Odysseus unbound and Penelope unstable: contemporary Australian expatriate women writers

Karen Ruth Brooks
University of Wollongong
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ODYSSEUS UNBOUND AND PENELlope UNSTABLE:
CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN EXPATRIATE WOMEN WRITERS

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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by

KAREN RUTH BROOKS, B.A. (Honours)

Department of English
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DECLARATION

I certify that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for a degree to any other university or institution. The work contained in this thesis is my own work except where otherwise indicated.

Karen R. Brooks, B.A. (Honours)
13th December 1996
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ABSTRACT

By examining the selected fiction of three prominent expatriate Australian women writers: Shirley Hazzard, Charmian Clift, and Glenda Adams, I analyse the expatriate experience generally, and advance a particular pattern of representation common to these writers. Their work evokes the liminality and ambivalence of the expatriate and "rewrites" the Homeric legend by giving an active and mobile prominence to Penelope figures. In exploring the psychological and physical dilemmas expatriation entails, they all disrupt generic literary forms (quest, romance, travelogue) and call into question systems of meaning from cultural conventions to language itself.

Expatriate fiction juxtaposes dynamism and stasis. The expatriate can experience both the need to articulate collective truths which stability and conviction allow, and the individual psychological harm that the inability to express these generates. Signifiers become arbitrary; nationality, land, chronology, temporal and spatial verities, and even gender, are all disturbed in the nomadic lives portrayed in the fiction of Clift, Hazzard, and Adams.

The principal method of the thesis is a close textual analysis of the various works of Clift, Hazzard and Adams, with some consideration of their different spatial and psychological relations with the country of their birth. This is informed by selected postcolonial and feminist theories. By also using the theories of Lacan as a useful heuristic for investigating the nuances and
unconscious designation of language and cultural identification, I establish an expatriate theory. This argues for the importance of a liminal discourse which I call *Femination*, a juncture that transcends physicality, culture, and gender without seeking to dominate any position, and as such is polemically situated against, while simultaneously embracing, the concept of "nation" which is masculine (imperial), colonising, and exclusive.
INTRODUCTION

TRANSIENCE VERSUS PERMANENCE AND THE FEMALE EXPATRIATE WRITER

I realise that some people would argue that by leaving Australia I had surrendered my birthright to comment on it ... I would reject that notion. I argue that instead of being in a disadvantaged position I am in a very privileged one by virtue of being born into one culture, knowing it intimately and then moving on to experience another. This I believe should put me in the position to say something relevant about Australian society with the possibility of seeing Australian values in relation to the values of another society and culture.¹

Tell me where you live, and I'll tell you who you are.²

The relationship between Australian culture, national identity, and expatriation is a long and often antithetical one. From the time of Australia's first white settlement, right up until the mid 1900s, England, and later America, were considered logical destinations for Australian writers or artists — a means of testing their worth against an international yardstick and of gaining financial returns.³ In 1899, Henry Lawson advised "any young Australian writer whose talents have been recognized... [to] seek London, Yankeeland, or Timbuctoo — rather than stay in Australia till his genius turned to gall."⁴ Even though this shift from colonial province to

⁴ Henry Lawson, "'Pursuing Literature' in Australia," The Portable Henry Lawson, edited by Brian Kiernan. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976, 210. Throughout this thesis there are numerous quotations from writers and critics who have employed "he" as a universal expression for both genders. Whilst Lawson, in the above quote, undoubtedly meant a male, Lacan, the principal theorist used in this
western metropolis was culturally sanctioned, it was not unproblematic. Australia's relationship to England, for example, was complicated by firm political, national and cultural allegiances between the two countries. The expatriate's (and, indeed, the resident Australian's) antipodean identity was rendered insignificant by the larger and more "authentic" British one, creating a type of cultural (and national) schizophrenia: a sundering of loyalties and self-identification. The fiction of early expatriate writers (such as Henry Handel Richardson and Christina Stead) reveal the conflict within the subject over juxtaposed sites of identification and torn loyalties. The writings often describe the cultural pull both towards England and away from Australia, and the heterogenous desires of the subject and the drives these geo-political movements set in motion. Henry Handel Richardson's trilogy, *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, is an example of the type of psychological fracturing that the dislocated and expatriated subject experiences. For Mahony, there is no firm sense of the self because there is no one space he can identify with in either England or Australia. His neither/nor geographical identity results in a psychological dislocation as well. His condition is shared by other Australian expatriates and interrogated in their fiction.

thesis also (but not exclusively) uses "he." I am conscious of the problematics of such a usage, I have not used "sic" to designate my awareness, rather, I have maintained the integrity of the selected quotations. While I am aware of the debate surrounding Lacan's phallocentrism (see footnote 34, page 13), and the problematics in general of using the male gender as a universal example, I have still chosen to retain the problematic "he". However, I wish to signal that in this thesis the use of a generic "he," in any quotations, signals both male and female subjects.

Rickard, 135.
Stephen Alomes describes Australian intellectual and artistic life from the late 1800s to at least the 1980s as an impossible dialectic, where the artist was either “unloved” at home and/or ignored as a pretentious colonial overseas:

Australian writers and radical intellectuals felt themselves falling between the two uncultured cliffs: the smugness of the Establishment, the colonisers, who could only understand culture guaranteed in value by its production in another place and another time; and popular scepticism and indifference, the apathy of the colonised to a culture that did not seem their own... Australian writers were labelled as mere colonial or provincial writers, a regional version of some greater talent in the real world.6

Writers were, to a degree, forced to relinquish their uniquely Australian voice in order to be heard, recreating an “imitation-English” world in their literature.7 Often the fiction that was produced in the colonies (and by expatriate Australian writers) struggled to express this sense of inauthenticity while trying to balance the duality of cultural and national inheritances. Alomes argues that, because of the prevailing cultural climate, the creative spirits of Australia were left with three options: to remain outside the colonial institutions and struggle against the odds; to accept the denaturalised position that cultural society demanded of them; “or to become an expatriate.”8

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7 Alomes, 1988, 227.
8 Alomes, 1988, 227.
The gradual exodus of Australian writers to English and Other shores emerges, particularly from the early part of the twentieth century onwards, as a distinct cultural phenomenon. The mindless materialism of postwar Australia and the conformity of the suburbs made many writers feel excluded, or exiled, at "home". There was a sense of not belonging anywhere, and so expatriation seemed a desirable option. In relocating, perhaps a spiritual/cultural "home" could be discovered. To some, expatriation was simply an affordable and practical means of seeing the world — as Glenda Adams states, "restlessness and moving around are certainly an Australian tradition." Other writers, like Rosa Praed, perceived England as their rightful home in the first place, and travelling there evoked a sense of both return and arrival. A number of writers, such as, Miles Franklin, Martin Boyd, Katherine Susannah Prichard, Patrick White, Alister Kershaw, Sumner Locke Elliot, Peter Porter, Germaine Greer, Barry Humphries, George Johnston, Charmian Clift and Jill Ker Conway, were "conscious of the desert inside Australia, of the vacuum in the heart of it," and so left. Alister Kershaw writes, "Whether we liked Australia or loathed it, we felt an overwhelming need to get out of it." Sumner Locke Elliott has said that when asked why he lived abroad, his response was to ask why anyone would live in Australia, the implication being that it was culturally impoverished. Ker Conway describes her disillusionment with Australia as

having origins in "coming of age in a country which, during the fifties, saw itself as little more than a colonial offshoot, where the women were discouraged from careers and education paid little attention to Australian history or Australia's role in Asia." In contemporary times relocations, and the multiple reasons for these, continue, the only difference being that the desired regions have become more exotic, encompassing Asia as well as the more traditional Euro-American locales.

The greater choice of destinations for Australian expatriates corresponds with an increasingly heterogeneous range of fictions as the expatriate seeks a re-visioning of the country of her/his birth through the lens of other cultures. Janette Turner Hospital describes Canada as "simply the safe filter through which I look at Australia." Not only does this reinterpretation of home occur from within another cultural space, it also occurs from a physical and psychological "safe" distance that creates a tension between the binary opposites of "here" and "there" and introduces a third space — a liminal space that moves between these sites. The spatial distance also generates a temporal gap between the past and the present that is simultaneously elided and augmented through the act of writing "home".

15 For example, Janette Turner Hospital (her first book was set in India) and Glenda Adams (her first novel was set in Indonesia).
17 The liminal space will be discussed in detail throughout the remainder of the thesis.
The notion of "home" has undergone a distinct shift in the history of
Australian literature. For many writers, "home" was always England — the
mother country — and living in Australia produced a sense of exile, not only
because of the distance from "home", but because popular cultural attitudes
meant that their literary efforts were seen as pretentious. Often the writer
made figurative returns to the mother country, such as those that occur in
the work of Martin Boyd and Vivien Crockett. The use of similes and other
literary tropes often served to widen the gap and feeling of exile within the
writer as Australia, the desert (primitive) wilderness was often read in
negative terms against the cultural (civilised) centres of England and
Europe creating, within the author's fictions a cultural tension.

The feeling of exclusion or sense of exile felt by many Australian expatriate
writers is also shared by writers from other postcolonial countries such as
the Caribbean, Canada, New Zealand and India. V.S. Naipaul, James

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15 Martin Boyd's, *Such Pleasure*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1985 and *Lucinda Brayford*, Harmondsworth,
20 See for example, Charles Higham and Michael Wilding (eds), *Australians Abroad*, Melbourne: F.W.
Cheshire Publishing Pty. Ltd., 1967, and also Christina Stead's *The Man who Loved Children*,
21 Clunies Ross, 3-26. Similarly, in an essay entitled, "Their Link with Britain" *The Sunburnt Country*,
published by Ian Bevan, London: Collins, 1934, 238-47, Boyd states that: "Socrates said that male and female
were once a single spherical body, but the gods cut them in two, and since then every one of the human
race has been trying to find his other half. In Australia we are in something the same position [sic]. We
need, from time to time, to be brought into contact with the land where we formed our spiritual secretions.
For most of us that is Britain. This is the deepest and strongest bond, but like all our most profound
feelings, it is one of which we cannot always be conscious" (239).
22 See for example, Andrew Gurr, *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature*, Brighton:
The Harvester Press, 1981; Bruce Bennett (ed), *A Sense of Exile: Essays in the Literature of the Asia-
Pacific Region*, Perth: C.S.A.L., 1988; David Bevan (ed), *Literature and Exile*, Amsterdam: Rodopi,
Joyce, Katherine Mansfield, and Jean Rhys for example, having been perceived as escaping the limitations of their nations of origin, are often described as exiles. Their “escape” is explained as an inner compulsion and an essential step in their growth as artists.23 Realised in the fiction of many of these “exiled” postcolonial writers is the ambivalence of the expatriate who experiences the conflicting emotions of anxiety (for the absent/present homeland), and desire (to leave, to escape). The individual’s internalised conflict is played out in her/his fiction and is often metaphorically represented through relationships, cultural exchanges, and the quest for a complete identity, all of which serve to romanticise the search for a national identity.24

While the above-mentioned writers “fled” their homeland, the overwhelming need to flee their native land was internal and could have been repudiated at any stage. These writers, particularly Naipaul and Rhys, endured an *exilic experience*, but it was not really exile as it is socially and psychologically understood. To represent these writers as exiles suggests that the meaning of the terms “exile” and “expatriate” has changed to such an extent that the two words can be used interchangeably to describe the same event. The terms are becoming problematic because there is a coalescing of cause and effect; but the incentives behind exile and

23 Gurr, 7-17.
24 For example, see Naipaul’s *In A Free State* and *A Bend in the River*; Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Mansfield’s, *The Garden Party and Other Stories* and *Bliss*; Rhys’ *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*.
expatriation are different and this needs to be recognised. The term “exile” originates from the same etymological root as the word exult and literally translates as “to leap out of.” The word “expatriate” on the other hand, implies a breaking of the more familial ties by the inclusion of the Latin patria — or fatherland — in its midst: so the movement “out of” (ex), apart from being a deliberate choice, implies a severing of the nurturing bond between a child and parent. Within this thesis, expatriation is understood to be a voluntary geographic renegotiation; a conscious unhousing of the subject in the physical and spiritual sense, that simultaneously requires dramatic social and psychological adjustment. Exile is an enforced condition whereas expatriation, while still sharing much of the emotional baggage of the exilic experience, is activated voluntarily. Expatriation is both physically chosen and then figuratively reconstructed, and it is this construction that incorporates some of the tensions produced by the exilic experience as outlined in Edward Said’s concepts of contrapuntal (or double) vision.

Whilst elements of third world postcolonial literature and Australian expatriate literature share common ground, conflating them into a unified field for commentary and criticism is problematic. White Australian postcolonial literature inhabits a different, if related, space. Alan Lawson

has termed this space that of the “Second World”. Lawson argues that “Second World” literature is one that is specific to white-settler postcolonial colonies such as Australia and Canada, where there is an ongoing tension between and across the antithetical states of colonising and colonised and where the text is “thus marked by counterfeitings of both emergence and origination.” Stephen Slemon further theorises this position by defining “Second World” literature as one which cannot be reduced to the simple binarisms of self/other or here/there. He argues that, on the contrary, these binary divisions have never been available to Second-World writers because they must always occupy the two spaces simultaneously:

the sites of figural contestation between oppressor and oppressed, colonizer and colonized, have been taken inward and internalized in Second-World post-colonial textual practice. By this I mean the ambivalence of literary resistance itself is the “always ready” condition of Second-World settler and post-colonial literary writing, for in the white literatures of Australia, or New Zealand, or Canada, or southern Africa, anti-colonialist resistance has never been directed at an object or a discursive structure which can be seen as purely external to the self.

Australian literature, providing as it does a range of Second-World/postcolonial discourses, expresses the ambivalence of being a product of a dual rhetoric — that of coloniser/colonised, and of struggling to establish an identity within that rhetoric. Whilst expatriate writings are inscribed with the various postcolonial binaries of coloniser/colonised etc. they are also located within an exclusively white historiography of Australia.

28 Alan Lawson, 158.
and the search for an identity beyond any purely colonial inscriptions. Expatriate literature, as a literature which itself expresses a further ambivalence towards the forms that already exist, can be accommodated under the rubric “Second-World.”

Expatriate literature also engages with the politics of identity at other levels. In moving beyond her/his country of birth, the expatriate is, in part, resisting the homogeneity of a national identity and the reductive cultural subjectivity the national identity entails. Expatriate literature not only occupies the two spaces of the binary equation here/there and coloniser/colonised, it also forms a nexus between them. In this liminal space between sites, the cultural and psychological agency behind and concurrent with the dynamics of relocation and subjectivity can be examined.

A particularly useful heuristic for reading expatriate texts in that it connects textual expression to the psycho-dynamics of the expatriation experience without implying either simplistic causation or reductivist uniformity, is Lacanian analysis. The move towards a psychopathology of expatriation is signalled by Robert Hughes who suggests that:
Expatriatism is very largely about Oedipal revolt, it is about the feeling that if you're not going to kill your father, at least you're going to kill him symbolically by getting away from him.30 Hughes' statement recognises the psychoanalytical aspects of both the motif and condition of expatriation, the voluntary breaking of cultural and familial ties, and the psychosocial and psychosexual origins of such a decision. Historically, the changing social and cultural attitudes to expatriation also indicate a type of Oedipal struggle between the parent/nation and child/national subject.

To read expatriation in Freudian terms alone, however, is reductive. Expatriation involves a more conscious play of the cultural/discursive patternings of desire and the psychological tensions between resistance and acceptance.31 Lacanian analysis can be strategically and productively employed in order to examine the numerous questions and disruptions arising out of the action of expatriation and its subsequent narratives. Lacanian theory offers a more satisfactory explanation of the connections between experience (individual and cultural), the author's mind, and the text. All of these can be "read" as meaning-producing systems operating, more or less, along the lines of language and through semiotic systems, which serve to both construct and alienate the subject. Expatriate writers in


31 Freud's explanation of psychogenesis is based on the takeover of the id by the ego and presupposes an "end of journey" narrative for the subject—a return home. The expatriate, in Freudian terms, can be read as the abnormal traveller destined to settle down as a "mature" citizen. Lacanian external desire and splitting allows for an explanation of expatriate experience on its own terms.
particular negotiate their identity/desire through cultural and textual signs.

Robert Young states that:

Lacan changed psychoanalysis because he shifted it from a seemingly self-referential body of technical knowledge into a metaphorics of language... Lacan showed how the structures of sexuality could be mapped onto linguistic ones: thus the Oedipus complex, for example, is translated into the story of the subject's accession into language and law.32

Lacan's move away from (but still incorporating) Freud is not only exemplified in his reconstruction of the Oedipus Complex, but in his attempt to avoid patriarchal rationalisations by replacing the Freudian biological penis with the abstracted signifier of the symbolic phallus. Lacan argues that, "the phallus... is even less the organ, penis or clitoris, that it symbolizes... For the phallus is a signifier".33 What this suggests is that the meaning of the phallus is contextual, it is not static, but shifts and changes according to its position in the signifying chain of language. In making the phallus a signifier of power, authority, and desire, Lacan attempts to explain subjectivity in terms that go beyond Freudian genital signification; "in substituting the phallus for the penis, Lacan has provided a socio-cultural and political analysis in place of an ontological and biological one."34 This move appears consistent with Lacan's reading of Freud's understanding of libidinal identity as non-biological and metaphorical:

It [the origins of human sexuality] is insoluble by any reduction to biological givens: the very necessity of the myth subjacent to the

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structuring of the Oedipus complex demonstrates this sufficiently.\textsuperscript{35}

By introducing linguistic and semiological models to psychoanalysis, Lacan succeeds in broadening discussions of subjectivity beyond sexual/libidinal concepts and allows for the problematizing of “culture” as a site for identification; a site which he reads as being informed by the same psycho/social/sexual principles as the individual:

It is clear, in effect, that genital libido operates as a supersession, indeed a blind supersession, of the individual in favour of the species, and that its sublimating effects in the Oedipal crisis lie at the origin of the whole process of the cultural subordination of man.\textsuperscript{36}

Lacanian psychoanalysis is used, within this thesis, to assist in the development of a psychopathology of expatriation so the various discourses that arise out of the action and its fictive re/construction may be examined. Lacan’s insights into the splitting of the subject enable a more complex description (and explanation) of the expatriate persona/e. Lacan argues that the subject is always formed in relation to the objects around her/him; so

\textsuperscript{35} Lacan, Écrits, 282. Despite his attempts to disassociate the signifier “phallus” from the noun “penis”, Lacan is often accused of phallocentrism, a condition that is seen as the inescapable state of psychoanalysis (see Elizabeth Grosz, Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction, St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1990, 174). Luce Irigaray is one of Lacan’s more vocal critics, perceiving in Lacan’s works a phallocentrism that not only over-values the male sex organ, but subsumes “women’s autonomy in the norms, ideals, and models devised by men”. “Phallocentrism”, according to Irigaray, “treats the two sexes as if they are two variations of the one sex”(Grosz, Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction, 174) However, Ellie Ragland-Sullivan criticises irigaray’s reading of Lacan by stating that Irigaray reads Lacan ideologically and substantively, equating the biological penis with the concept phallus thus failing to see its neutrality (Jane Gallop, Reading Lacan, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985, 134). Gallop agrees with Ragland-Sullivan’s contention in so far as she sees, in Lacan’s theories, the opportunity to surmount phallocentric models of interpretation. Gallop attributes this potential “release” from the bonds of phallocracy to Lacan’s idea that castration is not simply sexual, but linguistic too; in other words we are all (regardless of sex) commanded by a system of language through which we signify ourselves (Gallop, 20).

\textsuperscript{36} Lacan, Écrits, 24.
while “the human individual fixes upon himself an image that alienates him from himself,”37 this image also defines a self that will interact in the social order and appear to “cure” the subject’s internal conflictual tensions. The internal tensions arise out of an un/conscious awareness of alienation and psychological fracture. As a national subject, the individual’s tensions are both exacerbated and allayed: the culture and various national discourses around her/him operate to falsify a “whole” identity while, ironically, failing to repress difference and a cognisance of psychological fragmentation.

Lacan argues that the subject, as part of a Symbolic Order, is continually deprived of a sense of self because s/he seeks to re/discover the fundamental alienation that made her/him construct a subjectivity that is like another, and which is always destined to be taken from her/him by another.38 This thesis argues that the Nation, as a geo-political, cultural and psychological construct, attempts to elide, for the national subject, a sense of alienation and interior conflict. The nation is both “like another” (which the subject will model her/him self upon), and able to strip the individual of a unique identity; but it can also bestow identity by being, to a degree, other. The national subject does not always recognise her/his inherent schizo-subjectivity, hence the formulation of an identity which is based on the various nationalistic discourses. The alienation/fragmentation the subject may (or may not) acknowledge, however, is constitutive of the expatriate

38 Lacan, Écrits, 42.
writers’ identity, which, because of its physical and psychological movement away from the imaginative and geo-political nation, resists the culturally unified form it is being offered. Through the process of writing, the expatriate acknowledges a double dispossession and alienation from the self and the nation: there is possession through the writing and the relationship that is established with the home country and the “original” self and, equally, there is dispossession which is “confessed” in the act of writing towards the spatially and temporally distant home and the subjectivity that the nation has constructed for her/him.39

The expatriate, whilst being aware of the antagonistic cultural, national and psychological forces on either side of her/him, attempts to open up a dialogue in which these oppositional influences may converse. The dialogue occurs, in part, involuntarily. In being named an “expatriate”, a subject is simultaneously admitted to a national discourse and expelled from it. Embodied in the term itself is both rejection and acceptance, or to borrow Alan Lawson’s terms, “emergence and origination”. In this sense, the signifier “expatriate” is an ambivalent term. The expatriate is recognised as both a part of a national discourse (“patria”) and as apart from it (“ex”); as an ambivalent national subject who writes towards home, while being away from it. This dialogue originates in both the primary site of identification (the national home/home of birth, which also takes into account the

39 This process will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.
psychogenesis of the subject) and the secondary site (the new cultural home); yet by straddling these two sites the expatriate appropriates the reductive national discourses and augments them to incorporate Other dialogues (psychological, cultural etc.). The dialogue then becomes more complex, allowing for exchange and expansion.

The term expatriate can embrace as well as expel — depending on its context — which makes it difficult to reduce it to some sort of cultural or psychological specificity. There is often, for example, a cultural discomfort associated with expatriation because, as Peter Pierce states, "The phenomenon of the expatriate irritates and makes insecure local cultural commentators because it poses questions about why no permanent return has been made to Australia." So whilst some expatriates are made to feel as though they are cultural "traitors", others (like Shirley Hazzard who adopts a more international voice and refuses to claim any national allegiances), are encompassed within a nationalistic frame by being signified as an expatriate. This seems to indicate that "expatriate" is an ambivalent term that embraces a cultural and individual psychology of rejection and acceptance. On the one hand it acknowledges departure (and implicitly the reasons for this), while on the other it maintains a relationship with the subject through signification. This relationship is

40 Peter Pierce, "'... Turn Gladly Home': The Figure of the Revenant in Australian Literary Culture," Island Magazine, 38 (Autumn, 1989): 64.
entrenched in and reliant upon the imagined community that, despite the subject's physical absence, still constructs a legitimate (but ambivalent) space for her/him as both a part of and distinct from other nationalist discourses. In this sense, expatriate literature both upholds and subverts a national construct. The expatriate subject becomes a hybrid: s/he is both an intrinsic part of the culture s/he has left and finds that any relationship s/he tries to form with a new culture is informed by earlier psychosocial formations at the familial and cultural level. Graeme Turner describes a hybrid as someone who "retains... links to and identification with [her/his] origins, [s/he] is also shaped and transformed by (and, in turn, shapes and transforms) [her/his] location in the present. Belonging at the same time to several 'homes', [s/he] cannot simply dissolve into a culturally unified form."43

The relationships the expatriate forms, however tenuous, in both "new" and "old" countries are not static, but always becoming and always (depending on the number of cultures encountered), bifocal. The action of expatriation requires of the subject a psychological duality that forces her/him to confront and interrogate issues such as the self in relation to the nation, the self in relation to her/his culture, and the self in relation to the Otherness of the world. The movement of the expatriate, the self-evaluation, and the concurrent quest for identification that occurs, ensures that the dialogue is

dynamic. Because these questions are reciprocal, they are simultaneously posed to the cultural home as well, hence the feelings of discomfort the action of expatriation sometimes causes. This is most readily seen in the expatriates’ interrogation of nationalistic discourses.44

Australian nationalism is often regarded by critics as both masculinist and exclusivist, and as being unable to reflect the diversity of ethnicities and cultural traditions that currently exist in postcolonial Australia today.45 Graeme Turner perceives it as being constructed, for example, on the larrkin figure of the Lawson bush stories which, for many years, enshrined a “national type”. For the most part, these constructions keep recurring.46 As Turner states, this idea of a national character depends on a singular version of history and is inherently hostile to the competing discourses of nationality (based on historical revision and a reassessment of identity) that have currency today.47 Jill Roe describes Australian nationalism as a snare and delusion for women precisely because it has been built on an ideal of manliness.48 The expatriate, in moving out of the nation, resists the conformity of these models and the collective representation they offer for

44 While this will be explored in the following chapters it is already evidenced in the work of Henry Handel Richardson and Christina Stead.
45 Turner, 1994, 5.
46 Television and film are the principal creators/regenerators of these predominantly masculine forms: for example, Mick Dundee in Crocodile Dundee; Mel Gibson and Mark Lee in the film Gallipoli; the male characters in A Country Practice or even, more recently, Blue Heelers; and the character Jack, in My Brother Jack.
47 Turner, 1994, 7-10.
her/him as a national subject. The expatriate steps out of the predominantly "male" space of the nation and into a more fluid and "female" one. The liminal spaces the expatriate moves in allows her/him to engage in a continual dialogue with these representations and both reconstruct and deconstruct these nationally codified images in her/his fiction.49

The interrogative nature of Australian expatriate fiction means that it can be described as a dialectic of extremes. It not only examines the relationship between postcolonial and colonial cultures, but addresses the ambivalence of expatriation and national subjectivity. Whilst this type of dialectic is similar to Homi Bhabha's neither/nor formula of not quite/not white,50 it differs in that it is written from an ambivalent and ever-changing white space. The fiction can be more profitably linked to the uncertain white hybrid space of Alan Lawson and Stephen Slemon's Second-World, where any essentialist positions are transformed into productive tensions. Australian expatriate literature contains what can be described as a spiritual bellicosity that criticises the nation's "imperialism"— the static concept of nationality based on a communal geography, language and even ethnicity — by opening up a dialogue between these privileged sites of enunciation (geographical, linguistic, political) and other cultures, ultimately challenging notions of authenticity at the individual and national levels. The expatriate adopts

49 A strong example of this is Glenda Adams' *Longleg*, North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1991.
what Timothy Brennan calls "nationalism's Janus-face": the longing for union, which is the communal aspect of nationalism, and a concurrent rejection of its authoritarianism. This "Janus" perspective is reflected in expatriate fiction through the juxtaposition of dynamism against the desire for security and stasis.

To date, studies on Australian expatriate writers have tended to be both biographical (Henry Lawson, Patrick White), and nationalistic in the sense that they have been concerned about telling the story of a colonial genius who, possessing good raw material, managed to improve her/his self through the enriching process of Europe. On returning home, either figuratively or literally, s/he has added value to her/his country and become a legitimate national product by increasing Australia's international standing in the cultural exchange. The studies that have been done also tend to revolve around the same group of people: for example, Henry Lawson, Henry Handel Richardson, Christina Stead, and Patrick White. It was only in 1986 that a biography of George Johnston was produced and, recently, one on Sumner Locke Elliott. Likewise there have been "popular" biographies on expatriate celebrities such as Barry Humphries and Clive James. Whilst

these are by no means exhaustive, and principally deal with expatriation as a cogent (if incidental) fact of the author's life and the relationship these individuals have to the nation, they reveal the interest in masculine fictive interpretations of expatriation.\textsuperscript{57} The work of women expatriate writers (with the exception of Stead, Richardson, and Franklin) is sometimes perceived as a peripheral aspect of Australian literature and/or their expatriation is "swallowed" into the narrative of their national incorporation.\textsuperscript{58}

For the Australian expatriate woman writer, the attempt to enter a patriarchal and imperial literary tradition on her own terms necessitates a balancing of colonial factionalism\textsuperscript{59} with the potential subversiveness of postcolonial imaginative writing — the inevitable legacy, according to Slemon, of the Second-World.\textsuperscript{60} The fictitious discourses that the Australian expatriate woman writer creates interrupt the certitudes of nationality, gender, tradition, and even self, through their duality of vision and recognition of the limen as an active and dynamic site of interrogation.\textsuperscript{61} In

\textsuperscript{57} This is because these texts are principally about men, or focus on the nationalistic aspect of the author's work, or the relationship it bears to canonical national fiction.

\textsuperscript{58} Some examples of this push to the periphery can be seen in the works of; Charmian Clift, Shirley Hazzard, Glenda Adams (please refer to bibliography for further information), Barbara Hanrahan, Betty Roland, Dymphna Cusack, Susan Johnston, and Kathy Lette, to name a few.

\textsuperscript{59} What I mean by "colonial factionalism" is the inevitable hybrid nature of a settler colony such as Australia. On the one hand these colonies seek validation from the western centres (Europe/America), while simultaneously trying to avoid Euro/Americentrvism and consciously promoting nationalism. These juxtaposed positions can be identified clearly at a cultural level in the current "monarchy versus republic" debates.

\textsuperscript{60} Slemon, 34-5.

\textsuperscript{61} Miles Franklin's female protagonist, Sybylla Melvyn, in \textit{My Brilliant Career}, when speaking of her mother (which can be read metaphorically as her cultural British and Australian mother), says: "Would that we were more companionable, it would make many an oasis in the desert of our lives. Oh that I could
this sense, female expatriate fiction consciously promotes the idea of ambiguity in a deliberate attempt to blur the centre/periphery binary of postcolonial/colonial writing and express the "ambivalence of colonialism's middle ground." Henry Handel Richardson, Christina Stead and Barbara Hanrahan are early examples of expatriate women writers who, by using the mode of the bildungsroman and combining it with a physical journey, sought to disturb traditional narratives and bring into perspective the monologic voice of the Old world and the multiplicitous voices of the New. As Diana Brydon states: "the expatriate may be viewed as forward looking rather than backward looking in his disregard for the narrower claims of nationalism and in his appreciation of a global rather than merely a local heritage." In other words, the expatriate woman writer seeks to expose the repression of difference and desire. This repression plays an intrinsic part in the ideological construction of an homogenous and gendered Australian national identity while simultaneously interrogating the psychogenesis and psychological development of subjectivity beyond a national framework.

take an all-absorbing interest in patterns and recipes, bargains and orthodoxy! Oh that you could understand my desire to feel the rolling billows of the ocean beneath, to hear the peeling of a great organ through dimly lit arches, or the sob and wail of a violin in a brilliant crowded hall, to be swept on by the human stream. Ah, thou cruel fiend — Ambition! Desire!" Miles Franklin, My Brilliant Career, Pymble: Angus and Robertson, 1994, 253. Here Franklin interrogates and ultimately discards the cultural roles that are offered to women within the nationalistic framework and situates her heroine as desiring the Other; likewise Glenda Adams in Longleg, has her protagonist interrogating and rejecting the culturally prescribed "masculine" roles that Australia (and his mother) extends to him (this will be explored in detail in Chapter 7).

See respectively, The Fortunes of Richard Mahony; For Love Alone and The Man Who Loved Children; Sea-Green; also Miles Franklin's My Brilliant Career and My Career Goes Bung; and for some later examples see the work of Charmian Clift, Shirley Hazzard and Glenda Adams a selection of which, will be analysed in this thesis. Also, Germaine Greer, Daddy We Hardly Knew You; Jill Ker Conway, The Road From Coorain; Janette Turner Hospital, Susan Johnston, and Kathy Lette provide other examples.

In the fiction of the expatriate women writers I have chosen to examine—Charmian Clift, Shirley Hazzard and Glenda Adams—a dynamism becomes a celebration of the liminal; that is, the spaces between various sites. The women writers set up a polemic between recognised centres in the nation, the family, gender, subjectivity or even genre, dialogues that traverse from one position to the other and back again, while all the time subverting any attempts to locate them, blurring but not disintegrating any boundaries they confront. These female expatriate writers look forwards, backwards and beyond, turning their studies into multifaceted examinations. They become Odyssean nobodies—nomads who (momentarily) reject the past and therefore alter the present and by doing this embrace an unknown future. This is where the relationship between the temporal and the spatial becomes clear. By physically relocating, the female expatriate writer creates a temporal shift that allows her to excavate an old self and re/create and re-evaluate a “new” one accordingly. She moves into “no-man’s”-land and thus resists conscription into a national discourse. Odysseus literally becomes placeless and nameless in order to deceive the (monocular and monologocentric), Cyclops, Polyphemus. Odysseus retains his desired un-state until he is reunited with his homeland and heritage. Once achieving landfall and expelling the suitors, he chooses to adopt the familiar signifiers of his subjectivity once again. These signifiers of selfhood are the various

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65 Brydon, “Buffoon Odysseys,” 84.
roles he plays within his culture: king, husband, warrior, and father. The un-position he temporarily occupies whilst on his journey gives him an unwarranted freedom which his decreed territory and situation do not allow. Odysseus is simultaneously possessed and dispossessed, and as such is freed from any constraints, national or familial, to wander figuratively and literally. The creative potential of this situation is enormous, but the ambivalence it produces must be acknowledged as well.

It is no coincidence that many Australian expatriate writers adopt the Odyssean journey as a model in their fiction. George Johnston, in the My Brother Jack trilogy, uses the Homeric tale as the foundation for his protagonist's experiences. Shirley Hazzard also draws analogies to Odysseus' adventures and the entire expatriate experience in many of her works, particularly The Bay of Noon. Glenda Adams in both Dancing on Coral and Longleg, employs motifs from the Greek tale, as does Christina Stead in For Love Alone. Diana Brydon uses this last work to establish an argument for the inclusion of expatriate Australian women writers in a (masculine) Australian literary canon, suggesting that the odysseys these women construct are in fact “Buffoon Odysseys” or parodies of their male counterparts' imaginings. Whilst Brydon's theory is germane to this argument, it is limiting to see these stories as purely a narrative counterstrategy. Instead of simply parodying the male Odyssean voyage, the

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Australian expatriate female writer, and in particular each of the three I have chosen to study, creates a chiasmic version of the masculine journey, where inversion does not simply rely on the parodic or satiric for effect, but becomes a rewriting in terms that are neither subordinate nor effacing. In these narratives time and space are claimed in new ways for the female writer who acknowledges the binaries of her male counterpart's imaginings and then opens up, for fictive exploration, the liminal spaces between them revealing that permanence, and borders, are an ongoing (masculine) fabrication.68 The liminal space these writers create also allows for an interrogation of the self, and the self in relation to nationality, nationhood and culture.

The protagonists in the work of Clift, Hazzard, and Adams, in keeping with parodic versions of the voyage narrative adopt, not one position in the text, but many, satirising notions of essentialism and the assertion of a singular point of view. These multiple positions also encourage attempts by the reader/author/characters to balance a number of perspectives and parts. The roles of both Odysseus (dynamism) and Penelope (compliant stasis) are appropriated and reconstructed as ambivalent sites of perpetual movement and terminal security, which are, ironically, both desired. Whereas the

68 In this thesis the terms “masculine” and “feminine” are employed, in various contexts, adjectivally to signify a particular style of writing and representation which is not specific to any one gender: for example, the phrase “masculine” or “phallocratic discourse” does not exclude women as utilisers of these discursive styles in the same way that the term “feminine narratives” does not eliminate men as users either.
*Odyssey* locates Ithaca as the hero's ultimate destination, within these modern narratives Ithaca becomes a state of mind: for some of the protagonists it is represented by Australia, for others it is exemplified by an individual.69 Unlike the discourse of the expatriate woman writer's masculine counterparts, Ithaca is not a solid destination — a geographical place.70 In the hands of these women writers, Ithaca loses its geographic specificity and becomes a heterogeneous psychological and physical site. For the female expatriate writer, Australia can be more productively likened to the figure of Penelope — a point of psychological reference whose reactions are unpredictable and whose temporality changes. As Odysseus' wife, Penelope moves through time and space with the adventurer, but as a static and historical site from which he can draw a stable identity. Penelope, as an individual, is a dynamic and mutable force who represents the alterations and uncertainty of absence: she is always and idea(l). Penelope is the signifier that the expatriate both rejects and desires: a past memory and an uncertain future. This is where the notion of dialogue becomes so important. In order to re-establish a connection between "here" and "there" and "past and "present", there has to be an exchange of ideas that acknowledges each consciousness and each set of experiences. Penelope is not simply the past or the future as a static ideal but represents a dynamic relationship between the two contingent sites of desire.

69 In Shirley Hazzard's *Bay Of Noon*, for example, the characters Gianni and Gioconda represent for the protagonist Jenny the elusive and safe qualities of Ithaca. In *Transit of Venus*, Australia is for Caro, Grace and Dora, their Ithaca: an absent presence that dominates their present and helps them form their subjectivities. This idea will be explored more fully in the following chapters.

70 Patrick White's novels would have to be an exception here, particularly, *The Aunt's Story*. 

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Within the fiction of the female expatriate writer, land and landfall become chaotic locations that are perceived as sites of limitation and controlled growth; so the expatriate is portrayed as desiring the sea and the flux and change that it represents; however, the freedoms signified by the sea and motion often prove to be illusory. Land may, for some, signify entrapment— but it also signifies the positive characteristics many of the protagonists secretly desire: subjectivity, nation, home, and love. This is another aspect of liminality that these female expatriate writers offer: the negotiation between international romance and postcolonial quest story, exploiting, as Brydon puts it, "the tensions between the two to highlight the dilemmas of the colonised: Australians and women." Whilst Brydon draws attention to the polemical nature of female expatriate fiction, she overlooks its ambivalence which, in part arises out of its Second-World status and its desire to interrogate and resituate culture/s and subjectivity/ies. The protagonists in the female expatriate writers' stories may seek an Ithaca and all that it figuratively represents—security, love, and belonging, but they also flee, what is to them, the suffocating dictates and parameters of the very same forms. They portray the fragmentation of the subject in order to expose the futility of the quest for an imago and, in doing so, present expatriation (and the expatriate subject), as a series of diverse, liminal, and contested sites.

71 Brydon, "Buffoon Odysseys," 75.
72 Brydon, "Buffoon Odysseys," 76.
This study attempts to widen and modernise the literary treatment of the phenomenon of expatriation with attention to the particular dynamics of Australian texts by women. By interrogating the trope and experience of expatriation as an entirety, it is intended to both describe and examine some of the links between the psycho-cultural experience (including formations of subjectivity), the kind of writing that is produced (in this instance the work of Clift, Hazzard, Adams), and its relationship to a national literary industry. These three women have been chosen because they each wrote in a different period of Australian literary history, and within different generic structures, and therefore, they reflect a range of modern expatriate attitudes towards both their homeland and other cultures. The selective limits of this study, in that it concentrates on three female expatriate writers, do not permit the formulation of a single prescriptive theory. Nor does the thesis subordinate texts to theory — it merely seeks to employ a theoretical model as a useful means of extending the interpretation of certain texts and of reflecting upon their place in relation to the construction of Australian literature. The fractured self/desire of expatriation, compounded with, firstly, the double colonising/colonial identity of Australians and, secondly, the "double colonisation" of women, produces a particular kind of "liminal" writing (which is recovered no matter whether it finds expression in fiction or "autobiography"). Lacanian analysis is employed not so much for its own sake as in a political manner in order to explain a particular phenomenon of
Australian literature: the writings of white, Anglo-Celtic, female, expatriate writers.

Charmian Clift produced fiction, essays and travel books. For the purposes of this thesis, in Chapters Two and Three I will concentrate on her two "travel" books, *Mermaid Singing* and *Peel Me A Lotus*. I will examine the ways in which this genre is reconstructed in order to deal with the complex liminal position of the expatriate as both a neo-colonial voyeur of an/Other culture and a semi-colonial within it.

Shirley Hazzard shares her time between both America and Europe, and her cosmopolitan way of life is echoed in her narratives, all of which consider alienation and isolation from a sophisticated and urbane point of view. The search for love is prevalent in her work. This constitutes a search for the self and a metaphoric examination of the individual's relationship to her/his land and Others as much as it does a quest for a soul-mate. Both *The Bay of Noon* (Chapter Four), and *The Transit of Venus* (Chapter Five), explore these notions, revealing the tensions within the state of expatriation itself which can often inhibit, as much as it can provoke, the pursuit of selfhood.
Finally, in Chapters Six and Seven, I investigate the work of Glenda Adams. Her texts lack the sophisticated ambience of Hazzard’s, but still contain a great degree of satire and political awareness. She also captures the delicate spirit of Australia, particularly in the post-war years and disruptive sixties. In her works *Dancing on Coral* and *Longleg*, Adams portrays a female and male expatriate respectively and explores the sense of dislocation inherent in their condition as well as examining the tenuous nature of familial ties. The liminality of the expatriate experience is potently explored in each text, as well as the dangers involved in a fixated, or static love; love that is ultimately narcissistic and therefore impedes any psychological growth.

My first chapter examines the ways in which expatriation can be productively interpreted through psychoanalytical literary theory. I commence this chapter by exploring how the familial model posited by Lacan can be transposed and applied at a cultural/national level. In the following chapters I employ an expatriate theory in order to examine the chosen texts, and investigate the ways in which these texts explore the ideas/questions raised in this introduction. These questions include: the value of liminality as a particular type of discourse that both acknowledges and runs counter to any discourses of nation; the resistance to stasis in favour of dynamism, and the psychological ramifications of expatriation as an experience of cultural disassociation and further psychological
fragmentation, and the play of desire in cultural formations of subjectivity. The body of the thesis concentrates on demonstrating the validity of the expatriate theory through a combination of close textual and intertextual analysis and the application of psychoanalytical literary theory as an investigative device. Feminist and Postcolonial/Second World theories are also used in order to stimulate new readings of the chosen narratives and to enrich more familiar ones.
CHAPTER ONE

EXPATRIATION AND THE SCHIZONATIONAL SUBJECT:
A PSYCHOANALYTICAL INTERPRETATION

... the ultimate referent — the Country, Nation, Honour — is never present to itself within the narrative 'in person'. The space of narration is asymptomatic, which shows that the 'original' reference or Ideal is itself touched by fiction and constructed in a deferred narrative, as a form of repetition.¹

It is difficult to construct a theory of expatriation as the condition itself encompasses a diverse range of experiences, and the fiction arising out of those experiences appears to resist homogenisation within a singular theoretical model.² If, however, expatriation is seen as the nexus between space and place and as the liminal point at which numerous temporalities, cultural ideologies, and subjectivities begin to unravel, then a productive framework for readings and interpretations can be established. Expatriation, particularly in Australian literature, is often perceived as a contemporary rite-of-passage, or journey of self-discovery and transition.³ The narratives produced from these journeys are formed both within and

² It is a reductive exercise to read expatriate literature under the rubric say, of postcolonialist or feminist theories (consider For Love Alone, My Brother Jack, or My Brilliant Career), as doing this will fail to expose the complex tensions between “nation”, self, and Other that these texts (amongst many others) explore. This thesis, paradoxically it seems, attempts to redress this by examining a selection of literature through the lens of a new (though based on Lacanian theory) and diverse model.
beyond various cultural and geopolitical inscriptions and can be perceived as seeking to interpret "the enigmatic transactions between the psychic and the social". All literature, in a sense, endeavours to examine the relationship between the subject and her/his culture, but where expatriate literature differs is in the fact that it does not negotiate, only or primarily, with a cultural space that is constructed under the singular, unifying image of the nation. Rather, expatriate literature moves beyond the boundaries of the subject's original culture and thus opens up new avenues of inquiry and fresh ways of understanding both the subject, her/his primary culture, and the Other cultures the subject encounters.

The movement away from the geo-political and psychological nation-space that the expatriate enacts suggests that a threshold has been crossed and that a psychological and physical transaction, unavailable to writers who remain at "home", has taken place. This is not to suggest an absolutely different state for the expatriate, but it does imply a different order of complexity. A threshold, as James Donald states, is both a boundary and an interchange, and its very presence suggests the "irreconcilable tension in both subjectivity and culture between the push to identify and the structural resistances to any such closure...". Because belonging to a group and differentiating oneself from the crowd are key elements of human

5 Donald, 8.
existence (buying into assimilist fantasies and aggressive stereotyping of Otherness), desire can be read as being fundamental to both ends of this dialectic. It seems productive, therefore, to extend this connection to a psychoanalytical examination of expatriate writing working out of the colonial traditions of white Australian culture.

Psychoanalysis has the advantage of moving literary criticism beyond mechanistic, materialist notions of "the individual being determined by and/or adapting to society" as a primary mode of interpretation. Psychoanalysis considers other cultural technologies that also work to construct the subject, such as language, social semiotics, and gender. These issues become larger and more complicated when they include a range of unfamiliar cultural processes and psychological terrains. As we are dealing not with direct "talking cures" of a Freudian kind but with variously mediated literary expressions of expatriate subjectivity, I have chosen to employ a Lacanian critical framework. His greater emphasis on the play of language seems to make this particular form of psychoanalytical theory a more useful critical tool.

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7 Donald, 3.
The importance of language in ego formation is indicated by Lacan in his famous dictum that the unconscious is structured "like a language". That is, like language, the unconscious is structured by the two poles of linguistic functioning, metaphor/condensation and metonym/displacement. Sexual drives are the consequence of the absorption of the drive by systems of cultural meaning, by representations (we desire objects not to gratify our needs, but because they mean something, they have value or significance.)

Lacanian theory can be appropriated in order to examine the cultural semiotics of nation and national identity and their dynamic relationship to the psycho-social identity formations of expatriates and the expression of these in texts that themselves intervene in and reflect the dynamics of subjectivity. Before I proceed with specific textual and theoretical analyses, I want to look briefly at Lacan's analysis of the developmental processes of ego formation within a familial/cultural model in order to situate them in relation to the national subject and expatriation.

Lacan believed that when a child is born she or he immediately relates to her/his mother who, at this stage represents the whole of external reality. It is at this point that the child (in association with the mother) has an imaginary notion of bodily completion — of union and totality, an idea of her/his "self". In his hypothesis entitled "The Mirror Stage", Lacan describes a child before it uses language. A child sees its reflection in the mirror as

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a kind of signifier — a bestower of meaning — and understands the image that s/he now perceives as a signified: that is, the image "means" the self. The externalised semblance of the child, that which is reflected and which the child perceives, becomes internalised as its own image — the view of the self from the outside is what gives the child the sense of self.

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation — and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality... and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development.\(^\text{11}\)

As Grosz explains,

[the subject] is necessarily split between what it feels (fragmentation, 'the body-in-bits-and-pieces') and what it sees (the image of itself as a gestalt, as a visual whole), between a sense of its own identity and the identity provided for it by the other/mother/mirror. The mirror image provides it with an illusory or anticipatory identity, an identity it one day hopes to attain, which will form the basis of its ego-ideal. It results in an image of the self modelled on another a necessarily social subject. For this reason Lacan also claims that the ego is an alienated and paranoid construct — always defined by/as the other.\(^\text{12}\)

The relationship between the mother and the child is, therefore, one of "reciprocity without exchange."\(^\text{13}\) Lacan calls this particular phase of psychosocial development the Imaginary Order. In the Imaginary Order there is no notion of difference or absence, there is only identity and presence.\(^\text{14}\) All subjects undergo this identificatory process, though not all pass through it successfully, hence the mental illnesses of psychosis and

\[^{11}\text{Lacan, Écrits, 4.}\]
\[^{12}\text{Elizabeth Grosz, Sexual Subversions, St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1989, 22.}\]
\[^{13}\text{Grosz, Sexual Subversions, 22}\]
neurosis. The desire to return to the (m)other, the illusion of an homogenous centre, remains: it is just repressed. According to Lacan, this desire never leaves us, and so our lives become a continuum of movement from one signifier to another; our motivation is desire — the desire to fill what we lack. The expatriate is, potentially, more able to perceive a "whole" self because of her/his distance from the nation (or mirror), but at the cost of feeling increasingly alienated. This sense of alienation and fragmentation is both external and internal and is exacerbated because of the physical and psychological distance between the subject and her/his nation. The text then, can be read as a "bridge" — as an attempt to recover wholeness. This "wholeness" is also a mirror (and thus alienation), because it still works to split the self and the self-image.

The dyadic structure of child/mother is replaced when the "Father" enters the picture and introduces a triadic formation. The Father embodies what Lacan refers to as the "Law" — and this is represented by his signifier the phallus: that wider social, linguistic, and familial network of which the child is only a part. This network is termed the "Other" by Lacan and represents what he calls the Symbolic Order. The Lacanian Other represents the "differential structure of language and of social relations that constitute the subject in the first place, and in which... [the subject] must take up its place, it also represents the site of the signifier, the Symbolic Order or any
third party in a triangular structure". Lacan posits how the subject is formed out of relationships with the O/other. These relationships originate in both the dyadic and triadic stages of development, revealing that the Law-of-the-Father, as well as social, libidinal and linguistic processes dictate how we perceive, not only the self, but the self in association with O/others. The phallus, then, comes to represent separation and loss for the subject because in passing through to the Symbolic Order the subject is irreparably split from the dyadic unity s/he experienced with the (m)other. It is at the moment of division, instigated by the Father/Law, that the child becomes aware of the various processes at work outside the dyad — those processes that, in the future, will assist in defining the subject. Lacan states that:

On the side of the Other, the locus in which speech is verified as it encounters the exchange of signifiers, the ideals they prop up, the elementary structures of kinship, the paternal metaphor considered qua principle of separation, and the ever reopened division in the subject owing to his primal alienation — on this side alone and by the pathways... I have just enumerated, order and norms must be instituted which tell the subject what a man or a woman must do.

The introduction of the triad effectively disassembles the sense of wholeness the subject has acquired with the (m)other and instigates within the subject an incessant longing for a return to that unified state. Freud explained this longing as an Oedipal-type sexual desire for the mother — Lacan identifies it, not as a sexual need, but as a desire for the dyadic (m)other identity

15 Moi, 100-1.

which admits no Other. This desire, however, is repressed — driven into another realm of the mind. According to Lacan, it is at the very moment that desire is instituted in the subject that the unattainable Other arises and the unconscious is conceived.

In the Symbolic Order, the child learns to represent her or his thoughts and feelings through the acquisition of language and is ultimately constituted as a speaking subject. Madan Sarup, in his book *Jacques Lacan*, gives a succinct definition of Lacan's three interacting orders:

The Imaginary order includes the field of phantasies and images. It evolves out of the mirror phase, but extends into the adult subject's relationships with others. The prototype of the typical imaginary relationship is the infant before the mirror, fascinated with its image. The Imaginary order also seems to include pre-verbal structures, for example, the various 'primitive' phantasies of children, psychotic and perverse patients. The Symbolic order is concerned with the function of symbolic systems. Language belongs to the Symbolic order and, in Lacan's view, it is through language that the subject can represent desires and feelings. It is through the Symbolic order that the subject is constituted. The Real order [which I do not refer to in this thesis except implicitly], is the most elusive of these categories, and is linked to the dimensions of sexuality and death. It seems to be a domain outside the subject. The Real is the domain of the inexpressible, of what cannot be spoken about, for it does not belong to language. It is the order where the subject meets inexpressible enjoyment and death.  

The Imaginary Order represents the dyadic phase of psychical development, but it is in the Symbolic Register that notions of subjectivity are formed. The Real is the order that exists prior to, and yet is intrinsically a part of

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the other two orders; it symbolises that which is lacking in the other Registers, that "which may be approached, but never grasped: the umbilical cord of the Symbolic".18

For the national subject, the move from the Imaginary to the Symbolic registers creates a split identity based on various cultural apparatuses (language, dress, education, media, literature), all of which operate within a particular cultural space. This identity is an effect of contending discourses and ideological formations that relies, partly, on what James Donald describes as a "semantic field" and its continual policing.19 The policing of this field, and its contemporaneous ideologies, maintains a national framework within which a subject can both be identified by others and can identify her/him self. Donald also states that:

The reconceptualization of "national culture" in terms of the effects of cultural technologies seems to me a necessary corrective to many accounts of how ideology works. But, unlike Foucault and some of the new cultural technocrats, I don't think this means the concept of ideology should be junked, nor that questions of representation and subjectivity are superfluous. If the cultural technologies are going to work, must there not be some investment in the forms of subjection they produce by the people who have to live these terms of selfhood?20

A national culture is situated within very firm geographical, linguistic, political, and imaginative boundaries. In order for the various borders of the nation to be preserved, the Other (that is, whatever is not a part of the

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18 Alan Sheridan, Introduction to Écrits, x.
20 Donald, 36.
"official" culture), must be kept out. The border, then, becomes a site of contestation: a site which can always be potentially disrupted through hybridisation and in-mixing and where the "self and other become enmeshed in a ... heterogenous, dangerously unstable zone". However, as Donald also notes, "exclusion necessary to the formation of social identity at [one] level is simultaneously a production at the level of the Imaginary, and a production, what is more, of a complex hybrid fantasy emerging out of the very attempt to demarcate boundaries, to unite and purify the social collectivity". As the Imaginary stage in a child's psychosocial development produces an illusion of wholeness, so too the cultural or national Imaginary produces a sense of a cohesive national consciousness which works to both cover and deny the sense of alienation the subject feels by enclosing her/him within a "whole" nation-space and, therefore, artificially consolidating and removing any sense of internal separation or fracture s/he might feel. The cultural Symbolic continues to uphold this fantasy through the production of various "centripetal" national discourses and ideologies, yet it ultimately fails, the struggle to exclude any other only being partly successful and, in any case, dependent on the Other for its project. The boundaries between the Imaginary Order and the Symbolic are always permeable: "the 'inside' is always fragmented and differentiated rather than pure and united". An unconscious recognition of this situation is what occurs within the national

21 Donald, 36.
22 Donald, 37.
23 Donald, 37.
subject, and this subliminal awareness of incompleteness is what, in part, constitutes desire.

In broadening Lacan’s definition of the mother to encompass a cultural/national mother, I am simply doing what critics such as D.W. Winnicott have done before:24 fundamentally, this move requires that the Lacanian mother be read both metaphorically and metonymically. The use of tropes such as metaphors and metonyms is common in psychoanalytical discourse where they are perceived variously as “signs” of repression, psychosis, and deferment amongst other things. That such tropes feature in literature is, according to Lacan, no coincidence, as these devices function within language — the Lacanian unconscious — and to an extent serve as a reminder of the debt the Symbolic register owes to its predecessor, the Imaginary.

Lacan describes the metaphor as an ambivalent device that, on the one hand, promises sufficiency and wholeness,25 while on the other, it acts as a trope which distinguishes, discards and selects. Juliet Flower McCannell discusses metaphor as, “A determinant of social ties (discursive forms) between human beings”. Metaphor “dominates the linguistic mode, and it

does so in the service of culture. In short, it becomes ideology". The metonym, then, is the repressed trope in culture. But the repressed can, and does, return. As Lacan argues, "what does man find in metonymy if not the power to circumvent the obstacles of social censure". Lacan describes the metonym as functioning on a horizontal linguistic plane, where one term is in a contiguous relationship with another: "It is in the relation between two signifiers along the line of any concrete discourse". In other words, the metonym operates within the syntagmatic plane of language and, as such, is both restrictive and yet expressive of a longing because it serves to shift or slide the original signifier — the lost object of desire — through displacement; the primary signifier remains, it is just hidden, or buried. The metonym can remain hidden and form a subversive function through its refusal to totalise wholeness/arrival. Lacan, however, also reads it as a trope of servitude and, perhaps because of the linguistic limitations placed upon it, as an insufficiency:

The linearity that Saussure holds to be constitutive of the chain of discourse, in conformity with its emission by a single voice and with its horizontal position in our writing — if this linearity is necessary, in fact, it is not sufficient.

27 Flower McCannell, 91.
28 Lacan, Écrits, 158.
29 Gallop, 121.
30 Lacan, Écrits, 158.
Within expatriate fiction the trope of metonym can be conceived of as insufficient and as bearing nuances of servitude to the maternal site (which it represents) and the paternal Order which codifies and represses it. It is important to realise that metonym only displaces the original signifier, it does not replace it. The use of metonym can be explained as indicating the conscious/unconscious debt that the subject owes to the nation/subject dyad and, at the same time, be viewed as exposing the linguistic ambivalence of such a literary device — it slides across two orders, the Imaginary (maternal) and the Symbolic (paternal), and back again.

Metaphor, argues Lacan, is a structure of verticality, where new terms are selected and the old ones replaced, effectively changing or expanding their original meaning. Metaphor, “occurs at the precise point at which sense emerges from non-sense”.\(^{32}\) This statement implies that metaphor has the power to translate and even replace the original signifier — it is not bound to the horizontal chain of language like the metonym. Metaphor is in fact, “one word for another”.\(^{33}\) This amounts to the interchangeable substitution of one citizen for another within the national frame — metaphor is identity (s/he is an Australian) — a totalising attribution. The nation, as a sum of its people is metonymic: it signifies incompleteness and partial difference (x is only partly Australian but x and y and z are collectively Australian). The

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\(^{32}\) Lacan, *Écrits*, 158.

expatriate refuses (or is refused) the metaphoric substitution of similarity in favour of the sliding chain of metonymic partial-ity.

It is in his discussion of the qualities of metaphor and metonym and their discursive power (or lack of) that Lacan seems to supply two contradictory readings. On the one hand, he privileges the vertical (the metaphor):

The creative spark of the metaphor does not spring from the presentation of two images, that is, of two signifiers equally actualized. It flashes between two signifiers one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the occulted signifier remaining present through its (metonymic) connexion with the rest of the chain... *One word for another*: that is the formula for the metaphor and if you are a poet you will produce for your own delight a continuous stream. A dazzling tissue of metaphors.

