

***Reading Culture: the translation and transfer of
Australianness in contemporary fiction***

Lara Cain
B.A. (Hons)

**School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Centre for Community and Cross-cultural Studies
Queensland University of Technology**

Submitted in full requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
2001

Key words:

Culture, translation, identity,
language, belonging, fiction, marketing,
publishing, myth, Australia, France, United Kingdom.

Abstract

The dual usage of ‘reading’ in the title evokes the nature of this study. This thesis will analyse the ways in which people ‘read’ (make sense of/produce) images of culture as they approach translated novels. Part of this analysis is the examination of what informs the ‘reading culture’ of a given community; that is, the conditions in which readers and texts exist, or the ways in which readers are able to access texts. Understanding of the depictions of culture found in a novel is influenced by publicity and promotion, educational institutions, book stores, funding bodies and other links between the reading public and the production and sale of books. All of these parties act as ‘translators’ of the text, making it available and comprehensible to readers.

This thesis will make use of a set of contemporary Australian novels, each of which makes extensive use of Australianness and Australianisms throughout its narrative. The movement of these texts from their cultures of origin towards wider Australia, the United Kingdom and France will provide the major case studies. The thesis will assert that no text is accessed without some form of translation and that the reading positions established by translators are a powerful influence on the interpretations arrived at by readers. More than ever, in the contemporary reading environment, the influence of the press and other ‘translators’ is significant to the ways in which texts are read, and to perceptions held by readers of the culture from which a novel originates.

Table of Contents

Keywords	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Table of Illustrations	vi
Statement of Original Authorship	vii
Acknowledgments	viii
<u>Introduction:</u>	
<i>We translate cultures not languages.</i>	1
Definitions and key theoretical perspectives.	2
Why choose this corpus of novels?	14
What has gone before?	18
Practical applications of the thesis.	22
Chapter outline.	26
<u>Chapter One:</u>	
<i>The Australian sunbakes while the English sunbathes.</i>	
Translating culturally-specific language and identity in narrative.	
<u>Introduction</u>	30
<u>1. Language and Identity</u>	32
1.1 Speech genres	36
1.2 Intertextuality and heteroglossia	39
1.3 Variation and accent	41
1.4 Humour and word play	43
1.5 Popular culture	45
1.6 Vulgarities	49
1.7 Strategic choices and linguistic politics	52
<u>2. Australian English</u>	57
2.1 The Australian accent	58
2.2 Grammatical specificities	63
2.3 Lexical variation	64
2.4 Other Australian Englishes	66
<u>Conclusion</u>	72
<u>Chapter Two:</u>	
<i>Some colonial dress-ups and a few low key speeches.</i>	
Translating Australian approaches to nationalism and national mythology.	
<u>Introduction</u>	74

<u>1. Australian nationalism</u>	77
<u>2. Myth and masculinity</u>	90
<u>3. Land, belonging and finding a ‘home’</u>	102
<u>Conclusion</u>	113

Chapter Three:

That’s what Paradise is – never knowing the difference.

Theoretical approaches to translation.

<u>Introduction</u>	120
<u>1. What is translation?</u>	123
<u>2. Theoretical approaches to translation</u>	126
2.1 Descriptive vs theoretical translation studies	127
2.2 Fidelity	128
2.3 Style and form	131
2.4 Domestication and exoticisation	134
2.5 Some effects of translation theory on dealing with cultural specificities	137
<u>3. Transfer and the literary polysystem</u>	142
<u>4. Problems and “best possible” solutions</u>	149

Chapter Four:

A good book makes you want to phone the author.

Sites of authority: readers and authors as translators.

<u>Introduction</u>	157
<u>1. Paratext</u>	159
<u>2. What is an author?</u>	164
<u>3. What is a reader?</u>	172
<u>4. What is a translator?</u>	177
4.1 Genre	179
4.2 Celebrity	182
4.3 Oppositionality	193
<u>Conclusion</u>	197

Chapter Five:

Brisbane’s favourite son.

The transfer and translation of Nick Earls’ *Zigzag Street*.

<u>Introduction</u>	202
<u>1. Australian texts in the United Kingdom</u>	204

<u>2. Paratextual effect: wider community understanding</u>	
<u>as translation</u>	206
2.1 Education as translation	208
2.2 Publishing and the media as translation	211
2.3 Genre as translation	215
<u>3. Cultural-specificity/Australianness in Zigzag Street</u>	223
3.1 Language and myth	223
3.2 Author as local identity	225
<u>4. Sites of authority/types of translation</u>	237
4.1 Bookstores as translation	239
4.2 The author function as translation	242
4.3 The peritext: the publisher as translator	246
4.4 The epitext: the press as translator	249
<u>Conclusion</u>	252

Chapter Six:

L'exploratrice des antipodes.

The transfer and translation of Nikki Gemmell's *Cleave*.

<u>1. Australian texts in France</u>	258
<u>2. Paratextual effect: wider community understanding</u>	
<u>as a form of translation</u>	263
2.1 Education as translation	264
2.2 Bookstores and publishing as translation	266
2.3 The media as translation	270
<u>3. Cultural-specificity/Australianness in Cleave</u>	274
3.1 Language and myth	275
3.2 Genre and the author as local identity	289
<u>4. Sites of authority/types of translation</u>	294
4.1 The author function as translation	296
4.2 Peritext: the publisher as translator	308
4.3 Epitext: the press as translator	313
<u>Conclusion</u>	319

Conclusion:

Everything we know about cultures beyond our own has come to us [...] through processes of transfer and translation.

<u>Politics and translation</u>	325
<u>Economics and translation</u>	331
<u>Culture and translation</u>	338
<u>Future directions</u>	341

<u>Bibliography</u>	344
----------------------------	-----

Table of Illustrations

<u>Title of illustration</u>	<u>Page number</u>
1: Comparative examples of the author as celebrity.	188
2: Australian cover design of Luke Davies' <i>Candy</i> .	218
3: United Kingdom cover design of <i>Candy</i> .	218
4: Publicity photo of Nick Earls on release of <i>Bachelor Kisses</i> .	230
5: Promotional poster design for <i>After January</i> .	230
6: Publicity photo of Nick Earls on release of <i>Perfect Skin</i> .	230
7: United Kingdom cover design of Nick Earls' <i>Bachelor Kisses</i> .	241
8: Australian cover design of <i>Bachelor Kisses</i> .	241
9: Original Australian cover design of Nick Earls' <i>Zigzag Street</i> .	248
10: Second reprint Australian cover design of <i>Zigzag Street</i> .	248
11: United Kingdom cover design of <i>Zigzag Street</i> .	248
12: Australian cover design of Nikki Gemmell's <i>Cleave</i> .	309
13: French cover design of <i>Cleave (Les Noces Sauvages)</i> .	309
14: Australian cover design of Sally Morgan's <i>My Place</i> .	311
15: French cover design of <i>My Place (Talahue)</i> .	311
16: Australian cover design of Fiona Capp's <i>Night Surfing</i> .	314
17: French cover design of <i>Night Surfing (Surfer la Nuit)</i> .	314

Statement of original authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference in made.

Signed:.....

Date:

Acknowledgments

A project of this duration cannot be completed without the support and assistance of many. Throughout my work on this project I have considered myself extremely fortunate to have been surrounded by people, in both my personal and professional lives, who believed in the importance of my research and believed in my ability to successfully complete this thesis. It seems a prerequisite of the postgraduate experience to be plagued with self-doubt, so the wisdom of my colleagues, family and friends has been invaluable.

Fundamental to the submission of this thesis was the guidance of my supervisors. For academic expertise, celebrity anecdotes and extended metaphors above and beyond the call of duty, I thank the Principal Supervisor of both my Honours and PhD theses, Dr Barbara Hanna. I also thank Mr Joe Hardwick for his advice and support as Associate Supervisor. Both individuals have given generously of their time in spite of other pressures and commitments (having observed the experiences of other postgraduate students, I know that this is a gift not offered by all supervisors). I add to this list of collegial supporters many past and present members of QUT's soon to be dismantled School of Humanities and Social Sciences. I began my studies at QUT in 1994 with vague ambitions and no specific areas of interest. Within three years of undergraduate study, my fascination with literature and language had been fuelled by the excellent teaching and encouragement of those who are now my colleagues. I thank the department for supporting my Honours project and my move into PhD research.

The difficult position of researching international marketing and publishing concerns from Australia was made easier by a number of parties. Access to a sufficiently wide range of interviews, reviews and publishing anecdotes could not have been achieved without the help of publicists and other representatives of publishing houses. Further to this, the authors of the novels analysed in this thesis have been extremely helpful – I particularly thank Nick Earls whose continued support of this project has been invaluable.

The School and Centre at QUT must be acknowledged for financially supporting a greatly useful international research trip. During my time in the United Kingdom, the academic and support staff of the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies and the Australian Studies section of the University of Wales, Lampeter, offered me insight, advice and the opportunity for public presentation of my findings at that stage. I also thank my interviewees in France for their contribution to the project.

Finally, I must thank my family for being my friends and my friends for being like family. I have an exceptional support network in my private sphere and I could not have survived the past three and half years with any semblance of sanity intact without my personal associates. I particularly acknowledge the collegial support of my fellow postgraduate students at QUT who have been ready with a shoulder and an occasional beer in times of stress. Most importantly, however, I acknowledge the unconditional and tireless support and love of my parents, Max and Robyn Cain, my siblings, Emma and Stephen Cain, and my partner, Darren Gray – who came into my life towards the start of this project and didn't know what he was letting

himself in for! Thank you to all of you, this thesis truly could not have been completed without you.

Please note that this Thesis has had minor amendments made to pages 187 and 188 to remove words that may have offended the author of an article critiqued in this Thesis.

Introduction

“...we translate cultures, not languages.”¹

The dual usage of ‘reading’ in the title evokes the nature of this study. This thesis will analyse the ways in which people ‘read’ (make sense of/produce) images of culture as they approach translated novels. Part of this analysis is the examination of what informs the ‘reading culture’ of a given community; that is, the conditions in which readers and texts exist, or the ways in which readers are able to access texts. Further to the words of the text, the understanding of the depictions of culture found in a novel is influenced by publicity and promotion, educational institutions, bookstores, funding bodies and other links between the reading public and the production and sale of books. Each of these parties acts as translator of the text, making it available and comprehensible to readers. Though there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ reading of a novel, and each reading is individual, this elaborate process of translation establishes a range of reading positions from which readers are likely to approach texts. It enhances the reader’s repertoire of images, which allows them to make sense of the foreign features of a novel.

The parameters of this study have been drawn to include only the transfer and translation of a set of contemporary Australian novels, each of which makes extensive use of Australianness and Australianisms throughout its narrative. The movement of these texts from their cultures of origin towards wider Australia, the United Kingdom and France will provide the major case studies. To fully understand what happens during the transfer of a text, the thesis will unpack the process and

¹WYLER, Lia. *Translat2000 discussion group* (translat2000@yahoogroups.com). 13 Jan 2001. Archives available at URL: www.translat2000.com

investigate: what makes texts belong to a particular culture; ways in which culture is represented in these novels; how translators theorise the inevitable changes that occur in the process of transfer; what factors create and influence a reading culture (such as the status of the author or the state of a national literature); and why texts are transferred (who and what motivates a translation? what are their aims?). The thesis concludes with two case studies involving the translation of specific texts, which will demonstrate the above. The thesis will assert that no text is accessed without some form of translation and that the reading positions established by translators are a powerful influence on the interpretations arrived at by readers. In doing such an analysis, it becomes clear that language is but the façade of the translation process. Literature and authors work as ambassadors, being read as cultural texts. Funding bodies, too, are keen to educate readers about culture – and readers are keen to learn. Thus, the reading positions established by a range of translations of a text become important in terms of cross-cultural communication. More than ever, in the contemporary reading environment, the influence of the press and other ‘translators’ is significant to the ways in which texts are read, and to perceptions held by readers of the culture from which a novel originates.

Definitions and key theoretical positions of this thesis

Translation is commonly (mis)understood to be the transformation of a text from one language into another. Modern appropriation of the word permits its use also in terms of the transformation of a book into a film, for example, or of a concept into a realised project. The word ‘translation’, then suggests movement, transfer, changes of form and of the process of ‘making real’, or ‘making comprehensible’.

So, translation is not just a change of language, but a transformation of many, even all, elements of a text in order that it may make sense for a new audience.

Translation studies or translation theory mean different things to different people (as will be discussed in Chapter Three). Ritva Leppihalme² states that since 1980, a “shift of emphasis” has taken place in studies of translation. From its origins in pure linguistic analysis, the current state of the field is “interdisciplinary and culturally-oriented”³, and this will be reflected in the theoretical approaches chosen for this thesis.

Anthony Pym inspired the early stages of this project with the deceptively simple assertion that “texts belong”⁴; texts have a place, time and context of origin in which they are maximally comprehensible. The transfer of any text from this space requires a possible change of language, but a definite change of “values”⁵ in order for a different readership to engage with the text in a similar way to its original readers. The same can be applied to audiences, viewers or other producers and interpreters. This change of values is brought about by the fact that texts encompass the values of the culture in which they are developed. Graeme Turner says that texts “generate meanings, take on significances, and assume forms that are articulations of the values, beliefs – the ideology – of the culture.”⁶ Australian texts have a place of belonging in Australia because they

[...] draw on those myths, connotations and symbols which have currency in the Australian culture; and they also reveal what formal preferences – the encouragement of certain genres, conversions and modes of production – are exercised in that culture.⁷

²LEPPIHALME, Ritva. *Culture Bumps: an Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters. 1997, 1.

³LEPPIHALME, Ritva. 1997, 1.

⁴PYM, Anthony. *Translation and Text Transfer*. Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang. 1992, 101.

⁵PYM, Anthony. 1992, 102.

⁶TURNER, Graeme. *National Fictions: Literature, Film and the Construction of Australian Narrative*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin. 1986, 1.

⁷TURNER, Graeme. 1986, 19.

Put simply by Pym, texts must *belong* because sometimes they obviously do not.⁸ It is occasionally noticeable that words in a translated sentence are in the wrong order, for example. In terms of popular culture, Andrew McKenzie⁹ has discussed the use of dubbed foreign commercials in Australia, specifically the office setting of a Diet Coke commercial, “something about the way it looks or the way characters are dressed reveals that offices are not the same everywhere in the world.” So while the storyline has been made to work for a new audience, culturally-specific content allows viewers to conclude that the setting does not belong to Australia.

This thesis examines translation with reference to the culturally-specific content of Australian novels and the problems posed for translators by the Australianness and Australianisms these texts contain. Translators, in this thesis, will be defined as any party who assists in the process of making the text comprehensible, including the publisher, the press, educational institutions and bookstores (Chapter Three will elaborate these concepts). The interdisciplinary nature of this thesis is born out of its interaction with literary and cultural theories, as well as the aforementioned state of translation theory itself. Translation, by nature, promotes eclectic and contradictory theoretical positioning – given its inherent inability to sit comfortably within the guidelines of the post-structuralist taste for unstable borders and freedom of interpretation. Some clarification of the terminology at work in this project is therefore necessary.

The movements described in this thesis involve discussion of the transfer of a novel from one culture to another. There is a need to define the boundaries of a given language or culture in order to discuss such movements. A translator must decide that he/she is translating from ‘Standard French’ to ‘Australian English’, for

⁸PYM, Anthony. 1992, 102.

⁹McKENZIE, Andrew. Global Vision. *Weekend Australian*. October 30-31 1999, 29.

example, or his/her lexical choices become impractically limitless. At the same time, translators acknowledge the illogicality of assuming the existence of closed, homogenous cultures or languages. Such is the labyrinthine nature of translation discourse, which seems to catch one up, no matter which terminological choices are made.

This movement must also acknowledge that there are two parties involved in the transfer: a ‘producer’ and a ‘receiver’, a ‘source’ and a ‘target’ culture. Again, these loaded terms are problematic given that this thesis will argue that production of the text lies as much in the mind of the reader as the translator or the author. Production of a text cannot therefore be attributed to one person, and ‘reception’ erroneously implies passivity. ‘Source’ implies a single point of origin of the work (that is without its own intertextuality), while ‘target’ is born out of the school of thought that supports translating for the benefit of the recipient culture; meaning that alterations to the culturally-specific factors of the novel are acceptable. Yet, a name must be given to the points of departure and arrival involved in the movement of a text in order to discuss them, and alternatives to the terms used here are equally loaded in some way.

‘Literature’ as a term was historically considered to include only what might now be called ‘high art’, but has been sufficiently reappropriated to be used as a synonym for many types of text. The ‘literary function’ of a text, however, remains a significant distinction, which will be discussed further in Chapter Four. ‘Australian Literature’ can be questioned too¹⁰ as it variously refers to works written in Australia, published in Australia, written by Australians or containing some reference to Australia. Here it will be used in its broadest sense to include works written by

¹⁰See for example: John SALTER. What makes Australian literature Australian? *Antipodes*. 9 (1), June 1995, 15-22.

authors who view themselves as Australians – regardless of subject matter, current residence or birthplace of the author or place of publication before transfer. Theorist Itamar Even-Zohar¹¹ suggests that ‘transfer’ implies something like integration; that is, a text can be moved without being transferred (or adopted/comprehended by the target culture). My use of the term transfer here, however, follows Pym’s use of the term¹² to indicate the movement of texts that leads to translation.

Translation promotes discussion of ‘accuracy’, ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘faithful’ or ‘unfaithful’ and further qualifiers of value, which are viewed as obsolete and entirely subjective positions in other theoretical spheres. Thus, while postcolonial and postmodern theories of blurred boundaries, hybridity and the arbitrary nature of sign systems are philosophically desirable, they become difficult to apply in practice: to translate, decisions must be made. Anthony Pym, characteristically unabashed in his discussion of sacred institutions, says “in the spirit of quiet dissent”¹³ that deconstruction does not offer much on the topic of translation that translators do not already know; that is, the instability of texts is recognised, but external forces (finance, time, purpose of translation) prevent every translation from being an exercise in philosophy. “...translation theory should not be unduly upset by the fact that source texts are semantically unstable points of departure”¹⁴ Pym states. This might apply to others of the terms referred to above. Much time is spent within translation studies grappling with terminology, and yet, as Pym states, both deconstructionist and other word options remain “decidedly unhelpful once agreed

¹¹EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. The making of repertoire and the role of transfer. *Target*. 10 (2), 1998, 357-361.

¹²PYM, Anthony. 1992, 18.

¹³PYM, Anthony. Doubts about deconstruction as a general theory of translation. *TradTerm*. 2, 1995, 11.

¹⁴PYM, Anthony. 1995, 11.

to”.¹⁵ With this in mind, this thesis will utilise certain of the aforementioned terminologies, with sensitivity to the flaws within.

There are well-known opponents of the need for naming of translation devices and definition of boundaries within translation. Some go so far as to believe that one does not even need to know a second language in order to translate: one can translate the feel and rhythm of the text and still produce a readable document. This is true, but it will bear little resemblance to the original. This situation introduces one of the principle questions of translation theory: how much does fidelity matter? Translation theory (as will be expanded in Chapter Three) seeks solutions to the problems of choice faced every day by translators. Some changes – of either language or value - will be inevitable. The translator can make those changes minimal – so as to stay close to the original document but risk a lack of understanding or acceptance of the text in the second culture. Or, make extensive changes (‘domesticate’) so as to risk estranging the novel from its site of origin, changing the meaning of certain passages and losing cultural references for the sake of comprehension by the target group. Chapter Three will discuss other options such as translating the style, rather than content, of a text (sometimes viewed as appropriate for poetry, for example) or ‘function-oriented’ translation, in which the translator aims to achieve the same response to the text in the target culture as the source; it should *work* the same way. This thesis will examine how and why some such changes have occurred in the movement of Australian novels to other communities and will demonstrate the effect of these alterations on potential readings of the texts.

¹⁵PYM, Anthony. 1995.

Gerard Genette's understanding of a wider definition of text supports a wider definition of translation. For Genette (and others, as will be elaborated in Chapter Four) the text extends beyond the boundaries of the written document and might include all things that affect the reader's ability to make sense of the text: promotion, the author figure, cultural knowledge, and so on. Genette¹⁶ posits that a literary work is

[...] rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions [...] they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: *to make present*[...] (sic).

Genette refers to this extension of the text as "paratext", which can clearly be seen to influence and inform readings of the work. Genette divides his paratext into "peritext" and "epitext": peritext being the paratextual factors that are physically attached to the text (cover design, preface, sleeve notes), and epitext being those factors "not materially appended"¹⁷ to the novel (interviews, press releases, celebrity status of the author). These paratextual elements will be considered types of translation within this thesis. They are inseparable from the reading of the text, and therefore are inseparable from the transfer of that text.

Given the convoluted processes associated with translation, which is now broadened to include the press, funding bodies and other paratextual factors, questions must also be asked of politics. The politics behind translational alterations is frequently acknowledged by translation theorists, but is not always apparent to readers or other critics. Fields such as biblical studies are acutely aware of the importance of agenda and perspective in translation. A spokesperson for a recent international commission into biblical translation stated that there is "heresy lurking

¹⁶GENETTE, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. LEWIN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 1.

¹⁷GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 344.

behind every comma”.¹⁸ Lawrence Venuti has written extensively on translation ‘scandals’ – both in the sense of raising awareness of alterations (a favourite example is the omission of twelve pages of Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* for an English edition)¹⁹ and in terms of the treatment of translators (legally, financially and ethically). He advocates the teaching of texts as translations – including analysis of the historical choices made by translators – and more effective copyright laws and pay structures that recognise translators as artists and authors.²⁰

This recognition of translators is important to this thesis because of its effect on the role of authors. Browsing the paratextual examples given throughout this thesis, there is rarely mention of the translator. They will be cited on the front cover, and perhaps may include a translator’s note or preface, but will never be credited with any form of authorship of the book. They will not be interviewed about their impression of the cultures involved in the translation, in the way that these things are asked of authors, nor will they be attributed an individual ‘style’. Venuti speaks of the “weird self-annihilation”²¹ that accompanies professional translation. The translator is “performing without a stage”²², while the author may become a celebrity in a variety of different cultural environments. Chapter Four will show the ways in which authors are made to be ambassadors for their cultures, and become sources of authority for the many topics deliberated in their novels. Translators mediate between the source text and the public, yet are given no recognition for the part they play in comprehensibility – not just of the words, but of the culture and of extended

¹⁸ALLEN, John Jnr. Battle over translation body reflects wider liturgical wars. *National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas). 7 Jan 2000, 5.

¹⁹VENUTI, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards and ethics of difference*. London: Routledge, 1998, 154.

²⁰ See for example: Lawrence VENUTI. *The Translator’s Invisibility*. London: Routledge, 1995.

²¹VENUTI, Lawrence. 1995, 8.

