Patrick White's sense of history in *A Fringe of Leaves*

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'The historical novel can only represent our ideas and stereotypes about that [historical] past', asserts the philosopher Fredric Jameson in his analysis of postmodernism and its link to history.[1] *In this paper I intend to explore the ways in which Patrick White treats the theme of history in A Fringe of Leaves (1976); I will argue that this novel confutes Jameson's statement, while it shows the metaphorical meaning that "history" acquires in the literary text. Finally, I will try to assess the aim and function of White's historical reconstruction in the Australian context of the 1970s.*

Throughout the twentieth century the historical novel was a popular literary genre in Australia which often contributed to spreading nationalist feelings. In the era of Whitlam's 'new nationalism' in the early 1970s, the historical novel played a main role in promoting a national project.[2]

Besides this mythopoetic intent, however, authors often returned to this genre with critical intent, as a way 'of alternative history writing, of expiation for past guilt, or of comment on their own times'.[3] Thus, fictional reconstructions were not 'history in any verifiable or [strict] sense'; on the contrary, they showed 'the way many Australians of the present see their country's past and, therefore, […] the way they inhabit the present'.[4] Historical reconstructions offered engagement with the challenges that the country presented to a novelist; authors addressed historical moments as a way of imposing a contemporary interpretation on the past and of tracing there the beginning of present concerns.

Far from being a mere 'celebration', the historical novel became the site of a revisionist attitude towards the past. While representing the past, it stimulated the reader to reflect on it, and on its links with the present; historical novels often became parables of the country in a contemporary context.

The historical event connected with Eliza Fraser well exemplifies the functions and meanings of the historical novel. In 1836, the *Sterling Castle* was wrecked off the coast of Queensland; the captain's wife survived this dramatic incident, spent a month at sea and then a further two months on the mainland in the hands of the natives before being rescued by Government officers. Mrs Fraser's ordeal raised great interest and curiosity both in Australia and abroad. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, her story inspired writers and artists who dealt with the theme and turned the woman into myth and her experience into a legend.[5] In the 1970s, the historical event

became popular again both in Australia and overseas; at home, the woman's captivity lent itself to new celebratory nationalist representations.[6]

Patrick White too turned to the Eliza Fraser story. His novel is rooted in his friendship with the painter Sidney Nolan and dates back to the late 1950s, when the writer saw the series of paintings devoted to this woman that the artist had produced a decade before.[7] Mrs Fraser's adventurous experience stimulated White to read about her, and for the writer her story sounded 'like material I could use'.[8] This woman was to fascinate and haunt him throughout the 1960s and early 1970s until his book was published in 1976.

Nearly twenty years after writing his novel on the German explorer Johann Ulrich Voss, White turned to Australian past history again. Although he was technically using the fictional genre of the historical novel, real historical events were not his prime concern; White found 'historical reconstructions […] too limiting', and had always avoided 'writing them because of the strictures they impose on the imagination'.[9]

A historical character or moment was for the writer a mere starting point. With Eliza Fraser, he turns 'history' into 'his story'. By transgressing against 'historical stereotypes', White writes an alternative history and his novel acquires a strong metaphorical meaning: in the context of the 1970s, White's work does not celebrate the colonial past, it is not a defence of nationalism *tout court* in Whitlam's era either, but becomes a textual site offering a new version of history.

The protagonist, the Aborigines, the penal system, and the relationship existing between them are the fictional devices that Patrick White uses to challenge 'stereotypes'. White's first transgression against the images consigned by history emerges from the way he characterises the protagonist, Ellen Gluyas Roxburgh.