But, on the other hand, he suggests that the metaphor needs metonym in order to exist: that in metonym the genesis of metaphor may be found. In a seminar delivered on May 9, 1956, Lacan stated that “metonymy is there from the beginning, and it is what makes metaphor possible”. It is more useful to figure the relationship between metaphor and metonym not as a contradiction, but as a dynamic interaction. Lacan interprets the metaphor as possessing the power to liberate and move figuratively beyond the Law, but also as needing metonym to serve the Symbolic and, therefore, as recognising the site of cultural origination. Metonym then, is both the trope of maternity and paternity; the original dyad, both familial and cultural,

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34 Gallop, 124.
36 Gallop, 124.
and the new triadic Symbolic Order. Metaphor is the trope of paternity, relying, as it does, on the Symbolic Order, embodying the Law of both the old and new cultures/countries, and expressing desire for the Other through its debt to the mother — metonym. Lacan states that:

> desire is situated in dependence on demand — which, by being articulated by signifiers, leaves a metonymic remainder that runs under it, an element that is not indeterminate, which is a condition both absolute and unapprehensible, an element necessarily lacking, unsatisfied, impossible, misconstrued... an element that is called desire.37

The expatriate writer uses both the similitude of the metonym and the substitutive qualities of the metaphor in order to express both a lack (insufficiency — an awareness of split subjectivity) and desire (the potential for wholeness — for a complete self and acceptance into a new Symbolic Order). The metonym, though it has only as much flexibility as the signifier it evokes because it already has a preconceived context — it moves within those parameters — still represents a movement from one signifier to another in an attempt to find meaning. In a metaphoric reading the mother/culture moves towards closure and the drawing of boundaries through substitution (replacing one set of words or images for another), and suppresses desire by both excluding the Other and requiring of the subject a resistance towards it. A metonymic interpretation of the nation as mother suggests the possibility of a link between the maternal and the paternal (at the familial and cultural levels) because the metonym has the ability to form connections without erasing the original meaning. Reading “mother”

metaphorically and metonymically allows, not only for the move from the subject's familial psychosocial development to her/his cultural development, it also draws attention to the "mother" as an ambivalent site. It also demonstrates the alienating internal forces that operate to construct the self originate both from the psychological domain and the wider (and external) cultural one. These forces ensure that the subject emerges through a type of conflictual recognition;\(^3^8\) a recognition of that which is not-the-self — the subject's counterpart. In recognising the other, the ego comes to identify the self because, as Marini explains, "the self is originally other".\(^3^9\)

The ego, alienated from the other as self or from the self as other, is soon integrated into the complex topography of the subject where language, the law of the Father, and the phallic signifier play the main roles and constitute the foundations of culture that creates man rather than nature.\(^4^0\)

The metonym can be understood within expatriate writing as a dynamic trope that is expressive of desire (including the desire for the maternal/paternal nation), within each new site of enunciation. The metaphor, on the other hand, becomes an assimilative device that pulls all signifiers (new and old) into an equivalence. The expatriate writer brings in the new to elaborate on the known or even occlude it behind unfamiliar imagery. In this sense, metaphor articulates the desire and search for the repressed Other through its accountability to the metonym. It embodies a recognition of the original psychogenetic split and the acquisition of the

\(^{3^8}\) Marini, 37.  
\(^{3^9}\) Marini, 37.  
\(^{4^0}\) Marini, 38.
Law. The metonym is often used to return (figuratively speaking) to the mother country. It forms a connection, and therefore, an often uneasy relationship between self and Other and the nation-dyad and the Other. Gilbert Chaitin describes the desire to connect as originating “from the experience of loss.” It is not only a signifier that always acknowledges the original lack or absence, but also the inscription of the first stage mother-dyad and second-stage subject/nation-dyad.

In a geopolitical and geo-psychological context the construction of the self and the national citizen as an homogenous identity is problematic. The nation does not acknowledge the split caused by the subject’s entry into the Symbolic Order. To do so would be to destabilise the political and cultural infrastructure which gives the nation a coherent identity both nationally (the citizen takes her/his identity from the national construct and returns an identity to it by being a recognisable part of the nation), and internationally (those that inhabit the nation — and leave it — are described as an homogenous part of it: as “Australian”). Nationality, as a representation of the Law-of-the-Father, allows the subject a legitimate speaking position. As the child adopts the father’s name and is given an authorised site of enunciation, the paternal metaphor can be used to

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42 According to Chaitin, in one seminar, Lacan describes metonymy as “supplementation.” Chaitin argues that: “Regardless of the name, the essential point is that the rhetorical process that interests Lacan involves substituting one thing for the lack of another, and in many texts the factor which introduces that lack ... is metonymy” (37).
position a speaker in relation to their “Mother” country as well. As François Regnault states, “the Name-of-the-Father is in fact a metaphor. One signifier is substituted for another”.43 A substitution occurs when the speaking “I” is signified as Australian. The term “Australian” becomes a patronymic, and as such valorises the speaking subject while at the same time restricting “him” to a limited discourse; one that is static, political, patriarchal and perpetuating a psychological dyadism.44

The psychological dyadism of the nation and the self can be read as an attempt to elide subjectivity and the split inheritance of the subject; yet these are never really elided, only repressed. So what would challenge this static speaking site, and what conditions/agencies might produce the possibility of moving beyond it and escaping the discursive clutch of this dyad? Through the application of Lacanian analysis, self and culture can be problematised. The paternal metaphor and its relationship to the Other provides a useful model for discussing the dynamics of individual identity within the nation-state, especially one that is itself split as a subject by a history of colonialism: where the sense of belonging/not-belonging and self/citizen, has always been contingent on an ultimately irreducible (to the other) Other.

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44 It is a political patria and a cultural matrix.
In historical terms, there has been a distinct shift in notions of Australian national/cultural identity that located the first Other internally (the land and its indigenes) and then shifted to external forms as the land and its natives became homogenised into a semblance of nation. When this occurred, the Other was displaced beyond national boundaries. During wars, for example, the Other was distinctly outside the geographical, political and imaginative nation and read as the negative side of the self/Other binary. In peace, however, the dichotomous relationship is not so neat. The balance shifts and the concept of an “Other” fragments and diversifies into internal O/others: migrants, refugees, tourists, for example, simultaneously excluding or including them as appropriate, according to identificatory needs and threats. When the Other is recognised as a colonial (M)other, a powerful locus of desire is set in operation that constitutes an aporic splitting within the subject as the M/Other is identified, not only in two different locales, but as both aspects of the self and its alien counterpart. There is an identification of the drive to secure unity while at the same time there is a more firmly realised alienation effect which directs desire outward into flux — it cannot be located. So while the ego is inextricably tied to home and notions of indigeneity from which the Other is sometimes (depending on where exactly the Other is located) excluded, there is still a repressed, and therefore unrecognised, desire for its efficacy as well. The dual relationships of I/home, subject/nation, mother/child
ultimately trap the participant in mutually defining configurations which, while essential to psychological growth, are finally unproductive and limiting.\textsuperscript{45}

In relation to the expatriated subject, the introduction of the Lacanian Law can be understood as occurring at two different stages of psychical development. The first "exposure" to the Law or Lacanian Other occurs around the age of eighteen months,\textsuperscript{46} and continues through adulthood but as a static, contained, and repressed process. At a cultural level, this process is enacted by expatriates when they first acknowledge their mother country and embrace the Laws of its language (mother-tongue), and the Laws of its society and culture, all of which are structured by and within the political (and, to an extent, imaginary) nation. When the adoption of a cultural Symbolic is assumed within one's mother country (as opposed to outside of it — in another country), I conceive of it as a recognition of the other (as distinct from, and different to, Lacan's Other), and, therefore, as a continuum of the dyadic phase of development.\textsuperscript{47} The Other, within the context of the nation, does not really exist, it is only ever an other (with a small "o" — another (m)other), because the nation homogenises national identities as "citizens" and in signifying the subjects as such, homogenises outsiders as non-nationals. As a production of unfillable desire, the Other

\textsuperscript{46} Lacan, \textit{Écrits}, 2.
\textsuperscript{47} The Imaginary stage and the production of a false vision/version of completion.
operates as an internal goal (maintaining total unity) as well as an external one (total outreach — desire located in the Other). What this suppression/denial of desire for the Other does is reformulate the Lacanian paradigm of the dyadic relationship; country of birth, one's native land ultimately equates to the mother-figure of the dyad and the subject/native the child-figure. What is being demanded by this dyadic relationship, but is left unspoken or repressed into unconscious realms, is rejection of any Other; of anything that could disturb the national ideological apparatus. However, as the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas recognised, this Other is still desired:

I can satisfy my needs more adequately by keeping to myself and the members of the in-group with which I am identified. And yet it is the expression of a desire... which transcends me and my self-centred categories. This desire is never satisfied, but it seems insatiable, and it feeds on itself.48

For the expatriate, the Other is the locus of desire, and can be read as that which exists outside those spheres of self and other: that is, subject and nation/ality/hood. The Other is defined by negation, as that which is not-of-this-Nation, not-Australian, not-self, not-other. It is outside with a capital O, as opposed to Inside. The Other, constructed by negation, poses a very real threat to the positivity of the self-and-other dyad. This dyad, reminiscent of the bond between mother and child must, in order to preserve its totality and identity, keep this Other out. So, in these terms, self and other have a tendency towards a type of psychological and physical stasis. Subjects can remain in one place and have their ego formed for them. They

gain subjectivity once they recognise and desire the phallus — the patriarchal nation and its associated laws — and desire to possess it. With the recognition and adaptation of place comes a pre-constituted identity, a secure site within society, nation, and even the world. This "secure" site is, however, only ever an illusion, a signifier which shifts according to the position of its signified and whoever reads its signification.

The preconstituted (false) identity that the subject is offered as an "Australian" is inseparable from a collective national one. An homogenous "Australian" identity assists, as Donald argues in broader, international terms, in the construction of the self. Sneja Gunew states that: "nationality is perceived as being the permanent and most worthy extension of ego."49 This is a point that Bill Ashcroft also concedes when he asks, "Why does the discourse of 'nation' stand for 'self'?... Because its own legitimacy remains an unexamined given... the oppositional and heterogeneous potential of a national literature inevitably ossifies into hegemonic formulations of nationalism".50 Possibly, Australia's post-colonial state, having been attained out of struggles against the colonial metropolis can never perceive of itself as a "natural unity" and, therefore, works harder to produce that false vision/version of unity in order to cover its anxiety, the unconscious recognition of its fractured state. There is evidence to suggest that this

unity" before an alien land and an alien people. The mass arrival of various ethnic groups (the Chinese in the 1850s and the refugees/migrants from the 1950s onwards) saw a similar construction or "shutting out" happening and the construction (or re-construction) of an overt nationalism to offset this (the White Australia Policy for example). Likewise, from the 1970s on, an "Aunt Sally" national structure was erected in response to the various minority discourses being produced and as an anti-imperial gesture towards England. The idea was to effect a cohesive national (male) voice that silenced the disruptive other ones.\textsuperscript{51} All of these different periods saw attempts to establish an homogenous Australian national identity based on oppositional cultural positions: on one side there are institutionalised cultural norms and on the other there are the influences deemed negative and disruptive that have been rejected and displaced outside the nation's symbolic boundaries. This has been the case with migrants who have come to Australia and who, whilst initially Other, have been reconfigured as other in order to erase any difference.

\textsuperscript{51} The films produced during the 1970s are examples of a national construction based on homogeneity and exclusion. The production of the Ocker, in films such as \textit{Stork} (1971), \textit{The Adventures of Barry McKenzie} (1972), and \textit{Alvin Purple} (1973) saw the emergence of the anti-intellectual, white, male comedic anti-hero, who became the stereotypical image of what it was to be Australian: non-ethnic, non-feminine, very sexual, "ratbag". The films were unabashedly vulgar and, as Graeme Turner puts it, "depended on a very specific definition of Australian-ness." Graeme Turner, \textit{Film as Social Practice (Second Edition)}, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 143. See also Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, \textit{The Screening of Australia: Anatomy of a National Cinema (Volume 2)}, Sydney: Currency Press, 1988, Chapter 3.
Whereas expatriation is a negotiated identity between the individual (who may see her/him self as a migrant to somewhere else) and the nation (which may choose to reject or claim a person living abroad), the migrant is positioned as a temporary presence within a dominant culture whose "orientation is towards a past nostalgically conceived of as a lost motherland and mother tongue". For the expatriate, neither the mother tongue or the motherland, are lost. In her book *Framing Marginality*, Sneja Gunew likens the migrant's condition of passing from one language order into another, to a *succession* of mirror-stages; in other words, a series of Imaginary Orders. Gunew defines language as: "not simply a linguistic system but the varieties of sign systems which constitute a particular cultural domain: behaviour, food, dress, and so on". Gunew then questions the kind of subjectivity that would be created when the subject is forced to enter another Symbolic Order. Where Gunew concentrates on dyadic formations in relation to non-English speaking migrants, this thesis will examine the various triadic relationships between subject/ivities, nation/alities, and country/ies that evolve through expatriation. Through her fiction, the female expatriate writer examines the blurring of boundaries, the fragmentation of experience and identity, while often, at the same time, ironically, having her protagonists move towards unity, order and wholeness.

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53 Gunew, 7.
54 Gunew, *Framing Marginality*, 114.
55 Donald, 40.
The similarity of the migrant situation to expatriation requires acknowledgment; however, the psychological and spatial ramifications are, in many instances extraordinarily diverse and this diversity appears to originate in the primary sites of identification. Whereas Gunew situates Australia paternally, “as the father or third term which disrupts the mother-child dyad,” she also states that, “Australia’ is never located in the pre-symbolic.” In relation to expatriates, the premise of this thesis is that whilst “Australia” first functions paternally, as a signifier of the Law and disruption, it is ultimately relocated in the pre-symbolic as a maternal figure. So Australia is finally acknowledged ambivalently as both maternal and paternal. The expatriates’ relocation is often, ironically, a flight to the maternal — a maternal that is ultimately repositioned as paternal. In relation to the subject, Australia is identified in expatriate fiction as an ambivalent site: it is dyadic and limiting, but because of its dual function as both a representation of the cultural Imaginary and the Symbolic Registers, it is also a disabling and fragmented construction that, in global terms, invites/repels encounters. Like Gunew’s migrant writers, expatriate Australian writers offer “other constructions of Australia”, those that are formulated outside the Australian nation-dyad and within, or under the influence of, a different Symbolic Order. The expatriate is in the enviable

56 Gunew, 118-19. The expatriate’s writing is expressive of a struggle between resisting the national frame and using it.
57 There is a double political/cultural affiliation and the Second World split of two “mother” countries operating: one is a political “father” and the other a cultural “mother” (for example, Britain).
58 Gunew, 130.
situation of being able to choose — of deliberately disturbing generic boundaries and classifications and of selecting dynamism over stasis. The expatriate can also choose whether or not to embrace the Laws of the new country and turn a critical eye back on their mother country, reconstituting desire within themselves and their fiction, including that which the national construction seeks to exclude.

It is interesting to consider the expatriate as somehow confirming standard aspects of national identity (that is, the popular construction reminiscent of the 1970s films and literature that sites the national subject as non-conformist) by perceptions her/him as a rebel. Yet, by disrupting cultural, linguistic, geographical, and imaginative boundaries, the expatriate writer, in one sense, confirms them by playing out the role of the apolitical quester: she/he simultaneously acknowledges and breaks those boundaries by moving through and beyond them. By fictively reconstructing this movement, or series of movements, the expatriate writer acknowledges the country s/he has temporarily left and her/his new nation, reconstructing the old cultural binarisms in innovative and dynamic ways. The topography and psychopathology expatriate writers imaginatively deploy in their fiction seek to plot subjectivity (including a cultural identity or lack of) between the familiar old spaces of Australia and the mysterious new ones they have encountered, thus creating what some writers have called a "doubleness of
vision”. In a sense, the expatriate subject consciously adopts a split identity and confirms the originary alienated self/Other as an “authentic” self. Bill Ashcroft is accurate in his contention that “Literature has always seem[ed] to its advocates to be an unparalleled disseminator of cultural difference and national identity... ‘Nation’ as a term is radically connected with ‘native’. We are born into relationships which are typically settled in place”. However, literature or the imagination do not construct the nation so much as they reinforce its previously established boundaries. If this is so, and I believe it is, then Australia (and the other countries the expatriate inhabits, which signify the Other and, therefore, represent the point of desire that both fuels and eludes the quest for self-realisation), relies as much on expatriate literature for its formation as it does on that which is produced inside its borders: they all actively and heterogeneously seek to define versions of the self – the individual and her/his relationship to the mother country and the Other. These various literary interpretations are influenced by desire: the desire to represent the subject’s socio-cultural, imaginative, and familial relationships.

According to the Lacanian scheme, desire is founded on the absence or privation of its object: the object always being the unattainable O/other.

60 Ashcroft, 148. (My emphasis)
Desire is that which is manifested in the interval that demand hollows within itself, in as much as the subject, in articulating the signifying chain, brings to the light the want-to-be, together with the appeal to receive the complement from the Other, if the Other, the locus of speech is also the locus of this want or lack.\(^\text{61}\) Desire is forever prevented from being consciously articulated so, whilst desire is structured like a language, in that it “works by precise combination of signifiers that constitute meaning”,\(^\text{62}\) it is never spoken by the subject as it has been forever cast into unconscious realms. Despite this, desire still “undermines conscious activity; it speaks through demand, operating as its underside or margin”.\(^\text{63}\) As Lacan states:

Desire is situated in dependence on demand — which, by being articulated in signifiers, leaves a metonymic remainder that runs under it, an element that is not indeterminable, which is the condition of both, absolute and unapprehensible, an element necessarily lacking, unsatisfied, impossible, misconstrued, an element that is called desire.\(^\text{64}\)

Desire is, in effect, insatiable and always “an effect of the Other, an ‘other’ with whom it cannot engage, in so far as the Other is not a person but a place, the locus of law, language, and the Symbolic”.\(^\text{65}\) It is at this point that the child must locate itself within language in order to become a speaking subject. Whereas the subject previously conceived of itself as a gestalt, or “whole” being, the Symbolic phase destroys this phantasy by introducing language to the subject and therefore exposing a wider world of

\(^{61}\) Lacan, Écrits, 263.


signification. Between them, desire and language function to position the subject as always divided: “Desire thus institutes a new relation to and in language”. In other words, the subject can only be located through discourse — subjectivity is determined only in the Symbolic Order — by what the subject speaks, by what is spoken of the subject, and the way in which the subject is “spoken”. Lacan states that:

The subject is born in so far as the signifier emerges in the field of the Other. But, by this very fact, this subject — which, was previously nothing if not a subject coming into being — solidifies into a signifier. The subject, as a part of the Symbolic Order, is forever objectified to itself by the Other. The Other who speaks “precedes the subject and speaks about the subject before his birth. Thus the Other is the first cause of the subject” and is, as Juliet Flower MacCannell says, “the locus not of the moderation but of the deepening of alienation and dispossesssion”.

The Other, as the first cause of the subject, is that which also alienates her/him by forcing the subject to first acknowledge the fact that s/he is divided and then turning her/him into a signifier whose meaning changes according to its location on the signifying chain. Desire, however, operates in such a way that it generates objectified “others” through which the subject can realise her/him self. Desire hovers at the periphery of the

69 Flower MacCannell, 156.
familial and national dyad and is ultimately what drives the subject and her/his affiliations, arising as it does out of the original split between the self and the other. As Henry Sullivan states:

Desire is... also a principle of structuration in the genesis of the subject. It points to that void or real in human existence around which interpretation in the registers of the imaginary and/or symbolic grows up. Desire-as-lack, in other words, is contributory to human representation and the making of meaning. The adventure of making meaning of their existence-as-lack is what drives human populations to fashion imaginary and symbolic representations into the uneasy cohesiveness of culture.70 Desire, then, plays a dominant role within the subject, dictating the dynamics of her/his public and private relationships. The psychogenesis of desire in the subject occurs when the Imaginary phase metamorphoses into the Symbolic phase. In the Imaginary phase demand, literally “I want”, dominates and, whilst this demand initiates the subject into the terms of discourse, it does not give her/him a speaking site; this does not occur until the next stage, the Symbolic, when desire is constituted within the subject. Desire is integral to the structuration of the subject and occurs within the subject as a lack, influencing all subsequent relations s/he has.

Expatriates can be reconfigured as being more “aware” of this psychic fracture. Their movement away from their nation-home can be productively read as an endeavour to interpret the individual and cultural Imaginary and Symbolic Orders beyond the terms that have been prescribed for them

and as a rejection of the “uneasy cohesiveness” they have been offered. Arguably, the expatriate is more aware of the primal and cultural fracturing of the subject (even if s/he cannot articulate it overtly), and is more prone to requiring Otherness for self-identification. By giving themselves a malleable positionality, expatriate writers are able to play fictively with notions of identity, self and Otherness in order to re-establish boundaries as a condition of knowledge and of identity.71 Australian literature (and Australian culture) is characterised by the dialectic between those that move outside or originate from beyond its geopolitical and imaginary borders — those that move away in order to make other meaning/s of their existence.

In the terms of national discourse the repressed presence of the Other and acknowledged presence of the other (the mother/father nation), satisfies the subject’s needs and creates an illusion of belonging. All the time, however, the subject is split:

... the subject as such is uncertain because he is divided by the effects of language. Through the effects of speech, the subject always realises himself more in the Other, but he is already pursuing there more than half of himself. He will simply find his desire ever more divided, pulverized, in the circumscribable metonymy of speech. The effects of language are always mixed with the fact, which is the basis of analytical experience, that the subject is subject only from being subjected to the field of the Other, the subject proceeds from this synchronic subjection in the field of the Other. That is why he must get out, get himself out, and in the getting-himself-out, in the end, he will know that the

71 Donald, 37.
real Other has, just as much as himself, to get himself out, to pull himself free.\(^72\)

The expatriate writer willingly ruptures the dyad of nation/home/self/culture in order to move into the next psychoanalytical phase of induction: the Symbolic, or the Other — and towards a different set of Laws. These Laws, however, because they are not articulated in the name of the subject's father (on behalf of or to reinforce his or her nationality), are not conceived of, in the initial stages, as patriarchal, but maternal. Nonetheless, the Laws do assist in constructing, for the subject, another version of the self in relation to, not only the other, but the Other as well, hence the triplenness of perspective: that of self, other, and Other, producing a subject that is both always alienated and voluntarily separated from the nation-dyad and the national self.

Throughout his work, Lacan discusses and distinguishes between the states of alienation and separation. Alienation is a state that the subject is inevitably heir to. No speaking subject can avoid a sense of alienation as it is a legacy of language. Separation, however, is a choice. The urge to separate occurs in the subject because of a desire to separate from the signifying chain and the realisation that subjectivity can be located in the Other.\(^73\)


That is why he must get out, get himself out, and in the getting-himself-out, in the end, he will know that the real Other has, just as much as himself, to get himself out or pull himself free.\textsuperscript{74}

It is, of course, desire that makes separation from the signifying chain possible. The subject who is lacking a sense of being and who wants to be is the subject that will choose to separate from those systems or codes which (covertly) represent her/him. Yet, as Colette Soler admits, “not every subject suffers from his or her own lack”.\textsuperscript{75} All subjects experience alienation but not all desire (or choose) separation from the signifying chain: the primal cultural Symbolic. The expatriate is, however, one subject who separates from her/his nation dyad in order to discover that which lies beyond the other and so establish a dynamic relationship between the self, the national/cultural other and the yet-to-be-identified Other. What the expatriate uncovers throughout her/his journey is the psychological and physical value of the “vacillation between petrification and indeterminacy, petrification by the signifier and indeterminacy within the slippage of meaning”.\textsuperscript{76} It is in this ambivalent space, where the slippage of meaning occurs that, I contend, the liminal discourse of the expatriate commences.

It should now be clear that I have moved beyond Lacan’s position of two distinct planes which, while they overlap, also delineate hierarchised stages of psychosocial development. In terms of the subject’s national and/or

\textsuperscript{74} Lacan, quoted in Soler, 49.  
\textsuperscript{75} Soler, 50.  
\textsuperscript{76} Soler, 48.
cultural identity, the paradigm of the Lacanian triad, despite its endless chain of signifiers and the unconscious role of desire in the inception of this triad, inevitably ossifies into another dyad. This is a point Lacan himself concedes when he states that language (itself a metaphor for the Symbolic Order) does not give the subject the ability to know s/he is sited, and therefore legitimated only through the Other’s desire:

This secondary subordination [the diachronic or temporal idea of the subject] not only closes the effect of the first [the synchronic fixed notion of the subject] in projecting the topology of the subject into the instant of fantasy; it seals it, refusing to allow the subject of desire to realize that he [sic] is an effect of speech, in other words, that he is but the Other’s desire.77

So desire, that which unconsciously drives the subject, has been reformed into another dyadic structure in order to perpetuate and secure the political apparatus of nationhood; ultimately it is what the subject desires: to be a legitimate part of that discourse. Even if the subject becomes aware of the Other, it is often in such negative terms and is such a threat to the structure of that which it is so intrinsically a part, that the subject turns its gaze inwards and enjoys the stability and stasis of the nation dyad. This process is generally enacted by tourists who, while both aware of and curious about the Other adopt a position of voyeur/critic; they remain on the inside of their own nation dyad, regardless of the place they are in, and gaze outwards, evaluating difference as absolutely alien, and thus reaffirming the idea of the self as privileged, whole, and knowing.

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Expatriates reject the limitations of the nation when they undertake separation: the voluntary movement away from the second-stage familial and political dyadic structure. In a sense, one could argue that, expatriates become aware of the Other, but instead of simply turning their gaze back towards their own, they also look out and perceive a new set of Laws which they, in turn, desire to possess. It could also be argued that they somehow recognise the artificial security (the nation cannot really suppress desire) offered by the second-stage dyad, and wish to experience that proffered by the Other. This would also account for the more personal reasons for relocating: the idea of a search for the self, the individual quest. The ego has not been satisfactorily formed within the nation-dyad, and it desires the addition of Other Laws in order to develop.

It is important to understand that, unlike their exilic counterparts, expatriates do not have to reject the second dyadic structure; they may choose to, but the decision is not forced upon them, nor is it irrevocable. In some individual cases, such as Hazzard, relocation was an inevitable result of dependency (she was sixteen years old and obliged to accompany her parents). This, however, does not alter the value of the cross-cultural encounters enacted in expatriate fiction nor does it radically change the psychopathology of the subjects' social and cultural adjustments. Regardless of the motivation for expatriation, for the expatriate subject the integration
into a new culture and new set of Laws must initially be contemplated from the outside and from the security of an unreleased dyadic position (not unlike the tourist). Where the exile is forced into conflict, the expatriate is not. S/he can choose to remain on the outside and simply gaze in, or alternately and more productively, s/he can utilise the second-stage dyadic relationship s/he has with her/his "home" country in order to re/establish dialogues with the new country — ones that are informed by the old.

The link between the "old" country and the "new" can be seen in the difficulties and tensions surrounding the acquisition of a new language. It becomes a case of the mother tongue versus the unaccustomed patriarchal (phallic, as a signifier of desire) tongue. Even if the received language is English (including American or British English) it is still contextualised. The "new" language is informed by another Symbolic Order and, therefore, has fresh cultural, ideological, and imaginative associations. The acquisition of a new language, or part thereof, indicates that signifiers will substitute continually for each other, rupturing the borders between old and new sites as words learnt from the primal lexicon are metaphorically and metonymically projected on to the new, maintaining a Lacanian linearity. Desire will, once more, inspire and move the subject; signifiers will no longer reflect each other, as they did in the original nation-dyad, in a repressed chain of meaning.
Expatriation is sometimes perceived as being analogous to the severing of the umbilical cord and the expatriate to a (libidinally?) resistant child deserting its family. Yet the very nature of expatriatism does not suggest closure: the way home, while it may have been altered, is always open. Embodied in the term itself is a motion backwards as much as it is forwards and it is this, I contend, that causes the greatest amount of disturbance. Expatriation, like the literary tropes employed in its numerous narratives, is not a static concept. It is the subject’s quest to seek the Other, but in turn it is also a quest to evaluate the self: it is as much a psychological journey as it is a physical one. It is my assertion that expatriate discourses, with their explicit interest in the movement between (and to and from), any static spheres and their subversive use of “authentic” literary tropes, are antithetical to and disturb any patriarchal concepts of nation. Graeme Turner writes that, “the process of ‘nationalisation’ at its most definitive, is unsurprisingly masculine”,78 however, the expatriate writers’ concern with the fluid and dynamic as opposed to the static and corporeal suggest otherwise. Within their narratives, the nation is both maternal and paternal. It is the flexibility of this positionality that leads me to posit that these narratives can be defined as peculiarly feminine.

Expatriation both recognises and denies nationality/nation. It rejects its repressed femininity and “masculine” stasis through its movement away,

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yet once space has been negotiated and an Other place reached, the expatriate writer enters into a dialogue with her or his country of birth, acknowledging that country's maternal precedence over her/him while at the same time subverting it. As Luce Irigaray suggests:

... it may be necessary for the daughter to give up the mother as haven, refuge and shelter. In exchange for this apparent [my emphasis] loss, the daughter may, for the first time, be able to relate to the mother as a woman.79

This occurs again when the expatriate returns; the influence of a new set of Laws (that received from the adopted country/ies) cannot be ignored and ultimately affects the subject's reintegration within her/his native land. The initiated dialogue continues, allowing expatriates a heterogeneous perspective that is possibly/potentially denied to those subjects who still interact within the terms dictated by the second-stage dyad. These dialogues, informed as they are by a two-part continually overlapping dyadic/triadic relationship, are expressed in the narratives of Australian expatriate writers. It is in their fictive compositions that this dialogue can be most clearly heard and metaphorically and metonymically expressed.

A useful term for the consideration of expatriate fictions; one that acknowledges the patriarchal structures that first informs them, and celebrates the feminine movement that now continually redefines them, is Femination. A more appropriate way of writing this term, one that reveals

the rupturing and rewriting of borders that expatriate fiction consummates, is:

\[
\text{Femi} \quad \text{nation}
\]

This algorithm expresses, in a more precise manner, what I claim expatriate fiction, particularly (but not exclusively) that which is written by women, moves towards accomplishing. The \textit{Femi} represents the feminine, the fluid, the dynamic. It also reveals the position of the maternal as the originary and final site of enunciation by being placed above the nation. This algorithm also expresses a triadic relationship. The broken line symbolises the subject who is always split; the nation equates to the nation-dyad, the primal identificatory site. The \textit{Femi} represents the triad, or Symbolic Order of the Other which, because it is located \textbf{through} the primal site, remains dynamic. These terms are all diagrammatically distinct from each other; the subject is situated between the two primary sites of the other (nation) and the Other (\textit{Femi}), pictorially representing the choice of separation and disassociation that the expatriate enacts. The broken line also symbolises the flexibility and potential movement \textbf{between} that the two terms, \textit{nation} and \textit{Femi}, signify — it is a threshold — a frontier. The --- is both a line and is not a line. It is linear, suggesting endless possibilities, implying also Lacan's signifying chain of language and desire; yet its very state, a \textbf{broken} line, subverts any essentialism suggested either by the term \textit{Femi} or \textit{nation}; the two terms are not there to totalise but to suggest dynamism as opposed to stasis. The nation, with a small "n" symbolises the first and second stage
dyadic relationships that the subject must experience in order to move beyond and within the concept of nation and enter into a dialogue with it. The lower position of “nation” in the algorithm suggests at once its secondary but cthonic situation at any enunciatory phase, yet the broken line also indicates that “nation” too can move between and influence speaking sites. Nation may be a masculinist discourse, yet it is necessary to appropriate it in order to legitimate the disruption to its authority caused by discourses of expatriation: Femination. This move is deliberate because, as Gallop states:

One can effectively undo authority only from the position of authority, in a way that exposes the illusions of that position *without renouncing it*, so as to permeate the position itself with connotations of its illusoriness, so as to show that *everyone*, including the “subject presumed to know”, is castrated.\(^8^0\)

The entire algorithm of *Femination* also acknowledges the importance of metaphor and metonym as unconscious and conscious tropes of meaning: tropes that, within expatriate narratives, move between speaking positions. Metonym, in the maternal/paternal discourse of Australia/nation crosses the threshold to influence other/Other enunciatory positions. Metaphor, while functioning primarily in the Symbolic Register (new or old), moves disturbingly between positions, as well as articulating the lack in nation and the desire implicit in *Femi*. In this sense, neither literary device is static and fully engages in the dynamics of expatriate discourses.

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\(^{80}\) Gallop, 21.
*Femination* is a word that expresses in both its appearance and meaning the absolute liminality of the expatriate who stands at the border of numerous polarities, turning their inherent singularity into polyvocity. *Femination* expresses not only the subversive power of feminine discourse, but its integrity too.

To speak as woman means to undo the reign of the 'proper' — the proper name, property, propriety, self-proximity. It means to evoke rather than designate, to overflow and exceed all boundaries and oppositions. It involves speaking from a position in the middle of the binaries (the so-called position of the 'excluded middle'), affirming both poles while undoing their polarisation. To speak with meanings that resonate, that are tactile and corporeal as well as conceptual, that reverberate in their plurality and polyvocity.81

Throughout this thesis, I argue that this is what the fiction of the expatriate writers, Charmian Clift, Shirley Hazzard, and Glenda Adams, sets out to achieve. The women writers I have chosen represent those writers, both male and female, who endeavour to express the liminality of the expatriate situation, the politicisation, the alienation, the ambivalence of the search for Other and self, within their narratives. Drawing on the discursive model of *Femination*, which is not meant to be reductively totalising, as well as drawing on other theoretical sources, I will analyse selected texts. It is recognised that such a theory, like most, will not neatly describe every type of discourse that is available to female or male expatriate writers. As Graham Huggan suggests:

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81 Gallop, 132.
Australian literature, like any national literature, is not an homogenous entity: its narratives and counter-narratives cut across one another, creating a series of contradictory readings that continually redefine the meaning of home.82

It is hoped, however, that *Femination*, as a theory for the liminal discourse of the expatriate, will provide a useful and productive strategy for the reading (and re-reading) of texts which have, in the past, been excluded from consideration as mainstream “Australian” narratives, and assist in their (re)integration into Australian literary history.

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CHAPTER TWO

TRAVELOGRAPHY — THE DISCOURSE OF SELF-BEGETTING: CHARMIAN CLIFT’S MERMAID SINGING.

Among the red and golds and the drifting smoke of a familiar London afternoon I was haunted by crippled men in seamen's caps, by shrill sad voices of singing girls.¹

Here we have our present age... bent on the extermination of myth. Man today, stripped of myth, stands famished among all his pasts and must dig frantically for roots, be it among the most remote antiquities.²

If I cry my beloved country, what country is it, and how shall I cry it?³

Prior to her death in 1969, Charmian Clift had developed a reputation as one of Australia’s most popular essayists.⁴ Whilst the essay was her most successful narrative mode, Clift also wrote across a range of other generic structures including fiction, travel writing, and television screen plays.⁵ Her two travel books, Mermaid Singing⁶ and Peel Me A Lotus,⁷ are distinct from

¹ Clift, Charmian, Mermaid Singing, Pymble: Angus and Robertson, 1992, 15. All further quotes are from this edition and will be annotated in the text of the thesis.
⁷ Charmian Clift, Peel Me A Lotus, Pymble: Angus and Robertson, 1992.
her other work in that Clift chooses not only herself as a subject, but her expatriation as well. The autobiographical and "documentary" style of these books also sets them apart from the fiction of Hazzard and Adams and provides a different perspective on the theme that is common to all the texts: expatriation. Both *Mermaid Singing* and *Peel Me A Lotus* explore encounters between different cultures from the point of view of the nomadic outsider and describe, from this exterior locality, a multitude of thresholds that are crossed, broken, reaffirmed, and blurred. They also describe, metaphorically and metonymically, the search for the self through separation from the primal national/cultural Symbolic.

Clift enacts this separation in order to both address the impossible doubleness that the nation requires of her (different from the collective but, because of the cultural Symbolic, positioned as the same), and to search for that lost, pure, authentic self beyond the borders of the nation-dyad. To seek, however, is also to lose, "for seeking presupposes a separation between seeker and sought, the continuing me and the changes it undergoes".8 Her search for a unified self is doomed from the outset because what she hopes to realise (the "pure" self), is, according to Lacan, a fantasy. In Clift’s work (and that of Hazzard and Adams), this knowledge hovers at the periphery of the texts as a form of desire, maintaining the narrative’s dynamic and the slippage of meaning. For Clift, Hazzard, and Adams, it is the idea of the

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impure or split self that is recognised as authentic: an ambivalent identity that vacillates between the nationally constructed (pure) self and desire for the Other (which locates the subject as both incomplete and alienated). Within Clift's travelographies, the motif of the journey functions metonymically as the search for the self and its consequent discoveries, which are then articulated as a series of dialogic tensions between the self and Other and "here" and "there". For both the writer and the reader of these texts, the expatriate's journey/search plays a dynamic role in the production of meaning. Clift's search also serves as an introduction to the fiction of Hazzard and Adams whose protagonists seek, through various means, to find their "real" (split) self as well.

Charmian Clift was born in the New South Wales coastal town of Kiama in 1923. Kiama at that time was a fairly remote and insignificant place where the beach was, as Clift states, both her "nursery and her playground." Her parents were relatively unconventional which meant that she was able to make choices about her own life and the directions she would take; choices that were unavailable to other young women at that time. Clift worked variously at business school, as a garage hand, and even commenced training as a nurse, thereby beginning to push at traditional gender roles and locate herself at the fringes of society. The inability to stay with a

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particular occupation was a feature of Clift's youth and indicated a restlessness and even a conflict within her that was to influence her later years as well. She states:

I wanted to get out into the big bad world and do — I didn't know what I wanted to do, but like most kids with any sort of creative ability I wanted it to be big, I wanted it to be enormous, I wanted to see the world, I wanted to do something, I didn't know what, better than anyone else could do.11

A cash prize for first place in a beauty contest gave Clift the opportunity to seek her fame in Sydney; however, this adventure was short-lived. It is now revealed that it was during her time in Sydney, whilst working as an usherette at the Minerva Theatre, that Clift fell pregnant, gave birth, and then, as was the practice in the early 1940's, nursed her baby for two weeks before giving it up for adoption. Clift named the child Jennifer. It was only after this short bond had been established that she signed the papers that released her daughter for adoption.12 Clift's illegitimate pregnancy positioned her, once again, at the margins of staid 1940s Australian society. On the one hand, she was the rebellious sexually free young woman trapped into a situation by her biological functions; on the other she was a shamed outcast who "for all her unconventionality ...was inculcated with the correct forms."13 Clift gave up her child and, from a psychoanalytical point of view,
this separation, whilst voluntary, consumed Clift with guilt\textsuperscript{14} and played a part in her quest for selfhood.

Clift's quest involved adopting a variety of roles. These roles or models were projected on to her by both her own idea of her "self" and the demands of Australian culture of which, despite her resistance, she was so intrinsically a part. She sought to conform to society's ideas of the Australian feminine stereotype; roles that were analogous to her own construction of herself as "pagan," the model, the potential filmstar, the athletic, strong and golden beach girl. All of these paradigms simultaneously objectified her as a particular cultural signifier of Australianess and reinforced her own conception of herself as the unconventional beauty: "And I worked for a year, wearing a trailing gown, purple lipstick, black eyes and long scarlet finger nails."\textsuperscript{15} In Australian cultural terms, Clift's overt paganism located her outside dominant gender and cultural ideologies; yet there is also evidence to suggest that she sought belonging within the same forms that rejected her.\textsuperscript{16} Whilst the Australian cultural Symbolic was providing Clift with a unified image (woman, mother, citizen), she was consciously fragmenting these imagos through her performative rejection of them. Her rapid substitution of one role for another functions as a metaphor for desire: her desire to find wholeness.

\textsuperscript{14} Chick, 242.
\textsuperscript{15} Tolchard, 26.
\textsuperscript{16} Chick, 38-9.
Despite her previous unsuccessful attempts at fame in the artistic world, Clift, ironically, found a temporary niche in the army which encouraged her creative talents by commissioning her, moving her to Melbourne, and giving her the Ordinance Corps Magazine to edit. Clift's enlistment in the army can be read in two ways. Firstly, it functioned as a form of recovery after the adoption of her child. It was a way of removing herself from the undisciplined and bohemian environment of the theatrical circles of Sydney and placing herself within a structure that had very defined and disciplined roles for each soldier. Secondly, it was a role totally counterposed to, not only the maternal one she had consciously rejected, but also the previous socially validated feminine representations of Australia. The army signified both an acceptance of nationalistic/cultural conformity and resistance to it. By joining the army, Clift once again positions herself as a figure of excess. She is the ultimate companion, the ideal "mate" in the masculine/sexual sense of the word. She embodies notions of Australian mateship and patriotism by enlisting in the defence force, yet as a prominent pagan and intellectual figure, she also subverts any nationalistic discourse that may be operating. Her "mateship' is counteracted by her overt sexuality: she is still the transgressive female moving in the masculine space of the uniform(ed) defence forces. This idea of transgression is manifested when she eschews her fiancé for the journalist George Johnston.\(^{17}\) Clift's posting to Melbourne

\(^{17}\) Kinnane, 75-6.
facilitated her meeting with Johnston and her eventual employment on the *Argus* newspaper. What followed was a tempestuous few months culminating in their, by this time, very public affair, her sacking from the *Argus*, and his subsequent resignation from the same paper.

Both Clift and Johnston felt frustrated at the narrowness of their newspaper colleagues and embarrassed by the infamy they had earned in Melbourne. They desired a change, and at that point in their lives, Sydney seemed to offer it. Johnston's biographer, Garry Kinnane says that Melbourne "...was not their spiritual home: George had outgrown it, Charmian had never belonged to it. They needed a looser, freer environment in which to start afresh".18

There is literary evidence to suggest that it was not only Melbourne that made Clift and Johnston feel restricted and alienated, but the pervasive social and cultural atmosphere of Australia as a whole. In *Clean Straw for Nothing*, Johnston uses a dialogue between Meredith and his journalist companions to express the dreariness that had descended upon post-war Australia.

It is this country that they blame. It is something they see as rotten in the fabric of Australia that has soured them. One night a while back when Jefferson was building up to one of his diatribes he began glaring around and thumping his fist on his

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18 Kinnane, 88.
thigh. “What the hell has gone wrong with this bloody country?” he furiously wanted to know. “What’s happened in just a couple of years to the blokes you knew? We’ve turned into a race of pimps and bludgers and philistines and racketeers! But, Jesus, we weren’t like that in the war... .They [the “blokes”] thought about things. They believed in things. They had ideals...” Well. Jefferson had reasons enough for bitterness: and there is this feeling of suffocation, of smothering under some soggy heavy blanket of timid conformity and dullness and worthwhile values twisted awry, and a kind of belief, or hope, that no other climate can be quite so stifling as this. This feeds the native sense of isolation, that torturing affliction of feeling too far away from where anything important is happening, lost on the hidden undercurve of the world. So there is much talk of striking off overseas.19

Similar feelings of suffocation and ordinariness that Johnston describes here drove many other Australian artists of that era to expatriation: Patrick White, summed up his feelings of alienation in his now famous dictum “the great Australian emptiness”; Barry Humphries created Dame Edna Everage as a vehicle to satirise the averageness of the suburbs and Australian life; Peter Porter, Clive James, Jill Ker Conway, Germaine Greer, Cedric and Pat Flower, Sidney Nolan, Peter Finch, Sumner Locke Eliot and many others, have all given testimony to what Johnston articulates in Clean Straw For Nothing.20 Clift herself stated in her essay “On Being a Home-Grown Migrant” that “Sydney suburbia appears to be as stupifyingly dull as it was fifteen years ago.”21 It was as though the united eagerness of a nation

21 Clift, Trouble in Lotus Land, 102.
under threat from war and which later attained international alliances and respect, regressed (for these artists at least), into a cultural and social vacuum. Clift unites her feelings about Australia with the reasons for her expatriation, citing them as arising, not only out of the perceived monotony of life in Australia, but also out of her own desire for the Other:

We left for England in 1950. At that time I left Australia, I wanted desperately to leave. I didn't like Australia a bit. It had to me that very nasty feeling of post-war, I thought it was money-grubbing and greedy, all the values I thought were important didn't seem to be there any more. Besides, also, I still had that childhood ambition to go further and see more, and whatever the big thing was, it wasn't here in Australia for me, I knew that then.22

This clearly articulates Clift's desire for the Other, a desire that her Lacanian nation-dyad has failed to repress. Clift is driven by a range of forces to search. It is her desire for the Other which drives her search for meaning and which forces her to substitute other nation-supplied objects (house, money, cultural and gendered imagos) in order to defer this desire and prevent self-division. It is only by being desired that a subject can achieve a sense of being, and this desire — that which both divides and drives the subject — originates in the Other.23 Clift attempts to conform to society's standards and mores while continuing to redefine herself as an individual by becoming a liminal figure: she is both the new woman seeking equity and recognition (the army officer, the journalist), and a victim of

22 Foster, 60.
post-war puritanism (wife, mother). Toni Burgess, Clift’s closest friend, states that,

... she went on to do the other things society expected of women. She married. She had children. Women were expected to marry, to breed and to be good mothers. When the marriage turned bad, she stayed with it.24

Within Clift the unrealisable doubleness of the nation-dyad becomes manifest. Clift adopts the role of the tragic heroine who is pushed to the limits both by and on behalf of the national dyadic collective and, therefore, fluctuates between a sense of division (the Other) and artificial wholeness (the nation), without being able to articulate or acknowledge the split. Clift is compelled, because of the conflicting states of alienation and integration operating within and outside her and her desire to recognise these diametrically opposed conditions, to leave her nation-dyad and “find” her self.

Clift’s first move away from the nation-dyad is to England, Australia’s mother country, keeping her, in cultural terms, within a familial relationship. Johnston describes their expatriation as only beginning once they left England, despite the fact they were there for over four years:

After ten years of expatriation... fifteen if you count the London time. No, ten is more precise. The London time was more like a state of suspended animation, suspended agitation if you like, at the end of a long broom, ten thousand miles long... .25

24 Chick, 243.
25 Kinnane, 225.
England is not the Other for Clift; it simply mirrors the Laws learnt in her mother country, Australia. Clift remains trapped in the dyadic ellipsis of mother/country and child/native; though this time the relationship also carries a further complication by placing her inside the centre/margin colonial/colonist dichotomy. This sense of being confined is reflected in Clift's perceptions of her situation at this time:

I liked England, I was very happy in London, excepting that again there was a feeling of being bound and constrained... and I felt that I was an outsider looking in, never part of it, never part of the London I wanted to be a part of, because I wasn't free... also, in a sort of sense, in some peculiar sense, I felt at that time I was losing my identity completely, I wasn't quite sure who I was... .

As a product of the colonial margins and a middle-class woman, Clift would only ever be allowed to adopt the position of child, observing the "adults" at play, but never able to actively join them. Clift, is prevented from receiving the English version of the Law because, as a "child" of Australia she is regarded as incapable of successful possession because she is psychologically and chronologically (as a colonial child) unprepared.

The imperial/patriarchal nature of the relationship a colonised subject forms with the country that colonised it, can, in some instances, effectively prevent any form of ego development beyond that which has already been prescribed as authentic by either the colonising country or its colonial subordinate. Desire for the Other is not automatic, it may or may not be present in the

Kinnane, 225.
subject. Many Australian expatriate artists, such as Clive James, Peter Porter, Ray Lawler, Alan Moorehead, and Germaine Greer, found England to their liking. Stephen Alomes notes that the "colonial-imperial relationship of Australia as a settler colony to Britain created a historic and demographic context for expatriation." Peter Porter writes that so long as artists born in the colony could think of themselves as 'British' and regard a passage to Britain as the most natural thing in the world, and Britain itself as the obvious referent for their work and their values... for many [other] Australians the notion of expatriation in shifting to Britain would have been nonsense, since their move would have seemed to them a return and not an exile.

Subjectivity/ies can only be achieved through recognition and association with the Other: for Clift, an Australian and child of the Empire, England was not that Other, it was simply a greater version of the Australian other. For Clift the move to England was merely a "return", hence her feelings of loss, of lack of identity; her ego was being subsumed by the bigger mother (England). Porter describes this feeling of incongruity as a Janus-faced ambiguity. At this time Clift was simultaneously in an all-consuming relationship with her own children: the phallus, the signifier of desire and Otherness, was effectively, in terms of individual, cultural, and even political identity, shut out. Clift was being defined in and against both the colonial Mother and her role as mother. Both of these relationships enact

27 Soler, 50-51.
29 Porter, 135.
30 Porter, 135.
31 By this stage in her marriage, Clift had two children, Martin and Shane.
the parent/child dichotomy and have Clift slipping between the authoritative role of parent and the subordinate role of cultural/colonial child. In relation to England, she is “a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite.”

The fact that Clift had no literary output of her own during her time in England further exemplifies the notion of stasis and the repression of desire that the English Mother encompassed. The sense of being constrained arose not only out of her dual role as parent/child, but also through her fictive collaborations with Johnston which again situated her as a literary child and potential rival and limited her own creative output. She was, as Chick states, “a satellite to her husband’s sun.” This situation appears to have been unacceptable to Clift. Her subjectivity was in question, both in terms of her writing and her own idea of her self. She once more sought to escape the grasp of a restrictive dyad and reaffirm her self: “She had had enough of this dual-control flying and was ready to go solo.” It was the plight of the Kalymnian sponge divers that provided, not only a panacea for metropolitan disillusionment and a means of fulfilling that unarticulated desire for the Other, but literary fodder as well. Greece was also a place where Clift’s excesses (her multiple roles as intellectual beauty, blue-stocking, mother, writer and mate) could be absorbed by the island’s seemingly pagan cultural

33 Chick, 86.
34 Chick, 96.
Symbolic. As a “modern” if poor culture, the Greek islands were not pagan in the way Clift hoped, nor were they pagan in the way that Australia, in contrast to images of civilised Europe, had imagined itself to be (under the Lindsays for example). For Clift, the move to Greece became a type of sanctioned marginality where her own doubleness (her typicality as a “golden” beach girl Australian and intellectual ambitions to be a writer) appeared less extreme in the exotic context. Greece was both Other and, in classical Western tradition, a Mother as well, and for Clift it offered a cultural Symbolic of which she desired to be a part.

Clift’s tribrid status as an outsider, insider, and border-dweller offers valuable multiple discursive articulations of self, other (Australia) and the Other. Trinh T. Minh-ha describes this liminal position:

The moment the insider steps out from the inside she’s no longer a mere insider. She necessarily looks in from the outside while also looking out from the inside. Not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that indetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out. Undercutting the inside/outside opposition, her intervention is necessarily that of both not-quite an insider and not-quite an outsider. She is, in other words, this inappropriate other or same who moves about with always at least two gestures: that of affirming ‘I am like you’ while persisting in her difference and that of reminding ‘I am different’ while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at.35

Clift’s differences are defined not only by her status within and outside of Australia but through her new position as a liminal citizen within Greek

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35 Trinh T. Minh-ha, 76.
society as well. In the Greek community Clift continues to trope both herself and the Greek Other for her readers in an attempt to set up a self/Other essentialism. However, her hybridity (as both self and Other), and liminality (as neither an insider nor quite an outsider), continually calls this neat dichotomy into question.

As sites for retreat, islands are interesting in terms of psychological translocation. Clift chose two isles for the duration of her expatriation: Kalymnos, then Hydra. Islands are ambiguously experienced: as Paul Sharrad explains, they are the centre of their own world but peripheral to any other. They signify a potpourri of binary opposites: escape and imprisonment, freedom and security, they are fixed yet metaphorically floating. They stand for individuality in a cartography of conformity. Clift physically relocates to Greece in order to escape civilisation — the irony in this movement is that she relocates to the centre of Western civilisation. To Clift the Greek isles also represent a return to origins or roots (Mother). It was, in part, an atavistic need that brought Clift to Greece, the physical shift embodying a temporal shift as well. The temporal shift (from “then” to “now”) gives Clift the space to either unearth or erase her former identities and re/create new ones. Yet because Greece is both Mother and Father (it is a new Symbolic Order therefore it represents the phallus and desire), there

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36 See Chick, 193, 261, 301.
38 Chick, 261.
is a sense in which any interrogation of the self Clift undertakes will be contingent on the past as much as the present. Shirley Ardener, in her anthropological study of woman and space, argues that by changing place time is collapsed or elided.\textsuperscript{39} So whilst Clift may have moved to Greece in an effort to efface her past, as an expatriate her cultural and psychological origins are essential to any identity she adopts or search for selfhood she undertakes.

Clift commences her self-reconstruction as “expatriate” by making a journey. It may seem appropriate, then, that both \textit{Mermaid Singing} and \textit{Peel Me A Lotus} are marketed as travel writing. Sara Mills argues that travel books, like autobiography, have long been perceived as masculine narratives as the “figure who generally writes about... other countries is male and adventurous, supremely masculine... .”\textsuperscript{40} Travel implies a physical movement from one place to another. Clift's books, on the other hand, because of her expatriate status, imply an exchange. This exchange is both physical and psychological and is a metaphor for the movement into the new phallic order. The marketing of the books as travel writing masks the equally important autobiographical element and both categories (travel writing and autobiography) tend to efface the particularities of the works as writing by a woman. If travel writing emphasises journeying and places,


autobiography, as Sidonie Smith has it, ... takes the “I” as the subject of the narrative, rendering the “I” both subject and object.” Autobiography has, up until recently, been perceived as a predominantly masculine genre and, in order to fulfil its discursive strategies, women either “inhabit the category not-man and therefore do not write, or they write as men.” Sidonie Smith states that: “Autobiography, then, is ultimately an assertion of arrival and embeddedness in the phallic order. The myth of origins enacted in the pages of autobiographical text asserts the primacy of patrilinear descent and, with it, androcentric discourse.”

There is a sense in which Clift, with her two “travel” books, attempts a generic liminality. While they are categorised as travel writing the narrative present, for the expatriate writer, is fixed. What is narrated is how “I” arrived here; where “I” am; and what this journey means to this discursive “I”. Her texts are also autobiographical, but they encompass fiction and documentary as well. The mixture (hybridising) of generic structures articulates the ambiguity and ambivalence of the expatriate who navigates around the binaries of self/Other and participant/observer. The ambivalence and liminality is expressed through her refusal to site herself permanently on either side of the binary equation: Clift prefers to straddle both sides simultaneously and thus disturb any specificity. For example, her

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41 Sidonie Smith, 19.
42 Smith, 50.
43 Smith, 43.
44 Smith, 40.
speaking positions may appear static, but she subverts any notion of immobility as her mind travels, her eyes travel, her pen travels (across the page), and her self travels as it is continually being recreated in order to inscribe upon the land and its inhabitants various and, particularly in *Peel Me A Lotus*, often fictitious relationships. By melding two privileged phallogocentric discourses such as travel writing and autobiography, Clift also blurs these generic categories by closing the journey around the autobiographical subject. In doing this she points to the usual separation of these two modes of discourse and disturbs the borders between fiction/fact, female/male, private/public writing. She places her self as the primary subject of her texts and negates any essentialism by using the technique of self-begetting (that is, a series of changing roles).45 As an expatriate Australian, Clift inhabits several intersecting and conflicting roles. She is white, western, female, Australian, British resident, individual, wife, mother, writer, privileged visitor, destitute "hippie", local in relation to other tourists,46 as well as being both a traveller and a settler figure. Her texts, therefore, carry the discourses of colonialism and travel and the insecurities of identity negotiation/autobiography, all of which are further complicated by the discourse of gender. As Smith states:

The autobiographer who is a woman must suspend herself between paternal and maternal narratives, those fictions of male and female selfhood that permeate her historical moment. This rhetorical woman then is a product both of history and of psychosexual phenomena: her self-representation reveals both contextual and textual forces of signification. Thus the autobiographer confronts personally her culture's stories of male

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45 This technique is similar to that which Homer has both Athena and Odysseus employ in order to maintain movement and psychological survival.
46 This aspect is brought out more clearly in the following chapter.
and female desire, insinuating the lines of her story through the lines of the patriarchal story that has been autobiography.47

One of culture’s stories Clift could hardly ignore in her Greek location is the Odyssean voyage epic. By combining this masculine travel story with a female domestic one she once again overturns any concept of discursive supremacy. Clift “suspends herself” between the male travel narrative and a female domestic one. She remains static (she does not leave the island) and yet she imaginatively, through her fictive creations, weaves and conceives a moving sequence of characters and worlds. In this sense, she sites herself as a Penelope figure — a Penelope who is no longer the object of Odysseus’ (or the male narrative’s) desires. She experiences, waits, and narrates, thereby parodying and even rewriting the generic possibilities of the masculinist discourses of autobiography, travel writing, and adventure narratives. What this liminal stance also achieves in narrative terms is “an ironic balancing of perspective rather than a heroic assertion of a single point of view”.48

In *Mermaid Singing*, a certain open-endedness is achieved through the conscious employment of polarities so that overlapping antitheses prevent any final synthesis. Clift achieves this disruption through the narrative acknowledgment of her Australian cultural and ideological origins, which she then juxtaposes against those learnt and practised by the Kalymnian

47 Smith, 19.
people. After she has established herself and the native Kalymnians as binary opposites she then universalises her textual examples, displacing and moving between any borders she has created. Clift uses contrapositions such as nature/culture, private/public, old world/new world, individual/community, continually siting herself both within and between these terms. The either/or equation is one Clift continually employs, however, because of her expatriate status, she is unable to locate herself exclusively in either position. An example of this occurs with Clift’s description of the Kalymnians, and her own, attitudes to privacy:

But privacy is the state most difficult of all to attain in Greece, perhaps because the Greeks seem inherently incapable of understanding the need for it. Here, where families of ten or fifteen live in one room and sleep on one shelf, people are accustomed from birth to a communal existence. There is a highly complex and delicate balance of personal relations between families and neighbours, who are obliged by their poverty to live in such propinquity that the whole of everyone’s actions, and almost all his thoughts, are open to the inspection of the rest... The Romans leave private villas. The Greeks leave only temples and markets. Only the communal buildings are constructed to endure, for it is only here that their true life centres. It may be that it is necessary to sacrifice privacy in order to properly understand the art of living together, as the Greeks in many ways have understood it better than any civilisation on earth. But for us, products of a social structure that puts a high value on an individual right to solitude, it was, and is, difficult to surrender ourselves to a community. And in our early days it often became a matter of desperation. We never did, in fact, find privacy on our Sunday expeditions (133-4).

