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Nature and Psyche: nature imagery and the depiction of consciousness in Australian novels of the 20th century

Australia has from the beginning of its short history meant more to its inhabitants than mere environment and mere land to be occupied, ploughed and brought into subjection. It has been the outer equivalent of an inner reality; first, and persistently, the reality of exile; second, though perhaps we now tend to forget this, the sense of newness and freedom.¹

With this statement the poet Judith Wright has highlighted the dual imagery of Australia as *Arcady* (newness, freedom) in contrast to Australia as *Botany Bay* (exile). These two perceptions of landscape have been investigated by philosophers, psychologists, Romantic poets and art critics. Attitudes, intentions and social values are of major importance in understanding these psychological phenomena as well as the development of nature depiction in Australian novels. In the New World one is confronted with the special problem that strategies of perception which had been developed in the British context had to be transferred to a foreign environment. Therefore, the problem of distorted nature perceptions and the search for adequate ways of observation are dealt with in numerous novels.

Mental processes are filters which intervene in the literary presentation of nature. This article will take you on a journey through literary landscapes, starting from Joseph Furphy and ending with Gerald Murnane. It will try to show the development of Australian literary landscape depiction. The investigation of this extensive topic will show that the perception of the Australian landscape as foreign and threatening is a coded expression of the protagonists' crisis of identity due to their estrangement from European cultural roots. Only a feeling of being at home enables the characters to perceive landscapes in a positive way and allows the author to depict intimate and familiar views of nature. This topic will be investigated with a range of novels to reveal the development of this theme from the turn of the nineteenth century (the time of Furphy's novel *Such is Life*) up to the present (i.e. novels by Malouf, Foster, Hall, Murnane).²

It was Paul Carter with his concept of 'spatial history', who concluded that a person who tries to describe a perceived landscape will always transfer their thoughts and ideas onto what they perceive.

[The] objects [of spatial history] are intentions and, suggesting the plurality of historical directions, it constantly risks escaping into poetry, biography or a form of immaterialism positivists might think nihilistic. After all, what can you do with a horizon? ... [Spatial history] suggests even our inviolable 'personal space' expresses a community of historical interests. The viewpoints we take for granted as factual began in someone else's fantasy ... it is by reflecting ... the intentions [of travelling writers], by understanding what lies behind the finished map, the elegant journal, the picturesque view, that we recover the possibility of another history, our future.³

The landscape we intend to describe becomes a 'landscape of our imagination'. It will be demonstrated how the meaning of 'personal space' and landscape perception has changed and expanded because of postmodern ideas and values.

Terminology for presenting consciousness in fiction

In order to interpret the depiction of consciousness in the Australian novel Dorrit Cohn's terminology is still the most helpful tool. She differentiates between the internal monologue or omniscient description of a first person and a third person narrator.⁴ An indirect technique used by a third person narrator for the depiction of their characters' thoughts is called *psycho-narration*, which is defined as the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness. *Quoted monologues* are a character's mental discourse. It is an internal monologue quoted in a third person narration. *Narrated monologues* present ideas using the third person, however, in contrast to *psycho-narration* the narrator uses the language typical of the character whose thoughts he narrates. Thus it is a character's mental discourse in the disguise of the narrator's discourse.

For the first person narrator Cohn differentiates between *autobiographical retrospection*, *memory monologues* and the *autonomous monologue*. If a narrator presents his thoughts and experiences chronologically in autobiographical first person narration it is called *autobiographical retrospection*. *Memory monologues* also present thoughts of the past but never in a chronological order. If a narrator uses the *autonomous monologue*, experiencing and narrating ideas occur at the same time. It is the genre in which all events are translated into the interior language of a perceiving consciousness. The most famous example of an *autonomous monologue* remains the Penelope chapter in *Ulysses* by James Joyce. Cohn contrasts this illusion of presenting an accidental, unplanned string of thoughts with the *autobiographical monologue* because in a biography past events need to be presented in a chronological order.

Search for a home country

Our journey through literary landscapes starts with Joseph Furphy. In his novel *Such is Life* (1903) he uses the wide Riverina country to elucidate the complexity of life and human tragedy. Furphy, in strong contrast to the highly romanticised depictions of a Henry Kingsley, for example, sets out to give a very realistic portrayal of outback life.

This central point of the universe, Riverina Proper, consists of a wide promontory of open and level plain, coming in from the south-west; broken, of course, by many pine-ridges, clumps of red box, patches of scrub or timber, and the inevitable red gum flats which fringe the rivers. Eastward, the plain runs out irregularly into open forests of white boy, pine, and other timber. Northward – something over a couple of hundred miles from the Murray – the tortuous frontier of boundless scrub meets the plain with the abruptness of a wall.⁵

This rather objective description appears to be almost photographic. However, in the last sentence adjectives like "irregularly", "inevitable", "boundless" and especially "tortuous" reveal the threatening aspect of nature which the reader encounters again and again in Australian literature. Feelings of estrangement and fear are transferred onto the vast Australian outback so that it appears foreign and threatening, as has been claimed in the main hypothesis. Fur-

phy's protagonists are lonely and homeless travellers in their own country. This structure, which Paul Carter has called 'travelling mode of knowledge,'⁶ emphasizes the fact that tragedies remain unforeseeable and are extremely hard to cope with. The structure of the novel without a formal beginning and with an open ending (the reader apparently only gets to know part of the twenty-two diaries of Tom Collins) and the symbolic use of the vast country parallels the timelessness of the nomadic life of Furphy's protagonists.

In Europe or the USA it were writers like Virginia Woolf or William Faulkner who experimented with narrative technique by using external landscape as a reflection of the *paysage intérieure*. Furphy uses the Riverina as a symbolic landscape to depict consciousness and differentiates between the unreliable perception of events by his narrator Tom Collins and the omniscient knowledge of the author Furphy. The problem of distorted perception is thus raised and combined with problems of identity, as can be seen by the two important nature depictions in the story: first the depiction of the phenomenon of the mirage and second the lost child motif.

Faced with a mirage, a person is no longer able to distinguish between truth and illusion. "The most critical and deliberate examination can no more detect evidence of fantasy in the unreal water than in the real fence." (129). The fence is a symbol of men's effort to divide the vast landscape into man-made, comprehensible parts. An artist's problem in depicting a mirage is that in a work of art he cannot differentiate between illusion and reality: "an artist's picture of a mirage would be his picture of a level-brimmed, unruffled lake" (ibid.) This is exactly Tom Collins' problem as a narrator, as he is often unable to differentiate between illusion and reality. Important events always happen when he is unprepared for them. Furphy uses the mirage as a symbol of how men struggle to understand and give meaning to their lives.

The motif of the lost child questions the depiction of Australia as Arcadia. The image has developed into an Australian myth and has become part of Australia's national vocabulary.⁷ It also points to the dominating position of Australian bush imagery for creating an Australian identity. Like Marcus Clarke and Henry Kingsley, Furphy uses the motif to present the potential danger of the Australian landscape. With Furphy the story attains a further significance because Mary, the child that is lost and dies in the bush, has been celebrated as "perfect young Australian", representative of an Arcadian vision of a young nation's future.⁸ Furphy shows that Collins' view of Mary is too idealistic. Collins describes her using the mythological term 'dryad', and uses a quotation from *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare: "to her it was a new world" and a biblical allusion in Genesis: "she saw that it was good" (73f.). Mary is thus idealised by being compared with Shakespeare's Miranda, a figure of purity and nobility, and with Eve in Paradise. She underestimates the possible danger of the bush which forces people to fight against droughts or thunderstorms for survival.

Tom Collins hoped that conflicts from the old world might be overcome in Australia – a hope which is shattered by the death of Mary who has been a symbol of this vision. Tom Collins' thoughts are presented directly in an *autobiographical monologue* to support his feelings of

tense emotional stress when confronted with this tragic experience:

Dear innocent, angel-faced Mary! perishing alone in the bush! Nature's precious link between a squalid Past and a nobler Future, broken, snatched away from her allotted place in the long chain of the ages! Heiress of infinite hope, and dowered with latent fitness to fulfil her part, now so suddenly fallen by the wayside! That quaint dialect silent so soon! and for ever vanished from this earth that keen, eager perception, that fathomless love and devotion! But such is life. (198).

However, Furphy makes it clear to the reader that a too idealistic attitude towards nature and wrong values of a Eurocentric consciousness are the reasons for this tragic outcome. Only an appropriate mental map makes it possible to survive and feel at home in this country. The Riverina is thus a real but also a very symbolic landscape that only those who look through the tangled narration of Tom Collins can detect.

In the goldfield trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* (1917-1929) by Henry Handel Richardson, the protagonist is “[one of] the misfits, which were physically and mentally incapable of adapting themselves to this strange hard new world.”⁹ The author discusses the conflict of loyalties between England and Australia when searching for a home country. Richardson employs the Bergsonian duality of intuitive and intellectual perception to explore this topic from different perspectives. The portrayal of a marriage of two conflicting characters may remind the reader of the Ramsays in *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf. Richardson develops Mary's and Richard's relationship and their psychological struggle to find a home, as seen in her wish for stability or permanence and his longing for change or renewal.

According to Bergson we can only understand our changing reality by using our intuition. We can only really understand a complex and developing context through intuition.¹⁰ This ability needs sensibility and the will to identify with an object. It is Richard Mahony's ability to understand the world intuitively that makes him such a good doctor. At the same time this leads to his homelessness and constant need for change. His search for some deeper truth is symbolized by digging for 'gold' and presented in a *narrated monologue*: “Deep down in him, he knew was an enormous residue of vitality, of untouched mental energy that only waited to be drawn on. It was like a buried treasure, ... a journey of spiritual adventuring, of intellectual excitement, in which the prize striven for was not money or anything to do with money.”¹¹

The other method of understanding reality is by using our intellect. Mary Mahony is the realistic thinker of this family. Yet, by using only her common sense, she remains at a superficial level when viewing the world. According to Bergson intellect cannot really access truth but only circle around it. Mary is described as “struck by a beneficent blindness” (UT 774). She cannot really understand or sympathize with Mahony's psychological problems.

Richard Mahony perceives his restlessness not as an individual psychological problem, but as a national characteristic, “the spirit of vagrancy that lurks in every Briton's blood” (AF 142). Mahony blames colonial society for further strengthening his need for change. Richardson

presents his thoughts in a *narrated monologue*:

The life one led out here was not calculated to tone down any innate restlessness of temperament: on the contrary, it directly hindered one from becoming fixed and settled. It was on a par with the houses you lived in – these flimsy tents and draught-riddled cabins you put up with, “for the time being” – was just as much of a makeshift affair as they. Its keynote was change. Fortunes were made, and lost, and made again ... your whole outlook became attuned to the general unrest. (AF 25f.).