²²WECHSLER, Robert. *Performing without a stage: the Art of Literary Translation*. North Haven: Catbird press, 1998.

readings. ‘Scandals’ are caused by this invisibility: because few people approach a translated work *as* a translated work. Many ask “what did the author mean by that?”, but not “what did the translator mean/why did he or she make that choice?” Ultimately, it is the translator’s invisibility that allows texts to be read in cultures away from the source as if they were being received in an original state.

These ‘scandals’ can be applied equally to the texts as to the paratexts. On a theoretical level, this thesis is innovatory in that it will be shown that well-known theories of translation (such as domestication, ‘fidélité au sens’ or invisibility) can be applied to the publicity, promotion, cover designs, author figure, bookshop sales and other types of translation, as the printed word. The paratext also assists with a discussion of how translated texts are made to work in different environments; that is, what their place is within a given culture. Itamar Even-Zohar’s ‘polysystem theory’ discusses this.

The polysystem is the interrelated collection of systems that governs the ‘production’ and ‘reception’ of literature within a given culture. Polysystem theory analyses the ways in which translated texts are positioned within cultures and the innovative or conservative influence texts may have on the recipient culture. Even-Zohar’s initial forays into polysystem theory were criticised as simplistic and general, but they instigated a field of study that increasingly attracts followers and interest. With recent revisions, Even-Zohar’s work sees that “extraliterary factors such as patronage, social conditions, economics, and institutional manipulation are correlated to the way translations are chosen and function in a literary system”.²³

Trends in publishing can be read as the commercial face of Even-Zohar’s theory, which aims to investigate the effect of translated works on a polysystem and

²³GENTZLER, Edwin. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London: Routledge, 1993, 120.

the changes to the repertoire of the target culture after texts have been transferred. The buying trends of different cultures indicate the preferences and tastes of a culture and the palatability of certain cross-cultural outputs (though analysis of marketing shows that these tastes can be influenced). Knowing, for example, that the French love detective novels means that Australian detective novels automatically have a place to go within the literary system. Bestsellers and award winners are more likely to be offered and bought for translation than those texts with a limited readership. This may result in a skewed impression of the qualities of the literature of a particular nation as only a small selection is being offered for international perusal. Even-Zohar suggests that translation can be a conservative influence (rather than the innovatory influence which might be assumed) if a system chooses to translate books already palatable in some way: those that will 'fit in', rather than revolutionise. This choice is most often made for reasons of saleability.

Lawrence Venuti's passionate observations in this area show that there is a vast imbalance in the number of texts translated from, rather than to, English. Part of this is due to the strength of British and American publishing houses. This "trade imbalance"²⁴ carries cultural and economic consequences for smaller (weaker, in Even-Zohar's parlance) countries, languages and literatures. Indigenous publishers want to promote British or American bestsellers because they are more profitable than local works, which require larger amounts of marketing to find an audience. Therefore, there is less money to promote domestic languages and literatures, and readership for them becomes even more limited. In countries where numerous languages are spoken, this imbalance conserves and reinforces existing hierarchies. Foreign texts are translated into "government-designated official languages or into

²⁴VENUTI, Lawrence. 1998, 160.

the native language that dominates the publishing industry”, thus preventing exposure to diversity leading to an elimination of the smaller language and a lack of enrichment of the “official” one.²⁵ The French Publishers Association figures from 1999 suggest that 70% of rights acquisitions that year were English-language books. This tells a tale about the state of the cultures involved: there is more interest from French people to learn about English-speaking countries than vice versa, for example.²⁶ Even-Zohar would suggest that this indicates a lack in the French system that can be satisfied by the importation of English-speaking texts. Movements for Even-Zohar are encouraged by gaps in the system that require filling. This lack might be financial or philosophical (this position will be problematised in later chapters.) These types of equations serve to create a trend in a reading culture, and translations are positioned accordingly. Political regimes, economic well-being, physical relation to neighbouring countries and historical ties to colonisers over history dictate the condition of the literary polysystem and therefore the desire for, and positioning of, translated texts.

Polysystem theory, translation in general, and cross-cultural communication are influenced by power relations. Power will be analysed in a number of ways throughout this thesis. Postcolonial theory looks at the power of language as a tool for identity assertion and formation.²⁷ This is important to studies of translation as there are often significant changes made to the language of a text when it is moved away from its source culture, which affects the power strategies of the language

²⁵VENUTI, Lawrence. 1998, 162.

²⁶LOTMAN, Herbert R. France: A growing taste for Anglo-American Authors. *Publishers Weekly*. 247 (36), 4 Sept 2000, 52.

²⁷See for example: Bill ASHCROFT, Gareth GRIFFITHS and Helen TIFFIN. *The Empire Writes Back: theory and practice in post-colonial literature*. London: Routledge, 1989.

choices made by the author. At the same time, Michel de Certeau's²⁸ discussion of oppositional behaviour in everyday life, and Ross Chambers'²⁹ analysis of oppositionality in narrative, can be used to envisage a possible reversal of the power roles in the same circumstances. That is, the translations used by the epitextual facets of the text (the press and so on) create the illusion that a text is easily palatable (given that a potentially specialised audience may limit the possibility of translation), thereby allowing it relatively easy passage into the target system, where it may begin working to educate or revolutionise the system. In this way, translation acts as a sort of disguise, where readers are asked to believe that they will understand the novel without further investigation and in their lack of resistance to the text's foreignness may actually come to learn more about the source culture. Alternative viewpoints on this position will be given in Chapters Three and Four.

The author is also viewed as possessing a power attributable to the notion of 'celebrity'. As is the case for film or music personalities, the media and a constant procession of public appearances, interviews and readings create the successful contemporary author. The notion of authorial intention (what the author really meant) was once the elusive factor thought to facilitate translation. What is now sought by readers is not a definitive meaning, but an authentic cultural context for the novel. The authentication of authors (by making public their personal lives and so on) increases believability of the text for the reader. This is particularly notable in relation to books by younger authors, where there is a tendency to assume that the work is necessarily autobiographical. The texts chosen for this thesis are primarily the work of younger authors who write about everyday problems. Therefore, readers frequently desire a

²⁸CERTEAU, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven RENDALL. Berkeley: California University Press, 1984.

²⁹CHAMBERS, Ross. *Room for Maneuvre: Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991.

biographical dimension to the work in order to validate their own similar experiences. Chapters Four, Five and Six will show the ways in which authors are ‘created’ by the media and made to work as ambassadors for their culture and experts on a range of other issues. The author becomes a translator in this capacity as he or she assists in making a place for the novel in the target polysystem and in maximising comprehension of the text. Work in the field of celebrity and cultural studies by P. David Marshall³⁰, Stuart Cunningham, David Rowe³¹ and others will be examined to show why readers look to authors as sites of meaning.

Why choose this corpus of novels?

Zigzag Street by Nick Earls and *Cleave* by Nikki Gemmell provide the major case studies for this thesis. Luke Davies’ *Candy*, Christos Tsiolkas’ *Loaded*, Fiona Capp’s *Night Surfing* and Andrew McGahan’s *1988* provide examples of culturally-specific textual elements and translation strategies in Chapters One to Four. Other texts will be alluded to briefly as supporting evidence.³²

The novels analysed in this thesis display many similarities, though they do not belong to a singular genre. Each text represents a specific cultural position, within an overarching analysis of Australianness. National mythologies, colloquial language usage and intertextuality with previous Australian works are major features of these novels – making them difficult to translate and transfer to other environments. Each of these novels takes a pedagogic stance on a cultural

³⁰MARSHALL, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

³¹CUNNINGHAM, Stuart and Toby MILLAR, with David ROWE. *Contemporary Australian Television*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1994.

³² Due to the frequent use of these novels within the thesis I will not cite full bibliographic details in footnotes. Page numbers will be listed beside quotations and further details can be located in the Bibliography.

environment: Indigenous cultural identity, the world of drug addiction, the specificities of youth culture or the hybrid space of Greek-Australian culture, for example. This attachment to a specific cultural environment means that the alteration of the text for digestion of a different readership has an effect on the educational potential of the novel. All of these novels have been released internationally, with varying degrees of translation and critical or commercial success, in spite of their cultural specificity.

A young Australian author is said to have written each of these novels. The subject matter of their work and their press coverage renders them eternally young as a part of the process of authenticating the texts in readers' eyes, regardless of the actual age of each author. These allusions to youthfulness also work as metaphors for the perceived youthfulness of Australia as a nation – particularly in the international press. Each of these texts is the first or second novel by an author who did not have a place in Australia's canon at the time of release of the text. This is important as it affects the types of promotion and publicity accompanying the release: the introduction of an author into a new environment must be more instructive than the 'latest' release by a well-known author. Each novel is considered 'literary' (though the term is controversial) as opposed to merely 'popular'. This is significant because it permits the text a certain amount of cultural influence not afforded to a 'trash' novel.

Many of these texts have been associated with the 'grunge' movement, which was popular within Australian literature in the late 1990s, much to the consternation of some of the authors involved. I have endeavoured to steer away from the use of the label in this thesis, however, the grunge tag has worked for some of these texts (particularly those of McGahan and Tsiolkas) as a marketing tool and

will be discussed in places for that reason. It is a term also useful for arguing that genre works as form of translation itself, in that readers make sense of a text according to their expectations of the genre. Film and television offerings are cited occasionally here as, similarly to 'genre', they are inextricable from notions of celebrity and cross-cultural communication in the contemporary situation. Their separate theoretical requirements, however, prevent them from being major players in the case studies provided here. Graeme Turner has suggested that literature can no longer be "regarded as the pre-eminent national art form"³³ so the assertions of this thesis on the movement of cultural images, as backed by the translation abilities of the media, must acknowledge the influence of film and television on Australia's national and international performance of identity.

The primary reason for the choice of these novels is that they indeed seem to 'belong' to an Australian culture. *Zigzag Street* is a Brisbane-based novel that has acquired cult-status in its hometown due to its use of local references and landmarks, and to the very public face of its author. It is a tale of twenty-something romance that weaves its way through the streets, restaurants and shopping malls of Brisbane with accuracy, making maximal use of popular culture, brand names and other identity markers of the generation it depicts. *Loaded* continues the genre of urban drama in its depiction of a day in the life of a young, gay, Greek-Australian man who embraces an eclectic, cross-cultural lifestyle of family traditions and Melbourne's club scene. Again, the city becomes a character in the novel as the protagonist describes the things he sees in his world; the nuances of the communities he moves between are portrayed in a realist manner. *Candy*, similarly, uses the vernacular of

³³TURNER, Graeme. Film, television and literature: Competing for the nation. In: Bruce BENNETT and Jennifer STRAUSS, eds. *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998, 349.

the drug scene to authenticate its depiction of a romance between two heroin addicts. Moving between Sydney and Melbourne, and briefly to the country, we again see the repetition of myths about place and cultural identity along with culturally-specific language usage. *1998* and *Cleave* move from urban spaces to the desert and the bush as the characters take physical and psychological journeys through the centre of Australia, striving to connect with their country and find themselves. These texts catalogue the small details of urban life and then starkly juxtapose them with rural life. Both texts speak about race relations in Australia and the fissures between Australian identity myths and lived experience. *Night Surfing* also speaks about identity struggles and the desire to leave the past behind and embrace a better future. This text is set in seaside Victoria where its young protagonists deal with the mores of surf culture and the city-beach divide along with relationship issues.

These stories involve young characters who are questioning identity. This naturally raises issues of cultural identity and allows the most mundane details of everyday life in Australia to be played out for the reader. The *Seinfeld* genre of story telling that is so popular with young people world wide can be seen in these texts. Though ostensibly talking about small problems, these works closely examine cultural life through their attention to detail. Through use of language, brand names, icons of popular culture, national mythology, idiom and intertextuality, they have textually created Australian spaces, which have immediate resonance for those who share the source cultural environments. Simultaneously, they resist easy translation due to the change of values, as well as language, that will occur when the texts are moved.

What has gone before?

There are no other studies, to my knowledge, that blend translation theory and the corpus of texts selected for analysis in this thesis. However, a wide range of other studies of translation and Australian culture inform this project. In addition to the theoretical influences already mentioned, the predecessors to this thesis dissect Australian literature and culture or translation of other sorts. There are many studies available of cross-cultural communication and culturally-specific translation issues, along with analyses of Australian cultural communication issues.³⁴ Many postcolonial studies³⁵ have also examined the politics of cross-cultural communication and language usage in colonised nations, including Australia, and between nations, such as Australia and the United Kingdom.

Anthony Pym is one of the rare translation theorists who is interested in the translation of Australianness. Ritva Leppihalme's study of "culture bumps"³⁶ is also a specific investigation of cultural allusions - in this case moved between contemporary English-language texts and Finnish culture. The use of strong Scottish dialect in Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* provided some interesting commentary on contemporary translation decisions.³⁷ Similar studies of dialect and variety will be cited in Chapters One and Three. In the Australian context, however, the focus is predominantly on Aboriginal texts. I have found only occasional articles dealing with the problems of translating contemporary non-Aboriginal Australian novels, and

³⁴See for example: Mary ZOURNAZI. *Foreign Dialogues: Memories, Translations, Conversations*. Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 1998 and Gerhard SCHULZ, ed. *The Languages of Australia*. Canberra: Australian Academy of Humanities, 1983.

³⁵See for example: Brian EDWARDS and Wenche OMMUNDSEN. *Appreciating Difference: Writing Postcolonial Literary History*. Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1998.

³⁶LEPPIHALME, Ritva. 1997.

³⁷A fascinating step-by-step account of the translation of *Trainspotting* into a play for French Canada, complete with decisions made regarding slang and vulgarities can be found at: URL: <http://publishing.about.com/arts/publishing/cs/translation/index.htm>.

these are limited to studies of the canon, not innovatory texts by younger writers.³⁸ Stephen Muecke³⁹ and Anthony Pym⁴⁰ are two whose work on the translation of Aboriginal languages, including their translation for overseas markets, will be referred to within this dissertation.

International perspectives on Australian life and culture, and the analysis of similarities and differences, are not uncommon given the plethora of universities world wide including Australian subject matter in their curricula. Journals (such as *Antipodes*⁴¹) and collections (such as *European Perspectives*⁴²) offer a variety of visions of Australian life and culture from an international point of view. Jean-Paul Delamotte has published a series of ponderings on Australian culture and literature in French as a sort of intellectual advertisement for Australian creativity.⁴³ Other studies have followed early cross-cultural situations, such as Maurice Blackman's investigation of author Paul Wenz – a Frenchman who wrote novels and poems about bush life in French in the early 1900s.⁴⁴ Blackman notes that Wenz kept clear ties and contacts with the French literary scene during his life in Australia and his work is “identifiably French”. Yet, because of style and subject matter, Wenz can be “located within Australian literary discourse at one of its key moments, precisely

³⁸See for example: Xavier PONS. Australian novels in French. *Australian Literary Studies*. 6 (4), October 1974, 419-422.

³⁹MUECKE, Stephen. *Textual Spaces – Aboriginality and Cultural Studies*. Kensington, NSW: University of New South Wales Press, 1992.

⁴⁰PYM, Anthony. On the translatability of Australian Aboriginal Myth. 1998. URL: www.fut.es/~apym/myth.html (16 Feb 2001).

⁴¹*Antipodes: A North American journal of Australian literature*, the publication of the American Association of Australian Literary Studies. Brooklyn.

⁴²CAPONE, Giovanna, ed. *European Perspectives: Contemporary Essays on Australian Literature*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1991.

⁴³DELAMOTTE, Jean-Paul. *Amours de Rencontre (papiers australiens): à la rencontre de la culture australienne*. Paris: La Petite Maison, 1993.

⁴⁴See for example: Maurice BLACKMAN, ed. *Paul Wenz: Diary of a new chum and other lost stories*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1990.

when that discourse was reflecting on its own identity.⁴⁵ These types of clear cross-cultural moments are more commonly analysed than the more nebulous issues of translation as dealt with in this thesis.

The strong presence of Australian writers and intellectuals in the United Kingdom in the last forty years has ensured that Australian literature has held a notable position (this is expanded in Chapter Five). While some of these commentaries may take note or make light of Australian slang, the movement of literary fiction from Australia to the United Kingdom is rarely spoken about in terms of ‘translation’ (though the popular press occasionally alludes to this notion).⁴⁶ Translation does occur during the movement of texts from Australia to the United Kingdom, in both the traditional sense (words were exchanged when *Cleave* was released in the United Kingdom) and through paratext (a review may define, or ask an author to explain, a term). I have found no academic study that analyses this process in terms of translation theory.

There are clearly many academics outside of Australia specialising in Australian studies, though they are almost invariably bilingual and are therefore able to analyse Australian texts in their original form. Hence, the question of translation seems rarely to be raised in these forums beyond a comprehension of difference. Culturally-specific language usage may be clarified in such texts, but not framed according to translation theory. International Australian studies generally seems to concern itself with making sense of the greater Australian identity myths from looking at the past, more so than the present. This encourages study of canonical or

⁴⁵BLACKMAN, Maurice. Postcolonialism? Transculturalism? The Case of French-Australian writer Paul Wenz (1869-1939). In: Brian EDWARDS and Wenche OMMUNDSEN, eds. *Appreciating Difference: Writing Postcolonial Literary History*. Geelong:Deakin University Press, 1998, 149.

⁴⁶See for example: Lucy ATKINS. Outback Odyssey. *Times Literary Supplement*. 23 July 1999, 23.

germinal Australian novels, rather than exploring more unusual contemporary offerings (some exceptions to this will be outlined in Chapters Five and Six).

The lack of writing on the topic of contemporary Australian translations may also be due to the fact that international Australian Studies is frequently part of an English department. Again, this suggests that those who are likely to write about European perspectives on Australian literature are reading the novels in their original form. Academics who work in cross-cultural or language studies courses are aware of the issues raised by translation and perhaps see little point in comparing one version to another. Indeed my choice to perform close textual analysis might seem somewhat dated as an approach to study of translation (given the aforementioned assertion that there is no perfect solution). In this thesis, however, the inclusion of paratextual material justifies the use of comparative textual analysis: I am not looking for ‘faults’, but for potential reading positions.

The influence of Australia’s well known ‘cultural cringe’ may also have affected the lack of interest in this sort of analysis from Australian perspectives. In the popular press, there is clearly still a sufficient thrill associated with international recognition that the changes accompanying the movements are rarely questioned. A number of high profile authors have declined publication deals because of the changes deemed necessary by international publishers, but this is clearly less newsworthy than the success of those who do transfer their texts. For similar reasons (as discussed regarding the ‘polysystem’) high-profile or canonical authors are more likely to be chosen for academic analysis, though their texts may be far less culturally-specific than more experimental texts. This thesis will show that contemporary, youth-oriented Australian fiction carries heavy cultural significance,

yet is less likely to be analysed in academic ways. Consequently, there is a lack of literature about movements of this kind that this thesis seeks to rectify.

Practical applications of the thesis

This thesis proposes that translators have the power to inspire particular readings of a text, and that the changes that occur to the text during this movement will be made in consideration of what that desired reading position is. In many ways, this thesis says nothing new about the dilemmas inherent in translation itself: these have been theorised extensively by many. What this thesis offers is a rare examination of the Australian situation, which is mindful of the reasons why texts are moved. In terms of the reading public, there is a desire to read texts from foreign environments for the sake of interest, escapism and variety. On the part of the publishers and other funding bodies (without whom literary translations would seldom take place) there are specific agendas being sought from the process of transfer. One practical application of this thesis is to note the disparity between the aims of these facilitators and the reality of the reception of the translated work.

Estelle LeMaitre⁴⁷, a representative of French publisher Actes Sud, says that her publishing house actively seeks books “which at the same time can convey what is distinctive about a country but which also have universal content.” In choosing books, literary quality is said to be more important than evocations of landscape or other obvious drawcards, though Lemaitre admits that there is “an educational intention” behind the choices made. No books are entirely ‘universal’ in content without alteration, though naturally many stories may have broad appeal. To be

⁴⁷STRETTON, Andrea. Interview with Estelle Lemaitre. TV ABC, *Sunday Arts*. 31 Oct 1999a.

viewed as at least pan-national, that is, for a culture other than the source culture to feel that they too can relate to what is being told, the images in the text must be comprehensible within the foreign reader's frames of reference. This is why translation occurs – to make that resonance possible to some degree. While Actes Sud funds careful and considered translation, the findings of this thesis show that those things which are 'distinctive' are frequently exchanged or dumbed down in order that other facets of the narrative will make sense. So while a foreign audience may achieve some level of education during the reading of the text, they will never receive the full extent of educational opportunities.

Marc de Gouvenain ⁴⁸ (who oversees Antipodean acquisitions for Actes Sud) has said that "Australian authors have a fresh way of seeing things", and this is part of the appeal of publishing Australian novels. French actor/director Simon Eine has said of Australian theatre: "They're so strong, so fresh, these Australian playwrights, particularly the women – so powerful and so young!"⁴⁹ Yet, it is this freshness and originality that can be easily lost in translation. Chapter Six will look more closely at the movement of Australian texts towards France and will clearly demonstrate the extensive alterations made to novels during that movement. One example of change is the eradication of Nikki Gemmel's characteristic word play from the French edition of her novel *Cleave*. The striking use of word play makes a significant contribution to the innovatory nature of *Cleave*. Thus, the very thing being sought by publishers does not appear to its full potential in the translation. Readers with an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (about which there is currently much curiosity in Europe) are also deprived of some of the potential information that could be gleaned from a text like *Cleave*, due to the necessary

⁴⁸TURNBULL, Sarah. Australian Authors in demand. *Bulletin*. 28 October 1997, 35.

⁴⁹GLEDHILL, Matthew. The French Selection. *Bulletin*. 27 June 1995, 84.

alteration of Aboriginal speech patterns in the translation. The promotion of Indigenous cultures is one of the key aims of the Australia Council, and many other facilitators of cultural transfer, and, while much is still being achieved, the necessity to translate undermines some of these positive principles.

The 'Official Mandate'⁵⁰ of the Australia Council for the Arts includes the following specific aims amongst its functions:

- to foster a national identity by means of the arts.
- to uphold and promote the right of persons to freedom in the practice of the arts.
- to promote knowledge and appreciation of Australian arts by persons in other countries.
- to promote the unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as integral to Australia's national identity.
- to increase resources, opportunities and audiences for Australian arts.

The Arts Council provides vital funding for Australia's artistic endeavours and supports many programs for the international touring of productions and exhibitions. The translation process, however, calls into question the level to which some of these aims can be achieved. This thesis will demonstrate that alterations are regularly made to Australian texts before they are transferred, thus suggesting that international audiences are sometimes not receiving a realistic picture of Australian culture. While freedom to be an artist might exist due to the Council's funding, freedom of interpretation does not due to the reliance on paratext for marketability. It could be argued that in some cases what is being received is not 'Australian arts' but a hybrid form of such including considerable terminology belonging to the target

⁵⁰AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS. *Australia Council 1998 Grants Handbook*. Australia Council Act 1975, Official Mandate. 1998, 1-3.

rather than source culture. David Malouf⁵¹ has stated that for his work to be accepted in France, it must be “not an English book in translation but a French book” which is positioned in relation to “all the other French books on the shelf”. Malouf’s comments parallel the sentiments of one school of translation theory that encourage domesticating procedures; others suggest that it is important that, in these circumstances, a text retain its cultural specificity. When sufficient changes are made to a text for this to occur, it becomes much more complicated to speak about which culture is the source of a piece of literature.