This passage serves as an illustration of Clift’s liminality both as an expatriate in an Other culture, translating differences in a way that the home audience will comprehend, and as an outsider seeking to understand

49 Later in this chapter I will be discussing the importance of markets in terms of Bakhtin’s theories.
and live by the Laws of the Other. Clift uses the colonising rhetoric of anthropology, situating herself as an observer and as superior to the events she witnesses. The natives are represented as tribal, while Clift positions herself and her (Western) readers, as individuals. Yet while she does this there is also an admiration (or a claim to admiration) for and a desire to enter into the collectivity of the Greek cultural Symbolic. Clift's demand for privacy has been suppressed (both consciously, she says "It may be that it is necessary to sacrifice privacy... ." and unconsciously, the use of the word "may" is significant — she hasn't made the sacrifice) into cerebral realms, re-emerging metonymically in the public domain of published words as an unconscious desire for inclusion. Desire, as Soler argues, "is the presence of something which haunts speech, but which is not always translated into a precise demand". This is why Lacan locates desire in metonymy, which is an expression of desire which slips into discourse but is impossible to grasp. This passage indicates an attempt to dissolve barriers; the unconscious desire metamorphosing, in the literal and figurative sense, into a very publicly expressed need, making its fulfilment, in Lacanian terms, impossible: "It [desire] is beyond conscious articulation, for it is barred or repressed from articulation".

All speech is demand; it presupposes the Other to whom it is addressed, whose very signifiers take over its formulation... that which comes from the Other is treated not so much as a particular satisfaction of a need, but rather as a response to an appeal, a gift, a token of love. There is no adequation between the need and

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50 Soler, 50.
demand that conveys it; indeed it is the gap between them that constitutes desire...  

Language begins from the absent O/other. In this situation, there are two absent others: the "absent" (culturally different) locals, and the absent (spatially removed) "home" reader, both of whom, for Clift, call forth the writing and any meaning that arises out of it. Clift states that both she and Johnston ultimately "accepted it [the lack of privacy] with a numb sort of resignation, as if our sense of privacy had at last been anaesthetised"(135). The use of the word anaesthetised strongly suggests a repression, a putting aside of one's conscious needs in order to resurrect them at a more appropriate moment. Privacy, in Clift's lexicon, is also associated with exclusion: it is born of absence. For the metropolitan Westerner, privacy signifies freedom — an inside space (physical and mental) that remains closed to all but the individual. To Clift, situated on Kalymnos, retaining that particular space also means possible psychological deprivation and repudiation by the adoptive Greek community. Notwithstanding, Clift requires privacy in order to write, a privacy that simulates and anticipates company and is, therefore, productive. Russell Grigg asserts that, "desire is always desire for something else, related metonymically to the cause of desire";  

or, to use Lacan's words, "Man's desire is the desire of the Other". In articulating both a need for privacy and an acceptance of its

loss, Clift is representing the liminality of the expatriate writer who hovers on the borders of physical and mental acceptance or rejection by the Other.

What is ironic about Clift's expressed need for privacy is her lack of recognition of the same need in the Kalymnians. Clift does not hesitate to declare her imperious scheme of using the Kalymnians as resources to be plundered and fictively reconstructed by her pen. Drawing on military metaphors suggests the neo-colonising and voyeuristic nature of Clift's intentions. She unabashedly describes the house the family rents on Kalymnos as a "strategically situated ...observation post" (20). The house has "staring windows"(4), through which, "without moving from the house at all we [Clift and family] could observe a complete cross section of Kalymnian activities, all the movement of the harbour, the main street, the several houses diagonally opposite and the innumerable coffee-houses, tavernas, shops and bakeries behind the row of salt trees" (21). Clift explicitly declares her reasons for being on the island; to use her own words, she was there "because there was a story that was interesting"(11); she ominously states that Kalymnos is "an island under sentence"(14), which indeed it is, in the form of Clift's pen and her inscription of the indigenous islanders.
Mermaid Singing is, from the outset, presented as deliberately voyeuristic; imbued in the text are neo-colonial and class assumptions. The narrating “I” presents as a more mature, wiser, imperial “tourist” (she does not perceive herself as such)\textsuperscript{56} trying to make sense in a world run by primitive and ignorant children. Despite the obvious efforts of this “I” to present itself as sympathetic, and therefore qualified to speak about and on the Others behalf there is, in this fundamentally ethnographic work, notions of tourism and a fetishisation of cultural difference. Trinh T. Minh-ha declares that it is a question of “outsider and insider in ethnographic practices. An insider’s view. The magic word that bears within itself a seal of approval. What can be more authentically Other than otherness by the Other herself?”\textsuperscript{57} Clift, as an insider, outsider, and border-dweller as well as a present/ subject/ observer (who is, simultaneously, an absent/ object/ observed), inscribes on the landscape and its inhabitants an empathetic and desirable alterity; as the narrating “I”, her discursive authenticity remains unquestioned. To the home audience the “I” is perceived as a legitimate voice spanning diachronic gaps, travelling unproblematically both temporally and spatially, and the reader accepts her interpretation of events and people as valid. The liminality of her expatriate situation is subsumed, in this particular instance, by her gender. As Vicki Kirby suggests: “Phallocentrism and ethnocentrism are naturalized and disavowed in the benign appeal that feminists are the trustworthy translators of cultural difference because, as

\textsuperscript{56} The often angst-filled relationships and differences between tourists and expatriates will be explored in chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{57} Trinh T. Minh-ha, 74.
women, “otherness” is what also defines them." Clift, deliberately problematises any specificities in her text by reminding the readers that, as she learns about the natives, she also learns about herself: she is not a voice of authority; instead she is an expatriate (that is, non-native) and the subject she seeks to examine is, principally, herself. Despite this, the imperial tone of her rhetoric is, at times, inescapable.

Clift situates herself as the hero/ine of her story; she is, therefore, an Odysseus figure as well. Her arrival on the small isle of Kalymnos is greeted with awe; Clift and Johnston are viewed by the Kalymnians as their potential saviours. They are from a desirable Other and, as such, are perceived by the indigenes as possessing the means to magically transport the populace, either through their presence and the essence of the foreign they represent or, literally, by invoking political authority and arranging Australian permits: “Plenty fellers here think that you and Mister Charmian is a committee, somethin’ like that”(8). Australia had a particular interest for the Kalymnians; it was a land of opportunity and freedom from the tyranny and poverty of sponge diving. Whereas Clift wants to “escape” to this barren island, the Kalymnians see their island as a

59 This idea of the Johnston family being potential saviours is a fictitious construct on the part of Clift. The initial reason for going to the island, which was to map the migration of the Kalymnian sponge divers’ journeys to Australia, was taken from them when the scheme was cancelled before they left England (Kinnane, 39).
60 The idiom here is reminiscent of the dialect bestowed on indigenous Australians by Jolliffe in his cartoon series for the Bulletin. Also, there is a trope of encounter operating here in which a colonial self-dramatisation occurs at the expense of exploitation of the Other.
prison and Australia as an ideal destination. As American Mike states:

"They all [the male population of Kalymnos] want to get to Australia" (11).

On Kalymnos, Clift and Johnston are perceived as being agencies of Australian political power, reaffirming for Clift her national/dyadic identity. The contact with these Others positions her in an/other relationship with her native country. Here she is inescapably Australian, a woman, an expatriate, a non-native, and, ironically, a symbol of wealth and freedom. She therefore serves as an object of Kalymnian desires — particularly the men's.  

Clift and her family are no longer amongst familiar signifiers; nor are they familiar signifiers — they are all golden-haired entities from the new world, the manifestation of alterity. They are new and ambivalent elements in an old space and, as such, have breached traditional boundaries representing both the excitement of the foreign and a potential danger.  

Throughout the text the natives consciously and unconsciously subvert Clift's attempts at neo-colonial voyeurism: attempts which she humorously includes in her narrative. As Clift observes and comments, so too the islanders return the colonial gaze, the voyeurism ultimately becoming reciprocal:

... it was not at all unusual for us to sit down to meals under the interested observation of a dozen women and children who jostled in the doorway or stood laughing and chattering behind our chairs. I still remember with a shudder the nightmarish unreality of waking, shivering in the damp grey dawn, and looking directly

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61 This notion of the "other" woman embodying Kalymnian male desires (in all senses of the word) is explored in Clift's novel, *Honour's Mimic*.

62 Ardener, 13.
into a little grinning face whose nostrils ran thick yellow mucus (29-30).

Clift appears to accept that both mutual voyeurism, and lack of privacy, are aspects of the difficult quest for the Other which must be tolerated in order to aid the correlative search for the self. The islanders’ continual presence at the Clift family’s meals and outings becomes not only habitual, but an opportunity for exchange. Clift, in a wave of nostalgia, cooks Cornish pasties for her family and, in so doing, she earns the admiration of the native women who rush to emulate her recipe (83). In this instance, the separate spaces of “here” and “there” are mediated; Clift and the Kalymnian women, through the exchange of food, become agents in the cultural process: the Laws of the Other are, in one brief instance, successfully translated. Food nourishes and sustains and it is a signifier of culture and cultural practices, but it is also a rudimentary physiological requirement. Digestion is both a natural and essential procedure: therefore the women become the conduit through which contrapositions can advance. As Julia Kristeva writes:

... the woman-subject although under the sway of the paternal function (as symbolizing, speaking subject and like all others), [is] more of a filter than anyone else — a thoroughfare, a threshold where “nature” confronts “culture”.

The Kalymnian women have used Clift’s (and therefore metropolitan-Western) recipes to nurture their families, using Other social/cultural practices to fulfil their culturally specific familial and gender roles. Likewise, Clift’s maid, Sevasti, teaches Clift Greek styles of cooking (81-2)

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63 Kirby, 76.
64 Julia Kristeva, quoted in Grosz, Sexual Subversions, 162.
allowing reciprocity to occur: borders are successfully ruptured. In this example, Clift uses her gender to render the limen between herself and the Other permeable. She moves from her position as colonial voyeur/tourist (who does not exchange), to migrant (who is metaphorically consumed by the Other — her food is eaten), to expatriate, who sits on the limen and negotiates the various exchanges that take place.

Food also functions as a point of interchange between the old world and the new. Clift evokes the culinary preferences and dietary abundances of Australia, England, and even America, not simply to compare them to her adopted home, but to use them as a vehicle for understanding the various predicaments, deficiencies and the new sites/sights she encounters. Food serves as a metaphor, to both Clift and the Kalymnians, for culture and civilisation. It replaces the original signifier by being consumed and is itself a signifier of the repressed Other.

In nothing is the cruel poverty of this island revealed more clearly than in the diet of its inhabitants. In exactly the same way as the tree is the yardstick of natural beauty — “ah, it is a beautiful place; it has trees!” — food has become the measure of all sociology and economics. America and Australia are spoken of always in terms of food. A migrant writes from a works project in New South Wales to say that they eat four times a day, and this startling information is carried all over town and discussed for days... It is perfectly polite to greet a comparative stranger and to ask immediately what he has eaten for his midday meal or to question your neighbour on what she intends to cook for supper (77-8).

The importance of the relationship between food and culture is signalled within the first few pages of the book. Clift’s son, Martin, feeling isolated
and alien in his new Greek home, metonymically articulates his desire for return to his “homeland”\textsuperscript{65} in his longing for peanut butter: “Oh, it’s awful Mum!” Martin sobbed. ‘I haven’t had any peanut butter since London and I don’t know what anyone is saying’\textsuperscript{(6)}. From a psychoanalytic point of view this sentiment could be interpreted as an absence of mother-culture dyadic signifiers which offer him security and a sense of belonging. When Martin asks if the boats of the sponge divers can bring peanut butter to the island (7), this is understood as a further plea for a return to the comfort of the nation-dyad. As Lacan notes:

... desire is situated in dependence on demand — which, by being articulated in signifiers, leaves a metonymic remainder that runs under it, an element that is not indeterminate... an element necessarily lacking.\textsuperscript{66}

Martin articulates the longing/demand of many expatriates: a successful transference of sociocultural signifiers in order to establish a sense of “home”. The demand for peanut butter functions metonymically as an expression of a desire which is based on the absence of its object.\textsuperscript{67} Because desire cannot be articulated, it finds substitute objects to signify it and its unattainable absence. If it seems that Martin can articulate his desire (since his expatriation is not of his choosing), Clift certainly cannot. She has split her identity by being more Australian than average (through her earlier imagos), and feeling alienated, being more local than visitors to Kalymnos. Being a stranger herself (and to herself), she relies on all of these

\textsuperscript{65} For Martin, at this stage, the homeland is conceived of as England than Australia.
\textsuperscript{67} Grosz, \textit{Jacques Lacan}, 64.
representations being in play to succeed in her writing. She cannot wish to return home or to “go” native. So, like Martin, Clift makes use of static, reductive images of her nation of origin (as well as England and America), to provide a backdrop of sense to the consistently changing, dynamic images she frequently registers. This anchoring of the Greek reality upon the memories and cultural signifiers of her Australian Symbolic further reflects the ambivalence of the expatriated subject. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin state, “it is only through this absent and enabling signifier [Australian and Anglo-West] that the [Greek] daily reality can acquire legitimacy as a subject of literary discourse”.68 Similarly, it is only through the “absent” Other/ness of Greek/ness that there is a quest for both the writer and reader.

Clift’s children (as well as those of the Kalymnians) often express, through their actions and their conversation, both the liminality of the expatriate and the psychological processes of triadic transference. Clift describes her son and daughter’s behaviour in the early stages of their life on Kalymnos as either “lordly or apprehensive”(57). Whilst they did not actively make the choice to relocate themselves, the children express, through their conduct, the ambivalence of many expatriates who stand at the brink of Otherness. Clift says of the children:

They were, moreover, quite incapable of understanding or communicating with their playfellows, and contrary to everything

I had expected, they resisted the language stubbornly and took refuge in lordliness or exhibitionism. Shane, who is normally the sunniest and most affectionate of little girls, became surly and defiant. Martin's shoulders drooped and he was given to spasms of uncontrollable panic (75-6).

The neo-colonial lordliness of the children signifies a debt (in the positive and pejorative senses of the term), to their nation-dyad where, from within its comfortable embrace, the Other was shut out, repressed by the Symbolic Order on their behalf. This process is no longer enacted for them, but has to be dealt with by the children themselves. One way of avoiding confrontation with the Other is to resist its lures through disparagement from within the confines of the original nation-dyad. This can be achieved through language — by maintaining their mother tongue and defying all attempts to learn the new one (they give the local children anglo-nicknames like “the Kicker”) (76). Another means of resisting the Other is to ignore its presence totally. The Clift children attempt to do both. They also, however, seek to be included, hence their apprehension as they enter a new Symbolic Order. Whilst the children give away their toys as a simultaneous bribe and offer of friendship/acceptance (76), entry into the triadic stage of development is first achieved through language. Lacan argues that the subject is situated in and through language. Therefore, the acquisition of a second language, the language of the Other, fundamentally indicates that the Other must, to some extent, lose its Otherness for the subject. Being bi-lingual the subject can successfully locate him or herself between two Symbolic Orders. Shane and Martin both go to school and gradually develop a vocabulary that
ensures a degree of entry into the Laws of the Other. But as they did not go through the Imaginary/dyadic stage on Kalymnos they do not have access to all the customs and cultural systems operating within the new Symbolic Order, therefore their entry into the new Triadic Order is problematic. They are also, hesitantly at first, given a reconstructed history. Contextually this gives the children an original site from which to enter the new Symbolic Order and even a different way of re-entering and questioning the old one:

Martin was reluctantly compelled to discard the beloved and familiar heroes of his imagination, Richard the Lion-heart, and the Black Prince and Joan of Arc and Robin Hood, for a new crop of strangely named pallikaria — Kolokotronis and Athanasios Thiakos and Miaolis and Boubalina (124).

The dearth of Australian heroes in this passage reveals the imaginative link to Britain that was extant in the Australian psyche in the 1950s and supports the notion of England as another nation-dyad for the Clift/Johnston family. The replacement of one set of historical signifiers with another also marks the passage from one Symbolic Order into (and in and out of) another. Shane and Martin retain their mother tongue (they become bilingual), proclaiming through its continued use their psychosexual and linguistic origins. The longer they remain in Greece, the harder their genesis is to distinguish until they finally resemble (but are not identical too), the progeny of their new Symbolic Order: the Kalymnian children. Like Martin and Shane, the expatriate, no matter how swift or complete her/his

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69 This state is exemplified in Clift's part in the devil in the bottle scene.
entry into a new triadic phase of development is, will always remain, to the
Other, "the golden children of the new world" (190). Therefore the subject
can only ever loiter on the perimeters of Otherness. It is also important to
note that neither Clift nor Johnston, despite a total of eleven years in
Greece, were able to master any but the most rudimentary words in the
language. In Lacanian terms they always continue to remain on the
periphery of the Greek Symbolic order, absolutely liminal figures who,
whilst anxious to relocate in a new Symbolic Order, cannot discard their
psychosocial and psychosexual origins.

Recognising the debt the subject owes to anterior ideological models, Homi
Bhabha argues that:

> The ultimate referent — the country, Nation, Honour — is never
present to itself within the narrative "in Person". The space of
narration is asymptomatic, which shows that the "original"
reference or ideal is itself touched by fiction and constructed in a
defered narrative, as a form of repetition.

Clift divides herself between “here” and “there” in order to rehearse her own
subjectivity using her absence from “home” as the ultimate [ideological]
referent. Clift is able to translate her subsequent metamorphosis from the
dyadic (there) into the triadic (here) phase into her fiction arousing desire of
the Other in the reader. This transition is not without its complications and
compromises. Not only does the author have to recreate herself in a myriad

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70 Kinnane, 161.
of guises in order to achieve sense of the world around her, but she has to recreate the native islanders and, in the second book *Peel Me A Lotus*, the tourist and expatriate populations as well. This re-creation, or self-begetting involves a series of enunciatory sites for the narrator; a positioning which means on the one hand appropriating different spaces and places into one fabricated “location” and, on the other, a constant movement between these sites. Sidonie Smith identifies this process of self-begetting as a masquerade which the author either consciously or unconsciously develops:

Involved in a kind of masquerade, the autobiographer creates an iconic representation of continuous identity that stands for, or rather before, her subjectivity as she tells of this “I” rather than that “I”. She may even create several, sometimes competing stories about or versions of herself as her subjectivity is displaced by one or multiple textual representations.72

Clift’s masquerades involve the construction of a new self and the partial (if not complete) erasure of the old. This involves a negotiation between the undisciplined sites of her nation-dyad (which identified her as pagan, a blue-stocking, and a “mate”), and the position she now occupies as legitimate outsider (writer, mother, Australian). Her identity is made elusive (masked) as it is continually displaced along the signifying chains of two competing Symbolic Orders, creating numerous versions of her “self”. Lacan perceives masquerade as playing at the level of the Symbolic.73 It is a matter of appropriating signifiers in order to move across and between binary positions without really engaging with the Other. It is obvious that a mask is being worn and that the subject is simply “playing” at Otherness.

72 Smith, 47.
Mimicry, however, is a device which, when employed correctly, Lacan feels is a more effective means of making contact. He describes mimicry as a type of camouflage that allows the subject the opportunity to move through Other spaces. By using mimicry the subject is able to engage with the Other and to enter into some sort of psychological exchange.

The effect of mimicry is camouflage, in the strictly technical sense. It is not a question of harmonizing with the background but, against a mottled background, of becoming mottled — exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare.\footnote{Lacan, \textit{The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis}, 99.}

As Clift has little to no language to draw on she resolves the early anxiety she experiences by relying on mime and mimicry to convey her needs.

I mimed as if my life depended on it, I contorted my face into a gamut of emotions, ranging all the way from anguish to polite surprise.... I shuddered violently. Spasms wrenched me. My teeth chattered. It was an act for which no rehearsals were needed (26-7).

For Clift, functioning within a different (but still patriarchal) Symbolic Order, mimicry gives her the ability to make contact, and rupture the barrier between herself and the Other. As Paul Carter states:

...whenever people have met and been unable to communicate, mimicry has been the means of initiating friendly relations, however temporarily. For mimicry, however reductive as a theatrical trick, is the means of opening up a dialogue in the migrant situation; and the value of this dialogue does not consist in the matter communicated, but in the manner itself. For while nothing may be exchanged between the two people mirroring each others voices and gestures, the very act of mimicry opens up a space between them, a space they agree to share. Mimicry opens up a dialogue in a situation where, otherwise, dialogue would be impossible.\footnote{Carter, 121.}
Mimicry, as a means of communication between Others, serves the subject in both positive and negative ways. Bhabha sees mimicry as representing a discourse of ambivalence, where the subject is positioned as almost the same, but not quite.76 This ambivalent location does, according to Bhabha, not merely "rupture" the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence."77 Roger Callillois would, in part, agree with Bhabha's argument, however, where Bhabha reads mimicry as having ambivalent effects, Callillois reads mimicry as a totally ominous device that, "... threatens to assimilate the individual into its environment at the cost of any 'identity'".78 Luce Irigaray on the other hand sees mimicry as a counter-strategy against women's suppression in any patriarchal order as she mimes and thus exceeds the patriarchal requirements of femininity.79 According to these critics, mimicry is a device that can potentially work in either a negative or positive way, as Bhabha concedes, mimicry is "at once resemblance and menace":80 it creates a doubleness of vision that disrupts the authority of colonial and other discourses.

In her narrative, Clift relates the difficulties she experiences communicating with the natives through humour and a thinly disguised

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77 Bhabha, October, 127.
79 Grosz, Sexual Subversions, 174.
80 Bhabha, October, 127.
exasperation, displaying once again the ambivalence of the expatriate who longs to “talk” the new tongue and yet is frustrated by early, and mostly unsuccessful, attempts to do so. Initially, the inability to speak the new language causes a type of psychological precariousness as the subject, a product of the nation-dyad, seeks to anchor her or himself, through language, at the portal of the new triadic phase. Clift, through initial clumsy attempts, enters into what Carter calls an unspoken “dialogical contract” that represents the desire to make contact of any kind. Jacques Delaruelle reads the loss of elementary language, which he terms “phatic language” as causing great existential anxiety, and even ontological fractures in the subject. He further states that: “to live outside one’s maternal idiom [is to] remain... [in] a spiritual orphanage”.

In a psychoanalytical reading, Clift’s (neo)colonial discourse equates with that of the nation-dyad therefore her mimicry functions to simultaneously disrupt her nation-acquired discourse and that of the natives, thus creating an unstable space whereby contact, however fleeting, can be made. In other words the technique of mimicry prevents, as opposed to facilitates, the subject being absorbed by the Other. It allows the subject to resemble the Other whilst still retaining elements of difference and hence “menace”. It is, arguably, a liminal strategy. Metonymy also represents a form of lexical

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81 Carter, 6.
82 The ability to communicate feelings and thoughts as simple as “good morning” or “how are you.”
84 Delaruelle, 69-70.
mimicry; it creates a sense of doubleness as the original meaning/context of the word/s is embodied in the new. By using metonymy the subject continually slips through and beneath the discourse of the Other preventing "capture" (a specific signification), but at the same time ensuring resemblance and therefore a measure of acceptance as well. Clift continually uses mimicry to make herself understood and accepted and, likewise, the Kalymnians rely on it to communicate with Clift (74) and in doing so both parties, temporarily at least, disturb the limen between self and Other.

Another guise that Clift adopts is that of legitimate translator of the Other: of exotic signifiers and signs. She describes her position as both outside (hearing the foreign) and inside (knowing the reality):

... street vendors shrilly crying the merits of edible commodities the names of which sounded much more exotic than they really were — oktopothes! smarithes! pastelia! baklava! portokalia! psaria freska!... (20-1).

Clift simultaneously sites herself as a part of the alien world she is narrating, and therefore as apart from her Australian readers. By recording the exotic nature of her surroundings, she identifies them as different from the world she once inhabited: that which her reader still does. Once more she is a liminal figure, poised between contrary positions. The juxtaposition of the two languages locates Clift as both a linguistic translator and an authority on Greek commodities — she knows what these specific items are and deliberately leaves them untranslated, maintaining within her text
their status as Other. Implicit in the passage is the idea that she has also
tasted this food and discovered that the alieness of these items lies in their
enunciation only — the phoneme — not the taste. It is an interesting
fetishisation and masking of cultural difference. This practice occurs again
when Clift transposes Greek wages into Western currency for the reader,
turning the unfamiliar into the familiar:

If Mikailis works solidly through a ten hour day he may earn
about twenty-five shillings. His earnings in a good week, for there
are a few days that will provide ten hours of work, may amount to
little more than £3 10s. More usually it is about thirty-five
shillings, upon which he supports a wife and six children (56).

By juxtaposing the two economies (that of the Old world and the New), and
failing to provide a context for the Old World (that is, cost of living etc.),
Clift deliberately exploits notions of primitiveness and misuse. The
implication is that of the fortunate (in every context) New World and the
unfortunate Old. Yet, by converting the Greek currency into the British-
Australian one, Clift is also suggesting that the Other is not as
counterposed to her homeland or as intimidating as the reader might
anticipate. Here Clift is validating both her position as interpreter (the
Greek words are words she alone has access to, the equivalent amounts in
drachmae are absent from the text) and as an expatriate; she uses the
narrative to return home, to remind her reader (and herself) of her origins.
She gestures towards this by employing the imago of “the lucky country”
and thereby admitting both her alienation from it and attachment to it.

Clift also adopts an ambivalent stance in her writing of the island itself. We
are told that, “on the surface of it Kalymnos is absolutely a man’s world”
Similarly, on the surface Clift appears to claim membership to male selfhood and her original dyadic legacy by using her pen as an instrument of power and colonising the natives with words. Yet, by decentering herself (being both subject and object of the discourse), she makes fluid and redeemable any boundaries she acknowledges. Her challenge to the apparent phallocratic culture of the island lies in the form of sociological and mythical explanations for the positioning of women:

Kalymnos is probably one of the few surviving islands where one can see the worn threads of the old pattern, older than mainland Greece, in its essentials older than recorded history, going back to a misty time when masculine subjugation to an all-powerful Earth Mother led to masculine revolt and the goddess was overthrown. Then, because the men were still afraid, it was necessary to enslave the goddess, to deride her, to bolster up the new disquiet of freedom by boasts and jeers and laughter. These dark atavistic currents still seem to swirl through the everyday life of Kalymnos (41).

By reinscribing a temporal and spatial place for the women, Clift empowers them and their seemingly unenviable situations as victims of both the Kalymnian men and their bodies. She endows the gynocratic community with mystic, historical, and psychological powers and therefore legitimates their presence over and beside the mens:

They are of a different species — the female species, the mysterious Other Ones whose femaleness is derided and despised, but who must be kept under lock and key in case they work a magic. It is all very dark and ancient and filled with the cold white beams of the moon, the fear of blood and three spits for the evil eye. In the churches the dark, hard God of Byzantium thunders His creed of male supremacy. In the tavernas and coffee-houses and shipyards and the crowded diving boats speeding to the shores of Africa it is substantiated. But in the Kalymnian houses the triple goddess lurks still upon the hearth and bedshelf, smiling lewdly among the icons (46).
In Clift's work, the women are no longer silenced but are given a voice and, as Sidonie Smith suggests, it is "like the voice of the mother, outside time, plural, fluid, bi-sexual, de-centered, nonlogocentric". Clift discusses the island women's roles in birth, marriage, death, and the various religious and traditional ceremonies. Whereas the Kalymnian men are likened to "old Etonians"(40), which metonymically suggests the imperial/colonial nature of men regardless of geographical or cultural locations (suggesting too, that man as a genus, not just the Kalymnian males, are in fact afraid of women and their unspoken but, in this book not silenced, powers), the women are described, it first appears, differently:

From the time of her marriage (usually when she is aged from fifteen to seventeen) the primary function of a Kalymnian woman is reproduction... whatever character she might possess is in this fecund stage submerged beneath her overwhelming, enslaving femaleness. And she is enslaved — enslaved to the species. A Kalymnian woman of thirty is utterly sexual. She is a large, soft, white, secretive, slow-moving thing...In her youth she is a graceful kore from a vase painting, but in her maturity she is Rhea, Mother of the Universe, hatching out the great stone... After the menopause and the end of her child-bearing... she emerges again, high-stomached and sibylline, freed of the burden of her body, with hooded eyes and the carved still face of Hecate... like a Hoffman witch... Desire no longer plagues her (50-1).

The phases of femininity observed by Clift are, despite their celebration of womanhood, characteristic of those revered and feared by patriarchy. The kore is simply an object of desire. The analogy to Rhea represents the fecund, sexual woman, man's ultimate fantasy and dread — the vagina dentata. Finally, the metaphor of the witch — the sibylline creature of

85 Sidonie Smith, 58.
darkness and secrets — represents the passing of youth (and hence the passage into the non-sexual physically abhorrent woman) and a reluctant recognition of mortality. Clift continues her discourse on womanhood by informing the reader that the most powerful women on Kalymnos are the *gorganos* — the old women who signify the end of fertility and who are perceived as the embodiment of the wisdom that arrives with age and experience. Even the Kalymnian males recognise the ascendancy of the *gorganos*: “Don’t you be misled,” he [Yanni] warns darkly. “The men don’t rule here. The *gorganos* do” (51). It is a subversive rule that quietly undermines the patriarchal structures with feminine mystique, as seen in the Koliva festival (138-41), which is associated with death, and the lengthy Easter ceremonies (182-3).

Clift drifts between a male (imperial) stance in relation to the “natives” and a feminine one in relation to her readership. These contrary positions reflect her desire to be simultaneously located and disassociated from particular (gendered) discourses. Her description of the women is given from an outsider’s point of view: she does not perceive herself as inhabiting any of the categories of womanhood she describes. The women of Kalymnos have a relationship to the land and its signifiers that Clift can never hope to realise. Clift writes that, “Kalymnos is a barren rock, but the women have sent their roots down deep into it, and there is nothing for the men but the far lands or the sea”. (53) As a woman with no roots on the rock, she again
sites herself as a liminal figure, physically and psychologically displaced as an expatriate between Australia and Kalymnos. Whilst Clift on the one hand states that “the truth and meaning of the little island lay here, in these men [the sponge divers]” (190), she subverts the value of this statement by continually evoking matrilineal concerns and making public what is usually relegated to private or non-spheres: childbirth, baptism, dowry (prika), marriage (including intercourse and matrilineal inheritance), fecundity, and even menopause. While she sometimes sites herself within her nation-dyad and its patriarchal premises, observing and documenting events from a very masculine perspective, she undermines this through, not only the contents of her interpretations, but via her acknowledgment of Kalymnos as both motherland and fatherland.

Despite Clift's gender, she finds herself, to a degree (and it is even more apparent in *Peel Me A Lotus*), marginalised by the matriarchal forces on the island because, to both the women and the men, her position as “woman” is problematic. Clift's presence literally and figuratively ruptures the natives' social and psychological textuality. On Kalymnos she is referred to as “Mister Charmian”(8), since she wears trousers and invades the exclusively masculine space of the taverna.

Kalymnian women do not go to tavernas. That my presence is never questioned probably is mostly due to the fact that I am a foreigner, and therefore beyond criticism, or else it is another example of the extreme sensitivity of the Greeks in the matter of hospitality (98).
On returning to Australia, Clift, in one of her syndicated columns, wrote that while “On Kalymnos... I was the first woman ever to drink in a taverna”. This insinuation of herself into a male space can be read in two ways: one, as a specifically western female territorialisation, claiming equal (gender) possession of a public place and, secondly, as a neo-colonial gesture that disregards local customs and traditions and imposes Other Laws and cultural practices upon the natives. Whilst it is, in part, the role of the travel writer to investigate and report on these kinds of places, the expatriate, at the very least, seeks to understand and perhaps obey the Laws of the Other, not break them through “invasion.” It seems unusual that Clift did not attempt a negotiation, but thrust her presence upon the men, ultimately reading their behaviour as an uncomplicated and “genuine acceptance” of her (99). Despite what she says, she remains a liminal figure; physically she gains entrance, but she remains on the outside looking in. An awareness of her outsider status comes, not within the space of the taverna itself, but after the taverna celebrations are moved, on one occasion, to a local house. She writes: “George and I, alone of all the party, were unfamiliar and a little formal in the glowing orange room. I felt with a sudden deep conviction that we had no right to be there” (164).

Clift continually chronicles her awareness of how fragile her liminal position is, siting herself as embraced by the Kalymnians one moment (for

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example, 127), while in the next expressing her desolation at the knowledge that to the islanders she is still Other and therefore not privy to their conventions. This is because while Clift represents a bridging of the divide between (physically speaking) the “inside” and “outside” worlds, in terms of psychological connections, the breach must remain in order for desire to function: “it is the gap between them that constitutes desire”. An example of this occurs when she is asked by the Kalymnian men if she knows how to put a devil in a bottle:

All Kalymnian women know, says Costas Manglis darkly... I appeal to her [Golden Anna] as a reasonable woman. Her smile broadens and her grey bulk quivers with silent laughter. But she will not answer... all of the men look uncomfortable ... Everything is suddenly very queer and baffling, and I am inclined to be cross and governessy and to demand rational explanations. George is grinning. “Go on, “ he says. “You're jealous. You can't have it both ways. You traded in devil bottling for trousers and a cigarette holder” (97-8)

Once again, Clift’s dyadic and triadic inheritance is exposed; as an Australian, a Westerner, she has not been imbued in the traditions and customs of the Greek dyadic and triadic phases of pyschosocial development, so she remains outside their Laws. On Kalymnos, Clift cannot be both a woman and a “mate.” Golden Anna is aware of this and refuses to give Clift the phallus: that is, initiate her into the Laws of the gynocratic community, insisting through her silent refusal, that Clift retain her outside status. Clift still represents a bridge to the Kalymnians and this site is simultaneously reciprocated — they are her link to the Other as well — so some mutual

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cognisance can and does occur. This exchange also asserts the Laws of the new country, those which Clift desires apprehension of and which will continue to motivate her expatriation and her search for her self.

By drinking in the taverna and consciously invading male spaces and attempting to appropriate female ones, Clift is somehow positioned as neither female or male, but as bi-sexual, representing through the interrogation of gender the bi/tri-cultural state of the expatriate. When Clift goes swimming with her friend Yanni and the maid Sevasti, she disturbs gender and cultural barriers once again. Not only does she expose her body in an unprecedented fashion in front of the native women and men, she refuses to acknowledge the segregation of the adult sexes whilst in the water, and finally, she swims like a man:

One day I was lured by an overweening pride into demonstrating the Australian crawl. The women, after their first stunned and gratifying surprise, averted their eyes. My performance, I realised, was to them something as grotesque as a trapeze act or a performing seal. "Only men swim like that," Yanni's wife Polymnea whispered to me in embarrassed explanation. After a moment of troubled thought she added, "If you like I'll make you a fustani [a long robe worn by the women while they cavort in the water] to swim in. Your skin is going quite black" (43-4).

Clift is the ultimate hy/tribrid. She crosses the barriers of cultural and gender discourse sitting/sighting herself continually as not quite Australian nor quite Greek either, as neither totally woman nor man. Bhabha describes liminal sitting as a part of the ambivalence of colonial authority which
“repeatedly turns from mimicry — a difference that is almost nothing but not quite — to menace — a difference that is almost total but not quite”.

Clift’s skin is darkening and in this external adjustment she is located, as Bhabha puts it, in the “ambivalent world of ‘not quite/not white’, on the margins of metropolitan desire”. Her performance also breaks down the oppositional binaries of male and female, prompting the women to locate her, because of the discomfort she causes in her liminality, in feminine spaces by offering to make her a gown: an external mask of womanhood.

The suggestion that continually underlies Clift’s narrative positions is that she could be either or all of these things; male/female, insider/outsider, colonial/colonised. Like most expatriates, she lives with the dichotomous condition of Self and Other, and yet continually aligns herself between making her liminality a rhetorical exercise.

The relationship between time and space is also explored in Mermaid Singing, where it becomes apparent that while these realms may be collapsed or elided, they are also “mutually affecting spheres of reality”.

88 Bhabha, October, 132.
89 Bhabha, October, 132.
91 The condition of liminality is metonymically and metaphorically suggested in the title of the book itself. “Mermaid Singing” is taken from T.S. Eliot’s poem, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”. Prufrock himself is continually located outside mainstream discourse; an observer, but never a participant in the “real” sense. Likewise, the image of the mermaid is a liminal one. Mermaids are half woman, half fish: neither fully one or the other. They can exist in two elements (air and water) and can even venture on to land (only sitting) for brief periods, able to gaze upon but not join the earth-bound Other. Mermaids are only one of the many liminally situated mythical figures (the demi-gods of Greece and Rome, the Medusa, the Hydra, the Bunyip etc.). They are all exotic creatures — the Other, and yet they bare, in many aspects, uncanny resemblance to the Self — the familiar. The song of the mermaid is the song of the siren: that which lures and seduces the Self into recognition of its fragmented frailty. The power of the siren’s song will be explored in later chapters.
92 Ardener, 6.
space that Clift occupies on Kalymnos has her re-evaluating her previously held temporal verities; finding that in Greece, "... time seems to be much more malleable than it is in the Western countries" (201). On the island Clift's spaces are no longer framed by time; likewise her familial relationships are no longer ruled by its tyranny, the "treadmill which is the big city feel" (126). Temporality becomes both a metonym and a metaphor for the different spheres of existence: to Clift in her westernised life, time has functioned as an oppressive instrument that restricted private and public spaces. On Kalymnos time is negotiated differently. An awareness of this makes Clift reflect on her past life and reconsider her alliances. In this text, time crosses Other barriers, designating for itself new meanings whilst still retaining, for Clift, its more familiar signification as well, allowing her the opportunity to translate, for her readers, the differences. In moving to the island, Clift and Johnston perceived themselves as "buying", or earning a slice of time (198); time to write and procure some financial freedom. Once again Clift, as an expatriate, is situated, in the temporal and spatial sense, liminally. Meanings, in the anglo-sense are no longer coherent — on Kalymnos, time and money are mutually exclusive terms. Within the new Symbolic order, western definitions have to be expanded and reformulated. Another area signified in the text that must be redefined through examination is that of Greek cordiality; particularly towards the expatriate Clift. According to Clift, she was made to feel welcome from the moment of her arrival on Kalymnos. In a rather Odyssean gesture, Clift and Johnston "adopt" a guide on their journey to the island. This Athena-figure procures a
house for them and throughout their time on Kalymnos, along with various other of the island's personalities, continually supervises their life. What Clift only marginally addresses in her narrative is the symbolic importance of lies, both in terms of her interaction with O/others, and the degree of help extended towards them by the Greeks. Lies also function metaphorically as a masking technique, displacing original meanings and, as yet, another appropriation of the Odyssean narrative.

On pages six and seven of Mermaid Singing, Clift describes to the reader the deficiencies of the house she "chooses" to rent. These deficiencies are pointed out to the landlady who declares that "her one object in life was to oblige me [Clift] and to make the little darlinks happy"(7). The promises of extra commodities and repairs never happen; the landlady blatantly lies (through mimicry and an interpreter), leaving the house, and its faults, for Clift and family to fix. Likewise, the family's closest native friend Manolis (their original Athena-guide), continually takes money from Johnston and hospitality from Clift (he shares all their meals). He bemoans the poverty-stricken state of his family on another island and the ruthless behaviour of his former employer. Manolis, despite the appeals of Clift and his own relatives, deserts his family remaining on Kalymnos well beyond his expected date of return. Clift evokes sympathy for Manolis in the reader. Later in the text, however, the true state of affairs is revealed:

Now the story which Manolis told us was that the Kalymnian tailor for whom he worked owed him six weeks' wages, and he
dared not go back to Kos for fear it would never be paid. The paltry few drachmae he did get each week, he said, had to be sent to Kos to support his wife and children. His accounts of the poverty of his family were deeply harrowing...the fifty-drachmae note George had given him [for his family] (incidentally, the first of a steady supply) had arrived, and the whole family had gone to church to light candles and pray for blessings to fall upon their saviour. Occasionally Manolis went across to Kos for a week-end visit. There would be more fifty-drachmae notes from George, who would also pay the boat fare and provide baskets of tinned food and butter and milk... . In some respects Manolis had become our most costly luxury.

Later inquiries ... revealed that the old rogue had been telling us a fine old pack of lies from the very beginning. Not only had he been paid regularly by the tailor, but he had been paid a good deal more than either of his nephews earned, and they, with our assistance had been supporting him for all these months! Moreover, while he was living in some comfort on Kalymnos his wife and family on Kos were being supported by his father-in-law, a market gardener in fairly good circumstances (169-70).

According to Lidia Sciama, lies in Greek society are a means of protecting one's privacy — they function as a means of concealment. They are also used for "material gain, for sheer love of concealment or love of secrecy or of mischief". As Sciama states, the lies people tell can be as revealing as their true statements: both function as signifiers of and for a particular subject. In Manolis' case, he lies in order to remain in the presence of the Other — Clift and her family. His reasons for remaining are principally economic, but there is also a sense in which Manolis enjoys the Others' dependency on him: it gives him a new found status and, arguably, assists him in his construction of the self. Around Clift and her family, Manolis adopts the role of a parent minding his colonial children; a reversal of the usual role

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94 Sciama, 101.
assigned to the islanders when confronted with Others (usually tourists). There is also a sense of mockery in his lies. They are so outrageous, one feels he is mocking not only his own community, but Clift’s Other community too. As Sciama argues, “while mockery is in the first place a sanction ... what they are in some sense laughing at is really society itself with its impossible strictures and demands”.95 Clift implies, at the beginning of her narrative, that the whole island itself was implicated in deceiving her. She says that “Kalymnos declared itself only gradually” (13), suggesting that its first toy-like appearance (10) superficially hid its real character of barrenness and poverty luring the unsuspecting expatriate subject to its shores.

Clift herself, in a rather Odyssean gesture, becomes complicit in this lying process firstly through her adaptation of various positions in the novel and, secondly, through the realist genre she chooses to write in which superficially hides her reconstruction of both herself and the natives. Through lying, Clift is able to present the aspects of her self that she wishes the reader to see, keeping her real self, in much the same way that Manolis did, hidden. Using lies, she is able to gain the privacy (her self) that she says she desires. She becomes the trickster, employing lies to both confirm and escape the Odyssean role she has created for herself. In doing this, Clift allows herself the freedom to both parody and find her subjectivity and

95 Sciama, 101.
continue her journey towards her illusive selfhood. Furthermore, as an expatriate, Clift uses lies to escape the sense of both alienation from the Other (by pretending to be more “native” then she is), and to construct herself as a reliable translator (she acknowledges both nation and the Other) for her home readership. In this sense, by employing lies, she protects her subjectivity and confirms her trbrid/split identity as an expatriate.

In an extraordinarily neo-colonial gesture, Clift fetishises the island describing it as being analogous to “a doll’s town to amuse a child”(2). She continues by attempting to subvert this description by highlighting the grotesque nature of both its geography and many of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, by defining the island as either child-like or grotesque, she relegates it to the margins of discourse, by placing herself at the centre of her narration. Ultimately, Clift overcomes any marginalisation of the natives by devoting a great deal of her book to the activities of the Kalymnian carnival and by doing so recentres everything that had previously been decentered, once again blurring any extant borders.

Bakhtin contends that:

Carnival... does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators... Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because it is the very idea that embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom.96

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Carnival erupts on Kalymnos (145-62) and it is in this space that Clift, as an expatriate, can finally put aside her Otherness and participate fully in the Other culture. As Bahktin suggests, carnival inverts and parodies cultural and gender stereotypes, it overturns hierarchies and creates, in a sense, an homogenous and grotesque space. Clift revels in the atmosphere of carnival; it is pagan and unpredictable; identities are obliterated, even language changes for the duration of the carnival (156). Yet there is also a sense in which Clift fears this new space, she doesn’t understand its congruity in terms of the island life she had come to know. For Clift, the carnival exemplifies the Otherness she both longs for and fears:

> There had been nothing continuous, nothing organized... odd little spurts and jets of something... not Carnival, because the connotation of Carnival is gaiety and even in the dressing up of the children there had been nothing of gaiety. There were other things — grotesquerie, certain sly and sadistic touches of humour like little Georgouli’s mockery of his mother, moments of a bizzare and sometimes frightening frenzy when the alleys spilled hordes of leaping twirling, hopping little monsters into the dark evening pool of the plateia... During this period all forms of polite greeting changed. Instead of saying “good morning” or “good evening” you were greeted with... good Carnival. But it was all quite stiff and formal. There was no merriment in it (156).

As much as Clift tries to resist the atmosphere and derisive laughter of carnival, she cannot. As Bakhtin argues, there are no spectators. Clift is unwillingly drawn into a space where her self is temporarily transformed and lost. The revellers no longer acknowledge boundaries: all are crossed and binaries are blurred and even inverted. Clift’s status as Other is
disturbed as the Carnival spills into her home, drawing her into its “world of nightmare” (157):

Often while we were eating our supper they would file quietly up the dark stairs and assemble around us in a silent circle. Their faces would be covered by hessian or sheeting with eye slits cut in it, or by baskets hung with fishnets and tassels... We never knew whether they were men or women, whether they were neighbours, friends or people we had never met. They never greeted us. They would caper and leap around the table quite silently. And then they would hit saucepan lids with sticks and rattle the gourds in every corner of the room, and then they would bow and go out as quietly as they had come (160).

Carnival creates a space in which communication can take place. As Bakhtin suggests, it is a new form of communication, which produces both unique ways of speaking and endows the old ways with fresh meaning. By entering into Clift’s house, the Carnival has transgressed the neo-colonial space of the expatriate, rupturing its borders, rendering them ambivalent through noisy mockery and silence. Clift has longed for the Other’s acceptance however, once the opportunity is presented to her, she rejects it retreating into the security of her nation-dyad and choosing instead to observe and record the natives at “play,” thereby maintaining her secure location within counterposed positions.

The market-place functions in a similar fashion; it is an arena for extraterritoriality. Clift refuses to be seduced by the market’s communal space choosing instead to gaze into it and fetishise its characteristics:

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97 Morris, 203.
98 Morris, 213.
The market, an ugly, crumbling pseudo-Venetian building constructed near the fishing wharves behind the cathedral during the Italian occupation... was a delight to the eye... I wanted to bury my face in the baskets of fragrant lemons or stand and stare at the old potato seller with her skirts hooked back over a striped petticoat or at the greenstalk boy lolling by the broken fountain with his basket of gleaming mackerel. Yet, finished admiring, what was there after all that I could put in my basket to make two sustaining meals for four people? (78-9).

Here Clift evokes the grotesque beauty of the marketplace, her silent admiration functioning metonymically as a longing (a desire) to be a part of its exotic appeal. She figuratively embraces and rejects this carnivalesque space, breaching but ultimately leaving intact its borders of Otherness. She watches and, through the metaphor of trading, joins in. This is what Clift's entire text enacts. Throughout her narrative she persistently enters and re-enters the world of the Other and whilst she remains at the periphery in the physical sense, there are moments of psychological and imaginative contact/exchange which render any barriers uncertain. It is possible to argue that Clift appropriates the discourse of the carnivalesque and, by leaving unresolved the dialogue that is initiated between self and other, between Other and self, and between the nation-dyad and the new triad/Symbolic Order, she creates a fluid and dynamic discourse that encounters, inverts, and disturbs a range of generic, gender and cultural practices thus demonstrating the ambivalence of the expatriate. It is as though she creates a (libidinal?) free-play zone in order to collapse binaries and enable unrestricted self-exploration and self-experimentation. She exposes through her affirmation and collapsing of borders that the Other is
irreversible: even Carnivale cannot overturn the self/Other binary. The ambivalence of the expatriate manifests as fear on the one hand and intrepidity on the other, emotions which keep the subject on the margins of discourse: simultaneously dis/located in space and place and therefore liminal.

In *Mermaid Singing*, Clift appropriates a range of discourses from the colonial to the neo-colonial, from feminist to masculinist, from nationalistic to the discourse of the Other, sliding between and across enunciatory sites. She does not allow any of these discourses to dominate; each subverts the other moving between spaces instead of, in a logocentric fashion, exclusively exploring one. As a narrator, Clift continually positions herself at the threshold of numerous binary opposites ultimately making her liminality a rhetorical exercise. Clift deconstructs any concept of stasis or androcentrism, ultimately privileging dynamism and liminality over concrete conclusions. This is revealed through her strategic self-positioning which lacks any sense of a pattern. Her rhetorical strategy continues no less problematically in the next text, *Peel Me A Lotus*, where many of the tactics employed in *Mermaid Singing* are used again, but for a different purpose, and where the construction of the self, and the attempt at entry into the Symbolic Order of the Other, is metaphorically and metonymically explored in new and interesting ways.
CHAPTER THREE

PEELING THE LOTUS: AMBIVALENCE AND THE EXPATRIATE

... writing itself is a kind of travel, a text of secret displacements.¹

It is a diverse and tantalizing collection of human beings sprawled about these rocks and ledges on a hot cliff far from their native lands, insurgents all who have rebelled against the station in which it pleased God to place them. What devious roads brought them to this small island, what decisions and indecisions, what driftings, what moments of desperation and hope? What are they looking for? What do they expect to find here, an Australian journalist, an Irish schoolmaster, an American misfit, an exotic outrider from the St-Germain-des-Pres?²

*Peel Me A Lotus*, the second of Clift's travelographies, also deals with the ambivalence of expatriation and encounters with the Other, and examines the binaries produced and collapsed by the psychological/physical realisation of expatriation. This book, however, adopts a different tone to that of the previous one. Whereas *Mermaid Singing*, in a sense, celebrated expatriation by concentrating on the joyous aspects of isolation and encounters with Otherness, *Peel Me A Lotus* is a disquieting and sceptical account of the motivation behind and the continued rationalisation for living out of one's mother country. Clift moves from the primitive Kalymnos to the newly discovered expatriate "paradise" of Hydra. She shifts from relative isolation to being in the hub of the expatriate enclave. The frustration Clift

² Charmian Clift, *Peel Me A Lotus*, Pymble: Angus and Robertson, 1989, 97. All further quotations are from this edition.
feels towards, not only the natives with whom she lives, but the island's expatriate population, the growing number of tourists, and herself as well, becomes apparent as the narrative progresses. The question "What are you doing it for?" (162), which is posed by the ubiquitous Mrs Knip (the visiting mother of an expatriate couple), becomes an agency through which Clift interrogates the various rationales for expatriation. Through the use of juxtaposed tropes (such as those that represent inclusion and exclusion), and the mapping of the dynamic interrelations between self, other (expatriates and tourists) and the Other (the Hydrans and the tourists), Clift's *Peel Me A Lotus* offers an explicit account of the search for the self beyond dyadic (nation) borders.

The book commences with the statement: "Today we bought the house by the well" (9). With this bold declaration, Clift notifies the reader that her intentions are now serious: home, in the literal sense, has been relocated. Whereas on Kalymnos she observed island-life, on Hydra she intends to participate. The purchase of a piece of property somehow authenticates, for the reader and (perhaps, her self), her presence and the subsequent events she chooses to relate. Clift is now, through her home ownership, both an investor in and, because of her narration, an inventor of Hydra.³ In Anglo-western terms, property has broad signification — it equates dwelling, in the psychological sense, with an exterior and physical definition of the word.

A house is a symbol, a space for the self to “connect” without the intrusion of the Other. As Levinas suggests: “the ‘at home’...is not a container but a site where I can, where, dependent on a reality that is other, I am, despite this dependence or thanks to it, free”.4 In these terms, the house on Hydra should represent a site of freedom for Clift, where her subjectivity can be contemplated and where her “self” can be maintained.5

Clift’s new status as landholder also suggests that the double-vision of the relaxed tourist (sojourner) on the one hand and the tense expatriate (resident alien) on the other,6 which was extant on Kalymnos, will now be unified into a singular perspective: that of a semi-native’s. The medial site of the semi-native is a position that Clift consciously appropriates. In relation to the Hydrans, she is an outsider; in relation to the tourists she is both a local (and, therefore, an intermediary) and one of “them.” She is more “expert” in local ways and able to adopt the mantle of “tour guide” when appropriate. She is also an ethnographer of the islanders, the tourists, and, implicitly, her self. In terms of her narrative, these positions are achieved through her blurring of the diametrically opposed sites of native (insider) and visitor (outsider). This blurring of perspectives renders the borders between self, other, and Other unclear making Clift’s location within and

5 See Levinas 37-8.
around these specific locations uncertain. This type of discursive strategy is evident in her description of the purchase of the house:

... it does seem to be a reckless romantic thing that the first piece of earth one has ever owned in all the world should be Greek earth, and that one should pay for it — figuratively, anyway — in golden sovereigns, at a time when the Cyprus issue is becoming more venomous every day and they are making bonfires of Union Jacks in Athens and everything English is hated with an intensity that is directly in inverse ratio to the love the English used to command in Greece: everything that is except the golden sovereign. The people of this island are inclined to be suspicious — rather narrow-eyed, watchful people they are — and there is no other money they really trust (11).

Clift describes the purchase of the house as a “reckless romantic thing”, but fails to explain precisely the nature of the romance. The statement/enunciation can be taken as referring to her expatriation itself. In juxtaposing “reckless” and “romantic”, Clift expresses the ambivalence and the motivation that lies behind her expatriation. She confesses to the simultaneous sense of separation from her origins and the impossibility of belonging to the new Socio-symbolic Order whilst celebrating the “total” repossession of a cultural womb — the “Greek earth”. Despite this acquisition of an authentic piece of otherness (a Greek house), Clift still acknowledges her origins in the last part of the passage when she positions herself outside her newly purchased semi-native status and reflects on “the people of this island.” These are a people of which she is now, in geo-economic (and geo-political — she is not English and can sympathise with their anti-English feelings) terms, one, but who remain elusively Other. It appears that Clift is aware that ownership is not analogous to kinship.

7 Her authenticity lies in her connection with the soil but her means of acquiring it, money, is inauthentic.
To buy the house, Clift uses golden sovereigns which, as a foreign but useable currency, are signifiers of both separation and connection. On Hydra, economic counter is culturally marked: gold gives access, yet the golden sovereign, as a colonially inscribed form of economic exchange, also marks her cultural separation from those she is dealing with. The golden sovereign is a legacy of British rule; a rule that is, according to the above passage, both resisted and militantly challenged. Clift substitutes her western “going-back-to-civilization money” (10) for the sovereigns. The fact she can do this reflects not only her material access to the Other culture (which substitutes for/displaces her cultural/personal exchange), but the extent to which modern global materialism encourages fiscally based hegemonic practices. The transaction also disturbs the threshold between ancient civilisations (golden, gold as currency) and modern ones (gold is translated/transformed into an internationally marketable currency). Clift belongs by being a householder, but because the house has not been inherited (blood lines), she does not belong. She has the object of desire but not the fulfilment of desire and still has to find satisfaction in being multi-part-ed rather than uniformly whole.¹⁸

¹⁸ Metonymic, not metaphoric.
The neo-colonial space of “the house by the well”(9), a barrier that Clift erects between herself and the Other in order to explore her self. The native islanders re-situate Clift as a cultural outsider when they refer to the property as the “Australian house”. Clift fails to mention this re-naming in her narrative, a re-naming which signifies that the house and, by association, its occupants, are a part of another Symbolic Order. The house becomes an ambivalent location where not only is the Other appropriated by Clift in order to effect acceptance, it also offers the Hydrans the opportunity to gaze upon Clift and observe her differences and for her, in turn, to gaze upon them.

Twenty windows round are private boxes filled with unabashed women and children, who jostle each other in their eagerness to see the curious spectacle of George seated at his typewriter. The terrace opening off the studio might as well be a public stage — and there go all my plans for nude sun-baking (80).

The idea that the house becomes a stage whereupon the theatre of the Other is played out is implicit in the narrative. Mary Andrews, one of Clift’s closest friends from her England days, says that: “Charm liked to be the centre of attention. You could see her switch herself on. She turned up the voltage to compensate”. Cedric Flower, another of Clift’s companions, is reported as saying, “Of course she was always an actress. In London the young sophisticate. In Greece she was more Greek than the Greeks”. The Hydrans watch Clift’s family performing their daily duties, and Clift places

9 A place/space which is simultaneously centred (centre of community) and decentred (the house is owned by a foreigner).
11 Chick, 124. Implicit in this statement is the idea that Clift performed versions of herself in order to compensate for the sense of fragmentation she felt.
12 Chick, 95.
herself on display (to both the Hydrans and the foreign group) while all the
time watching the Hydrans. As on Kalymnos, the gaze becomes reciprocal, a
mutual voyeurism/exhibitionism coming into play. Lacan understands the
scopic drive as elemental in self/Other identification, as it is through the
gaze that the subject becomes aware of his or her lack and it is an
awareness of this lack that activates desire and the congruent search for the
desired object:

What one looks at is what cannot be seen... In exhibitionism,
what is intended by the subject is what is realized in the other.
The true aim of every desire is the other, as constrained, beyond
his involvement in the scene. It is not only the victim who is
concerned in exhibitionism, it is the victim as referred to some
other who is looking at him.\textsuperscript{13}

Both subject and object are implicated in the gaze: the subject who sees is in
turn seen — the gaze always comes from the field of the Other.\textsuperscript{14} As Grosz
states: “This means that the object is simultaneously part of the subject (e.g.
the eyes) and something detachable from the subject, a part of itself not
identical with itself.”\textsuperscript{15} It is when the subject becomes aware that it is not
identical to the object of her/his gaze, that desire is born; it is a triadic
alliance based on the subject, the other, and the Other. Grosz simplifies it
by saying: “The other is the object through whom desire is returned to the
subject; the Other is the locus of signification which regulates the movement
by which this return is made possible. The subject’s desire is always desire

\textsuperscript{13} Jacques Lacan, \textit{The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis}, translated by Alan Sheridan,
\textsuperscript{14} Elizabeth Grosz, \textit{Jacques Lacan: a feminist introduction}, St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen and Unwin,
1990, 80.
\textsuperscript{15} Grosz, 80.
of the Other". For the Australian reader, the other is the expatriate writer and the Other is the foreign that they represent to her/him. For the expatriate writer, the other is both “here” and “there” and the Other is something that lies both within and beyond. The Other represents an ideal belonging that splits across home and abroad and is formulated/objectified by “the nation.” It is also that which makes writing and return possible.

