Gender and nation formation in late nineteenth century

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NOTE

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Arthur Streeton Early Summer—Gorse in Bloom 1888
oil on canvas 56.2 x 100.6 cm
Art Gallery of South Australia
CHAPTER 3

JOURNEYS OF WOMEN

This chapter argues that for women the passage from childhood to maturity was imagined as a 'little journey' from comparative mobility in the bush to the confines of the home. Since the domestic realm—"the world cast aside"—is rhetorically excluded from the public sphere, and since the imaginative formation of nations is located in the public domain, women are seen to withdraw from the national community on reaching maturity in narratives of nation formation. Such narratives not only marginalise women but they fail to lay down imaginative foundations for the development of national consciousness in women. This failure to incorporate women, as women, is also observed in most theoretical writing on nationalism, as well as in critical writing on national culture.¹

If the maturation of women was seen to be effected through marriage and motherhood in the late nineteenth century, then those women who remained unmarried were represented as arrested on the journey of life. In the three accounts considered in this chapter, unmarriedability is seen to be a consequence of disfigurement. In spite of the sympathetic stance articulated in these stories towards the women, no man, it is assumed, would choose to marry an ugly woman.

Rites of passage

A young girl in Streeton's *Early Summer—Gorse in Bloom* (1888) (Plate 7) stands still, in the middle ground, by a post-and-rail fence corner, looking across a sparse, harsh-hued landscape. She looks towards some more distant figures, a little girl and a lamb on the track nearby, and, walking away in the distance, two adult women. This is not intentionally a narrative painting, and its provocative "eccentric emptiness" is said to be a result of Streeton's appropriation of "Japanese" aesthetic conventions to capture impressions of the colour, light and tone of the landscape.² The image, however, reiterates the association of women, especially young women, with fences, noted earlier, but with a significant difference. This child is positioned *outside*, gazing inwards across empty space.

Jane Sutherland's *Untitled* painting, known as *Girl in a Paddock* (Plate 8), reiterates this motif of a young girl outside the fence, gazing into an enclosed space. This girl, in her pinafore and hat, has laid aside her tied bundle and billy, to step off the path that
Jane Sutherland, *Untitled (Girl in a Paddock)*, c. 1890

oil on canvas 66.0 x 105.5 cm
runs outside the fence, and to lean across the fence. The muted colouring of the paddock she looks into and across, and the seductiveness of the background and detailed flowers and foliage foregrounded outside the fence distract us from the realisation that the interior space is devoid of such richness and detail. In this painting, the ground covering is green-blue, the fence is overgrown with autumn-coloured bushes and foliage, and the distant ranges are deep blue. The rich, warm colours have lent themselves to the interpretation of this work by Leigh Astbury in terms of the domestication of the "fertile, cultivated landscape ... with its green field, hedges and old rustic fence". Helen Topliss, too, sees in both the setting and subject "a characteristically female view of the landscape".

Too often, however, in the interpretation of the paintings of the late nineteenth century, the presence of a women has been read almost mechanically as a sign of idyllic domestication of the landscape, without sufficient sensitivity to the positioning of the woman within the space of the work. Once again, this is not necessarily a narrative painting, but the idea of a journey is suggested by the path and the bundle and billy, and by the positioning of the girl outside the enclosed space. Other paintings, such as George Lambert's *A Bush Idyll* (1896) and Julian Ashton's *The Corner of the Paddock* (1888), reiterate this motif of a girl-child positioned outside the fence that connotes the boundary of interior and exterior space.

An earlier painting by Jane Sutherland is titled *Obstruction* (1887) (Plate 9). In this painting, a young girl carrying a satchel seems to consider whether she can continue her way. Narratively, the obstruction appears to be a bull behind a fence in a paddock through which she must, presumably, pass. As the *Argus* described it in 1887:

> The progress of a small state-scholar to school has been barred by an aggressive cow on the other side of the fence, and the child is uncertain whether to advance or retire.

Visually, however, the bull does not dominate: it is placed on the right-hand margin of the painting, and is relatively small in comparison with the fence and trees separating the child and the animal. Its painterly treatment does not lend it bulk or monumentality, and indeed, if one simply blocks it out, the child's way is still obstructed. The post-and-rail fence, though it appears rather delicate, is extraordinarily high in relation to the bull and the child. (The bull could possibly scramble under the fence and out of the paddock.) The child's way is obstructed visually by a stand of comparatively slender trees and their wispy foliage, a ditch which resembles a bar of deep shadow cast by the trees), a makeshift bridge of split timber over a ditch, and the fence itself. Further, though the child appears to have come to a halt, it is not quite clear where she is
9. Jane Sutherland *Obstruction, Box Hill* 1887
oil on canvas 41.3 x 31.1 cm
we can just make out where she has come from, but there is no pathway marking out her way ahead. Without being overly alarmist about this, the absence of a pathway for women pedestrians in the bush occurs very rarely and suggests a loss of bearings, as in McCubbin's *Lost* (1886) (Plate 11). Tom Humphrey's *The Way to School* (1888), by contrast, shows a clearly defined path to school, although even here the willingness of the girls to tread it is not evident. In Sutherland's painting, however, not only is the pathway missing, but so too are other visual clues. Behind the bull-paddock, there is a belt of trees which offers no indication of destination. In its lack of visual resolution, this remains a peculiar painting, albeit, as Victoria Hammond and Juliet Peers note, that it is one of Jane Sutherland's "most widely reproduced images".  

Images of older women, sweethearts, wives and mothers, however, seem unlikely to place women in this spatial configuration. Rather, the relationship of women to space, and in particular to outside and inside space appears to alter as they mature. It is a broad, but useful, generalisation that young bushgirls may be placed outside fences, located in exterior space, but young marriageable women are more likely to be positioned within spaces delineated by fences, and mothers are most frequently represented inside the house itself.

It may seem facetious to suggest that the approach to maturity in women is represented spatially as a move towards the home. Nevertheless, this conclusion is the concomitant of the function of women characters in the journeys of men. Unless she dies 'physically', the young woman will be positioned inside to take up her mature role as personified point of departure and return.