He constructs her as being Cornish and not English, with Cornwall figuring as a '*remote* country!' […]. 'Of dark people'.[10] This region represents the periphery in contrast with the centre, England; it stands for nature versus culture, and already prefigures the Australian bush against the anglicised coast of the southern hemisphere. Moreover, this woman's religious beliefs have their roots in the ancient pre-Christian Celtic myth 'of tokens and witches', including 'the white witch of Plymouth', they clash with revealed religion and Christian dogmas of English society and ominously foreshadow their holder's experience in the Australian bush.[11]

Although her rural, humble origins are later overlaid with a veneer of gentility, acquired upon marriage to the ailing, effete, pompous gentleman Austin Roxburgh, she is aware of the differences existing between herself and the refined world of Gloucestershire and the anglicised world of Australia: 'there is a river between us. You're English', she asserts.[12] Analogously, the female members of the Victorian microcosm recreated in the Antipodes consider her different, 'a woman of mystery', or 'something of a mystery'.[13]

This character lives in conflict with both the Victorian middle-class milieu of England and the transplanted English bourgeoisie, as she contradicts all their 'ethnic', social, and cultural principles. Furthermore, by her adulterous act with her husband's brother in Australia, she betrays her personal, social function as a wife, with all the

implications that this role demanded from women in the Victorian era. Above all, she acts against Victorian morality and sensibilities as she fails to live up to the ideal of womanhood within the society she inhabits.

The heroine's characterisation and the way the historical setting is depicted merit a further comment. When Jeff Archer analyses the theoretical models framing the concept of identity, he argues that the postmodernist pattern denies identity as a centred, unified self while it privileges the idea of decentred and multiple identity.[14] As a character combining two divergent social and cultural identities, Ellen embodies the notion of postmodernist identity, and thus becomes White's first means of dismantling historical stereotypes in his text.

A second observation concerns the way White recreates the past. After modernism rejected the 'burden of the past', postmodernism recuperates it, and tries, 'self-consciously to reconstruct its relationship to what came before'. This recuperation and this relationship are, however, often parodical. As a trope producing a double or split discourse, or as 'a popular rhetorical strategy for working within discourses and contesting them at the same time […]', irony becomes an instrument 'which has the potential to subvert from within', and 'a powerful subversive tool in the re-thinking and re-addressing of history'.[15]

White makes use of this double-talking, forked-tongued mode of address when he rewrites the past and the people who inhabit it. Mr Merivale, for example, a surveyor employed by the Crown, is described 'strolling with that elaborate informality gentlemen in the colonies assumed for their inferiors'; his wife is portrayed as a woman made up of 'layers of fur, merino, cautchouc, and flesh'; finally, her companion, Miss Scrimshaw, is a woman with 'Exalted Connections'.[16] These figures appear as static creatures, subservient to social principles. Their characterisation turns them into caricatures: the women are petty and vapid, while the men are shallow bureaucrats.[17]

While recreating the Victorian setting both of England and of colonial Australia and transgressing against stereotypes, however, White is not only engaging himself with the past, but also with the present, in line with the aims of the historical novel in the twentieth century. When the writer ridicules the past, he is subtly gibing at the philistine Australian society of his own days, at the inherited colonial mentality that permeated Australia in the 1970s; White criticises the still persisting fusty colonial traditions and conservative way of thinking, the underlying subservience towards Great Britain which, for him, prevented the Australians from promoting their country on a more autonomous basis.

As the novel proceeds, it also turns into a parable for invoking a communal Australian memory. The bush section, which constitutes the core of the text, is also central in this regard. On their return voyage to England, the Roxburghs are shipwrecked and cast ashore on Fraser Island, off the coast of Queensland. Ellen's husband and the crew are killed by the aborigines, while she is taken captive. This episode apparently inscribes the text into the genre of the 'captivity narrative'. These narratives were a popular Victorian genre which focused on the figure of the white woman at the mercy of

Aboriginal captors. Because of the theme they treated, they were not only fictionally entertaining, but prompted ideological and political debate.

On the one hand, they became a privileged textual locale to describe one of the most common European *topoi* and one of the experiences that the Europeans most feared, namely the threat of 'going native', or of being absorbed into native life and customs.[18] White women in captivity were seen in an uncomfortable position: as females, they appeared vulnerable; as captives, they were imagined as subjected to savage life, and particularly menaced by inter-racial physical and sexual contacts.

Consequently, these texts emphasised the 'cult of womanhood' in the Victorian context: women personified the Victorian moral and social values, and, with men, they figured as categories representing the 'cause of civilisation'.[19] Women became a category of historical event and cultural signs of the superiority of the white race.