As has been stated elsewhere, this is not to suggest that these parties are being deceitful or neglectful. There can never be absolute equivalence between a translated text and its original so readers, publishers and critics must accept what John Ciardi has referred to as the translator’s ambition: “the best possible failure”.⁵² This inevitable alteration results in changes to readers’ perceptions of the text and the source culture, which may be in tension with the reasons why the text has been chosen for transfer, such as educating another culture about Australia, for example. Thus, on a practical level, the research of this thesis may raise awareness of those things that influence the understanding of Australian culture for foreign readerships.

The necessity for translation leads many to ignore the fact that when reading, teaching or critiquing translated novels, we can never assume to be reading what was contained in the original text. Venuti’s exposés of ‘translation scandals’ are testimony to the fact that leading translation theorists see a lack of common understanding of this notion amongst readers. In some cases, readers may be aware of such scandals with relation to classics, as they become part of the paratext of the

⁵¹MALOUF, David. Queensland Art Gallery seminar series. 26 Aug 1999.

⁵²CIARDI, John. Translator’s preface to ALIGHIERI, Dante. *The Purgatorio*. New York: Mouton, 1961.

novel. However, it is often not considered an important line of inquiry in study of contemporary novels. On occasion, a well-publicised case appears, like the dubbing of the Australian film *The Castle*⁵³ for American release, for example. The popular press and many public voices were outraged that well-loved facets of Australian life (such as ‘rissoles’) were exchanged for American alternatives. It is rarely understood that such exchanges are extremely common and have a great influence on international perceptions of Australian culture. Raising awareness may be another practical application of projects like this one. This thesis will not suggest ‘better’ translations, which may retain a greater amount of cultural specificity, but perhaps inspire critical thinking or wider research by readers who wish to learn more about a culture than what is understood through blind faith in the accuracy of translated works.

Chapter outline

To adequately reach conclusions in this area, this thesis will progressively analyse the levels of textual meaning available to translators and the theories and practicalities of the translation process:

Chapter One will look at language – the traditional perceived starting point for translation. This chapter will analyse the work of a number of Australian authors and will scrutinise why language renders the texts culturally-specific, what types of language usages pose problems for translators and why there is debate over the retention of culturally specific terms when texts move between cultures. This chapter will look at the importance of defining a language (such as Australian English) and

⁵³*The Castle*. Directed by Rob SITCH. Working Dog Productions, 1997.

the flaws and limitations inherent in such boundaries. It will also analyse the importance of slang, expletives, brand names, humour and intertextuality in terms of linguistic cultural identity. Chapter One will secure for readers that the traditional framing of translation as the movement of a text from ‘language A’ to ‘language B’ is impractical.

Chapter Two will continue to question what allows readers to make meaning of a text and what it is about a text that makes it culturally specific. Chapter Two will address these concerns in terms of national mythologies. Language usage is intertwined with shared knowledges that belong to the collective psyche of a cultural group. Ways of seeing the culture, both proud and ironic uses of icons, turns of phrase with historic origins, depictions of landscape that resonate for those who have experienced them and the deployment and rejection of stereotypes are subtle but important factors in the process of making sense of a text and its culture of origin. This chapter will closely analyse a number of Australian texts looking for these culturally-specific layers of meaning. It will question how these signs position readers and why they are problematic for translators.

Having established the factors in texts that give meaning and that may cause concern for translators, Chapter Three will summarise the theoretical positions available to translators. This review will show the ways in which translation, and texts, are, and have been, perceived. It will demonstrate the parameters of translation and common problem-solving techniques, showing that translation is about far more than language and that other factors, such as economy of finance or space, sometimes override the most desirable, faithful or educational translation choices. Chapter Three will explain the mechanics of translation and its applications for Australian fiction.

Chapter Four will question our understanding of ‘text’ by investigating the role of the author and the media in the transfer and translation of texts. Genette’s theory of the paratext will be applied here and will demonstrate that translation can be seen on many levels other than the words of the novel. Chapter Four will introduce the concept that authorial meaning is sought by readers – not through traditional ‘author’s intention’ but through knowledge of the author’s life and his or her relationship to the source culture of the text. The importance of genre and the workings of the culture’s polysystem will be said to influence the reception of the text. Translation will be shown to include all facets of the text (including cover, press, etc) and to be influenced by contemporary approaches to marketing (celebrity status, advertising, design). By the conclusion of Chapter Four, the reader will have been exposed to conceptualisations of the processes and levels of meaning making available to both reader and translator; from the most concrete (language) to the more abstract notions of ‘cultural identity’, ‘national mythology’, ‘authorial power’ and ‘marketing’. All these things will be established as sites of meaning and sites of translation.

Chapters Five and Six will take on a more journalistic style than the previous chapters as specific case studies are analysed using a vast number of media responses to the texts. This approach has been taken in order to conceptualise popular response to the texts, and to examine the reading positions established by translation. That is, I will not presume what readers actually do with texts, but what the various translators instruct them to do. Chapter Five will begin the movement towards conclusions by closely analysing the reading positions established by translators for the work of Nick Earls. Commencing with linguistic analysis and local reception, this chapter will trace the movement of the text from its source

through to overseas reception and watch the translators at work along the way. This chapter will have an emphasis on the reception of Earls' work in the United Kingdom to enforce the notion that translation is not necessarily about a change of language.

Chapter Six will continue the case study approach by analysing transfer of the work of Nikki Gemmell. Again, I will examine the movement of her work from the local context to the international and watch the ways in which it is translated during each step. This chapter will have an emphasis on the movement of Gemmell's work to France to demonstrate that in the case of movement between standard languages, translation within the paratext can still be observed. This reinforces the assertion that a change of language is only one small part of the translation process, and that possible interpretations are created by a variety of translators.

Chapter One

“The Australian sunbakes while the English sunbathes”.¹

Translating culturally specific language and identity in narrative.

Introduction

Translation is viewed in this thesis as part of a wider discourse about novels, and of a media-based framework that positions texts within a literary polysystem and creates reading positions for potential readers. As a starting point for this discussion of translation, it is important to establish what aspects of a novel locate it within a particular culture; that is, what makes a novel require translation in the first place? The two most significant markers of cultural identity within a novel are language usage and national identity myths.

This chapter’s title is drawn from Graeme Turner’s analysis of the importance of words to a culture’s social frames of reference. It suggests an intrinsic link between word usage and cultural identity: the Australian bakes in a hotter sun than that in which the English person may enjoy bathing. A slight change of word use here is indicative of a much greater cultural perspective. Likewise, a culture’s particular usage and creation of slang, varieties, vulgarities and other parts of common speech reflect the activities and belief systems of the culture. Chapter One will investigate such language usage within Australian novels and will discuss the effect of the use of Australianisms in novels on cultural-specificity, authenticity, local resonance and translation. Translation choices will be shown to have significant power over the

¹ TURNER, Graeme. *National Fictions: Literature, film and the construction of Australian narrative*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1986, 19.

impressions of a culture to be held by the culture that receives the translated text. Chapter Two will go on to complement this with an investigation of cultural identity myths before this thesis explicitly analyses the translation process.

Nick Earls's *Zigzag Street* and Christos Tsiolkas' *Loaded* will be used in this chapter to provide examples of culturally-specific language usage. Both of these include Australian slang, vulgarities, popular culture and idiomatic expressions as a way of locating their stories within very particular Australian times and cultural spaces. The cultural spaces discussed in these novels include the Australian national culture, but also the specificities of other types of culture within Australian culture. Language use is a tool employed by many types of social communities, including professional cultures, youth culture or the cultures of minority groups. The novels analysed here draw on the jargon of various cultural communities to bring realism to their subject matter. Despite this local repertoire, both of these novels have been released internationally, in English and in foreign language versions. Later chapters will analyse the ways in which use of language becomes problematic when the texts are transferred for markets away from their source culture. Here, however, I will define culturally-specific language and look at some of the ways in which language is used as a marker of identity.

To define culturally-specific language I will first analyse the parts of language that lend themselves to cultural-specificity. These include speech genres, humour, intertextuality, dialect and political choices. Following this, I will discuss Australian English and will examine ways in which Australians relate to their language and link it with nationalism. The purpose of this is to ascertain why cultural specificities in novels are important links to the story and the psyche of the protagonists, and why they may cause problems for translators (translators being held as both the 'official'

translator of the novel, or the other forms of ‘translation’ as suggested in the introduction to this thesis). An investigation of types of English used in Australia will also be pertinent, as Australian English is not a homogenous entity. Overall, Chapter One will establish what is meant by ‘culturally-specific’ language, so that this term can be problematised in later chapters.

1. Language and identity

One way in which culture has been defined is “the way ordinary people organise their daily existence”.² In order for organisation to take place, communication must be effective. Thus, language (verbal or otherwise) and culture become inseparable. Michael Clyne³ has said:

Language is the means of identifying ourselves and others; it marks group boundaries. Through language we indicate where we come from, or where we want others to believe we have come from or been. We indicate what group, socio-economic, national, regional, gender, religious, generational or otherwise to which we belong (sic).

Our awareness of group identity is informed by the ability to perceive speech differences and similarities. The inclusion or exclusion of potential members may depend on how we perceive their use of language.⁴ Language use locates us within specific cultural groups and reveals who we are to others. At the same time, it is also a mutable entity that can be manipulated according to situations and environments: informal terms are used with family, but a formal register is used for a job interview. People find acceptance from peers by strategically choosing fashionable words. The

² MUECKE, Stephen. *Textual Spaces – Aboriginality and Cultural Studies*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1992, 16.

³ CLYNE, Michael. The role of language in Australian society. In: Gerhard SCHULZ, ed. *The Languages of Australia*. Canberra: Australian Academy of Humanities, 1993, 52.

⁴ BLAIR, David. Australian English and Australian identity. In: Gerhard SCHULZ. 1993, 65.

most proficient of students of English may be marked as foreign by their choice of slang or their unfamiliarity with turns of phrase that have localised origins. To ‘fit in’, foreign speakers of any language may attempt to align their usage of slang and idiom with that of the local culture.

Translators make similar strategic choices. Likewise, when moving a text from one culture to another, the translator decides whether to mark the text as foreign, by retaining cultural specificities, or to attempt to localise it by exchanging local terminology for something acceptable to the second culture. David Blair suggests that “To change the way we speak is to signal changes in who we are or how we wish to be perceived; to take on new speech patterns is to reform ourselves and present ourselves anew”.⁵ In this way, altering the ‘speech’ of a text works to alter perceptions of the culture from which the text is drawn. Aspects of language such as slang, icons of popular culture, idioms or vulgarities are important markers of cultural identity which symbolise broader aspects of a cultural sphere, and which also may connote facets of a novel’s storyline. Their alteration results in a reformed text, which can never contain the same significations as the original.

As stated in the introduction, this thesis hangs on Anthony Pym’s assertion that “texts belong” to certain peoples and situations.⁶ Language develops out of the experiences of a culture. Peoples at a distance from one another inevitably have experiences that differ and their languages expand automatically to describe them.⁷ Translation is frequently complicated by a lack of equivalent terms between two

⁵ BLAIR, David. In: Gerhard SCHULZ. 1993, 64-65.

⁶ PYM, Anthony. *Translation and Text Transfer*. Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Land, 1992, 92.

⁷ BERNARD, John R. Regional Variation in Australian English: A Survey. In: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR, eds. *Australian English: The language of a new society*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1989, 258.

different languages, even when the cultures are relatively similar. Communities who share a ‘standard’ or ‘common’ language, too, will speak in many varieties.

(A ‘standard language’ is used here to speak about the ‘official’ national language as approved by dictionaries and the education system and other monitoring bodies within a culture.)

One connotation of the title *Loaded*, is the notion of loaded terms: word choices that may appear benign, but are in fact signifiers of broader concepts or agendas. Language usage is an extremely important marker of identity in this text, which sets its young protagonist, Ari, amongst the multi-racial conflict of the city of Melbourne. As Beth Spencer⁸ has said: “Ari is young, unemployed, Greek and gay... Hmm. Or Ari is a poofster wog, a slut, a conscientious objector from the workforce...” Ari’s mission is to resist and play with the naming processes associated with ethnic, racial and sexual identity to assert an autonomous place for himself in what he sees as a conformist society. He desires the ability to name himself, not to be named or categorised by others. In working with this character, Tsiolkas sheds light on the ways in which language is used as a tool to form identity and to assert cultural-specificity. *Loaded* provides passages of inclusion and exclusion for both the characters and the reader in its selective use of intratextual translation. Inclusion to this text is ultimately found by those who have an immediate resonance with the cultural terminology; exclusion comes when the reader is left to make sense of references using their own limited repertoire as Tsiolkas mostly chooses not to translate the culturally-specific terms within the text.

Thus, there is a political and linguistic game at work in *Loaded*. Ari plays roles for whoever is present at the time, or whoever he chooses to be. Language is a

⁸ SPENCER, Beth. Mapping Desire – Christos Tsiolkas’ *Loaded*. *Ozlit Reviews*. URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ozlit/rev-9613.html> (19 June 1998).

toy for Ari who makes use of it to satisfy his anger at cultural belonging – and what he perceives as a lack of individual freedom.

I start a refrain in my head. Singing along to the thirties hashish song they are playing downstairs, I sing fuck politics, let's dance. I sing it in a Greek accent, give the phrase middle-eastern inflections, draw out the words and my voice reverberates on the vowels. Fuck politics, let's dance I sing as I'm coming down the stairs. I'm angry and I don't know what I'm angry about. (62/63)⁹

This quotation offers a real sense of language as a device that can be manipulated, and indicates that culture, too, is something that can be affected. Ari sings a song from the 1930s, but reappropriates it for his own purposes. He reinscribes a text (song) that may have strong political meaning for someone of an older generation, for example, with the slang and political disrespect stereotypical of young people. He sings the song in English, but puts on a Greek accent – here he parodies his cultural belonging. He gives the song a middle-eastern inflection, showing that he can also easily imitate the cultural trappings of cultures to which he does not have any ties: cultural belonging is a game.

At the same time, Ari's use of vulgarities marks him as belonging to a young, Australian cultural community. His freedom to assert such viewpoints marks his lifestyle as relatively free of oppression and alludes to Australian society as multicultural and fractured. His exclamation “fuck politics” points to a rejection of both the politics of his family (who retain beliefs and prejudices developed from their life in Greece), the politics of prejudice he feels from being gay and the child of migrants, and his personal politics of identity. His dancing indicates a freedom of spirit and rebelliousness, even though he feels angry at the world around him.

⁹ Throughout this thesis I will retain the authors' use of punctuation in quotations. Please note that direct speech is frequently written in forms other than the traditional use of quotation marks.

In this way, authors use language to inscribe texts with multi-layered cultural connotations: from the blatant use of slang or idioms, to the manipulation and ironic use of language devices to mark shifts in perspective and heterogeneity of cultural spaces. Importantly, novels like *Loaded* and *Zigzag Street* depict such levels of cultural meaning through the language of everyday activities – such as dialogue between characters, references to popular culture and the intertextuality of contemporary language use. This links the language of the text to a specific cultural community and hinders the possibility of such varied levels of meaning being interpretable to a reader from outside the source culture.

Culturally-specific language is a code passed amongst members of a cultural sphere, like the jargon of a certain profession or the slang of a teenage collective, where the code unifies those who understand it, and alienates those who do not. The purpose of translation is to reduce the feeling of alienation felt by readers of a text written in a foreign code, whether by domestication or exoticisation of the terminology (as will be discussed further in Chapter Three).

1.1 Speech Genres

Mikhail Bakhtin's term 'speech genre' provides a convenient way to discuss the minor turns of phrase and lexical patterns that are some of the distinguishing features of any language. These are not necessarily words that differ from those used by any other group who shares the standard language, but ways of putting those words together. Speech genres have been defined as normative forms arising out of the

continuing practice of an utterance.¹⁰ That is, they are generic forms that become significant within a language due to their regular usage. Matthews¹¹ states:

They are both normative in that they provide a frame that connects utterance to the situation and catalysts for the emergence of new forms in that they can be used self-consciously to enrich an utterance with multiple meanings.

An acknowledgment of speech genres gives the individual utterance power in the formulation of meaning and identity. In this way, the use of speech genres in texts has the power to instil a level of cultural-specificity in the text, to affect the perceptions of the source culture for outside readers and to hinder translation.

A playful example of an Australian speech genre from *Zigzag Street* is the use of ‘ish’ for an approximation of time. The following quotation displays both the use of the speech genre itself and the self-conscious re-employment of the phrase for humorous purposes. Here, the protagonist, Richard Derrington, is asking a new love interest for a date.

And if you haven’t seen *Bullets Over Broadway*, and you want to, we could see it. Maybe early-ish this week, since I might have work things on later.
Okay, okay, so when-ish? When-ish is early-ish?
Maybe, you know, maybe even Monday. Ish. (246)

Speech genres belong to national cultures and standard languages, but also to other cultures (such as youth culture) and their forms of expression (such as literary or filmic genres like ‘comedy’, for example). Bakhtin distinguishes between primary and secondary speech genres, with ‘secondary’ being ‘complex’ genres such as the novel or scientific research. The formation of a secondary genre requires the absorption of primary genres. Bakhtin places a high level of importance on the more

¹⁰MATTHEWS, Anthony. *Samosota: Polyphony and Heteroglossia in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin*. Seminar presentation. Canberra: Australian National University. 28 May 1998.

¹¹ MATTHEWS, Anthony. 1998.

general notion of genre as a means of making sense of language and various utterances or texts. He says¹² that people might know a language well but still

[...] feel quite helpless in certain spheres of communication precisely because they do not have a practical command of the generic forms in the given spheres... Here it is not a matter of an impoverished vocabulary or of style, taken abstractly; this is entirely a matter of the inability to command a repertoire of genres of social conversation.

A similar thing happens in the learning of a foreign language: although comprehension and vocabulary might be strong, learners may continue to use the genres of their native language and thus flag their speech as foreign.¹³ Translation theorist, Ritva Leppihalme¹⁴ has referred to the lapses of comprehension caused by an inability to comprehend speech genres as “culture bumps”. These are disruptions to comprehension insufficient to warrant classification as ‘culture shocks’, but likely to cause a brief hurdle on the road to ‘making sense’ of a text.

Speech genres identify, and help create, social spheres. Therefore, they allow us a path into the past and the present state of a language: a vision of the development of a language and the social use of language as it stands within a particular culture. A look at both of these aspects will help to identify cultural boundaries, translation difficulties and the absences or needs which cause the movement and transfer of texts/utterances to occur (this will be expanded in Chapter Three.)

In novels, speech genres, such as poetic allusions or ironic uses of language draw attention to the text’s culture of origin, but also have broader purpose.

¹²MORSON, Gary and Caryl EMERSON, eds. *Mikhail Bakhtin – Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, 275.

¹³MORSON, Gary and Caryl EMERSON. 1990, 275.

¹⁴LEPPIHALME, Ritva. *Culture Bumps: An Empirical approach to the Translation of Allusions*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1997.

Leppihalme suggests the following ways in which such literary tools work:

- a) “to call attention to one’s learning or wider reading” (which also establishes a sense of belonging to an exclusive set where author and reader share common knowledge)
- b) “to enrich the work by bringing in new meanings and associations”,
- c) “to characterise people, or suggest thoughts or unconscious impressions and attitudes in characters” or
- d) “to increase the significance of one’s work by generalising or suggesting universality”.

For any of these levels of meaning to survive in a translated work, the rendition of speech genres must be handled with great care.

1.2 Intertextuality and heteroglossia

Alongside speech genres, Bakhtin developed an early theory of intertextuality, which he referred to as heteroglossia (many different ‘voices’ within a language). At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers) but also into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, professional languages, languages of generations and so forth. Language can be viewed as a “generative and continuous process, as utterances which respond to and anticipate other utterances”.¹⁵ Heteroglossia is a state in which every utterance has contained within it components (direct or simply influential) of other utterances. An understanding of this concept may help to pinpoint why certain cultures share a sense

¹⁵RICE, Philip and Patricia WAUGH, eds. *Modern Literary Theory: A reader*. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 1992, 195.

of humour, for example, or other culturally-specific understandings. Shared humour could be the result of the fact that through shared experience one is able to interpret the ‘voices’ within an utterance. Metaphor, idiom and allusion in novels also have their origins in heteroglossia, where multiple culturally-specific voices are at work in a particular text.

Heteroglossia, then, is also culturally specific. The range of possible voices, or utterances to be responded to are the voices that have previously formed part of the cultural sphere from which a new utterance is developed. In the case of Australian literature, this implies that contemporary texts bear the mark of Australian texts before them, amongst other influences. A character in one novel may resemble the hero of an earlier one (national archetypes are created in this way), and audience recognition of this is expected. Many contemporary novels choose to ‘write back’ to earlier versions of the Australian experience, in the current Australian climate of revising and rewriting the nation’s history. Thus modern rewrites of older texts come into being or amalgams of older genres are made to work for a new readership. The complex process of development of Australian English, the textual genres that are accepted within Australian publishing (including those from outside Australia) and the country’s historical framework inform every utterance that will be created in Australia, and the ‘voices’ that represent those influences on the creation of the novel will be audible in some way. A reader from outside the source culture of a text must therefore be extremely well-informed about the novel’s culture of origin to understand the heteroglossia at work in the text in the same way as a reader from the source culture.

This phenomenon is also spoken about in terms of ‘hybridity’. A hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs by its grammatical, syntactic and

compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two ‘languages’, two ‘belief systems’.¹⁶ There is no formal boundary between these utterances. This occurs literally in such examples as Greek-Australian English (pertinent to *Loaded*) or might simply be reflected in a sentence spoken by one speaker that contains an echo of opinion from someone who has spoken before them. Hybrid cultural constructions thus combine two sets of ‘voices’, creating an even more specific community of speakers or readers who will be able to interpret an utterance without translation.

1.3 Variation and accent

Speech genres and heteroglossia are key factors in the construction and identification of accents and variations within a standard language. Furthermore, like speech genres, accents and varieties work as symbols of belonging and ways of asserting identity. They reveal a speaker’s origins and can be imitated to suit certain situations. Accent can also be read in the more abstract sense of the reappropriation of a term for use in a subcultural group; a word from a standard language may be given a “different evaluative accent”¹⁷ by members of a subcultural community. Accents are made use of in novels to lend authenticity to characterisations. The accent or language choices of a character may indicate his or her age, history or tastes so that these need not necessarily be defined in the narrative.

Accents create major problems for translators as they are extremely difficult to render with any degree of accuracy in a different language. Accents are written into novels through grammatical and phonetic ruptures to the standard language. Where

¹⁶ EMERSON, Caryl and Michael HOLQUIST, eds. *M.M Bakhtin: Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. Hobbs. Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986, 305.