The gaze also has the power to problematise the subject’s concept of her/his self — the imago or ego-ideal. In *Peel Me A Lotus*, the gaze becomes a means through which the self and the Other are constructed, by and for each other, in different forms. In the text a series of multiplying gazes occur, the gaze moving from subject to object and back again (from Clift, to the Hydrans, from the Hydrans to Clift), linking them in a network of perception and desire. The gaze has the power to diminish subjectivity, but it also works to bind the ego with the fantasy of a whole self. The combination of self and fantasy prevents annihilation of the subject by recapturing, through memory, a nostalgic continuity that bridges the gap that the gaze opens up. By moving through memory to a time before the Other existed (in both familial and cultural terms this relates to the first dyad) the subject is able to recapture an idea of the self that she/he can cling to. The gap between

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16 Grosz, 80.
18 The Other is always there, but by moving towards the idea of a time before the Other, a sense of the self can be realised.
subject and object that the gaze exposes ensures that desire is maintained. By occupying the house, Clift is able to gaze with little threat to her subjectivity. She can look outwards at the Other and, when the gaze threatens to overwhelm her, she can retreat inside her semi-native space of the "Australian house" (a signifier of her primal dyad and roles within her cultural and biological family) and reaffirm her self. The house offers a privileged site from which to turn one's gaze on the outside world, but it also constitutes a fixing of the subject as the object of social observation. The ambivalent interdependence of the gaze and the house thus acknowledges the dichotomous/triadic relationship between the self and the O/other.

In a very neo-colonial gesture, Clift begets the Hydrans discursively, translating people and events into constructs palatable for an Anglo-Western readership. She achieves this by reconfiguring the Greek Symbolic Order based on her primal Symbolic (Australia) and either discussing the similarities between "here" and "there" (metaphorically) or exposing, in a rather negative manner (usually metonymically), the differences. This type of positive/negative discourse is evident in her description of the island women's reaction to her mothering skills. Clift refuses to pick up her son, Jason, when he cries, preferring instead, after the fashion of her culture, to leave him to cry and therefore exercise his lungs. The Greek women are horrified by what they interpret as her lack of maternal instincts and physically intervene to pacify the child.
'I saw you had company, so I picked him up for you,' Kyria Spirathoula says blandly, looking me straight in the eye. 'I thought you might not have heard him crying.'

'Poor little baby ...koo-koo-koo-koo ...all alone up there ... it's cruel to leave him alone then, isn't it?' She is talking to the baby, of course, not to me. So are the other women, who are now passing him from hand to hand, jigging and bouncing and tweaking him, hissing and poo-sou-ing (a sort of formalized spit, repeated three times after any word of praise; that Evil Eye again) ... He opens his mouth and bellows.

'Ah, he is hungry then,' says Kyria Heleni sagely, and jolts him up and down more violently than ever, hissing like a guardian adder. I say that he has just been fed.

'It's a touch of the sun,' says Kyria Spirathoula reproachfully, grabbing the baby from Kyria Heleni and jiggling in her turn. 'None of mine had a touch of sun on their skins until they were walking.'

'He ought to have his hands tied down,' Little Cuckoo whispers. 'Waving about like that without any wrappings.'

... In fact I ... take him firmly and return him to his basket, and there he lies screaming all the morning, jigged and hissed out of his senses, poor little thing. The ladies stand around the lane outside in dignified groups, whispering and nodding to each other and shaking their heads sadly.

'Why don't you tell the old faggots to go and mind their own bloody business!' George shouts down to me...

'It's no use telling them to mind their own business,' I yell back in exasperation. 'The baby is their business. He's the whole damn town's business! I'm trying to educate them!'

'Well, do you think you could do it more quietly? Or even just give in?'

I'm damned if I'll give in, even though the education programme seems to be working in reverse. I feed Shane with cunning propaganda to disseminate among the neighbouring houses. Shane returns with gruesome stories of babies who were allowed to go on crying and died (81-2).

In spite of, or perhaps, because of, her colonial attempts to "educate" the women, Clift, as an outsider in a new Symbolic Order, finds herself resignifying aspects of her maternal/nation dyad in order to survive in the Greek triad. She rationalises the changes she undergoes as not simply a subtle effect of living with the Other, but describes them metonymically as
tactical manoeuvres employed, in part, to counteract the united efforts of
the Hydran women and which ensure her own, and her family’s,
preservation. As an expatriate she is a neither/nor figure and thus her
refusal to “give in” to the native women’s attempts to “change” her ways
(metonyms for assimilation), and her battle to distribute “propaganda”
(another metonym for a return to the mother culture as a means of resisting
capitulation by substituting the Laws of the new country with those of the
old), reveal her ambivalent coloniser/colonised situation. The complexity of
Clift’s double/split positioning is articulated in Slemon’s Second World
Theory when he states that even the “illusion of a stable self/other,
here/there binary division has never been available to second-world
writers.”19 Clift, as an expatriate, is both alienated from her self (the
Nation) and the Other (as an outsider) and can never achieve the narrative
or psychological integration that is available to “national” and even third-
world postcolonial writers.20 Clift’s liminality is further explained by
Lacanian social semiotics which read subjectivity as a particular and
difficult process of fragmentation caused by internal and external cultural
forces. As an expatriate, removed from her original cultural dyad, Clift’s
sense of alienation and desire for integration must be greater. Her narrative
explores her continual splitting and her desire for the Other as a means of
achieving totality.

19 Stephen Slemon, “Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World,” World Literature
Written in English, 30.2 (1990): 38.
20 Slemon, 38.
Part of Clift’s tactics to ensure her “survival” (as an identifiable self), involves the creation of a fictive narrative to explain/justify her presence on the island. The narrative allows her to re-create a series of textual relations temporally and spatially remote from those she actually experiences. The events of her life on the island are filtered through the roles she plays for the islanders, for the expatriate group, for her family, for herself as an aspiring writer, and for her audience. This narrativising entails the working of desire and as such it generates object substitutes (personae) for desire that simultaneously express fulfilment of desire (in writing and in constructing a self-image), and its unresolved power. Clift warns the reader that she has had to resort to underhand methods in order to survive in Hydran society when she states that she has become “unnecessarily devious in business dealings with the Greeks” (10). Not only does this statement pronounce her intention to continue to exist within the strange new world through a type of personal closure, but also that being devious is a particular strategy employed to guarantee her psychological survival.21 As an expatriate she still wishes to use her “home” country as an anchor and as an agency of translation through which to make sense of her new

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21 Garry Kinnane, George Johnston: A Biography, Melbourne: Nelson Publishers, 1986, 163. Implicit in the theme of deception that recurs in both of Clift’s travelogues is the intertextual reference to the Odyssey itself. Athena and Odysseus employ deception and lies, manipulating events and people in order to achieve satisfactory outcomes. Odysseus in particular is praised by Athena for his abilities to mislead: “The goddess, gray-eyed Athena, smiled on him, and stroked him with her hand, and took on the shape of a woman, both beautiful and tall, and well versed in glorious handiworks, and spoke aloud to him and addressed him in winged words, saying: ‘It would be a sharp one, and a stealthy one, who would ever get past you in any contriving; even if it were a god against you. You wretch, so devious, never weary of tricks, then you would not, even in your own country give over your ways of deceiving and your thievish tales. They are near to you in your very nature...’” The Odyssey of Homer, translated by Richmond Lattimore, N.Y.: Harper Perennial, 1991, 205. Clift was simply employing devices that her mythical heroes had used before her excusing and somehow validating her deception.
environment. Her statement also suggests that she desires to survive as a writer, both in her textual dealings with the native population and the island and as a particular (and complete) persona with whom her readers can identify. The authority or "wholeness" of the persona she presents is revealed metaphorically through her descriptions of the island itself:

If the island is no longer ‘our’ island, it is very lovely nonetheless. A summer island, a painter’s paradise, just enough off the beaten track to be an authentic ‘discovery,’ simple still, and strong with its own personality. ‘Quite unspoilt,’ people are heard to say. ‘The essence of Greekness. An absolute gem’ (85).

Clift situates herself as a superior colonial commentator who, while she says she relinquishes exclusive ownership of the island (as an Anglo-Saxon inhabitant), actually reclaims it (as an author) in order to validate her own “authentic” position and her discovery of it as a site for exploration. The anonymous people who validate the island’s “Greekness” (tourists, fellow expatriates) are, for Clift, valuable and maybe even fantastical Others who assist her manufacturing and interrogation of the island’s textuality. These Others function in an intermediary position — exotic but familiar. The Greeks stay Other for both groups, and the travellers are Other in consolidating Clift in her “local” role. The “local” role is also a destabilisation since it places her as a refuge from the Greeks and as a go-between or surrogate Greek as well. This type of narrative fabrication provides Clift and, in turn the reader, with the illusion of a temporal presence that can be metaphorically linked to her own “strong” personality. In Lacanian terms, this type of discursive ploy is understood as a defensive
strategy of the ego which “resorts to an iconic dumping of fantasy over any disconcerting fragmentation which undermines its unified self-image”. By evoking exotic and imaginative semiotics, Clift is able metaphorically to cover her sense of self-division. For the reader, Clift is the “absolute gem” a complete and solid identity and she continues to construct herself as such in order to reinforce her authenticity, as a person and a writer, beyond the borders of her primal nation-dyad. As an expatriate, Clift has relocated to, what it is in her mind, a land of inconsistencies; the first other (the first-stage triad) which aided her insertion into her original Symbolic Order, is often irreconcilable with the apparent influences that dominate the Hydran Symbolic Order despite her attempts at metonymic similitude. Her awareness of the inconsistencies between the past and present Symbolic Orders (as well as her original Australian psycho-social relations), challenges her understanding of her self and prevents her inscription into the new culture except through metaphoric textual relations.

Clift’s compensatory construction of fictive and “real” images that work to conceal her own sense of self-division, can be seen in her deliberate fictionalisation of the names of actual people in her narrative. Many of the Greek individuals bear appellations borrowed from classical literature: Socrates, Creon, Aunt Electra, Dionyssos, Cassandra, Orestes, and Archonda. All of these names, with their deliberate metaphoric employment,

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22 Feldstein, 157.
gesture towards a schizo-reading of their significance. On the one hand, these people are natives occupying "real" spaces as Others within Clift's text but, on the other, the use of these specific names evokes their original literary context too, claiming them as part of an "owned" culture. The Western accretion around the names suggests a diversity of intratextual psychological readings which inform and expand many of the themes extant in the text. The themes of madness, (Cassandra, Creon, Dionyssos — of a different sort — Electra); ambivalence (Creon, Orestes, Electra); potential destruction of dyadic and familial relationships (Orestes and Creon); rhetorical and intellectual supremacy (Sophocles/Plato); carnivalesque space (Dionyssos); and un/conscious obfuscation (Cassandra) are all evoked. By using the names of these classical literary characters, the text both announces its intentions and positions itself as liminal: it disturbs the borders between fact and fiction by situating the natives as authentic and unique and as repetitions of previous literary models. By appropriating these figures in the way that she has, Clift constructs a dialogue between both self and Other essentially, if problematically, erasing their cognitive borders. Instead of constricting the possible readings of the Greek individuals' ethnicity or subjectivity, she multiplies them.

The other members of Clift's group are also reconstructed with fictitious names, allowing her the freedom to both invent and embellish events and personalities. Kinnane states that, "the names of the characters, apart from the Johnstons, are fictive, but the characters are clearly based on actual
people". By creating names for her fellow subjects, Clift is able to distance them from any association with or dependence on her own similar (Anglo-Saxon/Eurocentric) origins of subjectivity. This is particularly evident in the case of her Australian expatriate friends Ursula and Henry Donovan (Sidney and Cynthia Nolan), who both shared with Clift a common nation-dyadic relationship. By objectifying her friends with imaginary names and, therefore, resignifying them as objects, Clift is also able to comment with apparent authority on their whims and behaviour. There is a sense of both intimate knowledge and imaginative construction in her descriptions which allow her to establish some sort of credibility with a "home" readership. This idea is sustained in the organisation of the book which is written like a diary.

The diary structure suggests a tone of artless "confession" as opposed to deliberate and careful construction and gives a sense of intimacy to the text and allows the reader to believe that censorship has not been applied. There is an impression that what is being read is somehow "raw" and true-to-life. Yet this device is simply another textual arrangement on the part of the author that destabilises the authority of travel writing whilst simultaneously pointing to the narrative's self-reflexivity by describing a

23 Kinnane, 163.
24 One character that is rarely spared Clift's vitriol is Ursula, a pseudonym for Cynthia Nolan, a lady whom Clift detested. Kinnane says that in Peel Me A Lotus, "Clift painted an unsympathetic portrait of Cynthia as the bitchy aloof Ursula Donovan. When she read it, Cynthia never wanted anything to do with the Johnston's again." Kinnane, 160.
period of self-growth. Not only does Clift move through a series of enunciatory sites, creating a “rhetoric of restlessness”,\textsuperscript{25} she also expresses the ambivalence and liminality of the expatriate by refusing a synthesis of perspective. Expatriation signifies both the possibility of excess/closer grappling with desire and the double lack of original identity and present belonging. Within her “diary” she articulates the psychological destabilisation that occurs with cartographic, cultural, and linguistic marginalisation. It is as though the reader is not only being exposed to the differences in the physicality of life on Hydra, but to the divisions in the psycho-pathology of the narrator as well. Clift can never be located in one site, she is a fluid presence in her narrative.

Clift announces the elusiveness and dynamism of her text through its peculiarly feminine configuration. The book is divided into nine mensals — February to October — a sectioning which can be read as signifying a gestation and “birth”. Through this obvious feminine strategy, any colonising or androcentric rhetoric of the narrative is rendered ambivalent. The book is Clift’s progeny and, therefore, maintains a dyadic relationship with its author/mother. By releasing her literary child for publication she also exposes it to the wider world of signification as each reader interprets and then resignifies its contents. As the subject is always informed by its primal origins, so too the text is imbued with Clift’s persona and will

\textsuperscript{25} Huggan, 169.
always, because of the style and genres she has chosen to tell the story in, be influenced by any knowledge the reader may have of her. It is because of this, perhaps, that the reader is aware that this account expresses and, in a Lacanian reading, represses, a desire to communicate with the Other. Despite the overt ambivalence of Clift, there are moments when contact occurs. As it does, appropriately, with the birth of her child.26

When the book commences, Clift is very pregnant with her third child. It is this pregnancy (and her children) that allows her to traverse the borders of Otherness, balancing acceptance and rejection as productive binaries: “But it is the baby who is the focus of the most intense interest and curiosity, perhaps because he is the first foreign child ever to be born on the island (80)” and “Both he [Martin] and Shane seem to be loved quite genuinely by the islanders: it occurred to me again that in Greece children are one’s best insurance policy”(38). The children give Clift the licence to be herself, but they also tie her to the role of mother — a role she rejects. Once again, Clift suspends herself between roles that both define and alienate her: she is the writer/adventurer, mother/individual, Australian citizen/self, Greek resident/self. The role of mother is especially threatening to Clift as it holds up to her the prospect of being absorbed by the Other as a Greek mother: the absolute antithesis of the golden-girl imago. The children are adored by the Greeks, and it is through her relationship to her own children that she

26 This will be discussed shortly.
has some access to the Other and so cannot (nor is she allowed to by the
native women) relinquish her maternal role.

Clift employs a narrative methodology of self-begetting — the continually
created “I” whose identity is, along with her characters, repeatedly being
displaced. The “I” is moved to the periphery of the discourse in order to
allow her a new and “celibate” (pure, untarnished by a dyadic-derived
subjectivity) access to the Other. This “pure” self obscures the fact that she
found it difficult, if not impossible, to understand the Laws of the Other. In
his biography of George Johnston, Kinnane explains the ambivalence that
Clift and her family felt towards the Other as follows:

If the Johnston’s ultimately failed to merge fully into the Greek
way of living, it was no fault of the Greeks. Johnston and Clift
often claimed that they were merging in because, they insisted,
they were “fully accepted by the locals”. But this was not the
problem. It was more that they both already had a cultural
identity as Australians, in their own and the Greek’s eyes, and
this could not be shed simply by a change of location.27

Kinnane is partly correct in his assumptions: the relationship between
subjectivity and place of birth often functions in an oppressive sense,
restricting the subject, regardless of location, to a specific and unalterable
cultural identity. In so far as Clift and Johnston attempted to belong,
Kinnane is justified in pointing to the evident limitations surrounding their
project, for example, they never mastered the language. But belonging did

27 Kinnane, 161.
not necessarily entail total conversion. Paul Carter writes that the relationship between relocation and identification is generically configured:

Two antithetical assumptions are commonly made about persons who remove themselves from one place to another: either that they bring with them intact the culture of their home country and, as far as they are able, impose it on their new surroundings ... or else that newcomers experience arrival in the new land as a form of rebirth and, with a minimum of regret, shrug off their former identity, swiftly assimilating to the ways of the new host culture.²⁸

There is little doubt that Clift unconsciously attempts to reconstruct her expatriate life on lines similar to those in Carter's model. Firstly, on Kalymnos, her removal is viewed as a type of “rebirth” and, on Hydra, she attempts to narrate it as an unproblematic process of “assimilation”. Despite these efforts, in her descriptions of the psychosocial difficulties of adjustment, particularly on Hydra, the distances between her self and the Other are made manifest. As Kinnane wryly notes, there was a vast gap in mutual perceptions and the unavoidable designation of cultural identity with which to contend. Yet, one can only claim authority as a mediator of cultures by relative closeness to the Other: absolute closeness/absorption precludes any type of mediation.

As Charmian, the “golden-girl”, Clift simultaneously locates herself as an Australian (sun/beach lover) and as a person who has removed herself to her correct spiritual home; one that happens to resemble her cultural home. Chick describes Clift's feelings for Greece:

Quite simply it had become her home. She resonated to the warmth, simplicity and honesty of the people; to the sun, the open blue skies and the ever-present sea, so reminiscent of her childhood.29

This quotation reveals the resiting of Greece, in Clift's mind, as the temporal and spatial reality of her childhood cultural imago. Notwithstanding this, by locating herself as an expatriate and a semi-native within her text, Clift disrupts the easy substitution of one home for another and points to her situation as liminal. Whilst the geography and emotional openness of Greece and Australia might be similar, they are not the same. To one version of Charmian, Hydra is home; to other aspects of her self, it is a source of anxiety and a place that exposes rather than hides her differences. Later in the text, the ambivalence she feels becomes clearer as she describes her "absolute gem" of an island as a dream:

It is a dream island now, isolated from all reality by a grey veil, and glowing in dream colours of topaz, amber, jade, of ruby and sapphire and emerald and pearl. Faster and faster the dream figures gyrate in the dream stillness, acting out the dream within the dream ...Where does it start? Where does it end? Is there any true line of demarcation between what is veritable and what is not? (183).

Clift repositions herself (and, by extension, her narrative) in the gap between viewer and viewed, between external and internal, as her "reality" takes on a dream-like quality. It is a similar experience to that which the child undergoes before the mirror, where the idealised ego relies on the construction of integral boundaries (which are themselves a fiction) based

29 Chick, 267.
on an objectified visual image. Looking in the mirror exposes the gap, in the same way that Clift, by resignifying the island as a fantasy, blurs any boundaries or sense of totality she may have articulated. By moving the island to the realms of fantasy, she replaces her earlier metaphoric identification with the island with a deliberate disidentification. Clift then continues to reinvent the dramatic aspects of her existence on Hydra, narrativising it and casting herself, narcissistically, into the role of a star “whose totalised perspective is seen and judged in relation to the Other’s [and the reader’s implicit] gaze”. Clift may have found, in Greece, another home, but the reactivation of the memories of her nation-dyad make her aware that the secondary Symbolic Order of the island, despite its seeming similarities, is distinct from her original one. The island both validates her “traveller” expatriate self and negates it by forcing her foreignness/Australianess upon her, just as writing to an Australian audience signifies both a connection and a distance. It is in this split, between old and new Symbolic Orders, that Clift’s narrative is produced, exciting wonder through its refusal to submit to any systematic codes that would attempt to circumscribe it within their boundaries.

Clift interrogates the split or gap produced between the two Symbolic codes and her examination of these gaps can be recovered through the application

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30 Feldstein, 159.
31 Feldstein, 159.
32 Feldstein, 162.
of psychoanalytical theory. In psychoanalytical discourse, the gaps come to represent a lack and, “it is at the point of lack, that desire of the subject is constituted”.\textsuperscript{33} As a child recognises the lack in its dyadic relationship with its mother, so too the cultural/national subject (in this instance Clift), recognises the lack in her/his nation.dyad and desires to fill this lack by encountering the Other. Desire always remains, even once contact with the Other has been achieved; it operates continuously at an unconscious level and, as such, is never recognised:

If it is merely at the level of desire of the Other that man can recognise his desire, as desire of the Other, is there not something that must appear to him to be an obstacle to his fading, which is a point at which his desire can never be recognized? This obstacle is never lifted, nor ever to be lifted,...it is in seeing a whole chain come into play at the level of desire of the Other that the subject’s desire is constituted.\textsuperscript{34}

The expatriate site can be understood as the realisation of a nostalgia for the national.imaginary (sun/beach) and the cultural imaginary (myth/writing). Travel becomes the displaced/objectified expression of the impossible desire of total national belonging. The obstacles of the new Symbolic order that Clift has to, at the very least, recognise and contact (Greek morals/economy), will mean that her nostalgia for her nation.dyad and, in turn, desire for the Other, will be more intensely felt. The expatriate subject swings more extremely from one locus of desire to the other. It is the constitution and continuation of desire, and the displacing of it onto newer sites, that allows Clift to function as a subject: “desire is thus a movement,

\textsuperscript{34} Lacan, \textit{The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis}, 235.
an energy that is always transpersonal, directed to (O)thers.\textsuperscript{35} It is the combination of the gaps (or lack) and the desire to fill these that establishes Clift's split subjectivity and propels her into attempting to enter the next Triadic phase of development. Her desire to enter a new Symbolic Order is frustrated due to her "dismal failure to speak Greek,"\textsuperscript{36} which can be read as a symptom of the impossibility and necessity of not becoming the Other. As stated in Chapter One, "desire ... institutes a new relation in and to language"\textsuperscript{37} positioning the speaker as a discursive "I". Clift, because she cannot "speak" herself, is unable to site her self or accept the subjectivity offered by the Other (outsider; rich tourist). Lacan says, "If the subject is what I say it is, namely the subject determined by language and speech, it follows that the subject... begins in the locus of the Other...".\textsuperscript{38} Lila Kalinich suggests that:

Language is the medium through which the symbolic order returns to the flesh and writes its messages. The messages thus inscribed are the particular ones of our linguistic and acoustic experience, not simply fantasmogoric creations of our solipsistic and individual lives. In other words, we are what we hear.\textsuperscript{39}

While Clift is, in this sense, deaf to the Laws of the Other, she unconsciously attempts to reconcile this situation by adopting multiple positions within her text. From the margins of the Other she seeks to interrogate her plural subjectivities and histories, her old Symbolic Order

\textsuperscript{35} Grosz, Jacques Lacan, 65.
\textsuperscript{36} Kinnane, 161.
\textsuperscript{37} Grosz, Jacques Lacan, 66.
(represented by herself, the expatriates and the tourists), and the new one
(represented by the Hydrans and Hydra itself), that she is trying to acquire.
In this sense, her failure to enter completely the Symbolic Order of the
Other becomes a discursive triumph; the fact that the language eludes her
increases her desire and confirms her in her role as expatriate (and gives
her continual impetus to write about “never arriving”). Lacan states that:
“The function of desire is the last residuum of the effect of the signifier in
the subject. Desidero is the Freudian cogito”.\(^\text{40}\) Clift’s failure to “merge”, to
grasp the language and hence enter a new Symbolic Order, operates
unconsciously as a metaphor for her ambivalence towards her nation of
origin, towards her expatriate friends, and for her desire to locate herself as
different from them. It is also a sign of her inability to surrender herself and
thus become “Other” to them. Clift’s inability to acquire linguistic “proof” of
the success of her journey into Other spheres exacerbates both her
ambivalence towards her expatriate status and further signifies her
liminality and her continuing alienation: she remains split from herself. Her
voyage away from her primal nation-dyad has not resolved her sense of
separation and alienation therefore she constructs versions of herself as
discursively unaffected, “chaste”, in order to maintain a degree of
authenticity with her home readership suppressing her desire and perceived
psychological inadequacies. This strategy is analogous to Deleuze and
Guattari’s “celibate machine”. David Musselwhite defines the “celibate
machine” as:

magnificently and resplendently impersonal, transcending
genders and codings and making available intolerable but
ineffable intensities. It is here that a new subject can appear that
is quite peripheral to identity — which belongs to the manic-
depressive moment — a new subject that can roam at will all the
intensities, all the genders, all the histories, all the names, all the
conditions that are available to it ... in all those moments of
intensity that offer multiple entrances and positions.41

Clift’s concern with presenting a “celibate” version of the self is reflected in
her preoccupation with the Hydran expatriate community. This
preoccupation occurs, in part, as a response to Mrs Knip’s question, “what
are you doing it for?” which also demands of Clift a self-reflexivity. It is as
though by interrogating herself and the other expatriates, Clift may find a
suitable response to the many questions that expatriation provokes. On
Hydra, Clift is situated as an ambivalent member of a growing expatriate
community. The idea of a group association concurrently threatens and
protects Clift’s subjectivity and her genuineness as translator of the Other.
Clift continuously validates her presence within the small Greek community
over and above that of the other expatriates and tourists who seek “asylum”
or contact with the Other by relocating, however temporarily, to Hydra. She
says that her,

position among the other expatriate protestants who are also
seeking to take their lives back into their own hands is a curious
one. In a particular way, we are unique. By them we are regarded
as being successful. We own a house, support a family, and have
books actually published. But also, to them, we embody that very
dull normality from which they are all fleeing. We are respectable
revolutionaries, often heavy with responsibilities, harassed by
children, and apparently less concerned with the state of our
psyches than with the state of our drains (112).

As a permanent islander, Clift is an ambivalent figure to the other expatriates. On the one hand, because she has relocated and, in their eyes been successful, they embrace her as both one of them and a genuine and admired semi-native. On the other, however, by acquiring a mortgage and all the associated burdens of this type of commitment (including a family), she is a representation of what they have fled. Clift, as though to compensate for her marginal and ambivalent status on the island, continually reminds the reader that she is both qualified and able to translate the various temporal and spatial presences for them. Referring to the other expatriate/tourists, she declares:

Transients all, they are experiencing vicariously through us and our house the problems and pleasures of settling down. So they come and they go through the day, each according to his mood wistful, envious, thoughtful, irritable, or wearing the lightness of their own unmortgaged freedom like wings (48).

Here Clift reveals, not only that she is an agency through which the various tourists and expatriates (and, by inference, readers as well) can experience the Other, but the binaries extant within the expatriate group — the temporary versus the permanent. 42 She says, of the other expatriates:

I refuse to acknowledge them my spiritual brothers. For they have declared not only against the rat-race of modern life, but against life itself. The human race, they say, is an irremediable disaster, the heavens and earth a conjoined imbecility, life itself nothing but a torture chamber of senseless affliction. And saying this they absolve themselves from all responsibility, all control, all moral laws, all sense of duty. Humility is lacking in them. They know no direction. They have lost all sense of wonder (128).

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42 See also, *Peel Me A Lotus*, pages, 18,21,70-2,112,114,115,118,and 127.
By locating herself as distinct from this group, Clift also recreates herself as the heroine of her story. The disparagement of her expatriate friends raises her to a superior spiritual and epistemological position. Clift strives to situate herself as something akin to the anti-tourist tourist, "the appreciator of indigenous culture, not a short-term visitor to a foreign country". This type of discourse generates "a rhetoric of moral superiority", and Clift uses this discursive strategy to juxtapose favourably her own emotional commitment to the Other against that of her expatriate companions. She again figures herself liminally, at the threshold of the various extant binaries: westerner/native, resident/nomad, permanent/temporary, prisoner/escapee and, by moving between speaking positions, Clift reconstructs herself and her discourses from a variety of positionalities simultaneously affirming the binaries and deconstructing their rhetorical sites. She locates herself as an expatriate by aligning herself with the "revolutionaries" while later detaching herself from that particular site by refusing to acknowledge a spiritual "brotherhood" or a commonness of purpose between herself and the expatriate group. When Clift constructs herself in the role of permanent resident, she positions herself as a semi-native commenting upon the fallibility and falseness of those transient subjects who perceive Hydra as simply a hiatus in their journeys away from and back towards their mother country. So whilst Clift acknowledges her origins (by mixing with the expatriates and tourists) she also attempts to

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43 Sharrad, 107.
44 Huggan, 170.
45 Huggan, 170.
46 Huggan, 170.
have her presence sanctioned by the Hydran community. The continual presence of the expatriates and tourists serve to remind her of her psychosocial foundations and the fact that she continues to reside outside the Greek Symbolic Order. As Paul Carter says, "the displaced person who consciously identifies himself with the culture of his country of origin is a person doubly displaced. Similarly, a migrant community that builds its identity on the conscious preservation of a cultural form stands outside the culture that produced them". Clift attempts to escape this double-displacement and retain her validity as an expatriate through spiritual and textual disengagement from the western community on Hydra.

While Clift works hard to establish her separateness from the expatriate group, she also, ironically, seeks to maintain a relationship with them. By involving herself with the other westerners on the island, Clift can feel secure, resist the allure of the Other:

We all talk the same language, have more or less the same cultural pattern, the same frame of reference. We laugh at the same jokes, understand the same implications in events, and are equally perturbed at the trend of modern civilization. We are here, all together on the same small island, living more or less the same way, and looking — alas! — most definitely A Foreign Group, variations on the theme of escapism (127-8).

Clift aligns herself with them in order to, as Sharrad states, "avoid the identity-threatening experiences ... facing the cross-cultural traveller:

47 Carter, 99.
rejection by the Other or absorption into the Other”.

In this sense, one of the functions of the “Foreign Group” on Hydra is much the same as that of the Lacanian mirror — both assist in the process of self-definition and prevent interruption or incorporation into the Other, giving the comfortable illusion of a gestalt.

I can satisfy my needs more adequately by keeping to myself and the members of the in-group with which I am identified ... The group is more powerful, more inclusive, and, therefore, more important than the individual. To be free is to sacrifice the arbitrary inner self and to fit into a rationally grounded system.

Clift and the other expatriates indulge in a commodious and secure dyadic relationship that, at times, refuses to acknowledge anything outside its cultural totality. Clift, however, tires of the numbing safety of this dyad which echoes that of her original nation-dyad, the “rationally grounded system” of the laws of the first triad. She flees Australia and London in order to avoid systematic inculcation in the socially correct forms and moves to Greece as a means of preserving a protective distance and recapturing her privileged “youth”. The expatriate group (and the Hydrans), turn her into a mother again and cause her to flee to a series of lovers so she can attempt to recapture her desired “golden-girl” imago and relocate herself outside her dyadic discourse and at the periphery of the Other. This ploy, however, fails to work and the island, and indeed the whole idea of expatriation begins to lose its appeal: “Everything is changed, as though I am looking at the island in a distorting mirror, or as if the moon has begun

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48 Sharrad, 108.
49 Levinas, 16-7.
to shine on us with her other face” (160). This expresses the Janus-faced ambiguity of expatriation, the mirror becoming a metonym for the inescapable obligation the subject owes to the mother-country which first gave her/him a language, a sense of self, and the desire for the Other.50 The distortion of the mirror expresses the apprehension the search for the Other can potentially generate as well as the distortions in apperception it can create. At one stage Clift says: “I thought of my baby, born a stranger in a strange land who would probably have to learn his mother tongue as a foreign language” (68). This also sets up a dialectic between place of birth and subjectivity: Clift perceives her son’s mother tongue as her own, however, the child is born in Greece implying that, culturally speaking, his mother tongue will be acquired there.

Clift problematises the relationship between cultural identity, place, and language. She does this by acknowledging that her son will have access to two Symbolic Orders: the Greek Symbolic Order by accident of place, and her own, by learning his “mother tongue” (literally, from his mother), and therefore a version of the Australian Symbolic that is removed from any geopolitical specificity. This situation potentiates a dialogue between different dyadic relationships and their origins. It is as though by suppressing place (and a Greek cultural identity) Clift can secure a dyadic site for her son within her own nation through language — the mother becoming the site or

passage through which this will occur. Clift's dyadic relationship with her nation of origin enables her to perceive the Otherness of the island and its natives and forces her to metonymically replace what she conceives with more familiar signifiers occluding the Otherness of Hydra and the Hydrans behind semiotic barriers. Not only does Clift do this for her son, but for her self as well. As Paul Carter suggests:

They [the newcomers] speak ... as if they cannot imagine living anywhere else and, even though they admit (and even exult in the fact) that the country they live in remains indescribably foreign, they refuse to acknowledge the stand in nature of the cultural grid they impose upon it.⁵¹

Not only does the group gather around a table in a cafe on the waterfront on a daily basis to exchange gossip, they exchange food and money as well, relying on each other instead of the Laws of the Other to guide them. The imposition of their cultural grid on Hydra becomes even more apparent when Ursula desires to create an English garden (42). As Clift wryly notes, an English garden would not survive the combination of inappropriate climate and landscape, Ursula's impulse "is almost certain to end perversely in destruction" (42). This points to the futility of imposing an unaccommodating selfhood on Otherness: the need for adaptation and hybridity and thus the superiority of her own position. On the other hand, what Clift is also articulating here is the danger of attempting an organic relocation — it simply cannot be done. All the subject can aspire to do is erect cultural masks, whether linguistic, physical, or economic, as a means

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⁵¹ Carter, 39.
of negotiating the Other. Masks and masquerade, with their concealment of difference, can seriously obstruct the subject's desire for recognition of and by the Other and potentiate psychological devastation. As Lacan states: "Masquerade ... is precisely to play not at the imaginary, but at the symbolic, level."52 This is at that level where subjectivity is both recognised and split. Cultural grids or semiotic barriers can be penetrated through analysis or even metamorphosed through interpretation, and this is another role Clift adopts as she purposefully dismantles the grids that she painstakingly builds.

Another liminal site in the text is the Hydran waterfront; its liminality being expressed through its geographical and economical peculiarity. The waterfront is a promenade/port where cafes and shops provide a commercial barrier between the sea, with its imports and exports (people and products), and the streets behind that signify the residential areas of the natives. It is the threshold between culture and nature, sea and land, natives and non-natives, outside and inside, procuring and retailing. For Clift, contact with the waterfront is a daily necessity where she has the opportunity to meet with members of the expatriate community and some of the indigenes. Her favourite spot on the waterfront is also situated so as to allow her unobstructed observation of the in the port and on the water's edge. This particular site represents an exchange; not only is gossip reciprocated, and

goods bought and sold, but again the gaze is employed as indigenes and strangers alike are subjected to it and reciprocate it. Once more the scopic drive functions as powerful tool through which subjectivity is further divided and through this division continually confirmed. Clift is able to identify herself as opposed to or the same as specific individuals she encounters eliding, temporarily at least, aspects of herself. In this space, Clift adopts a number of contrary positions, and it is here that the reader is able to locate her different enunciatory sites: the semi-native, the expatriate, the tourist, the woman, the interpreter of exotic semiotics, the writer, the wife, the mother. It is as though the geographically liminal position of the waterfront allows Clift the freedom to express her various selves and enter into a dialectic with the binaries produced by, and her ambivalent feelings towards, her different rhetorical stances.

Initially, the discursive potential of the waterfront is viewed positively, as a site for the politics of identification and subjectivity:

Here on the waterfront there is always company. It is easy to join a group around a plastic tablecloth and a flask of wine, and to sit for hours, gossiping, watching the evening promenade go by, conscious ... that one's limbs are relaxed, that one is not really attentive at all (122).

Later in the text, however, Clift describes the waterfront with complete contempt, as a place to be shunned at all costs, where subjectivity and desire are suppressed:

It has become an obsession with both of us to try to avoid that tainted area of the waterfront with its traps of tables and wine flasks, where still the shafts of spite and envy and malice break and splinter, and still under the loops of naked bulbs the
dislocated psyches creak and crack, the obscure philosophers are trotted out, the negligent poems never completed, the revolutionary paintings never begun, and the interminable verbal catch-ball with esoteric phrases about linear values and plastic form that inflame George to a white-heat of fury (163).

There is distinct shift, in these two quotations, from her imago/freedom to culture/constraint, from the sea/Greeks to the cafes and the expatriates. This movement suggests that the waterfront metaphorically represents the psychological divisions extant within Clift herself. It signifies firstly, through the various exchanges that take place in its vicinity, the cultural and psychological advantages of expatriation. At the waterfront Clift is able to identify, temporarily, with different groups through the sharing of food and drink. She is also able to make contact with the Other through scopic or linguistic means and therefore reaffirm both the alterity of the Other and the plurality of her self. The waterfront also offers (literally, in Clift's situation), the option to leave and return home. As Levinas states: "This reversion of the alterity of the world to self-identification must be taken seriously; the 'moments' of this identification — the body, the home, labour, possession, economy ... are the articulations of this structure".53 The waterfront, however, also symbolises, metonymically, the dyadic relationship between the subject and her/his nation. Clift eschews the waterfront precisely because it comes to reflect that from which she fled; the anaesthetic Laws of her home-nation. The "traps" she speaks of are those that are extant within the ellipse of the nation-dyad, those that repress

53 Levinas, 38.
desire by presenting it in the form of "tainted" Laws: those which pretend to be Other but are culturally only other and therefore a duplication of the original dyadic mother-child relationship. Because Clift succeeds in placing herself in opposed discursive sites (as self, other and Other), she sets up a dialectic between what the waterfront signifies and what her own rhetorical strategies suggest, deconstructing any specific position that the reader may try to give her, and confirming the waterfront's liminal possibilities. The waterfront also represents because of its double push/pull aspect, the ambivalence of the expatriate; as much as Clift loathes its dyadic overtones, she cannot resist returning to it either physically or figuratively. It is simultaneously a fact of her situation and contact with the Other and a fiction allowing generic and often frightening psychological possibilities.

The final section of *Peel Me A Lotus* describes the invasion of Hydra by an American film crew who appropriate, not only the waterfront, but the entire island in order to fetishise it and construct a celluloid version of Otherness that western audiences will be able to consume. The production company are positioned as imperialists who are going to take the island apart (170) with a "conquering army" (173), colonising and proselytising the natives and their island. Yet Clift indicates that both master and slave are complicit in this process; the Hydrans help generate the changes needed to transform the island. As far as they are concerned it is an economic matter — not cultural. Money, once again, becomes a signifier of cultural exchange and commercial subjugation:
“Socrates, don’t talk such nonsense, “ George said sternly. “There aren’t six houses on the island with showers, you know that. And one of those houses is for rent.”

Socrates clasped his hands over his belly and doubled up with laughter. “Then pirasi! Never mind, eh? Do you know what that Americanos said? He said Socrates you find me one nice clean house and it hasn’t got a shower, I build one shower. Dollaria, eh! That Americanos has more dollaria than the king. Two million dollaria they’re going to spend on this moving picture, did you know that? Everyone’s going to have a shower, going to have a lavatory with a chain, going to have lots of dollaria” (171).

The Hydrans willingly participate in the artificial activities that are demanded of them, posing for the cameras which are there to record an idealisation of Greek peasant life; reconstructing their daily lives as roles which they inhabit as characters, not as individual subjects. In a sense the natives parody both themselves and western constructions of them by “performing” for the cameras, but there is also the notion that the film crew pervades and destroys, transforming the Greek daily reality into a world of irreconcilable Eurocentric fiction, where “the waterfront has become the queerest fantasy world” (178). The Americans adopt a colonial position in relation to the natives who become a willing and homogenous colonised group. But the whole process, as the film itself exemplifies, is a fantasy; but it is one that the Americans, as western capitalists, encourage. They appropriate and textualise the natives in a particular way: one that maintains their sense of superiority. Sharrad describes this appropriation as the aim of “the colonial officer [whose purpose] ... is to impose a dominant narrative on a subjected culture”.54 While the narrative and the subjected

54 Sharrad, 108.
culture might be temporary in terms of the physical adjustments the islanders make, they are still colonial and lasting enterprises with a wide readership/audience. Clift co-operates with the Hollywood group simultaneously placing herself with the natives on the one hand and the colonising forces of the Americans on the other:

In this weird dream-world everyone slips into A Role ... The Donovans and ourselves play loose extras as Genuine Beachcombers. We are all treated with a curious respect. Somehow we have become indigenous. And even the most apparently worldly members of the film company are rather inclined to drop their forks and use their fingers if we join them — I suppose to make us feel at ease — and to apologize in hushed voices for Spoiling Our Paradise ... Queerest, and most terrifying of all, one finds oneself unprotestingly playing the role assigned ... I find myself automatically fitting myself out “in character” (178-9).

The adaptation of a “role” by Clift comfortably homogenises her as Other. Whereas to the islanders, their objectification and erasure as individuals by the film is problematic, for Clift the presence of the film company allows her to be, temporarily at least, located as possessing the phallus: that is, the Laws of the Other. As Barthes argues, regarding photography: “... the Photograph is the advent of myself as [O]ther: a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity”.55 This dissociation is what Clift has been both actively seeking and purposefully avoiding. The film now provides her with an external and temporary means of moving unproblematically into the discourse of the Other and receiving their Laws. Her apparent shift into this sphere is secured through the objective gaze of the American movie

cameras. As Barthes suggests, however, "From the object to its image there is of course a reduction — in proportion, perspective, color — but at no time is this reduction a transformation." Therefore, the psycho-shift from the dyadic into the triadic phase is simply an illusion, an illusion of which Clift is aware and which she dramatically shatters in the narrative by recalling an earthquake (186): nature’s reaction to the inappropriate and artificial cultural exchanges that have been occurring.

The making of the film also parallels Clift’s travelogue: she too creates a world of artifice and guile and, like the director of the film, she becomes a “colonial officer” who erects facades in order to hide one particular version of ethnicity and present another. Clift is very critical of the Americans commercial/imperial appropriation of people and spaces on Hydra, appearing unaware that she is appropriating the Hydrans in a similar fashion. Like the film crew, Clift uses spatial referents and people as correlatives for her subjectivity, ambivalently either obscuring or disclosing them. Clift’s narrative is never static: she continually moves between places and spaces performing a “role”, fitting herself out as a particular character in one scene only to deconstruct it in the next. This keeps the narrative fluid and dynamic as does the use of self-reference as a means of examining cultural space.57

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57 Carter, 170.
The character of Mrs Knip, whilst functioning metaphorically as an imperialistic force who “is prepared to civilize the island” (149), is also the mother of two of the more eccentric characters in the text: Katherine and Toby Nichols. This pair are “American by birth, European by education, and Greek by choice” (70). The Nichols attempt to adopt the Greek way of life as authentically as possible, denying themselves any western luxuries and often the company of their compatriots for fear of contagion:

They declined an invitation to join the rest of the foreign population for dinner at Spiro’s restaurant, not, I think, from any unfriendliness, but because they are truly afraid of a sort of contamination. Their conversion to the Simple Way is as narrow and as ardent as only an intellectual conversion can be (72).

Here Clift makes reference to levels of “conversion” implying that the Nichols’ attempts to imitate Greek life are inauthentic because they are so excessive, and their “conversion” is, more or less, a cerebral one. This type of commentary reflects well on Clift’s own situation. Implicit in her words is the idea that she does not indulge in a pathetic mimesis, but acknowledges that she can only ever live with the Hydrans, not be like them. As Carter says:

... the self-styled custodian of ethnic culture stands in relation to the living ... as a ghost ... newcomers who set about aping the manners of the host culture may be tolerated by those around them, but they will never be accepted as “locals”. Trapped in the mirror of others’ expectations, they will not construct a space where they can speak for themselves: they may act eccentric but they will be incapable of embracing a fate of their own ... Mimesis was a work whose conditions and circumstances of existence are not immediately derived from the culture it describes ... but built rather on an agonizing distance from it.58

58 Carter, 100-1.
Whereas the mimesis Clift attempted in *Mermaid Singing* opened up channels through which communication, however slight, could be instigated, in *Peel Me A Lotus*, the mimesis of the Nichols evolves into a pitiable masquerade that parodies, not only the culture they are attempting to understand, but the ethnic politics of western societies that appropriate and interpret Other cultures without any internal knowledge. Part of the reason the Nichols indulge in their “slavish imitation” (129) is, as Clift notes, to affect a new reality. Katherine and Toby abhor western cultural practices and come to Hydra as a means of escaping them and all they represent; they attempt to deny their nation-dyadic origins and plunge psychologically unprepared, into a new Symbolic Order. Their psychosocial origins remain extant, however, illustrating the unavoidable binaries in their efforts, finally rendering their attempts at cultural mimesis offensive. As Clift disparagingly writes:

But then how faintly ludicrous is Toby's Greek moustache, and Katherine’s head-scarf. How nonsensical the play-acting of the wooden loom, the nightly ceremony of lighting the lamp before the ikons. And I have a notion that even fanatical determination and a private income will not bring off complete conversion. Katherine has gone back to the gymnasium tutor for her lessons. She seems to have some queer block as far as the Greek language is concerned, Toby reports worriedly: every lesson ends in tears. Love for a country is not enough (129).

The Nichols pursue what Graham Huggan terms the “Culturally Authentic”, the quest for legitimacy as a means of establishing self-reference and self-knowledge. They represent another type of expatriate:

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59 Huggan, 169.
60 Their behaviour is also analogous, in the psychoanalytical sense, to that of some exiles.
the one that attempts to deny his or her cultural genesis by suppressing it physically and mentally. What this passage also reveals is that Katherine and Toby are fixated on the objectified Other-image, an image that refuses to acknowledge (unconsciously or consciously) a lack or gap between self and Other that will stimulate desire. The new language (representing the Symbolic Order of the new country) proves an insurmountable obstacle that will not allow suppression of the nation-dyad (a gap). On the contrary, the nation-dyad demands acknowledgment: the Nichols are forced to communicate in English. Not only does Katherine fail to acquire the language, but Toby, who already speaks fluent Greek (a Euro/American version of it) finds any attempts he makes to communicate with the natives thwarted (70) because the natives want to practice their English on him. Ultimately, the Nichols find themselves triply displaced: they are non-natives, unwesternised westerners, and they divorce themselves from association with the expatriate group. So when Katherine's mother arrives and poses her perplexing question “What are you doing it for?”, the Nichols, along with the other expatriates, find themselves unable to answer.

The ambivalence of expatriation is ultimately expressed, once again, through the arrogation of grotesque spaces. Whereas in *Mermaid Singing* Clift achieved this through her descriptions of the carnival, in this text she focuses on the gothic and tropes of madness, decay, and the unnatural, to open up new and ambivalent spaces and speaking sites. The distortions that
Clift describes at various points in the text are all perversions of the normal, of nature, whether it be nightfall (51-2), wasps (155), or the weather (154). All abnormalities are furtively blamed on the island itself:

The old woman sweeping the church doorstep looks up at me as I pass, and her eyes are white with trachoma. Two adolescent louts are teasing the dwarf girl and she is laughing — why did I never notice before that she has two sets of teeth? All the Bosch people have crawled out from their dark corners and are limping and hopping and gibbering in the sweltering sun: the face in the window has a beak like a parrot, the dead baby of malnutrition is a swollen toad, a woman shrieks among the windburnt geraniums with the howling mouth of a Greek mask — gone mad, they say, with waiting for her man to return from the sea — the hand that measures out a mound of glistening green grapes is not a hand at all, but a sort of double-hooked claw covered with scabs...I cannot seem to blink into focus. The tiers of ruins seem more real than the gay and crowded waterfront. The island died long ago; the antics of all the smart bright people who throng the cafe tables suddenly have the ultimate obscenity of necrophilia (160-1).

In this passage, Clift situates herself as an observer and recorder of the gothic and removes herself from its odious processes and establishes her superiority over the Others, by setting up binary oppositions between herself and what she sees. As the island and its inhabitants are dead, she is alive; as the old woman is mad, she is sane; as everything she describes is abnormal, she (and her cultural origins, her subjectivity) are normal. Yet by using the gothic as a narrative device, Clift also exposes aspects of her many selves. As Arlene Sykes argues, in gothic narratives, “women reveal deep-seated conflicts between a socially acceptable passive, congenial “feminine” self and a suppressed monstrous hidden self”.61 Clift sites herself as both a part of her necrophiliac nightmare and as distinct from it because she is

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able to see this vision/versions of herself. Thus, through her employment of
the gothic, she subtly exposes aspects of the selves she has repressed/hidden
from the reader.

As the story progresses the supernatural feeling of the island grows,
mounting to an extraordinary tension which finds a correlative in the
narrative with Clift's increasing feelings of ambivalence towards her life on
Hydra. She describes some of the islanders as "Bosch people" (160),
signalling quite clearly her appropriation of the gothic as a strategy to
subvert the realist discourse of her travelography. Finally, Clift depicts the
earthquake which not only shakes the island, but functions as a literary
means of discarding the grotesque and its associated spaces. Life on the
island — cultural and natural — returns to normal after the quake, the last
few pages of the text being written as an unsatisfactory denouement to the
energy, anxiety, and bitterness that preceded it. There is even a cleansing
rain after the oppressive heat which functions in an all-too-obvious
metaphorical way, providing a comfortable and generically correct (happy)
ending to a text that sought to disturb and question. By employing the
gothic in the way she has, however, Clift has discursively rendered her own
authenticity questionable as she satirises and exaggerates incidents and
people in order to declare her own ambivalence at her expatriate situation.
The ambivalence Clift feels is further articulated in the title of the book itself. At the height of the grotesque and gothic diatribe Mrs Knip tells Katherine and Toby “that the only place you are likely to find [lotus] is right back home”(160). This statement is a direct reference to the title of the travelography and emphasises the narrative’s employment as an ambivalent and liminal sphere of inquiry. Peeling is the liminal site between gazing and desiring (you are acting on both of these), and consuming (which is yet to commence). Peeling is also a dynamic word which contains ideas of movement, exposure, and eruption and a possible rejection of the interior. The lotus was the flower of Homer’s Lotus-Eaters who consumed its fruit in order to forget about home. Implied in the title is the notion that home is not forgotten, it is always apprehended, it is only the impetus to return that is suspended: the fruit has not yet been devoured, forgetfulness has not yet affected the possessor or peeler of the fruit, but the potential for it to do so is there. The title is also paradoxical, because the request is to peel ME a lotus; therefore the action is being undertaken on the petitioner’s behalf. This positions the text itself as a lotus and the act of reading as a type of peeling or even consummation. It also sites the narrator as a hedonistic, self-indulgent subject who wants to consume the flesh of experience without the inconvenience of the tartness of the skin. Or, alternately, it could be argued that Clift, through her title, concedes that home can never be occluded or forgotten, but must be recognised: one should only ever peel the lotus, not digest its powerful fruit.

The title could also be read as an anguished cry to end the schizo-state Clift currently, as an expatriate, occupies: to hasten the state of forgetfulness that she desires. It is cry to discard the limen — to put an end to her medial status.

Clift's two travelogues, *Mermaid Singing* and *Peel Me A Lotus*, use the reality of expatriation to focus upon diversified ways of representing the self. Clift constructs relationships between herself and the exotic communities she inhabits that are ultimately multifaceted and always marginalised, exposing the difficulties facing the self when it encounters the Other. By adopting numerous positions within her text, Clift shows a total disregard for temporal or episodic authenticity and enters into a dialogic and dynamic encounter with logocentric interpretations of women's writing thus problematising any attempts to essentialise or silence her polyphonic voices. By fictionalising the narrating self, Clift further anticipates the process of self-begetting: an invented and protean narratorial voice that "travels" in terms of psychological and spiritual journeys in order to attempt to recapture the illusion of the gestalt which was projected for her and onto her by her nation-dyad. While the outcome is predictable (the self will always remain split), it is the search and its associated journeys that provide a variety of discourses which interrupt both the static constructions of and the borders that exist between subjectivity, nationality, ethnicity, and cultural forms, interrogating the complicated politics of second-
world/white-settler identity. Clift also announces the fluidity of her discourses through her changing roles and apperceptions interrupting the apparent stasis of her nation-acquired subjectivity. Her voyage to the Other gives her the knowledge and freedom to examine her various selfhoods through the contemplation of an alternate Triadic phase.

Clift's quest, which is described through a discourse that embraces movement, hesitation, and change, is explored in both *Mermaid Singing* and *Peel Me A Lotus*. The narrative strategies that Clift employs create a discourse of *Femination*. Her texts both embrace the nation-dyad and turn away from it in order to gaze upon and comprehend the Other. Clift simultaneously rejects the stasis of her nationally constructed subjectivity and accepts the dynamism that the Other makes available to her. By moving between these very different sites, Clift attempts to configure, for herself, a subjectivity. Her attempts are not always successful despite her occasional pretence at this; yet it is, ironically, her final recognition of failure that the narrative is compelled to reluctantly celebrate.
CHAPTER FOUR

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: DISLOCATION AND CEREBRAL CARTOGRAPHY IN THE BAY OF NOON.

“Place takes more time than people. There is no real love at first s-i-t-e.” He spelt it. “Yet with people I do believe in it — instant attraction.”

“So do I.”

“We can’t have our way so much with places.” ¹

Charles Dodgson used to stay with an old uncle ... [at Onslow Square], and walk up and down, his hands behind him on the strip of lawn. One day, on hearing my name, he called me to him saying, “So you are another Alice. I’m very fond of Alices. Would you like to come and see something which is rather puzzling?” We followed him into his house which opened, as ours did, upon a garden, into a room full of furniture with a tall mirror standing across one corner. “Now”, he said, giving me an orange, “First tell me which hand you have got that in”. “The right”, I said. “Now”, he said, “go and stand before that glass, and tell me which hand the little girl you see in there has got it in”. After some perplexed contemplation, I said, “The left hand”. “Exactly”, he said, “And how do you explain that?” I couldn’t explain it, but seeing some solution was expected, I ventured, “If I was on the other side of the glass, wouldn’t the orange still be in my right hand?” I can remember his laugh. “Well done, little Alice”, he said. “the best answer I’ve had yet”.²

“This must be the wood,” she said thoughtfully to herself, “where things have no names. I wonder what will become of my name when I go in? I shouldn’t like to lose it all – because they’d have to give me another, and it would be almost certain to be an ugly one...”³

Unlike Charmian Clift, Shirley Hazzard did not “flee” Australia because of its perceived cultural philistinism — she simply followed her family, being too young in the early years of her expatriation to establish herself independently. Hazzard was born in Sydney in 1931 during the Depression,

¹ Shirley Hazzard, The Bay of Noon, N.Y.: Penguin, 1988, 78. All further quotes are from this edition.
³ Carroll, 225.
and left Australia when she was sixteen years of age. While Australia is perceived by Hazzard as her native or mother country,\textsuperscript{4} she had, by the time she was twenty, lived in as many as six different countries, all of which impacted upon her sensibilities in distinct and important ways.\textsuperscript{5}

The sense of geographical and cultural displacement so prominent in Hazzard’s fiction, is matched by the historical events of her life. Both the World Wars, particularly the Second, deeply affected Hazzard and her way of viewing the world. War is a recurring theme in all of her novels (including the one she is currently working on),\textsuperscript{6} and continues to shape her reactions to modern culture. Hazzard perceives the contemporary conditions of nomadism and dislocation as being direct effects of all wars, the World Wars in particular. While she sees the nineteenth-century novelists constructing the notion of a homeland as an expression of security and continuity, \textsuperscript{7} she holds that:

In the past half a century a great dislocation has blown this state of affairs — humanly and culturally — to smithereens. And it is these smithereens that new novelists must begin to assemble and identify as best they can.

Whole populations have become nomadic, many of us have lived in different houses, suburbs, towns, cities, countrysides, countries and even continents before we reach middle age ... Even those of us who do remain in one place are exposed to demolitions and reconstructions and to remarkings in the same oddly repetitive,

\textsuperscript{5} Hazel DeBerg Collection, “Shirley Hazzard” Tape 932, 12 March, 1976, Oral History Section National Library, Australia.
\textsuperscript{7} Hazzard cites Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dickens and Hardy as prime examples of writers who express, through their writings, the human need for consistency.
yet not lasting modern image and the apprehensive state of mind to which most human settlements are these days subject.8

Here Hazzard’s language simulates the discourse of war: “smithereens”, “assemble”, “identify”, “demolitions”. The fragmentation Hazzard’s fictional characters literally and psychologically experience is a part of the very real sense of division that has been apparent in the world since the Second World War. As the marine biologist Justin in *The Bay of Noon*, states: “war was like a great siphon that spread human beings all over the globe” (72). Hazzard was, inadvertently at first, one of these dislocated beings. She was evacuated from Sydney to the Blue Mountains whilst at school9 (an incident which is fictitiously recounted in *The Transit of Venus*), and the returned wounded soldiers and the presence of American servicemen left an indelible impression upon her. After this, her father’s position as an Australian Trades Commissioner meant the entire family experienced frequent overseas postings in places as diverse as New Zealand, London, Hong Kong, Japan (immediately after the war) and New York.10

Despite the different reasons for her expatriation, Hazzard retrospectively empathises with the impulses that drove “rebel” writers, like Clift, abroad:

> In the circle where I was raised, I knew of no one knowledgeable in the visual arts, no one who regularly attended musical performances, and only two adults other than my teachers who spoke without embarrassment of poetry and literature — both of

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9 Wyndham, 29.
these being women. As far as I can recall, I never heard a man refer to a good or a great book. I knew no one who had mastered, or even studied, another language from choice. And our articulate, conscious life proceeded without acknowledgment of the preceding civilisations which had produced it.