Theo Brooke Hansen's painting *Love or Duty* (1891) (Plate 10) is a conventionally narrative work depicting a young woman poised at the open door, hand on knob, hat in hand. She half turns towards the older man, seated by the fire, who is pointing, but not looking, in her direction, holding her back with his insensitive monologue. Outside, the doorway is framed by autumn-hued vines, and the sky beyond is dusk-rosy. A man is walking down the road towards the open door. We infer a romantic attachment. The woman must get away from the man who could be her father if she is to meet the man who could be her husband. (Bushmen meet their sweethearts out of doors, on their own turf.) However, it is not too far-fetched to suggest that the man, to whom she is bound by duty, represents not only her past, but also her future. He occupies the space that her husband would occupy in time, and though she will meet her lover outside, he will carry her back across the threshold in the fullness of time. For this woman, her sojourn in the exterior space seems likely to be a brief duration.
10. Theo Brooke Hansen *Love or Duty* 1891
oil on canvas 81.5 x 122 cm
In this shift in spatial representation, we are looking at an implied female journey, a rite of passage. The image of female maturation appears to conform to Annis Pratt's observation that the development of the female hero is less "a self-determined progression towards maturity than a regression from full participation in adult life". Growing up, she says, involves a choice between "secondary personhood" and "sacrificial victimization, madness, and death". In bush mythology the outcomes of this choice are not readily distinguished from one another. Entry into the closed space of conventional womanhood can be interpreted as a death since in passage of life imagery, death is imagined as the return to interior space (‘grave’/‘womb’), just as in ritual, rites of passage enact the 'death' and 'rebirth' of the initiate. It is perhaps only a little journey, through a fence, along a narrow but clearly defined path through a paddock. But its significance for the positioning of women in nationalist mythology is not trivial. The maturation of women is constructed in imagination as a move that takes them out of the public domain of the nation, suggesting a highly ambivalent relationship of women to the nation.

If maturity is imagined as withdrawal from the public domain, then the representation of womanhood in an image of enclosed but blank space suggests some difficulty with the idea of female maturity itself. In part, this is a function of the implicit masculinity of the viewer or reader, who is himself positioned outside. But the issue of whether female maturity could be imagined as other than featureless confinement remains to be seen. Jill Matthews' comment that "femininity is an empty shell" is suggestive in this context. Matthews argues that transgression and failure are structured into the pursuit of femininity which posits ever-changing and contradictory ideals. These paintings convey this suggestion of a prescriptive femininity which is no less compelling for being illusory.

**Lost in the bush**

The concept of women's maturation as a journey etched into nationalist mythology may throw light on other images of girls and women in the bush. The recurring motif of the lost child in both visual and literary works furnishes poignant examples of the fragility and vulnerability of children in the bush and has been generally interpreted in terms of the enticing beauty and the treachery of the bush itself. This motif enjoyed widespread popular and artistic appeal throughout the nineteenth century and, as Leigh Astbury shows, its topical interest lay in the actual disappearances and miraculous rescues of children lost in the bush. It appears that girl-children are more frequently lost in the bush than boys. Even if this were not the case, gender difference is likely to inform the ways in which this motif is deployed.
11. Frederick McCubbin *Lost* 1886
oil on canvas 115.8 x 73.7 cm
McCubbin's 1886 painting *Lost* (Plate 11) depicts a girl lost in dense scrub, her apron folded up to hold the flowers she has gathered. The child is dwarfed by the height of the surrounding bush, and she stands still, hand to face, in the middle distance. The bush behind suggests no discernible features by which she might orient herself. The tall, slender trees and intricate, wispy foliage that enclose her, obstruct the viewer's access to the child and partially absorb her. Jane Clark suggests that "there is a clear indication...that she will not remain lost: at the centre of the viewer's entry into the painting is a conspicuously broken twig, presumably the last of several which will trace the wild-flower gatherer's path for searchers or re-trace it if the child recollects herself." This benign, literal reading—now conventionally cited on museum labels for this work—is unsettled by the metaphoric interpretation of the broken sapling as a young tree that will not grow to maturity. (The device of the broken sapling is used again in McCubbin's 1907 painting *Lost*, but this sapling, which bars access to the boy-child and mimics the child's seated pose, is too thick to be an accidental path-marker. The greater narrative impetus of this work, too, suggests a less optimistic interpretation.) Recently, Juliet Peers has argued that the painting can be read "in the light of constructions of female behaviour circulated in the wake of the widely publicised Mount Rennie rape case, Sydney, 1886." This reading, too, undermines the conventional interpretation by reference to topical events other than the plethora of 'lost child' stories cited by Leigh Astbury.

While, as Ian Burn argues, McCubbin's child is dressed as a visitor to the bush, Mary O'Halloran in *Such Is Life* is described by Tom Collins as a "perfect Young-Australian". "A child of the wilderness", Mary is in perfect harmony with her natural environment, "undisturbed by other companionship, save that of her father". At one with the bush, her death does not result from its treacherous enticement. Mary dies because she fears for her father's safety and tries to find him. In doing so, she attempts to move purposefully across the land, to master it through her quest.

Rory O'Halloran had gone on a three-day station muster of ewes, leaving home before daylight. Though "she didn't trouble herself the first day", by the second day the child seemed, "not fretful, but dreaming", questioning her mother about a swagman whom Tom Collins and her father had found dead in the earlier episode. On the third day, taking some milk and bread, Mary left home to search in the scrub for her father. She spent seventy-two hours in the bush and the trackers picked up the sound of her exhausted voice calling "Dad-de-e-e!", without terror, still
searching for her father. But they arrive half an hour too late, and find her dead, having fallen face down into a sort of trough and lacking in strength to get out.²⁹

Mary O'Halloran's belonging in the bush is of a different order to her father's. Her attempt to follow him on a muster—for him a routine traversing of the land—spells her death. Maturity for her lay not in the emulation of the journeying of adult men, but along a different path. Her alienation from her mother and closeness to her father bar her way to the immobilised confinement that is womanhood.

'Spirit-girls'
While little lost girls are endangered, other female figures represented in the bush personify and eroticise danger. With the growing interest of painters in Symbolist representations of the bush, women emerge as the 'spirit of the bush'. As Ron Radford wrote in his introduction to the 1975 exhibition Ladies in the Landscape, "the women who earlier strolled down paths and along the beach actually became later in many instances, the very soul of the landscape. The spirit of the bush becomes 'SHE'."²⁰ The spirit of the bush is personified as a young, eroticised woman, who, though she is mobile and dwells in the bush, will never cross the boundary to inhabit interior, domestic space, and whose maturation will be arrested in the image of the sprite. The "wild woman", says Noel Macainsh, "belongs out in the never-never. Her urban counterpart, the 'wanton' or slut, belongs in the street. Neither of them belongs in the home."²¹

Charles Condor's Mirage (1888) (Plate 12), Sydney Long's Spirit of the Bushfire (1900) and Streeton's The Spirit of the Drought (1895) depict drought and bushfire as naked femmes fatale. Condor's Mirage carries a lighted torch and a mirror, and her flaming hair is the source of the fire which sears the sparse bush. That she is beyond the pale of the social world is marked by the openness of the terrain, but the mirror implies a closure, "a return upon the self", the absence of change and growth. Long's Spirit of the Bushfire draws flame around herself with the tips of her fingers. She encloses herself in a swirling circle of molten fire.