It is only at the beginning, when still in love with his young wife Mary, that Richard sees beauty in the Australian outback:

It was the time of flowers – of fierce young growth after the fruitful winter rains. The short-lived grass, green now as that of an English meadow, was picked out into patterns by the scarlet of the Running Postman; purple sarsaparilla festooned the stems of the scrub; there were vast natural paddocks ... On damp or marshy ground wattles were aflame: great quivering masses of softest gold ... the fragrance of their yellow puff-ball blossoms saturated the air. (AF 79).

At first the author presents the Australian landscape from an onlooker’s perspective. However, the next sentences show that this is no objective or realistic description of the Australian landscape, but that we view the world through Richard Mahony’s eyes:

And to Mahony these waves of perfume, into which they were continually running, came, in the course of the hours, to stand for a symbol of the golden future for which he and Polly were making. ... to-day no difficulties had power to daunt him; and the farther he advanced the lighter-hearted he grew: he went back to Ballarat feeling, for the first time, that he was actually going home. (ibid.).

Richardson changes between an outward perspective and *psycho-narration* for the presentation of Mahony’s consciousness. At the same time this landscape seems to Mary, who always longs for social contacts and finds little charm in lonely nature experiences, “as if they were driving away from all the rest of mankind, right into the very heart of nowhere.” (AF 80).

When his split of consciousness, which finally ends in madness, comes to full force, Richardson uses the notion of England as *home country*, as well as the Australian landscape, to reveal his mental state of mind. They cannot settle down in the old world but find out that “they stood out, the pair of them, like over-large figures on a miniature background. ... England had no welcome for her homing sons, or any need of them: their places were long since filled. (WH 415f). It is interestingly enough ‘colouring, landscape and horizon’ in England that suddenly appear as ‘dull and cramped’ as the people themselves.’ (WH 419).

The Australian landscape with its heat and aridness for Mahony becomes a landscape of nightmares. “The midday heat blazed; the red dust enveloped them, dimming their eyes, furring their tongues; there was not an inch of shade anywhere. ... Mahony saw nothing – nothing but the tremulous heat-lines, which caused the whole landscape to quiver and swim before him.” (UT 714). Richardson represents Mahony’s restless and dissatisfied state of mind through the use of different narrative techniques. In the passage quoted above, she uses *psy-*

cho-narration, then changes to the *quoted und narrated monologue* in order to stress his broken string of thoughts and the intensity of his feelings: “To tack the child on, too. ... Because she liked company. ... But his needs had never been hers. Solitude ... solitude was all he asked ... to be left alone the greatest favour any one could now do him. Seclusion had become as essential as air or water to the act of living. His brain refused its work were others present.” (UT 715).

Obviously, Mahony’s spiritual search for unity is not a typically Australian phenomenon, but something we also find in modern novels by Virginia Woolf or William Faulkner. However, Richardson succeeds in using the Australian landscape to present her character’s state of mind. Mahony’s despair is projected onto his reflections about Australian nature:

Was he ... to drive for all eternity along these intolerable roads? ... through this accursed bush, where the very trees grimaces at you in distorted attitudes, like stage ranters declaiming an exaggerated passion – or pointed at you with the obscene gestures of the insane ...obscene, because so wholly without significance. ... a sense of unreality began to invade him, his surroundings to take on the blurred edges of ... one of those nightmare-dreams in which the dreamer knows that he is bound to reach a certain place in a given time, yet whose legs are weighed down by invisible weights. (ibid.).

It will be shown that it is again and again in the most arid outback scenes that Australian protagonists finally reach this kind of deeper understanding they strive for. When Mahony accepts the unity of man and nature shortly before his death, he experiences a sense of unity which he has always longed for:

He flung himself at full length on the wet and slimy ground ... he dug his left hand into the earth until what it grasped was a compact mass of mud and gravel ... [and] became suddenly aware of the breaking over him of a great light ... And this suffused him, penetrated him, lapped him round. He breathed it in, ... and, as he did so, the last vestiges of his old self seemed to fall away. All sense of injury, of mortifications, of futile sacrifice was wiped out. In its place there ran through him that beatific certainty that his pain, his sufferings ... had their niche in God’s Scheme ... and he himself ... as surely contained in God, as a drop of water in a wave, a note of music in a mighty cadence. ... he touched the hem of peace at last ... eternal peace ... which passeth understanding. (UT 737-740).

Richardson uses images of digging for gold and parallels the search for gold with Mahony’s private and finally successful search for spiritual harmony. In contrast to the gold diggers, whom Richardson describes in her proem (see AF 13), Mahony no longer plunders and maltreats the Australian earth, but finds in close contact with nature a deeper understanding of life and of God. So in death the “rich and kindly earth of his adopted country absorbed his perishable body, as the country itself had never contrived to make its own, his wayward, vagrant spirit” (UT 831).

It is left to Cuffy Mahony and the next generation to really feel at home in Australia and to accept nature as it is – “to those who, with their mother’s milk, drank in a love of sunlight and space; of inimitable blue distances and gentian-blue skies. To them, the country’s very short-

comings were, in time, to grow dear.” (UT 585).

Coming to terms with the Australian landscape

Nature perception of the Aborigines

The first settlers took possession of Australia as ‘terra nullius’. Thus, they negated the presence of the first inhabitants and promoted the image of a hostile and unoccupied place. This resulted in an inferiority complex of the new inhabitants as they were confronted with what they thought was a ‘cultureless’ landscape. The threat of the Australian wilderness is accordingly reduced by the time Australians learn to feel at home in a way comparable to the Aborigines’ closeness to nature.

Katharine Susannah Prichard realized the possibility of learning from the Aborigines how to accept Australia as home country. Her novel *Coonardoo* (1929) depicts a love relationship between the Aboriginal girl Coonardoo and the white farmer Hugh. The novel stands out because Prichard tried for the first time to depict the stream of thought of an Aboriginal protagonist. By presenting most of the plot from Coonardoo’s perspective, she forces the reader to take Coonardoo’s view of the world. Her conflicts are caused by two different cultures which she encounters in her ‘uloo’ and the ‘homestead’. She shows a way to combine her life as an Aborigine with the life of white farmers as well as a positive identity with nature.

The idea of a ‘mother earth’ implies that Aboriginal women are especially close to a ‘spirit of place’. ‘Coonardoo’ means ‘spring in the shadow’ and promises life in a landscape always threatened by terrible droughts. Nature comparisons are used to describe what Coonardoo looks like: her eyes are “dark and velvety as a moth’s wing with glittering irises”; she is “handsome and spirited as a young filly.”¹² The Aborigines know that Coonardoo is responsible for fertility and the growth of farm life. The myths of the Aboriginal dreamtime and her resulting closeness to nature enable her to do so. So the relationship between a white settler and an Aboriginal girl becomes an ideal basis for a life led in close harmony with nature. Hugh was born in Australia and loves his life as a farmer. However, his life takes on a tragic turn because he could never overcome some of his prejudices against Aborigines. He treats them well but still views them as inferior. As Hugh rejects Coonardoo’s love and denies his feelings for her, his failure is paralleled with his loss of the farm and Coonardoo’s death. It is implied that a state of harmony between Aborigines, white settlers and nature is destroyed because of inappropriate values and a maltreatment of the first inhabitants. His moment of regret is the only passage in the novel where Prichard presents a character’s stream of thought directly in an *autonomous monologue*:

Rotten, that’s what I am. There goes my son to look for his mother ... and I haven’t the spunk to go with him. It’s beneath my dignity. My pride won’t let me. They’re better than I am. ... Warieda would have banged her about, perhaps; but not scared her to death, pitched her into a fire. Coonardoo, my poor Coonardoo, if you’d been a dog I wouldn’t have treated you like that. (216).

Once Hugh has told Coonardoo to leave the farm, this rejection is shown to be an affront against nature (see 225). The last chapter describes Coonardoo's agony from her perspective. She has been maltreated by white men and now returns to the deserted place where the farm Wyaliba used to be. Prichard uses the *narrated monologue* to directly confront the reader with her painful memories: "She shrieked cursing ... was being dragged to a little boat on the river ... the sea rocked under her ... she cried, lost in her agony, an anguish of consciousness ... And then she was walking: walking away from the sea, the stench of pearlers and the close horrible places they live in." (229).

In death her body again becomes one with her home country. She dies close to her fire and becomes an image of the burnt, deserted place. "Her arms and legs, falling apart, looked like those blackened and broken sticks beside the fire." (232). While the Aborigines in this novel are in close contact with nature right until they die, the situation of the white Australians is illustrated by the image of the dead and deserted landscape. Their attitudes lead to hopelessness and destruction.

Again the hope for an appropriate mental attitude is left to the next generation, to Winni, Coonardoo's and Hugh's child. For a white reader the novel reflects an Australian identity and blames white settlers for their treatment of the first inhabitants. Yet, Prichard from her Eurocentric position cannot show what a hopeful future for the Aborigines might look like.¹³ This leads to the literature of Aboriginal authors and their concept of 'Aboriginality'. In modern Australia, they have become travellers searching for a new feeling of being at home, too.

In *Dr Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World* Mudrooroo Narogin (formerly Colin Johnson¹⁴) retells the history of the Tasmanian first inhabitants from the perspective of the Aborigine Wooreddy, husband of Trugernanna. The reader gets an insight into the thoughts and feelings of the last survivor of a cruel ethno- and genocide. Narogin marginalizes the dominant white culture by retelling 'the ending of the world' from Dr. Wooreddy's perspective in a *narrated monologue*. Narogin uses the real historic figures Wooreddy and Trugernanna to write 'a history of Aboriginal space' as Paul Carter has called it. Narogin writes about Aboriginal literature as a "homecoming and a re-entry. A return from exile and alienation into Aboriginality."¹⁵ The author uses historiographic metafiction in order to falsify the one-sided Australian history of the white settlers.¹⁶ Thus, Narogin succeeds in depicting the new content of an 'Aboriginal history'. His nature depictions combine their traditional culture and their search for a new identity, for an Aboriginal notion of place.

In the first sentence of the novel the reader already understands how the author uses the English language to convey a metatext of Aboriginality. "Wooreddy as a child and a young man belonged to Bruny Island."¹⁷ The English term 'belonging' has a rather limited economic and geographical meaning. The Aboriginal idea of belonging to a land means that it is not man who owns the land, but it is man who is part of nature and adopts. Out of their relationship to the land develops their culture and religion – their whole existence as Aborigines. 'Belong-

ing' in this sense also means taking responsibility and respecting their mythological sites.