That was the context amid which small, valiant cultural efforts found themselves marooned, or in which large talents obscurely gathered force. Those were the conditions which compelled many Australian artists — painters, writers, actors, musicians, dancers — to make their way abroad; and of which their potential public, some of the country's most lively and enlightened spirits, also felt obliged to take their leave.

The lack in Australia was not mere vacancy, but a highly conscious feature, often expressed by hostility and by that markedly Australian instrument, mockery.\textsuperscript{11}

The general response to Hazzard's Boyer lectures in 1984 revealed the antipathy felt by certain Australians towards those who expatriated themselves.\textsuperscript{12} Germaine Greer, on a return trip home to Melbourne in 1986, endured similar mockery to that which Hazzard mentions in her lectures. Like Hazzard, Greer compared aspects of Australia to its international neighbours and was promptly insulted and told to go "back where [she] came from".\textsuperscript{13} Jill Ker Conway, in her autobiography, \textit{The Road From Coorain}, describes her expatriation from Australia as being motivated by, amongst other things, wanting "to think about Australia in a way that made everyone else uncomfortable."\textsuperscript{14} Hazzard defends her words (and, by


\textsuperscript{12} Hazzard's criticisms of Australia were met, from some quarters, with resentment, see Wyndham, 32.

\textsuperscript{13} Germaine Greer, \textit{Daddy, We Hardly Knew You}, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990, 31. Greer compared the drinking regulations at Sandown to those on the racetracks in Europe. It was not so much a criticism as an observation of difference.

\textsuperscript{14} Jill Ker Conway, \textit{The Road From Coorain}, London: William Heinemann, 1990, 236. On her return to Australia in 1993 to give the Larry Adler lecture at the Sydney Institute, Conway said her disillusionment with Australia originated in the fact that, during the fifties, Australia perceived of itself as little more than a colonial offshoot. Her interviewer, John Lyons, states, when summarising his dialogue with Conway,
association, those of other expatriates who have articulated similar feelings) when she states that: "there are some aspects on which I can look with both my native Australian eye, and with the gaze of an outsider." Here she positions herself as a type of cultural arbitrator declaring, when told of the public reaction to her Boyer lectures, that:

Nationalism's a funny thing ... I feel anybody who comes from outside Australia is a target if they give a truthful answer that isn't entirely laudatory.

Truth, regardless of its consequences (or perhaps because them), is a recurring theme in Hazzard's fiction.

The importance of truth to Hazzard's work means that it can be distinguished from Clift's writings and the latter's more overt attempts to conceal the same. Charmian Clift never ceased to rehearse her various personas as part of the dialogue she maintained with her Australianness and with her audience. Her return "to the fold" continued the legend she had fabricated and which she could not sustain. Hazzard, on the other hand, hides her persona behind her fiction and does not return "home."  

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that: "When you add up all Conway's stinging criticisms — on leadership, character, education, society in general and the future of the country — you are left with the very strong impression that she sees Australia today as no less a dead-end than she did in 1960," John Lyons, "What's Wrong With Us?" The Australian Magazine, August 14-15, 1993. This is quite a remarkable summary of an enlightened and interesting discussion on the position of women in Australia and the United States. Even Lyon's title reveals his attitude to Conway's comments.


16 Wyndham, 32.

17 While Hazzard's work is fiction, many of the characters enact aspects of her own history and, while they are not autobiographical, they are often read as though they are. In this sense, they can still be read as exploring the dynamic of expatriation at a different level of operation, but along the same lines as Clift's work.
homecoming was tolerated and even embraced by the national collective and this was because her attempts to construct Other versions of her self and her native country were, arguably, literary failures.

In Lacanian terms, Clift's reinstatement as part of the national dyad functions as a second round substitution which supplements the lack in the nation-dyad (and her self) that she first exposed by moving away. Clift's return works to remind her audience that they are cultural beings "created in and by language,"\(^\text{18}\) and restores the phallic signifier to its rightful position in the signifying chain of cultural language. As Gilbert D. Chaitin writes, the phallus is "the agent which first isolates a subject separate from its attributes and then serves to reattach them."\(^\text{19}\) Clift identifies with her Australian origins (the master signifier or phallus) and is able to be reinserted into a national/her own mythos as the traveller/woman who paid the price for resisting the system and thus provide, for her audience, a sense of closure (completeness).

In comparison to Clift, Hazzard has attained literary/critical success. By staying away and opposing the national collective, Hazzard continues to disrupt the artificial sense of dyadic wholeness the national construct


\(^{19}\) Chaitin, 60.
attempts to sustain. By refusing to acknowledge a nationality, Hazzard celebrates her liminal position as an expatriate indicating both the liberating and traumatic qualities of Otherness. She uses her primal origins to move from one signifier to another, to disassociate herself from a national and cultural dyadic. In doing this, Hazzard's identity and meaning as an Australian subject falls into the gap between cultural signifiers and sets up an opposition and a slippage of meaning that destroys her audience's sense of wholeness.

One way in which the nation-dyad attempts to mask the gap that Hazzard's absence and writings expose is by qualifying her relationship to Australia with the ambivalent epithet "expatriate." Hazzard, however, refuses to locate herself within any cultural or national construct: "I never had any sense of belonging there [Australia] or anywhere else ... I'm not a person with national feelings". This dramatic disassociation from a relationship with any country is, Hazzard believes, an endemic state for most contemporary authors who often experience a sense of psychological deterritorialization:

One of the greatest challenges faced by contemporary novelists is an unprecedented loss of geographical and, to some extent, national and even social, sense of belonging. I don't mean that this is exclusive to novelists, I mean this is what has happened to their material, what's happened to the world. The sense of

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20 Wyndham, 32.
21 Chaitin, 147-8.
22 Wyndham, 32.
territory is like a great rug that's been pulled out — very recently and very quickly — from under the feet of us all.  

She considers it far safer and more appropriate to inhabit the "borderless world of the imagination." It is not surprising then that a sense of nation or nationality is often absent from the fictional individuals in Hazzard's stories. All of her characters appear to be representations of the types of people one may encounter anywhere as opposed to studies of specific cultural or ethnic figures. Whilst Hazzard pays great attention to the impact that surroundings and other people have on an individual's consciousness and her/his subsequent social behaviour, she does not posit any essentialist connection between thought or conduct and racial, cultural, or linguistic foundations. Tancredi, in The Evening of the Holiday, may, as Algerina Neri argues, be recognisably Italian, but his way of perceiving and understanding life differs very little from the English protagonist Sophie. What attracts these two characters to each other is their unarticulated but obviously shared attitude to love and life: an intellectual and sensual common-ground that transcends any cultural or racial difference. Likewise, in People in Glass Houses, the various ethnic groups that work in and around the Organisation are linked by common purposes.

24 Wyndham, 32.
and dispositions as distinct from common places of birth, employment, or shared work spaces.  

Hazzard is often called a cosmopolitan writer, and this term appears to be used either to avoid discussing or to excuse the ideological similarities in her characters. They are often read as products of an homogenous intellectual elite; city-bred people who bear little or no resemblance to the real world. This type of reductive reading is seen in Peter Pierce's response to *The Transit of Venus*. He describes it as a book populated by characters that would appeal to a “supra-society or *cognoscenti* with a taste for elegant moral formulations and a disdain for realism as a literary mode... .” In this age of international organisations and global capitalism, writing about expatriates and other countries is a mode of realism, even for Australians. The derogatory use of the term “cosmopolitan,” however, indicates the survival of nationalist attitudes amongst Australian reviewers, arising from a (post) colonial insecurity about feeling that centres of power (especially cultural) are located elsewhere when they ought to be located in Australia. These insecurities also stem from the continuing ossified definitions of Australian national identity as working class and/or rural. Hazzard might be criticised for working within a narrow range of characters (all of a

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27 Mr Bekkus (male x) and Sadie Graine (female y) serve as examples of unthinking, destructive bureaucratic types; Ashmole-Brown (male a) and Miss Kingslake (female b) represent the individual's struggle against the mindless conformity and oppression that the Organisation strives to sustain.


mobile, bureaucratic, artistic or professional kind), but what is really at stake is that they are intelligent, female, urban, and living on the fringes of cultural life as if that were a natural thing. They do not fit stereotypical representations of what it is to be Australian, nor do they profess a patriotic commitment to a particular country (they are often expatriates).

If setting one's novels in different cities of the world makes fiction cosmopolitan, then Hazzard is a cosmopolitan writer. The term should, however, never be applied in the reductive sense — categorised as "cosmopolitan" simply because it is "unconnected with Australia". The criticisms appear to originate out of the national drive to police cultural production. All of Hazzard's characters (and her fiction as a whole) strive to escape this policing. Hazzard's fiction explores humanity: the depths and heights to which individuals are capable of reaching in their lives and loves. By concentrating on well-educated, somewhat remote individuals, Hazzard is recalling voices similar to her own. Ultimately, in nearly all of her novels and stories, the origin of the characters, in terms of their cultural origins, education, and wealth, is inconsequential: it is their beliefs, their degree of sensitivity and their actions, "as a reflection of the inner life", that are paramount.

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30 Colmer, 461.
31 What the nation cannot police is its Others — that which defines it and that which is always desired.
Hazzard has published four novels. The two earlier texts, *People in Glass Houses* and *The Evening of the Holiday*, foreshadow the ensuing ones, *The Bay of Noon* and *The Transit of Venus*. As Catherine Rainwater and William J. Scheick note, "each of her novels successively revises its immediate predecessor". The *Evening of the Holiday* is, like *The Bay of Noon*, set in Italy, and follows the journey of a young half-English, half-Italian woman, Sophie, who experiences, through love, a coming to her senses and a type of self-realisation. A similar, but more complicated scenario is evident in *The Bay of Noon*. This text is also the only one of Hazzard's novels to be written in the first person. Hazzard's justification for choosing fixed focalisation as a narrative voice was that she felt writing in the third person would make a travelogue of the story, whereas "the first person makes Naples the real protagonist of the story". The relationships the characters adopt with Naples signify the importance of place regardless of any sense of psychological or physical deterritorialisation.

By examining the gender politics in *The Transit of Venus*, many of the themes extant in *People in Glass Houses* are also encompassed. *Transit*, however, moves beyond the bureaucratic spaces that are exclusive to *People in Glass Houses* and investigates the private worlds of its often bombastic individuals. This is accomplished through a juxtaposition of public and

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private spheres and a fictive exploration of the different subjectivities these two realms produce.

In *The Bay of Noon* and *The Transit of Venus*, Hazzard depicts various characters who have an "indispensable humanity", that is, an intrinsic honesty that enables them to resist the powerful forces of mediocrity and malevolence despite the sometimes formidable and solitary consequences of their decisions. Her characters also experience the dynamic interrelations across the double splittings of alienation/integration, and between the dyadic and triadic phases of psychosocial development. This double splitting is expressed through the various tensions that the subject, as an expatriate, experiences. The tensions are most evident in the depiction of their familial, cultural, and sexual relationships. The desire for recognition of the self, which was extant in Clift's work, is also apparent in Hazzard's expatriate characters. They struggle between the Imaginary and the Symbolic Orders of two cultures and the anxiety produced by the state of alienation (division), and the desire for integration (stasis). In both *The Bay of Noon* and *The Transit of Venus*, Hazzard has mapped the processes of these cultural and psychologically produced tensions in order to resist appropriation by nationalistic, gendered, generic, or political discourses. She has done this by examining the un-position, or liminality of the female

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36 Particularly Jenny/Penny in *The Bay of Noon*, and Caro, Grace and Dora in *The Transit of Venus*. 

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expatriate. Lacan could have been describing Hazzard's expatriate figures when he said:

it would be worthwhile mapping the places in social space that our culture has assigned to these subjects, especially as regards their assignment to the social services relating to language, for it is not unlikely that there is at work here one of the factors that consign such subjects to the effects of the breakdown produced by the symbolic discords that characterise the complex structures of civilisation.37

Another way in which Hazzard creates tensions within her narratives is through her deliberate employment of a generic structure, such as romance, and her consequent inversion/subversion of generic expectations. Peter Pierce, for example, describes Transit as the "best-dressed women's magazine fiction of its year".38

Anne Cranny-Francis outlines the generic strategies of contemporary western romance as a combination of:

a strong, male character, a combination of Rochester and Heathcliffe, with the development of a romance between him and the heroine. The conventions used in the characterisations and the plot structure of the modern romance reveal its ideological function as did those of their nineteenth century predecessors. In the modern romance the male hero is usually an established professional man, often from a wealthy family, and occasionally from an aristocratic background. He is often some ten to 15 years older than the heroine, with the added experience — personal and professional — this entails. The assumptions are that he is white, middle — or upper-class and heterosexual. The heroine is correspondingly younger, less experienced, less established, less wealthy, and often from a poorer and less socially elevated background. The plot usually traces the subjugation of the heroine to the hero whom she initially dislikes because of his

38 Pierce, 110.
arrogance. In recent books this arrogance is often characterised as male chauvinist behaviour, which it usually is, but which the heroine eventually learns is the result of his true sensitivity.39

Despite some evident gestures towards such a generic type, Hazzard's work cannot be confined to this singular category. Rather than adhering to the formulae cited above, Hazzard defies many of its rules. For example, the motif of incest abounds in The Bay Of Noon and, in Transit, the apparent heterosexual hero is homosexual and insensitive, while the "real" hero is working class, poor, well-educated, unattractive and very sensitive. In destabilising romantic conventions, Hazzard problematises the notion of genre (in the same way that Clift does, but within a narrower literary range), and in doing so raises the issue of systems as constructed and constricting. By concentrating on characters abroad, Hazzard manages to subtly thematise the concepts of nation, identity, and foreignness in the same way (if not to the same overt extent) as Clift does. She also conjoins the search for love and the search for self, and ties them both to a quest for connection with a specific place. In The Bay of Noon, for example, place is raised beyond its geographical and political specificity, to the status of subject.

For all of Hazzard's protagonists it is the search for love (which manifests as a journey to Other countries, towards Other people), that is significant. It is

the means through which any analysis and discovery of self and Other can occur. Lacan understands romantic love as a form of homage: not to either man or woman, but to the Other. Lacan understands romantic love as a form of homage: not to either man or woman, but to the Other.40 The search for love is a search for unity or wholeness that is, in psychoanalytical discourse, ultimately an illusion that motivates the subject but rarely satisfies her/him. On the contrary, love both alienates and divides the subject. 41 Within Hazzard's fiction, love can only be discovered when subjectivity is identified (and understood to be dynamic and split), place recognised (and, like a lover, often relinquished), and the search abandoned (either because of fulfilment or acknowledgment of failure) only to be recommenced at another, more appropriate time. Fundamentally, the search for the self (and self-love/love) is endless; discovery and security are temporary moments and, generally, fantasies. In Hazzard's fiction, searching takes the subject into new Symbolic Order/s, allowing her (it is usually a woman) the simultaneous freedoms and restrictions entailed in this movement from, towards, and between the old and the new.

In this chapter, the background of the search, and the withdrawal from one Symbolic order into anOther one, will be used to explore the importance of love to the expatriated subject and to examine the triadic configurations of

Self/Other/Place and Self/Love/Place as they are portrayed in Hazzard's second "Italian" novel, *The Bay of Noon*.

*The Bay of Noon* is a sensitive, retrospective novel that uses the technique of fixed focalisation to review the time fifteen years earlier that the expatriate narrator, Jenny Unsworth, spent in Naples. Recollection plays a major part within the novel, as all the principal characters relate aspects of their own histories to explain their current relationships, idiosyncrasies and behaviour. The overall tone of the narrative is one of nostalgia. Yet, instead of falling into a discourse of sentimentality and idealisation, the protagonist and the other intradiegetic narrators all signal their awareness of the dangers of recollection. As Jenny says, when describing the way her friend Gioconda appeared at their first meeting, "I feel I am giving a false impression and introducing, even to myself, a woman I do not know" (16). And Gioconda, when telling Jenny the story of her first love's death, remarks:

> When I talk of it this way, now, to you, it all comes out as though it were some sequence, some logic, instead of moods, contradictions, alternatives. The design imposes itself afterwards. And is false, must be false (60-1).

Throughout the text the acts of remembering and writing are depicted as acts which impose form upon events. This should render the events totally subjective and unreliable, yet they are continually foregrounded. By self-consciously drawing attention to the way events, memory, and writing,
structure experience, Hazzard sets up an ironic tone of voice that puts a
distance between reader and characters. 42 Characters too are placed in
ironic relation to each other, undercutting and modifying speech and action
and the meanings that can be inferred from either. Jenny is endowed with a
clearness of vision that can be attributed to the temporal (and bodily) space
she has put between herself and the incidents she is relating.43 Yet Jenny’s
analytical demeanour also places her in the past she describes and so
imposes its own “filters.” In the first page of the story, memory is made
corporeal by being likened to a search, a cerebral seeking out of the relevant
in one’s life and a discarding of the irrelevant. This selection or seeking out
of events does not always occur by choice, but often by accident.44 Memory is
portrayed as an ambiguous practice that can simultaneously bestow
“chronological prestige” or cause the owner to “literally sink”(9) under the
burden of remembrances. By using a series of journeys, both as physical
actualities and as metaphors for the trek through one’s memories, The Bay
of Noon examines the effect of locality on the subject, and the way in which
the search for the self manifests itself through relationships with Other
people and places. Jenny, the dislocated English protagonist finds, in
Naples, the home she has never had and she also, simultaneously, finds
herself. The epigraph to the novel, which is taken from Auden’s poem “Good-

42 Neri, 41.
43 Thus Hazzard embodies in her texts the kind of shifts and distances that Clift constantly talks about in
her travelographies.
44 The use of the accidental causes this selection — as well as “Venus” (love and movement) to fall into a
narrative pattern (while at the same resisting patterning by being “accidents”). Similarly, Jenny’s
expatriation can be read as “accidental,” or war can be understood as functioning like an “accident” for
some of the characters.
bye to the Mezzogiorno,” indicates the significance of memory and place to
the individual:

To bless this region, its vendages, and those
Who call it home: though one cannot always
Remember exactly why one has been happy,
There is no forgetting that one was.

The epigraph highlights the attitude and/or sense of belonging of the
national citizen, while the phrase, “and those who call it home” accentuates
the traveller/outsider — the expatriated subject who is simultaneously
alienated and embraced by place.

The story is a circular narrative. It commences with a search (the story of
the lost plane), and ends with Jenny’s return to Naples to seek Gioconda.
 Appropriately, the story ends before Jenny can find her friend: the crucial
aspect of her looking for Gioconda lies in the attempt itself. The quest
becomes the means by which the subject can cover the territory of the self
and the Other and make discoveries about both in the process. To seek with
an unshakeable goal in mind is, Hazzard tells us, to be like the early
Australian explorers who died from thirst in the centre of Australia because
they anticipated, incorrectly, that water must be there (154). The key is not
to presume, not be static, but to embrace dynamism and difference and
launch oneself, without expectations into the unknown.

One can only discover what has already come into existence.
Equipped to search, we justify ourselves by ranging as far afield
as possible, in order to render a plausible account, to be able to
say, “I looked everywhere”. But it is not by such journeys as these
that one approaches home. Rather, they are, like Gioconda's trip to Madison Avenue, a garland laid upon experience... .When the territory is charted, its eventual aspect may be quite other than what was hoped for. One can only say, it will be a whole — a region from which a few features, not necessarily those that seemed prominent at the start, will stand out in clear colours. Not to direct, but to solace us; not to fix our positions, but to show us how we came (153-4).

The novel is framed by metaphorical descriptions of the disparities between what the subject seeks and what the subject finds.45 As Diana Brydon states:

For the narrator, the novel's ending is yet another beginning. She is now ready to explore her deeper past, to look much closer to home in the colloquial as well as the metaphorical senses, rather than her more immediate past in Naples... .46

Jenny's journey has come the full circle, yet it is by no means over as she will continue to create herself and, through memory, recreate her past. It is important to realise that it is because of her time in Naples, and her realisation that in this city she has a home that she can acknowledge and leave again, that she finds herself and the freedom to commence her retrospective search through her life's memories. As Giovanna Capone argues, "Acquiring a place and people to fill her memory reassures [Jenny] and provides her with something to come home to... ."47

Thinking about this new past of mine — that was still the present, though imagination leapt ahead to seal it from the perspective of departure — I contrasted it with what had hitherto served me for a past: that other past, of exile, of Africa and England, Edmund and Norah. And it was as if I had come upon old letters addressed in a hand unrecollected but poignantly

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46 Brydon, 78.
47 Capone, 182.
familiar, an envelope over which the hand may tremble but which must be opened before the writer can be identified. So I must eventually retrace these sources of self — later on, as the search drew closer to home (146).

Here the split identity, as well as the disparate temporal and spatial experiences of the expatriate are evident. Jenny articulates the dual/tribrid psychosocial development of the expatriate who has been "subjected to the field of the Other," and, therefore, remains divided between self and Other, here and there, past and present. Her desire to return "home" (the self, the national citizen, the dyadic self, the loved object/loving subject and a geographical locale), is expressed through her search. She consciously retraces events through her memory in an effort to find aspects of her split self beyond her Symbolic conflicts and Imaginary (and imaginary) fixations. The internal and external struggles of the expatriated subject are articulated in this passage and recognised as desire: the desire for the self and the Other.

As an expatriate (and a product of familial and national conflicts), Jenny is a victim of the post-war deterritorialisation Hazzard writes about. Jenny is removed from her native country in the northern hemisphere and relocated (or dislocated) to South Africa. Her itinerant state — her homelessness — is signified by her uncertain identity. She is christened Penelope but because

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50 Brydon, 78.
of a "bureaucratic accident" (18) en route to Africa, her name is changed to Jenny. This shift in identity reveals the ambiguous nature of the expatriate whose relocation to new places and into previously uncharted spaces requires major psychological and physical adjustments. Throughout the novel, Jenny continues to lead two lives; in Naples she is Jenny, however, in her letters home to her brother and mother in England, she continues to be known as "Penny" (19). This double-identity is indicative of her own physical and psychological divisions. She is a child of the old world who, because of war, has been abruptly relocated to the new world and, when the threat of war has gone, returned to the country of her birth. The Penny/Jenny renaming further divides her from the real relations that she attempts to sustain (within a social, familial and cultural Symbolic) with the images and actions of her self within these same systems.51 Jenny perceives herself as two different people and as both subject and object within the signifying chains of her various Symbolic Orders.

The renaming of "Penny" can also be read as the split subjectivity of the Second World postcolonial who is both imposer of and colonised by the oppressive practices of one culture while continuing to live in another, not quite, antithetical one. As Alan Lawson suggests:

Since the cultures of the Second World are both colonizing and colonized, there are inevitably two kinds of authority and two

kinds of authenticity which the Second world subject is consigned to mimic.\footnote{Lawson, 157.}

Lawson further proposes that, because of the concurrent colonising/coloniser rhetoric, the settler-subject must be acknowledged as a site of a particular dual inscription and that this site should be read as endlessly divisive and problematic.\footnote{Lawson, 157.} Jenny's dividedness is established at the outset through her two names which signal a psychological duality and position her as a dynamic subject: a dynamism that has, in part, been caused by her expatriation and subsequent sense of dislocation. Jenny's situation as a resident in South Africa can be paralleled to that of an Australian where the binarism of England and the Other is reconfigured as an ambivalent "not quite" subjectivity.\footnote{Slemon, 34.} Stephen Slemon argues that, Second World writing (as well as subjectivity) is an ambiguous site which blurs any attempt to set up binary opposites.\footnote{Slemon, 34.} Within *The Bay of Noon*, this blurring of positions occurs not only because of Jenny's dual nationality and identity, but also through her status with the American NATO forces in Naples. As a periphery member of the NATO team she is positioned as a second-class citizen, but one who is on the same team. Jenny is a woman and because of her dramatic physical shift (from South Africa, to England, to Naples) and

\footnote{Alan Lawson, "Comparative Studies and Post-Colonial 'Settler' Cultures," *Australian-Canadian Studies*, 10.2 (1992): 157.}

\footnote{And where the subject is forced to mimic various forms of authority (cultural, self, and Other) in order to be authentic.}

change of perspective (entering different Symbolic Orders), she becomes a casualty of both patriarchy and imperialism.

What Jenny sees around her in South Africa challenges what she remembers from her early years in England and what she is taught is "typical" through the imported literature she reads. When she finally returns to England, her sense of homelessness is not relieved, just repressed as she searches for sense in the objects and people around her. Jenny/Penny is continually being fragmented by a series of cultural contestations which force her to search for (desire) a cultural and individual totality.

Returning to England had lost its initial meaning and taken on another. If it could no longer assuage a homesickness that, after its heart-splitting genesis in childhood exile, had not so much abated as become a permanent sense of lack, it gave, in compensation, unlooked-for, adult pleasures. It pleased me, for instance, that the plants and seasons now corresponded to literature; that Nature was not the sole index of age; that the rewards of one's surroundings were rendered in architecture, rather than in the unearned prestige of Table Mountain (24).

Jenny's duality can be understood in Lacanian terms. When Jenny is sent to Africa, she is not only taken away from her dyadic relationship with her mother country, she is also wrenched away from her triadic relationship with her mother and brother (her father and mother are divorced). Jenny's mother visits her daughter, Penelope, in Africa after the war, but dies not long after her return to England. This death releases Jenny from the bonds

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56 Brydon, 78.
of her first dyadic and triadic relationships, and partially releases her from her Penelope-identity: she is now free to wander. Her mother sent her into exile in the opposite hemisphere, but death frees her to either remain there or to find her home/self through expatriation.

Jenny's brother decides to move to South Africa, thus prompting Jenny to stay, and they establish a relationship that is not unlike a marriage. Nor is it unlike a reconstruction of their earlier dyadic relationship with their own mother/country, their dependence upon one another being described as "a foregone conclusion" (24), where "conclusion" implies a sense of completeness. Edmund and Penny/Jenny reflect each other in mutually defining configurations, excluding the Other and any ego development.

Making the *Odyssey* connection quite clear, Jenny's father remarks that she is more "like Ulysses than Penelope", (24) suggesting that Jenny is also an explorer who rejects the static role of Penelope preferring instead the role of the active quester. By appropriating this role for Jenny, her father seems to understand that "this claiming involves them [the female protagonists] in - an ironic balancing of perspectives rather than an heroic assertion of a single point of view." The balancing of perspectives embodies, within the act of balancing itself, a degree of ambivalence and an attempt to represent

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58 Brydon, 74-5.
the liminality of the female expatriate who simultaneously, through her actual transit and the writing of her expatriation, embraces and rejects traditional gender positions. The reference to, and deliberate inversion of, classical Western roles also points to the narrative's concerns with, not so much the physical (masculine) journey, but with the psychological (feminine) one. The “hero” is now a woman who has appropriated the role of Ulysses and will use it to locate the Other and the way home: that is, to discover herself. This is very much an intellectual journey that transverses places in order to enter new spaces.

The Odyssean tale is not the only legend Hazzard subverts, she also inverts the myth of Ariadne and Theseus (27). Hazzard depicts Edmund’s love for Norah (his wife) as the thread that draws her out of the labyrinthine depths of pure egotism. In these interpretations of Western mythography, it is the role of the woman who patiently waits or remains static that is rejected and the part of the questing male that is appropriated, transformed and re-utilised so the woman can assume the journey for the self on her own terms.

The incestuous relationship Jenny desires to have with her brother is mirrored, in various ways, throughout the story. Jenny/Penny falls in love with her brother, a love that is forbidden by the incest taboo, which as Grosz explains, “is the cultural correlate of the individual’s oedipus complex.”

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59 Elizabeth Grosz, Sexual Subversions, St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1989, 76. Freud describes the incest taboo in Volume One of his Introductory Lectures: “The ego, freed from all ethical bonds, also...
inviting Jenny back to England to share his life once more, Edmund seeks to recreate the triadic relationship that he had with his mother and his sister by constructing another triad with Jenny and Norah based on interdependence and access to the Symbolic Order. Jenny sees the resemblance between her mother and sister-in-law. She describes her mother as, "an ordinary, fair, little woman [who] wasn’t unlike my sister-in-law to look at, as a matter of fact — though Norah used to be glamorous, which my mother never was" (23). It is as though Edmund has replaced his mother’s image, his memory of her, with that of Norah. It is love for her brother that leads Jenny back to England so she may supply the “missing links” (26) in his marriage. These “missing links” could be described as a psychosocial lack, which Jenny is required, by Edmund, to fill. Jenny, as a member of the reconstructed triad, performs the role of his wife and, unconsciously, that of his mother/lover:

And this made it appear, for a time, as if Edmund and I were in league with one another, not against Norah but in her favour; almost as though he and I were the married couple, and she were some third party whom we had agreed to humour (26).

According to Lacan, Jenny would symbolise the phallus because in occupying the third point of the triad, she enables all three of them to access the Symbolic Order.

finds itself at one with all the demands of sexual desire, even those which have long been condemned by our aesthetic upbringing and those which contradict all the requirements of moral restraint. The desire for pleasure – the “libido”, as we call it – chooses objects without inhibition, and by preference, indeed, the forbidden ones: not only other men’s wives, but above all incestuous objects, objects sanctified by the common agreement of mankind, a man’s mother and sister, a woman’s father and brother”. Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis: Volume One, translated by James Strachey, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974, 175.
The phallus is both the signifier of the differences between the sexes and the signifier which effaces lack and thus difference. It is the term with respect to which the two sexes are defined as different, and the term which functions to bring them together, the term of their union ... . For both sexes, though in quite different ways, the phallus serves as a means of access to the "domain of the Other". The Other is understood here in two senses: as a socio-symbolic network regulated according to language-like rules; and as a physical structure, representative of this social Other, internalized in the form of the unconscious.60

In this sense, Jenny fills the missing links in Edmund's relationship with Norah because as a signifier for the phallus, that is, the-name-of-the-father, she reflects the Other to both Norah and Edmund and allows them access to the Symbolic Order of their culture. Jenny moves to the boundaries of the social order and returns as the closest familial member but, as an expatriate, the least close cultural "family" member. However, her presence ensures that the signifying chain of language, customs, sexual roles continues.

This triad is destroyed once Jenny's incestuous feelings become manifest: "It was when this love dawned on me — as it literally did, one grey sunrise, while I stood at my window looking at the brick backs of houses on Fullham Road — that Edmund began to wish me away; in becoming aware, I had outlived my usefulness" (28). Incest is forbidden in that particular Symbolic Order, therefore Jenny/Penny is compelled to leave, she can no longer serve her purpose in the chain of signifiers. She has metamorphosed from sister to

60Grosz, Jacques Lacan, 117.
conscious lover and has therefore shattered the signification of Edmund's triad.

Incest becomes manifest again when Jenny meets Gioconda and is told that her cat's name was changed from Innocente to Iocasta after it conceived kittens with its own son. The movement from innocence to experience is represented in both the cat's renaming and that of Jenny. Jenny's love for her brother, whilst forbidden by her first Symbolic Order, was never acted upon. It was, arguably, innocent: cerebral not physical. The cat, however, has conceived and born kittens by its own son and, in doing so, appropriated the Oedipal paradigm for the animal world. In the Symbolic Order of Naples, this incestuous relationship is accepted; this acceptance is revealed by Gioconda's treatment of her feline companion: "In commendation or in sympathy she snatched it up – round the middle, with both hands, as a child might – gave it a squeeze and set it down again on its chair, where it smoothly resumed a wash interrupted mid-lick" (20). Unlike Jenny, the cat has not been expelled from either its familial relationship, home, or country. Jenny becomes an Oedipal figure: one who desires that which is culturally forbidden. Unlike her male and animal counterparts, however, she does not act upon her desires. She suppresses them and relocates herself physically to the periphery of a new Symbolic Order, to the borders of the looking glass, in an attempt to chart the new territory she hopes she will find. As Gianni says to her, "This will change everything for you, being here. Naples
is a leap. It's through the looking-glass" (38). The idea of passing or leaping through the looking glass, becomes a metaphor for the process of expatriation. In physical terms it represents a passing from the familiar to the unfamiliar, to a world that appears to be full of contradictions, inversions and opposites. In psychological terms it correlates to Lacan's mirror-stage, where the subject gazes upon its own image and experiences for the first time the body in bits-and-pieces and a sense of lack. It is from this point onwards that the subject will seek a means of identification, a sense of self, through an image of the Other. Jenny's experience in Naples is very much like a second birth in a cultural mirror “where she is spatially recaptured by the field of the Other.” Entry into a triadic phase and access to a Symbolic Order artificially heals that rift — represses it — as, for the most part, the subject will function in society but will continue to experience a sense of incompleteness which s/he desires to fill. To pass through the Lacanian Mirror, however, suggests a voluntary movement towards the Other.

By passing through the mirror of Naples, Jenny is confronted with the gap between viewer (her old self/subject) and viewed (her new self/object). In order to compensate for this gap or sense of incompleteness, she uses the city of Naples itself, and the characters she meets to construct a totality for her self. This “totality” artificially compensates for her second “pre-mirror experiences of fragmentation associated with the disjointed body in bits and

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pieces."63 There is also a sense in which Jenny may be read as seeking a comfortable liminality; a relationship between the signifying chains of her old and new Symbolic Orders. By occupying the threshold between these two Orders, Jenny can avoid geographical entrapment (spatial captivity), internal psychological imprisonment/fixation and/or Othering of her self. The liminality of Jenny's position is expressed through her refusal to completely abandon her old name. Penelope is used for bureaucratic purposes and to keep a tentative link with her former identity (20), to cross back through the limen represented by the "oval mirror of the bay" (38). Jenny chooses to inhabit the border between two Symbolic Orders; leaping through the mirror gives her the opportunity to pursue her desires, more as realised desires as opposed to object substitutions which Gianni and/or Gioconda become.

The second dyadic/triadic relationship that the expatriate Jenny both needs and desires is fulfilled when she meets Gioconda. Jenny possesses a letter of introduction to Gioconda which she describes as "a single introduction to Naples" (12), thereby aligning Gioconda with the city itself. 64 It is, therefore, appropriate that on her journey to meet Gioconda, Jenny's walk through the city is, concurrently, her introduction to the Neapolitan Other. Even the guidebook directs her to Gioconda's apartment. Meeting Gioconda is Jenny's first figurative step through the looking glass; the streets she

63 Feldstein, 159.
64 Capone says, "Naples is also Gioconda," 180.
walks through represent a passage that will take her beyond the threshold, the split between her old and new existence. This movement is signalled by the location of Gioconda’s apartment which is beyond the Spaccanapoli – the split of Naples (13). Jenny marries space and place by identifying in Gioconda herself a psychological portrait or map of the city she will grow to love. Gioconda says, of herself, “I talk like a landlady who is taking in a new lodger” (21), and Jenny, responding to Gioconda’s warmth, thinks, “the map of her existence is soon to be flagged, for me, with these encampments, these centres of interest…” (22). Gioconda/Naples is a destination, an “horizon” of desire/Otherness at which Jenny longs to arrive.

Throughout the course of their friendship, Gioconda becomes a mother figure to Jenny and Gianni becomes a father figure. On coming upon them arguing, Jenny says she feels a “loss of equilibrium, frightening, like overhearing one’s parent’s quarrel. For I had come to rely on them, even then, to provide me with a measure of stability” (49). Jenny ultimately re-establishes a relationship with Gianni and Gioconda that echoes the one she had with Norah and Edmund. In this one, however, she initially adopts the role of the child, or Innocente. Jenny has an “outward aspect of ingenuousness [that she] no longer completely possessed.” She says, “It was a deception I did not seek, but which I did nothing to dispel” (46).
However, in reflecting on her English phase, Jenny realises that in her relationship with Justin she “had ceased to be accommodating”, and she defines this cessation as “the loss of innocence” (45). The implication is that Jenny will no longer fill in the gaps in other people’s relationships, but seek, whilst through the looking glass, to satisfy her own needs and desires. She is described by a Neapolitan hairdresser as having hair like the Magdalen. This description suggests that innocence has either been discarded or that it can only co-exist with experience. Jenny performs the role of the Oedipal daughter (both innocence and experience) by having a sexual relationship with Gianni. Gioconda, on the other hand, succumbs to her desire for the Other by running away with Justin, fulfilling her need to continue loving Gianni and what they are together: “that’s a way to go on loving – a place, or a person. To miss it. In fact, to go away, to put yourself in the state of missing, is sometimes the simplest way to preserve love” (52). By not breaking any culturally recognised taboos, Gioconda retains a virginal status that allows her, despite her sexual adventure, to reunite with Gianni: a reunion that can only take place once Jenny, the fragmented, expatriated subject, is absent. To Gioconda and Gianni, Jenny is the mark of Otherness; the phallus of their relationships, with each other and the world. Her presence and performative role within their relationship allows them access to the Other. Jenny also uses this relationship to assist her interpretation of the Other, but ultimately she comes to identify Gianni and Gioconda’s desire as distinct from her own and thus relinquishes her role in the triad. Jenny’s absence from Gioconda and Gianni’s lives allows them to once again
desire (as opposed to possess) the Other and thus perform productive roles within their cultural Symbolic (as woman/man, writer/producer).65

Jenny not only operates in a triadic relationship with Gianni and Gioconda, she simultaneously has one with Justin Tulloch, and the city of Naples itself. Jenny's love for Justin, and the relationship they have together, is an ambivalent one which represents, in all its manifestations, the liminality of the expatriate. Justin reminds Jenny of Edmund (22), again foregrounding the dangers of memory which will lead Jenny down a similarly incestuous path to the one she feels she has abandoned. It is Justin's resemblance to Edmund which first attracts Jenny to him and has her taking possession of him; she calls him "my scientist" (12). Justin is both a representative of the old triadic relationship that Jenny had with her brother and with her mother country and the physical and socially acceptable manifestation of her secret desires. Her relationship with Justin is, in part, a customary signpost for her on her journey of self-discovery. Justin represents what she has relinquished by moving from England to Naples — a voluntary movement away from one Symbolic Order into another unfamiliar one. By interacting with Justin, Jenny is able to revisit her old Symbolic Order and use the well-known signifiers of her past to interpret her new surroundings. In this way, she is able to recognise the Symbolic inconsistencies which are

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65 The ironic English title/translation of their second film, *Cause For Congratulation*, is also reflective of the interpretive uses Gianni and Gioconda made of their relationship with Jenny.
revealed through her comparison of past and present experiences. Justin and Jenny even develop their own secret ironic discourse, a mode of communication that excludes the Other and envelops them both in a comfortable linguistic dyad:

Cosy private jokes of language, used against themselves, were the sort of thing that, in leaving England, I had wished to escape from. Yet their resuscitation in that bizarre setting gave them a nostalgic — almost anthropological — interest. That is something one does not foresee in wishing to elude one's traditions: that the threat, once its fangs are drawn, may become transfigured into intimacy, a frame of reference (45).

As Jacques Dellaruelle suggests, "the mother tongue is the very texture of the self". By speaking in a particular idiom with Justin, Jenny is able to keep the connection to her old self and the language of her old Symbolic Order intact. Jenny is able, through her contact with Justin, to subvert the authority of the Other by questioning its desire and distinguishing it from her own. Paul Carter states that, "Any orientation to the new environment depends initially on finding resemblances between it and the home left behind". Justin assists Jenny by giving her a spatial and linguistic point of reference (and through his resemblance to her brother a dyadic one as well), which ties her new-world expatriate identity to both the first and second dyadic stages and to "the difference between them as a place for transformation."
Ultimately, Jenny and Justin's relationship fails. It too is incestuous. Jenny describes their association as being like that of siblings, "It was as if we had known each other since childhood and had nothing left to disclose" (108), suggesting a re-enactment of the original familial and cultural dyad as well. Jenny is unable to assert her own subjective position or interpret signifiers for herself. The relationship is abandoned in order that the movement through the looking glass, towards the Other, can be completed. For Jenny, this abandonment of the familiar and incestuous occurs three times: firstly with Edmund/England, secondly with Justin/England and, finally, with Gianni/Naples. In all cases the men act as metaphors for the (double) masculinity of the “mother” country and the feminisation (Gianni and Gioconda) of the “Other” country. They also act as metaphors for the Symbolic Orders which Jenny has been, firstly, born into and, secondly, allowed access to. Whilst her relationship with Justin fails, it is not Jenny who is the cause of the failure, rather it is Justin's desire to embrace the Other and release himself from what he recognises as a restrictive, culturally dyadic (incestuous) liaison. Justin describes his relationship with Jenny as one of Asyngamy: “The inability of two plants to achieve cross-pollination owing to their unsynchronized development” (73) – it is a matter of bad timing. The mirror-stage illusion of their relationship cannot hold and Justin is forced to confront the split between the restrictive borders of his cultural dyad (represented by his relationship with Jenny) and his desire for the Other (represented by Gioconda). Gioconda, then, is both
Other and mother to Justin. He does not want a wife, the failure of his first marriage has soured him and instilled in him a “neurosis of self-protection” (44); neither does he want a cultural sister. Gioconda is the manifestation of his desire for the exotic Other and his Oedipal longings.

Justin’s Oedipal passion is revealed through the symbolic relationship Gioconda has with Jenny (mother/daughter), and through the association Jenny has with Justin (cultural and figurative siblings). This last relationship suggests that Justin is, through his association with both Jenny (cultural sister) and Gioconda (Other/mother), the latter’s metaphorical son. The fact that Justin and Gioconda’s liaison occurs away from Naples, in Spain, lessens its impact. They move to “border territory” (in the same way that Jenny, through her earlier expatriation, has), in order to move beyond the Symbolic structures that define them and to dis-identify (or at least blur) themselves and any attempt to contextualise (in the cultural sense) their actions. It also relegates the affair, for Jenny, to the realms of the imagination, making the assembling of events an act analogous to that of ordering memory. The affair becomes another area that will, in the future, be charted by Jenny in order to bring her home. This is the function it ultimately serves as it is not until she is returning to Naples and Gioconda that Jenny revisits these moments in her life.
Prior to Gioconda’s departure, Jenny modifies her relationship with Gioconda and Justin through a linguistic and psychological shift. Justin repositions Gioconda by referring to her twice as Jenny’s friend. During this same conversation Jenny refers to herself in a simile as Justin’s mother, “I was like a mother urging an unsociable child” (115). It is a Symbolic re-identification that constitutes for Jenny, Justin, and Gioconda roles beyond the cultural co-ordinates of subjectivity. What occurs is, in a sense, a type of self-objectification which “involves a reflexive turn so that the subject of need becomes — through this inversion and subsequent obedience to the reflexive signifier — the object of the Other’s demand.”71 It is a self-fulfilling act that, when read metonymically, can be seen as being activated by desire. This articulated re-signification serves as a psychological prolepsis for the events that are to follow.

A similar prolepsis occurs when Gianni disembarks from the “Il vaporetto dei cornuti...The boat of cuckolds” (82). Gianni, of course, will be cuckolded by Gioconda and it is this infidelity that leads to Gianni and Jenny’s symbolically incestuous alliance. Gianni had been a father-figure to Jenny, constantly referring to her as a “schoolgirl” (36, 37), a role Jenny willingly adopts when around Gioconda and Gianni:

Of that journey, with Vesuvius slowly turning us on its flanks, then releasing us for the long arc of the bay, there remains a childhood sensation of disappointment: my outing had been spoilt, the expedition had shifted character in an un-looked for way. In

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71 Feldstein, 165.
memory there is a blur of cold sea and silver fields, and then we are at Sorrento and I am cheerful again, having had my lunch and being excited by the pretty restaurant, the romance of the slopes above and the cliffs below, and the great view out to Capri. It is as Gianni has just said, I am as easily diverted as a schoolgirl (37).

In his attitude towards her relationship with Justin, Gianni also adopts the role of Jenny's father. The notion of rivalry between the two men is apparent, but it is manifested mainly through Jenny's apprehension that they should like each other and not enter into some sort of masculine competition. Gianni refuses to acknowledge Justin as an individual, referring to him as "the Scotsman" (121); and Justin is only too willing to label Gianni (on the basis of hearsay) as a "bounder" (123). The irony of their single meeting is that "it went well – the very reverse of the uneasy afternoon when [Jenny] introduced Justin and Gioconda" (109). The apparent ease between the two men foreshadows the inevitable patriarchal exchange of women which occurs later in the novel. As Laura Mulvey states:

Patriarchy is founded on rites and rights of inheritance and exchange of women that neutralize a neurotic, father/son rivalry and establish the basis for a symbolic order.72

Justin and Gianni sense that they are rivals for Gioconda and Jenny and repress their desires (sexual and the desire for violence) into their unconscious. They are, figuratively, father and son and the exchange of women they ultimately perform serves to establish the Symbolic Order which Jenny can re-enter later in her life and to which Gioconda can return.

In the lives of both Gioconda and Jenny, Gianni also fulfils the role of knight errant, “saving” them, in a sense, from themselves in times of emotional disaster (61, 125). Gianni is, concurrently, father/brother/lover to Jenny, and as such, he too must be abandoned. Jenny, as much as she is satisfied in her relationship with Gianni, realises that she is, once again, filling a lack or gap in somebody else’s relationship. It is necessary for Jenny to leave Gianni so that Gioconda can take her place by Gianni’s side: a place she creatively returns to in the form of another cinema co-production. With the knowledge of her role in the affairs of Gianni and Gioconda, Jenny also gains an awareness of the part she played in the lives of her brother and sister-in-law. Once again, recollection orders the past into a semblance of sense providing signposts for the present and for the future:

“Gianni, “ said I. “I will tell you something about my family”. He thought we had disposed of my relatives, and his face recast itself for boredom. “Which will explain why I don’t stay on here”. I paused, at some mental intersection where many routes converged. “there was a time when I undertook to supply what was lacking in my brother’s marriage. Though his wife did not know she was encouraging me to do this, it was something that, with a little thought, she might have known. Even after discovering it there too I might have stayed on, shifting position a little, doing the same things differently, but for her intention to use me further – as a foil for magnanimity. I was to be an object of forgiveness and understanding for the term of my natural life. Again, she did not know that she was doing this; again, she should have known it”. Gianni made a face, as if this was asking for the moon. “I’m telling you this so you will know why I don’t stay here and wait for Gioconda. Here too, some things have been the same. The difference is that I care about Gioconda, and could not bear the rest of our friendship to be a mutual demonstration

Irony in this is that Gianni causes emotional disaster by being married and later by being committed to Gioconda (home/mother).

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of largeness of heart. It is too soon for us to be together again. What with one thing and another” (135).

It is Jenny’s relationship with Naples, her friendship with Gioconda, and the sexual substitution that occurs between them, that gives her the freedom and strength to enter into a liaison knowingly with Gianni and enter a new Symbolic Order, access the Other, and thus find herself through love. As Jenny grows to love both Naples and Gioconda, she also grows to understand and love Gianni. Gianni is like another country whose territory she must familiarise herself with, whatever disappointments she may find, in order to understand and better appreciate him. She says of Gianni, “Here was another piece of country Gioconda had traversed – these alien configurations of Gianni’s existence which had given her pain, to which she had reconciled herself” (140).

The alignment of people and places in The Bay of Noon serves to invest them, symbolically, with each others’ qualities. Naples becomes personified, a city of secrets and hopes, its streets and shops becoming habits for the subject to adopt:

I had begun by then to treat the city with a show of familiarity; pretending, as people do with a celebrated acquaintance, to know it better than I did, inserting myself into its landscape, another figure in its vast presepio; acquiring habits of cafes and buses and hairdressers, uttering casual observations that sounded on my own ears as exotic as examples from a phrase-book...(63).
The people become landscapes that need to be explored and mapped; each one a different country with different features to be traversed, and with different moods that need to be taken into account. Gioconda, Gianni and Justin are a part of the physical and cerebral cartography that Jenny must transverse in order to find herself. This is signalled in the resemblance between all their names: Jenny, whose name “was practically the same as [Gianni’s]” (34), and Justin and Gioconda. It is as though they all suggest each other. As John Colmer suggests: “The similarity of names is surely not accidental, but is intended to suggest how the characters assume each other’s identities in the ever-shifting patterns of love”. It is as though by endowing her characters with similar names, Hazzard is reinforcing her idea that “One can only discover what has already come into existence” (153). In their incestuous involvement with each other, three of the characters at least (Justin, because of his death, is a possible exception), are brought closer to true love, to home, and therefore the self. Ironically, it is Justin who says, “For love, you must look closer to home” (76), advice he does not follow as is demonstrated by the means of his death: a plane crash, suggesting that he continued to seek too far away. As the aeroplane search that opens the book proposes (9), very few think to start with themselves, the subject’s first home, but choose instead to view outside themselves without really engaging with or understanding what they are seeing. To begin the true journey towards self-realisation, the fog of egotism and cultural incestuousness needs to disperse. To quote Levinas again:

74 Colmer, 42.
The way of the I against the "(O)ther" of the world consists in sojourning, in identifying oneself by existing at home with oneself. In a world which is from the first (O)ther the I is nonetheless autochthonous.75

For Justin, Gioconda, Jenny, and Gianni, the "sojourn," the quest for self-discovery, is tied as much to each other and to their time in Naples as it is to any Other destinations they may choose. The self is the home.

Not only do Justin, Gioconda, Gianni and Jenny have similar sounding names, but they are linked as well to the painting in Gioconda's palazzo, La Ginestra. "La Ginestra" is the title of a poem by Leopardi, translated as "The Yellow Broom".76 In this story, it is the painting that dominates the background and, in a sense, the foreground of Gioconda's life. The painter Gaetano and Gioconda's father establish an accord between them that she describes as being like "brotherly love" (54). Once again incest is hinted at, and indeed, Gioconda herself becomes an object of exchange between these two men. The painting which Gioconda cherishes is a landmark in her existence which represents both her first love and, because that love was lost, the origins of her love for Gianni. The painting is of the flowers that grow on the slopes of the volcano, Mount Vesuvius,77 suggesting at once the fragility and nobility of life which continually anticipates and defies death as well as suggesting the beauty that can grow out of ordinariness (it is a

75 Emmanuel Levinas, Totality and Infinity, translated by Alphonso Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979, 37. See also Chapter One, 43.
76 Neri, 42.
77 Neri, 42.
weed). In this sense, Gaetano is like the flowers he portrayed, choosing to reject involvement in a war he didn't believe in, defying death only to succumb to its force. When Gianni tells Jenny the story of the eruption of Vesuvius and the relaxed attitudes of the Italians who, despite facing death, took too much time to commit themselves to action and were finally lost (36), he is talking about Gaetano and human nature in general. Humans cannot outwit nature, no matter how hard they may try and this is a realisation that the Neapolitans have come to, hence their continual encroachment upon the slopes that may, one day, destroy them. Nature, in The Bay of Noon, is not a benevolent mother-figure, but a thinking, inner scape that has the potential (as the ominous presence of the volcano suggests), to cause great devastation.

“What I like about the landscape of Italy”, Gianni informed me, “is that there’s none of this nonsense about the great outdoors. That sort of thing’s all right elsewhere. Here you could practically say it’s an indoor landscape. It’s Nature with beautiful manners – no, that’s too tame. Rather, it’s as if Nature were capable of thought, of joy.”

Neither of us mentioned the volcano (144).

The silence they maintain over the volcano is indicative of the optimistic and casual Neapolitan attitude to life; one that Jenny, in her complicit reticence, has now adopted. It is also a sign of repression, of the boundaries set on civilised discourse by the Other. Algerina Neri writes that:

As Naples dominates the novel, so does Mount Vesuvius dominate Naples, a perpetual memento mori, Leopardi’s symbol of Nature’s cruelty. As Jenny realizes, it is the presence of Mount Vesuvius on the other side of the magnificent bay which “goes on absorbing the tributes of those it clearly intends to exterminate” that has
compelled the Neapolitans to acquire a fatalistic enthusiasm for enjoying themselves. 78

The language used to describe the city suggests the influence of the volcano in its construction and attitude:

The city itself was marked by a volcanic extravagance. Its characteristics had not insinuated themselves but had arrived in inundations — in eruptions of taste and period, of churches and palaces, in a positive explosion of the baroque; in an outbreak of grotesque capitals, or double geometric staircases; in a torrent of hanging gardens poured down over terraces and rooftops, spilt along the ledges and doorsteps. The very streets were composed of blocks of lava, dark rivers that flowed through Naples and gave place, indoors, to a sea of ceramic tiles and marble intarsia: the word lava itself, in its volcanic sense, had originated at Naples (65).

In giving the four main characters and Gaetano names that resemble La Ginestra, Hazzard has endowed each of them with the “frail mortality”79 of the flower itself, and likened their individual existences to works of art that will reach out, like Gaetano’s painting and one day touch others.

Jenny’s commentary on the volcano, and its effects on the city, are something of which she only becomes aware once she has abandoned the role of observer (or voyeur) and exchanged it for performer. Jenny is one of an expatriate group employed by NATO: an organisation populated by military and professional men who “were perpetually seething — with fury, with fear, and with the daily necessity of striking out before they could be
felled by inapprehensible foes" (41). Jenny is different from this group of bureaucrats because she is content with her posting and surroundings and finds that, as a result of her contentment, she is "vaguely suspect for being so" (42). In the initial stages of the text, Jenny remains within the restrictive borders of this little transplanted, colonial world being taken daily, by car, from home to office and back again. She is confined and defined by her work and the places she inhabits and is only able to gaze, from various windows (house, office, car), upon the city that waits to meet her. It is only once Jenny is "loaned" for the day to Justin Tulloch that she starts to perceive Naples in a different way. Firstly, the bay takes on a new significance as she translates Justin's marine documents and learns what creatures live beneath its glassy depths, perceiving it, for the first time, as "a dense and teeming jungle in which weeds and rocks and wrecks and a million creatures reproduced in strange counter-part the city of Naples itself" (11-12). The Bay itself is called the Bay of Noon, where "noon" represents a border or threshold of its own that Jenny, whilst simply looking, has not yet crossed. It is fitting that it is after this sight of Naples that she has the opportunity to enter into the city itself and, finally, cross the split, or symbolic limen of the Other. It is only when Jenny goes into the city itself, and encounters Gioconda, Gianni and Justin, that she stops being a voyeur of the Other and participates in its different life. Her entry is helped because she is reasonably fluent in the language although she is also aware that language is only one barrier that must be crossed on the journey.

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80 The Bay also functions like a mirror.
towards the Other. She wistfully remarks on the conversation between guests at the party in Gianni's flat:

In one way... their talk affected me with homesickness, for I envied the intimacies of language and upbringing, all the puns and jokes and local allusions that even such a gathering as this could generate — and in which I could never truly participate even were I now to live among them always (93).

What Jenny expresses here is the desire of the expatriate to be able to communicate phatically with members of the Other culture. Jenny is not yet ready to sacrifice her interchanges with Justin; but, as she states, place of birth restricts and confines one to a mode of nationalistic discourse that is, fundamentally, unalterable. In this sense, Jenny will always be an observer, but the important fact is that she attempts to cross the threshold and, with Gioconda's help, to a degree, she does. At the beginning of the novel, Jenny feels like a trespasser or cultural intruder — "I stood there with the letter in my handbag like a warrant to search, to root out secrets" (15) — and yet it is precisely this introduction to Gioconda (and Naples) that functions like a rite of passage and allows her to find herself. Jenny does not exploit Naples, or its natives, but views them as monuments in the journey of her life that she will revisit in her memories:

Gioconda had said it was a way to go on caring about a place, to miss it; yet it was rather, for me, that there now existed at last a place that could be missed. Arriving in America, I was coming from this. Some part of me would always be coming, now, from this. Like the dye they injected into my veins, the country coloured my essence, illuminated the reaction to everything else. Here, literally, I had come to my senses (145).

This forms a stark contrast to Clift who did not possess the linguistic skills that could aid her movement towards the Other.
Jenny has journeyed through the looking glass and, in her relationships and imagination has been able, to hold the reflected orange of Charles Dodgson in the “right” hand and been able, not only to see things differently, but also be seen differently. Jenny’s trip to America signifies a movement back through to the other side of the looking glass, to commercial imperialism and colonial practices. The journey back also represents a re-placement of events and people into a past that will one day be recovered:

So I must eventually retrace these sources of self — later on, as the search drew closer to home. Aspects of remorse, of injury, of forgetfulness would make their belated bridges over courses that had run dry, or been diverted. Justin had been the last of it, a transition (146).

As Capone suggests, Jenny’s time in Naples has been a mirror that provided her with a way to see her own identity and deeper self. Justin is the final route she must travel in order to give Naples, and the events there, their rightful place in the map of her existence. When she discovers, inadvertently, that Justin has died, she is able to abandon her cerebral search for him and freely collect those aspects of herself that were dislocated by his disappearance, fifteen years before, in Naples:

The cup in one hand, a forkful of cake in the other, I lowered my head over your name, Justin, at last, in that tea-room in Pinner inches from the fair and greying topknots of my chattering companions. My stomach turned over, I can tell you, but one gets used to anything. The pang of irrational posthumous jealousy, that shock of your alien new life that had already closed before I learnt of its existence; and your name I had sought everywhere. The middle initial, of which you were very proud, was misprinted, there is always some irrelevancy of the kind. We had an appointment in Pinner, your name and I, and now I will need never to look for it again. The search has been abandoned (131).