¹⁷RICE, Philip and Patricia WAUGH. 1992, 195.

grammatical structures differ between languages, it is impossible to carry equivalent grammatical changes over into a new text. Translators will often exchange accents or varieties for local equivalents that will resonate similarly for a different culture. Anthony Pym cites the example of exchanging Scottish English for French-Canadian Joul, “both might be working-class and nationalistic, but they are by no means equivalent...why should someone in Scotland speak Joul?”¹⁸ There is no clear answer to this problem as any attempt to translate accents will result in an inauthentic reproduction (this notion will be expanded in Chapter Three).

Pym has questioned the validity of using accents as markers of authenticity in texts. True authenticity of accent requires a character to consistently portray very specific linguistic nuances, or the author risks parodying, rather than authentically representing, an accent or variety. Authenticity of variation or accent for Pym¹⁹ is

[...] the multiplication of variations beyond anything that the popular imagination can identify, such that a variety is represented in such detail, with such a wide range of finely nuanced accented features, local lexis and faintly non-standard syntax, that the linguistic result must surely be the real thing, if only because it goes beyond the limits of what any analyst could identify as features of a variety.

An inauthentic representation of accent frequently results in stereotype or parody, while an authentic accent, according to Pym’s definition, will necessarily undergo major changes for translation into a different language and will be difficult for other speakers of the standard language to comprehend. For these reasons, authors in their representations of accents and varieties, frequently make concessions, meaning that readers’ impressions of the cultures depicted in novels are likely to be inaccurate.

Accent and variety as represented in *Zigzag Street* could be seen as authentic in the case of the lead protagonist, Richard, whose voice we hear more regularly, and

¹⁸PYM, Anthony. Translating Linguistic Variation: Parody and the creation of Authenticity. 2000. URL: <http://www.fut.es/~apym/on-line/authenticity.html> (16 Jan 2001).

¹⁹ PYM, Anthony. 2000.

parody in the case of many minor characters who lend comic relief to the plight of the lead. Similarly in *Loaded*, Ari's rejection of a single cultural group leads to greater authenticity of voice, as his linguistic choices do not parody a single variety, unlike other speakers in the novel. This recognition of the way accents work in literature is important when analysing the novels in this thesis, as they are represented by the media, and sought by the public, as authentic representations of cultural environments. This will be examined more closely later in this chapter where I discuss the specificities of the Australian accent.

1.4 Humour and word play

The ability to self-consciously utilise speech genres is pertinent when speaking of humour (as employed in *Zigzag Street*). To understand the irony of a word-play or a twist of meaning, it is necessary for the receiver of the text to have a solid prior knowledge of the cultural background of the text. In order to make sense of such a usage, one must be familiar with the original context and also possess the skill to move with the reappropriation. A web of responsive possibilities exists in such situations. In the instance of translation into a second language, ironic or satirical speech genres attract the same problems as the translation of metaphor or idiom. They may be exchanged for relatively equivalent local genres that will produce the same effect or response, for example, as the specific meaning will be lost on a foreign reader. In cases of transfer within a national culture or standard language, such culture-based speech genres may present humorous results, be offensive, or be incomprehensible.

Humour often has a culturally-specific bias, being based on such things as politics or satire of everyday life. Bakhtin²⁰ suggests that “the comic style demands of the author a lively to-and-fro movement in his relation to language, it demands a continual shifting of the distance between author and language.” This follows Bakhtin’s statement that playing on the common language of a given group is the primary source of language usage in a comic novel. Texts such as *Zigzag Street* provide neat examples of this, as it is the use of slang, popular culture and vulgarities that allows readers to relate to the characters and, therefore, see the humour of their situations. Nick Earls plays on those things that Bakhtin suggests are taken as “the *going point of view* and the *going value*”(his italics)²¹ and presents them in a humorous fashion to a market that is assumed to find instant resonance with familiar generic models.

As well as appropriation of common tropes, there is also some space for creative use of speech genres and individuals may even create speech genres of their own – this is seen in the case of the comedian who asks the audience to repeat a signature phrase, for example. An example from *Zigzag Street* is when the Australian sporting legend Donald Bradman is lauded in the suggestion by Derrington and his friends that all great achievements should be measured in units of ‘milliBradmans’ (229). Here we see humour developed in this example through intertextuality, the deployment of a newly created speech genre, and the ironic reappropriation of a cultural icon.

The 1990s saw the rise of realistic urban comedy as one of the most popular forms of humour, evidenced in television programs such as *Seinfeld* and *Friends*.

²⁰HOLQUIST, Michael, ed. *The dialogic imagination: four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Translated by Caryl EMERSON and Michael HOLQUIST. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981,195.

²¹ HOLQUIST, Michael, ed. 1981, 195.

Earls' novel and those of his peers are viewed as the literary branch of this genre, where humour is found in sending up the small-scale troubles of Western everyday life. The popularity of the genre stems from the author's ability to parody the daily experiences of a large group of people. In this way, the author/comic must distance himself, or herself, from the common language in order to satirise it, while the reader/viewer must be familiar with the shared culture to comprehend the satire. This establishes a relationship between the author/comic and the audience/readers, which will be discussed further in Chapter Four. It also defines the boundaries of a cultural community: membership is determined by understanding of the humour. Simultaneously, the belonging of texts is determined by their ability to appeal to the culture's preferred genres.

1.5 Popular Culture

Dick Hebdige²² has spoken about the usefulness of icons of popular culture as markers of identity. Especially strong within any given generation, the knowledge of what is a current trend in popular culture or the shared memory of what was popular at a given time provides intimacy between members of the group (creating a shared cultural space). Recognition or favouring of a certain icon tells much about the lifestyle or age group of an individual. Tara Brabazon has spoken of these icons as cultural objects: "textual anchors which will be necessary to any future history of the present."²³

The use of references to popular culture in *Loaded* is extreme. Each chapter

²² HEBDIGE, Dick. *Subculture – The meaning of Style*. London: Methuen and Co., 1979.

²³ BRABAZON, Tara. A red light sabre to go, and other histories of the present. *M/C A Journal of Media and Culture*. 1999, 2 (4). URL: <http://www.uq.edu.au/mc/9906/sabre1.html> (10 Aug 1999).

commences with the lyrics of a song. References to music, television, film and slang bring realism to Ari's youth and fast lifestyle. In *Zigzag Street*, Earls also uses references to television, music, film, clothing and other trends as representations of the protagonist and his source culture.

I'm playing the album she gave me for my twenty-first. Sitting here on the bare boards of the verandah of this old house, studiously not renovating, listening to The Smiths' *The Queen is Dead*. (1)

This excerpt exemplifies the novel's sense of play with popular culture. To engage with this passage, one must know that the album in question is the quintessential 'depressed youth' album of the early 1980s. This helps to set up the melancholy tone of the character, establishes his age and explains that the album had a particular place in Australian youth culture in the 1980s. A level of meaning would be missed if readers were not able to engage with the culture of Earls' work.

On the novel's next page, Earls translates the content of the album by saying: "She gave it to me, I'm sure, because she knew I liked it, not because of its abundance of ironies, full as it is of loneliness and stricken unrequited love" (2). While this 'translation' goes some way to aiding the understanding of the character, it does not give away the full connotations of the use of this album as a symbol. This is the pattern in the usage of culturally-specific terminology within *Zigzag Street*. Earls gives enough away to ensure a basic level of comprehension of the story, but absolute resonance comes only to those familiar with the culture. Even the large-scale celebration of the twenty-first birthday holds significance for only a few cultures.

Earls continues to make regular use of the names of contemporary singers and bands (Nick Cave, The Pet Shop Boys, Michael Bolton). Derrington listens to youth radio station Triple J as he drives. All of these things are icons which locate Derrington within a particular age group and lifestyle. He watches *Rage* and

discusses *Seinfeld*. He dabbles in the common Australian pastime of the denigration of politicians, with jokes about Bronwyn Bishop's hair (thus incorporating an element of national identity mythology). Jokes such as these locate the text not only within Australian culture but also within a time frame. Should the book be read in 10 years, perhaps not even other Australians would be interested in Bishop or the various other celebrities (Liz Hurley, Paula Yates etc) who take a beating from Earls's pen.

Derrington compares himself with Burke and Wills when feeling lost after a big night out. Actual Brisbane streets, shops and restaurants, Medicare, EFTPOS, whipper-snippers, Tim Tams and singing the well-known Australian song 'Khe-Sahn' at the office Christmas party are just some of the other features that may be considered 'culturally-specific references', and which should hinder translation and movement of the text.

While seemingly trivial as markers of identity, brand names hold a particular position in a given culture and hold a certain social status that is not easily replaced by a local relative equivalent. Tim Tams, for example, may be seen as a chocolate biscuit like any other, but have a social significance in Australia as the favourite comfort food when depressed, or as such a delightful indulgence that one would sacrifice anything for them. This is enhanced by advertising campaigns showing girls choosing a packet of Tim Tams over a boyfriend, or acquiring the biscuits as their only wish granted by a genie. Earls uses Tim Tams as the preferred food of his protagonist for this reason. Likewise, Vegemite is seen as an essential Australian foodstuff, with its origins going back to 1923 where it was established to challenge the British stranglehold on such products. Statistics indicate that 9 out of 10 Australian households contain a jar of Vegemite and there are many tales of travellers

who will go to great lengths to have relatives post the product to them.²⁴

Increasingly, Vegemite can be purchased in international supermarkets, and simultaneously more recent Australian translations do not exchange the product for a local alternative such as jam or peanut butter, as was the case in earlier translations.²⁵

Considering Earls' repeated use of culturally-specific language, it becomes hard to imagine how foreign readers *could* embrace this novel, though international sales have been high. Earls has said of foreign readers that "they don't actually get it, but they get something different out of it."²⁶ Readers of any cultural background develop a series of coping mechanisms for approaching foreign works, as will be discussed in later chapters. A general pattern that emerges in study of the international movement of Australian work is that audiences see something interesting or pan-national in the story and therefore, the localised references become less problematic. Furthermore, where there are at least some references that work internationally, as is the case with certain icons of popular culture, readers will still respond with some level of kinship to the text's culture. As popular culture becomes a more global phenomenon, these connections will increase allowing greater opportunity for internationalisation of novels that use this type of language. Yet, this thesis will show in later chapters, when readers assume understanding of a culture due to comprehension of some of the novels' culturally-specific symbols, they may ignore those icons that do not resonate for them. By choosing not to clarify the meanings of such references readers are denied the opportunity to learn about the text's culture of origin.

²⁴ WHITE, R.S. A Brief Cultural History of Vegemite. In: Ian CRAVEN. *Australian Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 15-21.

²⁵ Such as the French translation of Sally MORGAN's *My Place* in 1997, which will be discussed in later chapters.

²⁶ EARLS, Nick. *Boy's Games*. Public reading at Jameson's Bar and Restaurant, Brisbane. 20 July 1999.

1.6 Vulgarities

Vulgarities or ‘swear words’ are another type of culturally-specific speech genre. While vulgarities often have relative equivalents in other languages, they are speech genres for which situational appropriateness and degrees of severity may differ between cultures even if a word is mutually recognisable. Traditionally, the taboo words within Australian English almost invariably denote “the activities of sexual intercourse and elimination or parts of the human body and substances associated with these activities.”²⁷ As time passes, however, the social acceptance of these types of taboo words has increased, while other words, such as discriminatory language, have acquired a higher taboo loading.

A high profile court case in Australia, in 1999, resulted in a magistrate dismissing a charge of offensive language saying: “The word fuck is extremely commonplace now and has lost much of its punch.”²⁸ In defence of the decision to air extreme vulgarities on prime time television during the program *Sex and The City*, the Nine Network’s classification officer, Richard Lyle, said that “Racial villifications have probably taken over in people’s minds as the worst kind of words you could use.”²⁹ The frank television series remains controversial, showing that not all members of a society will concur with what constitutes offensive language. In a mediatised society, however, those things deemed acceptable for commercial television are a reasonable gauge of changes to social acceptability of words. There

²⁷ TAYLOR, Brian A. Towards a sociolinguistic analysis of ‘swearing’ and the language of abuse in Australian English. In: Michael CLYNE, ed. *Australia Talks: Essays on the Sociology of Australian Immigrant and Aboriginal Languages*. Canberra: Australian National University, 1976, 43.

²⁸ DENT, Jackie. Hear no evil in C-word, says Nine. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 24 Sep 1999, 3.

²⁹ DENT, Jackie. 1999, 3.

are many racist terms that would have been acceptable for media usage in the past, but are now never likely to be aired for public consumption.

Levels of tolerance of vulgarities are put in place by experience, class, education, peers and many other factors that accompany one's socialisation into cultural, subcultural and generic conventions. It is also true that certain terms or words may move from the periphery (that which is highly offensive) to a more central position (generally acceptable) through frequent usage. A level of desensitisation towards vulgarities comes with watching contemporary cinema, for example. Thus, in translating contemporary novels, the recipient's tolerance for vulgarities will be estimated according to market trends within the perceived primary demographic for the novel. Along with this, translators will attempt to exchange words for relative equivalents from the second language. In intralinguistic translation, too, the social acceptability of a word will differ between cultural groups.

Taylor³⁰ has created a tabulated assessment of Australian taboo terms, which suggests that one of the exceptional things about the use of vulgarities in Australia is the multiplicitous employment of variations on common swear words (like 'fuck' or 'shit'). This is potentially born out of a trend in Australian English towards abbreviations, self-deprecating humour and nicknames – all of which open up possibilities for word play on a regular basis. 'Fuck', for example, may be used as an adjective or adverb, an exclamation of surprise, a literal verb or a figurative verb. Common popularised Australian speech genres also incorporate the word (such as 'fuckwit' which appears in a number of the novels used for this thesis). While these expletives are used in most forms of English, and have equivalents in many other languages, the Australianised uses of the words do not always have equivalents. The

³⁰ TAYLOR, Brian A. *In*: Michael CLYNE. 1976, 43.

social nuances are not necessarily easily rendered in another language or understood by other speakers of English. It is not uncommon for an insulting term to be used as a term of endearment in particular contexts in Australian English, for example.

In *Zigzag Street* we find that certain taboo language becomes acceptable in the work place and is employed frequently by Derrington's boss, Hilary. This relaxed attitude in the workplace may be seen as a characteristically Australian feature – particularly in a law firm (this will be examined further in Chapter Two). The use of vulgarities is depicted occasionally as a common workplace occurrence for emphatic discussion of professional problems and incidental punctuation of sentences, even between a manager and an employee. Vulgarities are even seen as intellectual during the endless sessions of character analysis and debate between the lead characters (all tertiary educated professionals). This example features a conversation between Richard and his best friend Jeff after Richard has spent the night with Hilary (Derrington has earned the nickname 'Krapmeister' due to an ability to attract 'crappy' situations):

And then, through one act you go from the crumbly nobility of the Krapmeister to evil schlong Lord.

I think I still want to be the Krapmeister. [...]

You must feel quite out of control.

Yes. [...] I don't sleep, I can't work, I can't think straight and I feel like fucking Chicken Little, looking everywhere for some kind of affection.

You feel like fucking a chicken now?

Fucking Chicken Little. It was clearly an adjective. It was never a verb. But maybe you've got a point. Maybe not even the chickens are safe. (181)

Speech genres also play a part in the usage of vulgarities in *Zigzag Street* where phrases like "I feel like shit" (155), "I was already fucked up" (139) or "What the fuck am I going to do?" (187) are utilised in situations where it may be unacceptable to use the offensive word itself in a more emphatic way. Speech genres

such as these that move into common parlance work to lessen the offensiveness of a taboo word.

Culturally, an understanding of the levels of offensiveness attributed to such words is extremely important. Many studies³¹ have analysed intercultural confusions where certain hand gestures have opposite meanings in two cultures or, for example, an instance like the shaking of one's head for 'yes' and nodding for 'no'. Simple cultural misunderstandings occur constantly through the ignorance of the culturally-specific meaning of a gesture held to be universally recognised. Similarly, when translating, a substantially different slant may be given to a situation by the use of a more or less harsh vulgarity. Like all things deemed socially acceptable or otherwise, the taboo loading of a word is a societal construct – hence, logically, difference will occur between cultures.

1.7 Strategic choices and linguistic politics

This chapter has so far shown that many language devices are utilised in any text to display cultural specificity. These devices inspire resonance for readers from the text's source culture and require various types of translation for those from outside. Importantly, each novel discussed in this thesis uses these references to talk about specific cultural spaces. Like Ari in my initial quotation from *Loaded*, authors and readers play with the language used in these novels to create the narrative, but also to construct a relationship with culture. *Loaded* discusses linguistic politics and simultaneously engages with it. This requires the inclusion of all of the linguistic devices listed in Part One of this chapter (speech genres, heteroglossia, vulgarities)

³¹ See for example: Desmond MORRIS. *Gestures: their origins and distribution*. London: Cape, 1979.

In the first few pages of Tsiolkas' novel he reveals an uncompromising approach to the use of realistic (for the genre and the characters) language and the hybrid culture in which his protagonist Ari exists.

- Have you got any gear left? I ask my brother.
- Breakfast and coffee first. Then you have to ring Mum and then you can roll your own joint.
- [...] George is laughing at me. He leans over and wipes some food from my bottom lip. My cock goes hard and I don't try to speak, just scoff down the food.
- Someone has changed the music in the kitchen. *I believe in miracles since you came along, you sexy thing.*
- Turn it up, yells George [...] Peter puts on a cup of coffee then comes over to me and grabs me from behind. I giggle and tell him to fuck off.
- You fuck off, Ari, he laughs. [...]
- Call Mum. Peter holds the phone out to me. [...] Mum, I say, how are you, I slept over at Panayioti's house. Yeah, I'll come home soon, I tell Mum. [...] Are you coming home? I ask Peter. I am home, he says. She asks if Janet is there. I start talking in Greek, trying to be discreet. (3-4)

In this excerpt, the text has already furnished the reader with drug references, vulgarities and sexual references. Tsiolkas includes non-textually translated references to popular culture and culturally-specific slang (of Australian, youth, gay or Greek cultures, and combinations thereof). The first chapter also gives a preliminary insight into the cultural tensions at work. At the end of the above passage, we see Ari choosing to call his brother, Peter, by his Greek name, Panayioti, when speaking to his mother. We also see him feel compelled to begin speaking Greek when he needs to hide something from Peter's Australian girlfriend, Janet, who is disliked by their mother.

This use of language results in resonance for some readers and distance for others. The choice to exclude some readers of the text can be made due to the author's desire for authenticity, but can also be a political decision to position the reader as an outsider; to make the reader feel foreign or make the reader have to work for comprehension. In this way, the reader may become educated about the culture in question or, at least, experience similar feelings of isolation or cross-cultural

confusion to those felt by the characters in the novel. We see this often in postcolonial fiction, where Indigenous writers struggle to maintain cultural authenticity, to express culturally-specific narratives, while writing in the language of the coloniser, resulting in hybrid linguistic forms which retain aspects of an Indigenous language while writing in English. Leading postcolonial theorists³² have described these forms of appropriated language as ‘anti-languages’, and this could be extended to describe the languages of a variety of subcultural groups (like ‘youth culture’ or ‘gay culture’). ‘Anti-language’ implies a resistance to the central language of a culture; a political choice to identify through a language form that is not shared by those seen to occupy an oppressive mainstream. (At the same time, however, ‘anti-language’, like ‘subculture’, presents a terminological problem as it could be seen to negate the validity of such forms of identification as languages or cultures in themselves.)

For readers who do not attempt to investigate the terms left untranslated in a text, the words come to be symbols of a culture. They represent ‘Aboriginality’, or ‘Greekness’, and may then be associated with the reader’s own repertoire of images about that culture, rather than the words having individual significance.³³ Crucial nuance is therefore lost in the interpretative process. On occasion, a text will include a glossary of terms, though this gives the readers “only the illusion that they are being given a code to enter into this world. [...] A word list is not enough to allow someone unfamiliar with a language to follow a speech.”³⁴

Regardless of which reading position an individual reader takes when interpreting a culturally-specific text, the assumption of authenticity is strong. This is increased in

³² See for example: Bob HODGE and Vijay MISHRA. *The Dark Side of the Dream*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1990.

³³ HODGE, Bob and Vijay MISHRA. 1990, 207.

³⁴ HODGE, Bob and Vijay MISHRA. 1990, 207.

many works by Indigenous writers, or members of any nameable cultural group, as a level of biography is frequently assumed, and reinforced by the novel's paratext. These assumptions oppose the reading of the text as 'fiction' and lead to feelings of disappointment, and the shock of perceived fraudulence if the author is revealed to be other than similar to the protagonists. Beth Spencer's review of *Loaded* states that the risk with such levels of faith in ethnic, gay, women or black writers means that any level of "artifice or brilliance then becomes a fault". At the same time, she acknowledges that for her there was certainly "that sense of deep recognition" in *Loaded*. "Ari is most definitely moving through the city I grew up in. And every now and then I feel floored by how much he reminds me of the boys I went to school with."³⁵ It is ironic that people should feel such resonance with a book in which the message speaks of the artifice of words and cultural identities.

Another form of political language usage is the ability of groups to reappropriate words for their own use and imbue them with an unexpected power. Words commonly seen as vilifying, like 'wog' and 'poofter', are scattered throughout *Loaded*, and are used venomously, affectionately or innocuously depending on when and where they are being spoken. A survival mechanism of many under-represented or minority groups is to take the insulting terms levelled at them by the community and give them new meaning, thus disempowering the users of the insults.

An example of this in Australian popular culture is the transformation of the word 'wog' (which will be analysed further later). "I'm a wog boy...I'm proud of it" says the lead protagonist in Nick Giannopolis's film *The Wog Boy*³⁶ which has been one of the most successful Australian films to date. Similar examples can be seen in

³⁵ SPENCER, Beth. Mapping Desire – Christos Tsiolkas' *Loaded*. *Ozlit Reviews*. URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ozlit/rev-9613.html> (19 June 1998).

³⁶ *The Wog Boy*. Directed by Aleksis VELLIS. Australia: 20th Century Fox, 2000.

the play *Box The Pony*³⁷ by Leah Purcell where the Aboriginal protagonist openly makes use of racist slang and renders it ridiculous, or the name of Aboriginal singing group ‘The Stiff Gins’ (playing on ‘gin’, a derogatory name given to Aboriginal women). This use of humour challenges preconceptions of what is appropriate word usage and reduces the number of feasible disparaging appellations.

One argument for the success of texts like *The Wog Boy* or *Box The Pony*, and the public willingness to progress from past racism in response to the texts, is their appeal to the ‘battler myth’ (see Chapter Two). Protagonists gain a level of respect for displays of courage in adversity and for their support of anti-establishment ideologies. In *The Wog Boy*, Giannopolis’s character fights the government and the media for acceptance leading to conflation of the stereotypes of the Greek-Australian and the ‘little Aussie Battler’. Likewise, *Box The Pony* pokes fun at the wealthy and the government, rather than targeting all non-Aboriginal people as culpable in some way for the suffering of the Indigenous population. Readers or viewers in this way feel resonance with the characters, and thus see past issues of race to issues of humanity.