Wooreddy first equates the approaching white settlers with 'Ria Warrawah', a dangerous, devil-like spirit of the sea. They are the returned spirits of dead enemies. As supernatural creatures, they cannot be defeated, but have to be accepted as fate. While the protagonist tries to grasp what is happening to his world, nature comparisons dominate. This is how he describes their: "The white cloud sails bulged, fluttered like the wings of birds and collapsed in a torrent of rain; a baby boat crawled from the strangeness of its mother ship-island; tottered across the waves on unsteady legs; dragged its tiny body up onto the shore – and reached out insect arms." (22). Nature comparisons are used in this context to find words for the unknown, to make it more familiar.

Narogin also describes how the first white settlers in order to justify their occupation of an uninhabited country, as implied in the 'terra nullius-idea', did not accept the Aborigines as human beings. One of the soldiers in the novel says: "Almost human, ain't they ... A musket ball'll round them up a lot quicker and better ... They're just a bunch of savages, good for nothing, but mischief" (80). It is Trugernanna who understands the legitimization process behind this treatment when she says at the end of the novel: "We are not savages. That is only your excuse for not listening to us." (202)

Mythology and symbolism are constructed dialectically in terms of good versus bad, black versus white, land versus water, Ria Warrawah versus Great Ancestor, a star in the sky which protects the Aborigines against dangers from the sea. It is only at the end of his life that Wooreddy realizes that reality is not as simple as that. Narogin makes clear that a change of consciousness for the Aborigines is necessary as well in order to understand and survive the present.

His new insights make Wooreddy an intellectual, a 'doctor'. Dr. Wooreddy learns the white man's lesson and becomes a cultural hero who can hold on to the holy symbols of his tribe because he succeeds in developing new cultural abilities. He critically observes the actions of the white men and analyzes the Aboriginal world. As a distant observer who sets out to survive in order to observe the ending of their world, he describes how his lush and fruitful island becomes a cemetery (see 24f.). Rituals can no longer be performed and the loss of a former paradise is symbolized by a snake (see 28). With the distance of a scientist (see 20) Dr Wooreddy describes how the nuns repeatedly rape his wife. Their treatment of the Aborigines lets the reader recall their similar barbaric treatment of nature: "Strange animals roamed and even strange grass replaced the old. Trees were chopped down in huge numbers, others were circled and left to die, and the furrows from 'wheels' scarred the earth." (97).

It is especially his travels with the missionary Robinson that help Dr Wooreddy to understand the ambitions of the white men. The author makes use of the Robinsonade to reveal the imperial attitude of the missionary Robinson which is mirrored in his perception of nature. Robinson is a working class man who wants to become a "gentleman of leasure" (176) by coming to Australia. Though he sees himself as father to his children, he is shown to be an ignorant

and ludicrous figure who depends on the Aborigines to survive in this country. Here, the historic figure of Robinson stumbles across a spiritual site of the Aborigines – which he calls “a child’s playing ground”(88) – and is punished with a tormenting skin disease.

Robinson has promised to lead Dr. Wooreddy and the last of his tribe to a so-called ‘Promised Land’ which in fact turns out to be an Island of Death (see 145). Insufficient hygiene on Flinders Island causes illnesses. Boredom and hopelessness cause what is called the “Flinders Island Depression” (157). Robinson’s “paradise through hard work” (137) means that they should become servants, their only wage being bad food. Their loss of identity culminates in finding new Christian names for them. Yet, Robinson does not succeed in brainwashing them. The ethnocide fails but Robinson succeeds in accelerating the genocide of the Tasmanian Aborigines.

Narogin has emphasized that, although the novel is set in the 1830s, it reflects modern times and the Aboriginal predicament today. He suggests this by using modern sounding words.¹⁸ For Narogin retelling the past becomes a means to explain their present and to formulate ideals for their future. Dr. Wooreddy finally understands that the white man is similar to his own race and also made by ‘Great Ancestor’ (see 196). The novel makes clear that it is the white readers’ task as well to understand the equality and similarities between white and Aboriginal culture. The history of the first pioneers tells only part of the truth as long as an Aboriginal spatial history is denied. It is this new form of ‘Aboriginality’ that Narogin conveys through his protagonist’s perception of nature.

In Sally Morgan’s autobiography *My Place* we again encounter alienated characters who find a new identity through accepting their own ‘Aboriginality’. Morgan is also a proponent of a different spatial history, as Paul Carter has called it.¹⁹ In contrast to Narogin, however, she rewrites Aboriginal history from a very personal perspective. The reader experiences a change of consciousness as Sally in her autobiography finds out only at the age of 15 that she is part-Aboriginal. Morgan uses the narrative forms of *autobiographical retrospection* and the *autobiographical monologue* to tell her story as well as the stories of her uncle Arthur, her mother and her grandmother. The reader is made to identify with the narrator so that the perspective of the Aborigines is no longer that of a distant minority.

As a young child Sally already encounters hostile reactions to her family. It is the swamp behind their house that consoles her and becomes a major part of her view of herself:

The swamp behind our place had become an important place for me. *It was now part of me, part of what I was as a person.* When I was in the swamp, I lost all track of time. I wallowed in the small, muddish brown creek that meandered through on its way to join the Canning River. I caught gilgies by hanging over an old stormwater drain and wriggling my fingers in the water. ... I imagined myself as an adventurer, always curious to know what was around the next bend, or behind the clump of taller gums that I glimpsed in the distance. I loved to think of the swamp as a very wild place. (My italics).²⁰

Sally like her grandmother has a very personal bondage to nature. Her grandmother had once explained to her the difference between kangaroo, emu and goanna tracks and the importance of knowing the difference in order to catch tucker. (see 99). The concept of place already suggested in her title becomes ambiguous: on the one hand it implies her search for her origin and identity – her place in life. On the other hand it refers to the two places where her white and black ancestors live, i.e. Perth and the Pilbara Region in northern West Australia. The reader experiences Sally's confusion when she is trying to define what being Aboriginal means to her. Therefore, her thoughts are depicted almost in an *autonomous monologue*: "Had I been dishonest with myself? What did it really mean to be Aboriginal? I'd never lived off the land and been a hunter and a gatherer. I'd never participated in corroborees or heard stories of the Dreamtime. I'd lived all my life in suburbia and told everyone I was Indian. I hardly knew any Aboriginal people. What did it mean for someone like me?" (141). Her definition reads almost like a repetition of well-known white stereotypes.

A real sense of belonging is only achieved once she and her family decide to visit Corunna Downs Station, the homeland of her mother and her grandmother. Again it is from the contact with nature that new insights can be gained: "I want to see if there are any of the old buildings left. ... I want to look at the land. I want to walk on it. I know that sounds silly, but I want to be there, and imagine what it was like for the people then." (215). The journey becomes a "spiritual and emotional pilgrimage" (233). They find warm and honest feelings here that Sally's mother never encountered with the white family of her husband, nor Sally's grandmother with the white farmers she worked for. Finally they experience a feeling of belonging and are part of the land: "we'd suddenly come home and now we were leaving again. But we had a sense of place, now. ... We had an Aboriginal consciousness now, and were proud of it." (230, 233).

Morgan succeeds in writing about a new form of Aboriginal history which transmits the psychological importance of incidents and looks forward to the present. Thus, she questions the heroic role of the white pioneers in the Kimberleys and the Pilbara. It is stressed several times that it was rather the badly paid or unpaid work of Aborigines which made it possible for the squatters to farm the land and become rich (see 181, 211, 327). Her uncle Arthur is presented like a typical Australian bushman. He is tough, brave, laconic and humorous. The subversive tendency to describe an Aborigine with this white man's myth necessitates a new assessment of a central part of Australian culture. Aboriginal farmers are different from the white farmers: "You don't see the Blackman diggin' up the land, *scarin' it*. The white man got no sense." (My italics, 148). The land is personified as being scared. It is again shown how land is part of the Aborigines' identity as he projects his own feelings towards the white man on to nature (see also 212). Their spiritual tie with the land is part of their *Aboriginality* and it is this ability which makes them superior to the knowledge of white Australians:

Blackfellas know all 'bout spirits. We brought up with them. That's where the white man's stupid. He only believes what he can see. He needs to get educated. He's only livin' half a life. ... I like to think that, no matter what we become, our spiritual tie with the land and the other unique

qualities we possess will somehow weave their way through to future generations of Australians. ... This is our land, after all, surely we've got something to offer. (244, 306).

The personal history of this autobiography finally becomes a collective autobiography. The reader feels a kinship with a partially submerged cultural tradition.²¹

Many Aboriginal authors, for whom Narogin and Morgan were chosen as an example, use literary depictions of consciousness and nature to portray a former harmonious relationship between men and nature. They either present this relationship before the arrival of the white men (Narogin) or hint at a long ago paradisiacal past (Morgan). In contrasting this paradise with their present situation, they succeed not only in finding an appropriate state of mind to cope with their present situation, but in drawing their own spatial history. They need to translate their own traditional culture into European terms to make it meaningful for the present. Values which are presented through the idea of paradise and freedom or the use of nature signs like the cry of the bird in the novel by Morgan have to be borrowed from Western culture. In this form of translation they become important for their cultural self-assertion. Morgan does not analyse the tension between authentic Aboriginal ideas and the necessary translation with the Romantic values of paradise and freedom. Narogin, however, uses the tension evoked by Western values and authentic Aboriginal content to create a new Aboriginal identity for the present. Narogin's metafictional historiography shows how the Aborigines felt lost and alienated because they could no longer grasp their world properly and had to question known values. He succeeds in creatively using the tension caused by translating Aboriginal ideas into the form of the novel. He also analyses and portrays the necessary development to assert 'Aboriginality' into the future.

Aboriginal literature makes it possible to depict a traditional perception of nature. It might work as a new pattern for contemporary literature and present an alternative to the Eurocentric myth of the antipodes. This process would also be the end of "the dark secret of Australian consciousness" as Hodge and Mishra have called it.²² Patrick White and Randolph Stow also understood the potential of using Aboriginal culture to create an Australian myth of art.

Nature perception of white visionaries

Patrick White presents transcendental nature experiences by describing visions of his protagonists shortly before they die or during natural disasters. A central topic of his novels is the search of an outsider for deeper insight and fulfilment. He aims at overcoming the 'dun-coloured offspring of journalistic realism' and instead writes about a 'country of the mind'.²³ Though his novel *Voss* is based on reports about the discoverer Ludwig Leichhardt, it is not a historical novel. White turns the historic into a symbolic figure. He uses the desert as a symbol to show the unknown areas of the collective unconscious as defined by C.G. Jung.²⁴ His landscape depictions gain universal meaning as is already suggested by the title of his novel *The Tree of Man* (1955).