82 Capone, 178.
Like Jenny's memories of her brother Edward and her incestuous desire for him, Justin can now become a fact of her life that "will lose its prominence and become a more and more distant landmark" (82). Jenny can now look in the mirror and see her collective self: not as a dyadic subject, but one that has embraced a Symbolic order of her own choosing, a Symbolic Order imbued with the knowledge of Others.
CHAPTER FIVE

INTERROGATING THE LIMEN: TERRESTRIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPPOSITIONS IN THE TRANSIT OF VENUS

In the true, and northern, hemisphere, beyond the Equator that equalized nothing, even bath-water wound out in the opposite direction. Perhaps even the records gyrating on the gramophone. Australians could only pretend to be part of all that and hope no one would spot the truth.¹

The Australian intellectual consciousness was formed and pervaded by English literature, which kept, magnificently, before Australian eyes an “authoritative” version of physical existence quite different from their own. Shakespeare — to whom the extreme evil was “as opposite to every good as the Antipodes are unto us” — was not alone in associating Australia’s situation with a fall from grace. It was hard to escape an impression that Australia was inherently in the wrong.²

Like its predecessor, The Bay of Noon, The Transit of Venus employs the overriding universal themes of love and individual discovery which are crucially grounded in the dynamic of expatriate experience and the metaphors and allusions of mythic questing.³ Each of the principal figures in the narrative embarks on journeys through different countries and cultures while searching for a subjectivity which is often interwoven with love. These transits lead the characters into new Symbolic Orders and/or help them make contact with Otherness, contacts which, in most cases, assist in giving shape and meaning to their individual existences. In The Transit of Venus, the Other is located principally in England, the (M)Other,

³ If Bay of Noon provides only an indirect view of the author’s own expatriation, Transit offers a clearer reflection in that its central characters are raised in Australia before migrating to England.

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a location which problematises the notion of the Other as a distinct and defining force for the Australian subject.4

Caro and Grace have been imbued with English customs and culture from an early age. The narrator describes the duality of their psychosexual origins as one where they were geographically situated in one Symbolic Order, but were educated in the literature, climate and customs of an Other. Caro and Grace

had never seen these [English fauna and flora] but believed in them with perfect faith. As you believed, also, in the damp, deciduous, and rightful seasons of English literature and in lawns of emerald velours, or in flowers that could only be grown in Australia when the drought broke and with top-dressing. Literature had not simply made these things true. It had placed Australia in perpetual, flagrant violation of reality (31).

In order to subvert the notion of cultural familiarity and demonstrate the absolute Otherness of England, Hazzard employs a series of binary oppositions as a simplified way of defining the universe such as, Northern hemisphere/Southern hemisphere, colonial/postcolonial, youth/age. The binaries are expanded to include cultural, ideological and individual perceptions as well: new/old female/male, art/science, mythology/history, astrology/astronomy, falsity/truth, imaginative/critical writing, peace/war, license/control, and public/private.5 As the expatriated subject moves

4 See Clift, Chapter 2 page 85, where the relationship between the Australian national subject and the England is first problematised.
5 These binaries are exemplified in the characters themselves (Caro, Paul, Ted, Grace), in the way that they relate to each other and the world around them; for example, the art versus science binarism. All of these areas will be examined in detail throughout the chapter.
between the poles of these binary equations, a slippage of meaning occurs which exposes the lack in the national subject and instils in her/him a desire for the Other. Therefore, these binarisms can be read as metonymically representing desire — the desire of the subject to find wholeness.6

Hazzard appears to establish, for the expatriated Australian subject, colonialism and the English (M)Other as a site of cultural and individual oppression. The dyadic relationship that Caro, Grace and Dora have with Australia is not mirrored in England despite the influence English culture has upon them. For these characters, the movement to the (M)Other becomes a site of a second cultural inscription that serves to further split and alienate them as subjects. Whereas Clift was both defined in and against England, the cultural Mother,7 the Australian characters in Transit are defined only against it, therefore their Othering in England is complete.

Caro refuses to be petrified by the signification her nation of origin offers her. Equally, she also refuses the signification of the English Other which continues to site her within specific and “inferior” cultural and individual binaries. The binarisms also function as a representation of movement. By

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7 See Chapter Two, 87.
establishing a series of polarities and then centering her story upon the life of two expatriate sisters, Hazzard reveals the unstable nature of these binarisms. In focussing on the importance of transits (physical and psychological), Hazard introduces a third space of mobility between origin and end that both acknowledges and disrupts these dual sites.

The word “transit” broadens to encompass both its corporeal, literal meaning and a new, psychological and spiritual one. Giovanna Capone offers a definition of the word “transit” which summarises its significant role in the narrative:

Astronomically the term denotes the passage of a planet across some special point or region of the zodiac, or of a celestial body across the meridian of its culmination, or as in The Transit of Venus, the passage of a minor planet — Venus — across the sun’s disk. The concept conveys the general idea of transition: a passage of short duration, an event which flares up briefly and speedily vanishes, the idea of what is not permanent or persistent, but fleeting or temporary — passing through a place without staying in it, or staying only for a short time. This involves also the momentous excellence and beauty of the event experienced simultaneously with its immediate decline; it involves the idea of change and decay, of passing across and away. The course of two planets, two people, or more people (but still in couples), intersect for a brief moment, only to reach a contact and a culmination and to separate. As a story, transition becomes a narration of impermanence and decline, but also of transformation and rebirth, being ultimately about a search, an “open” Odyssean story.8

Embodied in Capone’s definition is the notion of the transit as a discourse of ambivalence; a narration that suggests, concurrently, “impermanence and

decline” and “transformation and rebirth”. Likewise, Capone’s concept of
the transit narrative as an “open” Odyssean story can also be read, because
of its concern with disturbing the binary opposites of departure and arrival,
as a liminal discourse.

In this novel the term transit and its associated binarisms celebrate
movement and change as positive modes of existence. In the midst of the
polarities Hazzard opens a liminal space where these binaries collapse or, at
the very least, are disturbed. Her characters seem to represent fixed
 contrasting positions. By locating various individuals at different stages in
their lives within unstable liminal space, Hazzard subverts the mutual
exclusivity of recognised opposites and establishes the space between as a
legitimate site from which to interrogate them. The examination and
ultimate rejection of specific enunciatory sites is evident in the lives of the
principal protagonists Caro and Ted who proceed to cross and recross the
borders between numerous binary oppositions rendering their textual
authority ambiguous. Caro, as a colonial and a woman, manages, despite
opposition, to move into the patriarchal space of British government. As a
heterosexual woman, she continues her affair with a homosexual man
whilst being aware of his sexual preferences. Ted overcomes his working

9 In modern times “transitory” has also been extended into a mode of existence (as Caro’s life
demonstrates — she continually relocates her self).
10 For example, the consistent motif of the aeroplane crash: air travel as transit/Otherness, an arbitrary fate
of the cosmopolitan.
class origins and becomes an eminent scientist (pragmatist), all the while maintaining his idealistic love for Caro. These are just some examples; others will be pursued throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The idea of a limen which functions to separate a series of polarities but which also occupies a crucial space, is evidenced in the terrestrial and mythological figure of Venus herself. As a morning and evening star Venus provides a reliable point of reference. But as both a morning and evening star, Venus is also ambiguous and appears to shift position with the seasons. As a mythological representation of love, she is indicative of an emotional state that cannot be fixed or defined. She also functions as one half of a pair; in astronomical terms, her partner in the transit is the sun. In classical mythology, her companion is Mars, a male who symbolises war. While Venus is depicted as calming Mars, she also sows discord and generates passion and conflict which he then has to resolve.

By employing Venus as a dual scientific and artistic/mythic identity and linking “her” with a journey, Hazzard has produced a motif with potentially limitless symbolic meanings which break down the specificity of reference. In doing this Hazzard recreates Venus (and by association her partners) as both a liminal subject/mythic signifier. The liminal figure straddles the border between binary opposites; that is, she recognises the limen as an
active site of interrogation and asserts motion or transit as a legitimate series of speaking positions beyond the limitations of nationality, familial, social and gender stereotypes. Venus simultaneously evokes both stasis and dynamism and, in doing so, erases any essentialism associated with distinct either/or viewpoints. Venus, as a representation of movement and transit, offers an authentic medial position from which to articulate an awareness of usually antagonistic forces. In the novel Caro is represented as a metonym for Venus as she causes the original signifier to shift or slide along the signifying chain of language. Caro refuses to totalise either herself or the Other characters/cultures she encounters. She becomes an ambivalent subject who moves between the Imaginary (familial and cultural) and Symbolic Orders of Australia and England (and Others) and back again, disrupting any attempts by Others to essentialise her.

By making implicit a parity between Caro and Venus, Hazzard also draws attention to the unstable dualities evident in Caro's nature. These dualities either attract and/or repel the men in Caro's life. Paul defines these vacillating binaries as "Some other, reckless nationality"; Christian describes her as "beyond his means" (23); while Ted Tice consigns any meaning in his life to Caro's presence. Caro's amorphous condition threatens those lacking integrity, those who will adhere, regardless of the consequences, to one viewpoint and refuse to acknowledge that there may be

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11 This slippage or movement also occurs when Caro is identified as "Australian": she does not fit stereotypical representations of "Australianness" as explored in Chapter One, pages 54-5, footnote 49.
an alternative way of seeing/thinking. These people feel challenged and exposed as inadequate by her unqualified honesty, which prompts Paul to "violate Caro's pride or her integrity" (98).

Paul's relationship with Caro can also be read metonymically as an attempt to interpret himself through her — she is Other to him (139). Paul is formed by his nation-dyad. He believes in his cohesiveness as a subject until Caro enters his life and he desires her. He says to Caro, "I was astonished how I wanted you, because I'd felt no lack" (132). Paul is not aware of the Other until Caro (a signifier of Otherness and the phallus) is present. Paul "uses" and then rejects Caro because whilst she first integrates him into his Symbolic Order (he is inspired by her), she later alienates him. Paul symbolically castrates himself by discarding Caro and then replaces the gap that is left with another signifier: Tertia. Tertia simultaneously bars Paul from the site of his desire (Caro) while setting up another (limited) metonymic chain of signification which he can move along (in his roles as husband, father, and public married figure). Throughout the narrative, Paul maintains an ambivalent relationship with Caro, his phallic signifier who solidifies and strengthens him whilst further alienating him from his self.

12 Caro also confirms her own identity by using his sense of lack
13 She does this by falling pregnant and therefore setting up her own triad — Paul, Tertia, child.
14 Paul's "use" and then rejection of Caro can be seen as analogous to the exploitation by James Cook's crew of the Tahitian women. Paul is not interested in psychological connections or contacts, he fears them: like the crew, he simply wants his lust sated and will, for a while, risk the demolition of his construction in order that it is needs are filled (reminiscent of the exchange of nails — integral to Cook's ship — for sexual favours). The subsequent venereal disease of the Tahitian women can be seen as an imperial legacy (sexual and cultural). Paul's imperial legacy is his dominance in Caro's thoughts, a dominance based on deception, a "diseased" mind. This false dominance ultimately causes "distortions in
Within *The Transit of Venus*, it is the individuals who consciously or unconsciously choose to embrace flux and impermanence who are portrayed as experiencing the brief joy of contact and momentary fulfilment. This, the narrative makes clear, occurs because these characters refuse to stay on “the safe side of the line”.\(^\text{15}\) The liminal figures in the text interrogate the territory on either side of the limen, while simultaneously interrogating their shifting marginality (Caro and Ted for example). In this sense, these figures act as metaphors for expatriate subjects who also inhabit the border in order to examine their dynamic relationships with various cultures and to interrogate the self. Hazzard inverts the hegemony of masculine and colonial rhetoric by making the antipodean (and expatriate) way of seeing into a moral and ethical achievement that eclipses the limitations and stasis of other modes of perception. James Wieland describes an antipodean as someone who

> is on the opposite side of the world; is an Australasian. But, in the logic of the novel, it is to hold opposite views to the prevailing views, it is to be the opposite of a person or a thing, where “European” provides the norm. It is to be outside the established repositories of power and authority: it is, then, not the geography which is important, but the ideas an individual holds.\(^\text{16}\)

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\(^{16}\) Wieland, 38.
While a series of oppositional stances are clearly delineated in the book, it also moves beyond a simplistic oppositional reading. The text advances into the borderland between conflicting discursive territories in order to explore its value as a site of contestation.

Not all the characters in the book start, let alone continue, to venture along or cross the limen in the transit of their life, preferring instead the security and power their familiar, tangible and emotional signifiers can offer. Because of their refusal to progress, Paul Ivory, Christian and Professor Thrale are configured as permanent signifiers who orbit around the lives of others. They are “fixed” in the way that the moon is — we only see its one face — but that fixity reduces them to satellite status as they orbit the more complex mobile bodies of Hazzard’s fictional cosmos. They are ultimately portrayed, despite the authority they have wielded and the material success they have attained, as lacking in both the Lacanian sense and in the emotional sense. These characters choose stasis over the explicitly disturbing recognition and inclusion of love and motion in their lives.

The adherence to specific and oppositional sociocultural roles is figuratively expressed by Hazzard through her use of metaphor and metonym. All the characters in the novel can be likened to either creatures of the firmament, the sea, or the earth. They are either fixed and immovable, or irrevocably
compelled to begin a fate-decreed voyage that will involve, as the four parts of the novel suggest, a crossing from the Old World to the New (and back again) and many contacts and culminations. The continual association of water and celestial imagery with particular characters is also indicative of their attitude to life. Paul Ivory is described as a "star" (135) — something fixed and immutable.\(^{17}\) He makes many contacts, but they are usually brief and, in terms of their impact on him, unremarkable. Grace Thrale describes herself as "fixed, terrestrial; landlocked, in contrast to the open sea" (270). She is bound by her social and gender roles to conform to a particular way of life, regardless of her desires. Grace comes to the realisation that to move out of one's predetermined role, to cross the boundaries erected by social, gender and cultural discourses is a risk that deserves acknowledgment:

Grace had discovered that men prefer not to go through with things. When the opposite occurred, it made history: Something you'll remember always.
She said, "Women have to go through with things. Birth, for instance, or hopeless love. Men can evade forever." (328).

She subverts the rigidity of the gender roles she assigns by recognising that there are, and always will be, exceptions to the rules.

There were exceptions — Ted Tice, or her own son. It would be dreadful if Rupert were to lay down his life, as Ted had done. Dreadful, but not unlikely (328).
Mr Leadbetter is likened to a "ship in a bottle" (102) — restricted and compressed, controlled by greater, outside forces and therefore limited.
Angus Dance is named after the Italian hero Aeneas and his birth is associated with the sinking of the _Tirpitz_ (foregrounding Grace and Caro's,

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\(^{17}\) He does, however, "rise" and "fall", but these movements leave him unchanged.
as well as the Drage family's, association with ships). It is later discovered that this ship was not on the ocean when it sank, but capsized at its moorings (274), and Angus later admits that, despite owning a boat, he is not much of a sailor (280). Angus will only follow a carefully plotted, earthly course, he will not, like his namesake, deviate — even for love, thus confining his progress. The narrator wryly notes, however, that this confinement “is a means of motion” (286).

Christian Thrale is another creature of the planet whose only adventure into the ocean of life has him foundering and feeling like “a mutation as of fish to land” (270). Christian is not the Odyssean figure he fancies himself to be (223), but is a Penelope who, for a brief moment “left the loom” (231). Caro and Ted are aligned with both the sky and the sea. Caro is linked to the sea through the continual water imagery surrounding her (which includes the death of her parents on the Benbow). Early in the narrative she is “established as a child of Venus,” (15) thus connecting her to the sky. Caro is a creature that spans two elements. Likewise, Ted’s movement into the narrative is accompanied by a deluge, thereby associating him with water and he is confirmed as an astronomer who watches the movement of the stars. In his earthly existence he travels the globe. His life is paralleled to the explorer/astronomer Legentil, who devoted his life to the pursuit of Venus. It is ironic that Caro’s last decision is to set in motion the boat she travels in with Ted; after which she “became inactive” (330), suggesting that
she will not and cannot control its course or her destiny. Caro and Ted have never travelled on water together before (332), and are now acting in concert; they are enjoying a mutual transit, but the reader already knows that “the calculations are hopelessly out.” The reader is prepared for the outcome — the Black Drop. In coupling Caro and Ted to the sea and sky, they are also linked to the two major elements that invite travel and transit. Movement through the sea represents the flux and change of life and the transitory nature of existence itself. The sky is also a changeable arena and the space through which, in modern times, cross-cultural encounters are most readily facilitated. The symbolic employment of the sea and sky signify the expatriate’s metonymic movement between spaces and over borders as well as being metaphoric manifestations of life itself.

Throughout the various journeys the characters undertake, memory plays a critical role. It assists the characters in the mapping of their existence so they, like the individuals in The Bay of Noon, may one day revisit it and make sense of its configurations. The patterns of reflection come mostly through the narrator/author’s structuring. This allows the narrator to juxtapose the reconsidered past with the present in order to expose the flaws between theory and practice, ideals and reality. This gap between what is and what one desires it to be is manifested in Caro:

What she had read had evidently made her impatient of the prime discrepancy — between man as he might be, and as he was. She would impose her crude belief — that there could be heroism, excellence — on herself and others, until they, or she, gave in.
Exceptions could arise, rare and implausible, to suggest she might be right. To those exceptions she would give her whole devotion. It was apparently for them she was reserving her humility (10).

Sylvia Lawson perceives Caro as a simplified object of male desire, stating that, "within the elegant outlines of her figure, absolutely nothing happens; it is at all times totally unified".\textsuperscript{18} To understand Caro as a static and unified character is to overlook the complex moral life she has and the dualities inherent in her own nature which see her crossing and recrossing the borders of social, familial, cultural and psychological constructions. This constant movement between and along the threshold of oppositional forces is reflected firstly in her love life and, secondly, in her transits through many countries.

Caro is continually positioned as a liminal figure poised between the choices life offers her. She seeks a future of her own design, one that does not commit her, irrevocably, to either one particular space or another. This is reflected in Caro's name which carries meanings such as "flesh" and "dear". As an expatriate subject interacting with the Other, Caro becomes the word made flesh — she embodies (for some) the phallus. Her very presence amongst the Other is a signifier to which random meanings (associated with both the external and the internal) may be attached depending on the context.\textsuperscript{19} While Caro may be "flesh" she also has a strong spiritual and


\textsuperscript{19} An example of this is when she translates Ramón Tregeár's poetry and so assigns her own meanings to words so they can be admitted to the Symbolic Other of England.
psychological existence suggesting that within her, the binary opposites of the physical and the cerebral are blurred. Despite the fixed idealism that Caro exudes, she maintains her "crude beliefs" through a series of displacements. These displacements are produced by her expatriation and through the different relationships in which she is depicted. Caro moves from Australia/parents/Dora, to England/Paul/Ted, to America/Adam/Ted, and from these western locales travels beyond to Other exotic locations (South America/Tregear). The maintenance of her "crude belief" is contingent on her liminal status — her continual occupation of the threshold between self and Other. Caro refuses to concede to either side. She frees herself from her nation-dyad and becomes a shifting phallus and thus exceeds her frame of cultural reference. In doing this she resists being offered up as an image of consumption for the Other. Caro desires to spatialise herself within the second Symbolic Order and this is why she refuses to occupy any singular position.

As a pair, Caro and Grace embody the spiritual and the corporeal — yet apart they have elements of both allowing them to be recognised as individuals: "[Caro's] body had a more distinct outline when she was parted from her sister" (25). The sisters' names seem to reflect an attitude to life or an ideology, the narrator informs us that the contrasts between the sisters were exaggerated to keep things neat (9), implying that they are not as dissimilar as society and social codes would have them. They are in fact,
"formed and indissolubly bound" (9), a condition resulting from their mutual dyadic origins which allows them, in their later years, to sit "inclined towards each other, ... exchang[ing] some pain for a tragedy not exclusively theirs" (327). This combination of flesh and spirit, so obvious in Caro, is what distinguishes her as Other — she is not firmly situated but drifts between positions, destabilising them as she goes:

Her soul seemed a cold, separate thing, while her body was weightless, humid, its contours exposed and scarcely natural. It was hard to say which was unworthy of the other (77).

From the opening of the book Caro and Grace are both located physically and psychologically as opposites to their English hosts. They are Australian "almost a subject for ribaldry" (11), they are young women and, while Sefton Thrale is aligned with "the inventors of deadly weapons" (57), Caro is a child of Venus (15). A discursive and psychological sense of Otherness is established that ultimately aligns the characters as generic and cultural opposites. Caro and Ted, despite efforts to the contrary, refuse to be categorised and therefore limited. This is revealed firstly by Caro's relocation to Europe and her employment in a male dominated environment and, secondly, in Ted's intellect which has allowed him access to a world previously unavailable to his class. Caro and Ted are overtly united through their attitude to life and their eagerness to explore and learn about Others. This attitude, which defies specificity, earns them the attribution of heresy (15); an action which defies social, gender, class and cultural codes.
Ted is portrayed as a psychological and cultural “expatriate” who has journeyed beyond the confines of his working-class origins and altered the directions his life will take. Ted’s outsider status is clearly depicted at the outset when, for example, he is likened to “a governess in an old story, who marries into the noble family” (6). This both confirms (generic) and disturbs (social) rules. Where Paul’s future success in his chosen career is certain (14), and Sefton Thrale rests on the laurels of his past successes finding the future too unpredictable (12), Ted’s destiny holds no certainty:

Tice’s future ascendancy could not, like Caro’s beauty, be taken on faith: some sign was needed as to whether he would win or fail – both possibilities being manifestly strong in him (12).

Ted, like Caro, is an uncertain quantity who refuses to bow to the pressures and strict impositions that his various cultural and social roles anticipate for him. Caro and Ted are further aligned when they are referred to as “radicals” (15) and described, because of their origins, as “upper servants” (15). Tice is a reader and lover of poetry and is familiar with the work of Rex Ivory. His passion for literature prompts Charmian Thrale to think “it was an odd misconception that scientists had no taste for literature” (14). Ted also has great integrity, revealed not only in his action regarding the

21 “Paul Ivory has already established some place for himself in literature. And is rising so swiftly that there is no telling where he may yet go.”
22 “His sympathies were with the manageable distances of the past rather than the extravagant reach of the future.”
23 This description arises out of Ted’s working-class background and Caro’s Australian identity. The description is also an attempt to polarise and essentialise them, but they resist this definition.
siting of the telescope, but in his story about the escaped German prisoner of war, an example of an “intense and private humanity” (53).

Both Caro and Ted derive from alternative backgrounds to the other members of the Peverel household. Caro is an Australian, an antipodean, a person who originates from the Other side of the world and, despite the historical and political relationship between Australia and England, is perceived as having originated from within a different Symbolic Order. Australia is described as being in “perpetual, flagrant violation of reality” (31), bearing connotations of falsity or even parody in comparison to the “genuineness” of England. From the beginning of the story, the characters are located within a gothic, nightmarish and aristocratic world in which some are only included by accident. The generic mode of the narrative suggests a fixity and order that is momentarily disturbed by uncontrolled forces. These disturbances are never brought under control; they work subversively against the apparent “stage-managed” prolepses of the book. Likewise, the apparent stasis of places and people is generally relativised by the Other. For example, the fixity of Peveral is relativised by the castle next door. Likewise, the apparent order and stasis of the relations between the

24 Peverel is depicted as a masculine domain ruled by the scientific patriarch Sefton Thrale. Peverel has, on top of its regular occupants, Charmian and Sefton, two female house guests. With the arrival of Ted Tice and then Paul Ivory, a generic order between genders, and private and public worlds, is established offering both contacts and contrasts for the reader. The men all have very public occupations: Professor Thrale is a distinguished astronomical scientist, Tice is a young protégé about to be launched into the male-dominated world of science, and Paul Ivory is a charismatic playwright. In their chosen careers these men will both attract and need public approval in order to be successful. The women, on the other hand, are positioned within a domestic and private space; Charmian representing what Grace will become.
English householders and landholders (Paul, the Thrales, and the Drages), is relativised by the orphan and expatriate status of Caro, Grace and the absent Dora. Lacan argues that, not only is the subject constituted in relation to the signifier in all its meanings, s/he is determined in it as well: “the things that are inscribed are significations, dialectized significations in the relation of desire of the Other, and they give a particular value to the relation of the subject to the unconscious.” Caro, though we are told she is different, for the moment serves as a guest-domestic Other, subservient to Professor Thrale. She is a figure he can desire and against which he can define himself. By being defined in and against the Otherness of Peverel and the English cultural Symbolic, Caro and Grace (and Ted), are continually alienated and fragmented, both culturally and subjectively. Their presence in Peveral functions similarly; they are perceived (unconsciously) as objects of rupture and constant remainders of the fracture of the psychosocial subject.

In the analepsis of the Bell girls’ childhood, told between two chapters set in England, Hazzard foregrounds the theme of colonial provincialism. For Caro and Grace, Australia is a British outpost which they inhabited, and which is continually being inscribed and recolonised by English history and literature. Later, Australia suffers another sort of colonisation in the form of American commercialism. England and the Northern hemisphere are positioned as a mythically rich and vibrant Other that the subject must

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25 These comparisons offer both contacts and contrasts for the reader.
seek, must move towards, in order to grow emotionally and spiritually and attach the signifiers of their youth to their appropriate and proper signified:

Going to Europe, someone had written, was about as final as going to heaven. A mystical passage to another life, from which no one returned the same (37).

Expatriation is, for Caro and Grace, a means of forming cultural and psychological links. The “mystical passage” is like a second birth through which they will enter another dyadic relationship with the (M)Other culture and be given legitimate speaking sites. The inability of the first Symbolic Order to contextualise the cultural Symbolic they acquired through literature requires that they undergo this movement. For Caro and Grace, expatriation becomes a means through which they attempt to gain a sense of subjectivity and totality. Because their differences are continually being pointed out to them, they seek to anchor themselves by conjuring up memories of past experiences. What occurs is a greater sense of alienation which is read against cultural integration. This sense of integration is aided by Grace’s engagement and Caro’s employment, occurrences that artificially construct an Other subjectivity for the women whilst all the time alluding to the differences between the Self and the Other as a site for transformation.27 This liminality is demonstrated by the fact that Caro does not fit comfortably into either the masculine public space or the feminised private one. She is single, and is about to commence working for the government after having earned top marks, despite views to the contrary.

27 Feldstein, 161.
in a public service exam. Caro will enter masculine spaces on her own
terms; as the narrator comments: “Caro did not necessarily belong here:
Caro would decide at which table she belonged” (9).

In her degree of involvement with Ted and Paul, Caro also inhabits and
crosses the limen. According to the formulaic requirements of romance
narrative, the romantic novel “is structured by two central ideas or aims:
the characterization of a strong, male figure, the hero, and the romance and
marriage between him and the heroine”.28 Paul is, in the initial stages of the
text, the embodiment of the romantic hero:

When Paul Ivory walked in espadrilles on the paths and passages
of Peverel, the sound inaugurated, softly, the modern era. As did
his cotton jerseys — some blue, some black — and the trousers of
pale poplin. The modern era, like the weather, was making these
possible. Paul had brought the sun, and his luck, with him (70).

Paul possesses “schoolboy” (68) looks and an irrepressible charm that
seduces male and female alike. Paul’s fraudulence is, in part, due to his
sexuality which is subtly hidden from the reader until the last few pages of
the novel. 29 Paul, the romantic hero, is a married bi-sexual: Caro, the
heroine, has full knowledge of this (302) and yet continues their relationship
and by doing so actively participates in his dissimulation. Caro and Paul’s

178.  
29 The death scene of Rex Ivory on page 96 has Rex saying to his son, “Never seen death yet, Dickie?
Now is your time to learn;” which is said by a dying adventurer to his homosexual son. Likewise the scene
where Caro ventures backstage to meet the cast of Paul’s first play, page 127, has her excluded on the
grounds that she is an outsider — sexually as well as professionally. Paul’s greatest deception, over and
above his hidden sexuality, is the secret of Victor Locker’s death.
entire relationship destabilises generic expectations by, on the one hand following them and, on the other, overturning them. By forming a relationship with Paul, Caro deconstructs the concept of the romantic heroine and reveals the complexities within her own nature. These are further brought out when she takes the name Vail (veil).30

Whereas Paul's sexual crossing from male to female and back again, can be read as narrow and perverse (he desperately wants to keep his bi-sexuality hidden, to the point of murder), Caro's movement into new sexual spaces can be understood as part of her greater ambition to make contact with, and understand the Otherness in the world; “She had wanted knowledge” (310). Drusilla Modjeska claims that the novel “ends up very close to romantic women's fiction”31 which Bronwen Levy explains is because “the novel fails to challenge stereotyped assumptions about women, largely owing to an emphasis on romantic love at the expense of the themes of history”.32 While Caro's complicity adds a positive complexity to her character, the relationship of Caro and Paul is not based on romantic love but an almost unhealthy mutual eroticism and psychopathology. The psychopathology is reliant upon their identifying each other as Other. By subjecting themselves to the field of the Other they are able to locate themselves within the

30 Caro takes the veil — a romance convention of both retreat and chastity — by getting married: ironic inversion of genre.
32 Levy, 190.
English Symbolic Order.\textsuperscript{33} Their desire for each other simultaneously divides and completes them as subjects, in much the same way that expatriation works for the national subject. Caro says to Paul, "All my weakness is distilled in you" (134). Yet her succumbing to his seduction does not render her powerless or mute; on the contrary, it empowers Caro, not physically, but psychologically: "It had not occurred to Paul that Caro's influence might increase with her submission. Or that she would remain intelligent" (99). Like Victor Locker, Caro is too great a risk for Paul. Under her influence he can "see his entire construction falling apart" (311). Caro never believes in Paul's romantic "film set" (106), being cognisant, in terms of sexual responses, of what is expected of her in this relationship. Caro adopts the role of the "other woman", the "classic mistress" (152) yet, ironically, it is Tertia (whose name means "third"), who is the outsider. Caro loves Paul, but it is a love entered into willingly and with full knowledge of the Otherness that Paul, in his "secret" sexual life, entertains. Once Caro gains knowledge of his other deception — the murder, she can no longer face what her past relationship with Paul now implies: that is, that she was complicit, not only in a greater deception, but in an unbearable, almost deliberate ignorance of the "dated nobility"(314) of Ted Tice:

Caroline Vail felt an almost physical barrier to recognizing the role of Ted Tice. She, who had spoken to Paul of ignorance, must assess the ignorance in which she had passed passionate years of life. All pride and presumption, the exaltation of her own beliefs, the wish to be humane, the struggle to do well, were reduced to this: a middle-aged woman wringing her hands and calling on God (310).

\textsuperscript{33} See Lacan, \textit{Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis}, 188.
Where Levy's criticism of the novel as failing to challenge stereotypes is accurate is in the novel's depiction of the triangular affair between Caro, Ted and Paul. Both Ted and Caro, as stated earlier, are aligned with the working classes, whereas Paul, particularly after his marriage to Tertia, is a representative of the privileged classes. Paul's exploitation of Caro at the expense of Ted's emotions is, according to Cranny-Francis, a component of contemporary society's "white supremacist ideology".34 This ideology is encoded by dramatic class and economic discrepancies. Describing the typical romance/fairytale scenario, Cranny-Francis writes:

After all, kings are in no danger from goose-girls; they may choose to marry them or they may not. But goose-boys are in an extremely precarious situation. Not only do kings appropriate their labour; they also appropriate their women. Women, therefore, may be read as class traitors, all too ready to abandon their own class for another which is more socially and economically advantageous.35

In choosing Paul over Ted, Caro conforms to the conventions of romance/fairytale narratives. This is further compounded when she marries Adam Vail — the supremely wealthy and ideologically sound male who carries his phallic power in his sceptre-like cane.

Adam Vail originates from America, a country notorious for its neo-colonial practices. Adam, however, as his name suggests, is seeking to create a

34 Cranny-Francis, 188.
35 Cranny-Francis, 188.
Utopia, a new Garden of Eden, an egalitarian world which, ironically, he seeks to fashion from his privileged myopic position. Adam's motives, as altruistic as they appear, are fundamentally, unclear. This is suggested by his surname, Vail (veil), and his characterisation as a man of mystery. In her relationship with Adam, Caro is able to possess the phallus (as opposed to being it for Paul) and thus enter the Symbolic Order as a subject. She now solidifies, as a married woman, into a signifier. Yet, by having an indeterminate nationality (204), Caro continues to disrupt the borders around particular national and cultural spaces particularly by choosing to translate the poetry of Ramón Tregear. This act of translation becomes a metaphor for the interpretation others need in order to locate Caro. Even her husband cannot specify who or what Caro is (206), and this causes a disruption in the field of the Other. Caro, as an interpreter, as an object that is both self and Other, represents desire. She thus sustains, for those she encounters, their intersubjective experiences in the Symbolic Order: she can locate them within a Symbolic discourse, but cannot be located herself.

In a psychoanalytical reading, Caro's movement from Paul to Adam to Ted also operates in the same way as that of Jenny's exchange in The Bay of Noon. The interchange of women is the basis of the Symbolic Order and as

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a means of neutralising the father/son relationship. The exchange can be expanded beyond the confines of the familial to embrace a cultural reading of exchange which simultaneously reflects the international/Other influences upon Australia. Caro has an affair with English Paul (symbolic of British occupation of its Antipodean colony), is rejected (Australia becomes independent), and then marries Adam – a symbol of growing American neocolonial commercial imperialism (and influence in Australia). The marriage is successful, and allows Caro access into a new Symbolic Order. Caro cannot gain anything from a relationship with Ted. Ted has no power; he represents, in a psychosocial sense, a meaningless return to an old Symbolic Order. He does not possess the phallus, therefore he does not have the power to locate Caro within a cultural triadic relationship and a new Symbolic Order:

In different socio-political structures, the phallus seemed to function as a signifier of the presence and absence of access to power and self-definition ... the phallus thus distributes access to the social categories invested with various power relations ... it can thus, if interpreted socio-politically, be seen to represent some of the ways in which subjects are positioned in different locations within a hierarchized social geography.

Ted is "castrated" (lacking the phallus) because he defines himself/is defined by Caro/desire/phallus. He cannot fulfil himself within his own Symbolic Order:

Ted Tice already understood his attachment to Caro as an intensification of his strongest qualities, if not of his strengths: not a youthful adventure, fresh and tentative, but a gauge of all effort, joy, and suffering known or imagined. The possibility that

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he might never, in a lifetime, arouse her love in return was a
discovery touching all existence. In his desire and foreboding, he
was like a man awake who watches a woman sleeping (57).

His sterile family are lost (another castration both familial and cultural),
his class background, his profession, are all projected onto Caro (as
unattached\footnote{This unattachment can also be read as being free of a specific Symbolic Order. She is a sliding or
floating signifier.} and different) to complement his lack. But Caro, as the Other,
always projects his (lacking) image back to him in an endlessly deferred
promise. This ignites desire in Ted and the motivation to continue moving
along the signifying chain. By moving along the chain of signification Ted
experiences both alienation and the aggressive competitiveness "from which
develops the triad of Others, the ego, and the object ... ."\footnote{Lacan, Écrits, 19. This triad of aggressive competitiveness is mirrored by other relationships in the text;
Tertia, Paul, Caro; Adam, Caro, Josie; Adam, Caro, Adam's dead wife; Christian, Cordelia, Grace; Angus,
Grace, Christian.} Once Caro and
Ted enter into a loving relationship (the I/you mutuality), there is no Other
and there is no longer a promise of sufficiency. Lacan suggests that man will
always attempt to place his love relations in place of his relations with and
to the Other.\footnote{Grosz, Jacques Lacan, 138.} This metonymic displacement will and does fail in the case of
Caro and Ted.

As individuals, Caro and Ted still retain the signifiers of their different
Symbolic Orders and these enable them to be located within a triadic
system. As a couple, however, they cannot be located within a phallic
system and so their relationship flounders. Neither Ted or Caro are interested in occupying posts within a power structure of any description, yet their attempt to defy social and O/other conventions by refusing to maintain a place, signified by their relation to the Other, is what causes their deaths. Without Caro, whom Ted relies upon for self-definition and, in the ontological sense, for giving purpose to his life, he cannot survive. By calling their ultimately acknowledged love a culmination, Hazzard celebrates their defiance, their liminality, beyond any psychosocial representations and points to the personal satisfaction gained from their refusal to conform. In the end, both Caro and Ted achieve what they have long desired — even though the "calculations were hopelessly out" (15). This suggests that anything beyond their brief contact and culmination (an unreal sense of psychosocial completeness) would be impossible.

In her relationship with Adam, Caro describes herself as resurrected (326), her time with him is an ascent (205) from the underworld of darkness and depression and the contemplation of suicide:

The deed of death has no hypothetical existence — or, having its hypothesis in everyone, must be enacted to achieve meaning. Then meaning is total, as for nothing else. A phenomenon known as the Black Drop. It is no less logical. There are dying conditions as well as living conditions. Venus can blot out the sun (167).

With Adam, Caro experiences a re-birth and revival: he is a New-world Adam and she is re-signified as his Eve. From this moment on, Caro is
referred to increasingly as Caroline Vail, the surname suggesting that she keeps a barrier between herself and Others in order to preserve her subjectivity. This subjectivity depends upon the liminal space between various dualities. Caro has moved from one patriarchal order into another, yet by appropriating the “veil”, a sense of mystery, she is also able to access both her old Symbolic Orders and the new one. She takes her husband’s name — a paternal metaphor which is “the qua principle of separation, and the ever-opened division in the subject owing to his primal alienation [and through which]... order and norms must be instituted which tell the subject what a man or woman must do.” Her identity as Caro gives her access to the English Symbolic Order and her Australian identity (which is how she is signified by other characters), continued access to her first (mother/dyadic) one. As Caroline Vail, however, Caro also enacts the role of Irigaray’s Persephone, “who represents the relations between the celestial and the terrestrial”. Persephone, according to myth, begins as an object of exchange between two men, but continually longs for her mother:

Carried off into a world which is strange to her, she weeps. But no one hears her. And her mother, who does hear this anguished cry, cannot discover the place of their disappearance. No living person points it out to her ... The one must remember the other. Having entered that world, she must not come back from it. Must not cross again through that invisible veil which restrains her, that shadow which surrounds her, that death which encircles her. Which she sustains ... Persephone doesn’t remain there.

44 There is also a sense in which Caro previously lacked a protective barrier and Adam has given her one: the metaphor of the fig leaf in the Garden — innocence makes way for experience.

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Caro, as a Persephone figure, "exceeds her designated position(s) and roles. She remains a paradoxical being, inhabiting mutually exclusive domains..."48 These mutually exclusive domains are configured in Australia/America and Europe. Caro travels from Australia to Europe, and then from England to America. In each of these countries she engages with the culture and the people using her native country as a touchstone through which to observe and compare what she sees.

The text itself is not unequivocally about nationalities or cultures even though it does, in a sense, explore these issues. Rainwater and Scheick understand this lack of reference to specific cultures as being a characteristic of all Hazzard's work. They interpret her oeuvre as seeking to explore "a world view beyond any particular national culture, a world view derived from large concerns transcending the delimiting boundaries of any particular nationality".49 The novel is primarily ontological in its concerns. These concerns centre on individuals and the polarities within and around the subject which affect their movement in, and apprehension of, life. Levy argues that the Australian background of the Bell sisters serves "largely to provide a legitimate reason for their lack of social position in England and to explain their position as partial outsiders within the English and American societies in which they live.50 Levy takes this idea further by

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48 Grosz, Sexual Subversions, 165.
50 Levy, 188. The book is also clearly venting its spleen on British Civil Service, American politicians, bureaucrats, and philanthropists, and Australian "whingers."
suggesting that: “Their Australian background operates less as a cultural
difference and more as a cultural disadvantage which is largely overcome.”51
Hazzard uses the provincial background of the Bell women both as a
correlative to Ted’s working class origins and as a means of establishing
their continued outsider status which motivates their search for love and a
home. To argue, as Levy does, that the Australian background of the Bell’s
is largely overcome, is to limit an analysis to the aesthetics of the book
alone; they may appear to fit in to the society they choose to dwell in, but it
is only a superficial fit. Psychoanalytical interpretative praxis expands a
reading of Caro and Grace’s origins beyond these sort of considerations and
signals the continual dialogue between Old world and New that pervades
the novel.

Caro and Grace not only grew up in pre and post-war Sydney, experiencing
the enormous social and cultural changes that were prevalent.52 They also
experience, while still very young, the loss of their parents. The capsizing of
the Benbow becomes a metaphor for the psychological capsizing of the girls’
life. This event is continually diminished by their Northern counterparts’
rescue from the famous Titanic, revealing that people often fail to
understand the enormous psychological ramifications of such an event or,

51 Levy, 188.
52 Such as the impact of American commercialism: “It was the first encounter with calculated
uselessness,” (47) and multiculturalism.
like Dora and the school teacher, use it to explain or excuse aberrant behaviour:

At school both were clever, which was attributed to the maturing effects of their tragedy — just as, had they lagged, obtuseness would have been ascribed to the arresting trauma (39).

The Benbow signifies different things to different people. For the Bells, however, it signifies the destruction of their familiar/familial dyadic and triadic relationship; the story recalling, yet again, the conversation at the Thrale dinner table: “The years of preparation. And then, from one hour to the next, all over” (15). Both Caro and Grace were, along with their mother, identified as “One and two halves ... and no Dora” (34). They were full initiates into a triadic relationship with their family and culture: a threesome — the absent father providing the third figure and the Law. After the loss of their parents they have to re-establish some sort of relationship within and with the Australian Symbolic Order. Dora becomes a substitute mother/father figure, the possessor of the Lacanian phallus, enabling the girls a dramatically altered, but still essential, access to the Symbolic Order. They establish a new dyadic and semi-triadic relationship with Dora and their Symbolic Order that has them constructing their versions of reality:

The girls’ early legends were all of the time that Dora. The time that Dora stood up to the tax man, the time Dora took no nonsense from the minister...” (40).

Even familiar signifiers become reconfigured under Dora’s influence:

53 Note that while the girls may be two halves, they are still separate entities. The description of them as two halves also links them to their maternal origins.
Dora had a vermilion dress with black buttons that she wore for housework. The child Grace was asking, “Why are you always angry in that dress?” Dora scarcely knew how to flare. “In this dress – I’m always busy. Not angry, busy” (41).

Dora is unable to satisfactorily fulfil the role of mother, in the same way that, metonymically and metaphorically, Australia, as a “home” culture, proves to be inadequate. Hazzard correlates people and landscape pointing out, through the description of one, the dearth in the other. Australia is described as a “lack” comprising “scarcity and distance” (26). Similarly, Dora is described as a diseased landscape from which Caro and Grace must flee in order to find refuge:

Like a vast inland of their own littoral, Dora was becoming an afflicted region, a source of abrupt conflagration. Compliant with her every mood, they wondered that her life should be, as she told and told them, subjugated to theirs. There was some misunderstanding here. Deep trouble was having its way with Dora, as the girls were first to know. She might still take them into her arms – but vehemently, as if few such embraces might be left to them and without providing sanctuary... They were losing their mother a second time” (38).

The narrator comments that “the threesome was beginning to irk” (48), and then the narrative jumps to Europe. The suggestion is that, not only was the triadic relationship Grace and Caro formed with Dora unsatisfactory, in psychosocial terms, so too was the cultural one they had formed with their native country. Once the narrative recommences it is significant that Dora, like Australia, is absent: they are both recreated in frequent analepses, in the memories of the subject that directly impacts upon the present. Both Grace and Caro expatriate themselves from their familial home (Dora) and
their cultural home (Australia) in order to contact the Other and submit to
new encounters that will expand their private and public knowledge.
Irigaray understands the renunciation of a maternal shelter (national home
or a specific individual), as giving the subject the possibility of a
rejuvenation "a rediscovery of the identity shared by mother and daughter
which may give to both a certain strength to resist these [patriarchal]
circuits of exchange".54 Ultimately, neither Grace nor Caro are able to
completely resist the "circuits of exchange" in which patriarchy positions
them, though Caro often manages to occupy the limen and thus fracture the
boundaries.

Dora becomes a permanent outsider who drifts continually on the periphery
of Symbolic Order after Symbolic Order, rejecting the Other and any chance
of "rejuvenation" or self-definition it may offer. Dora remains an insular
individual and, in this respect, can be likened to Paul Ivory who, as Ted
suggests, "has no growth, merely automatic transmission" (74). Through the
diametrically constructed portraits of Dora and Caro, the reader is also
offered heterogeneous versions of the female expatriate. Caro is an
expatriate who does not require the security of place, but searches for
meaning in inner spaces: Caro's "still waters ran deep" (20). She is able to
relocate herself because she is not tied to any particular place in the
physical sense, only emotionally. This is why Caro will inhale "December for

54 Grosz, Sexual Subversions, 182-3.
a lifetime" (37). She will carry with her the signifiers from her old Symbolic Order (the scent of the Mother country) and, despite the ever-present influence of the new one and the impact it has on her past existence, will be able to translate her experiences in England (and later Europe and America) through Antipodean eyes, endowing people and events with new meaning.

Caro, whose travels are reduced to small asides throughout the novel, represents the expatriate who is eager to engage with the Other. Caro learns languages with relative ease, affirming her willingness to communicate with the Other in her life. She travels from Australia, to England, Spain, France, Sweden, and North and South America. In all these countries she makes contacts which she preserves throughout her life, even if it is only through letters. Dora, on the other hand, remarks "that her own language is good enough for her" (125) and manages to transplant the signifiers of one Symbolic Order with her on to anOther one: "The block of flats in Rua das Flores was called the Chisolm and might have been at Hammersmith" (161). Even Dora's choice of partner is suggestive of her own disposition: "Everything about him was contained, constrained, a fullness tied and bound" (122). Bruce Ingot will admit no Other — not even Dora into the enclosure of his life. Dora's mother died when she was born (34), suggesting that Dora lives in a perpetual dyadic state with substitute mothers, having been given no real opportunity to progress beyond this phase of psychosocial development to the next one. Dora lives in a state of
familial and cultural displacement: she has no home. She habitually positions herself as dependent on Grace and Caro, as a victim of life, and therefore as a child in continual need of help. Her constant relocating (reflected not only in her country of residence but in her friendships as well) indicates a deep-rooted restlessness and a desire to be guided. Dora desires to maintain a dyadic relationship with her familiar and familial country; that is, herself (which she mirrors through her choice of companions) and Caro and Grace, relationships that, for Dora, will admit no Other. Dora also expresses a desire for death (40) which, according to Lacan, is the wish of the child who manipulates the phantasy of her or his own death in love relations with the parents.\(^5\) This is primarily used as an attention seeking device, as a means of demanding the articulation and re-articulation of love and through this achieving a sense of security and belonging. It is appropriate then that Dora ultimately inverts the relationship she has with Grace and Caro, repositioning herself as child/dependent and Caro, in particular, as a mother-figure.

Caro sat with her arms about Dora, and for two pins would have resumed long past pleadings: Please Dora, oh Dora, don't. In any embrace, Dora would apply her stranglehold. Caro, whatever her frailty, was now irrevocably cast as the strong one who overcame without effort; Dora would be the victim, and pitifully weak (163).

\(^5\) Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 215. It is significant here that Caro also expresses a desire for death after the end of her affair with Paul, a representative of the English Symbolic Order, and before her relationship with Adam commences. Caro at that stage is moving between two cultural parents and could likewise be observed, in the psychoanalytic sense, as unconsciously manipulating her "parents" in order to gain both attention and love. The fact she is "rescued" and adopted by another parental figure reveals that her stratagem worked.
Dora rejects the Other; she fears the influence it may have on her life. This is made apparent in her attitude towards Caro's purchase, when she is still a child, of a book: "Dora knew, none better, the enemy when she saw it"(49). For Dora, knowledge is to be feared. Dora, like the Major, views life as a continual battle, a struggle to keep oneself contained. A psychoanalytical reading offers a more sympathetic reading of Dora, one that understands her anxiety as a psychosocial lack, as a sense of alienation from a culture and a subjectivity; a condition which, according to Hazzard, is an inescapable result of post-war modernity. As Brigitta Olubas points out:

Caro's planned epitaph for Dora, "[she] could live without a country but not without an enemy" (256) is perhaps Hazzard's own comment on the dislocation of modern life, reminding us that travel does not of itself create discovery, or meaning, and that movement can also be in the direction of senseless antagonism and death.56

This juxtaposes Dora's continually expressed wish for death with Caro's ultimate death (which is the culmination of a great love). It also expresses the war imagery which figures around both Dora and the Major. Hazzard, in her Boyer Lectures could well have been speaking about Dora when she stated,

History suggests to us the terrible possibility that humankind cannot live without an enemy: that, deprived of one antagonist, we will soon settle on another; and that our individual lives set the scene for this tragedy with the little private wars we are forever declaring amongst ourselves. If we are not to accept the fated view of our past and our future we must learn to develop our faculties – to open our eyes and ears and minds. We need to listen

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and enquire. To have thoughts in which we have no enemies. To equip ourselves for living to the full, in Australia and the world.\textsuperscript{57}

War is regarded as a form of senseless antagonism, exacerbated by politicians and bureaucrats who fail to speak the truth, but practice circumlocution and, like Paul, deception. The Major has served in the war and continues to fight against life, with Dora temporarily enlisted as an ally, against life. It is appropriate then that Christian, upon meeting the Major, should find his “punitive figures of speech aroused such antipathies that were scarcely coherent. The truth was they were too reminiscent of Christian himself” (123). Once again, the narrator seeks to link individuals in ways that transcend nationality and culture, forming contacts that the characters themselves are often oblivious to.

The way in which Hazzard’s characters employ language to either hide or expose the truth is significant. Paul Ivory, the consummate wordsmith, ultimately reveals the truth about his sordid past. His words release Caro from her nostalgic love for him and give her the freedom to re-evaluate the past in the light of the present. Paul’s confession also gives Grace the freedom to speak to Ted; however, Grace’s actions also reveal the fact that the individual does not control the outcome of the patterns s/he establishes. As Catherine Rainwater and William J. Scheick point out, characters “do

\textsuperscript{57} Shirley Hazzard, \textit{Coming of Age in Australia: The Boyer Lectures}, Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1985, 57.
not control the destiny their words ironically generate; Grace Bell’s intention of bringing Caro and Ted together at last produces disaster”.

In Lacanian analysis, language (the voice) is first equated with the mother as it is the mother (biological and cultural) who first organises the world linguistically for the child. The image of the child is interpreted and “fitted” by the mother acoustically. The voice is a partial object that causes desire and gives direction to that desire. The language that comes from the cultural dyadic Mother is only one side of what orders meaning for the subject: the Other completes the signifying chain. For the patriarchal characters in the narrative (the Thrales, Leadbetter, Paul and even Vail), language, and its careful employment, becomes a means of verifying their own and Others positions within the signifying chain. Language is employed as a hegemonic instrument and as a means of either alienating or integrating Others.

The expatriate relies upon language in order to constitute him/herself against the backdrop of the new Symbolic Order. Both the gaze and the

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58 Rainwater and Scheick, 206.
61 Ragland, 192.
voice drive language,\textsuperscript{62} therefore, the expatriate subject, more than any other, runs the risk of being perpetually fragmented and disassociated from the Symbolic Order because of the movement and changes and loss of the "mother tongue" their dynamic position entails. The expatriate's desire, which is located in the drive of the voice and the gaze, is forever deferred. Whilst on the one hand, desire alienates her/him, on the other, it motivates her/him to search for subjectivity.\textsuperscript{63}

Within the narrative, silence and language are juxtaposed as powerful and potentially harmful forces, depending on how and by whom they are employed. Hazzard disturbs this binary opposition by presenting words as arbitrary tools that have no fixed meaning and silence as a process that produces random and indeterminate signification. Caro is one such subject who is both located in and placed outside the Symbolic Order by language. "English" is her native tongue, yet characters like Paul, Professor Thrale, Christian and Mister Leadbetter, constantly use "their" language to relocate her to the margins of their cultural Symbolic. As a liminal figure, Caro continues to point out to them the structural incapacity of their linguistic games (192-3). In choosing to translate Tregear's poetry, Caro deliberately embraces the margins as a site which represents the transference of meaning. In response to her former alienation, she now controls the language of the two Symbolic Orders and is temporarily coded as a signifier

\textsuperscript{62} Ragland, 190.

\textsuperscript{63} The expatriate locates desire both in and beyond the voice/language — in the Other.
with a validated means of speaking. The publishers, however, reduce Caro’s translation to an act of vanity, and attempt to again displace her to the periphery of the Symbolic Order (257). The irony of their attempt is that Caro’s work is finally recognised as a displaced narrative construction that straddles two Symbolic Orders and represents the phallic signifier of desire (261-2).

Silence is employed in a similar fashion. It becomes an instrument of power by denying the subject and/or object access to a Symbolic Order which is founded on lexical play. Paul Ivory, Ted, Charmian Thrale and Cordelia Ware all employ silence as a means of apprehending and controlling the Symbolic Order of which they are a part.

This brings into focus another set of linguistic binary opposites: art and artistic language versus science and scientific and political language. Not only do these binaries contradict each other by establishing a way of simultaneously speaking about and perceiving the world, they often, like Venus, perform in concert as a duality. This vision of the world, as a Blakean “mingling of opposites”, is symbolised in the lives of the two poets,

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64 Feldstein, 169.
65 Feldstein, 173.
66 As in Clift’s work, silence is also used to maintain privacy.
Rex Ivory and Ramón Tregeár, who also foreground the theme of language and truth.

Rex Ivory is dead before the novel opens but through analepsis is revealed as a "touchstone of value throughout the novel". This role is made clear by Charmian Thrale who when commenting on the television documentary about Ivory's life says that, "Rex was the only one left alive. It was the others who looked dead" (322). This also recalls the phrase, which is repeated throughout the novel that "the truth has a life of its own" (10). Rex Ivory is referred to as "not a great poet ... but a true poet" (14). Later in the novel, the relationship between his life and his art, something that was previously unclear and unacceptable to the popular market, is researched and "explained" by Professor Wadding. The idea that language must reflect the truth is severely satirised in the portrait of the American academic who uses jargon and circumlocution to "interpret" the choices of Rex Ivory. Similarly, Ramón Tregeár's poetry is posthumously successful, the manner of his death ensuring at least a modicum of interest. Caro, a woman, is his translator, and the difficulty she has in being taken seriously is also offered as an "ironic parallelism" to the unequivocal success of Wadding, whose text on Ivory is already being hailed as a "modern classic" (319). The fact that

68 In an interview with Kate Jennings, Hazzard deplores the academic appropriation of jargon saying: "There is a delusion that, by adding syllables, one fills the void". "Going Against the Grain," *Island*, 50 (Autumn, 1992): 23.
the work of both poets is absent from the text invites the reader to assess their endurance in the face of adversity and the power of the artistic life over the horrors of political and physical war. Abnegation is, ultimately, a principle to be applauded, but not in the way the critics understand it. In the example of the poets, renunciation is depicted as the refusal to employ language as a political and manipulative tool and as having the strength and moral courage to remain deliberately silent about the material world and to express an alternative, spiritual world, through landscape and people. The ultimate “success” of the two poets, beyond any real understanding of their work, is achieved through clever marketing strategies, revealing that, sadly, literature is only a commodity and is therefore able to be regulated. Language and reason are, as John Colmer states, “the two great sources of truth and reality”,69 which can be translated into instruments of power and male domination. Consequently there is a dichotomy between the official, masculine way of perceiving the world, and the feminised, unofficial way of understanding or interpreting the world (141). Within the novel, it is the masculinised, sanctioned means of comprehending events that is, in material terms, more successful, but it is the feminised mode of interpreting that is, ultimately, recognised as being of greater value.

69 Colmer, 11.
The Transit of Venus is a novel that, through a progression of binary opposites, sets recognisable generic codes which it then proceeds to interrogate and challenge by offering, as an alternate and equally valid if disruptive site, the dynamic space of the limen. The limen is the active threshold at which geographical, cultural, psychological, social and gender binary opposites, and the associated sensibilities and ideologies these counterposed regions produce, become fractured. Hazzard creates characters that limit and structure their lives around a static adherence to cultural and gender codes that reject Otherness. She then diametrically opposes these individuals to portraits of characters who embrace and celebrate change and movement. The subject who can acknowledge difference is identified as possessing great moral and personal integrity. These are characters such as Caro and Ted who can identify in their origins a site from which to enter into a dialogue with Other ways of seeing and performing, refusing to endow either position with authority or superiority. Caro possesses Antipodean sensibilities: in originating from an Other location she is able to enter this space on her own terms and produce multiple readings and interpretations of its specific sites, thus undermining its static and authoritarian position. Alternately, by rejecting the position she is offered by either the centre or her Australian identity exclusively, she is able to exit these places and spaces and observe their operations from the limen — from neither the centre or the margin, but from the border between.
Subjectivity is not a singular state, but a series of overlapping and dynamic spaces that Caro, through her expatriation, loves, and various roles in life, recognises and in so doing discovers her self. The idea of unity is, as Lacan states, an illusion, and by embracing a variety of psychological and physical locations within the public and private worlds, Caro discovers the multiple identities that are all a part of her various subjectivities. For other characters in the novel such as Mr Leadbetter, Professor Thrale, Christian, Tertia, Dora and the Major, the transit between and across particular cultures, people or countries is not something they pursue. These characters adhere to the stationary pattern of their lives and do not challenge the sites their Symbolic Order has given them preferring to criticise and judge Others, regardless of where they may be physically located, from within the limited psychological security of their own nation-dyad/Symbolic Order, perceiving difference as negative and invalid in terms of their own subjectivity. For these characters there is no such space as the limen: they redefine this as an occupied “zone”, as the enemy’s stronghold and therefore beyond their concern or interest. They implicitly reject the notion of “betweeness”. For other characters, such as Rex Ivory and Ramón Tregear, imaginative locations are equally if not more important than physical ones. To these two poets, the imagination is the spiritual home, but in order to reach it a difficult journey through an obstacle course of fixed and earthly signifiers is still necessary and often involves moving into active liminal spaces in order to experience and perhaps express the nature of the place that sits between all Others: the limen.
Once again expatriation figures as an important motif that expresses, in its simultaneous repudiation and acceptance of national and cultural codes, the subject's ambivalent desire to be sited. The liminal space is offered as an exciting and dynamic alternative that the expatriate, by the nature of physical and psychological dislocations, inhabits. The expatriate narrative is revealed as resisting static definition or closure through its simultaneous exploration of corporeal and mental/spiritual states. It is in this sense that Hazzard's narratives, like those of Clift before her, can also be read as discourses of *Femination*. 
Like Australian migrant fiction, expatriate writing explores cultural convergences to question the nature of nationality and national identifications. In the expatriate fiction by women, gender definitions are also placed in question. Australia is seen less as a place to be denied than as the accidental birthplace of a misfit, who must seek her true home through travel but finds that she can only survive through embracing impersonation, that is, through recognising the parodic — that interplay of repetition with difference — in all she does.