Critics of this approach see it as conforming to the genres, or ‘acceptable’ levels of foreignness, required by the majority audience to avoid feelings of alienation or judgement. Ongoing debate questions whether audiences or readerships of culturally-specific texts should be positioned as ‘other’ in order to signify cultural distance and draw attention to the exclusion of certain groups from mainstream society. In theory, this forces the audience to work harder to gain understanding of the cultural group or to accept that cultural tolerance, rather than tokenistic understanding, is the best way to interact with other cultures. At the same time, this

³⁷ PURCELL, Leah and Scott RANKIN. *Box The Pony*. Sydney: Hodder Headline, 1999.

risks a reduced or resistant audience for the text. Alternative thought suggests that there is more power in lulling audiences into a secure position by conforming to dominant genres at which point thought provoking material can be delivered in more subtle ways, and arguably effect greater change.

This thesis will demonstrate that the same questions are pertinent to translation, as translators must choose whether to domesticate or exoticise a text when it is moved between cultures. The theoretical reasonings for, and practical repercussions of, these choices will be demonstrated in later chapters. Here, I have thus far outlined the types of linguistic devices that might render a novel culturally-specific. I will now pursue closer analysis of Australian English and the way it is made to work in my corpus of novels.

2. Australian English

Having defined those things that generally mark aspects of a language as culturally-specific, a closer investigation of Australian English will now be performed. Some of those things that distinguish Australian English from other Englishes will be remarked upon here, and the ways in which Australians relate to their own language will be analysed. Links will be made between language usage and characterisation in novels (again pointing to the importance of translation to interpretative possibilities) and between language and nationalism (anticipating the discussions of national identity myths to be conducted in Chapter Two).

2.1 The Australian Accent

In many forums, such as advertising, ‘Australianness’ is most clearly marked by the Australian accent and by Australian slang.³⁸ Each of the novels analysed in this thesis makes use of accents and slang to give substance to characterisations – or to appeal to Australian archetypes. The different regional origins, social standing or education levels of characters in novels are frequently marked by accent or linguistic variety of some kind. In some cases, the lexicon of a character will connote an accent even if it is not technically written into the novel’s direct speech. Readers familiar with the culture being described in the novel are likely to ‘hear’ a character’s accent as it is being spoken depending on the choices of words attributed to the character. In both *Zigzag Street* and *Loaded*, every character has a distinguishing feature to their ‘voice’. Thus the notion of translating such novels into any ‘standard language’ is problematic.

Translated Australian texts in the past were cited as “translated from English by...”. It is now common to read “Translated from Australian English by...” However, this implies a homogenous language from which the text was drawn, ignoring accent and regional particularities amongst other things. In terms of accent, it has been argued that Australian English is “quite unusually uniform”³⁹ compared to the Englishes of the United Kingdom, for example, where regional dialects (over comparatively short distances) differ to the extent that they may be incomprehensible to other speakers of English. There *are* marked varieties of Australian English, though they are not always popularly recognised or clearly delineated.

³⁸ BLAIR, David. *In: Gerhard SCHULZ*. 1993, 65.

³⁹ BERNARD, J.R. *In: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR*. 1989, 255.

Where not specifically regional, Australian varieties may be linked to other social structures. Gender-based speech differences have been noted in Australia, with a general tendency uncovered for girls and women to speak with a less broad accent than boys and men, and for boys and men to use more vulgarities, even in the workplace. The well documented High Rising Terminal⁴⁰, however, is most common to young females.⁴¹ School aged children show the least variation according to class with their particular slang and popular culture oriented lexicon taking precedence.⁴² For these reasons, the language choices made by authors and translators often target an age group, or other cultural group, rather than a specifically regional one.

Most commonly in linguistic research, however, Australian English is narrowed to three recognisable accents: ‘broad’, ‘general’ and ‘cultivated’.⁴³ These three speech types are said to have clear distinguishing features, though they basically only classify the speech of Anglo-Australian speakers, or well-integrated migrant or Indigenous English speakers. Horvath⁴⁴ has suggested the inclusion of official ‘ethnic broad’ and ‘accented’ classifications as just some possible ruptures to the aforementioned three level theory, though it is difficult to ascertain at what point that accent then becomes a different language – such as Greek-Australian or Aboriginal-Australian English. In this analysis of popular representations of Australian English, I will continue with discussion of those accents most readily identified as Australian by Australians and by the outside world.

⁴⁰ AQI (Australian Questioning Intonation) or HRT (high rising terminal) describes the Australian speech pattern of ending statements with a questioning tone.

⁴¹ PAUWELS, Anne. Gender differences in Australian English. *In: Suzanne ROMAINE, ed. Language in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 318-361.

⁴² CORSON, David. Social class difference in the lexicon. *In: Suzanne ROMAINE*. 1991, 340- 361.

⁴³ BERNARD, John R. *In: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR*. 1989, 256.

⁴⁴ HORVATH, Barbara. *Variation in Australian English: The sociolects of Sydney*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

General Australian English is the most commonly used version of the language. It is the accent taught most often in schools and displayed on mainstream television. For this reason, it is slowly taking the place of the broad accent as the one most recognisable to international readers or viewers of Australian cultural outputs. The ‘cultivated’ end of the spectrum more closely resembles British Received Pronunciation and is now reserved for a select number of private schools or families with closer ties to Britain than most. Unlike similar varieties of British English, the cultivated Australian accent is not necessarily that spoken by the serious media, the wealthy or by high level politicians (who have been known to lower their spoken register for the sake of appealing to a broader public). The cultivated accent is frequently satirised in popular culture in keeping with the Australian identity myth of repudiating elitism (this will be expanded in Chapter Two).

The hackneyed, broad Australian accent, as David Blair has stated, is the natural accompaniment of the Akubra hat, the suntanned complexion and the “cold, cold beer”.⁴⁵ This brand of Australian English has been legitimated in the Australian National Dictionary as: “a stylised representation of Australian speech characterised by excessive assimilation, elision, metanalysis etc.”⁴⁶ This most stereotypically ‘Aussie’ of possible Australian Englishes was used in early, nationalist representations of Australianness because of its distance from British English. Its continued use appeals to outdated, though marketable, notions of nationalism and Australian identity myths.

The broad Australian accent is, in reality, only utilised by some of the Australian population. Yet, for a long time it was the one most recognisable to foreign cultures and the one chosen for international marketing of the country’s

⁴⁵BLAIR, David. *In*: Gerhard SCHULZ.1993, 64.

⁴⁶DEVINE, Frank. That’s Language. *Weekend Australian*. 16-17 Jan 1999, Review 14.

products and its most internationally successful films. The broad accent is often viewed nostalgically or seen as humorous for Australians, yet is parodied in depictions of lower class or rural-dwelling Australians. It is adopted during nationalistic story or joke telling by speakers of any variety with a sense of ironic pride, yet those who speak it daily will be mocked in popular culture. One part of the population feels identification with the broad accent, while the others “construct their identity by their common repudiation of it”.⁴⁷ It has been said that to “understand such paradoxes can go a long way towards understanding the complexities and contradictions of the Australian national identity and the processes by which it is constructed.”⁴⁸ The ironic embracing of stereotypes while striving to outgrow them forms a key element of Australian national identity. This is one way in which texts become imbued with culturally-specific meaning that exceeds the immediate signification of language itself.

Zigzag Street depicts culture both in the obvious way of the use of icons of popular culture, but also in the more subtle sense of the use of speech genres by different characters. While there is no accent strictly written into the text, it is possible for an Australian reader to ascribe a character with an accent based purely on the slang or other culturally-specific speech genres they adopt. One example is the character of Kevin Butt (Derrington’s next door neighbour), who is introduced to readers when he is spied over the fence attempting to dig up a tree stump.

⁴⁷ HODGE, Bob and Vijay MISHRA. 1990, 209.

⁴⁸ FISKE, John, HODGE, Bob and Graeme TURNER. *Myths of Oz: Reading Australian Popular Culture*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1987, 163.

Kevin Butt, my neighbour, has a crow bar under a tree stump and the look of a man about to do himself harm as he sweats and swears away under a battered Akubra while his arm muscles pull like old ropes and get nowhere. (41)

With a specific mental picture already on its way into the reader's mind, Kevin is made humorous by being imbued with a very particular speech pattern.

Oh, g'day young Richard, he says between deep desperate breaths. I think it's bloody got me beat, mate. Not like I bloody used to be. [...]

I'm sure there are plenty of things you're still good at.

Yeah. Some things maybe. Not much I reckon. Not now. Slide bloody guitar maybe. You want to hear some slide guitar? Some real bloody old-style slide guitar? (41/42)

The mode of speech ascribed to Butt positions the character within the boundaries of a well-known Australian stereotype. While no accent is technically written into the dialogue, it is likely that many Australian readers would credit Butt with the general to broad Australian accent typical of many Anglo-Australian men of his age group. Such accents are imagined by readers due to the common recognition of language varieties within a given language.

In *Zigzag Street*, the broad Australian accent is reserved for comical or older characters such as Butt and Deb, the receptionist at Derrington's law firm. In both cases, the dialogue between Derrington and the other character reinforces the difference in the speech genres being utilised; that is, between Derrington's educated, general accent and others.

Deb's weekend was not like that.

Well, I got really pissed on Friday, she says when I ask what she did, and Saturday I got a new tat. Look.

Did that hurt? I ask her.

Less than most.

It's very nice, I tell her [...] It's a good piece of work. Nice use of the contours.

Thanks babe, she says and grins. Knew you'd like it. (12)

Similarly to Butt, Deb does not have an accent inscribed in the text, yet her use of slang implies a general to broad accent clarified by juxtaposition with the

conservative, standard vocabulary of Derrington's responses. Again, this is reserved for the secretary – not the lawyers; the working class neighbour – not the director of the law firm. Earls's main protagonists are middle-class urban young Australians who speak with the vocabulary associated with either a general or cultivated Australian accent. Thus, the broad accent is displayed variously as crass or out-dated and sometimes as the voice of the lower classes – not as representative of some essential 'Australianness'.

2.2 Grammatical specificities

Recent studies suggest that many of the non-standard grammatical specificities that are used by certain Australian English speakers (and most frequently associated with the broad accent) can be seen as varieties or social dialects rather than random uneducated utterances as they are becoming conventions of particular regions or families. These varieties are not necessarily class dependent, though frequently peer dependant. Specificities of certain varieties of Australian English include such things as: the adoption of the past-participle form for standard past tense form (as in "I done all the landscaping myself"), the suppression of the perfect aspect ("It's the way they been brought up") and inversion of the singular and plural in verb agreements ("The best batters on our team was me and Wayne").⁴⁹

The argument for the recognition of these as part of some form of social dialect rather than poor English ability is useful to this thesis. Regardless of the origins of a given speech genre, the fact remains that these patterns are adopted by communities, in spite of education to the contrary, due to common usage by peers and

⁴⁹ EAGLESON, Robert D. The evidence for social dialects in Australian English. *In*: Michael CLYNE. 1976, 9-18.

family members. This positions them as legitimate features of a variety of Australian English and, therefore, are difficult to translate. For the foreign reader, translators must ensure that the social role of these language features is not missed and that the character who uses them is not erroneously dismissed as a fool.

While the grammatical specificities listed above would be commonly seen as belonging to an uneducated or 'lower class' speech group, the survey from which the examples were drawn also reveals 'incorrect' uses of vocabulary that are common features of Australian speech, even at the cultivated end of the spectrum.⁵⁰ For example, the use of 'of' in time phrases ("When he comes home from school of an afternoon"), the use of 'handle' for 'cope' ("How can you handle living there?"), and the use of 'what' as a relative pronoun ("She's taught me more than what Peter has.") This implies that something generally acceptable in Australia could be read by a foreign reader as incorrect English. This could lead, for example, to the interpretation of an educated middle-class character (such as Richard Derrington in *Zigzag Street*) as an uneducated or ignorant speaker. However, the broader context of the protagonist's characterisation will also inform this interpretation.

2.3 Lexical variation

While differing regional accents are contestable in Australia, terminology does differ between regions of Australia. A common example of this might be the Queensland usage of 'port' for 'carry case' or 'school bag'; or windcheater (Vic) for pullover (NSW) or sloppy joe (Qld). These variations also occur markedly between subcultures and between age groups. Australians are generally aware of the existence

⁵⁰ EAGLESON, Robert D. *In: Michael CLYNE*. 1976, 19-20.

of regional variations (particularly if they have moved around the country in their lifetime) yet they are not always familiar with the lexicon of other regions.⁵¹ Those known exceptions are used self-consciously to assert identity and engage in inter-regional rivalry, which, as in many nations, thrives in Australia in areas such as sport and tourism.

In some ways, a lack of awareness of regional variation can cause more bewilderment, or leave more gaps in a listener's understanding, than the use of a foreign language. Pauline Bryant⁵² has suggested that a person hearing the French 'une épingle à cheveux' would simply think "I don't know the English word for that" but would realise that the item referred to probably did exist in their experience. By comparison, a South Australian speaker hearing a reference to 'bobby pins' (apparently a Qld and NSW term which would be 'hairpin' elsewhere) would be unlikely to think "I don't know the South Australian word for that" but would rather conclude that the objects are not used in South Australia. Bryant's scenario would not apply to all speakers, but later chapters will show that a similar pattern of assumption of meaning occurs when Australian texts are moved to other English speaking environments. (See Chapter Five).

Bryant⁵³ has also suggested that lexical variation in Australian English is rarely considered due to the unexceptional nature of the items that show variation.

She has said:

The range of items with regional names covers things likely to be met with in everyday living – food, clothing, household equipment, children's activities, school, plants, birds, weather.... They are used in areas of life shared by all speakers, but because of their mundane nature, they are unlikely to be spoken about outside the speaker's immediate circle, and hence do not become widely known.

⁵¹ GUY, Gregory and Julia VONWILLER. The high rising tone in Australian English. *In*: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR, 1989, 28-30.

⁵² BRYANT, Peter. Regional variations in the Australian lexicon. *In*: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR. 1989, 302.

⁵³ BRYANT, Peter. *In*: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR. 1989, 302. .

If culture is about the organisation of daily lives, it is these ‘unexceptional’ items, and the way they are employed and spoken about, that mark the difference between cultural groups – hence the importance of their careful translation. It is the frequent usage of localised terms for small details of everyday life that locate novels like *Zigzag Street* within their source culture. The ways in which these terms are used, and translated, in a novel will influence the perception held of the source culture by readers outside of that culture.

The use of culturally-specific terminology in *Zigzag Street* comes primarily in the form of ‘unexceptional’ quotidian items for which Earls never shies from using the most localised term. *Zigzag Street* is a simple story of one man’s daily activities and survival mechanisms after a relationship breakdown. What provides the humour in this text is the collision between this man and his environment as he strives to achieve ‘normality’ after an emotional upset. The unremarkable events that shape this novel depict intricate social structures and mores of Australian (and specifically Brisbane, ‘twenty/thirty-something’) culture. The language utilised by Earls locates the text within a time and space with little intratextual translation to aid readers from outside the novel’s source culture.

2.4 Other Australian Englishes

Australia is in a unique position having Standard Australian English and about 100 community languages⁵⁴ spoken in the country along with Aboriginal languages

⁵⁴ The term ‘community language’ is frequently employed to denote the so-called ‘immigrant’ languages used within the Australian community to emphasise the legitimacy of their continuing existence.

and creoles, migrant languages and hybrids thereof.⁵⁵ Many of these were once lumped together under the banner of ‘migrant English’: an obvious misnomer. Australia was also home to approximately 250 different Aboriginal languages at the time of European contact. (Around 70 are thought to remain, though some have very few living speakers.)⁵⁶ It is important to acknowledge that in reality Australia is a polyglot nation and that Standard Australian English is the common speech only. Fair treatment of that issue would, however, occupy more space than is possible in this thesis. What can be examined here is the effect of some of these other languages on that which is called Standard Australian English.

One of the evolutionary processes that helped to split Australian English from its British influences was the incorporation of Aboriginal language terms for things such as flora, fauna and place names. There are also more general terms in use such as billabong, boomerang or corroboree, though these are sometimes employed in a negative or semantically incorrect fashion. Words like this have been assigned a new meaning in the light of white Australian understanding and pronunciation of the terms (such words are appropriated from oral languages, thus the spelling is Anglo-European, not Aboriginal). These types of inclusions to Australian-English grow out of the meetings of the cultures resident within the country and are not common to other varieties of English. Thus they can be utilised in Australian novels politically – as a tool to distance non-Indigenous readers from the text – or educationally – to teach Australian and international readers about Aboriginal cultures. Again, this renders texts culturally-specific and increases the significance of the translation of these representations.

⁵⁵ CLYNE, Michael. *In*: Gerhard SCHULZ. 1993, 53.

⁵⁶ WALSH, Michael. Overview of Indigenous languages of Australia. *In*: Suzanne ROMAINE. 1991, 27-48.

In addition to the many community languages spoken in Australia, there are also many ‘Englishes’ at work: varieties and dialects, the English of tourists, the English of migrants and the Englishes of other nations such as the United States or New Zealand. All of these dialects are transmitted to speakers of Australian English through the media and public relations, and each exerts an influence on the development of Australian English. David Blair⁵⁷ has said that

At the very least, we develop a passive knowledge of those dialects; the usual suspicion, though, is that our children learn about trash cans, cookies and the letter zee from *Sesame Street*, and in the process acquire the foreign terms as part of their active vocabulary.

The flow of images surrounding the consumption of popular culture has contributed considerably to Australian familiarity with the lexicons of American or British English. This is less so of other Englishes which may send out less frequent, popularly consumed examples of their language (films, television programs) against which to draw comparisons. Therefore, South African slang is less familiar to an Australian audience than American slang, for example, and a South African text may require some translation for an Australian reader whereas an American novel may not.

In the same way, Australian English continues to require some translation for the English market and extensive translation for the United States readers (examples of this will be shown in Chapters Five and Six). As Australia’s cultural outputs grow in popularity in these countries, less translation will be required. Changes in translation choices being made during the transfer of Australian texts is notable when looking at more recent translations compared with those of five years ago – words that used to require translation are no longer incomprehensible as international cultures incorporate Australianisms into their own repertoires.

⁵⁷BLAIR, David. *In*: Gerhard SCHULZ. 1993, 63.

Multiculturalism and, by implication, multilingualism, has been associated with a new national identity in Australia. Language, and its surrounding learning and teaching environments, reflect a shift in popular perceptions and an opening up of Australian culture. Hybrid languages are becoming increasingly important contributors to the repertoire of Australian English speakers. Anastasios Tamis⁵⁸ uses the term ‘ethnolect’ to describe these language forms which might be described as stabilised non-standard varieties, initially common only to speakers of two particular languages. In the case of Greek-Australian, for example, a series of words have been taken from English and made Greek-like over time (eg: tractor – traxtres, machines - masinja) and have then stabilised at that point. Many Greek-Australian bilinguals employ a few semantic, syntactic and pragmatic deviations from the norms of both Modern Greek and Australian English. Thus, the Greek-Australian accent and uses of terminology are a distinctive (culturally-specific) form of English at work in Australia. Tamis states that, for example, the combining of American English and Greek has not brought about the same results.⁵⁹

Greek-Australian actor Nick Giannopolis⁶⁰ investigated ethnic accents in the lead up to his aforementioned film, and his numerous television and theatrical appearances, which depicted Australia’s migrant community. He says that an accent, and language use, he refers to as ‘Wogspeak’ grew out of working-class environments where Greek, Italian or Turkish migrants and their children experienced similar problems with English language acquisition. His colleague, Mary Coustas⁶¹, sees the Wogspeak accent as a combination of first generation migrants’ accented English and

⁵⁸ TAMIS, Anastasios. Modern Greek in Australia. *In: Suzanne ROMAINE*. 1991, 258-259.

⁵⁹TAMIS, Anastasios. *In: Suzanne ROMAINE*. 1991, 258-259.

⁶⁰ WARREN, Jane. ‘Wogspeak’: Transformations of Australian English. *Journal of Australian Studies*. Sep 1999, 90.

⁶¹ WARREN, Jane. 1999, 90.

broad working-class Australian accents, as evidenced in the stereotype of the frequent, accented use of the word ‘mate’ in Greek-Australian speech.

Jane Warren’s surveys involving the actors mentioned above and other communities of ethnic speakers, showed that general Australian English was commonly spoken by second or third generation Australians, with ‘Wogspeak’ being deployed for family occasions or other situations where “ingroup solidarity by the self-conscious use of wogspeak” became important.⁶² Modern Greek is the most widely used community language in Australia after Italian, but surveys have shown that in second or third generation usage of community languages, the symbolic function of the language replaces the communicative one, which is dominant in the first generation.⁶³ This is reflected in *Loaded* where Ari deploys Greek language or ethnic slang only in particular situations, where it is symbolic to him of some kind of belonging or power.

Like the excerpts cited earlier in this chapter, cultural identity struggles are displayed throughout *Loaded* in the tensions between words and their signified meanings. Ari dislikes girls who look “too woggy”, for example. Here, the discriminatory label ‘wog’ is used by a Greek person to describe people who personify the Greek-Australian female stereotype: in this case, characterised by tight clothing and excessive hairspray and make up. There are also other aspects of the culture with which Ari has a cynical relationship: dancing, coffee cup reading and cars. Yet, each time Ari is placed in confrontation with one of these aspects of Greek

⁶²WARREN, Jane. 1999, 90.

⁶³ TAMIS, Anastasios. *In: Suzanne ROMAINE*. 1991, 249.

culture he will revert to usage of at least some Greek language.

- What are the coffee cups saying, *Thea* Tasia? I ask in Greek.
 - Shut up, Alex says, we haven't finished mine. I ignore her. Can you read mine as well *Thea*? She nods and I start making some Greek coffee. While I stir the sugar and the coffee in the *briki* I listen to what she is telling Alex. [...]
- A lot of Greek bullshitters read the coffee cups but I reckon my Aunt Tasia is the real thing. (16)

The use of the Greek-Australian accent (as opposed to vocabulary) is not as marked in this text as are other hybrid accents. On page 51, Ari meets the Lebanese mother of his sister's boyfriend, whose accent is clearly inscribed:

- You happy you sister with Lebanezo? I'm not ready for that question and immediately answer yes, just to be polite. [...]
- In Beirut my neighbours were Greek, she answers, when I was a little girl. We all live together, Orthodox, Muslim. We all friends. [...] Maybe one day I meet your mother, your father?

All of these devices locate the text within Australia, specifically Melbourne and more specifically, the ethnic sub-cultures of the suburbs.