In the novel *Voss* (1957) his protagonist of the same name needs to overcome his imperious state of mind and understand that he cannot force his will onto nature. As we have also seen in the work of Richardson, it is only then that a feeling of harmony and unity with nature may be experienced. Part of this process is that Voss overcomes his fear of a relationship with Laura. Voss' expedition into the desert is paralleled with Laura's fate in her "desert of mortification and reward."²⁵ Although she remains with the 'huddlers' in Sydney, she becomes a major part of the expedition as her feverish visions during an illness combine the action in Sydney with what is happening to Voss and his men in the interior of the continent.²⁶

Laura understands Voss' dilemma. White lets her use the image of the desert landscape to reveal his fascination for isolated places and his urge for independence: „You are so vast and ugly ... I can imagine some desert, with rocks, rocks of prejudice, and, yes, even hatred. You are so isolated. That is why you are fascinated by the prospect of desert places, in which you will find your own situation taken for granted, or more than that, exalted.” (V 87f.). Voss does not believe in God, but only in himself. The manifold images that White uses to depict Voss' character illustrate the complexity of his character and underline the mystery about the Voss as a person.²⁷ He wants to conquer the Australian desert, possess it mentally and thus prove his own divinity: “It had become clear from the man's face that he accepted his own divinity. If it was less clear, he was equally convinced that all other must accept.” (V 144). White interrupts the thoughts of his protagonist and comments ironically his stream of thought by using the *narrated monologue*.²⁸

Laura realizes that somebody who despises love and devotion is damned. She strives to help Voss to become more self-realistic. Her statement “You are my desert” (V 88) must be interpreted with this in mind. Letters are the last real form of communication between Voss and Laura. Afterwards their relationship is only imaginary and expressed in dreams and visions as Le Mesurier's statement explains: “We do not meet but in distances and dreams are the distance brought close” (V 295). This reader accepts this form of telepathy as Voss and Laura have been presented as kindred spirits when they met before the expedition started. White presents several streams of thoughts simultaneously which the reader needs to decipher.

Voss' weak identity, “his inherent helplessness” (V 32), his preoccupation ”with his own deficiencies” (V 136), his narcissism, and self-overestimation explain why he is afraid of human friendship. It is Sanderson, one of the members of the expedition, who understands his psychological problems: “Rocks will not gash him deeper, nor sun cauterize more searchingly than human kindness” (V 139). Thus, Voss proposes marriage to Laura in a letter only when she is unattainably distant from him. His dream afterwards gives away his desires and fears: “Two zusammen should gain by numbers, but lose in fact. Numbers weaken. The weaker is stronger, O Vooos.” (V 188). The typographic means that James Joyce made famous in his novel *Ulysses*, signals a first change of mind. It had been love and all floating smooth elements which Voss' had resisted. The flow of the letters in his name now initiates his acceptance of a floating substance, implies humility and hints at a new form of strength: “the weaker is stronger”.²⁹

The author presents part of the unconscious by using the Australian outback symbolically. Transcendence becomes part of reality. Real nature images are thus turned into visionary landscapes: “some dead tree restored to life by the absence of hate, were glowing with flesh of rosy light.” (V 179) Everyday objects like the butterflies in *Voss* become vehicles that mediate between “the world of semblance and the world of dream” (V 259) and appear in a new and more meaningful light. Rain does not only turn the arid desert landscape into paradise, but chases away doubts about whether their project will be successful (see *ibid.*). White like Carl G. Jung finds human rationality of minor importance. The real source of human energy and of creative imagination comes from the unconscious. This explains the relevance of visions and dreams in White’s work. Voss’ fantasies reveal his growing insight into his own humanity in the face of this mighty and unknown landscape which weakens his body and teaches him humility. Images of hell dominate, which remind the reader of T.S. Eliot’s ‘Waste Land’ rather than of a hopeful Eden. As the sun rises, the mention of skulls hints at death (see V 144). The desert is a “devilish country” and becomes a place of damnation, “the approaches to hell” (V 336). The expedition into the interior has a psychological rather than a geographical function: “To make yourself, it is also necessary to destroy yourself ... Every man has a genius, though it is not always discoverable. Least of all when choked by the trivialities of daily existence.” (V 34f.).

It is in Voss’ visions that his inner conflict becomes apparent: he has to decide between humanity and love (“the ring of gentle gold”) or alienation and clinging to the belief in his own godlike position (“the ring of fire”, “the Universal Throne”). Laura becomes an alternative to his self-divine mania: “He lay thinking of the wife from whose hands he would accept salvation, if he were intended to renounce the crown of fire for the ring of gentle gold. That was the perpetual question which grappled him as coldly as iron.” (V 213). Laura is often described with nature imagery in Voss’ visions, for example, “dressed ... in a hooded robe of full, warm, grey rain ... her stone form” (V 269). The meanings of these visions are often symbolized by landscape details: “What they were saying had not yet been translated out of the air, the rustling of corn, and the resilient cries of birds.” (V 163).

Voss only gains real insight in his last visions near the end of his life: White makes it clear by using metaphoric language that Voss now accepts his own humanity and is “reduced to the bones of manhood” (V 390). The necessary union of body and soul is implied by images like: “a species of soul ... of a substance similar to human flesh” (V 393). White uses religious images of the Holy Communion to reveal Voss’ transcendent experience and more humble mental state of mind.

Once upon the banks of a transparent river, the waters of which were not needed to quench thirst, so persuasive was the air which flowed into and over their bodies, they dismounted to pick the lilies that were growing there. They were the prayers, she said, which she had let fall during the outward journey to his coronation, and which, on the cancellation of that ceremony, had sprung up as food to tide them over the long journey back in search of human status. She advised him to sample these nourishing blooms ... The lilies tasted floury, but wholesome. ...

But of greater importance were his own words of love that he was able at last to put into her mouth. So great was her faith, she received these white wafers without surprise. (V 393).

Dorrit Cohn explains that it is often in a state of sudden insight that authors let their protagonists speak in a *quoted monologue*.³⁰ However, White still uses *psycho-narration* and irony so that the reader is baffled by Voss' final reflections: "All these objects of scientific interest the husband was constantly explaining to his wife, and it was quite touching to observe the interest the latter professed even when most bored." (ibid.). Voss' acceptance of God remains mysterious as he dies shortly afterwards. He was not able to climb 'the Universal Throne', but in his more humble position at last experiences the vision of a love relationship. On the other hand, Voss' death is celebrated like a final apotheosis. The lily becomes a symbol of fulfillment. The flower symbolizes purity, peace and resurrection and thus hints at regeneration and immortality. Voss accepts Laura's love through these 'nourishing blooms'. When Voss finally accepts his own humanity, he paradoxically comes very close to the God-like position that he tried to attain all his life. Laura's insight while suffering from a fever thus proves to be true: "When man is truly humbled, when he has learned that he is not God, then he is nearest to becoming so. In the end, he may ascend." (V 387). Voss becomes Christ-like instead of God-like and symbolically offers the host ('white wafers') to Laura. According to Jung the figure of Christ is an archetype for the self and a symbol of unity. Voss' psychological and spiritual search realizes its goal. In this state of harmony, Voss is able to accept his weaknesses as the suppressed part of his unconscious. The desert as an early Christian medium becomes the place for divine experiences.

Voss' imperial attitude has again been contrasted with the closeness to nature of the Aborigines. They, like the land itself, have refused succumbing to Voss' control: "the two blacks jogged along, a little to one side of Voss, as if the subjects of his new kingdom preferred to keep their distance. They could even have been rejecting him. Their voices were for each other, and twinning with the dust." (V 191). Their closeness to nature is stressed by combining their voices with the desert dust and at the same time contrasted with Voss' overestimation: "he would interpret the needs of all men, their souls of rocks, even." (Ibid., see also V 170). Now the Aborigines attest that he has supernatural powers, as he appeared together with a comet in the sky. It is the Aboriginal boy Jackie who finally kills him to "break the terrible magic that bound him remorselessly, endlessly, to the white men." He becomes a wanderer between cultures. Voss' influence is still felt as "the great spirit by which he was possessed" (V 421).

So it is the art of a visionary instead of a cartographer that leads to really knowing a place. As Laura explains: "Some will learn to interpret the ideas embodied in the less communicative forms of matter, such as rock, wood, metal, and water" (V 446). It is this interpretative process that White's literary landscapes try to transmit.

The Tree of Man is written in the form of a pioneer saga. The life of a simple Australian farming couple reminds the reader of Lawson's or Furphy's poor selectors. However, White uses ordinary pioneer life to depict visionary and transcendental experiences. He employs lyrical

elements of style that remind the reader of the novel form that Virginia Woolf describes in her essay “The Narrow Bridge of Art”: “[It is a novel] which we shall scarcely know how to christen ...it will be written in prose, but in prose which has many of the characteristics ... [and] something of the exaltation of poetry, but much of the ordinariness of prose.”³¹

Stan Parker, like Voss, is an outsider and a silent visionary who feels a need to drive out into the bush and look into the distance to escape the “brick tombs” of the cities³² Nature and especially the tree symbol are used to depict consciousness. As long as the Parkers have a happy family life, this harmony is reflected in the nature around them (see TM 31f.). When Stan suffers because of his inability to communicate with the people close to him, his desperation is mirrored in the long dry season (see TM 296f.). He cannot put his insights into words and remains “a prisoner in his human mind, as in the mystery of the natural world.” (TM 49). While driving through the bush with his son Ray, his inability to communicate with his son is reflected in nature: “There beneath that tree, under which they had pulled up, a gnarled, difficult native with harsh, staring leaves, the man and the boy were resenting each other for their separateness.” (TM 222). Like Voss Stan experiences his revelations in close contact with nature, i.e. during a flood or a thunderstorm. It is also shortly before his death that he is allowed a feeling of unity and closeness to God. Yet, the vision also implies total isolation. Again White uses mystic symbolism to hint at important mental insights of his protagonist:

That afternoon the old man’s chair had been put on the grass at the back, which was quite dead-looking from the touch of winter. Out there at the back, the grass, ... *had formed a circle* in the shrubs and trees which the old woman had not so much planted as stuck in during her lifetime. There was little of design in the garden originally, though one had formed out of the wilderness. It was perfectly obvious that *the man was seated at the heart of it*, and from this heart the trees radiated, with grave movements of life, ... All was circumference to the centre, and beyond that the worlds of other circles, whether crescent of purple villas or the bare patches of earth, on which rabbits sat and observed some abstract spectacle for minutes on end, in a paddock not yet built upon. *The last circle but one* was the cold and golden bowl of winter, enclosing all that was visible and material, and at which the man would blink from time to time, out of his watery eyes, unequal to the effort of realizing he was the centre of it. (My italics, TM 474).