Captivity narratives supported the colonial discourse and were imperial propagandistic texts: while legitimising the dichotomy between 'civilisation and wilderness, white and dark-skinned peoples, colonizers and colonized', they gave the pretext for a rescue mission and enhanced a British nationalistic perspective. These novels represented an apologia of the Empire and endorsed the colonial project: rescuing the white woman meant rescuing the nation, 'an idea of nation', notably the British nation with all the related values of its civilisation.[20]

White apparently adopts the traditional *leitmotifs* of this genre as the characterisation of the Aborigines shows. Stereotypes saw the natives as primitive or savages, as an indistinct, cruel crowd merging with the hostile landscape and inflicting a series of brutalities on their white captives. White seems to comply with popular tradition, and not to move 'past primitivism' since he uses the category of the cannibal to connote the Aborigines.[21]

Nevertheless, his fictional and ideological discourse is more complex. Ellen's captivity in the bush reproduces 'her imprisonment at the hands of the Roxburghs'[22] in the English world. Though the indigenous captors submit the white woman to a series of humiliations, they also fetishise her: 'they anointed her body regularly with grease and charcoal and plastered her cropped head with beeswax, and stuck it with tufts of down and feather'. This episode reminds the reader of a similar one taking place in British high society: '[…]; it might have been old Mrs. Roxburgh adding or subtracting some jewel or feather in preparation for a dinner or ball'.[23] The code of behaviour and the veneer of gentility Ellen's mother-in-law imposes on the woman are as humiliating as the brutalities she suffers in the bush.

The way White casts the protagonist's reaction to the wilderness also contradicts a stereotypical colonial stance. Admittedly, she first tries to resist the bush: the fringe of leaves with which she covers herself up and under which she hides her wedding ring best exemplifies her attempt to safeguard and cling to her Western identity. Yet, this veneer of civilisation is eroded down to its savage 'heart' when the protagonist deliberately 'goes native'.

Her cannibalistic act represents the apogee of this process:

> She had raised the bone, and was tearing at it with her teeth, spasmodically chewing, swallowing by great gulps which her throat threatened to return. But did not. She flung the bone away only after it was cleaned, and followed slowly in the wake of her cannibal mentors. She was less disgusted in retrospect by what she had done, then awed by the fact that she had been moved to do it. The exquisite innocence of this forest morning, its quiet broken by a single flute-note endlessly repeated, tempted her to believe that she had partaken of a sacrament. But there remained what amounted to an abomination of human behaviour, a headache, and the first signs of indigestion. In the light of Christian morality she must never think of the incident again.[24]

This episode furthers a series of linguistic and methodological reflections which, I think, give an insight into White's ideological stance. Although the woman is aware of her 'guilt or responsibility' in the light of Christian morality and principles, White uses the linguistic device of an equally Christian sacramental analogy to describe her cannibalistic act. The scene preceding it, for instance, is also described as if Ellen is 'initiated or confirmed into what she has formerly regarded as a generally hostile environment'. White's description suggests that this act is not merely grounded in hunger; on the contrary, the underlying idea is that this woman performs an act of some sacramental significance which, however, the Christian conscience is inadequate to comprehend.[25]

This incident also marks the moment of spiritual communion between Ellen and the Australian environment. With her act, she partakes of the *spiritus loci*, the spirit of the place, so that the landscape is no longer hostile, but possesses metaphysical ascendancy as it exemplifies 'spirituality immanent in the land'.[26]

The painter Sidney Nolan also appropriated aspects of Aboriginal culture in his work. While White was writing *A Fringe of Leaves*, Nolan was producing his fourth series of paintings dedicated to Mrs Fraser, and was experiencing a sort of 'romance with Aboriginality', which led him to identify with an 'Aboriginal way of thinking'.[27] Nolan saw the primitive world as spiritually rich, and replaced 'the primitive Other' with 'the sacred other' since primitive culture appeared to him as sacred, as an 'origin', as 'a site of what was lost and must be reclaimed'.[28]

White shares Nolan's view. In his novel, language, as a pointer to 'authorial tone' and to the 'stance or attitude taken by an (implied) author towards his message', becomes instrumental in eliminating the distance between the writer and his character, his values and those of the character he portrays.[29] The episode representing the cannibalistic act seems thus to replace the notion of 'the primitive Other' with 'the sacred other'.