A number of Long's art nouveau landscapes reiterate this idea of woman-as-enchantress, though his paintings do not usually depict destructive spirits. The Spirit of the Plains (1897) (Plate 13), The West Wind, and The Flute Player, though mysterious, are forever bound to the natural world, functions of the space they inhabit. The landscape is itself a flat, shallow, theatrical space, and there is nowhere to go. Such women do not journey through life, maturing, ageing, and dying.
Charles Condor *Mirage* 1888
watercolour 20 x 13.2 cm
It is not only in her relationship to exterior space that the bush spirit's barren future is signified. Compared to the fertile sweethearts to whom drovers and shearers return, these eroticised bush spirits represent a transition from a pre-modern representation of the female body towards a modern one. This shift, as Casey Finch has observed, is traced out on the image of the re-formed Victorian female body, with its emphasis now on uplifted and widely separated breasts, and on the posterior and limbs. "Here we confront a pictorial ideology that naturalizes the new shapes into which women were being transformed precisely by rendering invisible the pressures placed on the body by corsets and the extensions to which the body was stretched by bustles and crinolines." Where the female body in the pre-modern period represented "a corporeal and 'natural' source of abundance", says Finch, "now it became an elusive source of signs that could be generated potentially anywhere in the social space." However, the awkwardness of the paintings and weaknesses of execution suggest difficulties in the handling of the theme, so that the representation of both woman and land suggests barrenness rather than erotic energy.

Whether she is the spirit of the bush, or the tragically faithful bush sweetheart, the 'spirit-girl' is trapped in time as well as space, never to mature through marriage and motherhood. The spirit-girl is echoed in the stories of women who cannot be represented as marriageable because of "disfigurement".

Disfigurement
The codes by which women are recognisable depend on a process of maturation which leads to marriageability and consequent motherhood. If they are too ugly to be marriageable, they are unlikely to be represented as unambiguously feminine. Joseph Furphy, in *Such is Life*, describes two such women, the servant Ida, and the boundary-rider, 'Alf Jones'. Whereas the journeys of unmarried, even unmarriageable, men of marriageable age are central to narratives of nation formation, unmarried women play a marginal part in the constitution of the national community. They are significant in this study for precisely this reason: we are able to see more clearly how the nation is formed as an imagined community if we attend also to those groups who are implicitly excluded from its formation. Single women seemed to be set apart from the imagined national community at a time when many women were remaining single.

The fate of women who did not marry was a matter of some concern to observers at the time. Until the 1890s, men had so outnumbered women that it was not surprising that many men had not married. However, by the 1890s, this demographic imbalance began to show signs of levelling out. Though men still outnumbered women— with an excess of fifteen men for every hundred women in 1891—it seemed reasonable to
expect that a greater proportion of men would marry. At the time that colonial society was charged with the anticipation of Federation, there was an expectation that the frontier society should give way to a more stable social order.

But the tension that this sets up in bush mythology is augmented by another: in spite of the lessening demographic imbalance, a large number of men and women were remaining unmarried. Most significantly, the proportion of women who married actually fell.27 (The percentage of women in the 25 to 29 age bracket who did not marry almost doubled over a decade (1891-1901), rising to more than ten per cent in all colonies except Tasmania.) As conventional wisdom would have it, the men were choosing to postpone marriage or not to marry at all. During the Depression of the early 1890s, it was argued, men postponed marriage until they were better off and more able to support a family. Demographers have been reluctant to question the assumption that it would be men's perceptions and actions that accounted for the statistics. "Women," says Pat Quiggin, "played a generally passive role in changing marriage patterns in the last quarter of the nineteenth century."28 Susan Magarey, however, argues that a more satisfactory explanation is that it was women who were refusing marriage during the last decade of the century. She dubs this rejection "the strike against marriage".29

Though the lives of adult women outside marriage and home may have seemed unimaginable, this was a time when it appeared that a significant number of women were able to embrace this option that had no image. Though arguably employment opportunities for women were soon to contract, the 1890s saw an expansion of opportunities for women.30 Indeed, the 'unmarriageable' women considered in this chapter are all engaged in employment and support themselves independently.

In Such Is Life, in spite of Furphy's ironic distancing from his narrator, Tom Collins' amusement at the preposterous idea of marrying an ugly, unhappy woman serves to emphasise the significance of marriageability in the representation of women. The "low-born daughter of a late poverty-stricken Victorian selector",31 Ida is described by Tom Collins as "the white trash" menial who waits on men employed at the station. Though she is a conscientious worker, honest, gentle, generous, patient and self-denying, Tom Collins describes her as vulgar and exceedingly ugly:

Alltogether, poor Ida had little to be thankful for. Personally, she was, without any exception, the ugliest white girl I ever saw.

In addition, she is lame, through an accident in which a reaping-machine cut into one ankle, and the fingers of her left hand have been "snipped to a uniform length, through
getting into the feed of a chaff-cutter". Though Furphy observes with a degree of approbation Collin's callous indifference to and inability to empathise with the unhappiness of Ida, this does not undermine the representation of Ida as "unmarriageable". The characterisation of Ida bears a strong resemblance to the quite prolific cartoon representations of servants in the popular press in the 1890s which, Paula Hamilton has argued, articulate tensions in both gender and class orders as well as giving expression to what was widely referred to as "the servant problem". Typically, one significant group of servants were represented as ugly and unfeminine with stereotypes of an Irish peasantry invoked to suggest "backwardness".

When Mrs Beaudesart, Furphy's status-conscious housekeeper, calls Ida's respectability into question, Ida rounds on her in fury:

"Ain't I miserable enough without you lyin' away my character?"

"Think God made me for the likes o' you to wipe your feet on? Think I bin behavin' myself decent all my life, for you to put a slur on me?"