What these shifts of language within novels offer speakers of Standard Australian English is the aforementioned 'passive knowledge' of elements of Greek-Australian language – along with certain Modern Greek words (vulgarity, like *poustis*, or culinary terms, like *kafenio* or *souvlakia*, are often the first parts of a language to be incorporated into the 'standard language' repertoire). These aspects of Greek culture then become part of Australian culture. Those without a passive knowledge of Modern Greek will be left with assumptions about numerous names, dances and vulgarities that appear in the text. When authors use references to these alternative Englishes or hybrid language situations, they are discussing an important facet of Australian culture; translating it for other Australians and displaying it for international readerships.

Conclusion

Australian English reflects and reinforces Australian society's view of itself because language is an integral part of the Australian culture and perceptions of what it means to be Australian. As Australians come to perceive themselves differently, they perceive their language differently - leading to the movement away from the celebration of the broad accent or the change in social acceptability of certain expressions. The continual incorporation of terms appropriated from community languages is also a reflection of the changing face of Australia itself. Language use becomes a diagnostic tool for identifying social change, and simultaneously an instigator of change.

The Australian language is a form of English that has grown out of the Australian experience and thus contains features that may not be comprehensible to other English speakers. The Australian accent has been said to function as an "anti-language" which "marks and protects the secrets of Australian identity".⁶⁴ In addition, Australian English is a fluid entity that constantly absorbs new slang and appropriations of words whilst interacting with the Englishes spoken by Aborigines, migrants and visitors. This complex and hybrid language then comes to say as much about the state of the culture as writings themselves. Its use in novels plays a significant part in the way contemporary Australian culture(s) will be discussed and, it follows, translated and presented to outside readers

Judith Sandner⁶⁵ has suggested that cultural specificity in novels is found in the "glimpses" of culture revealed in the narrative. A "sensual" response to a

⁶⁴ HODGE, Bob and Vijay MISHRA. 1990, 209.

⁶⁵ SANDNER, Judith. Representations of Newcastle. Inter-cultural Studies '99 Conference. University of Newcastle. Oct 1999.

depiction of a city, for example, comes from reading about the nooks and crannies, not just the landmarks. Language provides some of those small details that distance these novels from similar texts created in other locations. Turns of phrase, small speech genres or particular uses of vulgarities work to identify the place of belonging of the text, and to present that cultural space to readers. Blair states that “what is currently true of Australian society is true of Australian English”⁶⁶, and this could be expanded to relate to other cultural groups within Australian society. So, to translate texts that utilise culturally-specific terminology is to translate images of the culture in which they were created. In this way, translation (in its many forms) has a degree of power over the images of Australian culture to be held by outside readers along with the demolition of hackneyed stereotypes.

⁶⁶ BLAIR, David. *In*: Gerhard SCHULZ. 1993, 70.

Chapter Two

“Some colonial dress ups and a few low key speeches”.¹

Translating Australian approaches to nationalism and national mythologies.

Introduction

There exist a mindset and lifestyles in popular perception that are ‘typically Australian’ in spite of ongoing debate about multiculturalism, Aboriginal rights and the theoretical replacement of the nation-state with hybrid and diasporic community-based identities. This ‘quintessential Australianness’ derives from a long history of adherence to fabricated master narratives, which superficially provide a cohesive sense of national identity, but also deny agency to many sectors of contemporary Australian society. The depiction of these narratives, or national mythologies, in novels can be overt or can be subtly inscribed within a text through representations of the weather, for example, or the daily rituals of the characters. Following Chapter One’s discussion of culturally-specific language, this chapter will examine other factors in a text that might make it culturally-specific and pose problems for translators and outside readers.

Australian texts draw on “those myths, connotations and symbols which have currency in the Australian culture”.² Like the distinction between ‘sunbakes’ and

¹ *Barry Humphries’ Flashbacks*. Episode 4. TV, ABC. December 13 1998.

² TURNER, Graeme. *National Fictions: Literature, film and the construction of Australian narrative*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1986, 19.

‘sunbathes’ in Chapter One, Graeme Turner³ has explained the ‘thong’ as an example of an evocative national sign. Here the thong is shown to suggest meaning beyond its practical use as footwear. The traditional, cheap rubber thong is highly unfashionable in accordance with current trends and worn by only some Australians. It has, however, been remodelled by high profile fashion labels and reconstructed as something appealing to a range of other wearers. At the same time, it retains currency as a recognisable symbol of Australianness.

As it flops over our sidewalks and beaches it speaks of our warm climate whose scorching pavements and sand demand the minimal veneer of culture to protect our (white) feet. It speaks of our informality, of our easy acceptance of our bodies, of our wish to bring the outdoors indoors. Its cheapness bears our egalitarianism. [...] The fact that the rubber and the idea probably come from Asia doesn’t make it any less part of an Australian accent [...] and Asians are well aware that the Australian use of thongs makes them a different species of footwear.⁴

Australian identity myths work in exactly the same fashion. They stem from settlement stories and the collision of the white population with the Indigenous population and a harsh climate. They must be reconstructed in various ways over time to hold relevance for new generations of Australians, yet the hackneyed images remain prominent in use by the media or on occasions where nationalist sentiments are required. Also, like many myths, the thong is a version of similar products in different nations, but the Australian use of it is recognised by Australians and others as culturally-specific. The novel can become a “sort of proxy for the nation”⁵ by symbolically representing and reworking national symbols and mythologies. The inclusion of these, like aspects of the

³FISKE, John, HODGE, Bob and Graeme TURNER. *Myths of Oz, reading Australian Popular Culture*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1987, 175.

⁴FISKE, John, et al. 1987, 175.

⁵GHANDI, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. Sydney: Allen And Unwin, 1998,151.

language itself, results in feelings of resonance for readers within the source culture and problematic reading and translation choices for those outside the culture.

Andrew McGahan's *1988* will be used in this chapter, along with references to the texts used in Chapter One, to show the ways in which contemporary Australian literature both celebrates and subverts common Australian myths. All of these novels have been translated into other languages and transferred to other Anglophone countries, where readers may not have knowledge of Australia's national identity myths. The reading positions from which readers will comprehend these texts will depend on their ability to understand the ways in which the novels manoeuvre in and out of traditional stories. Culturally-specific identity myths frequently work as "relative shifts against a common standard, not an absolute difference"⁶, meaning that many cultures may share aspects of a given myth. In such cases, a translator may choose to exchange a symbol of national mythology for a relatively equivalent figure or phrase from a different culture to ensure easy comprehension of the text by a different readership. In doing this however, the particular Australian 'accent' given to the symbol will be lost.

This chapter will show the ways in which these inscriptions of national identity can be read in the novels I have chosen. Australian traditional narratives will be simplified into three categories: nationalism, gender issues and (most importantly to my question of movement away from a source) images of home and belonging. Australian cultural studies analysts⁷ have adequately handled the history of Australian identity

⁶FISKE, John, et al. 1987, 163.

⁷See for example: David DAY, ed. *Australian Identities*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1998.

struggles in other forums so this will simply be a summary of those issues for the purpose of their application to the texts and later chapters.

1. Australian Nationalism

A national myth is “an invented story, arising from a collective belief, which gives events and actions a particular meaning”.⁸ In the same way, a national identity myth serves to produce an overarching way of reading the nation through images of history and supposedly common national traits. Bearing in mind Benedict Anderson’s notion of the imagined community⁹, all residents of a culture are assumed to recognise these myths, which are promoted and propagated accordingly. In Australia, these collective stories, which are intended to unify the national community, have traditionally been masculinist and exclusionary leaving little room for recognition of the country’s transformations over time. Feminists, Aboriginal and migrant groups and other activists have justly instigated the creation of fresh images of Australia, and a considerable amount of contemporary art, literature, theatre, film and even advertising now readily includes and accommodates a variety of cultural perspectives. In spite of this, the most common, traditional identity myths are still frequently romanticised and much of Australia’s textual output continues to struggle with the issue of Australian identity in

⁸BENNETT, Bruce. Myth. In: Richard NILE. *Australian Civilisations*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994, 58.

⁹Anderson sees communities as imagined as ‘the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.’ In: Benedict ANDERSON. *Imagined Communities*. Revised Edition. London: Verso, 1991, 6.

some form. Bruce Bennett¹⁰ points out that “...the lost Australian is such a recurrent figure in Australian literature that it indicates a deep national anxiety”.

Both within the country and for the rest of the world “discourses conventionally used to represent the nation come to ‘mean’ the nation almost irrespective of their context of use.”¹¹ These amount to a selection of “available definitions of our national character”¹² which, although limited and limiting, are perpetuated as long as common myths continue to be utilised (whether revered or rejected) in texts. Turner¹³ likens this to the “myth of consumer culture” where the public is presented with a finite range of purchasable items and are then told they have free choice of lifestyle.

The complications of Australia’s national self-image are partly created by the unusual position in which Australia finds itself, being asked to identify equally as a coloniser and the colonised. The common perception of the national mindset is one of simultaneously looking inwards to reconcile with the horrors of the country’s settlement, while trying to emanate self-confidence and unity in the separation from British ties. So, nationalism can assume homogeneity and suppress difference. Paradoxically, it can be “a positive, resistant ideology which provides the terms for an authentic assertion of identity in order to establish political independence.”¹⁴ The latter is seen in Australia’s nationalistic republican debates and quests to overcome the ‘cultural cringe’, which plagues Australia’s artistic endeavours. It can also be noticed in the desire of Aboriginal communities to establish their own nations within Australia.

¹⁰BENNETT, Bruce. In: Richard NILE. 1994, 70.

¹¹TURNER, Graeme. *Making It National – Nationalism and Popular Culture*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994, 11.

¹²TURNER, Graeme. 1994, 69.

¹³TURNER, Graeme. 1986, 107.

¹⁴TURNER, Graeme. 1986, 107.

Australia's images of identity are fraught with contradictions. One of the prevailing examples would be the caricature of the 'laid back' yet hard-working 'battler' who resists authority yet resigns him or herself to the tribulations of an inevitably hard life. This character will also not stand for affectation and will vilify 'tall poppies' (successful people) while simultaneously aspiring to rise above the mundane and to imitate a hero. This confused position partially has its origins in the settlement process of the nation and the consequent story telling about that period. In these narratives, heroes are made of criminals rather than of the soldiers who guard them, for example. Australia shares some such myths with other settler societies, such as the United States.

The 'typical Australian' then is an improviser "ever willing to "have a go" at anything, but willing too to be content with a task done in a way that is "near enough"."¹⁵ The supporting of this mindset is reflected in the many anti-heroes who permeate early Australian narratives (the anti-establishment outlaw hero Ned Kelly, the lost explorers Burke and Wills, the brave but defeated Anzacs). Based on these origins, a tongue-in-cheek nationalism exists in Australia which sees heroes as those who 'tried their best', not necessarily those who soared to victory. Even contemporary heroes (such as successful sports people) risk the longevity of their hero status should they display traits that position them above the 'average Australian' – Australian heroes must never be 'too big for their boots'. (This is where shared settler myths have been lent a specifically Australian accent; while the United States supports similar anti-heroes, it does not promote the same cynical approach to national pride.) Nick Earls' *Zigzag Street* and McGahan's *1988* draw on these myths for the self-deprecating humour of the lead

¹⁵WARD, Russell. *The Australian Legend*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958, 1-2.

characters, combining the anti-hero tradition with another ‘typically Australian’ trait: the ability to laugh at oneself.

By contrast, *Loaded*’s Ari depicts the ‘Angry Young Man’ in an overtly political text. *Loaded* is often inaccurately described as depicting the laissez-faire attitudes that represent ‘grunge’ and are presented in the other two novels. Gordon and Wayne in *1988* are generally passive observers of the action, whereas Ari’s quest is to actively create a space where he does not have to be labelled in conventional ways. National identity is one of these labels and throughout the novel Ari variously identifies as Greek, Australian and neither. He represents the Australian identity crisis with his lack of passionate belonging to either his ancestry or the home to which his parents chose to immigrate. He can be read as choosing not to belong to any ‘official’ version of nationality, sexuality or other definitions of identity, as shown in the analysis of the ‘naming’ process in *Loaded* as discussed in Chapter One. Ari’s refutation of possible identity positions is demonstrated in the following:

I’m not Australian. I’m not Greek, I’m not anything. I’m not a worker, I’m not a student, I’m not an artist, I’m not a junkie, I’m not a conversationalist, I’m not Australian, not a wog, not anything. I’m not left wing, right wing, centre, left of centre, right of Genghis Khan. I don’t vote, I don’t demonstrate, I don’t do charity. (149)

Tsiolkas uses words politically in his text to show the way that identity is constructed through discourse and social status quo. Ari is not necessarily confused about his identity, as is sometimes suggested, but oscillates in his choice of identifications according to context – he is occasionally required to ‘play’ the Greek son, for example. The text’s themes are strongly reinforced by repetition. The first sentence of each chapter is the same as the chapter’s title and Ari often repeats a declaration of identity

within a paragraph (as seen in the above quotation). This acknowledges the fact that identity myths retain currency through constant repetition.

Alienated by the myths of identity available to the young Australian, which are exclusive and limiting, Ari seeks a way of speaking for himself. He chooses the labels that will define him rather than being labelled by others. Through Ari, Tsiolkas subverts common images of Australia and the Australian male, but also of many other categories as Ari is not stereotypically Greek, or gay, or young but comprises elements of all of these. *Loaded* features a lead character who is seeking identity outside of the limited 'available' options. Its discussion of Australianness is implied in the struggle of the character, simultaneously displaying the identity conflicts felt by certain Australians as well as the freedom of most Australians to express that conflict. While Ari feels oppressed, in many cultures he would not have the liberty to actively be so slippery in his approach to identity and his movements around the city.

Far less aggressively political, the locating of *1988* in the year 1988 suggests a more blatant discussion of themes of Australianness. Gordon, would-be writer, and Wayne, aspiring artist, take a road trip from Brisbane to Cape Don (near Darwin) in what has been described as a "nightmarish comedy of errors and inadequacies".¹⁶ They seek creative inspiration and an escape from a life of few prospects in the town that Expo is soon to render unrecognisable. They are to assume positions as weather monitors in the isolated, rural setting of the Cape. Their journey through the 'outback' and the 'bush' anticipates the "authentic location for the distinctive Australian experience".¹⁷ The bush in Australian texts is traditionally the locale of true belonging and spirituality – characters

¹⁶MULLER, Vivienne. 1988 Review. *Imago: New Writing*, Autumn, 1997a, 9 (1), 135.

¹⁷TURNER, Graeme. 1986, 26.

often connect with their Australianness in the bush, and find personal satisfaction in the challenges of a harsh, but uncomplicated, outback environment. This myth is seen in many Australian texts, from Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians*¹⁸, to Stephan Elliot's film, *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*¹⁹, where protagonists experience personal revelations as they travel away from the city. In a parody of these established Australian narratives, McGahan's protagonists feel emasculated, displaced, bored and incapable of dealing with the natural environment. For the reader, it is necessary to be familiar with the heteroglossia at work in this novel, and the events of the year 1988, to maximally comprehend the irony of this text.

In the year 1988, Australian nationalism was seen to be at fever pitch. It was impossible to turn on the television or open a newspaper without being made aware of the Bicentennial celebrations and, in Queensland particularly, the spectacle of Expo. With slogans such as 'Celebration of a nation', 'Give us a hand' and the stamp series²⁰ 'Living Together', the events of 1988 have been seen as providing "an opportunity for white Australians to formulate a fresh image of their identity having successfully digested the massive influx of post war immigrants".²¹ Each of the aforementioned campaigns featured a variety of ages, cultural backgrounds, genders and vocations as participants in the Australian culture. Yet, the slogans misrepresented the reality of heated debates over

¹⁸ TURNER, Ethel. *Seven Little Australians*. Melbourne: Ward Lock, 1894.

¹⁹ *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Directed by Stephan ELLIOT. Latent Image/Specific Films, 1995.

²⁰ Xavier Pons has suggested that stamps can be seen as 'both miniature works of art and pieces of government propaganda' as they are generally used to 'promote sovereignty, celebrate achievement, define national identity, portray messages or exhort certain behaviour'. Xavier PONS. Stamp Duty. In: Ian CRAVEN ed. *Australian Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 36-45.

²¹ DAY, David, ed. *Australian Identities*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1998, xii – xiii.

multiculturalism, Aboriginal rights, the republic and immigration, which were gathering momentum in the 1980s and continue still. The Bicentennial attempts at representing a multicultural Australia have also been criticised as only praising the positive aspects of cultural diversity, that is, what migrants can ‘offer’ other Australians, rather than any truly equitable discussion of ways in which different Australians might harmoniously live together.

The 1988 celebrations typified Australia’s precarious relationship with its history. An authorised, limited collection of ways of seeing ourselves have been presented for most of the two centuries of white history. Graeme Turner refers to these as “national fictions”.²² Disillusionment and detachment from these ‘fictions’ was apparent in 1988, but many Australians did not know where else to turn for recognisable images. The reasoning behind the emphatic phrases and bombastic media campaigns, says Turner²³, was to address the “very real possibility that Australians would not spontaneously respond to the Bicentennial celebrations with anything like sufficient enthusiasm”. Therefore, the campaign became “pedagogic”²⁴ and Australians were taught how to be nationalistic. As Barry Humphries has said, an average Australia Day consists of “some colonial dress-ups and a few low key speeches”²⁵ so the extent of the 1988 celebrations was unusual.

Under constant media surveillance, the Bicentennial education in Australianness took place via sport (traditionally one of the few places where Australians might become visibly patriotic), in-school programs and events such as the ‘First Fleet re-enactment’ on

²²TURNER, Graeme. 1986.

²³TURNER, Graeme. 1994, 68-69.

²⁴TURNER, Graeme. 1994, 68-69.

²⁵*Barry Humphries’ Flashbacks*. 1998.

Sydney harbour (complete with anachronistic sponsors' logos) which were orchestrated to reconnect the public with its history. Gordon and Wayne, in 1988, are running away from Brisbane's Bicentennial activities. At the same time, many of the rural residents depicted in the text are keen to travel *to* the city during the year to 'be part of' the Bicentennial celebrations. Thus, the Bicentenary (and nationalism) is defined by the official celebrations, most of which take place in the city; one cannot be a part of the Bicentenary without attending an event. McGahan makes the point that there is no nationalistic feeling in Australia until it is orchestrated.

The commercialisation and dramatisation of the events of Australia's history reinforced stereotypes and imaged the past as a period drama. Meaghan Morris and Frederic Jameson have suggested that this desire to re-present the past can only "represent our ideas and stereotypes about that past"²⁶ inevitably perpetuating, if restructuring, traditional images. After television:

[...] imagining the past in any other relation to the present than that of a period-piece becomes ontologically impossible for mediatised human beings [...] we become incapable of thinking either past or future except as genres in the present.²⁷

The 1970s and 1980s saw Australian history put under the microscope in the form of the television mini-series creating images of 'what it was like back then' that remain fixed in the minds of viewers. Stephen Turner²⁸ has spoken of this as a 'dubbed' reality where

²⁶JAMESON, Frederic. Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism. *New Left Review*. 146, 1984, 77.

²⁷MORRIS, Meaghan. Panorama. The live, the dead and the living. In: Graeme TURNER, ed. *Nation Culture Text – Australian Cultural and Media Studies*. London: Routledge, 1993, 23.

²⁸TURNER, Stephen, In exile at home: the post-colonial condition. Adventures of Identity: constructing the multicultural subject conference. Sydney, Goethe Institut, July 30 - Aug 2 1998.

the Australia we identify with is one which is reflected back to us, translated for us, rather than what we recognise from our own experience. This is the type of Australianness discussed in *1988*. While one may not relate to any of the stereotypical images of Australianness, there is still a level on which those images are made desirable. Being ‘Australian’ becomes a performance or something to aspire to or resent, rather than simply a state of being. Both *Loaded*, with its strong rejection of the notion of doing or being what is expected, and *1988*, with its view of not knowing how to express a relationship with the nation, show Australianness to be a social construction.

In Vivienne Muller’s²⁹ analysis of *1988*, she suggests that Gordon (like many Australians) fails “to connect his own personal sense of identity and Australianness to the ‘authorised’ and official one”. While this is often the case for Gordon, there are also moments when he does engage with his country. But he does this in an innately self-centred manner and with no dedicated sense of nationalism. As in the following quote, his ponderings ultimately concern his own immediate circumstances.

I sat there thinking about time. It was 1988. Australia’s Bicentennial year. The country was two hundred years old. I was twenty-one. They were, I knew, significant numbers. Something should have happened in my life by then. [...] Now it was mostly pub work, and sleeping late, and the wasting of days. A steady decline. Happy Birthday then, Australia. (5)

Like Ari, Gordon’s experience does not reflect the popular images of who or what he should be at the age of 21. Gordon’s lack of nationalistic sentiment is fuelled by a general insouciance and little understanding or appreciation of cultural diversity or his own cultural identity. He lives in a dilapidated share-house with an ever-increasing number of Chinese people with whom only the most perfunctory exchanges take place.

²⁹MULLER, Vivienne. ‘To the Island’: Myths of Identity and Belonging in Andrew McGahan’s *1988*. *Association for the Study of Australian Literature conference proceedings*. 1997b, 31.

Gordon is aware that his lack of knowledge of Chinese traditions parallels the Chinese characters' lack of interest in Australian life. No moves are made to alter the situation as Gordon has little to share in terms of educating the Chinese about the Australian lifestyle. Besides which, the Chinese men in the text are at least managing to cook, socialise and look for employment. As Muller³⁰ puts it:

The Asians have moved in and are doing it better, the pastoral age has lost its romance [...] The old images of the past, the outback, the Ocker, are, as Gordon discovers, no longer tenable for today's youth, and any nostalgic links with landscape celebrated in earlier art and literature are irrelevant.

This realisation of ineptitude and loss of identity underpins many of the racist sentiments expressed within Australia (and elsewhere). Traditional national symbols are losing currency and immigrants are finding new and better ways to cope in Australian society than certain Australians who feel lost and confused in their changing environment.

Gordon comes to personify a broader Australian psychosocial perspective.

During their road trip, Gordon and Wayne become increasingly aware of their lack of connection to the perceived authentic Australia. Only a few hours from Brisbane they are already having car troubles and must flag down a passing truck driver to assist. Wayne, slightly more naïve than Gordon, explains to the bemused truck driver that they are 'exploring the outback'. 'I hope you find it,' the driver responds.

'Well, isn't this the outback?'
'No.'
'Where the hell is it then?' (41)

From there, their road map provides them with all the answers they need. Gordon's commentary throughout the text explains the quickly forgotten facts and data presented to them on the map. They rarely even venture from their Kingswood (another Australian

³⁰MULLER, Vivienne. 1997a, 136.

marker) to admire landmarks unless it is necessary for fuel or food. On page 48, Gordon is suddenly inspired to take in a view. With cigarettes and asthma inhalers in hand, they venture up a hill.