On the other hand, White's intent is further revealed by a combined modernist and postmodernist approach to the passage. The so-called phenomenon of 'the scramble for Africa' in the 1880s and 1890s enabled the whites to discover African artistic forms and practices. Stylistically, these forms distanced themselves from European tendencies and, once introduced into Europe, disrupted traditional artistic styles and gave rise to European modernist aesthetics. Moreover, they also contributed to creating a new

awareness among the Europeans: the African artistic products showed the other side 'of the European civilized psyche, the dark side of man, the negative pole to the positive one of civilization'.[30]

In an ideologically modernist perspective, Ellen's behaviour shows that European civilisation too possesses the irrational pole; her act dismantles the dichotomies between the Aboriginal and Western world: since she 'goes native', she shows that Europe is no longer invulnerable to the troubling 'Other', which the Europeans identified with a primitive, instinctual ontology. The woman's cannibalistic act turns Mrs Roxburgh into Ellen Gluyas again, reverses nurture into nature, the artificial self into the primitive one, so that she finally encounters and uncovers her naked and essentially instinctual self.[31]

To be more precise, the protagonist's act annuls any dichotomy between the protagonist's two personalities inasmuch as the two merge, co-exist within her and are both suppressed. In the end, Ellen straddles two incompatible worlds and occupies a luminal region, a 'beyond', an 'in-between space' which disrupts ethnic, social, cultural and ideological divisions. In White's novel, this act is the locale where continual interchange between different states is possible; it becomes a space of symbolic interaction which prevents identities from polarising. This space also opens up the possibility of cultural 'hybridity' that does not merely accommodate differences, but whitewashes and cancels them.[32] Ellen's multiple identities become White's medium to criticise the subject of 'humanism', that is the unified self, and to turn this character into a sign embodying a postmodernist notion of identity.

Ellen's behaviour shows the extent of *A Fringe of Leaves* as a postmodernist text providing a postcolonial perspective. White denies the traditional European colonial view which rests upon a Manichean division of the world, a binary structure of ideology and discourse which polarises the societies of colonisers/colonised into categories of, respectively, good and evil, order and chaos, rationality and irrationality: the protagonist, as the text shows, develops a consciousness which transcends these oppositions.

White thus dismantles 'stereotypes' as he does not give a version of the Australian past according to an Anglo-European slant. While contesting this facile attempt, White suggests an attitude which, rather than supporting division, promotes a reciprocal, intercultural dialogue between the Aborigines and non- Aboriginal Australians.[33] In this sense, the writer produces a new form of history which, in the Australian context of the 1970s, invokes a communal memory as a basis for the formation of Australian identity. *A Fringe of Leaves* is also White's means of expiation for the whites' past guilt. The figure of the bushranger and the fictional reconstruction of the penal system are pivotal in this regard.

Jack Chance is the man who helps Ellen to escape from her Aboriginal captors and who takes her back to civilisation. White casts this man as a bushranger, as one of those men who evaded the penal settlement and preferred to live in the bush instead of remaining convicts and, as such, were victims of the penal system. Over time, bushrangers became central figures in the reconstruction of Australian mythology. They were transformed into Romantic heroes, their experiences and deeds underpinned the Australian legend and the formation of nation and its history.