As a servant, subject to the authority of both Mrs Beaudesart, the sheep-overseer, and presumably almost anyone else on the station, Ida is effectively barred from the one avenue that would allow her to realise her adulthood—marriage. Nevertheless, it is her 'respectability' that sustains her vestigal self-esteem. Tom Collins sums up the perception of the servant who is ineligible for marriage:

"Upon the whole, ugly, illiterate—and, above all, ill-starred, lowly, and defenceless—as she was, she would have made an admirable butt for the flea-power of your illustrated comic journal."

'Alf Jones'

Ida's lack of feminine comeliness appears to reflect attitudes to class and ethnicity, as much as her individual attributes. Disfigurement in the middle class women appears to require a different kind of explanation, one which locates disfigurement in a particular experience. 'Nosey' Alf Jones in Furphy's *Such is Life* is such a woman.

When her horse trampled her face, Molly Cooper was so disfigured for life that she wore a veil down to her mouth. Though she had planned to marry, her sweetheart's visits now became less and less frequent, and suddenly he married "a girl out o' the lowest pub. for ten mile round." Jilted by Alf Morris, she becomes a recluse, living near him without his knowledge, passing as a man. This transformation of gender is constituted as a death: Molly Cooper "dies" in order to re-emerge as 'Alf Jones'.
Although the characters in the novel never realise the identity of Molly Cooper as 'Alf Jones', she remains bound to Alf Morris. This fated tie gives coherence to the novel's apparently unmotivated selection of events. The first mention of the two 'Alfs' chances across their connection: "You've got Nosey Alf, an' Warrigal Alf, an' (sheol) knows how many other Alfs", says Steve Cooper. The reader will be in a position to piece together the story of her new identity as 'Alf Jones' as the novel develops. The obtuse fictional narrator Tom Collins will remain insensitive to the evidence before him.

In the character of 'Alf Jones', there are echoes of the pristine bush sweetheart who dies young, broken-hearted and still faithful, to become a "spirit-girl" in the mind of the man to whom she is bound by fate. In his delirium, Alf Morris hears "her glorious voice as I used to hear it in our happy days; and I felt that her spirit was bringing forgiveness at last".

"...I've been in the spirit world since then, or a spirit has visited me here. I heard, plain and clear, the voice of a woman singing old familiar songs; and that voice has been silent in death for ten years – silent to men for three years before that."

Alf praises God for "avenging an act of the blindest folly and heartlessness". Hearing her sing a favourite song, he believes his punishment for his "terrible mistake" is over. He goes on to recount a series of stories about adultery and retribution, the last of which is his own, taking up where her brother, Steve Cooper, had earlier left off. Unable to bear to marry the disfigured Molly, he had married a woman who was "essentially low", in her tastes and aspirations, likes and dislikes, thoughts and language and had one child. After a couple of years, he "got the inevitable glimpse of the truth" of his wife's adultery. He sold up, divided the proceeds with her, "reserving to himself enough to start in a line of life that he could follow without the annoyance of being associated with anyone". From that time, he sent her all his earnings, beyond "bare essentials". Three years later, his little boy died "and his heart was turned to stone."

Though Alf has felt "impelled to place my tragedy on record, but in one man's memory only", Collins misconstrues the story, envisaging a devastating marriage to "a tawny-haired Tigress, with slumbrous dark eyes". Hearing Alf's bullocks being mustered outside, Collins interrupts the confession and leaves, pausing to hear Alf murmur:

"O Molly! Molly, my girl!—my poor love!—my darling!"
The infuriating Collins pauses to wonder if a tawny-haired tigress can be called Molly.

Eventually Tom Collins meets 'Alf Jones', who has taken up the position of boundary rider on Runnymede station. Tom Collins stays overnight in the boundary rider's hut, and in spite of his claim to "read men like signposts" and his intrigued puzzling over the identity of 'Alf Jones', he does not perceive that she is female. On his departure, Collins advises 'Alf Jones' to "be a man", travel eastward and southward to pursue a career as a professional musician. But she has gleaned from him that Alf Morris has gone to Queensland to live. And though Tom Collins is confident that "news will come of Alf 'in his proper sphere'", he later learns from a stranger that Alf is travelling to western Queensland. The question of which is the proper sphere for this woman remains unresolved.

Conventional women characters do not undertake such journeys. The relationship of 'Alf Jones' to space, to the land and to domestic space, is different to that of the attractive bush sweetheart. She is not confined to the interior space within the slip-rails, although she is, in fact, described only within this domestic space. When Alf Morris leaves the Riverina, 'Alf Jones' follows him rather than waiting passively for his unlikely return.

We can discern two journeys here, intertwined, but different. 'Alf Jones' undertakes a journey that could be completed only by her reunion with Alf Morris. If she could be loved and wedded, she would no longer be a boundary rider, literally or figuratively. She would cross into interior space and symbolically achieve maturity. We are warned, however, against anticipating such a romantic resolution. Tom Collins' erroneous belief that Alf Morris is a widower misleads 'Alf Jones', but we learn that Alf Morris is still posting his cheque, from which we presume that he has continued to support his wife even after the death of his son.

It is the incorporation of Alf Morris into the national community that is at stake in his journey. In his delirium he found that he loved Molly still and believed he had been forgiven. From this point, we learn that he was "entirely changed in disposition", and that the squatter Stewart "speaks of him as one of the noblest-minded men he ever knew". It is Alf Morris who undergoes a trial and it is he who may emerge from years of pain and punishment, a better man. Further, this possibility is sustained through the novel from the earliest mention of him, when we learn that "the more uncivilised a man is... the better bushman he is". Later Collins comments that we "associate noble-mindedness with cantankerousness".
In his account of the "heroic virtues of woman" in Furphy's novels, Julian Croft ascribes to Molly "the values of perseverance, independence, strong will, and love". But 'Alf Jones' is bound by love to Alf Morris. Though she is admirable, she lacks the autonomy of a hero, and her independence and strong will are both determined and qualified by the function she plays in redeeming Alf Morris. Perseverence and love are the gender-specific characteristics of bush sweethearts who wait in vain but ever-loving for the bushman's return. Croft concludes that "Alf Jones goes to his possible metamorphosis in the centre". There is, however, no suggestion that 'Alf Jones' may find the transformation through trial and self-knowledge in this journey. If the reader clings to some hope of a resolution, it is surely that she will meet Alf Morris, that he will love her, and that she can become again the person she always was: Molly Cooper. The attribution of femininity to 'Alf Jones' leaves no space for any other transformation.