You will come first to the Sirens, who are the enchanters of all mankind and whoever comes their way; and that man who unsuspecting approaches them, and listens to the Sirens singing, has no prospect of coming home and delighting his wife and little children as they stand about him in greeting, but the Sirens by the melody of their singing enchant him.

Growing up a generation later than Clift and Hazzard, Glenda Adams also wanted “to travel, to live somewhere else.” Unlike her predecessors, however, Adams was not motivated by the colonial sense of a cultural lack. Perhaps the same feeling of restriction that moved Clift, prompted Adams’ need to “stretch” and experience freedom. Adams describes the desire to leave Australia as arising out of a sense of “surveillance we all felt.

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Australia wasn't a bad society, it was just small. Apart from expressing the moral and political rigidity of Australia in the fifties, the concept of being under surveillance also gives voice to the notion that Australia was conceived of as a metaphorical parent from under whose gaze and control the native "adolescent" had to escape in order to grow more fully. Lacan describes the gaze as one of the most powerful and suppressive instruments of representation and desire which originates both from outside and within the subject. In this sense, the gaze functions oppressively by treating the subject as an object or, as Lacan states, a picture:

... in the scopic field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture. This is the function that is found at the heart of the institution of the subject in the visible. What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside.

The gaze can freeze the subject in a particular moment, a specific identity. Ironically, what mutual gazing also does is bestow a degree of subjectivity by confusing the relationship between subject and object. The subject desires both to be seen and see, participating in drives towards voyeurism and exhibitionism.

In relation to a cultural dyad, the subject is fixed by a powerful and restrictive gaze, which defines her/him within specific configurations of

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5 Pybus, 21.
8 This supports the notion of the expatriate as a voyeur of the collective self, and as an exhibitionist of the individual self.
visual codes and social behaviour, thus causing the individual to form an ambivalent relationship of simultaneous repulsion and desire. The subject needs to be “framed”, yet also longs to resist this cultural framing. It is when the desire to escape the parameters set by the cultural-visual becomes too great, that the subject chooses expatriation.

Expatriation enables a clearer definition of self by access to a more differentiated Other/subject gaze. This gaze can equally be held at bay by objectifying analysis, while also providing a position from which to examine the original split self. The gaze of the Other, emanating from a different culture, a new Symbolic Order, allows the subject to be refigured: s/he is not only looked at and perceived in a new way, but is shown new ways of seeing the world, the Other:

The world is all-seeing, but it is not exhibitionistic — it does not provoke our gaze. When it begins to provoke it, the feeling of strangeness begins too. What does that mean, if not that, in the so-called waking state, there is an elision of the gaze, and an elision of the fact that not only does it look, it also shows.

Lacan suggests that recognition of Otherness is unconscious and is what propels the subject into a recognition of identity as a split inheritance. It is this recognition, the being shown that he mentions, that arouses the feeling of strangeness — an acknowledgment of one's own otherness.

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9 My emphasis.
Identity is always constituted as relational. In these terms, Adams recognised the restrictiveness of the Symbolic Order of her birth and the narrowness of self-definition that accompanied its gaze, hence her desire to “stretch” her own boundaries and turn her own gaze upon Other objects. She also states that by leaving Australia when she did, she was able to see it more clearly because its absence made it a stronger force in her life.\(^\text{11}\) By making Australia an elision or gap in her scopic drive, Adams was able to reconfigure her relations to her native country and turn these reconfigurations into imaginative ones as well.

In 1961, at the age of twenty-two, Adams left Australia for Indonesia where she studied for two years. She returned for a brief period only to leave again in 1964: this time her destination was New York. Her plan, at this youthful stage in her life, was to go to New York for one year and then go back to Asia and explain The East to The West!\(^\text{12}\) In fact, she spent a total of sixteen years away from Australia, not returning until 1980, when she took up a position as writer-in residence at the University of Western Australia. Over the next decade, she continued to be invited back to Australia at different periods by various institutions, often sharing her time between her teaching commitments in the States and obligations in Australia. In 1990


Adams returned to Australia to take up permanent residence; she now teaches creative writing at the University of Technology in Sydney.

Adams' absence from Australia proved fruitful in terms of her creative output. In 1979, her book of short stories, *Hottest Night of the Century*\(^{13}\) was published, and in 1982, her political satire, *Games of the Strong*.\(^{14}\) Although it had a less than popular reception here in Australia,\(^{15}\) *Games of the Strong* reflects a certain Asian influence (it is loosely based on Indonesian politics), and Adams' love of language, its inconsistencies, dynamism, and potential power. In its themes and characters, this satire anticipates the central preoccupations in Adams' later works: the individual's struggle against the system, the journey as a physical and spiritual liberation, and the unrealistic expectations society places upon the subject through the established heterosexual conventions of love and romance.

Adams' second novel, *Dancing on Coral*, employs the motif of expatriation in order to investigate the subject's responses to restrictive social and cultural

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\(^{15}\) Glenda Adams is still puzzled by the lack of support for this particular novel (comment she made at the Writers Evening Glebe Books, Sydney, Tuesday, March 12 1996). When talking to Candida Baker in 1989 she says that people have "mixed feelings about it" (22); Baker herself states that she didn't like it as much as *Dancing on Coral*, but apart from the complexity of the book, offers no practical reasons. Elizabeth Riddell, however, offered a very favourable review in 1982, calling the book "complex but never confused" and aligns its style to that of the stories in *The Hottest Night of The Century*; a style which is "so attractive and so hard to forget" ("Life under a future dictatorship," *The Bulletin*, May 11, 1982, 79). These conflicting responses can be traced through the general reception.
practices and examines the significance of the Other as an agent for transformation. Ironically, given its concerns with expatriation, it was Adams' expatriate status which counted against the novel in the New South Wales Premier's Awards. *Dancing on Coral*, despite being judged the exceptional entry, was given the plaque, not the cash prize. This aggressively prescriptive stance regarding Adams' residency appears gratuitous in the light of the acknowledgments Adams makes at the beginning of the novel, which clearly express her gratitude for the support she received from both the National Endowments of the Arts and the Literature Board of the Australia Council. It appears that when it comes to the granting of awards as a form of public recognition for literary excellence, the judges enter into an exclusive sort of nationalism, politicising expatriation by elevating geography over and above any other consideration: imaginary or spiritual, interpreting it (expatriation) as some sort of cultural and national rejection. The type of narrow nationalism implied here is enshrined in official policy.


17 The Labor Government's *Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy* (1994) page 9, offers a definition of what it is to be Australian and just what constitutes Australian cultural creativity (in economic and public terms) and therefore what is deserving of government support. It is interesting that the definition of "Australianness" given in the statement contradicts the examples chosen to illustrate this and other similar points. On the one hand, the *Creative Nation* Policy states: "We are genuinely and distinctly 'multicultural,'" while on the other, that: "The works of writers and artists, like Lawson and Furphy, Roberts and Streeton, offered an Australian perspective of Australian life — a distinct set of values and views reflecting a distinctly Australian experience" (9). All the writers and artists used as exemplars of Australian work are white, Anglo-Saxon, and male, their work, whilst no doubt meritorious, excludes specific groups from creatively speaking for their country. Perhaps the fiasco surrounding literary awards is not yet over. Adams has not been the only victim of nationalistic exclusivity. In 1967, Christina Stead was recommended for the $10 000 Britannica Australia Award, however, after much controversy, was rejected due to the fact that 'her long residence abroad (since 1928) rendered her ineligible' despite the fact she had maintained her Australian citizenship. Again, in 1994, three well known authors were excluded from consideration for the prestigious Miles Franklin Literary Award: Elizabeth Jolley and her novel, *The George's Wife*; Frank Moorhouse and his work *Grand Days*; and finally, Maurilla Meehan's *Fury*. Whilst the panel acknowledged the merit of these works, they stated that they did "not portray Australian life although they were partially set in Australia and had Australian
Adams’ third novel, *Longleg*, did win an award. This novel is concerned with finding one’s self through love, travel (both mental and physical) and through a strong sense of genealogy. Like *Games of the Strong*, *Longleg* also plays on language; on how easy it is to misunderstand or misconstrue meaning, alter emphasis, and thereby change one’s life.\(^{18}\)

Adams’ fourth book, the *The Tempest of Clemenza*,\(^{19}\) was released at the Adelaide festival in 1996. It exploits the connections between past and present, fact and fiction, using the motifs of the Gothic and a series of interpolated narratives to explore a variety of extreme states (love, anger, impassioned commitment to causes, mental illness, lust) in people and society. These elements dramatise the idea of excess in both literal and metaphorical terms. By having stories within stories and juxtaposing levels of fiction against each other, Adams draws attention to the constructedness of the main plot while at the same time giving an authentically complex history. The principle protagonist, Abel, as her name suggests, has been able to weather the storms and violence of life, the extremes, but is unable...
to protect her daughter from the final tempest: death through protracted illness. Like *Dancing on Coral*, this book also involves physical journeys between America and Australia which serve as metaphors for spiritual voyages, the two levels mirroring each other and reflecting the doubles which permeate the novel.20

Despite the opinion of prize judges, all of Adams' novels, without exception, reflect aspects of Australian life. Apart from the characters and settings in *Dancing on Coral, Longleg,* and *The Tempest of Clemenza,* even *Games of the Strong,* her "Asian" novel, is a synthesis of the West and the attitudes prevalent in the urban centres of Sydney, New York, Canberra and Indonesia which, to Adams, reflect not only the hegemony and political practices of the West as a whole, but the peripatetic nature of cultural and familial parenthood as well.21 Unlike Hazzard, who decries any national allegiances, Adams feels very comfortable with the appellation "Australian" and, despite her sixteen-year absence, still feels a sense of connection with her place of birth: "It is home...Isn't that odd? Now that is something to think about. You spend so much time away but you always belong in some strange way to your original landscape."22 This is in keeping with Adams'

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belief that her movement away, from Australia to New York, was not a move to the centre, but from the centre to the periphery. She describes it as a putting herself on the edge, but at the same time figures it as entering the “heart of darkness.” This pairing reflects a concern with subjectivity and the idea that individuals can only uncover other versions of the self and a sense of authenticity by deliberately splitting themselves; occupying at least two spaces and places at once. The subject undertakes a physical journey from the nation-place and space of her/his origin, where they were endowed with a Symbolic Order, a language and set of laws which shapes every aspect of their social and psychical life. Simultaneously s/he tries to embrace a new set of laws and a new Symbolic Order that acts as a counter-narrative to the one s/he are accustomed to and which, to a degree, still attempts to employ. This is the “edge” and “heart of darkness” that Adams refers to; the movement from the safety of the cultural dyad to the threshold of a new triadic order. The edge becomes both a physical and psychological metaphor for the liminal status of the expatriate while the “heart of darkness” represents the ambivalent rejection of aspects of the self, an essential psychological letting go of the dyadic phase so the new Symbolic Order and its laws can be embraced. It is a time of confusion and insecurity; it is a cliff top upon which the expatriate totters — the “original landscape” being a Lacanian points de capiton that hold the psychological fabric of the split

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23 Baker, Yacker 3, 39.
subject intact and prevents it from falling in. In his essay, "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation," Homi Bhabha asks how one can conceive of the "splitting" of the national subject:

   How do we articulate cultural differences within this vacillation of ideology in which the national discourse also participates, sliding ambivalently from one enunciatory position to another?\(^{25}\)

Through the fictive representations of expatriate writers, for example, cultural differences are textually explored and articulated. In expatriate texts, the ambivalent and liminal are embraced as distinctive and fluid counter-narratives to the essentialist pronouncements of national or cultural discourses. This is because these type of strategies allow the narratives to slide from one enunciatory site to another and between them.

Using both *Dancing on Coral* and *Longleg*, I wish to further explore the notion of expatriate (Australian) women's literature as dynamic and liminal narratives that deliberately employ patriarchal and masculine paradigms in order to invert, mimic, and ultimately parody them, thereby destabilising the monologic voice of nationalistic and Old World discourses. Since *Games of the Strong* is less interested in expatriation and more engaged in recreating the atmosphere of lurking totalitarian social control and the language-power nexus, and because *The Tempest of Clemenza* revisits many of the concerns of the earlier texts, I shall concentrate on both *Dancing on Coral* and *Longleg*. These two narratives deal extensively with different periods of Australia's cultural history. *Dancing on Coral* explores the

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political sixties and *Longleg* the forties and fifties. They also offer the opportunity to re-examine the periods covered in Clift and Hazzard's work from a postmodern perspective therefore, perhaps, providing a means of comparing the shift in attitudes toward, and treatment of, the motif of expatriation.

In Adams' work, particularly *Dancing on Coral*, the extensive use of the motif of expatriation can be read as an appropriation and ultimately an inversion of the Odyssean paradigm. This connection is signalled early in the narrative:

Lark wrote to Solomon Blank: "'A certain man is absent from his own country for many years; he is persecuted by Neptune and deprived of all his companions, and left alone. At home his affairs are in disorder — the suitors of his wife dissipating his wealth and plotting the destruction of his son. Tossed by many tempests he at length arrives home, and making himself known to some of his family, attacks his enemies, destroys them, and remains himself in safety'. This is essential according to Aristotle. The rest is episode. Merely episode. I hope to be leaving very soon myself" (41).

The Odyssean journey is also alluded to in *Longleg*. According to Peter Pierce, this is an unusual choice of motif:

In Australian poetry and fiction, quest narratives have been numerous, especially in the couple of decades after the end of the Second World War. However, one prototype of the revenant, the wanderer who returns, the heroic/antiheroic figure of Ulysses, the domestic absentee who becomes the avenger of slights to his wife.
and home, has not been a major model in the construction of Australian quest narratives.26

Expatriate narratives, particularly those written by women, contradict this assertion. By using the mode of the *bildungsroman* and combining it with a physical journey, Adams, like many writers before her,27 appropriates the classical Western voyage narrative of Homer’s *Odyssey* and, in doing so, disturbs the more traditional, masculine narratives to which Pierce refers.28 By using Homer’s *Odyssey* as an intertext and parodying its primary themes and characters, these women writers deconstruct its assumptions: the journey as a solely masculine device; the notion of home as static and unchanging; the protagonist as self-assured, urbane and a confident trickster, conclusively fracturing the homecoming periplus. To use Diana Brydon’s words, the trope of expatriation “create[s] a critical distance through which to consider the problem of [the expatriate’s] relation to a national literary tradition.”29 Adams takes this critique further by inverting the traditional motif of the voyage narrative. She produces this inversion by creating an untravelled *heroine* who discovers, through the process of

26 Peter Pierce, “Turn Gladly Home: The Figure of the Revenant in Australian Literary Culture,” in *Island Magazine*, 38(Autumn 1989): 64.

27 For example, Henry Handel Richardson (The Fortunes of Richard Mahony), Christina Stead (For Love Alone), Barbara Hanrahan (Sea-Green), Charmian Clift in her autobiographical works and *Honour’s Mimic*, and Shirley Hazzard (Bay of Noon and *The Transit of Venus*. See also: Jill Ker Conway, The Road From Coorain; Germaine Greer, *Daddy We hardly Knew You*; and Janette Turner Hospital, *Borderline* and *Charades*, Kathy Lette, and Susan Johnston. While this type of discourse is particularly evident with women writers, it is not exclusive to them. See for example, Patrick White: *The Twyborn Affair*, *The Aunt’s Story*, and *Flaws in the Glass*; David Malouf, *12 Edmonstone Street*, George Johnston, *My Brother Jack* and *Clean Straw For Nothing*, and Christopher Koch’s *Across the Sea Wall*; to name a selection.

28 Hazzard and Clift are closer to the White/Malouf/Stowe/Porter model of expatriation in writing of (and living) an extended sojourn in one or two places. Adams’ fiction, at least, is more akin to travel stories — restless, uprooted. The others have restless characters; she has characters on the move.

29 Brydon, 74.
being unhoused, dislocated from her Symbolic Order (the nation-dyad), that “home” and “self” are not static but variable sites that await (re)inscription. Odysseus’ wanderings are recounted from an initiating stable site (Greece) with a stable end-point always in view. *Dancing on Coral* charts an hilarious chiasmic and peculiarly feminine journey that ultimately challenges its Odyssean forebear by revealing that dynamism as opposed to stasis, is a legitimate position from which to write. How difficult it is to embrace movement as a basic principle of subjectivity is something Adams explores in detail. Yet despite her celebration of dynamism and liminality, Adams’ novel is not unproblematic, for within the characters and settings there is an ambivalence — both a longing for and a rejection of the certainties provided by home, country, relationships, and self-knowledge. This ambivalence becomes, as it did in the work of Clift and Hazzard, the discordant discourse of the expatriate: a discourse of liminality.

*Dancing on Coral* is set in the sixties and has, as its principle protagonist a young, fundamentally unremarkable Australian woman appropriately named Lark. She is a person who blends with her environment, and is physically androgynous, another characteristic analogous to Larks as their sex is not always apparent. She is consistently referred to as being like a boy, “Solomon leant back and squinted at Lark: “You could be a boy, about twelve, whose mother will insist on his getting a haircut because he’s
beginning to look like a girl" (13). Like the avian creature she is associated with, Lark longs to fly, though, in her case, it is from her home and country:

Lark had always planned to run away. When she was four, she had packed her cardboard sewing case with her supplies for the journey — a swimsuit, a cardigan, her money box, an aspirin bottle filled with water in case there was no water to drink, and another aspirin bottle of methylated spirits, and matches, in case she needed to make a fire. She kept it all under the bed, next to a large black umbrella that could also be used as a walking stick or a club. She planned to wander around the world, until she found some kind of island to settle on, where it would be peaceful (3).

The novel's concern with mimicry is signified by the descriptive function of Lark's name. The story of her journey is, essentially, a lark — a tease or frolic, reinforcing the narrative's parodic rewriting of the more serious Odyssean voyage.

Lark eventually finds two islands and, in both instances, she rejects what they represent. Lark first lands on a Pacific atoll and, adopting the role of tourist, attempts to lark about. Susan Ash observes that Lark soon realises that travel is not without its moral implications. When she decides to visit the Catholic church at the top of the hill it is not due to any cultural or religious curiosity, a desire for contact or understanding, but to gaze. Lark informs the nun, who observes that she is not Catholic, that she "only came to look at the church and the view, to get off the ship" (129). She ignores the warnings of the English-speaking islanders regarding walking with her

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male companion Paul Crouch (129) and is "stoned" for her refusal to adapt. Lark may wish to be free of the attention of the islanders in order to enjoy the unspoilt paradise she wishes to encounter, but no matter how she tries to comprehend the island, it presents itself as a conflicting experience. Lark rails at Donna Bird for exchanging valueless Western goods with the indigenous purveyors of artefacts but, at the same time, fails to see the falsity of her own attitude towards the islanders: she cannot impose her romantic values upon these people. Her shock at the condition of her desired "golden" beach, which is being used as the village latrine, is set against one of the natives appearing in Donna's red, plastic raincoat and the chorus of the local children crying "May day in, may day in" (136).

Lark is a tourist, despite her expressed desire for a genuine engaging with the island. She reveals herself as possessing only a voyeuristic interest in the exotic, an interest that is charged with fetishism and imbued with western values. Values, like the goods Donna exchanges, are a relative possession that need to be exchanged or disregarded in order for contact to occur. The narrative insists that we are all products of our environment despite the façade we wear — we are ("may day in") made in our native countries, informed and formed by our Symbolic Orders. For Lark, her first encounter with an island is a disappointing experience, though she doesn't understand why:

31 Ash, 16.
She was at last on an island in the Pacific, in that different place she had always longed for. It was peaceful enough on the surface. But she did not belong. And she was glad that she did not. She could see that she was not wanted here. She closed her eyes and tried to understand why she was so frightened (141).

Lark's first confrontation with the Other, a gazing into the realms of difference, arouses within her an appreciation of her own cultural dyad and Symbolic Order which have given her a particular site from which to speak. Lark can only register everything she sees, define people, behaviour and places, in terms of the cultural dyad from which she emerged. Her rejection of the island and its codes is based on a clinging to the past, what she has left behind; the aspects of her subjectivity which she identifies as keeping her apart, not just from the natives, but from Donna Bird and the ship's crew as well. As Susan Ash argues, “there is no accessible, neutral space from which to view...”,32 we are all “may day in,” (made in) moulded by particular cultural practices and values.33 The only individual Lark can identify with is Paul Crouch, a fellow countryman, who assists her in reaffirming her subjectivity as an Australian. It is not until she is startled out of her cultural-identity stasis and observes Paul as weak (112), that she starts to progress physically and spiritually, and is able to discard him and what he represents.

32 Ash, 16.
Lark's second island is America, which is portrayed as the home of pragmatic relativism\textsuperscript{34} where spectacle and created images \textit{are} what they seem — there is no depth. Whilst Lark first worries that she may not be smart enough for Tom Brown (the anthropologist who, in an amusing postmodern rewriting of \textit{Pygmalion} plays Professor Higgins to Lark's Eliza Dolittle — and "do little" Lark does), she is reassured by her friend Elizabeth who tells her:

"Just subscribe to \textit{The New Republic}, \textit{The New York Review of Books}, and read I.F. Stone's \textit{Weekly}. That's all it takes. Don't tell him I told you that". She looked around guiltily, then giggled. "If you were mixing with the Ford Foundation lot, all you'd have to read is \textit{The New Yorker}, and that would do too. It takes a bit more work to be on the left, to be a critic"(192).

In America ideologies are learned from specific magazines and journals, depending on which philosophy you chose to expound — intellect is a façade and beliefs are a joke. The world is literally a text to be read and taken on face value; this is why America is Tom's base and why Manfred Bird believes people should "stay at home" (196).\textsuperscript{35} Tom pulls out photographs of his friends overseas to show Lark, asking her to guess their nationalities — to play the game of classification (28). Lark guesses them incorrectly and is told that, like other people tested before her, she is so "literal-minded" and that she "mustn't trust even [her] own eyes" (31). Yet Tom holds the belief that the world is "friable" (29) wherever you are, contradicting his attempt to seek stability or homogenise through his studies and the games he plays.

\textsuperscript{35} The embodiment of Orientalism.
with his protegée, Lark. Tom is consistently settling down on his islands and being pushed onwards to Ithaca. On this American Ithaca, the sirens are stay-at-home and insular.

The joke Tom enacts with the photographs foreshadows Manfred Bird’s name game which, as Joy Hooton says, functions as “a farcical metaphor of the arrogant imperialism of certain contemporary ideologies, which place the author/individual’s identity in the hands of the reader/interpreter.”36 Manfred, like his daughter, wants to translate the world for others; he says to the party guests, “I will interpret your life. It’s a game for you. For me, it’s my work” (200). Manfred, in the ultimate gesture of colonialism, desires to place his dictatorial stamp upon people and places: site individuals and cultures in relation to his own western, white, male, and academic authoritative position. Their lives are remodelled as games and their games as his life’s work — according to Manfred he is the only person with an authentic reason for being. Donna, likewise, expresses her desire to control existence:

'I am primarily interested in changing the world, educating the masses, empirically? Being involved? I would like to make the world a stage upon which I direct a mighty piece of theater [sic], beyond street theater, global theater, watched by everyone in the world. A mighty pedagogical practical joke, with the impact of a hydrogen bomb' (51).

36 Hooton, 274.
Ironically, Donna does direct a piece of "world" theatre. Yet, for Lark, her life in America takes on a dream-like, theatrical quality. She is safely ensconced in her upper-story apartment, perfectly placed to view the world, but not to participate in it. Once again, Lark's life has become static. Even the furniture in the flat, created as it is from discarded and recycled material, is more like the props in a play than truly homely or reflective of Lark. Both Lark and Tom stand on the balcony and watch real-life dramas take place on the streets below, refusing to partake in the scenes they observe and, the three times Lark does venture out of her house, unfortunate things happen (she meets Manfred, encounters Donna, and is married). All this seems to support Professor Bird's belief that one should stay at home. It is only by taking on a performative role, however, that the subject can grow and develop and, as negative and unpleasant as Tom, Donna and even Manfred appear to be, they all assist Lark in coming to this realisation. Lark tries to be a Penelope for Tom, but ultimately she casts aside the passive role of patient stasis and once again adopts the role of active, and assertive quester.

It is inevitable that Lark would desire to travel. Because Australia is felt to be a secondary offshoot of Europe, Lark is a hybrid who cannot identify with either home or self. Lark seeks an Ithaca, but Australia does not claim her in the same way that Odysseus' homeland claimed him, or in the way that
England claims her father. Ithaca, for Lark, is not her place of birth but her projected (and unknown) destination. Lark’s desired landfall, her island, evokes simultaneous notions of the Ithacan heartland and the exotic lure of Calypso’s island, both of which, in an inversion of the Odyssean paradigm, are situated at the perimeters, as opposed to the centre, of expatriate imagination. Lark is finally lured overseas by the siren songs of the student-cum-journalist Donna Bird and the widely travelled academic American Tom Brown. It is their seductive siren songs of Otherness to which Lark opens her ears and mind, that cause her to sever the ties that tentatively bind her to Australia. Lark traces a similar path to Odysseus but inverts the destinations and results of his journey, thus constructing a chiasmic and feminine odyssey. The idea of the chiasmic Odyssean voyage is further emphasised when Lark does not stop her ears against the sirens, but is swayed by their songs of alterity and self-definition, leaving her native country in search of love. She does not forsake her home as she leaves Calypso’s isle with ease; and even rejects the help of the Phaeacians who, in this narrative, are transformed into imperial Americans perceiving themselves as the centre of the universe.

Donna Bird, Lark’s tormentor-companion, adopts contradictory positions within the text. Whilst manifesting as a siren-like figure she also represents the goddess-guide Athena. In Greek mythology, Athena is a motherless daughter who springs fully-formed from her father’s head. She is a virgin,
without passion and, as Luce Irigaray suggests, the preserver of patriarchal law:

With the patriarchal order, femininity forms a system. Dissimilation of woman in the thought of the father. Where she is created fully-clothed and armed. Veiled, her beauty concealed. Nothing visible except her face. Therefore, not a woman. She would no longer touch herself. Only the face sees and is seen. And the voice clearly speaks the will of the father, which she translates into words audible to all — citizens. Femininity understands how to seduce, knows how to attract and captivate with the folds of her garments — a dissimulation which multiplies, multiplies her. She calculates her effects, times her blows ...

Donna Bird's mother is absent from the narrative. Her father is the famous anthropologist Professor Manfred Bird who has sought to record and, in a neo-colonial gesture, capture cultural artefacts from Pacific communities in order to investigate them “properly” and then educate the world accordingly. Donna is the medium through which her father's values and knowledge can be articulated. The name Donna is related to the Latin word “donum” which means gift or sacrifice: that is, to sacrifice on another's behalf. Donna is indeed the agent of her father's values acting, as she continually does, on his behalf. She is the instrument through which the voice of the god, the (white) father can be heard. She is a collaborator, a mouthpiece for masculine ideologies:

Only her father's daughter, she repeats his discourse without much understanding, carries out his law, spreading it everywhere, in the middle of everything, intermediary for all, to the point of intrigue, where her charm takes the place of violence. At least in appearance.

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38 “Donna” is also Italian for woman or lady.
39 Irigaray, 99.
Donna moves around the various spaces in the novel veiled from the light (which she is allergic to), and from the male gaze. Susan Ash points out that Donna's veils also function to distance her from the Pacific environment she enters:

Figuratively, her veils align her with the colonial past when clothes helped define the boundaries between colonists and their environment.... Colonists believed the tropical climate threatened white races with degeneration, enfeeblement.... Thus the good health of the colonists depended on setting up boundaries between themselves and their environment.40

Whilst Donna appears to be able to adapt to different cultures, it is simply a (colonial) illusion. Her cultural-dyad is still intact. Donna is never seen with a partner of either sex, but is portrayed as a procurer of empirical information, always seeking to involve herself in pedagogical demonstrations. Lark becomes proficient at Donna's lessons as she takes on the role of pupil, performing the text which Donna herself has written. Donna, in a neo-colonial gesture, directs Lark's journey and her experiences. Donna warns Lark that this is what, should the opportunity arise, she would do:

"with the world as my stage, my canvas, my text, you would consciously choose to break the law, and you would destroy property. Afraid to take action, you would be suddenly bold."
"What would I find myself doing?" Tom asked.
Donna put her chin on her hand and contemplated Tom.
"You're a hard case. You perhaps would settle down and get married and have children?" (52).

40 Ash, 11.
Through the linguistic machinations of Donna, Lark breaks the law (by becoming involved in a simulated kidnapping), attempts to set fire to the freighter she travels on (because of an encoded message Donna leaves on her list) and, ironically, takes action by reporting Manfred Bird to the customs officials. Whilst these actions seem independent and appear to signal Lark's burgeoning liberty, they are simply directions in a script composed for her by Donna Bird. Even her marriage to Tom has been, in a sense, composed by Donna, a performance that benefits the readers of Strange But True. Donna's dramatic but late entry fails to stop the nuptials but does manage to reconfigure their significance. Lark's arguments nearly defeat those of Donna in the mock court. It is only the footage that Donna has secured of Lark on the island, and which is shown out of context and reinterpreted by Donna for the wedding audience, that reverses the public's sympathies. Once again, Lark is cast in a theatrical role and faithfully plays the part her guide has written for her; a part which ultimately makes a parody of the wedding and positions Lark as a Calypso-figure who has seduced Tom against his will. Lark even realises that Manfred's arrest is a result of Donna's latent interference and abstruse suggestions of sinister cargo and activities. Yet Lark does learn how to manipulate language, to translate empirical evidence for herself and others and thus casts Manfred into the role of cultural pirate: a role the authorities also have him perform, to his detriment.

41 She predicted this as well — it was what she said she would have Tom do if she could reinterpret his life.
Lark learns, through her role as photographer for *Strange But True*, to manipulate images. Not only does Lark produce new contexts for the various people she photographs, she turns them into objects within phallocentric discourse, appropriating and colonising their images, exploiting them for monetary gain. Photography becomes a form of neocolonialism. The photographs and associated stories reconstruct Australia as a “barbarian” land. Tom describes his journalistic attempts for the magazine as “beating the capitalists at their own game” (62). This, however, is a fallacy. What Donna, Tom, and Lark are doing is perpetuating both capitalist and patriarchal practices by wielding the camera randomly and using it as a visual-weapon, stripping individuals of any identity they possess. Not only are they rewarded financially (a capitalist compensation), but they feel no sense of conscience about what they are doing. Tom describes the photography as “new approaches to conceptual art” (62), all the time failing to see that what he is doing is creating “a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity”.

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42 Photographs are a mode of representation and within the newspaper they are identified as a part of a specific cultural production — they are advertised as telling an “Australian” story. Donna, Tom, and Lark, produce photographs for an American tabloid which seizes on the ridiculous. The photographs are re-contextualised and situated with new by-lines and stories so that the original meaning of them is completely elided. And, because they are published in America, Australia and Australians are misrepresented in a type of cultural colonialism.

43 Like a tourist.

The photographs and Lark's job as photographer, work to assist Lark in perceiving herself from the outside before she even leaves Australia. They also, because of the distance between subject and object and the lack that this distance exposes, signify a type of visual expatriation that both excites and alarms her. While Lark is photographing other subjects, her own sense of self is confirmed: she is the subject, they are the objects. Though she is horrified by the way in which the photographs she features in are used and by what their new contexts suggest, they do give her a subjectivity. She is both a surface for illusions to be inscribed upon and an objectified commodity for capitalist consumption. But these are not the subjectivities that Lark wants. Barthes describes these ambivalent impressions as a suffering "from a sensation of inauthenticity, sometimes of imposture (comparable to certain nightmares)... I am neither subject or object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object."45 Although wielding the camera gives Lark a sense of power, having her image replicated and re-contextualised removes it. This is because her image replaces her subjectivity and relocates it at a distance from herself. The gaze of those who behold her image transfixes her and constructs an identity for her that is restrictively contextual.

In this sense, the photograph becomes a metaphor for the cultural-dyad — it is a type of mirror-stage for the subject reflecting the strict parameters of

45 Barthes, 13-4.
subjectivity that are given by the numerous socio-cultural and psychological constructs and the codes that operate within this field. Like the nation-dyad, the photograph frames and restricts the subject and turns her/him into an object which is dependent on an external discourse for validation.\(^\text{46}\)

The photograph also constructs her as an Other, and therefore excites her imagination and propels her movement forward and away from the nation-dyad. Lark's father, Henry Watter ironically comments: "The mirror would do well to reflect further" (56). While the mirror-image seems "to be the threshold of the visible world,"\(^\text{47}\) it is only by recognising its value as a threshold, as a place of possibilities and dynamism, that an identity can be constructed. This identity can be found through the scopic field where identification and recognition of and through the gaze of the Other occurs.

It is appropriate that once the film Lark and Tom took of their holiday in France is developed, there is no recording of their presence in that country — they are absent from the photographs. This absence can be read in two ways. Firstly, it signifies the loss the subject experiences when s/he attempts union with the Other, because "if the subject tries to find him or herself in the Other s/he can only find him or herself as a lost part. S/he is petrified by a master signifier [in this instance, French culture] and loses


some part of his or her being."

Secondly, it can be read as an unsuccessful attempt to subvert the Other's authority. By removing themselves from the scopic field (both their own and the Other's), Lark and Tom refuse to be objectified by those particular Symbolic Orders. What they unconsciously do, however, is resignify themselves as split subjects and as floating signifiers, erased from one Symbolic Order while desiring relocation within anOther (America). The photographs present a metaphorical study of a failed attempt to reconfigure identity beyond the cultural dyad. To deny the subject signification (whether that subject be a national, an expatriate, or a tourist), is to reduce her/him to an absence (the photographs) or ashes, as demonstrated in Watter's story. The protagonist in this story, through a type of osmosis and a refusal to accept the scopic threshold as a sight/site of potential, is reduced to ashes — his sense of self literally disintegrates. The story, and the absent presence of the couple in their snapshots, also reflects the negative impact Lark and Tom have on one another and prepare the reader for her move away from Tom. She will no longer be an object for him, but instead she discovers her selfhood beyond his sphere of influence.

Tom is a prime imperialist, strutting through the pages of the text, patronising Lark and the other members of his American and Australian family.  

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social circles.\textsuperscript{50} He lectures against racism and colonialism but then proceeds, along with the rest of the University "gang," to occupy the Chinese restaurant, seemingly indifferent to the racist and colonial implications of his conduct. Donna Bird manages to avoid Tom's monarchical influence by wielding her own, more subtle, means of controlling others through language while slipping out from others' control of her. All her sentences end with a question mark, absolving her of the charge that she is being manipulative while still provoking a reaction. Donna/Athena may appear to function as a figure of wisdom, however, she is only "worldly wise" and so can be read as another hybridisation/subversion of the classical model. In foregrounding the idiosyncratic nature of Donna's speech, Adams also highlights the subversiveness and political power of language and its fictional constructs.\textsuperscript{51} Lark detests having to work to uncover answers; that is, to pose the correct questions in order to get a result. To her it is an annoying game that at least two men in the novel, her father and Tom, persist in playing with her. They not only treat her as a child, but it is a means of ensuring that the power (im)balance between the sexes is maintained. Unlike Lark, Donna evades the subtle hegemonic plays of patriarchal language by framing all her speech as rhetorical questions. By using language in this way Donna occupies a neutral space: she neither colonises with her questions, nor is she colonised by giving answers. It is a means of subverting the dominant mode of discourse; and yet Donna also employs it against her own gender, Lark, in order to "instruct" her. Her

\textsuperscript{50} Hooton, 272.
\textsuperscript{51} Hooton, 272.
diaries and the list of names she thrusts upon Lark are other examples of the way she employs language.

Donna is the ultimate Lacanian moving along the signifying chain of language in a linear motion. Her motto, 'take the current when it serves' (22), functions both metaphorically and metonymically as a means of providing escape: from cultural forms, individuals, nation/ality. The sea, as a motif for the flux and change in one's life, is a dynamic metaphor that can be defined against the stasis of the landlocked. The motto is also in accord with the Odyssean model. Odysseus literally and metaphorically used the current (and the aid of the Phaiakians) in order to get home. Lark finally uses the currents of life to find herself — by escaping Australia, by ridding herself of Donna, by "capturing" Tom, and finally by discarding him.

Not having had the same access to masculine power and authority, Lark has never learnt to use language in the way Donna has learned. Lark's mother repeats the refrain, "please Lark [or Henry], no language" throughout the novel (2-3, 14, 55, 72), effectively silencing her daughter by not allowing her any dialogue with her familial or cultural dyad. Donna is extraordinarily vocal, Lark on the other hand, decides to remain silent and listen (48). This can be seen as a deliberate choice on the part of women to be active or passive participators in imperialist activities. In its treatment of language,
the novel, as Ash states, "scrutinises the degree to which we choose to participate in white male aggression, either by speaking (Donna) or by silence (Lark)." Paul Crouch also chooses silence and is seen as weak by Lark, who at that point does not realise that he is simply a male reflection of her own cultural and individual static attitudes.

As pernicious as Donna Bird appears to be, she also functions as a manifestation of the Otherness that Lark longs for but cannot articulate. Donna hovers between gendered positions in the novel, temporarily occupying one site and then moving to the other. Her imperious self-possession (self-interest) makes her an active force in need of Lark as a passive subject, and so an unconscious dependent relationship between the two women is established. As Emmanuel Levinas suggests, "it is the other who initiates actions, brings about encounters, makes approaches to and incites responses from the subject." Once more, it can be seen how such a relationship reconfigures the classical male hero as an active imposer of will upon circumstance. Donna is the instrument through which changes occur in Lark. Donna/Athena, as an enabling if malign heroine/goddess and harbinger of fate, functions as the medium through which Lark evolves into a character of limited action. In effect, what occurs, is that in Donna, Lark experiences a specular recognition: the means through which she can begin

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52 Ash, 20.
54 Whilst I have already claimed Athena to be patriarchal, I have not claimed her as "male". She is an example of how some women can be active participants in and wielders of patriarchal power.
to attain her subjectivity. Donna is, in many ways, Lark's alter-ego. Lacan describes this type of relationship as transitivism. Transitivism is common in young children where one child adopts the position of master, one of slave; that is, one plays a dominant role in the friendship, the other a passive role. There is also a transitivism of similarity/sympathy for example, if one child is struck, the other will cry. In this type of relationship identity boundaries become blurred, one subject taking on the characteristics and behaviour of the other:

The child who strikes another says that he [sic] has been struck; the child who sees another fall, cries. Similarly, it is by means of an identification with the other than he sees the whole gamut of reactions of bearing and display, whose structural ambivalence is clearly revealed in his behaviour, the slave being identified with the despot, the actor with the spectator, the seduced with the seducer.... It is in this erotic relation, in which the human individual fixes upon himself an image that alienates him from himself, that are to be found the energy and form upon which this organization of the passions that he will call his ego is based.55

Transitivism can also begin because of jealousy and a desire to be like or possess the attributes of the other person. This concept ties in with the power of the gaze as a means of establishing subjectivity, as jealousy can be aroused because of the desire to be seen, as opposed to being the one seeing. While Lark appears to dislike Donna, she also longs to be like her, perceiving her as "clever and original and cosmopolitan" (28). In an extreme gesture of transitivism, Lark borrows Donna's disguise of cosmopolitan sophistication, even wearing her sun visor and appropriating her souvenirs (146), and relating her travels to Tom in Donna's voice (155). While Lark

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may, like Odysseus, adopt a mask to ensure acceptance, she has none of the classical hero’s skills and confidence, her ploy is weak; it cannot be continued, and is eventually exposed.

Donna does, however, direct Lark towards Other sites and knowledges which, brief as they may be, give Lark moments of feeling more firmly situated, but these are merely points in a process of transition. Lark, as an expatriate, is beginning to move the constraints of her cultural-dyad and is acknowledging that there may be another Symbolic Order in which she can immerse herself and make sense of herself in relation to the old one. After meeting Donna and Tom, the narrator says of Lark that “she ... felt she had begun to live, and she had not even run away yet” (53). Her sense of selfhood is developing in relation to the alterity, the Otherness she perceives in Donna and Tom and their potential to offer her entry into a new cultural-Symbolic.

The sense of herself, in relation to another culture, is reflected in the letters Lark receives. At first she is sent letters from Solomon Blank (himself a tabula rasa that will be inscribed by American imperial/commercial values), and these function to alert Lark to the Other. In these initial stages her contact is translated through another subject’s experiences, but for Lark, it is still represents a form of connection. Later in the text, the letters from
Mrs Watter (in Australia) function like a supplement, providing a contrapuntal voice to the American culture and discourse in which Lark attempts to engage. The letters also reveal that home is not static, but is changing, as Mr Watter's disappearance suggests: Australia is not the unchanging Ithaca of Odysseus' imaginings.

Tom leaves for the United States and Lark, constructing him as her Ithaca, chooses to follow him. In the Homeric world, Ithaca is a static geographical destination — in this narrative it is an imaginative landfall that can be located geographically (as Watter does with England and Tom does with America), or fantastically in a person or the mind (as Lark does with Tom, Solomon with Lark, and again, as Watter does with England). Dancing on Coral gives Ithaca numerous positions and roles, freeing it from its previous stasis and making it a dynamic and multiple site. Ithaca even becomes a temporary limen — a border which Lark, at the end of the novel crosses when she discards Tom — her home and heart, choosing instead to venture through life alone with her baby. Lark refuses to stop looking for meaning and searching for love, her eagerness to find answers prompting Tom to call her "literal-minded" (31). Lark is committed to her voyage:

What she wanted more than anything else was to get away, away from that basement where a bad-tempered ram held them prisoners, away from the house, and away from the continent altogether. What she also wanted was to find true love, someone to be close to forever (36).
The metaphor of the ram becomes significant in Lacanian terms. The ram, a literal beast at the beginning of the novel, can be seen as substituting for a string of imprisoning masculine figures: Donna, Tom, the Captain, and Professor Bird. These figures confine the subject (particularly the female subject) to specific (domestic) spaces, and a dyadic cultural relationship, interpreting the Other for her in an unthreatening and easily accessible way. The (female) subject’s longing to escape is greeted by blatant psychological and physical opposition, making the path to freedom difficult. It is appropriate that it is Mr Watter who frees his family, giving them the passport to escape the workshop, as it is patriarchal authority and laws that grant the subject the liberty or otherwise to leave. Mr Watter represents a type of ambiguous authority because he is a destabilising influence. As an expatriate himself, he can be understood as breaking free from the cultural authority of his original Symbolic Order, but he still lives and moves within its realm of signification. He confers a dual masculine/feminine role on Lark when he both aids and resists her “escape” from Australia. As the freighter on which Lark is a passenger leaves Sydney harbour, Henry Watter throws a ball made of nylon stockings to his daughter, retaining one end himself. As the ship progresses, the nylon unwinds and stretches forming the only link between the land and the sea-going vessel. It becomes symbolic of an umbilicus — the copula to the womb and mother (land) and that which attaches Lark to her father’s authority. The movement of the

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56 This will be discussed further shortly.
57 At this point, Lark substitutes for Watter’s desired escape. So, the nylon string is as much to attach Watter to Lark (self to Other?) as it is to prevent her going.
ship, itself a signifier of new patriarchal laws and power, must inevitably sever the bond between subject and the cultural and familial dyad. It is Lark, however, that breaks the connection: she releases the cord. Unlike Odysseus, who does not resist his bonds, Lark frees herself from one set of certitudes in order to find another. While these are a potent metaphors, they are also told in comic terms and as such become political strategies that subvert the dominant cultural discourse. Watter may have, in one sense, freed his daughter but in the end it is he who is confined, literally and metaphorically, within the pages of the text. His destination in his wooden escape-pod is a parodic metaphor of the expatriate's journey which, despite the presence and gaze of the Other, will always be informed (confined) by the subject's original dyad.58

The entire book is pervaded by parody and jokes. In this text, the word "joke" is both an adjective and a verb. Australia is referred to, very early in the text, as a joke (2). A country that is excessive in all its aspects, but in particular, in its plenitude of wildlife and nature. The novel opens with Lark's father damning Australia as he chases the animals (mainly birds) from his backyard. To Watter, the expatriate Englishman, Australia is "a case of too much nature. Far too much nature" (2). The joke is on the new arrivals — this abundance cannot be tamed or civilised, and yet, as Donna Bird frequently opines, "jokes can be so pedagogical" (30). In order to survive in this antipodean jungle, Lark's father relies on recitations from his more familiar past: England. He endures by mentally mapping the streets of

58 This is symbolised by the coffin.
London and preparing imaginative journeys along its, to him, more accessible routes. He also knows the flight path from Sydney to London. The litany of stops are like an incantation which prevent him from “getting” the joke. Watter is, like his daughter, planning to escape Australia, but whereas Lark represents the Western impulse to tour the world,\textsuperscript{59} for him the only logical destination is England: the motherland. As his name and continual mental travels suggest, Watter is more at home on a fluid surface instead of being fixed to a specific point where the land and its unpredictable and unruly inhabitants can intrude upon his territory. He declares that he wants everything (including himself) contained stating, in an uncharacteristic fit of pique, “What’s the point of having a compound at all, if the outside world can penetrate it at will?” (39). Watter's “travels” are also a parody of the Homeric voyage. He can be read as a postmodern and ambivalent Odysseus who finds himself marooned on Calypso’s island (Australia), the home of the beguiling nymph (Mrs Watter), but continually plans to escape back to Ithaca (England). In this rendering, Mrs Watter fulfils two roles: she is both Calypso and Penelope. She is whore and wife to Watter and as such represents the ambivalent longings of the male traveller — the adventurer who longs for new experiences whilst still desiring the security and certainties provided by home.

\textsuperscript{59} Ash, 17
The primary joke in the narrative is Manhattan, the second island which is referred to as "joke-city". It is the supreme parody of what Lark, in her dreams and fantasies, has been seeking. It is in Manhattan that Lark, as an expatriate, will first learn to be "herself" and discard her childishness and dependency on her dyadic relationship with her mother country — symbolised by her early dependency on Solomon Blank. The first step in this process is revealed when she refuses to let Solomon Blank stay the night with her on her arrival in Chicago. Later, at the end of the novel, when he comes to her in despair, she tells him to return to his American wife. In releasing Solomon, Lark liberates herself and the knowledge that he recognises they share, "the ocean, the rocks" (287); signifiers of their Symbolic Order which she is now able to situate within a larger signifying chain of language and thus move forward. As Solomon says, Lark is now strong (288). Not only does Lark, as a Penelope figure for Solomon, reject the role he attempts to script for her, but she adopts the mantle of Athena by placing Solomon on a flight home. This reluctant Odysseus will return to his true Penelope and his Ithaca in the American heartland. In this sense, Lark's position in the text is multiple and ever-changing, depending on with whom she is associating: she is Penelope, Odysseus, and Athena, again reinforcing the role of mimicry and the ludic in the text. Lark no longer needs assistance when it comes to defining herself. Joke-city, its inhabitants and her parodic "staged" marriage have all allowed her access to a new way of understanding the world, a new Symbolic Order. In the new Symbolic Order, Lark will eschew episode and regard only the essential. If nothing
else, Lark has learnt that a life based on episodes (as hers and Tom's is) is not a life at all. The episode is swift and painful as demonstrated by Lark's separation from Tom at the end of the novel: "In the space of a baby's afternoon nap, Lark had separated from her husband and rejected a lover" (289). The episode is also extraordinarily theatrical: like her wedding and her "dance" on the coral. Even the journalist who comes to interview Lark and Tom describes their argument as "another brilliant piece of theater" (285). The narrative suggests that it is in the in-between moments, the brief interludes between episodes, that life is endowed with meaning.

The significance of between moments is powerfully represented in the narrative through the metaphor of the coral dance. The coral dance occurs as the middle scene in the story and can be interpreted as a paradigm for post-Federation, postcolonial expatriate experience. Lark becomes the unwilling participant in a perverse masculine/imperial initiation rite. The Captain of the freighter, who is a German, resembles because of his soft skull, the Hitler-eggs Lark smashed as a child. He is a symbol of Fascism; indicated when he insists on depositing the two women on an equatorial reef so they may have the experience of walking on coral. Lark is terrified of being abandoned in the middle of nowhere, perched on invisible "ground." Whereas Odysseus became "Noman" or "Nobody" in order to escape Polyphemus, secure in his identity, Lark lacks a founding authenticity from which to play the role of trickster. She experiences the ultimate in territorial erasure by being positioned "in the middle of nothing" (98).

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60 Lattimore (trans), 146.
Odysseus manages a series of landfalls on his way to recover his home/land but Lark’s quest is fundamentally rootless. Frightened, Lark clings to Donna who, perched on the partially submerged coral, walks unperturbed through the ocean, forcing Lark to follow her. The sadistic Captain has already alluded to the petering out of colonial power; “We used to own all this. And now,’ he snapped his fingers, ‘nothing’”, (114). It is Donna’s access to the remnants of European and masculine authority that gives Donna the confidence to “walk on water.” Nonetheless, her application of that power is a mixed phenomenon, carrying something of non-Western philosophy and the survival mechanisms of the oppressed: “You have to somehow not fight it, but go with it, go with whatever is pushing at you in order to master it” (120). Donna chooses participation and language as a means of eluding subordination or erasure — Lark eventually chooses this path as well.

Lark is simultaneously possessor of a new experience, and “colonised” by those who force it upon her. She “dances” between land and water, between male/imperial/colonial and female/colonial authority, between defiance and compliance, whilst tentatively poised on the ambivalently inanimate/living coral. In fictive terms, Lark’s “dance” is rearticulated as utter stasis; a pause between possibilities symbolised by her momentary cartographic, psychological, and gendered un-positions:

The two women were standing thigh deep in water. One was upright, in shorts and a T-shirt, no hat, her short hair, close to her head, like a bathing cap. The sun struck her face, rendering it round, flat, almost the color [sic] of her hair, without definition.
The other was crouched over, her bathing suit just visible below her long-sleeved sweat shirt. Her sunhat and a long scarf, which anchored the hat and wrapped around her chin and neck, obscured her face. They stood braced, their arms outstretched for balance, their legs apart and vaguely outlined beneath the water. The horizon, dividing the blue water from blue sky, encircled them. They looked into the distance, expectantly, urgently. As the water swelled and pressed against them they were forced to take little steps, first this way, then that, in unison, two women dancing on coral (121).

This can be read as a metaphor for the ambiguities of Australian identity in a postcolonial world, mixing European colonial with white coloniser, hovering between Europe and America. The national context of this reading, however, tends to reinscribe the Odyssean narrative (looking towards a relocation of the homeland/homecoming) against the radical instability of this central scene. It is more useful, I believe, to see the metaphor as applying to a particular (female) expatriate experience that resists the terms of the Homeric quest by emphasising liminality — the point at which the thresholds of nationality and identity, certainty and uncertainty, rejection and acceptance become unstable.

Lark returns to the ship prepared to discard her androgynous medial status and temporarily at least situate herself within phallocratic discourse by attiring herself as "woman" — as a desirable object. Again, the male gaze structures her and bestows a (secondary and dependent) subjectivity upon her. Her appearance at dinner prompts the Captain to exclaim, "So sexy

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61 And identity itself which is always dependent on numerous psychosocial, geographical, and culturally pre-inscribed factors.
tonight? No more the little child?” (122) implying that Lark has matured: the parodic dance on the coral has forced her to position herself “somewhere.” The Captain also mimics Donna’s discourse by posing rhetorical questions to Lark, suggesting to the reader that it is still up to Lark where she sites herself — what stance she will adopt.

Lark decides to take up a position complicit with colonial/masculine power and moves to free herself of its most immediate manifestation. Donna Bird has now become too manipulative, too confronting for Lark. In the early stages of the journey, Lark could not remove herself from Donna’s influence, she was essential to her. Donna functioned as a mediator between the ship’s crew and its overt hierarchical structures and mixture of nationalities (a microcosm of colonial/male authority) and the second world/expatriate Lark. In this role, Donna is endowed, by Lark herself, with neo-colonial power. Donna is a certainty: she is familiar, a woman, another passenger, and a representation of what has been left behind. She is also, as a frequent traveller through various cultures, a signifier of flux and change — of what Lark is moving towards. However, Donna’s promises of gender and cultural “belonging” remain unfulfilled; Lark remains painfully aware of her own limitations. When the ship docks at a small Pacific island, Lark’s desultory romance with the cabin boy is publicly misinterpreted. Once more the Homeric model is subverted. The seductive promise of Odyssean sojourns takes the form of Puritan disapproval from the missionised islanders; and it is not the lovesick wanderer who is detained. Lark continues her journey to America; she forsakes the romance and through subterfuge leaves Donna
stranded on the island. Despite her machinations, Lark, in a sense, never arrives at "herself"; landfall and reunion with Tom is both an affirmation and a negation. Lark's journey, in the physical and spiritual sense, continues as a series of displacements of her liminal condition.

The counter-Odyssean figure of Lark is portrayed as unbound, unresistant, and at the whim of worldly (cultural-dyad, socio-Symbolic Orders, the Other, individuals), as opposed to unworldly, forces. By portraying her heroine as a "Homo Duplex," unhoused, untied and responding to the discordant rhythms of otherness — the siren songs of Tom, Donna and the lure of the Other — and reappropriating them, the narrator creates a chiasmic odyssey that ultimately avoids subordination or erasure by entering into a dialogue with both imperial and nationalistic narratives and making redeemable any boundaries they posit. In Adams' hands, Ithaca is no longer a single geographical destination waiting to be conquered and held; nor is the "hero" a confident, sophisticated veteran of international affairs, capable of carrying a series of deceptions through to their successful conclusion. In a feminine appropriation, Ithaca becomes an esoteric abstraction that, in a Protean fashion, manifests itself in a myriad of guises whether it be people, places or spaces. Odysseus, the hero of classical literature, is transformed into an ingenuous, young Australian woman who refuses to stop her ears, or be tied to the specifics of nationalistic and

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cultural discourses and their structures. Instead, this female Odysseus listens to the sirens and frees her bonds and, in an effort to be validated (housed, sited, loved), briefly joins their colonial chorale. In *Dancing on Coral*, arrival is no longer the objective. Arrival is viewed as a static concept that the narrator ultimately challenges when Lark and Tom separate at the end of the story; metaphorically, Odysseus leaves Ithaca again. It is the dynamics of the journey and the liminality of the expatriate that have been employed by Adams. This dynamism resists the totalisation and essentialism of traditional, colonial narratives and suggests that the fluidity of feminine writing and the manner of its appropriations blurs the boundaries of the nation and all its psychosocial constructs.
'Listen', said William, giving the boy the boarding pass with the morse code completed. 'You'll be needing this in emergencies. I'll tell you what'. And he told the boy that this moment and all other moments in his life, sad and happy, would become his past, his history, the one thing, the only thing, that a person could truly possess. 'No one can take your past away from you. It goes with you wherever you go. If you think about it, it's a comforting thing, a blessing, not a burden. Your past is your treasure, your secret hoard, your own story. You can take it out and enjoy it whenever you want ...' (338).1

Longleg, Adams' third novel, is also one of her most popular. It won both the Age (Fiction) Book of the Year in 1990 and the Banjo Award for Fiction in 1991,2 and was well received by the critics, with A. P. Riemer going as far as stating that, "Giving any account of this marvellous novel without making it seemed hackneyed would be difficult — yet it is anything but that."3 Longleg is the only one of Adams' novels to date that has a male as its principal protagonist — the unremarkable William Badger. It is also the only text, within this thesis, that explores the expatriate's return to her/his homeland and the psychological repercussions of this. Longleg traces the

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1 Glenda Adams, Longleg, North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1991. All further quotes are from this edition.
development of William from ten years of age in late 1940s Sydney, his life and experiences in the Northern hemisphere and his return to Australia some years after. Interestingly, the character of William evolved out of Paul Crouch, in Dancing on Coral, who was a passive adventurer travelling around the world but unable to participate — only observe. William is also a passive individual whose journey is foregrounded as a search, as Kramer puts it, for “that contemporary preoccupation — identity.” William’s identity has been subsumed by his domineering, unbalanced mother and its uncertainty is reflected in his fluid name, which changes three times throughout the story, and his uncertain nationality.

The motif of expatriation is once more employed to signify the psychological growth and development of the principal protagonist while Australia, where William’s mother remains, is positioned as an ambivalent site of longing and rejection. Like his mother, who cannot stop the sensation of rocking once she leaves the ship that brings her to Australia from England (30), William is a liminal figure who totters on the edge of psychological self-destruction because of his lack of foundation. William is an instance of the split subject, a schizonational subject who straddles disconnected worlds, and wanders as a means of finding wholeness.

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4 Cassandra Pybus, “Fiddling With Words,” in Island, 47 (Winter, 1991): 23. In this interview Adams also states that Paul Crouch initially had a much greater role in Dancing on Coral having “a whole story of his own woven in” (23), but this didn’t work and so was cut. William, to a degree, takes up, emotionally speaking, where Paul left off.