Life leads Stan into the centre of a mandala which is, according to Jung, a symbol of unity.³³ The juxtaposition of images of birth, life and death implies the cyclic process of renewal, growing up and dying. The last outer circle might symbolize the earth itself as Stan explains to the young evangelist who interrupts his observations that God is part of this life. Transcendence maybe found in the most unimportant things, like his gob of spittle (see TM 476). After Stan’s death the trees steam with light and moisture, life goes on because of his grandson Ray. Again, as in the work by Prichard and Richardson, the hope of finding an intuitive harmony with nature lies with the next generation: “So he would write a poem of life, of all life, of what he did not know, but knew.” (TM 480). The trees through association become a manifold symbol of life and insight: “So that in the end there were the trees ... So that, in the end, there was no end.” (ibid.).

Both visionaries, Voss and Stan, finally gain self-knowledge. Voss is made humble and is

thus led to a final apotheosis; Stan is allowed insight into the unity and meaning of life. The reader gains insight into the psyche of the protagonists through visionary and real landscapes. White himself confirmed the relevance of transcendental moments for his novels: "I have tried to convey a splendour, a transcendence, which is also there, above human realities. From *The Tree of Man* onward ... I wanted to suggest my own faith in these superhuman realities."³⁴ It is only in close contact with nature that his protagonists communicate with the unknown part of their psyche and take possession of Australia "by right of vision" (V 29).

White portrayed the eastern part of Australia. With Randolph Stow the reader encounters Western-Australia as a *country of the mind*. The protagonist in the novel *To the Islands* (1958/1982) again travels with an Aborigine and is in search of his own identity. The reader finds two locations where the action takes place and a deeper understanding between two characters through telepathy. Many of Stow's nature images remind the reader of Patrick White: men are compared with ants; the missionary Heriot's willpower is evoked through comparisons with rock and stone.³⁵ It is the connection between self-destruction and self-affirmation that determined not only Voss' fate ("To make yourself, it is also necessary to destroy yourself" V 34), but also Heriot's destiny. Both finally turn from a proud and arrogant attitude to an understanding of their own limits and a more conciliatory attitude towards their home country, as well as their fellow human beings, through suffering and renunciation.³⁶

Stow wrote in several essays about the importance of nature and reflection on it through an observing consciousness for his work:

The boundary between an individual and his environment is not his skin. It is the point where mind verges on the pure essence of him, that unchanging observer that for want of a better term we must call the soul. The external factors, geographical and sociological, are so mingled with his ways of seeing and states of mind that he may find it impossible to say what he means by his environment, except in the most personal and introspective terms.³⁷

In a striking contrast to White, Stow uses Taoist ideas for these visions in close contact with nature. Discussion of the relevance of Taoism for Stow's work has so far been mainly restricted to his novel *Tourmaline*, but it can be shown that this nature philosophy also gives new meaning to the nature images in *To the Islands*.

It is the quintessence of the *Tao Te Ching* and of Heriot's experiences that man is inferior to nature and thus needs to adapt to it. This nature philosophy enlarges the spectrum of landscape descriptions which had so far mainly relied on Western traditions. Stow symbolically stylizes his characters to elucidate Taoist ideas. Heriot's journey becomes representative of "Everyman's journey towards death". The bush is made "a truer and broader symbol of the human environment than ... any European writer could create from the complex material of Europe."³⁸ Stow succeeds in combining the mythology of the Aborigines and their belief in the islands of the dead, to which the title of the novel already refers, with the European tradition through the depiction of Heriot's consciousness as well as Chinese knowledge. The im-

age of the rock, for example, which – as in White’s novel *Voss* – illustrates the protagonist’s willpower, obtains further meaning through the teachings of Lao Tsu in the *Tao Te Ching*. Water as a submissive and weak element is declared stronger and so “the strong and big takes the lower position the supple and weak takes the higher position.”³⁹ It becomes clear that Heriot’s authoritative attitude to the mission must end in a catastrophe. It is consequently with throwing stones that Heriot gives way to his anger and frustration. He has lost his family and now thinks of the Aborigines as ungrateful for what he did for them.⁴⁰

Heriot, in a way similar to the missionary Robinson in the novel by Narogin, tries to help the Aborigines to adjust to a better way of life, but actually destroys their traditional union with the land. Stow also shows how a better understanding might be possible as Heriot becomes humble during his wanderings through the Kimberleys and gains a deeper understanding about the Aborigines through his friendship with the Aborigine Justin.⁴¹ In the beginning the landscape seemed foreign and hostile: “Behind the uneasy trees rose the hills, and beyond them again the country of the lost, huge wilderness between this last haunt of civilization and the unpeopled sea.” (47). We encounter a clash of cultures because Heriot’s reflections are full of quotations from European literature. Heriot uses French quotations from Pascal’s *Pensées* to explain his helplessness and transitoriness in the face of the vast and foreign landscape (60). His stream of thought is contrasted with his timeless natural surroundings.⁴²

Stow conveys an atmosphere of dreariness and absolute silence in this no man’s land: “there was no shelter in the country of rocks, and no movement, nothing to rest or entertain the eye ... There was no action here. And it was silent, too, so silent that again and again he had this urge to sing and drown the silence.” (96). This dreary atmosphere reminds the reader of Clarke’s *weird melancholy* and the “kingdom of Anti-Christ” as Stow described it elsewhere.⁴³ Heriot learns only towards the end from his Aboriginal companion Justin to respect and love the world around him. It is only now that Heriot understands the Aborigine’s relationship to the land as ‘mythscape’, and he finds inner peace.⁴⁴

Once again the vastness and solitude of the Australian outback teach him, like Voss, humility, and to accept suppressed parts of his unconscious: “The uncollected memories broke up in the old man’s mind, became separate, fell in to place. Old pictures returned to him clearer than photographs, superimposed on the wild country of his wanderings. He saw an attainable peace at his fingers’ end, reached for it, grief springing in him like a delicate green thing among the rocks.” (87). A group of Aborigines who still live their traditional life teach Heriot selfless action and Confucian brotherly love according to Lao Tsu. It is not yet compassion according to Taoist ideas which means identification with the other. Compassion in this sense cannot be controlled by our intellect, but is rather an ontological experience. Rusty, a murderer like Heriot might have become, helps Heriot to reflect on his own guilt and human guilt in general. Sam, who lives in a ghost town, that used to be a mission, reveals to him the possible fate of his own mission. It is only afterwards that he is ready to accept death, and that his journey to the Aboriginal islands, ends. For him, it has also been a journey of self-discovery.

Finally Heriot stands at the edge of the cliffs and looks in vain for the Aboriginal Islands of the dead. At last – “neither knowing nor fearing” – he kneels down and looks out into the distance and into the light where he is face to face with Taoist nothingness: “he stared out to sea and saw nothing but the sun on the water.” (126). The last sentence: “My Soul is a strange county” (126) signifies that Heriot’s search finds its goal in Taoism. The connection of consciousness and landscape depiction finds its climax in the identification of the soul with the strange county.⁴⁵ He finds consolation and accepts that his soul remains unknown to him. Heriot becomes part of nature in this state of harmony: “himself a simple plant of the sea’s floor, waving and dying.” (123). His final state reminds the reader of Stow’s description in his poem “The Testament of Tourmaline”: “Body is land in permutation.”⁴⁶

It is only in loving the land that the Taoist state of total inner harmony may be gained as we see at the end of *To the Islands*. Terms like ‘silence’, ‘nothingness’, and ‘aridness’ which are used to describe the Australian landscape gain a new meaning through Stow’s use of Taoist ideas. To live a fulfilled life, one has to adapt to nature. This is not only the quintessence of the *Tao Te Ching*, but also the insight that Heriot as well as Voss are taught.

Postmodern authors can now paint their ‘personal landscapes’ by using their own literary tradition which earlier Australian authors developed. However, it will be shown that their innovative strategies extend this tradition even further.

Mythologizing the landscape

In *Harland’s Half Acre* (1984) by David Malouf nature is mythologized through the perception of an artist. Malouf explains that “elements of place and our inner lives cross and illuminate one another, ... we interpret space, and ... make our first maps of reality.”⁴⁷ Similarly, the artist Frank Harland experiences an enlarged understanding and a spiritual possession of his natural surroundings. Malouf again relies on transcendental experiences to paint a ‘country of the mind’. Yet, in contrast to authors before him, Malouf’s protagonist does not experience this feeling of unity with nature only shortly before death but through what he has created during his life. Malouf stresses in an interview that he tries to give words to the complex feelings of his protagonists who normally are not very educated or articulate as “a lot we apprehend is at the edge of articulation.”⁴⁸ It is in painting that the artist Frank Harland achieves “his ... state of dreamlike self-discovery”.⁴⁹ Frank first strives to regain the land around Killarney, his old family estate, through successfully selling his paintings.

Apart from his homeland Killarney, the war landscapes of the Polish emigrant Walter Knack become important for Frank’s work. Walter is a very good piano player. Frank compares the effect of his music to “a landscape of storms” (111). He is fascinated by this cultured man, but also shocked by his war experiences of homicide and concentration-camps. To reveal his fascination Malouf changes to the *narrated monologue* to depict Frank’s thoughts: “Knack had a headstart coming from Europe, which must be an education all in itself – a bitter one; Austra-

lians couldn't compete. You had to start from scratch here." (105). Frank hopes to give a new perspective of life with the help of his own landscape paintings. Instead, Frank's own perspective is broadened as he is taught by Walter, who brutally kills himself and his wife, that brutal and tragic events are not confined to Europe.

The artist's mind is further broadened by his friendship with Phil Vernon, an intellectual and a lawyer. In contrast to the intuitive conscious depiction of the artist who is presented like a romantic outsider in third person narration, Phil's thoughts are presented directly as he remembers his past as a first person narrator using *autobiographical retrospection*. He describes his life and his experiences with Frank. Frank's unusual and difficult character is thus mirrored from different perspectives. Again, as in Richardson's work before, we find the Bergsonian duality of an intellectual or intuitive perception of the world. The two protagonists need each other. Phil administers Frank's fortune as he becomes a successful painter and helps him to regain Killarney. Phil learns how important this is to Frank: "all this was for him a matter of profound emotion ... What to me were mere names, dimensions, numbers – rolls in my deeds cabinet – were to him so present and real that in the mere syllables that identified them they would blaze up as paddocks where cattle grazed among stumps and ghostly water lay just below ground. ... He had it all clearly in mind, and the names were magic." (155). However, Frank learns that his "hunger for land" is wrong. It is only when living alone in a fettler's tent on an island that he not only refines his art but also learns to take possession of nature through his artistic reflection. As he struggles to express himself in art his spontaneous thoughts are presented in patches of *quoted monologue* (see 177). Malouf elucidates that a real act of spiritual nature possession is possible only by mythologizing the landscape through art.⁵⁰ The title of the novel, *Harland's Half Acre*, finally does not signify land ownership, but alludes to the amount of painted canvas which Frank leaves to the world.