Croft's view of Molly Cooper/Alf Jones' is shared by Frances Devlin Glass. Both these writers attempt to weigh Furphy on the scales of misogyny, and not surprisingly both conclude that his "sexism" is tempered by his positive characterisations of women and ironic distancing from the expressed attitudes of the narrator and other characters. Ivor Indyk argues a more sophisticated case for Furphy's affirmation of reciprocity and equality across differences, which include those of nationality, class and gender. There is surely little doubt that Furphy's attitudes to gender are "complex and multi-layered", but what is at issue here is how gender becomes a meaningful category within Such Is Life, and how these meanings intersect with the construction of a national culture. It is the terms under which female characters enter national narratives that is under consideration here, and the ways in which nation and gender are mutually constitutive, rather than the over-simplified question of positive or negative evaluations of characters and attitudes.

The function of the female journey, then, within the male journey is that of helper. Such women enable flawed heroes to complete their journeys and realise their destinies within the narratives of the formation of the national community. Significantly, the destination of the female journey is unimaginable, a void represented as a blank space. The girls in Streeton's and Sutherland's painting gaze into enclosed but empty space. Watching 'Alf Jones' set off, the station storekeeper Moriarty

... felt sort of melancholy to see him drifting away to beggary, with his fiddle-case across the front of his saddle, and his spare horse in his hand. He knew no more where he was going than the man in the moon.
The journey to maturity for women is imagined as a lonely one, to an unknown destination, and its successful outcome is by no means assured. The notion of the destination as an unimaginable blank space has also characterised some masculine journeys, particularly those in which the inland is characterised as the "dead heart" of the continent. Ross Gibson has argued that the inland centrepoint is represented as an indescribable void, where "cultural assurity disappears, evaporates, breaks down". The perception that there is a point at which cultural "givens" might be rendered uncertain attaches a degree of anxiety to the representation of the bush. The stranger who met 'Alf' on the track to Western Queensland noticed that "he was carrying a box that he evidently would n't trust on his pack-horse". This final image of 'Alf' or Molly is one of pathetic indeterminacy and isolation:

"...whether it was a violin-case or a child's coffin, I was n't rude enough to ask."^1

No Man's Land
Nosey 'Alf Jones' is known to be the "best boundary man on the station". The space that is associated with 'Alf Jones' is the borderland—'no man's land'—that is constituted as the frontier between interior and exterior space. Unable to take her place in the domestic domain as unambiguously feminine, neither can she fully inhabit the open space of the bush. If fences in bush mythology signify the delineation of masculine exterior space and feminine interior space, female boundary riders take on a special significance. The work of the boundary rider is, after all, to maintain fences and to keep the boundary intact. In the middle of the night, Collins awakes to observe her:

Alf was kneeling at the fence, his arms on one of the wires, and the poor, disfigured face, wet with tears, turned westward to the pitiless moon, now just setting.53

The boundary is an ambivalent metaphor of entrapment, exclusion and security. 'Alf' is enclosed within the penumbra of the domestic domain, but excluded from the inner sanctum. Nevertheless the fences that enclose her also offer some protection from the world beyond. Her departure to follow Alf Morris signifies not her freedom from confinement so much as her alienation from the security offered by the proximity to domestic space.

The fact that she wears male clothing is a significant issue in the construction of both her identity and the narrative itself. Furphy invokes the traditional dichotomy between appearance and reality through the conventions of implicit oppositionality of body and
clothing. Alf’s guilty knowledge of dress materials, leaked when she corrects Tom Collins’ description of bombazine, is suggestive of her “proper” clothing. That a woman might become unrecognisable as such if she dresses as a man may appear to run counter to the assumption of natural gender difference. "To the extent that it denaturalises sexual difference," Annette Kuhn observes, "crossdressing threatens to disrupt an apparently natural order."

Annette Kuhn argues that narratives of cross-dressing render problematic the ideological construction of sexual difference as natural and absolute. In this sense, she says, "they are always about the fixity or otherwise of gender identity." Gender identity is conventionally signified by clothing, although in this story, we understand that the identity of ‘Alf Jones’ as a woman is never undermined by her disguise. Indeed, though she takes on the ‘costume’ of a male role, her ‘performance’ as a man remains unconvincing even to the characters who, though they do not "see through" her disguise, find her incomprehensible as a man. ‘Alf Jones’ makes sense only as a woman: as a man, she is an "ill-natured, cranky beggar", who "dodges the women like a criminal". Through the descriptions of her appearance, house-keeping, demeanour, tastes and interests, her femininity is ascribed and naturalised, so that Tom Collins "involuntarily glanced around the hut for the book-shelf". Her book collection is made up of "poetry, drama, popular theology, reference, and a few miscellaneous works; history meagrely represented, science and yellow-back fiction not at all". The account of her choice of songs contrasts the ‘femininity’ of love songs with the absence of ‘masculine’ concerns: "(n)o national inspiration; no broad human sympathies; no echo of the oppressed ones' cry; no stern challenge of wrong." In his handling of the encounter between Tom Collins and ‘Alf Jones’, Furphy loses the ease of manner that characterises his writing on the community of bullock-drivers. The heavy-handedness with which he establishes the femininity of ‘Alf Jones’, and the labouring of the point of Tom Collins' inability to recognise the obvious seems to "protest too much". Further, the disjuncture between her appearance as a man and her 'essential' character as a woman is never fully resolved, just as her final destination is never reached. Though Furphy has been criticised for the banal conventionality of the romantic plot, the lack of closure may be seen to offset the conservatism that underpins his representation of gender.

'Monsieur' Caloche
The romantic notion of 'woman' rests on the construction of essential differences that distinguish women from men. Female characters who 'pass' as men afford the writer
the chance to play with the non-recognition of other fictional characters while at the same time ensuring that the reader is alert to the deeply inscribed femininity of the disguised woman. Nevertheless the idea that women might succeed in disguising as a man appears to occasion some misgivings.

Cross-dressing, says Annette Kuhn, may be understood as a mode of performance, which "constructs a subject which is both fixed in the distinction between role and self and at the same time, paradoxically, called into question in the very act of performance". Clothing is conventionally read as a sign of the wearer's identity, and emphatically of gender identity. But clothing becomes 'costume' in performance, and "threatens to undercut the ideological fixity of the human subject". Thus, Kuhn suggests, questions opened up by cross-dressing may be resolved by revealing the body beneath. "A quest to uncover the truth of the concealed body may be precisely the desire that activates a narrative of sexual disguise."

Tasma's story "Monsieur Caloche" can be seen in terms of this "quest to uncover the truth of the concealed body". The identity of Monsieur Caloche, like that of 'Alf Jones', is revealed through descriptions of physical attributes and cultural practices. Though Monsieur Caloche's sallow face is "scarred and seamed by the marks of smallpox", the femininity of her physical features is clearly established.