6 This is similar to the Penny/Jenny scenario in The Bay of Noon.
William's search is ultimately recognised as a search for his selfhood and this involves freeing himself from his familial and cultural mother (and father) and locating a place and space that he can acknowledge as secure and unchanging. In this sense, William's journey is as much a quest for another dyadic relationship with a substitute mother — a reaffirmation of his unsplit self — as it is a search for a cultural dyad which his hybrid nature and the conflict between his parents (and the cultures they represent) has made unstable. It is only through a dyadic relationship that the subject can gain access to the Lacanian Law of the Father and a sense of selfhood through the Symbolic. By being denied all this, William is fundamentally rootless. He has no family or cultural home, and no sense of the self in relation to his sociocultural or psychological environment.

In this chapter, the analysis seeks, amongst other things, to investigate the search for the self through the dynamics of the expatriate's journey and the motifs that explore all the variations on this: the underground as metaphor for the womb, legs as a metaphor and metonym for movement, love, language, names and the power of the signifier to bestow or remove subjectivity. I will also analyse the degree to which the Odyssean paradigm has been employed, and the relationship William maintains with Australia both prior to his departure and on his return.
William Badger is not a native Australian. Born in England, William only arrived in Australia, with his mother, at the age of four. Yet he is understood to be Australian. His memories of England are not so much of places or cultural forms, as of individuals — such as the lady with the handkerchief collection who later turns out to be the parsimonious Miss Barkit, who, coincidentally, has also relocated to Australia. Psychologically and historically, William straddles two worlds. He is a marginal figure who initially hides in the fence/hedge. The cultural tension between his mother Rose (an Irish woman who has disowned her origins and adopted a false English identity) and his father, Wally (a native Australian), sets up a series of oppositions that confuses William's idea of his self. Whereas Rose, through the mother-child dyad, supplied William with his first sense of a stable identity, the mirror-stage as is usual in the psychosocial development of the child, would have confused this sense of wholeness by revealing a gap between the image seen in the mirror and the reality. This gap or split occurs to prepare the child for the acquisition of the Law of the Father and language and the latent knowledge that wholeness, like the visual image, is an illusion — a reflection that the subject will continue to desire as an actuality. While I reviewed Lacan's theories of the mirror-stage in Chapter One, I feel they are worthwhile quoting again:

The mirror-stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation — and which manufactures for

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the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic — and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development.8

Rose and Wally have provided an inadequate cultural (and personal) picture/mirror for William to reflect upon because of the incessant conflict between them. This conflict dramatically affects and retards the mental development that Lacan emphasises is so integral to the subject's sense of his or her self. William has been given a visual sense of himself, but not a psychological one. His father, as a physical manifestation of the Law, is weak, and the cultural and familial womb is in a constant dizzy spin. His understanding of his potential subjectivity only exists as a vague idea, it is not yet personalised, fixed to a self identical to itself and distinct from others.9 This image of unity, in the early stages is, as Lacan states, vulnerable and susceptible to damage — the child will latch on to both the idea it has of the self and any other version that may appear within its limited perception.10 Through his parents, William is offered two conflicting Symbolic Orders: the (false) English one (this occurs at both the social Symbolic and familial Symbolic levels) and the Australian one (a conflict that is an accurate reflection of the cultural unconscious of Australia in this period). These binary opposites work against each other, dismantling any sense of cultural or familial identity William possesses. Wally Badger

recognises the need to give his son a cultural base; partly because of the lack of the familial and partly because he unconsciously understands the part cultural identification plays in establishing subjectivity:

"the boy's got to have some national pride." Wally Badger was practically singing. Rose was alive again. "What if there's another war?" He let the oven door bang, and for a moment William thought his father might begin to dance, do a jig, even twirl, so animated had he become. "He might have to fight for his country one day. He needs national pride. If we're invaded he'd have to join the resistance and sabotage the enemy. You've got to have strong convictions to do that" (47).

War gives the subject a sense of wholeness and unity under a specific cultural and national banner that can only be sanctioned if the subject has advanced through both the primal and cultural dyadic stages of psychosocial development. William is, at this stage in his life, unable to identify himself either with or against other selves. His father, who was missing during his earlier formative years, is seen as a static presence who does not possess the Lacanian phallus: that is, the power or ability to move within the Symbolic Order allowing William an authentic speaking site.¹¹ Wally's lack or inability to represent the phallus is signified in two ways: firstly, in his damaged leg, which limits his movement and, secondly, in the name which he temporarily bestows on William — the name of Badger.¹² In cultural

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¹¹ Éric Laurent gives an example of a static triadic configuration. He writes: "The structure of the three condemned people ... is exactly the Oedipal structure of the father, mother, and child trapped in their private hell. They can only calculate because one element is missing: the phallus. No one has it, but the three of them have to take that symbol into account to define their positions as father, mother, and child. If any one of them makes an error, thinking he or she is the one that is missing — if the father thinks he is the father, if the mother thinks she is the Woman, if the child thinks it is the phallus for its mother — they all get stuck in their calculation. No one will find a way out. They will be stuck in eternal repetition." "Alienation and Separation (I)", in Reading Seminar XI, Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, edited by Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink and Maire Jaanus, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, 23. This is, in part, what occurs between Wally, Rose and William.

¹² Ironically, this is an English name associated with burrowing, solidity and wise reliability.
terms this name is illegally borrowed: metonymically this borrowing signifies that William has not been given the name-of-the-Father — the Law, it has simply been loaned to him. Until William learns about the illegitimacy of his surname, it is the only signifier of existence he has: it gives him a place in society and a right to speak as it positions him in relation to his father's name, the paternal metaphor. Anika Lemaire describes it as an “identification with the father and registration of the self through relativization”. Having William adopt his mother's (misread) name is in fact an extraordinary Lacanian gesture which acknowledges the “reality” of the mother over the concept of the father. The “Father” is a conceptual role; it can be located in a human being or/and in a series of discourses that inform the subject. These discourses will often substitute for the absence of the mother, siting the subject within the social order. William learns that he has no right to his father's name:

'It's not Badger', said William and waited for an explanation. 'We weren't married yet', muttered Wally Badger, opening one of the gates and trying to push William out. "We got married when she came out here."

William stood resisting him.

"That's her name, and yours," said Wally (207).

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13 As François Regnault writes, "The essence of naming, with regard to the father, is substitution: it is as if, as soon as you know your father's name (which is also your name), you are led to suppose another name, and yet another, and so on ad infinitum." "The Name-of-the-Father," in Reading Seminar XI, Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, edited by Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink and Maire Jaanus, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, 69. By following this linear chain of substitution, the subject is able to participate in the Symbolic Order. However, movement only arises when the main signifier to be substituted is the phallus (which itself represents a lack). If the phallus is absent in the first place (ie. it is not recognisable anywhere), the substitution cannot effectively take place, so the subject's movement is limited, or reduced to stasis.


Not only does William discover that he lacks a founding authenticity in terms of family identification (the father's name), but his passport has to be issued from the British consulate. William is an alien and as such is alienated from everything he has previously signified as having meaning and security for him. On the one hand, the loss of the name of the father frees William from the Laws of his culture while on the other, it renders his speaking position within the Symbolic Order (as William Badger) invalid.

It is in the name of the father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person [that is, the subject's] with the figure of the law.16

William is no longer a legitimate subject. The loss of his name means that he can longer be a speaking “I”, a subject that will be heard and identified within a cultural discourse as a (male) Badger and an Australian — both these important signifiers have been taken away from him. William now retreats back to the dyadic stage — the pre-Symbolic stage of psychosocial growth leaving himself, once again, subject to the desires of his biological and cultural mothers. The fading or loss of subjectivity that William experiences can be defined by the Lacanian theory of aphanisis. Aphanisis, simply put, is a fear of the loss of the signifier of being.17 Lacan explains its workings as follows:

By separation, the subject finds, one might say, the weak point of the primal dyad of the signifying articulation, in so far as it is alienating in essence. It is in the interval between these two signifiers that resides the desire offered to the mapping of the subject in the experience of the discourse of the Other, of the first Other he has to deal with, let us say, by way of illustration, the

mother. It is in so far as his desire is beyond or falls short of what she says, of what she hints at, of what she brings out as meaning, it is in so far as his desire is unknown, it is in this point of lack, that the desire of the subject is constituted. The subject — by a process that is not without deception, which is not without presenting that fundamental twist by which what the subject discovers is not that which animates his movement of rediscovery — comes back, then, to the initial point, which is that of his lack as such, of the lack of his *aphanisis*.

The subject will always strive to possess the ultimate signifier — the phallus — which is forever located in the realm of the Other. What this signifier partly represents, and what it bestows on the subject, is recognition by the Other. It is through this recognition that subjectivity can be realised because the metonymic gap signs the alienation that drives desire and prevents separation. Because so much emphasis is placed on the signifier and what it can potentially do for the subject, it eventually comes to represent the subject itself: subjectivity is always located through the Other. Possession of the signifier becomes, through the process of aphanisis, an ambivalent desire: the desire to possess the signifier is both an essential part in the constitution of the subject but it can also overwhelm the subject and imperil the sense of existence. As Fuery puts it: “By desiring subjectivity we end up risking its loss through aphanisis” and, like the character in Watter’s story in *Dancing on Coral*, we can be destroyed.

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19 Fuery, 24.
Rose instils in her son a desire for the Other. She rejects Australia and all it offers in terms of a socio-Symbolic, preferring images of the Old World over the lived experience of the New.\textsuperscript{21} "That is my country" (28), she says to William, referring to European scenes on a wall in a service station-cum-gift shop. She also subverts Wally's attempts to pass on a sense of national inheritance to his son (the Laws), by criticising the culture from which they arise and sets up an opposition between the cultural "real" (in England) and the "counterfeit" (in Australia).

Rose snorted again. It was always like this. When Wally Badger said this was the oldest land mass, Rose Badger said she could believe it, it certainly looked decrepit and shabby enough. When Wally Badger said the longest stretch of straight railway line in the world was between Perth and Adelaide, Rose Badger said she would have thought that that was the kind of thing a normal country would try to keep quiet about, instead of drawing attention to it. Just as a woman cleverly masks her worst features, so should a country (46).

Rose elides the role of the Father by masquerading as the Other, as the possessor of the phallus (in familial and cultural terms). By doing this, she denies William access to the order of the Symbolic — to culture and a subjectivity:

The existence of a symbolic father does not depend upon the recognition of the connexion between coition and childbirth, but upon something corresponding to the function defined by the Name-of-the-Father... the father is present only through his law, which is speech, and only in so far as his Speech is recognized by the mother does it take on the value of Law. If the position of the father is in question, then the child remains subjected to the mother.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} In this sense, Rose is very similar to Dora in \textit{The Transit of Venus}.
\textsuperscript{22} Lacan, quoted in Lemaire, 83.
The quotations from Longleg and Lacan set up a distinct association between woman and culture, an association that William, as evidenced through his later travels and affairs, recognises. Women have a responsibility to their culture (the Father) in so far as they prepare the subject (the child) for entry into it. Women, in social and cultural terms, are also identified with nature/nurture — a role biologically and socially imposed upon them. This is ironically portrayed in Rose's name. Not only is the Rose, as a flower, a symbol of nature, it has been appropriated by patriarchal discourse to metaphorically represent woman as object. Rose is an object of beauty but, as she astutely points out, she also possesses thorns: "The rose will stick you with her thorns so that you'll always remember her" (14). By referring to herself in the third person, Rose renders her position as object universal, while simultaneously pointing out the dangers facing men who perceive women in this way: the thorns are very real and the wounds lasting. Rose, as both subject and object, is a site of multiple and conflicting identities; she has a series of masks which she wears in order to seduce and deceive:

“No one can know. And so I'm always a stranger. But they call me Rose, English Rose, to trick everyone. Rose. Rosie. Rosette. Rosina. A hedge rose. Wild, wild, Rose. That's what my name should be” (15).

Rose rejects her socially and physically constructed roles as wife and mother, preferring to adopt the Odyssean cloak and wander. As Elizabeth Riddell writes:

William resists his mother but is bound to her. Even at 10 he recognises that she was not born to be a mother or a wife but is stuck with both occupations. Rose is both good and bad news for
anyone who loves her. She will influence his choice of women to love, if he can be seen to choose.23

It is understandable then, that William should look to a series of objects to desire (Other mothers, other countries), which indicate the unreachable desire signified by the Other. Rose, as a secure site for the young William, is ambivalent. Not only is her cultural identity a deliberately constructed one, so too is her familial one — she is not only an inadequate and uncertain parent, she is not even Wally Badger's wife. Rose initially hides these social failings, masquerading as the “perfect” mother, “youngest, loveliest mother in the world” (3) in order to secure her love object — in this instance, both William and Wally. As Lacan suggests, “Masquerade ... is precisely to play not at the imaginary, but at the symbolic level.”24 In abandoning William as she does, Rose exposes her masquerade and shatters William’s understanding of the Symbolic Order: language, and other signifiers, no longer have any fixed meaning. Mother, as a home and site, has now been relocated into Other places which William will desire to seek. If Rose could mask her “true” self, the implication is that his country of residence can too and is, therefore, unsuitable as a location: it is too unstable, too unpredictable to offer William the certainties he desires.

Before he can travel, William has to be metaphorically reborn. This process begins with his abandonment in the aptly named suburb, Manly. While at

Manly, the young William not only memorises passages from his Christmas present, the book *Underground, or Life Below the Surface*, but literally burrows himself into a thick hedge in order not to be disturbed (86). William retreats below the surface of life, a metaphor for his retreat back into the pre-Symbolic, the Imaginary, where he bides his time waiting to be reborn. While in Manly he learns the importance of attaching signifiers to particular objects and places and how these signifiers can change the way we perceive things. Roy, one of the boarders at the beach house, tells William that remaining in the one place, waiting for his mother to collect him, will not automatically guarantee her return: on the contrary, stasis, lack of action, will result in death:

"First you’ve got to vary your lookout. If you stay by the front gate all the time, you’re going to die there, like Vasse. We’d have to change the name of Manly to something else, Unmanly, or Billy, after you, Billy who died there. And think of the expense, changing all the maps and everything from Manly to Billy. And frankly, I don’t think it’s a good name for a place. I wouldn’t be happy living in Billy. Sounds like a billycan, and in summer you’d think you were getting broiled alive all the time in a billycan, every time you said the name of where you lived. I live in Billy" (88).

Roy reveals to William the secrets of language, how words and meaning have a relationship based either on contiguity (metonymic), or similarity (metaphor). Language is dynamic and its meaning is contextual depending on to whom, when, and where it is spoken. To remain still and only accept one meaning of a word is metaphorically to die, to be subsumed by the hegemony of one discourse. To view language metaphorically or metonymically and see the associative relations in words is to progress, to
move forward. Roy then proceeds to teach William morse code, again a language that serves as a substitution for the one William has inherited. Morse acts as a subversive strategy against the dominant mode of discourse — the spoken or written (english) word. In the linguistic sense, William starts to move underground, his morse tappings running as a counter-narrative to his spoken dialogues. In this way William also resembles his mother who uses singing as a very feminine and fluid way of subverting masculine notions of speech and subjectivity.25

William is initially confused about his mother's singing, understanding it to be a different language:

William at first believed that the language, the nonsense words she sang, was the language for singing, distinct from the language used for speaking, until once — it was when he was very young, during the war, before his mother brought him to Australia — a man shouted at Rose Badger for singing that song (15).

Singing, then, becomes a feminine ploy, a dynamic language that threatens masculine stability and stasis, confusing the certitudes of nationality, and speech, blurring enunciatory sites and subjectivity. As Rose states: “Music knows no politics, no wars” (16). Both Rose and William are given incorrect nationalities based on the German words they sing. Rose is branded a traitor (15); a traitor to masculine notions of cultural identity. William is given a past based on the words he sings — words he cannot translate. In

25 While morse code can be read as mechanical, staccato, and even monotone, it is still a subversive strategy that functions to represent difference and another mode of discourse.
both cases, singing transgresses boundaries opening up a range of possibilities, identities beyond the signifiers of the spoken word. It is a new way of articulating or singnifying and can be understood as the song of the siren; that which leads men and women to treachery: to cross socially, sexually, and politically constructed boundaries, and by crossing them, blur their distinctions. Singing is another discourse of liminality; the articulation that is speech and yet is not; the discourse that is sited (through the subject who sings) and which subverts any attempts to locate it (neither Rose, nor William are German).

In this novel, however, it is morse code which takes the predominantly subversive role. William's first practical application of it occurs when he meets Meg, his co-worker in the basement (underground) of David Jones. He assists Meg, becoming her protector against the verbal onslaught of Miss Block, showing her how to fill out her docket book correctly, and listening to her dreams of abandoning her old existence and living a new life as the exotic Olga. He also recites a poem for her, learnt during his Manly days under the privet hedge, yet while he is saying it, he unconsciously taps out the name of Meg's alter-ego, Olga (159). This subversive tapping reveals William's unconscious desire to escape the confines of his own ego and slip into another identity — a desire that was consistently expressed through his childhood wish for a fantasy, store-dummy playmate, whom he intended to endow with attributes he himself wanted to possess:
His inseparable companion could be William Longleg, not Dash. It was a name that would carry its owner far, striding off across unexplored territories as he struck faithfully to his leader, his partner, William Badger (10).

William never leads, as his subsequent partner Tillie recognises, “Haven’t you got the courage to overtake? Must you always follow?” (227). Any leading he does occurs in his imagination. His journey through the caves with Meg, and her Troglodyte club is another excursion below the surface — and it is here that Part Two of the novel picks up William’s story. There is an abrupt movement from his reading of life underground to literally partaking in it. The Badger burrows his way through the catacombs of the earth, another womb, from which he emerges feeling anxious only to have his worries justified when he is literally and verbally trodden on by the rest of the group (172-3). William is not ready for life on the surface; he is unable to accommodate the Symbolic order within his current mode of existence.

William continues to live a subterranean existence when he journeys to Europe and, in a case of mistaken identity, encounters Tillie Pepper and becomes a peripheral operative in the underground activities of the politically aware resisters, the Barbarians. Tillie is focalised through William, being described as an:

Englishwoman, political activist, working to tear down the boundaries that separated the peoples of Europe, questioning the dominance of the United States in Europe, calling for a radical overhaul of Western society, advocating that development for its own sake be questioned, challenged, and that the nations of Europe try to disarm — all novel and subversive notions (203).
William willingly adopts the subjectivity bestowed on him by Tillie, a subjectivity that positions him within a new Symbolic Order, and family, as a political refugee and rebel against the dictates of society. Tillie and her group discuss the ways in which they can work against social conformity and government dogma, fight for the oppressed and overturn society, while at the same time failing to see the ironies extant within their own group which is distinctly hierarchical and marginalises William as the outsider.

Within the Barbarians there is a microcosmic bureaucracy operating; roles and associated tasks are handed to members and honest dealings are surreptitiously avoided. Cato does not admit his marriage to Mat for fear of being thought bourgeois (221), and Tillie, whilst criticising Cato for precisely this, uses marriage as an excuse to pacify her intolerant landlady (231). Tillie is as guilty of oppression and dishonesty as the governments she criticises. She fails to see the irony in her treatment of William whom she keeps, in an interesting reversal of genders, as a sex object and work assistant, using his ideas and accomplishments to reflect well upon herself. Tillie, and the Barbarians, do not realise that their tactics and supposed resistance are just a means of disengaging from, of not participating in life. Their activity is, in fact, a stasis; a failure to progress. They refuse to be non-violent and yet, metaphorically speaking, all their action is inaction signalled by the fact that we never see the group “perform” any of their
intended strategies. The only time they attract attention is through William's intervention, when he steals the "tapping" document and brings the Barbarians to the attention of the rest of the Western world. Ultimately it is the very institution they have been seeking to overturn and their appropriation of its material that brings them the recognition they desire and the means by which they are taken seriously as a significant and politically dangerous group. William's role in their success is immediately reduced by the questioning of his name (274), which also destabilises his new-found subjectivity. William tells Tillie to "leave my name out of this" (274). By demanding that Tillie relinquish his name, William is refusing to be sited in the Symbolic circuit of exchange of the group. William does not want the identity he is being offered. He still wishes to keep his name for himself; that is, to be identified with his mother and the cultural dyad from which he originated.

Despite this, William starts to feel alive in Paris; he finds a direction and, whilst the direction and sense of self he finds is reliant on another individual, he also begins to have ideas. He wishes that, like the clever Cato, he could be defined by three words: "commentator, communicator, personality" (241). William, however, lacks the drive and ability to take on these performative roles. For example, he fails in his role as commentator. His "brief" on the Belgian fire, in which numerous people have perished, is

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26 This will be discussed in depth shortly.
relegated to the rubbish bin and his lack of imagination and prosaic abilities are never referred to again (257). William is concerned with the truth and the power of language as a purveyor of truth. He is an ingenue in the Symbolic Order and, therefore, does not understand the significance of lexical play (metaphor and metonym). He is unable to exaggerate or lie, being constantly astonished by the ease with which Meg and Tillie do both.

The women in this novel use language powerfully, as a manipulative tool in order to attain their desires. William is both inflexible and lacking in creativity and suffers for it. As Rita Felski notes, “the generalised assertion that woman are automatically excluded or absent from a repressive, male language ignores both the flexible, innovative, and creative capabilities of language itself and particular instances of the richness and complexity of women’s language use.”

William fails as a communicator. Not only is he unable to articulate his desires to the Barbarians, apart from two uncharacteristic outbursts, he cannot tell Meg how he feels about most things: he lacks the language (itself a metaphor for the Symbolic Order) to do this and, therefore, cannot locate himself within the Other culture. In a very Lacanian statement, Adams

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says, “Language is an entry into another world”. It is language and the power of words to operate as both signifiers and signified that potentially locates the subject within a Symbolic Order. For William, the Lacanian triad of Need, Demand and Desire, have all been repressed: “Although he had begun studying French, the language seemed to become more elusive the more he learned and the more he heard around him” (239-40). William is unable to articulate, in the language of the Other, his basic needs; it follows, that demand and desire (the latter which, whilst impossible to express is able to be partly recognised and met in its linguistic form, demand), are cast or repressed into his unconscious, making him unable to find anything to satisfy him.

Desire is produced in the beyond of the demand, in that, articulating the life of the subject according to its conditions, demand cuts off that need from that life. But desire is also hallowed within the demand, in that, as an unconditional demand of presence and absence, demand evokes the want-to-be under the three figures of the nothing that continues the basis of the demand for love, of the hate that even denies the other's being, and of the unspeakable element in that which is ignored in request.

As the sense of linguistic and physical dislocation increases (because of his expatriation), the objects of William’s desire become harder for him to identify. The associative links between his Australian past and his European present become more difficult, more complex to form, rendering him inert — immobile. Tillie is frustrated by William’s lack of commitment and lack of desire to participate; she says to him when they are driving to a

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28 Pybus, 25.
bureaucrats' meeting with the intention to disturb the proceedings, "I know your type... You're just passing through, right? A man of few words and little action, right?" (234). This is William's inheritance. He lacks the validation of a culturally and familially secure dyadic relationship from which to enunciate: he cannot lead or act, because he does not, as yet, possess psychological or linguistic means to do so. He also lacks the paternal metaphor which legitimates his subjectivity within a cultural discourse.

William's final journey underground is a more figurative expedition and occurs in London. Here he meets Amanda, the American academic who, like a courtesan out of the pages of William's underground stories, leads William below the surface of respectability (the Symbolic) within the terms of their relationship. Their extra-marital affair, despite Amanda's protestations of nuptial unhappiness, has to be hidden from her students and any other potential witnesses. Their loving occurs in dark cafes, in their respective lodgings, or in a distant motel. Amanda plays on William's innocence and he firmly believes in her commitment to him, despite her legal bonds to another man. The incident with the sparrow, however, serves as an unhappy prolepsis for the dynamics of their relationship:

A sparrow flew in the open window of Amanda's flat and commenced to batter itself against the walls and windows and soon it was flying in a dizzy, weaving way. William and Amanda stayed under the sheet, shrinking from the fluttering creature, startled by this violent intrusion. It was Amanda who got out of bed and picked up the injured thing in a newspaper, after it had lodged itself under the bed. She looked at William. He shook his head, indicating that he had no idea what she should do with it.

Pybus, 23.
She hesitated, then dropped the sparrow out the window, into the concrete yard two storeys below (291-2).

William can be read, metaphorically, as the sparrow. He is a creature who, removed from the signifiers of his unsteady identity, flutters helplessly around, bruising and almost destroying the remnants of ego still in place. As Amanda rescues the near-dead sparrow, so too William relies on the women in his life to perform the role of saviour, to fulfil a dyadic role within his life and thus allow him access to a Symbolic Order.

The three women William has liaisons with all resemble his mother. William seeks a mother in Meg, Tillie and Amanda — another dyadic relationship from which he can be given access to the Symbolic Order and thus be located as a speaking subject. William adopts the mantle of different subjectivities all designed for him by his mutable name and the women he encounters. They all, like Rose, literally (as in Tillie and Amanda) or figuratively (Meg), abandon him and, without exception, they all embrace movement over stasis. Meg dances in the street, skipping ahead of William and she also explores the subterranean depths of her motherland, re-emerging physically and psychologically unscathed. Tillie is restless, unable to stop moving even on weekends. Amanda roams the world in an effort to escape her marriage and the social implications of her unhappiness. William establishes a relationship with each one, falling in love quickly and hopelessly based on the image these women project both of themselves and the image they project/reflect on to him: a new identity. This image is self-reflective; not only do the women give William a sense of himself by
imposing, to a degree, an identity upon him (adventurer, political activist, secure lover), they also resemble him by being afraid to stand still.

William's surname also gives him a particular identity. While a Badger, he tunnels underground with Meg. Later, as William Longleg, he is able to stride across the world and adopt the personality of his store-dummy alter-ego: adventurer in Paris, later becoming a café dweller and companion to a courtesan in London. All the changes wrought in William, either geographical or emotional, are brought about through dramatic outside physical circumstances. William is unable to move of his own volition. The physical attack of Rose and his subsequent arrest cause him to leave Australia and his Troglydyte Meg who has all but abandoned him anyway. His movement away from Tillie begins with a literal baptism by fire (the Belgian fire and the incident with the American soldiers and their "practical joke" in The Constantinople Café), and is completed when she deserts him in Ostend. Amanda leaves him as well, her decision to return to her own certitudes in America, making him flee England and take a routeless journey that ultimately propels him homewards. William continues to rewrite his past or have it rewritten for him. In each relationship his present (and, therefore, his past) is radically altered in the light of each woman's interpretation of him. William continually allows this to happen; he lets the women identify him in a particular way and inscribe a subjectivity for him. The reasons for his ready acquiescence to these
orchestrations can be explained by Freudian and Lacanian theories of love.31

For both Freud and Lacan, falling in love risks the safety of the ego because it depletes it through the emotional commitment of the self to another. Being loved, however, replenishes the ego, nourishing it and elevating self-esteem, so there is a happy balance between introjection and projection.32 When love is not returned feelings of self-worth and value all but disappear, rendering the subject invisible in terms of Symbolic and self-identification. This is what happens to William. Each time the object of his desires deserts him, he has a feeling of disorientation, of a loss of the signifier of being. When Tillie disregards him in favour of his friends, the overwhelming feeling of ego-dissolution starts to occur:

William was scarcely able to place one foot in front of the other. He was working hard at not falling against a wall, at staying upright, moving, doing something to stop himself from slanting to one side, subsiding onto the cobblestones and never getting up (247).

Later he experiences a similar sensation: “Again William was overcome by the now familiar, dizzy weightlessness. If he succumbed and just lay down on the ground, he need never get up again” (273). Both of these examples occur when William feels he is losing Tillie — the current signifier of who he is and his dyadic and triadic access to the Symbolic Order.

The women in this novel, including Rose, all possess, or give the illusion of possessing, the phallus — the Law of the Father. Yet all of the women are also vulnerable and force William to adopt the dual role of father/protector and son/protected. As the landlady recognises, women understand the twofold role they have to perform for men; “We women have to let the men do things, don’t we, if we want to keep them happy and make them feel important, make them think they are the strong ones...” (230). It is only when each of the women appears vulnerable that William adopts, and feels comfortable with, the role of knight errant. Meg’s lack of knowledge in the David Jones’ basement makes her a victim of Miss Block’s reprimands and empowers the more capable William. On the surface, away from the basement, William is at a loss and this sense of loss is displayed linguistically, through his stammering and his discomfort when she questions his name and relegates it to the fairytale underground of the story Wind in the Willows (and, ironically, his English heritage):

William was having trouble keeping up with this new salesgirl. Inside the store, where he had some authority by dint of his years in Pens and Pencils, this Meg Meese had looked to him for help. But now, divested of authority, he was floundering, and she was in charge. He felt like a lumbering, slow clod, like wooden clogs clinging to the feet of a nymph (150).

William’s loss of “authority” (150) can be read as a loss of an enunciatory site; not only is his patronymic challenged, the symbol of one aspect of his subjectivity, but he has also emerged from the metaphoric womb of his
employer to falter outside in the Symbolic Order. His means of saving himself is to retreat to his subversive language, his morse code (150).

It is through his feelings of love and attachment to the women in his life that William achieves an artificial sense of wholeness, much like that perceived in the Imaginary/pre-Symbolic stage of the dyad. The type of love that William feels for his women, in a Freudian and Lacanian sense of the term, is both anaclitic and narcissistic. Anaclitic love is based on the mother or a substitute for her, narcissistic love is, as the name suggests, based on self-love. Grosz defines anaclitic love as follows:

the anaclitic lover tends to over-evaluate the love-object. This type conforms most readily to the stereotyped image of romantic love, a love based on putting the love-object on a pedestal and abjecting the self.33

What is ironic about this type of love is that in raising the woman to an unrealistic position, the anaclitic lover is in fact striving for self-recognition based on his own active situation within the relationship: her superior status in his eyes reflects and esteems his own ego. This is precisely what William seeks in his relationships — a celebration and confirmation of his own ego:

It was easy enough for William to remain silent. He was ready to lie happily on the bed, with his arms around Tillie all night, obeying her orders. He moved his hands over her body once or twice — he told himself he was not really doing anything, not really going against her instructions, since his arms were merely around her, even if they were moving, and she had said she would

allow his arms around her. But when she sighed and moved close to him, placing her arms around him, pressing her hands against his shoulder blades, in no time at all he was making love to her, happier than ever, making love over and over, claiming Tillie in a kind of celebration of himself, crowning the glory of the evening in which he had spoken boldly to a group of strangers and outlined a daring plan, a plan which had been greeted almost unanimously as brilliant (227).

Being with Tillie, loving her, gives William a sense of completeness — a feeling of being “alive, living, at last” (228). It is as though each time William crawls out the cave of their bedroom, (231) he progresses beyond the dyadic phase and is able to situate himself, through love, temporarily within cultural discourse:

The anaclitic lover makes this kind of passionate commitment not once, to a rare, exceptional woman — as he professes — but to a large number of women with whom he forms a number of serial romantic liaisons.34

It is not the woman so much that William desires, but the idea of love and romantic attachment itself and what it implies for his own subjectivity. It is as though they become a signifying chain which he attempts to move along in order to find a secure site and an ego-identity.

Narcissistic love is usually associated with women and is understood as a type of love that compensates, according to Freud, for their castration. It is an attempt to reaffirm wholeness by becoming the object of desire and, therefore having, as opposed to being, the phallus. It is a love of the other in order to love the self — precisely the sort of affirmation William has been

seeking. He is both the anaclitic and narcissistic lover: he "clings" to the m/other (29), and loves in order to be loved himself. In each of the woman William loves, it is the insecure aspects of himself that he identifies with and finds easy to love. With Meg, it is her inferior position at David Jones, while with Tillie, it is the attitude of the Pan-European group and her apparent ignorance of their feelings towards her, which arouses love within him:

He could see from the way Cato and the others had treated her the night before that she was not as important to them as they were to her, and this realisation of her vulnerability, her neediness, and the probability of her getting hurt and rejected by them in the future made him love her the more (233).

It is the knowledge that Amanda is not happily married that attracts William to her (286); yet it is only later, as William develops that he comes to acknowledge that love is "a puny, irrelevant, unpersuasive notion" (306). With this realisation comes the movement homewards.

All of the women in the novel have used masks to lure William into their grasp and to control him; they have unconsciously dissembled themselves in order to attain, through William, the phallus that they first believed he possessed. William is incapable of assisting Meg in constructing Olga; he is unable to situate Tillie, only ever being capable of being her accessory; and he is not able to offer Amanda the power she needs and desires to change her circumstances. William recognises that, with Amanda, it is probably just a case of saying the right thing, finding the words to bind her to him:
“He was sure he needed only to say the right combination of words, provide the right cue, and she would tell him that she was definitely planning to leave her husband and come to him” (303-4). Yet, when the opportunity arises, he does not have the language to seduce her, to empower himself within a different Symbolic Order from hers and thus take on the role of anchor and propel her along a signifying chain towards him.

Part of the reason William is unable to offer the women he loves the Lacanian phallus — the signifier and the capability to move forward in sociocultural communications — is because he has not uncovered his true origins, origins that can only, for William, be discovered through language and by posing the right questions. It is not until the end of the book that he has the courage and conviction as well as the words to ask the correct questions and to insist on their answers. He discovers that his name is Langley — a name which, as Katherine England says, “needs no creative justification”.35 William also learns that he is illegitimate, a validation of his dis-ease and sense of cultural and familial alienation. Whereas Rose stayed with the man who betrayed her and eked her slow and painful revenge upon him, oppressing her wanderer’s nature in order to make Wally Badger pay, (332) the knowledge and name she provides William with gives him the freedom to take his matronymic and, in wonderful subversion of patriarchal and psychoanalytical discourse, move forward because it is what he desires.

William, by asking his questions and receiving answers, is given possession of the Lacanian phallus — an ungendered signifier of desire — and the ability to really progress having abolished the ghosts of his past.

William’s movement forward is signified by his conversation with another one of his alter-egos, the young boy on the train. He tells the child that memory is what sustains the subject, it is a blessing, not a burden, as it is what constructs the self in the present. William will no longer hoard his sweets in preparation for an unwritten and potentially disastrous future: memory will provide him with the sustenance to go on. In being given an identity within the Symbolic Order — his “real” name or matronymic, a symbol of the dyadic relationship he can now relinquish — William is able to sift through his immediate past and understand it in new terms. It is now that he will become a “do-er” — not because his name signifies that he should, but because it is what he desires and is able to do. The train journey also signifies this, becoming a metaphor for the signifying chain of language and for progress forward through the dyadic relationship and into a culturally informed triadic one: he has claimed his inheritance. He has now conquered language and is able to employ it appropriately:

“There’s a beauty to it all, to the patterns and paths,” he said, and paused to murmur again the word beauty, once more surprised at the word he had chosen. “And there’s even a special word for it!” He struggled now to remember that word, frowning out the window. “Aesthetics!” he cried, turning to the glum boy opposite him. “It’s a kind of aesthetics” (338).
William's alter-ego, his desire to be someone else, has been abandoned. The young boy on the train is a real individual whom William can see resembles him, but whom he can also advise and leave to discover his subjectivity for himself. He now realises that his sense of being split, metaphorically expressed in his feeling of being unloved, is simply the human condition; to seek wholeness through someone else is a cruel and stifling illusion. This realisation ultimately frees William:

Although he was unloved, at least at the moment, he had certainly loved and would surely love again. He was capable of it. He knew that. He had some individual instances of good luck in the journey so far. And the planet was still spinning. There was a certain beauty in it all (339).

Unlike his parodic double Odysseus, William will continue his journey, despite having located both home and self. The desire to keep moving resists the Odyssean paradigm which suggests that once home and love and self are firmly sited, movement must cease. Once again, Adams inverts the Homeric wanderings and relationships of the Greek hero, by mimicking masculine discourse. Mimicry also allows her to strike a balance between a number of oppositional perspectives, and offer, as an alternative, a liminal discourse, avoiding the privileging of any particular point of view. This sense of equilibrium is achieved by giving the principal roles within Homer's Odyssey to a range of individuals who themselves do not retain a fixed identity but move between and through roles. William, as the principal figure searching for home, can be likened to Odysseus; but here the comparison ends. Like Lark, William is an uncertain and undefined
individual who lacks an original home and all the certainties it represents; he therefore lacks the courage and ability to move through the world with the confidence and trickster abilities of his classical double. William can only perform roles that are created for him — he cannot be an inventive imposter. What William is able to do, because of his shifting identities and changing sites, is enter into a dialogue with his home: a home that he acknowledges is also unstable. He takes part in a continuous dialogue between past and present, here and there, self and Other: a distinctive expatriate discourse. William correlates the people he meets and the places and spaces he temporarily occupies with Australia — geographically/culturally his Ithacan heartland — and either his mother or father who are biologically the centre of the home/love he seeks. When William observes the people dancing in the café in London, he finds his thoughts turning to Rose (and hence his mother country), however, the more he contemplates their movements, the more he sees through their masks of exotic abandon:

And William thought of Rose, his young mother, who having alighted from her ship onto the tilting ground, had proceeded to Wally Badger in the west, far from the sea that connected her to her homeland. But then William saw that the women with these dark, strong men were brightly dressed, in tight short skirts, sitting easily, drinking and laughing. And he saw that the men were not as dark and as strong as he had first imagined, in fact they were not even seamen at all. Most of them were wearing black turtleneck sweaters and black jeans and had the faces of the young men William saw every day on the streets of London going to their offices to work (295).
Apart from memory forming a connection between past and present, exposing the constructedness of cultural forms and even subjectivity, this moment is very much like Odysseus' trip to the underworld in Book XI where he receives enlightenment in the form of advice from the prophet Tiresias. In the underground of the appropriately signified Greek café, William's enlightenment is self-actuated and a result of the power of the gaze to strip away the mask of alterity that the other English people wear — masks that his mother and home country also wore in order to deceive. Being in the Café also reminds William of his father and his bequest of a permanently damaged leg, which renders him immobile. Wally is doomed to exist in a perpetual stasis because of his desire to acknowledge his nationality and seek wholeness under the flag of patriotism. This scene sets up an analogy between the vibrant dancers and the static Wally and Rose: both perpetual Penelopes. Rose, unlike the Homeric Penelope, has adopted this role as a form of revenge. For Wally it is bestowed upon him by his country and his desire to fulfil the masculine role of protector. The Odyssean role was too much for Wally; he is damaged forever because of his crippled state and is located as a buffoon Penelope instead.

Amanda, initially at least, perceives William as both Odysseus and her Ithaca as he gives the false impression of being at home anywhere. She discusses the modern predilection for travel perceiving it as frightening and

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36 See Hazzard, Chapters Four and Five.
representative of other deeper urges saying to William: “But you don’t need
to do that, do you? You seem secure, content” (283). Like the dancers in the
café, William wears a mask of Otherness: he is not as he appears, a
discovery Amanda makes for herself and thus forsakes him. William is a
perpetual “noman” — unsited, unhoused, and unloved — seeking to reverse
these psychosocial inheritances through his Odyssean journey.

William begins his journey with Meg and, like the unresistant Lark,
William listens to the songs of the subterranean sirens and is nearly lured
to his destruction because of them. He is warned not to listen to the voices
in his head, despite what they tell him:

“Some idiots come to a narrow neck in a tunnel and find their
shoulders are too wide, and they think if they take off their
clothes they’ll squeeze through. But that can be fatal. If you can’t
get through with the clothes on, you have to accept that you can’t
get through and go back.” Meg shrugged. “it’s a kind of
underground hysteria or frenzy that can overtake you, a
compulsion, like the sailors when they hear the Sirens” (127).

Later, in the tunnel, William hears the song of one of the cavers, “A
woman’s voice, soft and lovely, which he wanted to reach. The voice was
calling him” (131). William nearly succumbs to the voice of the siren, but is
saved by his companions and by the restrictive bonds of mother-earth who
holds him firmly in her rocky grasp. This becomes a chiasmic reading of
Homer’s siren episode.\textsuperscript{38} This reading is taken further when it is the silent

\textsuperscript{38} Lattimore (trans), 186.
sirens of the police car — their insignia — that throw William and Tillie together (202-3). William listens to the siren's songs and is lead away by their promises of Otherness and totality: by the illusion of wanting him that they create.

Tillie adopts multiple positions in the narrative. She is simultaneously Penelope, Odysseus, and Athena signifying the stasis William longs for and the activity and movement he needs in order to discover home/self. William is propelled to Tillie's side by what is described as "an invisible companion ... a woman" (193); an Athena-like figure who dissolves into the text (200), leaving him to make his own aimless way. Once again this parodies the notion of a guide, because it is simply a social and psychological trick that throws William and Tillie together. He follows her, as he is told (202), and manages to find a temporary home. It is within the walls of Tillie's flat, that William ambivalently inscribes the roles of Athena and Penelope for her and, ironically, for himself. He fears that she may "begin to twirl" (228), and so desires her to remain still whilst acknowledging her need adopt the mantle of Odysseus and to move, to be involved. William also wishes to be occupied, to be identified as a man of ideas and action. In this sense, he wants to embrace the role of Odysseus, but by remaining in the flat and trying to disguise Tillie by turning her into a more desirable/unrecognisable figure and influence her life, he also positions himself as an Athena/Penelope figure to her Odysseus. William attempts to free her hair, a metaphoric attempt to liberate her from the bonds of her Symbolic Order and subjectivity as well as an attempt to guide her towards another destiny:
"You look beautiful with your hair out," said William. "You want me to look more feminine, right?" said Tillie. "To mitigate the activism, right? It makes you uncomfortable to see a woman with opinions, right? All men are like that" (214).

This is also an attempt to disguise her from those who would claim her and take her away from him. Tillie does not wish to play the role he tries to create for her, but is unable to because of his own lack of subjectivity/identity. She prefers to be the active quester and dominant Odyssean figure in their relationship. She also rejects the Athena role he designs for her. His desire to make her a goddess/guide is signified when he places her on a figurative pedestal. While this is an active example of anaclitic love, it is also an attempt to turn Tillie into a literal goddess; who will guide him through life, directing his journey and growth:

William watched Tillie for several minutes, his perfect woman, a goddess. She had allowed him to make love to her the whole night and now he definitely loved her. He was alive, living at last (228).

Tillie is both subject and object to William. In the Homeric sense, it is only after she rejects the static role of Penelope that he sites her as an unattainable goddess — anything in preference to what the traveller's role suggests. As an earthly goddess, a benign but physically attainable woman, Tillie reaffirms his sense of self because he can site himself in reference to her, hence the feeling of being alive.
The most predominant image in William's relationship with Tillie is the huge jigsaw puzzle which occupies a large space in the apartment. For Tillie it is a means of procrastination, it enables her "... to put off drafting manifestos and agendas," even though it is "a monumental waste of time" (211). Tillie describes it as "a real weakness" (211). Not only does the jigsaw, in its composition (as a fragmented picture) represent the more insubstantial aspects of Tillie's (and by association, William's) nature, it can also be likened to Penelope's weaving. In a chiasmic reading, the puzzle, as William laboriously pieces it together and then dismantles it, functions to keep Tillie at his side, unlike Penelope's tapestry which kept the suitors at bay. Where the roles of the puzzle and the weaving become analogous is in the fact that they are both employed to retard the fulfilment of promises, which in Longleg and the Odyssey, are promises of love and marriage. The sense of wholeness that William feels he achieves with Tillie is an illusion, symbolised by the breaking up of the apparently complete scene from Enkhuizen, into 5000 separate pieces. This can be seen as a representation of the fractured state of the human psyche which only wears a visual/physical fragile mask of completeness.

When William returns home to Australia, he is still in a fragmented state, not having been able to recapture the sense of wholeness and subjectivity he achieved briefly with the women in his life. Where William is anxious about the legal ramifications of his return home, his name acts as a disguise that
allows him to visit his house, the scene of his psychological torment, and
encounter his father, a pathetic Laertes figure. The realisation that Wally is
a coward who has trapped himself in a prison of his own creation, frees
William from the bonds of his primal and cultural dyad. He is able to ask
both Wally and Rose the right questions and discover the previously hidden
aspects of himself and make sense of his past with the information he
receives in the present. William’s periplus has given him a site from which
to speak, from which to be able to utter the name of Langley and all that it
signifies. His childish longing for a double is laid to rest with the knowledge
that he possesses a twin, a half-brother with the same first name. There
really is another William who is the “spitting image” of him (333). William’s
acceptance of his father’s bigamy and the resultant double, indicates a
psychological coming-of-age, an awareness and embracing of his inherent
duality and divisions. It is at this point, with his fresh discoveries, and the
ironic knowledge of precisely how Wally Badger, whose whole life was one of
subterfuge and hidden circumstances, became recognised as a “do-er”, that
William can move forward and accomplish things for himself. He tells the
young child on the train, “You have to be a do-er, accept what has happened,
and get on with it, really do something” (339); a creed he finally adopts, as a
Langley, for himself.

William ultimately “conquers” his home and self via the process of posing
questions. Language is the tool he has learnt to wield and thereby banish
the ghosts of his past. Compared to the violent outcome of the *Odyssey*, this is a very feminine solution, an appropriate counter-narrative to the action and bloodshed of Homer's text. Here the victory is a psychological one. The feminine overtones of the ending are, in fact, echoed throughout the book. William is a feminised character who continues to occupy feminine spaces (in relation to patriarchal discourse) in the novel: from his preoccupation with women's clothing (166, 234, etc.) to his roles as passive worker, lover, and secretary. Whilst these positions reflect William's continued subjugation to his biological and cultural mothers' desires, they should not be read negatively. Despite his subjection to outside forces and his lack of a founding authenticity, William does manage to progress. He expatriates himself in an effort to understand both himself and his cultural origins and thus, by removing himself from his captious yet definitive origins, locates himself as an acknowledged individual within a society. The final scene in London where he jams his bus in a narrow street (308), reflects William's passage through life, and the patterns that reappear throughout the novel, a passage that has been confined and restricted by external forces. The fact he is able to get out of the street, albeit with difficulty, symbolises the liberation that William rapidly moves towards. William's overt femininity is crucial to his development and final understanding of himself. He learns to strike a balance, to blur the rigid boundaries of the Symbolic Order, by mediating between feminine/masculine, past/present, here/there. As an expatriate, William learns that liminality is a state that one can occupy in
order to resist the homogenisation and essentialism of cultural, sexual, and political discourses.

*Longleg*, despite its sometimes negative overtones, ends with an affirmation of life and the positivity of the expatriate experience which, for its protagonist, has resulted in fresh and exciting psychological and physical discoveries. William is now able to progress along the signifying chain of language articulating his needs, demands and desires having learnt that language does not need to be a barrier that prevents movement. On the contrary language, and the objects it signifies, are seen as simple borders that can be crossed and recrossed establishing new enunciatory sites in the process. William unconsciously recognises his desire for the Other, a desire that will continue to motivate his search and lead him along some alternate pathways. He now has the confidence of a newly bestowed subjectivity, an awareness of his split inheritance which, in a feminine appropriation, subverts any attempts to articulate individual specificity found in masculine discourses: in particular, those located in the *Odyssey*.

Ithaca, Odysseus, Athena, Penelope, and Laertes are all heterogenous and changing sites, both geographical and psychological, representing the contrariety — the oppositional forces — extant in cultural and familial discourses. Likewise, memory is not a static function, but a dynamic treasure to be stored and altered in relation to the present: it is what informs the subject and sustains them on their journey through life.
Acknowledging the mother's role (both familial and cultural) in primal identification, the subject is able to move into the Symbolic and the realm of lexical play. The name of Langley, ultimately gives William "an original signifier of self and subjectivity," freeing him from the bonds of specific cultural constructions and allowing him to enter the circuits of linguistic and psychological exchange. As a male expatriate figure, William inverts the essentialism of the Odyssean narrative. Through the discourse of *Femination*, his journey can be read as a dynamic and ambivalent physical and psychological voyage that offers a fluid reading of the subject's relation to both the nation-dyad and the Other.

39 Lemaire, 83.
CONCLUSION

**FEMINATION: THE DISCOURSE OF THE FEMALE EXPATRIATE WRITER**

Such, at least, is the space in which the imagery of the ego develops, and which rejoins the objective space of reality. Yet does it offer us a place of rest? Already in the ever-contracting 'living space' in which human competition is becoming ever keener, a stellar observer of our species would conclude that we possessed needs to escape that had very strange results.¹

My men went on and presently met the Lotus-Eaters, nor did these Lotus-Eaters have any thoughts of destroying our companions, but they only gave them lotus to taste of. But any of them who ate the honey sweet fruit of the lotus was unwilling to take any message back, or to go away, but they wanted to stay there with the lotus-eating people, feeding on lotus, and forget the way home. I myself took these men back weeping, by force, to where the ships were, and put them aboard under the rowing benches and tied them fast, then gave the order to the rest of my eager companions to embark on the ships in haste, for fear someone else might taste of the lotus and forget the way home ...²

As the preceding chapters have demonstrated, the work of the female expatriate writers, Clift, Hazzard and Adams, can be read as liminal, dynamic and ambivalent. Their writings are fundamentally concerned with disturbing the essentialist positions produced by nationalistic and masculine discourses. The texts expose a series of tensions between the masculine physical places that seek to define the subject, and the

psychological feminine spaces that resist closure. These tensions arise because the narratives refuse to acknowledge that the masculine and feminine are mutually exclusive spheres of existence. Instead they seek to disrupt the boundaries between the masculine and the feminine (and any Other essentialist sites that are posited) and in doing so create a succession of fluid speaking positions. Whilst the fluidity of the narratives means that they can be described as predominantly feminine, the texts still recognise and acknowledge the debt they owe to the anterior and masculine nation. By describing both the psychological and physical voyage of the expatriate subject, Clift, Hazzard, and Adams, resist the masculine conventions of the journey narrative, in particular, the notion of closure.

In these feminine narratives it is not closure or “discovery” (if that is even possible) that is tantamount, but the journey itself — the continuous movement through places and spaces. The physical movement is resignified as a stage in a spiritual quest; the quest being a search for the self. In this sense, these expatriate women’s narratives are as much concerned with discovering subjectivity as they are with cross-cultural encounters.

The search for the self that these texts explore is centered on the dual rhetoric of either/or. In resisting the binary oppositions of this type of either/or discourse, Clift, Hazzard, and Adams, all succeed in opening up a
third space for analysis: the space between these essentialist configurations. The space between is represented as liminal: it is the threshold at which the binary opposites established by the home culture/nation (Australia), become indistinct. The limen is signified as a dynamic position from which to interrogate the various certitudes of gender, nationality, and self which are all produced by various conditions (psychological and physical) within the nation-space. These certitudes are an effect of the Symbolic Order, and thus signify the national subject as a product of particular and secure cultural formations. The stasis of this type of subjectivity is elided by the national collective: the group identity of the nation which allocates a patronymic to the subject ("Australian") and thus empowers her/him to move and speak within its Symbolic boundaries.\(^3\) The artificial wholeness of the nation obscures the originary lack in the subject and therefore works to mask any desire for the Other that the subject may feel. The Other is displaced beyond the national construct and resignified as a negative and disruptive influence; as being literally and figuratively "out of bounds." The role of the Other in the formation of the subject is buried in a confined nationalistic temporal and spatial geography and reconfigured as being unnecessary to any type of self identification.

Expatriate fiction seeks to interrupt the comfortable dyad of nation/self by writing from beyond this limited configuration and challenging its stasis.

\(^3\) These boundaries can extend beyond the geographical borders, but still restrict the subject to a limited and "national" discourse.
The narratives of Clift, Hazzard, and Adams achieve this by moving through and beyond established borders, whether they be geographical, political or psychological, into new sites. Their fiction also reveals that the originary site of the subject, both cultural and familial, still influences the movement of the expatriate and her/his discourses. The work of these three female writers consciously seeks to examine the fracturing of the subject produced within and beyond the nation-dyad and with the triadic Other. All the texts examine the processes of cultural dissociation and the psychological fragmentation that accompanies these stages of psychosocial development. By acknowledging the split that occurs in the psychogenesis of the subject and the subsequent play of desire in the search for unity (a complete identity), these female expatriate writers employ the discourse of Femination.

The discourse of Femination is one which moves between the various sites produced by and are supported by the nation-dyad. It clearly recognises the subject’s psychosocial development as part of, firstly, a family and, secondly, a nation. It then moves beyond these structures to interrogate that which has been suppressed by the nation-dyad: the Other. By figuring itself as both a maternal and a paternal site to the subject, the nation-dyad effectively represses desire in the subject. In the fiction of Clift, Hazzard, and Adams, the nation-dyad is configured as a dual maternal and paternal (Symbolic Order/the Laws) site. It is depicted as an ambivalent and
conflicting location, both because of its duality and because it seeks to suppress the Other. The expatriate, then, is a subject who resists the coercion and conformity offered by the Symbolic Order and the nation by moving out of its discursive grasp in order to seek the Other. This movement away confirms the originary split of the subject. By relocating the self in the Other, the expatriate creates a temporal and spatial gap between the self and the nation of origin and by occupying this gap or threshold, facilitates critical and dialogic encounters.

The discourse of *Femination* can be perceived as celebrating the space between boundaries and the binary opposites it produces. *Femination* explores the subject’s confrontation with the originary split and then demonstrates how the concepts learnt in the familial and cultural dyad can help make sense of the Other (and the self in relation to the Other). It is only through the intervention/recognition of the Other that the expatriate subject comes to perceive the inconsistencies between past and present and “here” and “there” and distinguish her/his own desire from the other/Other. The recognition of desire gives the subject access to the signifying chain of language to both reconfigure and make sense of the self. In moving into a new culture, the expatriate subject finds her/him self through the Other — the gaze becoming the medium through which a specular recognition occurs. In effect, the second culture provides a second mirror through which the subject can begin to realise a new self. As Lacan states, “the mirror-image
would seem to be the threshold of the visible world."⁴ While the visible world provides the subject with a sense of self, it also exacerbates the impression of fragmentation associated with the body of bits and pieces.⁵ However, by harkening back to the Laws and codes first learnt and experienced in the primal dyad, the expatriate subject is able to reassert an identificatory foundation and thus progress towards subjectivity.⁶

Clift, Hazzard, and Adams all describe the complicated relationships that can form between people, places, and spaces. The journeys through which the subject can arrive at these heterogeneous destinations are portrayed as a series of dynamic dyadic and triadic associations that all mark various stages in the subject's psychosocial development. The love and other bonds that form between the various characters in the novels also reflect the psychological and physical spaces that the expatriate subject simultaneously occupies. These places and spaces present the subject as moving in and out of relationships in different Symbolic Orders in an effort to discover an identity beyond that offered by the national model.

The principal characters in the fiction of Clift, Hazzard, and Adams, all embrace the dynamics of expatriation. They continue to journey forward, along Lacan's signifying chain, rejecting stasis and embracing motility as a creed to live by and, paradoxically, as a means to locate the self. As Foucault believes, "What is productive is not sedentary but nomadic." The search for Other aspects and insights into the self is a search that applauds dynamism and views stasis as the unfillable lack.

In her books, *Mermaid Singing* and *Peel Me A Lotus*, Clift presents herself as both author and subject. She gazes at and consumes the Other, using her primal dyad as a secure site from which to encounter Otherness. Her moments of contact are brief, but nonetheless, provide an example of the fluidity of her expatriate discourse. Despite being anchored within a neo-colonial structure, her texts resist essentialism by exploring the expatriate's psychological journey: from the familial dyad, to the cultural dyad, to the triadic configuration of self/nation (other)/Other.

While Clift positions herself as subject, Hazzard has her characters stepping tentatively through the looking glass, only to find that Other places, people and the liaisons the subject forms with them, can be as complex and

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restrictive as those left behind. What is significant in both *The Bay of Noon* and *The Transit of Venus*, is the journey *between* the various sites, and the ultimate repositioning of the encounters and experiences into a personal past. Jenny and Caro, in particular, become paradigms of the liminal and ambivalent expatriate who stands at the threshold of past and future, old world and new, self and Other, in an effort to locate a subjectivity beyond those offered by nationalist or patriarchal discourses.

Like her predecessors, Adams also uses both the motif and the physical/psychological reality of expatriation to examine subjectivity. In her novels, *Dancing on Coral* and *Longleg*, Adams presents two expatriate subjects, Lark and William who, while they move in and out of their primal identificatory sites, finally move beyond them as well. Through their journeys, both Lark and William interrogate and disturb the iconographic masculinity of the Odyssean figure to whom they are metaphorically linked.

In choosing continual movement, the expatriate subjects depicted in these books celebrate fluidity and dynamism over stasis and the singularity of representation the nation offers the subject. The discourse of *Femination* allows this fluidity to be expressed while simultaneously acknowledging the importance of both constancy and variation. The discourse itself inverts the
masculine restraint of nationalistic and generic conventions, disturbing boundaries while also actively redefining them.

The ambivalent fracturing and merging of the subject is what the discourse of *Femination* articulates. It expresses the liminality of the expatriate subject, revealing her/his indebtedness to the primal familial and cultural dyads and acknowledges the value of the threshold. The expatriate subject chooses to lose her/his external and primal territory of signifiers and pass through the looking glass of Otherness in an effort to make sense of the self. Clift, Hazzard, and Adams, all employ the discourse of *Femination* as a means of expressing this choice. They also signify the threshold — the space between — as a dynamic and active site of interrogation. *Femination* is about negotiation and subversion. It privileges the imaginary life and self over any physical representations offered in masculinist and nationalist narratives; however, it also acknowledges that these narratives influence formations of subjectivity. In offering liminality as a constructive and significant feminine counter-discourse, *Femination* exceeds all boundaries, affirming polarities while undoing their polarisation; it suggests, as opposed to orders, and thus allows its narratives to retain both their ambivalence, and dynamism as part of the Australian literary canon.

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