Phil is impressed by Frank's character, but has problems in understanding the paintings of this tramp. Finally, he understands that his friend has become part of history. His stream of thought, presented in an *autobiographical monologue*, puts Frank in an historic context: "I thought of Frank out there ... on his island, one of the many, each with its own history of vanished tribes ... of convicts, lepers, whalemens ... and in our time, Frank Harland." (186). It is finally in the form of a *memory monologue*, which places past events as associations in an achronological order so that Phil also comes to a deeper understanding of his past, and present events: "I feel the occasion open to include vast stretches of time, ... a deep contentment comes over me, as of being and belonging just where I am. It is final. It is also a beginning." (220). In the end Frank's life makes it possible for all Australians to find a new cultural identity: "Frank Harland's lone encounters with himself ... could be seen now to proclaim a people's newly-discovered identity in a place it scarcely knew existed." (189). Thus, Malouf succeeds in creatively owning the land with literary landscape painting.

David Foster uses scientific concepts to describe landscapes of travel in contrast to landscapes

of home. A new relationship with your own home country is possible in dialogue with other cultures. *The Pure Land* (1974), Foster's first novel, describes the search of three protagonists for a home and self-fulfilment like Richardson's trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Yet, it is no longer England that is described as home country, but Australia. A trip to the Blue Mountains shows the reader how strongly related these protagonists feel to the Australian bush. It is the 'man wariness' of the photographer Manwaring that made him specialize in nature photography. His mental state is presented in *psycho-narration* as he is only half aware of an "instinctive urge towards the bush ... transcendental earthlust ... euphoria ... belonging to another scale of consciousness, another scheme of things entirely."⁵¹ Still, the author illustrates his inability to understand the world around him properly because of his shortsightedness and his need for strong glasses (see 27). It is striking that Foster changes the direction of travel. Australia is no longer a country of superficial materialism and without a past, and it is the USA which is viewed as the Promised Land and travel destination. However, with Foster definite physiognomies of countries are no longer possible: They cannot realize their hope of self-fulfilment in 'sunny Jersey city', America becomes "the world's warehouse and entertainment capital" (88), as decadent and corrupt as old Europe. Although Australia is presented as a natural paradise, the 'Pure Land', this topos becomes questionable in the end as well. The protagonists try unsuccessfully to analyse their situation as is made clear by the image of a wall, they cannot surmount. This image is used several times (see 26).

The Pure Land is written in the form of a family saga, a tradition that was made famous in Germany by Thomas Mann or in England by John Galsworthy. Yet, Foster's nomadic protagonists have no real sense of belonging. Foster describes the feeling of homelessness of modern man as a general human problem difficult to overcome. His search for an identity is part of his travelling. His modern picaros play different roles in order to survive in their confusing surroundings. Thus, Manwaring turns from nature photographer to pornographic photographer and finally becomes a follower of a sect with only questionable fulfilment. Danny becomes a student to liberate himself from his family, then a chemist without really identifying with this work, then turns to live on the road and becomes a ship's boy.

In contrast to traditional novels of travelling, there is no final destination and no end when everything that has happened becomes meaningful. The protagonists' search goes on after the novel has finished. "My Land of Purity may well await me just around the very next bend." (235). Travelling is a state of being, and no longer a movement to a certain destination. The cyclic structure of his plot arranges movements of different directions in a cyclic system. The end refers back to the beginning. This is comparable to the work of the graphic artist M. C. Escher who tries the same effect in his arithmetic thought pictures.⁵² Foster's novels and Escher's art both rely on the suggestive synthesis of the impossible which orders movements of different directions into a circular system. This structure of the novel also determines the state of consciousness and nature perception of his travellers: they are protagonists who wander around and whose hopes for a paradisiacal *Pure Land* remain unfulfilled. They need to live with the contradictions and inconsistencies of a modern world.

Foster has a doctorate in Chemistry and used to work in Australia and the USA. To explain his form of nature and character presentation he uses the concept of entropy, which explains an always increasing disorder. Danny reflects the process of travelling as follows: “The venture back is filled with joy, the venture forth is filled with dread. And yet the final outcome could well be contrariwise – cold well be.” (154). Foster reveals how in modern societies there are only small points of orientation left and one needs to live with accidental happenings.⁵³ Loneliness and disorder have to be accepted and cannot be blamed on one’s surroundings.

In order to survive in this modern world as presented by Foster, he advises alchemical thinking according to Jung. Foster explains: “I am interested in alchemy for the same reason as Jung was. It seems a more profound way of looking at the problems of the divided self than in an intellectual way.”⁵⁴ Alchemical thinking makes an arbitrary world more understandable as it combines subjective perception and outward surroundings. Danny again speaks for the author when he stresses the connection between mind and body (see 61, 162) and talks of “that old ignored nexus” (178). There is no hope for Foster’s protagonists who just travel around in circles. This is why in his later novels he turned to satire as “joking in earnest”.⁵⁵ His protagonists can no longer experience transcendental insights, meaningful visions, or a unity with nature as presented by Malouf and other authors before him.

Nature scepticism

Rodney Hall’s novel *Just Relations* (1982) reveals that for his characters as “white Aborigines” identification with nature and a feeling of being at home are possible. Thus, Hall tries to overcome the white man’s complex of guilt towards the Aborigines which has made being at home in Australia difficult.⁵⁶ This spiritual community lives in conflict with the government who wishes to build a highway right through their town. They hide the secret that there is still gold to be found because they know that lust for gold results in self-destructive materialism. Only their own history and memories are so important to them that they become their “religion of remembering.”⁵⁷ The difference between life and death, being awake and dreaming, is no longer meaningful. Realistic descriptions are presented side by side with unreal fantasies. Hall writes in the tradition of Gabriel García Márquez. These authors have found a new form of the novel which enlarges the possibilities for the depiction of nature and consciousness. In postcolonial societies magic realism attains further meaning as Hall uses it to depict the magic belief of his ‘white Aborigines’. Magic realism is used as a new development of the stream of consciousness novel. This identification process with the country is for Hall a sign of post-colonial societies.

Hall does not use inverted commas to differentiate between his characters’ speech or thoughts and only a dash to start their stream of consciousness. He presents spontaneous thoughts as *quoted monologues*, as inner monologues embedded in a third person narration. In this novel landscape is only relevant as ‘perceived object’. Especially towards the end of the novel, elements of magic realism become a more and more important part of their reality. They are used to depict the utopian quality of their natural landscape. After the government had decided to

built the highway, “the old bush people” (265) are horrified by the destruction of nature. They die, only to come to life again in order to start a new life closer to nature than ever in their ‘new London’. The English woman Vivien who now lives in Whitey’s Fall is one of the younger generation. She used to be an outsider but now understands how a life in harmony with nature is achieved here. For this process she also needs to learn that the capital of Britain, ‘the real London’, is no longer relevant here. Her insight is presented in a *narrated monologue* which reveals her emotional involvement:

[the people of Whitey’s Fall] are talking about a place where everything mattered down to the most fleeting association, first occasions, the magical art of naming things, finding the risks, the tricks, the natural forces, the foreign spirit of the place to be placated, and absorbing all this into their own survival. ... who would care about her reminiscences of the Underground, Bistro advertisements and Guinness is Good for You, the houses of parliament or the black Daily Express, what would a bobby matter or Lyons Corner House or cold pork pies, or the lunch hour crowd in Green Park? (467).

It is only when she feels that she can put a mark on the landscape by shaping the mountain to her wish (see 488) that she is ready to become part of this community. Self-analysis as part of the psychological novel and the dissolution or change of natural objects as part of the concept of magic realism, cause the development of these characters and of their nature perception.

Hall also presents the stream of thought of the young artist Fido, who is shut away from the world by his parents. He uses art to create a substitute world of his own. Bertha Mc Aloon is another artist who also creates her substitute house and substitute people through the art of knitting. Hall presents her stream of thought on former lovers in a long *autonomous monologue* which reminds the reader of the Penelope chapter in *Ulysses* by James Joyce (see 234-240). Her reconstruction of reality makes it difficult for the artist Bertha to differentiate between the real and the imagined: “Sometimes when knitting she could believe the horizon itself unravelled to become her wool, that it was being drawn into her personal web, yes they were the moments when all doubt left her and her talent took her into itself and afterwards she would gaze astounded at what she had done” (356). Magic elements make the knitted landscape of this old lady part of the town’s culture: “The interconnections are essential. You cannot take away a single hair, a single leaf ... without the entire fabric of the world collapsing.” (117). Finally, the artistic gardener Ian McTaggart has a similar transcendent vision as we have seen in *The Tree of Man* by Patrick White. Yet in a striking contrast to Richardson, White or Stow, Hall’s characters experience a feeling of harmony and of being at home in the world they created during their lifetime. Australia is no longer a *tabula rasa*. However, the ‘real world’ and real natural nature experiences are of little importance here.

Gerald Murnane employs deconstruction processes to present the dissolution of real into mental landscapes. Landscapes and consciousness depiction finds in Murnane its most abstract form. His novels only deal with mental landscapes. Objective nature perception is no longer necessary for a creative moment, in fact it hinders creativity. Murnane can be called ‘creator

of personal places par excellence' as he shows how it is possible to develop the presentation of psychological characterisation by using landscape imagery in its extreme. He confronts the reader only with the perception of abstract mindscapes or 'psycho geographies'.⁵⁸

The first person narrator in *The Plains* (1982), a filmmaker who plans a film about the area and its inhabitants, explains: "the plains ... are simply a convenient source of metaphors for those who know that men invent their own meanings."⁵⁹ Murnane describes in his novel the life of some intellectual big landowners, 'the plainsmen', in a wide landscape of plains which reminds the reader of the Australian outback. Murnane himself explained: "I confess that the appearance of the grass and the wide horizons etcetera are borrowed from my memories of having seen a few times only the district of Victoria sometimes called the Western Plains. It's a district where some of the oldest and wealthiest grazing families of Victoria used to predominate."⁶⁰ Murnane uses many images which Australian authors used to depict the Outback. However, here these metaphors are no longer used to describe a concrete landscape like Furphy's Riverina or the Victorian goldfields in Richardson's trilogy. Murnane's first person narrator concentrates on the description of landscapes of the mind. In doing so, his narrators separate themselves from other people so that the isolation of man becomes one of the major topics of Murnane's work.