Some pains had been taken to obviate the effects of the disfigurement and to bring into prominence the smooth flesh that had been spared. It was not chance that had left exposed a round white throat, guileless of the masculine Adam's apple, or that had brushed the soft fine hair, ruddily dark in hue like the eyes, away from the vein-streaked temple.

The slender lad has "shoulders that would have graced a shawl" and "long, lissome fingers that might have brodered the finest silk on other than male hands".

In "Monsieur Caloche", it is once again the man whose transformation is effected: the sadistic bullying Sir Matthew Bogg emerges as a "better man" when he realises that the disfigured lad, for whose death he is responsible, is a woman. The descriptions of Monsieur Caloche go beyond labouring the femininity to connote class origins as well. The insistence on Bogg's low class origins and his vulgarity as a self-made man are contrasted with feminine sensibility and refined presence of Monsieur Caloche even though she is at his mercy.

Decidedly the two men were of a different order of species. One was a heavy mastiff of lupine tendencies—the other a delicate Italian greyhound, silky, timorous, quivering with sensibility.
The young woman is given work by Bogg, who has the intention of "dropping on him unawares", as he refers to his "hobby" of terrifying subordinates. Out of place in the bush, frail Monsieur Caloche is defenceless and elusive. The "refinement in his disposition" is evident in all she does: her "mania for washing" and her refusal to learn to box. Yet, she rides with courage and horses "carried him as if they liked to bear his weight", and she doctored men's wounds with deft fingers "that made the sufferer feel soothed and half-healed by their contact." The station workers respond to this elusive and reticent youth with sympathy.

When Bogg arrives, intending to savour the terror his bullying will elicit, the station manager attempts to protect her. Bogg insists on touring the property, and eventually Monsieur Caloche rides towards him, galloping a newly broken-in horse. Accusing her of mining the horse's legs, Bogg strikes her with his whip across the chest. The youth turns "unnaturally white" and runs away into the bush.

... away in the distance the figure of a lad was speeding through the timber, one hand held to his chest, his hat gone and he unheeding, palpably sobbing and crying in his loneliness and defencelessness as he stumbled blindly on.65

Monsieur Caloche is eventually found dead, in the meagre shade of a straggling tree. The description of the undressing takes on overt sexual and erotic connotations. The eroticism of this account, as Mario Perniola argues, functions as a relation between clothing and nudity that is conditional on the possibility of transition from one state to the other. In undressing, he says, clothing is removed not because it is an obstacle to seeing, but because it is the condition that makes vision possible.66

Whatever of the tenderness Monsieur Caloche had expended in his short lifetime was repaid by the gentleness with which the working manager passed his hand under the boy's rigid neck. It was with a shake of the head that seemed to Sir Matthew like the fiat of his doom that Blunt unbuttoned Monsieur Caloche's vest and discovered the fair, white throat beneath. Unbuttoning still—with tremulous fingers, and a strange apprehension creeping chillily over him—the manager saw the open vest fall loosely asunder, and then ...67

Monsieur Caloche is revealed to be "a girl with a breast of marble, bared in its cold whiteness to the open daylight, and to his ardent gaze":

A virgin breast, spotless in hue, save for a narrow purple streak, marking it in a dark line from the collar-bone downward.
If Monsieur Henriette Caloche could bear no more disfigurement, in death her feminine beauty is restored. The notion that the 'truth of identity' is found in the body informs Yeats' observation that "we may ... have to undo the last button of what we wear in order to dis-cover and more truly re-cover what we are." Annette Kuhn observes that "(i)f crossdressing narratives always in some measure problematise gender identity and sexual difference, then, many do so only to confirm finally the absoluteness of both, to reassert a natural order of fixed gender and unitary subjectivity". This is the revelation of identity that is withheld in Furphy's story of 'Alf Jones'. It is not only the absolute difference of masculine/feminine that is reinstated in the revelation of Monsieur Caloche's body: the absoluteness of life and death is also affirmed.

Even the cruel scars seemed merciful now, and relaxed their hold on the chiselled features, as though 'eloquent, just and mightie Death' would suffer no hand but his own to dally with his possession.

This is a significant difference in the writing of Furphy and Tasma. In Tasma's story, the narrative is resolved through the assertion of an all-too-familiar system of binary oppositions through which knowledge and identity are secured: life-death, man-woman, nature-culture. In Furphy's writing, the conventional romance plot is based on similar assumptions of absolute difference, but this romance is interwoven with other stories, fragmented and incomplete. Tasma's story reaches its closure when the other characters realise Monsieur Caloche's 'real' identity as a woman, but in Furphy this fictional realisation is ultimately withheld. Nor is the absoluteness of life and death so insistent in the story of Molly Cooper/Alf Jones'. (Indeed, other characters is Such Is Life traverse this boundary, presumed dead, only to reappear later. It is against these that the finality of the deaths of Mary O'Halloran and the sand-blighted swagman are so uncompromising.)

Sir Matthew Bogg is a changed man, and "henceforth a slender, mournful-eyed shadow would walk by his side through life".

For constant contemplation of a woman's pleading eyes and a dead staturesque form might give rise to imaginings that it would be maddening to dwell upon. What wealth of caresses those stiff little hands had had it in their power to bestow. What a power of lighting up the solemnest office, and—to be sure—the greatest, dreariest house, was latent in those dejected eyes.
In death, then, Henriette Caloche is constituted as a "spirit-girl". She dies believing that "a woman who loses her beauty loses her all", a bitter lesson that she has written over and over in her tiny pocket-book. She could not live as a woman, and though she could pass as a man, she could not live as one. In the public places of office and station, she is known as a man. Unlike 'Alf Jones', this woman has no refuge in domestic space, where she can live as a woman. But the absence of these spaces is equated with darkness since "with the setting in of the darkness he regularly disappeared". The men on the station suppose she "camped up a tree with the birds", or perhaps "'Froggy' slept with his relatives, and it would be found that he had 'croaked' with them one of these odd times." These images of her disappearance at darkness suggest both the absence of the home, and her closeness to nature. Monsieur Caloche finds her natural niche as an animal of prey, like the greyhound, the calf and the lamb, to which she is likened through the story.