‘I think I might climb up,’ I said.
Wayne studied the hills. ‘Why?’
‘Just to see’
‘What?’
‘I dunno. We can’t just drive straight through without looking at *anything*.’ (48)

As with many other stages of the novel, this scene reveals the protagonists’ inability to understand that everything they are seeing has significance in itself. They are seeking the ‘real’ Australia, which they assume is to be found in particular vistas or monuments, not towns or the scenery around them as they travel. Finding only a small cave at the top of the hill, that ‘smelled of shit and piss’, and a view of ‘nothing’ Wayne says: ‘What were you hoping for, cave paintings?’ Wayne’s question is ironic, suggesting that even cave paintings are unlikely to be found on their voyage, as they feel they have thus far seen nothing of note. However, while Gordon and Wayne cannot connect with the authorised notions of Australianness, these are also the only images available to them; while they are cynical about the cave paintings, they do not know what else they could expect to find in a cave. They continue in anticipation but each location is simply tedious to them; they feel compelled to be interested in the natural environment, yet fear it when it is close at hand. Their urban mentality is displayed on page 70 when it is McDonalds rather than any natural phenomenon that represents their movement from ‘civilisation’ to ‘the country’.

We asked the Kentucky Fried girl where we might find [McDonald’s]. She said Darwin had no McDonald’s. Wayne and I looked at each other. There was nothing to say. (70)

Rather than feeling an affinity with the common images of Australianness, they have a melodramatic expectation of what dangers and untrustworthy people, flora and fauna might prey upon two city boys. For entertainment in small towns they always choose the performer publicised as coming from Brisbane or Sydney. Though not necessarily racist, their knowledge of Aboriginal culture is lacking in the same way as their knowledge of any other culture. They are travelling for artistic inspiration, yet there is no suggestion that local indigenous art or literature might play a part in their creative endeavours.

The question of Australia's relationship with its indigenous population features heavily in *1988* and was crucial to the concerns of the Bicentenary. Just as there are limited available images of Australianness generally, there are limited available images of Aboriginality.³¹ Aboriginal culture was included in a tokenistic way in the 1988 celebrations. In a similar way as to migrant cultures, it was arguably framed as a novelty that should be peacefully included in the new, multicultural Australia. Aboriginal protests and reconciliation activities at the time made it apparent that the bigger picture remained unaddressed.

In *1988*, the lack of incorporation of Aboriginal stories into popular culture is evidenced by Gordon and Wayne's cynical reference to cave paintings; they have no knowledge of their relevance or actual locations. Later, the protagonists naively question the availability of alcohol in the national park, having heard tales of restrictions placed upon Aboriginal communities (87). Prior to communicating with the Aboriginal

³¹MUECKE, Stephen. *Textual Spaces : Aboriginality and cultural studies*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1992, 23.

residents of the area, the boys have very little knowledge of the culture outside of the fixed, media images.

In *1988*, the national park region of Cape Don has been returned to the indigenous population, although its white settlers have already tainted it. There have been changes to the ecological balance and hunting restrictions imposed. An array of neglected buildings forms a makeshift town around the lighthouse where the boys are to work and relations between the few white workers and the Aboriginal community are tenuous and conditional. The notion of the monetary value of culture and land is addressed in this text through its look at the tourist trade, and the artist and writer are frequently being asked if they can ‘make money out of’ their work. The Cape is jointly run by white and Aboriginal people, but its significance as a “colonising site” is “kept alive through its value not as a part of the Aboriginal-owned national park, but as a weather monitoring station”.³²

What we see in texts like *1988* (and many other textual spaces since the 1980s) is a questioning and subverting of textually created and media-enforced representations (stereotypes, heroes, myths) of Australianness along with a slight nostalgia for exactly the images they attempt to reject. The difficulty with attempting to modernise established discourses appears to be the fact that if they are all dispelled, the community is left with nothing. Contemporary white Australia is too needy of unifying causes and solid points of identification as distancing devices from Britain to eradicate all the myths on which it

³²MULLER, Vivienne. 1997b, 33.

was founded. Subsequently, texts such as *Loaded* and *1988* appear to dance in and out of ways of addressing national mythologies, not yet finding, but certainly seeking new ways of viewing the nation.

2. Myth and masculinity

Gender studies per se will not form a key facet of the later chapters of this thesis, but is relevant here to set up the connection between traditional masculinity and the dominant national discourses that retain currency in contemporary Australia. Chapters Four and Five will show that a number of these discourses come into play in the press coverage of authors. I will analyse masculinity as a theme of the novels in this chapter in order to demonstrate and deconstruct the ways in which authors make use of culturally-specific national mythologies in texts.

The dominant heroes and archetypes of Australianness, from colonisers to hard-working settlers, gold miners, Anzacs, life savers and sports people have, in the past, been predominantly imaged as masculine. At the same time, the one perceived redeeming feature of Australian women in early Australian texts was that they were not as feeble as their British cousins. They were perceived as tough enough to cope with a harsh climate, and would even perform manual labour if required for survival. As such, they were capable of being ‘mates’ (in the Australian colloquial sense of ‘a reliable friend’) as well as a wives.³³ Thus, one of the major criteria by which to judge any

³³See for example, Sharyn PEARCE. Literature, Mythmaking and National Identity. The case for Seven Little Australians. *Papers*. 7 (3), 1997, 10-16.

Australian is their approach to mateship. Standing by one's mate is the "one law the good Australian should never break".³⁴

The historic Australian approach to mateship is born out of the white myths of origin of the nation where helping each other was essential to creating dwellings and produce in a harsh climate. Again, this vision of equality and loyalty reappears in the popular gendered hero roles, which are still often referred to in the media and other Australian texts in spite of the contemporary push for broader representations of Australianness.

Australian male heroes include characters like the 'stockman hero' whose development coincides with similar characters in the Americas (cowboy). These are anti-European figures who work closely with nature and with the industries that first boosted the colonies into the world economy (like cattle breeding). Their "value as personifications of national identity depended on their everyday existence not being shared by the majority of citizens".³⁵ This value increased with continuing urbanisation and added a "historical depth"³⁶ to the stories of recently created societies that had been ignorant of the indigenous history of the regions in their early days.

The Surf Lifesaver as hero is another common image of Australianness. The lifesaver is again capable of tackling the elements, working within a team and being chivalrous. In the early 1900s, lifesavers performed elaborate drills on the water's edge accompanied by pipers displaying military discipline. The legend however, is born out of the reputation attained by the mid 1930s of lifesavers as 'larrikins' or pranksters and big drinkers.

³⁴BEAN, C.E.W quoted in John BARNES. *Legend. In: Richard NILE. 1994, 69.*

³⁵PERKINS, John and Jack THOMPSON. *The Stockman, the Shepherd and the Creation of an Australian National Identity in the 19th Century. In: David DAY. 1998, 16.*

³⁶PERKINS, John and Jack THOMPSON. *In: David DAY. 1998, 30.*

Always ‘at war’ with the surfers and the bureaucracy, there is also a ‘resistance to authority’ component to the legend.³⁷

The ‘war hero’ is a myth said to have “crystallised many aspects of assumed Australianness such as courage, patriotism, bush values and the mateship of Australian men in adversity”.³⁸ Used primarily in description of the Anzacs and the battle at Gallipoli, this again is an image of heroism in defeat, of being betrayed by the authorities and of supporting your comrades. The ‘digger myth’ has consistently lost currency over decades as war became seen by new generations as futile rather than heroic.

The Anzac or digger myth is yet another masculinist, heterocentric and anglocentric image of Australia’s past, though the revisiting of the war experience through texts has allowed for the war stories of others to be told. The unrewarded role of Aboriginal soldiers, the courage and strength of the hard-working women at home and the existence of homosexual soldiers have all been recent revelations which undermine the value of the digger myth. Yet, the values proposed by the myth live on in different manifestations and the media and international commentators still utilise these stories of mateship and nationalism to image Australia. David Day has pointed out that more people now visit Sydney’s gay and lesbian Mardi Gras than participate in Anzac Day or Australia Day celebrations.³⁹ Yet, in 2000, when Australian troops were called to combat in East Timor, the ‘digger myth’ was resuscitated in media coverage.

³⁷JAGGARD, Ed. The Australian Surf Lifesaver as a National Symbol, 1920 – 1960. *In*: David DAY. 1998, 58.

³⁸BENNETT, Bruce. *In*: Richard NILE. 1994, 59.

³⁹DAY, David. The demise of the digger myth: Australian identity in a post-colonial world. *In*: David DAY. 1998, 89.

The most useful parallels and parodies of myth for the purposes of this thesis can be drawn between the protagonists of the contemporary novels discussed here and ‘the outlaw hero’, who fits within a tradition seen also in Britain, America and other nations. Like all national stories, however, this is given a specific ‘accent’ in Australia. The outlaw’s strength as a hero is drawn from fighting social (often class-based) oppression; robbing from the rich to give to the needy, for example. Rather than being pilloried for criminal activity, Robin Hood, Ned Kelly, Billy the Kid and others are celebrated as political protesters. They are framed as heroes with the courage to stand up to government or legal corruption on their own terms and make light of the pomposity associated with wealth. We see this attitude reflected in today’s Australia not in illegal dealings, but in an apparent national dislike of arrogance or garish displays of wealth. The commonly discussed ‘tall poppy’ syndrome in Australia is said to create heroes until they appear to be ‘above’ the general population at which point they are somehow cut down. Over the course of history, other nations have worked their myths in different fashions; class still plays a more significant role in representations of British social structure than Australian, for example, and obvious displays of material success are not so offensive in the United States. In Australia, the outlaw hero also exists within Aboriginal storytelling, where the crusader fights the systems of oppression of Aboriginal people.⁴⁰

Outlaw heroes “operate outside and against the official legal system of the state, but remain within the unofficial legal and moral code of those who see them as one of

⁴⁰See for example: Stephen MUECKE, Alan RUMSEY and Banjo WIRRUNMARRA. Pigeon the Outlaw: History as Texts. *Aboriginal History*. 9 (1), 1985, 81-99.

their own”.⁴¹ These codes include the obligation to be chivalrous, not to harm the poor or weak and not to indulge in unjustified violence. In the contemporary example of *Loaded*, Ari makes a list of commandments by which he will live including: ‘Thou shalt not give a shit what people think’ and ‘Thou shalt never steal from the poor or the old but fuck the rich for all it’s worth.’ (100/101) The outlaw hero also tends to die in a glorious fashion – often by hanging or shooting by the authorities, solidifying his status as a martyr for a cause. If the hero has not been legitimately caught and sentenced by the authorities, legend often has it that a member of his gang betrays the outlaw. The betrayer is then also served a punishment or takes his life out of guilt. There are obvious biblical overtones to this scenario suggesting that, given strong Christian beliefs in the colonies, many of the myths may have been inspired by the notion of Jesus as a brave but betrayed renegade. In the Australian context it also implies that illegal activity can be justified, but a lapse in ‘mateship’ cannot.

Considering the common occurrence of both outlaws and stockmen or land-dwelling heroes in the stories of a number of communities⁴², it might be assumed that the translation of such a character would be straightforward. Yet, this similarity of national heroes may act in the way mentioned in Chapter One, with reference to assumed recognition of signifiers. While similar characters have been created in each nation, they

⁴¹SEAL, Graham. The wild colonial boy rides again and again: An Australian Legend Abroad. *In*: Ian CRAVEN. 1994, 165.

⁴²See for examples: Graham SEAL. *The Outlaw Legend*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

are all accented by the historical circumstances of the community making them similar but *not the same*. Therefore, the repercussions of their actions and the social response to their hero status will differ amongst readers and it cannot be assumed that the replacement of a 'Ned Kelly' figure, for example, with a comparable European character will inspire the same effect on a reader. It will lead to different types of reading positions being established for foreign readers.

In 1988, Gordon and Wayne can be read as parodies of the outlaw hero. The two 'mates' live similar lives in Brisbane with mutual friends yet have little in common and fail to understand each other on many levels. With each being essentially selfish (though more so Wayne, who is less responsible than Gordon) they do not help each other if it is any way inconvenient. They compete rather than support (particularly with respect to women), tease each other about their various peccadilloes and blame each other if mistakes are made. From the outset, we are presented with a non-traditional image of male relations and mateship.

For McGahan's outlaw heroes, fighting the system comes in the form of Certeau's concept of "making do" or tactical response.⁴³ Certeau suggests that people assert small-scale rebellion against authority as a way of coping with their everyday lives. This may be achieved in the form of short cuts, lengthy lunchbreaks or excessive use of office stationery, for example. More recently, personal use of a business email account may be seen in the same light. In this way, Gordon and Wayne find ways to make the system work for them, rather than tackling the government or any bureaucracy with force or major illegality. In Brisbane, they make a living through the dole, casual work and an

⁴³CERTEAU, Michel de. *The practice of everyday life*. Translated by Steven RENDALL. Berkeley: California University Press, 1984.

occasional scam. In Cape Don, they put lacklustre effort into their jobs (which they know will have little consequence), joy ride in work vehicles when the ranger is absent (157) and break into other people's homes to watch videos (155). They see themselves as the under-privileged in this scenario and therefore feel justified to take what they can get if the opportunity arises.

Chivalry is also addressed in *1988* and is one of the most problematic aspects of the romantic, traditional hero stories. Chivalry, seen as a positive trait in its traditional form, is now often seen as sexist, oppressive and patronising. The contemporary 'heroes' of this story then represent men at a crossroads where acceptable treatment of women is as confusing as any other part of their lives. When two female backpackers arrive at Cape Don, accompanied by some lecherous sailors, a mating ritual takes place amongst the group. The disinterested women are 'treated to slaps on the back, touched knees, various innuendos' (202) and other forms of misguided preening and flirting. Later, the men leave the house to fetch additional alcohol, but Gordon and Wayne, who have been characteristically inept during this game, are left behind. 'That confirmed it. Wayne and I were so harmless we'd been left alone with the women' (202). There is tension here in McGahan's discussion of the need to conform and feel accepted amongst male peers, contradicting the desire to respect the female visitors. Not surprisingly, Gordon considers the positions and chooses not to act. The 'chivalrous' hero here is one who cannot really be bothered harassing the women in the way of the 'typical male' so he simply watches. He is chivalrous by default in this scenario.

In another subversion of heroic 'chivalry' Gordon declines an offer of sexual relations with an Aboriginal woman, who has just been raped and now lies in what the

reader assumes to be expectant fear; not protesting her degraded situation because it is perhaps commonplace in her experience. The woman, Hilda, is not given a voice here as she speaks only in her indigenous language. Gordon is horrified by the offer, but is only able to make feeble excuses about having a fiancée in Brisbane to whom he does not wish to be unfaithful. Again in the role of the subverted contemporary outlaw, he is chivalrous enough not to take what would have been an easy sexual opportunity, but not strong enough to speak out against the situation.

‘Don’t you like her?’ Con asked, confused. ‘She’ll do it.’
‘No.’ [...] other men could do it maybe, without even thinking. Con obviously *expected* me to do it. Maybe even Hilda did. [...] Suddenly I was appalled, sickened. [...] I felt ill and disgusted. Engaged? Getting married? Was that *all* I could think of to say? (268/269)

Gordon proceeds to struggle with his perceptions of himself as a man by alternating between chastising himself for not being more assertive and fantasising about what could have been. He does not discuss the situation or attempt to rectify it – but in this environment he has no ‘mates’ in whom to confide. Throughout the novel, Gordon feels that he has failed at any type of masculinity – chivalry or aggressive sexuality.

A society’s perception of the markers of masculinity is formulated and reinforced through stories. Linzi Murrie has stated that one’s status as masculine is dependent on the “authorising gaze of peers: the individual is both object of the collective gaze in the authorisation of his own masculinity, and participant in it, through authorising the masculinity of others”.⁴⁴ This is described in *Zigzag Street* where the approval and advice of peers is requisite to Richard Derrington’s decision making and self-image. Richard talks to his best friend Jeff for reassurance on the normality of his insecurities:

⁴⁴MURRIE, Linzi. *Changing Masculinities: Disruption and Anxiety in Contemporary Australian Writing. Journal of Australian Studies*. 1998, 56, 169-179, 171.

Trust me. Whatever happened with Anna doesn't mean it'll never work out.
But what if it's me? What if there's something about me? Something about me that doesn't work.
Something about you? Rick, there's nothing about you that isn't about everybody. Your biggest mistake is over-thinking this to buggery and convincing yourself it's anything but totally normal. (223)

Zigzag Street positions mateship favourably as the most important factor in the ability to overcome difficult times. Contemporary mateship for Earls' characters, is communicative and supportive, showing men as flawed, but ultimately sensitive in a way that subverts the popular perception of Australian men as boorish. It allows spaces for men to exist that are outside stereotypical masculine traits, while still subscribing to other identity myths. Without benefit of this type of peer approval, Gordon, in *1988*, sees himself as failing to live up to society's expectations, rather than accepting his approach to women and masculinity as an alternative, or an improvement upon the stereotype. He feels intimidated by the overt masculinity of other characters within the text, seeing this as successful or competent.

Barry, the previous park ranger represents the classic Dundee-esque Australian male. He is brash, sexist, vulgar, racist and completely competent on the land, yet willing to exploit the environment for his own pleasure (he fishes and hunts and is cashing-in on the popularity of wildlife photography). Barry's continual mocking of Gordon and Wayne disturbs them, even though they do not respect him.

Barry had got to me. I hated him and his opinion meant nothing, but he had got to me. [...] I went in to Wayne. [...] Barry had got to him too, seriously. [...] 'C'mon,' I said, 'Just because we're useless in a place like this, and to someone like Barry, it doesn't mean we're completely fucked. How would he survive in Brisbane?' Wayne's eyes were dry. 'They'd worship him. They'd make a TV show out of him. He's good-looking. He can do everything. He's the great Australian dream. Believe me, they'd take him over us any day.' (220/221)

McGahan ironically positions the ‘Great Australian dream’ (the male who personifies the myths) as a thoroughly dislikeable character within this text. He is recognisably a walking stereotype for that which is assumed to be an authentic Australian, yet is in fact rare enough to be a novelty worthy of a television program. This links to the ongoing paradox between Australianness as a series of myths, and as lived experience. This is a form of heteroglossia, which again relies on knowledge of myth as well as subversion.

Further to his many inhibitions, Gordon suffers an intense sexual frustration that manifests in aggressive masturbation and violent fantasies. Gordon has also indulged in a brief homosexual relationship and has fleeting sexual thoughts about Wayne and other men. Muller⁴⁵ has suggested that “such allusions to alternative psychosexual identities go some way towards destabilising hegemonic masculinity, while not seriously entertained as replacing it.” Alternatively, McGahan may actually be suggesting that there *are* alternative, feasible masculinities, though Gordon does not understand their potential. For Gordon, as the eternally distanced voyeur, ‘gay’ is something belonging to other people. His perception of gayness is another space to which he does not ‘officially’ belong: another authorised and media-enforced image with which he cannot engage. Meanwhile, he is happy to play with the suggestion in order to unnerve those he sees as naïve country folk. These scenes simultaneously invoke images of the ultra-conservative Queensland government policies of the early 1980s.

⁴⁵MULLER, Vivienne. 1997b, 34.

At the check-in we asked for a double room.
'You mean a twin,' said the woman.
'What's the difference?'
'It would be illegal for me to rent two males a double room [...]
'What if we were two women, and we asked for a double?' said Wayne.
'That'd be no problem.'
'Tricky being gay in Queensland, isn't it.'
The woman gave us a dark look. 'I wouldn't know anything about that.'(41)

In the year 1988, Queensland was reinventing itself after the dramatic downfall of an extremely conservative government which had caused an image of Queensland as behind the times and parochial. This scene is one of many that have culturally-specific overtones and may not be accessible to those unaware of images of Queensland (viewed most commonly internationally as a tourist destination) or of Queensland politics.

Gordon's uncertainty is unlike that of Ari in *Loaded* who does not question his attraction to men, but refutes the terms and the stereotypes of 'gay' or 'poofter'. Gordon would possibly be grateful to feel attached to such a label under which he could feel accepted. Ari adds these to the list of constructed labels that he does not wish to subscribe to. This is his way to 'fight the system' and find real autonomy.

Do your parents know? She's asking me a question.
Know what?
That you are gay? Am I? I want to say. I want to tell her that words such as faggot, wog, poofter, gay, Greek, Australian, Croat are just excuses. Just stories, they mean shit. (141)

By Ari's assertion, the term 'gay', like 'Australian', is simply another construct like so many tags placed upon people by the world around them. Yet, in this quotation the words are not just labels but *stories*. Each word implies a commonly understood mythology that will be perpetuated by subscription to the community and will provide excuses for behaviours. Ari acts on instinct where his sexuality is concerned, he does not need to identify with a legally or socially accepted definition of 'gay' or 'straight' and does not need justification for his sexual choices. Again, Ari rejects the available

definitions of gayness whereas Gordon does not feel that he belongs to the stereotype and is therefore abject.

In both cases, discomfort with the notion of homosexuality is imposed by society: neither character is concerned about their attraction to other men, but is concerned about his position with respect to the accepted definitions of gayness. Ari fights the image of gay men as feminine by being aggressive in his sexual pursuits – it is possible to *be* a man *and* have sex with men. Eve Sedgwick states that the vilification of the homosexual as a feminised ‘other’ suggests that misogyny is a part of homophobia.⁴⁶ This is comprehensible in the light of traditional Australian masculine attitudes that malign both women and homosexuals as weak and powerless ‘others’.

Negative positioning of the weak is not exclusive to Australia, but the way of dealing with such positioning may be seen as more culturally-specific. Gordon’s feeble response to the aforementioned rape situation represents the perceived apathy of Australians where social justice is concerned. This is another common myth that supports the ‘laid back’ perception of the country but misrepresents the reality that there are political factions of the Australian community like any other. It is often said that Australians do not have the passionate political instinct of some other nations as they have a ‘peaceful history’ (with little civil unrest in white society due to the effective suppression of the original inhabitants and the retention of ties to Britain for some time). While Australia may contain insidious forms of prejudice, this is rarely manifested in contemporary times in large-scale violence or hate-crimes, the likes of which are frequently viewed in other nations. The public face of Australian prejudices is one of

⁴⁶SEDGEWICK, Eve. *Between Men: English Literature and Male homosocial desire*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, 3.

passive contempt, avoidance or exclusion of certain people, rather than public spectacle. Gordon represents this in the midst of the gruesome rape scenario, where he is not misogynistic, merely utterly ineffectual.

Gordon and Wayne exchange the larrikin-like drinking of past heroes for excessive and escapist use of drugs to the point of irresponsibility and impotence. Gordon, a chronic asthmatic, sees his adoption of a smoking habit as one of the few achievements of his trip. Rather than dying in a blaze of glory, these outlaw heroes are disintegrating slowly through asthma, boils, malnutrition and self-inflicted wounds. Even the hackneyed image of the 'fast life' associated with drugs, as portrayed in *Loaded*, is subverted in *1988* and shown to be ponderous. Richard, Ari, Wayne and Gordon can be read as anti-heroes who represent a different and more complex Australian male than the 'ocker' clichés. Yet, it is necessary to understand the nuances of the legends to see the parodying movement in and out of those established images that takes place in the novels. Masculine hero myths are just one example of the culturally-specific subtexts of Australian novels that may be difficult to reproduce in cross-cultural exchanges.