In contrast to the Outback descriptions of White or Stow for example, the plains do not confront men with emptiness, similarity or hostility. Here it is a place of cultural distinction as the landowners act as patrons for different artists. The promotion of local culture is their main concern. This new valuation of places is something which Foster tried as well when he described how stereotypes about the old and the new world are no longer valid. However, in Murnane's work a character's state of mind is no longer reflected in the way he or she perceives nature. Murnane emphasizes that it is the mind which constructs landscape first of all. Thus, his postmodern work questions reality as an entity. His protagonists find themselves in places called Paraguay, the Hungarian Puszta or the North American prairie. Yet, all these locations appear like Melbourne or somewhere else in Victoria. Murnane just uses these place names to convey psychological insights into his characters, especially feelings of loneliness and isolation. The psyche of his narrators is a mental map as the narrator of *Inland* (1988) explains to his reader:

The true part of you is far too far-reaching and much too many-layered for you or me, reader, to read about or to write about. A map of the true part of you, reader, would show every place where you have been from your birthplace to the place where you sit now reading this page. ... There are still to mark all those places you have dreamed about and all those places you have dreamed of yourself seeing or remembering or dreaming about.⁶¹

His 'citizens of the mind' retell their lives in *autobiographical retrospection*. In *The Plains* a hero is someone who stays at home and only dreams about possible travel destinations without ever realizing these mental travel routes (see 8). Murnane's narrator also discusses the problem of adequate seeing and describing the perception of places: "I kept my eyes open. I looked for anything in the landscape that seemed to hint at some elaborate meaning behind

appearances .. the flat land around me seemed more and more a place that only I could interpret” (3). His psyche is an endless landscape which explains the endlessness of the plains: “The true extent of the plains had never been agreed on.” (8). The narrator finally understands that a film is a most inadequate medium to depict this kind of landscape. (see 57). In the end it is “darkness that was the only visible sign of whatever I saw beyond myself” (113). The image of the narrator, who focuses his camera and sees only darkness could signify his inadequate understanding of his surroundings. Yet, the plainsmen view the visible and important content of life as “an island lapped by the boundless ocean of the invisible” (100). Black is the colour of our consciousness, according to Murnane.⁶² As it is no longer possible to acknowledge the difference between outer world and imagination, a total isolation of self is the consequence for Murnane’s characters. Landscapes of the mind remain the only reality for his protagonists.

In his collection of short stories, *Landscape with Landscape* (1987), each story seems to develop out of the last because the narrator names at the end of the story the title of the next story and the last refers back to the first story. This cyclic structure of endless repetition is something we encountered in Foster’s novel *The Pure Land* as well. Thus, Murnane emphasizes the fictive character of his world of the mind: “part of the man’s story might be that woman’s hearing from a man somewhat like himself a description of what he called his landscape. But in the foreground of that landscape was a woman very like herself looking at what she took for the real world, with a man writing in its middle distance.”⁶³ The quotation illustrates the regressive motif of a landscape within a landscape – the optic illusion of endless mental landscapes which the title refers to. It is only the ‘psycho-geography’ of the narrator which is depicted as landscape of the mind in Murnane’s literary world. Here depiction of consciousness totally dominates landscape descriptions.

Conclusion

Our literary journey through Australian landscapes has revealed that literary landscape depiction and the use of narrative techniques for the presentation of consciousness developed in three different phases.

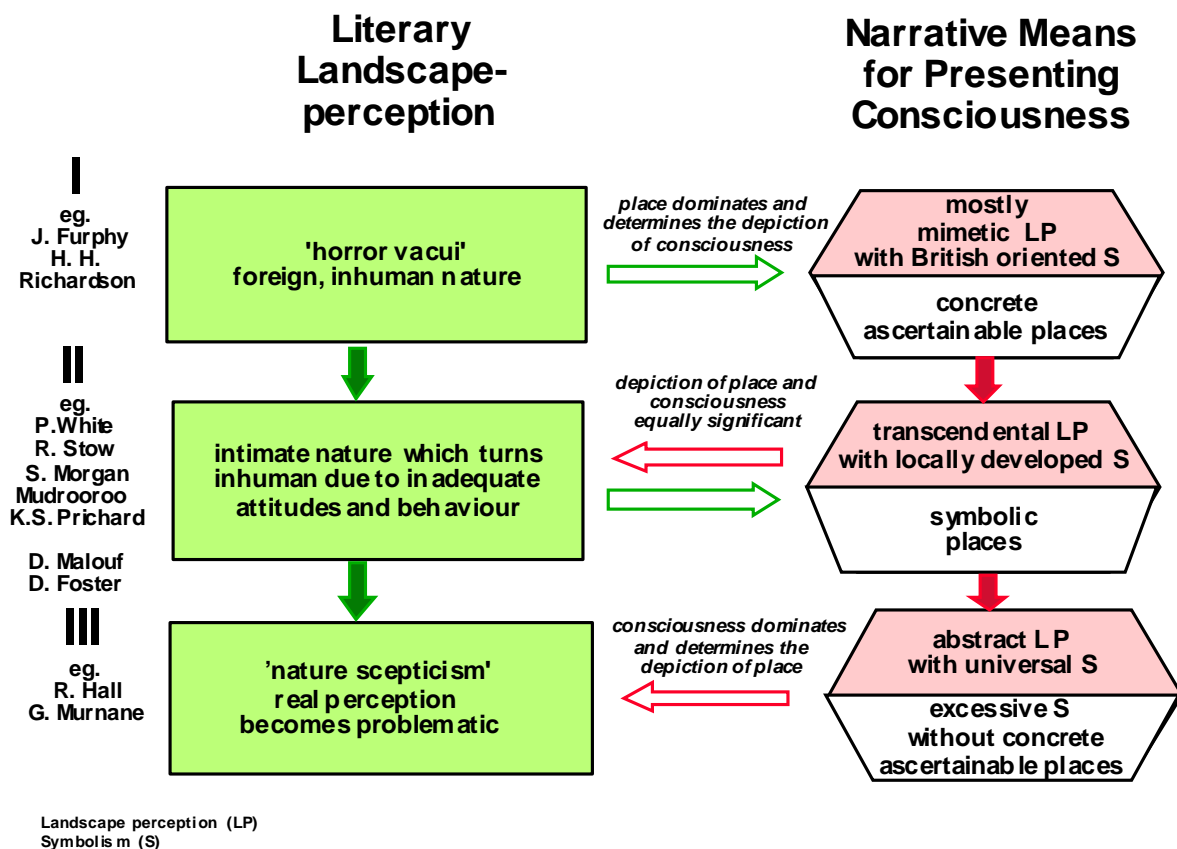


figure 1

With Furphy and Richardson nature descriptions dominate over the presentation of consciousness. *Horror vacui* is still the feeling that many protagonists experience. Nature appears foreign and inhuman. In the second phase nature and consciousness depiction become equally important. Symbolism which is developed out of the Australian setting conveys transcendental landscape experiences. Novels by White, Stow or Prichard and even Malouf reveal that an indifferent nature becomes hostile only because of an inadequate state of mind. In the third phase – in contrast to the first – the depiction of consciousness dominates. Hall and Murnane focus on mental or magic landscapes. These authors still work with nature symbolism but they use it for the mental landscapes of their protagonists.

The fact that contemporary authors focus on mental processes and turn away from real nature descriptions suggests that Australian authors these days make up what is typical of European Modernism: they focus on isolated self-dominated characters and question our view of the real world. Their protagonists are strongly influenced by conscious and unconscious processes (according to Freud or Jung). These tendencies lead to the deconstruction of reality (Foster, Murnane) or to a montage of different levels of reality like in magic-realist novels (Hall).

As, in Murnane's work, the opposition of outside world and imaginative construct is eliminated, it will be interesting to observe how this topic will develop in future. One possibility would be to turn to the realist novel as Foster has done in his later work. Another possibility would be an abstract description of psychological processes as a logic system where the Aus-

tralian context would be less and less important as, for example, Murnane or authors like Liam Davison strive to illustrate in their postmodern work.

¹ Judith Wright. *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry*. Melbourne: OUP, 1965, XI.

² For a more detailed discussion of these authors and parallel developments in Australian art as well as a digression on the Australian depiction of urban landscapes see Susanne Braun-Bau. *Natur und Psyche. Landschafts- und Bewußtseinsdarstellung in australischen Romanen des 20. Jahrhunderts. Hamburg Studies in the New Literatures in English*. Vol. 2. Hamburg: Lit, 1996.

³ Paul Carter. *The Road to Botany Bay*. London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987, 294f.

⁴ Dorrit Cohn. *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Rev. ed. Princeton: PUP, 1983.

⁵ Joseph Furphy. *The Annotated Such is Life. Being Certain Extracts from the Diary of Tom Collins*. With an Introduction and Notes by Frances Devlin Glass et al. Melbourne: OUP, 1991, 264. Page references refer to this edition.

⁶ Paul Carter, 9.

⁷ See Robert Holden. "Lost, Stolen or Strayed: From the Australian Babes in the Woods to Azaria Chamberlain", *Voice* 1/1, 1991, 59. See also John Scheckter. "The Lost Child in Australian Fiction", *MFS* 27, 1981, 62.

⁸ This tragic component is neglected by Frances Devlin Glass who does not see any differences between this story and other lost child stories, see "Joseph Furphy's Novels: Naked Capers in the Riverina" in: W.S. Ramson ed. *The Australian Experience*. Canberra: ANUP, 1974, 78.

⁹ Henry Handel Richardson. "Some Notes on my Books", *Southerly* 23/1, 1963, 14.

Gold is not only a symbol of material wealth, but used as an alchemical symbol of mental unity as it has been described by Carl G. Jung. Mahony can never attain this unity in life. See Carl G. Jung. *Psychologie und Alchemie*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*. Bd. 12, ed. by Dieter Baumann. Olten: Walter, 1972, 51, 110f, 150.

¹⁰ Bergson differentiates between 'la durée réelle', time as measured by scientists, and real intuitively felt time which we only experience intuitively. It is the novelist's task to present these complex pictures of a protagonist's consciousness. See Henri Bergson *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, in: *Ouvres*, ed. by André Roinet et al. 4th ed. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984, 1345ff.

Bergson was one of the most influential philosophers of the beginning 20th century. His works gained international fame. Bergson's relevance for Australian culture is also discussed by Humphrey McQueen. *Gallipoli to Petrov*. Sydney: A&R, 1984, 88.

¹¹ Henry Handel Richardson. *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1982, AF 315. Page references refer to this edition. Abbreviation 'AF' refers to Australia Felix, 'WH' to The Way Home, 'UT' to Ultima Thule.

¹² Katharine Susannah Prichard. *Coonardoo*. Sydney: A&R, 1990, 26f. Page references refer to this edition.

¹³ Mudrooroo Narogin appreciates the authenticity of Prichard's novel in contrast to many critics who emphasize the symbolic and romantic plot of the novel. See Susanne Bau. "A Conversation with Mudrooroo" *Antipodes* 8/2, 1994, 120-122.

¹⁴ Narogin changed his name as an act of protest during the Bicentennial celebrations in 1988. 'Mudrooroo' is an Aboriginal word for paperbark. Narogin refers to the area where he was born.