Although, like 'Alf Jones', she is a boundary rider, there are no images to associate her with the fence. Even a fence would delineate a familiar territory, differentiating the known from the unknown. Rather, she meets her predatory employer out in the open on a broad treeless plain of dusty soil without shade from the burning sun. In her despair, she runs towards the only protection afforded her, a belt of timber, and she is later found dead in the meagre shade of a straggling tree. Because she is a woman, the open plain is a sign of her utter defencelessness. It serves to emphasise her displacement, her homelessness.

"Billy Skywonkie"

In Barbara Baynton's "Billy Skywonkie", the spatial description of the monotonous, worn-out drought-stricken land suggests the quality of human relationships that await her, and foretells the outcome of her journey. Although Baynton's writing departs from the conventions of realism, this is consistent with Elrud Ibsch's argument that the justification of the spatial description in realist narrative is found in "the interplay of the space and the psychic situation of the protagonist." "Billy Skywonkie" tells the story of a woman who travels through the bush, but cannot complete her journey into interior, domestic space because she is half-Chinese and no longer young. Against the landscape of desolation and drought is set a Brueghel-like observation of the plenitude of human depravity and deformation.

In anticipation of taking up employment as housekeeper, the unnamed woman, travels by train through "the desolation of the barren shelterless plains", where the sheep and cattle are "drought-dulled" and dying. The growing sense of uneasiness for the outcome of her journey begins with the lack of any consideration or respect shown to
her by the drovers with whom she travels. Doubts about her destination and the connotation of danger are conveyed by the opening words of the story—"the line was unfenced"—and the plight of the animals both in the cattle-truck dying of thirst and outside on the "dead plain". In this land of survivors and victims, this woman is aligned with the victims. When she alights, a drover asks: "Are yer travellin' on yer lonesome, or o'ny goin' somew'ere!".

The driver of the buggy waiting at the siding where she alights is expecting to meet "a young 'piece' from Sydney" and nearly drives off without her. Realising that this woman is the subject of his errand, he comments that "there'll be a 'ell of a row somew'ere".

The sense of discordance and foreboding surfaces as they drive towards the Station, stopping to open the gates along the track. Billy Skywonkie has "promised ther 'Konk' t' leave 'im 'ave furst squint at yer". The man who has come to view the woman is "grotesquesly monkeyish", and his deformed nose "blotted the landscape and dwarfed all perspective". Her first impulse is "to extend her hand", and this "strange desire" is subsequently explained: "If the "Konk" had been a horse she would have stoked his nose."77

Given the insistent sexual coding of this story, the phallic symbolism of the nose is a grotesque presentiment. Yet her desire to extend her hand to the 'Konk' seems ambiguous. The inference from the phrase is that she would offer to shake hands, and this implies a degree of likeness: and indeed, she is as deformed in his eyes as he is in hers. He will not give her the emu eggs that he brought for the woman he had expected to meet.

The next incident follows Billy Skywonkie's decision that her standing is not so high as to prevent him from taking a detour to visit the shanty. Here she observes a cast of human savages: the drunken kangaroo-shooter whose pockets and swag have been "thoroughly "gone through", the flirtatious Billy Skywonkie and brazen, shrewd Mag, whose attentions and grog cost him "nea'ly 'arf a quid", and the bent old woman who surreptitiously begs her for money. The old woman's deformities make her animal-like, as she creeps "with catlike movements", "almost on all fours" and is described in terms of fowls, wolves and cows. The coin is secreted in her toothless, cavernous mouth with its "stump of purple tongue". As they drive away, the woman turns to see Mag extracting the coin as a dentist would a tooth. The dreadful action of placing the coin in the mouth alludes to the degraded sexuality that pervades this text.
His tongue loosened by alcohol, Billy Skywonkie comes closer and closer to naming the woman as "yaller satin" and "a 'arf chow". He comforts her with the advice that, if the Boss wouldn't have her, someone else would "soon buck up ter 'er". The Boss was "a terrer for the young uns", and, like Billy Skywonkie himself, wouldn't have a "yaller piece". Billy Skywonkie's wife is Aboriginal, and he comments that he'd "rather tackle a gin as a chow any day". However, where his objectification of women is callously indifferent, the Boss' greeting is filled with anger and contempt because she is neither young nor white. The next morning, Billy Skywonkie tells her that the Boss left word, "you wis ter sling yer 'ook. To do a get." He bends over the trussed and passive sheep, sharpens his knife and cuts its throat. Its eye mirrors the glitter of the knife.

The women are either victims or predators in this terrible environment which strips away all that can be valued in men. The men and the women inhabiting this space are all functions of the land, immobilised enemy-characters, in Lotman's terms. But this woman cannot cross the boundary to enter the interior space of domesticity, because her age and race are understood as 'disfigurements' which erect barriers against the completion of her journey as a woman. Though they do not restrain mobile male heroes, such "disfigured" women cannot be constituted as the interior space to which men return. The impossibility of their fulfilling this function within the narratives of male journeys has consequences for the outcomes of their own journeys. The inability to imagine lives of mature women not within marriage, motherhood and domesticity is constituted as a symbolic or actual death. In "Billy Skywonkie" the killing of the sheep may be interpreted as the symbolic resolution of the woman's life.

Conclusion
I have argued that the maturation of women has been imagined as a "little journey", from the outside, through a fence, to within. Such journeys take women out of the arena in which the nation is formed in the imaginary. The stories of 'Alf Jones', 'Monsieur' Caloche and the woman in Billy Skywonkie suggest that women who could not be imagined as wives and mothers were, like the spirit-girls who inhabit the bush, unable to achieve maturity. We may infer from these late nineteenth century paintings and literature, that the 'journey' to maturity in women occasioned considerable disquiet. Whilst marriage and motherhood appears to be the achievement of woman's destiny, that maturity is represented by an enclosed, but blank space.
Women who were unlikely to marry seemed difficult to represent as unambiguously feminine or mature. They appear to be destined for unhappiness, pain and death. These representations emerge at a time when, in spite of a levelling out of the demographic imbalance in the proportions of men to women, a significant number of men and women were remaining unmarried. At the same time, a window of opportunity opened for women in paid employment outside the domestic domain. The unmarried women considered in this chapter supported themselves through their paid employment: both 'Alf Jones' and Monsieur Caloche are boundary riders, and the unnamed woman in "Billy Skywonkie" is a housekeeper. Yet their labour is not constituted as heroic, and they are implicitly excluded from the struggle to form the nation by claiming the land. The fact that Monsieur Caloche is foreign is emphasised by her name, her inept English, and her nickname, "Froggy", and in the end, the land claims her, rather than the reverse. 'Alf Jones' remains outside the community of the bullock drivers, and yet does not belong to the station community, and though she is known to be a good boundary rider, in the end she too seems to be absorbed by the land as she travels west and north without a clear destination or realisable purpose. Their labour is not seen as a contribution to the formation of a national community, but rather it serves to emphasise their aloneness. The discordant introduction to 'Alf Jones'—with her "hands freshly blooded to the wrists"—reminds us that women's self-sufficiency did not sit easily in these narratives.