Nevertheless, White distances himself from these standardised ways of representing these men. He does not shape this character romantically, but constructs him more as a fringe-dweller, and as one of those figures that colonial discourse consigned with 'the original inhabitants of the land to a zone of convenient amnesia'.[34]

Jack Chance is an outcast, like Ellen. Thus, he becomes for White an instrument to criticise the colonial discourse. Mrs Fraser and her rescuer represent a 'colonial relationship of Australia to England'; the ex-convict symbolises the white (native) and innocent son who contrasts British authority 'on the distinct terrain of the bush'.[35] Chance works proleptically, in that he introduces the section devoted to the penal settlement. In order to depict the settlement of Moreton Bay, White draws upon the stereotypes which circulated in Great Britain at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Penal settlements were then associated with chains and flogging, while severe punishment was the policy British authorities adopted to deter crime.[36] The convicts and their masters made up two distinct groups: the former represented depravity and immorality, the latter authority and rectitude. The ex-convict too is aware that there are two classes in colonial Australia: the so-called moral classes and the convicts; when Ellen promises she will intervene on his behalf, he replies: 'No – *ppardons* – for the likes a' me'.[37]

However, White subscribes to these 'historical stereotypes' for narrative and artistic purposes only, without actually sharing the underlying imperialistic vantage point. His character does not trust the moral classes, the 'civilised' men of the colony. Later, he comments: 'Men is unnatural and unjust'.[38] While eroding the distance between the implied narrator and his character, these words reveal the author's stance, or authorial tone, towards his character's message.

While the novel's picture of the convict system furthers this moral and social opposition, it corroborates the idea that White engages himself with a 'specific historical moment' in order to question it. The convict past thus enables White to assess the nature of white historical responsibility and inherited guilt more vehemently.[39]

As White concerns himself with the harsh, authoritarian world of the penal colony, he uncovers an embarrassing facet of colonial past history. Seeing a group of convicts pass, for instance, Ellen's first impulse

> was to draw aside and remain the unseen observer, but fear, remorse, or some hellish desire to participate again in what she already knew through the experience of suffering, caused her to stand rooted to the track where the men would pass.[40]

Suffering and the ordeal in the bush make the woman sympathise with the convicts. The writer sets up a parallel between the primitive world of the bush and the penal system. The physical brutalities that Ellen undergoes in the bush are equalled by those that British administrators inflict upon the convicts, depicted as forming 'the length of the linked

prison life'.[41] Moreover, Ellen is also a victim of civilised society. She perceives that returning to civilisation means for her returning to a new captivity: 'As for Mrs Roxburgh, she accepted once more the fate and chains that human beings were imposing on her'.[42]

The author establishes a metaphorical parallel between Ellen, Jack and the prisoners as they have all experienced a form of imprisonment at the hands of the ruling classes.[43] White appropriates Australian history and scrutinises the penal system without being biased by colonial conventions or ideological stereotypes. His outlook does not issue from a 'white blindfold policy': on the contrary, he skilfully represents colonisation as a 'fragile settlement', being aware that 'colonialism had to be historically recreated'.[44]

Ellen's multiple identities, her nature as the spurious Mrs Roxburgh, as a farmer's daughter and as the European who has 'gone native', Jack Chance's experience and the penal system fictionalise the spurious nature of colonial Australia. While historical stereotypes have handed down to history the division between 'the bourgeois patterns of Sydney and Hobart and the Australia of convicts, assigned servants, and Aborigines', White does not share clear-cut social and moral distinctions.[45] The apparent oppositions in the Australian pattern merge in his novel: not only convicts or Aborigines, but also the British ruling classes are depraved an evil.

This historical reconstruction poses, I think, a question of historical truth not in documentary but in ideological terms. White combines his new vision of the self, which is essentially ahistorical, with his allegiance to describing Australian history.[46] While upholding a more equal discourse between British rulers and convicts, whites and non-whites, male and female, the writer aims at giving a revisionist account of colonial history which registers the fissures present in a monolithic version of the past; he challenges Eurocentric history, thus confining it to a 'monologue with itself'.[47] Conversely, White suggests universal humanism which invokes communal memory and acknowledgment of past wrongs as a basis for the construction of the nation.

The novel as a parable of the present

Some conclusions can now be drawn. Historical reconstructions, it has been argued, are instruments for revisioning history, and parables dealing with present-day concerns. It is now worth wondering to what extent *A Fringe of Leaves* can be read as a metonym of modern Australia, and as White's way of contributing to the building of the nation. Finally it is also important to comprehend what kind of nation White's text envisages.