¹⁵ See Paul Carter, 347. Mudrooroo Narogin. "White forms, Aboriginal content", in: Jack Davis, Bob Hodge eds. *Aboriginal Writing Today*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1985, 29. See also Mudrooroo Narogin. *Writing from the Fringe*. Melbourne: Hyland House, 1990, 192.

¹⁶ The term is defined by as "its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past ... it always works within conventions in order to subvert them." In: Linda Hutcheon. *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. New York, London: Routledge, 1988, 5, 105.

¹⁷ Mudrooroo Narogin (Colin Johnson). *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World*. Melbourne: Hyland House, 1983, 1. Page references refer to this edition.

- ¹⁸ David Kerr, Phillip Edmonds. "Profile. Recipe For a Writer" *The Bulletin Literary Supplement* 26.6.1984, 74f. Mudrooroo Narogin, *Writing from the Fringe*, 25. Gerard Windsor misinterprets the function of these words when he criticizes them as "most unlikely modernisms". See "How do you like your history done?" Book Review of Colin Johnson. *Dr. Wooreddy et al. Overland* 96, 1984, 66.
- ¹⁹ See Paul Carter, 322.
- ²⁰ Sally Morgan. *My Place*. Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre P, 1991, 59. Page references refer to this edition.
- ²¹ See also John Colmer. *Australian Autobiography. The Personal Quest*. Melbourne: OUP, 1989, 114.
- ²² Bob Hodge, Vijay Mishra. *Dark Side of the Dream*. Sydney: A&U, 1991, XVI.
- ²³ Patrick White. "The Prodigal Son", *Australian Letters* 1/3, 1958, 37-40; reprinted in: Paul Brennan, Christine Flynn eds. *Patrick White Speaks*. Sydney: Primavera P., 16.
- ²⁴ See Carl G. Jung. "Die Struktur des Unbewußten" in: *Gesammelte Werke, Bd.7* ed. by Dieter Baumann et al. Olten, Freiburg i.Br.: Walter, 1971, 312.
- ²⁵ Patrick White. *Voss*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1974, 74. Page references with the abbreviation 'V' refer to this edition.
- ²⁶ The wrong mental attitude of the 'huddlers' in Sydney is also depicted with nature images: "Unseeing people walked the sandy earth, eating bread, or sat at meat in their houses of frail stone foundations, while the lean man, beneath his twisted tree, became familiar with each blade of withered grass at which he stared, even the joints in the body of the ant." (V 27). White shows that in this society of the 19th century only material values and social events are important. This is White's literary testimony of what he described in his essay "The Prodigal Son" as 'the Great Australian Emptiness', in which "the mind is the least of possessions, in which the rich man is the important man, in which the schoolmaster and the journalist rule what intellectual roost there is, in which beautiful youths and girls stare at life through blind blue eyes." Patrick White. "The Prodigal Son", 15.
- ²⁷ He is described as "the ugly rock on which truth must batter itself to survive." (V 98) He is "a burning element" (V 241), "a scarecrow" (V 310), "a greedy-looking pig" (V39), "a juggler of hopes" (V 218), "a madman" (V 27), "a leader" (V 246) and compared with the devil himself (see V 69).
- ²⁸ It is only in his last novel *Memoirs of Many in One* that this search is parodied, and finding the deeper meaning behind things or transcendental experience is no longer possible.
- ²⁹ In a letter White stresses the importance of the stream of consciousness as used by James Joyce in his work: "Most certainly I shouldn't have made use of the stream of consciousness if it hadn't been for Joyce, but I also rely to a great extent on what you refer to as 'dream material'." See Ingmar Björkstén. *Patrick White*. St. Lucia: UQP, 1976, 2f.
- ³⁰ Dorrit Cohn, 81.
- ³¹ Virginia Woolf. "The Narrow Bridge of Art", in: *Granite and Rainbow*. London: Hogart P, 1960, 18. For parallels between White's and William Faulkner's presentation of nature see Patricia A. Morley. *The Mystery of Unity*. Montreal, London: McGill-Queen's UP, 1972, 13..
- ³² See Patrick White. *The Tree of Man*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1986, 42, 461. Page references with the abbreviation 'TM' refer to this edition.
- ³³ "The whole and perfect celestial circle and the square earth unite psychic qualities to express completeness and union. The mandala is made a uniting symbol", in: A.P. Riemer. "Visions of the Mandala in *The Tree of Man*", in: G.A. Wilkes. *Ten Essays on Patrick White*. Sydney: A&R, 1973, 118. See also Carl G. Jung *Aion*, 40f. The image of a mystic circle symbolizes in *Voss* a state of perfection, too (see V 198).
- ³⁴ Thelma Herring, G.A. Wilkes. "A Conversation with Patrick White", in: Peter Wolfe ed. *Critical Essays on Patrick White*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1990, 32.
- ³⁵ Randolph Stow. *To the Islands*. Sydney: Pan Books, 1983, 2, 10, 15, 64. Page references refer to this edition.
- ³⁶ It has been asserted that Stow writes in White's 'shadow'. See Vincent Buckley. "In the shadow of Patrick White", *Meanjin* 20/2, 1961, 144-154. Stow has made it clear in his preface to the revised edition of *To the Islands*, however, that he finished the novel before *Voss* was available in Australia.
- ³⁷ Randolph Stow. "Some ideas for a new, epic art in an Australian setting", *Westerly* 1, 1961, 3.

- ³⁸ Ibid. 4f. "Interview by Helen Frezil", *Australian Women's Weekly* 12.5.1958, zit in: J.J. Healy. *Literature and the Aborigine in Australia 1770-1975*. St. Lucia: UQP, 1978, 223, fn. 33.
- ³⁹ Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*. Transl. by D.C. Lau. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980, 138, also 140.
- ⁴⁰ Stow uses the rock symbol ambivalently as Mummy Dido appears in strong contrast to Heriot like "a Buddha, a round rock vast and warm and immovable in the knowledge of her responsibilities." (43).
- 41 Father Way, the new leader of Heriot's mission, is a figure of hope (see 32). He is the ideal leader according to Taoist ideas. Way with his "modern views" (41) represents wisdom and outer calmness – the 'wu-wei' according to Taoism. He lives and acts according to nature. In contrast to Heriot who learns total yielding only at the end of his journey, Way represents this ideal form of leadership as described by Stow in "The Testament of Tourmaline", 72." In this context his telling name is also significant as Tao means 'way'
- ⁴² For details see John B. Beston. "Heriot's Literary Allusions in Randolph Stow's *To the Islands*", *Southerly* 35/2, 1975, 168-177. He refers to the first edition of the novel. Stow himself explained: "I did certainly mean the quotations used by Heriot as fragments shored against his ruins ... their use shows his desperation ... as he strengthens, he drops his literary allusions and responds immediately to what is around him." Interv. with Peter Kuch, Paul Kavanagh. "The Self-Critical Craftsman", *Southerly* 46/4, 1986 437.
- ⁴³ Randolph Stow. „The Southland of Antichrist: The Batavia Disaster of 1629“, in: Anthony J. Hassall ed. *Strange Country*. St. Lucia: UQP, 1986, 412f.
- ⁴⁴ The term is coined by Stephen Knight. *The Selling of the Australian Mind*. Melbourne: Meridian, 1991, 18. See also Paul Carter, 337f.
- ⁴⁵ Lao Tsu explains the 'strangeness' of the wise man who experiences Tao in the 41st stanza: "The way that is bright seems dull; The way that leads forward seems to lead backward; The way that is even seems rough. The highest virtue I like the valley; ... The great note is rarefied insound; The great image has no shape. The way conceals itself in being nameless." *Tao Te Ching*, 02.
- ⁴⁶ Randolph Stow. "From the Testament of Tourmaline", 72.
- ⁴⁷ David Malouf. „A First Place: The Mapping of the Word“, *Southerly* 45/1, 1985, 3.
- ⁴⁸ Susanne Bau. „Interview with David Malouf“, *Newsletter der Gesellschaft für Australien-Studien* 9 1995, 76.
- ⁴⁹ David Malouf. *Harland's Half Acre*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1987, 39. Page references refer to this edition.
- ⁵⁰ "what [*Harland's Half Acre*] really ends up wanting to affirm is that the people who possess anything are the people who possess it in their imagination and not in fact. ... Australians don't own the land, neither do Aborigines own the land, but those who have formed a real spiritual union with it." My interv. with David Malouf,
- ⁵¹ David Foster. *The Pure Land*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1985, 22, 26. Page references refer to this edition.
- ⁵² Foster has supported this interpretation when he explains: "the book is now seen to begin, not at the beginning, but towards the middle, and the beginning follows upon the end – this plan leaves the middle fuzzy, and the beginning clear. The inspiration would be Escher's graphic work." Letter from the author 13.08.1992.
- ⁵³ For further details see David Foster. "Chaos is normal" *ABR* 119, 1990, 24-28.
- Foster's biography shows similarities with his protagonist Danny. He explains "*The Pure Land* is a semi-autobiographical novel in certain of its components, in its landscapes certainly. ... The landscapes were things I had seen." My interview with David Foster, *Westerly* 42/1, 1997, 117.
- ⁵⁴ E.A. Travers. „On the Philosophical. An Interview with David Foster“, *Westerly* 37/1, 1992, 71. See also C.G. Jung, vol. 2, 549f.
- ⁵⁵ See David Foster. „Satire“, *The Phoenix Review* 2, 1987-8, 63-79.
- ⁵⁶ Rodney Hall himself has worked for the *Queensland Council for Aboriginal Advancement* and has written a book about their culture, see *The Australians*. South Yarra: O'Neil, 1984.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid. *Just Relations*. London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1990, 20. Page references refer to this edition.
- ⁵⁸ The term was first used by Stephen Kolsky. "Exploring *Inland*", in: ibid. *Earth Wings. The Outrider '91 Amanach*. Brisbane: Phoenix, 1991, 99.
- ⁵⁹ Gerald Murnane: *The Plains*. Ringwood: McPhee Gribble, 1990, 92. Page references refer to this edition.
- ⁶⁰ Susanne Braun-Bau. „A conversation with Gerald Murnane.“ *Antipodes* 10/1, 1996, 47f.
- ⁶¹ Gerald Murnane: *Inland*. London: Faber and Faber, 1990, 63f.

⁶² “I thought while I was writing [the end of *The Plains*]: If you look into an eye, you see only darkness. And yet, as the plainsman says, that’s where the visible world is. We think our minds are brightly lit, but now I know they’re in darkness.” In: Susanne Braun-Bau, „A Conversation with Gerald Murnane“, 46.

⁶³ Gerald Murnane. *Landscape with Landscape*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1987. 24. In Murnane’s work the relationship between men and women also remains purely imaginative. Being single and alone is necessary to retain the positive unblemished view of the woman which is paralleled with landscapes of Australia (see 43).