1For an example of the failure to included women as gendered subjects in nationalist theory, see Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities—Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, London, 1986; for an example of the failure to include women as gendered subjects in critical writing on national culture, see Graeme Turner, National Fictions—Literature,Film and the Construction of the Australian Narrative, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986 For writing on women and nationalism, see Andrew Parker et al.(eds). Nationalisms and Sexualities, Routledge, London and New York, 1992.


10 ibid., p. 17.

11 See for example, Leigh Astbury, City Bushmen, The Heidelberg School and the Rural Mythology, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985, pp. 158-175.

12 ibid.


14 For example, the recent major exhibition of McCubbin's work, AGNSW, wall texts and catalogue, p. 40.


17 Joseph Furphy (Tom Collins), Such Is Life, Eden, North Ryde, 1987, p. 91. For the account of Tom Collins' visit to the O'Halloran household, see pp. 88-101.

18 ibid.

19 For the account of Mary's death, see ibid., pp. 233-241.

20 Ron Radford, Ladies in the Landscape, exhibition catalogue, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Ballarat, 1974 (unpaginated) (emphasis in original).


23*ibid.*, p. 349.

24*ibid.*, p. 359.

25Ivor Indyk's challenging and sophisticated reading of *Such Is Life* as constituting a multicultural, multi-racial nation pays insufficient attention to the specific relations of various categories of people to the communities they inhabit, and the relations of the various communities to one another. It does not appear to me that all characters are included in the national community or that the pairing of characters functions as a form of egalitarianism. Ivor Indyk, "Reading Men Like Signboards: The Egalitarian Semiotic of *Such Is Life*, *Australian Literary Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3, May 1986, p. 303-315; see also, Ivor Indyk, "Some Uses of Myth in Australian Literature", *Australian Cultural History*, no. 5, 1986, pp. 60-74.


27Susan Magarey, *ibid.*

28Pat Quiggin, *ibid.*, p. 77.

29Susan Magarey, *op. cit.*


31Joseph Furphy, *op. cit.*, p. 263. For the account of Ida, see *ibid.*, p. 263-276.

32Paula Hamilton discusses the representation of feminine beauty and ugliness in "Domestic Dilemmas: Representations of Servants and Employers in the Popular Press", in Susan Magarey et al., (eds), *Debutante Nation, op. cit.*

33Joseph Furphy, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

34*ibid.*, p. 264.

35*ibid.*, p. 27. For Steve Cooper's version of Molly Cooper's story, see *ibid.*, pp. 25-29.

36*ibid.*, p. 19.

37*ibid.*, p. 181. For Warrigal Alf's version of the story, see *ibid.*, pp. 181-190.

38*ibid.*, p. 190.

39For Tom Collins' visit to 'Alf Jones', see *ibid.*, pp. 303-327.

40For the news of 'Alf Jones' departure, see *ibid.*, pp. 356-358.
It is possible to read this story metaphorically as a journey by Stewart, Alf Morris, and later 'Alf Jones', to paradise. Much earlier in the book, Tom Collins muses on Stewart's likely acceptance into heaven. Stewart's name, he says, is recorded in Saint Peter's book "on the page reserved in case of rich men. And still the metaphor of the camel and the needle's eye stand unimpaired."(p. 209) Stewart tells Collins that he is leaving the district: "Crowded out. Going to Queensland," he tells Tom Collins. (p.217) And indeed, Alf Morris, having undergone his ordeal of fever and spiritual reconciliation with still-loved Molly, goes with Stewart to Queensland, a redeemed man. Some may think it ironic that Queensland should be constituted as 'death', but for Stewart and Alf Morris, this trip marks the completion of their journeys and their re-crossing of the boundary to interior space. If 'Alf Jones' keeps riding, Molly Cooper may yet be reunited with her lover on the other side of the border.

ibid., p. 312. I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Webby for her clarification of this point.

ibid., p. 29.

ibid., p. 311.


ibid.


Joseph Furphy, op. cit., p. 357.


The boundary riders in Such Is Life are generally outsiders with respect to the communities of station or track. They are Chinese, yeoman British, Scots and their function is not only that of fence maintenance. They enact a surveillance and policing
function with respect to the bullock drivers—impounding cattle, denying access to pasture and water.

53 *ibid.*, p. 325.


55 Judith Rodriquez has suggested that the appearance and clothing of 'Nosey Alf' may have been influenced by Furphy's meeting in 1877 with "the original Nosey Alf", Johnanna Jorgensen and by newspaper accounts of her death in 1893. Judith Rodriquez, "The Original Nosey Alf", *Australian Literary Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1975, pp. 176-84; see also Joseph Furphy, *The Annotated Such Is Life*, (introduction and notes by Frances Devlin-Glass *et al.*) Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1991, p. 541.


57 Joseph Furphy, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

58 *ibid.*, p. 304.

59 *ibid.*, p. 322.

60 Annette Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

61 *ibid.*, p. 57.


63 *ibid.*, p. 11.

64 *ibid.*, p. 16.

65 *ibid.*, p. 23.


69 Annette Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 57.


71 *ibid*.

72 *ibid.*, p. 19.

73 Barbara Baynton, "Billy Skywonkie", in *Barbara Baynton*, eds Sally Krimmer and Alan Lawson, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1980.

Ernest Favenc's story, "The Parson's Blackboy" tells of a sanctimonious young parson travelling through similar communities to that described by Baynton in "Billy Skywonkie". The parson is unaware that the Aboriginal guide "on loan" from one of the stations is a young woman dressed as a man. The parson preaches against the practice of keeping Aboriginal women on stations for sexual labour. But these are "customs of the country" to which the bushmen perceive that he has "adapted" himself. Ernest Favenc, "The Parson's Blackboy", The Last of Six (1893), re-published in Bill Wannan (ed.), Australian Frontier Tales, Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1971, pp. 119-121. For an historical study of Aboriginal women's labour, see Ann McGrath, Born In The Cattle—Aborigines in Cattle Country, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987.

Barbara Baynton, op. cit., p. 48.

ibid., p. 51.

ibid., p. 60.