In her analysis of the Eliza Fraser's story, Schaffer seems to appreciate the nature of White's novel. She points out that 'in some senses the 1970s were not unlike the 1830s', and adds that 'both decades were marked by dynamic shifts of power relations throughout the world' and were characterised by 'crisis, transition and rapid social change'.[48]

In the 1830s, Continental Europe was swept by a wave of revolutions which contested dominant power relations, old political authority and establishment; in England

the middle class challenged the aristocracy, while a new awareness of ideologies of femininity engaged and increased the division between the public and the private sphere and between social classes. In Australia too, there were contrasts. Divisions arose between different social groups – British administrators, pastoralists and the emergent middle class – and their diverging political, economic and social interests. Although the empire was still at the height of its power, campaigns for and against transportation spread both in England and in the colony. Supporters, mainly members of the new colonial gentry, were contrasted by emerging social reformers and humanitarians, until transportation was abolished.[49]

The 1970s were also swept by changes. While Anglo-Australian relationships were being revisited, Australia was acquiring an increasing role in the Asian-Pacific region. Meanwhile, the ethnic, social and cultural fabric of the country was becoming more varied in the wake of the substantial number of immigrants from Europe and Asia. As in the 1830, then, many dissenting voices – including feminists, Aboriginal people, Australians from non-English-speaking background, social and cultural critics and historians – contested dominant power relations.[50]

In this context, the metaphorical value of White's novel is clear. While the writer fictionally dismantles historical stereotypes, he criticises the inherited colonial mentality and subservient attitude towards Great Britain which was still present among some sectors of Australian society in his days. On the other hand, this novel does not celebrate the nation in the era of Whitlam's 'new nationalism'. Though a supporter of Australian independence, White always remained hostile towards official patriotism and official forms of Australian nationalism.

By contesting stereotypes, advocating communal memory and expiation for past wrongs, White's text rewrites history and seems to give his personal contribution to 'a national quest' and to the process of 'nation-building' in the pluralistic, multicultural and decolonised context of the late twentieth century.

NOTES

[1] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalism* (London, 1991), p.71.

[2] Gough Whitlam was Australia's Labor Prime Minister from 1972 to 1975. One of the most controversial figures in Australian political history, Whitlam is nevertheless considered one of the leading parliamentary performers of his generation. The Whitlam Government was responsible for a list of legislative reforms. In less than three years his Government acted to improve the position of Aboriginal minority, abated tariff barriers, ended conscription, and introduced a universal national health insurance scheme. See Robert Manne, 'Rebirth or Ruin?: The Whirlwind Beginnings and still Controversial End of Whitlam Government', *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 October 1997, p.3.

[3] Kerryn Goldsworthy, 'Fiction from 1900 to 1970', in Elizabeth Webby (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.105-182 (p. 108). See also Delys Bird, 'New Narrations: Contemporary Fiction', *The Cambridge Companion* above, pp. 183-208 (p. 193).

[4] Roslynn D. Haynes, *Seeking the Centre: The Australian Desert in Literature, Art and Film* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 239. Haynes quotes Andrew Taylor, *Reading Australian Poetry* (St. Lucia, 1987), p.8.

[5] Examples are John Curtis, *The Shipwreck of the Sterling Castle* (London, 1838); official and fictional accounts such as 'A Lady Long Resident in New South Wales' (Charlotte Barton), *A Mother Offering to Her Children* (Sydney, 1841). See Kay Schaffer, *In the Wake of First Contact: The Eliza Fraser Stories* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 24.

[6] Examples are Michael Alexander's populist history *Mrs Fraser on the Fatal Shore* (London, 1971), Sidney Nolan's fourth series of paintings (1971-77), Andrè Brink's South African novel *An Instant in the Wind* (London, 1976), Canadian Michael Ondaatje's long poem *The Man with Seven Toes* (London, 1969). For further titles see Schaffer, *First Contact*, p.217.

[7] Sidney Nolan painted four series of paintings on the Eliza Fraser story in four different periods of his artistic career: 1947-48, 1956-57, 1962-64, 1971-77 (Schaffer, *First Contact*, p.138).

[8] *Patrick White: Letters*, ed. by David Marr (Sydney, 1994), p.138.

[9] David Marr, *Patrick White: Letters* (Sydney, 1994), p.476; Patrick White, *Patrick White Speaks* (London, 1990), p.84 (first published in Sydney by Primavera Press in 1989).

[10] Patrick White, *A Fringe of Leaves* (Harmondsworth 1981), p.104 (first published in Great Britain by Jonathan Cape in 1981).

[11] *Ibid.*, p.45.

[12] *Ibid.*, p.347

[13] *Ibid.*, p.15

[14] Jeff Archer, 'Situating Australian National Identity in Theory and Practice', in Geoffrey Stokes (ed.), *The Politics of Identity in Australia* (Melbourne, 1997), pp.23-36.

[15] Linda Hutcheon, 'Circling the Downspout of Empire', in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds), *The Post-Colonial Reader* (London, 1995), pp.130-135 (p.131, p.133).

[16] White, *Fringe of Leaves*, p.16, p.8.

[17] Schaffer, *First Contact*, pp.165-166.

[18] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London, 1998), p.115.

[19] Schaffer, *First Contact*, p.50.

[20] *Ibid*., pp.50-51, p.66.

[21] Simon During, *Patrick White* (Melbourne, 1996).

[22] Andrew Elfenbein, 'Narrating Australia: Competing Heroisms in *A Fringe of Leaves'*, *Commonwealth Novel in English*, Vol. 6 (1993), pp.44.

[23] White, *Fringe of Leaves*, pp.239-240.

[24] *Ibid*., p.244.

[25] Helen Tiffin, 'Australian Literature and the British Tradition' in Martin Coyle et al (eds), *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism* (London, 1991), p.1156.

[26] For a treatment of the metaphysical power of the Australian landscape see Graeme Turner, *National Fictions: Literature, Film and the Construction of Australian Narrative*, *second edition* (St. Leonards, 1993), p.26.

[27] Schaffer, *First Contact*, pp.150-151. Schaffer quotes Nicholas Rothwell, 'Nolan: The Artist in Exile Begins his Long Journey Home', *Weekend Australian*, 6 (1989), pp.15-17. Nolan painted his fourth series from 1971 to 1977.

[28] Schaffer, *First Contact*, p.155.

[29] Geoffrey N. Leech and Michael H. Short, *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*, *fifth edition* (London, 1986), pp.280-281.

[30] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London, 1989), pp.156-160.

[31] Elfenbein, 'Narrating Australia', p.45; Schaffer, *First Contact*, p.164.

[32] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Key Concepts*, pp.118-119.

[33] Schaffer, *First Contact*, p.1.

[34] Tiffin, 'Australian Literature', p.1157.

[35] Schaffer, *First Contact*, pp.147-148.

[36] Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980* (St Leonards, 1981), p.17.

[37] White, *Fringe of Leaves*, p.252.

[38] *Ibid*., p.253.

[39] Ken Gelder, 'The Novel', *Australian Literary Studies* (*ASL*), Vol.13 (1988), pp.503-519; Goldsworthy, 'Fiction from 1900 to 1970', p.111.

[40] White, *Fringe of Leaves*, p.333.

[41] *Ibid*., p.333.

[42] *Ibid*., p.346.

[43] Elfenbein, 'Narrating Australia', p.46.

[44] During, *Patrick White*, pp.27-28.

[45] *Ibid*., p.42. Elfenbein quotes William Walsh, *Patrick White's Fiction* (Boston, 1977), p.42.

[46] Elfenbein, 'Narrating Australia', p.39.

[47] Schaffer, *First Contact*, pp.27-28.

[48] *Ibid*., p.22.

[49] Transportation to New South Wales ceased in 1840, to the rest of Eastern Australia in 1853, and to Western Australia in 1868 (R. White, p.24). Schaffer generalises saying that slavery was abolished in 1832 (Schaffer, p.22).

[50] Schaffer, *First Contact*, p.27.