3. Land, belonging and finding a 'home'

The controlling of nature reappears in many of the identity myths discussed so far. The Australian outback setting is said to be the "ideological crucible"⁴⁷, which invokes a stereotyped Australian character endorsing a "taxonomy of accompanying virtues such as resourcefulness, independence, mutual support, courage and tenacity".⁴⁸ In *1988*,

⁴⁷MULLER, Vivienne. 1997b, 31.

⁴⁸MULLER, Vivienne. 1997b, 31.

aptitude and affinity with the land do not come automatically for the male characters. In spite of their proximity to the land, Gordon and Wayne reveal few of these desirable qualities.

Like all the masculinist national images mentioned here, Australian attitudes to the land were traditionally based upon heroism in adversity. Turner⁴⁹ has said that:

Ours is not, like the American, a myth of the imposition of the individual on the land – of the politics of conquest; ours is a myth of accommodation and acceptance which admits the impossibility of conquering the land and merely recommends a manner of survival by learning to live in partnership with it.

Australia's is a story about making the land fruitful "and a story of sacrifice and suffering, which paradoxically, is also a kind of success".⁵⁰ Australia's particular connection to the land stems from a combination of colonial origins, distance from other countries, a small population for the land mass, vast uninhabited regions, heavily romanticised textual images of the outback and Aboriginal land rights claims. This sort of connection to nature does not occur in more populated or industrial nations – and is declining in the hearts of city dwellers even here.

Libby Robin⁵¹ suggests that it was urban Australians who invented "the Bush with a capital B" which has been in popular parlance since the heyday of the *Bulletin* newspaper in the 1890s (a strong force in the definition of Australian national identity). Most descriptions of the Bush from that time onwards tell us more about the aspirations and identity crises of romantic urban dwellers than any real details about rural regions. As such, the Bush as icon, and the ability to connect with that icon, have been perpetuated as a desirable feature of Australianness. Increased mobility in contemporary

⁴⁹TURNER, Graeme. 1986, 118.

⁵⁰BARNES, John. Legend. *In*: Richard NILE. 1994, 41.

⁵¹ROBIN, Libby. Urbanising the Bush: Environmental Disputes and Australian National Identity. *In*: David DAY. 1998, 116-127.

times means that city-dwelling Australians are able to enjoy the coast and the bush as places of escape, perpetuating the myth of the bush as an environment in which one finds peace and where one feels an increased connection to Australianness. This mythology images the city as practical, busy and amoral while the bush is serene and spiritual.⁵² However, given contemporary urban people's distance from the harsh lifestyle which inspired the bush myth, city-dwelling Australians are asked to connect with the land in "a legislatively protected frontier"⁵³ like a national park. This effectively limits sites of interaction with nationalism in a similar way to the "authorised images" of Australianness perpetuated in spaces like the Bicentennial celebrations. For urban dwellers there is less need to conquer the bush and more of a desire to marvel at it. Its popularly conceived role has changed from something overwhelming to something fragile. "For one generation bush-bashing meant heroism, for the next generation it meant vandalism".⁵⁴ Either way, a true Australian is perceived to have some kind of affinity with the land, and is asked to connect with a sense of national pride when surrounded by 'bush'.

Gordon and Wayne are extremely uncomfortable on the land – partially through fear and partially through their unmet expectations of the natural environment. In Darwin:

We went down to the beach. There was no surf. Nor was there anyone swimming. Warning signs mentioned marine stingers, sharks and crocodiles. [...] It didn't matter. We weren't there to look at the beach. It was the ocean we wanted. (71)

⁵²ROBIN, Libby. *In: David DAY. 1998, 123.*

⁵³ROBIN, Libby. *In: David DAY. 1998, 123.*

⁵⁴ROBIN, Libby. *In: David DAY. 1998, 123.*

Here, Gordon fails to understand or appreciate the immediate environment instead searching for a romantic, imaginary 'real' ocean: that spiritual place of escape, which he did not find in the 'outback' during the road trip. Gordon and Wayne fail to be remotely interested in the weather features they must learn for the work they are doing, instead being surprised and frightened by storms or extreme temperatures.

In another paradox, however, Gordon is sensitive to the 'feeling' of places, being highly perceptive considering his superficial lack of interest in anything. However, cynicism or boredom soon replace Gordon's occasional lapses into poetics as he is quickly overwhelmed by a need for peer acceptance and by his conditioned response to nationalism (the land may be beautiful, but it is still *just* Australia. It is not special.)

We'd travelled somewhere. There was a feel about Darwin. In the air. It was a weight, a heat and humidity that was nothing like Brisbane. Coming down from Asia. The breath of the monsoon. On the other hand it wasn't southern Chile, or the remotest Russian Tiaga, or the upper reaches of the Zaire River. Australia was only so big and we were still in it. We got sick of looking at the ocean and the clouds. (71)

Similarly to their 'laid back' attitudes to nationalism, Australians are not perceived to be zealously religious. Representing many Australians, Gordon does not subscribe to organised religion, but is extremely superstitious and prone to seeing many natural occurrences as signs of things to come. A dog by the side of the road becomes a signifier of doom and anything unfamiliar is inevitably malevolent:

It seemed calm. Wise. It knew things about us. Where we were going, what would happen when we got there. And what it knew wasn't good.' (55)

The wallabies were back, silently grazing. Something about them was sinister. Round, grey shapes, lumping their way across the grass. (109)

In a significant interaction with the animal world, Gordon is spooked by a large lizard:

What the hell was it? A big goanna? A monitor lizard? [...] It swivelled and ran off around behind the shack. I followed. It wasn't there. I heard loud, rustling sounds, branches snapping in the scrub. There was no scrub there. There was nothing behind the shack but the cliff, dropping straight down. There was nowhere it could have gone. [...] Something wasn't right. [...] In the corner the spiders sat in their webs and watched me. (235)

The reader is soon aware that this evocative interaction with the lizard intersects with the Aboriginal community's spiritual connection to the land. The lizard image goes some way towards bridging the gap between the belief systems of the two cultures in terms of the land. Gordon is privileged with the opportunity to explore the more secluded portions of the national park with Allan Price (an Aboriginal elder):

He was pointing to a large reef.
'Crab dreaming place,' he said. 'Lots of dreaming places around here. Dingo, stingray, snake.' He waited, watching me. 'You know what dreaming is?'
'No. Not really.'
'Cape Don. That's a dreaming place.'
'Yeah?'
He laughed. 'Yeah. Big lizard dreaming.'
'You're kidding.'
'No, no joke. *You* know. Mean old fella, big lizard. Plays tricks in your head...' (252)

In this scene, McGahan suggests that many quotidian superstitions harboured by white Australians are not dissimilar from the assumedly strange and supernatural Aboriginal dreaming concepts. Suddenly these appear as a probability rather than an 'alternative' or 'magical' reality, as they are often comprehended by non-Indigenous Australians. This is significant in terms of translatability of texts as many international audiences are even more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to position Aboriginal cultures as distanced from their own daily experience.

Gordon questions his Christian upbringing throughout the book and sees other ominous signs related to this (such as a supply plane appearing as a cross in the sky). In

his initial attempts to write a gothic horror novel, featuring sewage-obsessed women and angels with huge phalli, he states:

I began thinking about Christian sects and cults. I'd studied them at university. Jehovah's Witnesses. Seventh-Day Adventists. Mormons. They'd fit in there somewhere too. You could never go wrong with religion. (179)

Religion becomes another facet of life that Gordon feels distanced from: it is something you study, not something you feel. At the same time, Gordon does not acknowledge the intense spirituality that he actually subscribes to, which ironically puts him at ease with the Aboriginal approach to spirituality within nature. Allan's tales of the 'earthquake spirit tree', a beach that would determine the weather if one drew certain signs in the sand and the ability of people to 'call' cyclones if 'law' was interfered with are absorbed unquestioningly by Gordon.

The result of this comfort with local legend and ability to quietly observe custom in the initial stages of Gordon's visit to Araru with the Aboriginal people is his first and only fleeting moment of happiness during the voyage.

Was I enjoying myself? I had no idea why they were bothering with me, why they cared whether I was happy or not, but I was. I lit another cigarette, offered them round. We skimmed over the ocean. (255)

Gordon states on several occasions that he is 'unsatisfied' with his life. From his life in Brisbane and throughout the journey he is yearning for sexual experience, he is hungry yet fussy about food, he has writer's block, he feels displaced and he is lonely. After a meal of stale bread, bloody meat and water amongst the Gurig people Gordon rolls onto his back to look at 'the stars, billions of them, bright in the sky. I felt full and satisfied and tired. Even the boils felt better'(261). Here, Gordon has his 'authentic' experience. He finds a place of comfort, acceptance and that elusive satisfaction. He becomes aware of all that is beautiful and spiritual about a more basic lifestyle. Then, Gordon destroys

this serenity and acceptance by thoughtlessly breaking laws under the influence of a local miscreant.

In this way, McGahan conforms to the traditional image of the bush as spiritual home, yet implies that it will always be a transient home for non-Indigenous Australians. Gordon cannot connect with nature in any environment that has been certified for that purpose, such as the beach or the weather station. He cannot make contact with his Australianness or his spiritual self in the company of white rangers or rural residents. His only moment of 'authentic experience' is in the space occupied by Aboriginal Australians and their traditions.

In positioning the authentic Australian experience in this way, McGahan buys into issues of Aboriginal authenticity (that is, what constitutes a real Aborigine?). The notion of bush-dwelling or 'full-blood' Aborigines as more authentically indigenous than those of mixed origins has had considerable influence over the wider acceptance of Aboriginal people in Australia. It has affected the right for many people who identify as Aboriginal to write or speak for their people, and has cast doubt on the rights of some to accept government aid. It has inspired debate about whether it is one's parentage or one's environment that formulates a sense of identity, and implies that urban-dwelling Aborigines have no traditions. The common Australian misconception of ways of identifying as Aboriginal is a part of Australian popular mythology that is not subverted in this text. While McGahan parodies the myth that white Australians are assumed to be able to connect with the land, he does not problematise similar assumptions made about black Australians.

Bruce Bennett⁵⁵ states: “The myth of home, of a place of belonging, is especially prevalent and poignant for Australia’s Aboriginal people because they have so patently been displaced”. This can also be viewed in the wider Australian population’s response to belonging, as all are migrants of sorts, be they recent or distant arrivals. Many Australian works consequently deal with “places known and loved, of homes lost and the strategies to regain them in memory and imagination. In some respects, this mythic story is the master narrative of contemporary Australia.”⁵⁶ Even in *Zigzag Street*, where the protagonist is completely at home in the city of Brisbane, his actual house is an uncomfortable environment. He has recently acquired the house from his deceased grandmother and it feels empty to him. He fails to feel motivated to renovate or even unpack the moving boxes. It becomes ‘home’ only after he has undergone some self-exploration; when he feels comfortable with himself, he feels comfortable in the house. This works as a neat metaphor for Australian national identity: that is, the feeling of occupying someone else’s space which coincides with personal feelings of being lost and displaced. Hodge and Mishra⁵⁷ have spoken about the “bastard complex” existent in Australia which “foregrounds the issue of legitimacy as crucial in the Australian definition of identity. And paradoxically the basis of identity that it constructs is a shared sense of illegitimacy...” due to the common understanding of the problematic right of white citizens to live in Australia.

In *1988*, this is alluded to in the many images of the residents of Cape Don and in Gordon’s displaced responses to his other residential addresses. Gordon is originally

⁵⁵BENNETT, Bruce. *In*: Richard NILE. 1994, 63.

⁵⁶BENNETT, Bruce. *In*: Richard NILE. 1994, 63.

⁵⁷HODGE, Bob and Vijay MISHRA. *Dark Side of the Dream*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990, 23.

from Dalby, a home of the past, and as such, one that features a country lifestyle to which he no longer relates. He speaks dispassionately about the town: ‘I had nothing against Dalby. I’d enjoyed my years there. Still, I had no regrets about having moved on either.’ (29). This distance from his origins is reinforced by a symbolic visit to his parents on the way home from Darwin where he finds no one home and the door locked. Brisbane is the place where Gordon lives yet he is not comfortable there either. His house is overpopulated and decrepit, his acquaintances are casual and he has no interest in the growing excitement about Expo, which was, superficially, a significant and unifying event for the Brisbane community.

Cape Don represents a purgatorial space where Gordon and Wayne are housed in a dilapidated school symbolising the learning experience they endure – the environment itself, natural and imposed, takes on the role of pedagogue. Cape Don is a shared space where neither white nor Aboriginal residents feel ‘at home’. Gordon and Wayne make daily annunciations of their progressive decline and subsequent personal resolutions on which they rarely act. Even the park ranger, Vince, who should, by virtue of his profession, be more at ease at Cape Don is displaced.

They’re bright boys there in administration,’ he said, ‘Everything I know is desert-related and they send me here. Cape Don. A tropical and maritime park. Boats. Mangroves. Crocodiles. I know fuck-all about any of it. (107)

Vince discovers that he has been duped into extending his term as ranger of the park and must also endure an ill-fated fishing trip with his estranged son, which challenges his masculinity and power. So, the Cape is not a place of spiritual homeliness simply by virtue of its seclusion and bush location. It is a space of suspension before returning to the respective ‘real’ worlds of the characters.

In a final assault on the masculinity of the lead characters, their replacement weather observer arrives in the form of a chirpy, experienced and competent woman (Stacy) who finds the park beautiful and immediately gets along with the Aboriginal residents. The reader assumes that Vince may find a companion in Stacy and the customs of the locals will be well respected. Stacy is a traveller who will not make this a permanent home either, but as she is permitted to live in an actual house, rather than the schoolhouse, the reader can assume that she has less to learn than Gordon and Wayne. Stacy is a symbol of ways in which harmonious relations between black and white Australians, and between Australians and the land, might be achieved in the future.

As Gordon and Wayne return to Brisbane they drive exactly the same route with fewer stops or observations. This might suggest that nothing has changed, or that no lessons have been learned. This illusion is broken, however, by the symbol of the unsuccessful attempt to visit family. After failing to see his own family, Gordon drops Wayne at his mother's house (which will also be a temporary residence) then goes to seek a place for himself. No one he knows still resides at his share-house and after searching, Gordon moves into a men's boarding house.

Brisbane has become foreign since their departure but the reader must question whether it is the city or Gordon that has changed.

And Brisbane felt strange. It wasn't the way I'd left it. [...] The streets were full of tourists. The papers were full of Expo events and Bicentennial news. Live acts. Free concerts. Parades. (311)

There is also a 'strange beam of light, arcing across the sky', 'stretching over Brisbane, over everything' which reveals itself to be the Expo Skyneedle (a lighthouse-like sculpture which shone constantly throughout the year 1988, and is still lit for special

occasions). Muller⁵⁸ reads this symbol as a strong phallus to juxtapose with the limp and decrepit lighthouse of Cape Don. It might also be read as a symbol of useless urban imitations of the bush or the coast – this ‘lighthouse’ has a purely decorative function yet beams more strongly than the weather station and warning light in the national park.

Importantly, Gordon takes time to pause at Brisbane’s Kangaroo Point cliffs where he suddenly sees Brisbane as ‘impossibly beautiful’. ‘If there was any single view of Brisbane, maybe it was this.’ (308, 309). Like *Zigzag Street*, this image of Brisbane serves to resonate with local readers and tantalise others, as the city is rendered remarkable. Gordon’s beautiful Brisbane is exotic, not comfortable like the Brisbane of *Zigzag Street*.

An old, black man named Vass runs Gordon’s boarding house. As Gordon drinks with Vass, his mind drifts to the Aboriginal residents of Gurig National Park:

I thought about another old black man three thousand miles away, Allan Price. Vass was nothing like him, but I’d wandered into Vass’s territory just as I’d wandered into Allan’s. Respect, I thought, *respect*. The place wasn’t much, but it was his home and I wanted to live there. (313)

As long as he is living with Vass, Brisbane still will not be Gordon’s own place of belonging. Simultaneously, McGahan here evokes a broader image of the displacement at the heart of Australia’s “bastard complex” – the notion of illegitimacy that obstructs a feeling of true belonging. Homi Bhabha⁵⁹ uses the expression “unhomely” to describe the “estranged sense of the relocation of the home and the world [...] that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations.”

⁵⁸MULLER, Vivienne. 1997b, 33.

⁵⁹BHABHA, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, 9.

Loaded also discusses the notion of unhomeliness, although Ari appears to revel in this, in perpetual motion through the city rather than seeking a specified home. ‘What I am is a runner. Running away from a thousand and one things that people say you have to be or should want to be.’ (149) Though he lives with his parents, Ari spends more time at a variety of ‘homes’ around the city. The homes of friends, favourite nightclubs and certain streets or alleyways become temporary places of sanctuary for Ari. He knows his city well, even refers to it as ‘my city’ (144), yet has no love for it.

The West is a dumping ground; a sewer of refugees, the migrants, the poor, the insane, the unskilled and the uneducated. (144)

[...]St Kilda beach. The beach which for decades has been the home of junkies and whores, refugees and migrants, now being redone, remodelled, restructured into a playground for the sophisticated professional. (131)

Even the favoured areas of the city are only transient homes in Ari’s eyes. They are ‘dumping grounds’ or are about to be renovated forcing old residents away. While Ari does see beauty in aspects of Melbourne, he defines the ugliness in terms of the labels he resents himself. This is partially because his vision of Australia is one in which people like to live up to the available images – people desire to fit into a category. On page 112, Ari says ‘Home is the last place I want to be’ and this edict is displayed in his determined vagrancy.

Conclusion

We see the notion of displacement reflected in characters like Richard, Gordon and Ari, but the notion of finding places of belonging can also work as a metaphor for the movement of texts. Transferred novels leave one type of home and must seek, or be

made to establish, connections with a different ‘home’ or readership when they move between territories. They carry with them the marks of their place of origin, including language and national mythologies, that those outside of their source culture will struggle to comprehend. As Pym⁶⁰ has suggested, texts naturally resist translation due to this change of values. I would suggest that this perhaps makes translated works more like ‘tourists’ than ‘migrants’ in a new cultural environment. Translators nonetheless will attempt to render the text equivalent in a different language or to use the paratext to assist readers in finding adequate reading positions from which to access the material. The inclusion in novels of such heavy allusion to culturally-specific images risks major misunderstandings when approached by readers from other cultures.

A United States review of *1988*⁶¹ suggests that it is a “listless” prequel to the “cult novel” *Praise*, in which:

McGahan exiles his Aussie Generation-Xers to an Outback outpost in a slacker Heart of Darkness...even Gordon’s last, squandered opportunity to befriend the local Aborigines—occurring in the only section of the novel with any vitality—barely generates the narrative energy for an anticlimax.

A further American review⁶² states:

At the end of six months they return home, unchanged and unimpressed by their experience. The story may sound as affectless as the characters, but McGahan writes well, capturing the essence of directionless youth.

Similar reviews continue the association of the text with the grunge genre, painting it as a slower-paced *Trainspotting*. The ‘wilderness’ is cited only as the setting, never problematised as being a national emblem of any kind. McGahan’s ‘listless’ characters are viewed as similar to young people anywhere, in spite of the potent Australianness of

⁶⁰PYM, Anthony. *Translation and Text Transfer*. Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Land, 1992.

⁶¹*Publishers Weekly*. 1988. 243 (49), 2 Dec 1996, 41.

⁶²BURKHARDT, Joanna M. 1988 Review. *Library Journal*. 122 (1), Jan 1997, 148.

the novel. By connecting the text to the 'grunge' genre, these critics need look no further than the obvious trappings of such novels (sex, drugs, nihilism) to make sense of the text, and in so doing, overlook a significant level of cultural meaning.

In the *New York Times*⁶³, 1988 was approached thus:

Australia is a nice place to live, and probably the worst place in the world to write a harrowing antinovel that exposes your generation as a phalanx of debauched zombies. Where's the nihilism? Where's the banality? [...] merely kaleidoscopic scenery and a sheltering raft of laid-back, optimistic adults, beerily inclined to support you in your every move. How do you even start to invent a fractured, empty soul for your generation when there are kangaroos and duck-billed platypi boinging past your window?

While, assumedly, ironic, this article points to the stereotypes of Australian life as perceived by international readers and views grunge literature as anomalous to the lifestyle 'truly' being lead by young Australian authors. Rather than being read as an 'authentic' representation of a bleak existence, this article implies fictitiousness of subject matter, as if McGahan were a writer struggling to find something to agonise about. This review is a positive one, giving McGahan praise for reinventing realism and producing a refreshing, if uneventful, novel. While the reviewer enjoys McGahan's use of the mundane, he concludes the article with the cynical remark:

[...] it is this familiar type of realism that seems to be bothering McGahan's generation of young Australians, leaving them hung over and even sometimes bedridden. Luckily, though, they still seem able to write'.⁶⁴

This reviewer may be similarly cynical about many novels which deal with stories of contemporary youth anxiety, however, again, the declination to view McGahan's novel as other than an Australian version of the grunge trend, annuls the study of the novel as a statement about national identity. This is a reading position that has not been offered to

⁶³MADDOX, Bruno. Australia: Not that boring. *New York Times Literary Review*. 23 Feb 1997, 11.

⁶⁴MADDOX, Bruno. 1997, 11.

the American public through the paratext, and may not be recognised without paratextual translation.

Similarly, a German review⁶⁵ of McGahan's *Praise* commences with talk of red sand, "cross-legged Aborigines" and didgeridoos before stating that there is also "another Australia"(the city) where over half of Australia's population lives. While more considerate of urban malaise in Australia than the *New York Times*, this article refers to Gordon as an "average Australian guy". In *Praise*, even more than in *1988*, Gordon's squalid lifestyle, while not remarkable, could not be read as 'average'. This review goes further to say that McGahan's work is important in that it dispels images of Australia as nothing more than a "pretty, environmentally-friendly holiday destination". Thus, the translation of the text effects some form of education, but may still be erroneously read as representative of the totality of the urban Australian experience. While it works to dissipate certain stereotypes in its German incarnation, it still does not inspire a reading of the text that goes beyond its recognition as an example of grunge.

By comparison, Australian academic Catherine Pratt⁶⁶ has said that *1988* "examines the relationship between history and landscape in a funny but also deeply critical way". Similarly, Phillipa Hawker⁶⁷ concluded her review of *1988* thus:

While the first novel [*Praise*] explored masculinity in the claustrophobic context of a relationship, *1988* looks at myths of masculinity in the year of the Bicentennial, the 'Celebration of a Nation' – a strangely appropriate context for this six months of Northern exposure, of isolation, desolation, revelation and boils.

⁶⁵STOLL, Caroline. Andrew McGahan: Die Geschichte mit Cynthia. *Stadtmagazin Berlin*. 16 July 1997.

⁶⁶PRATT, Catherine. Landscape. Austlit discussion group (austlit@vicnet.au). 28 May 1998. Archives retrievable at URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au>.

⁶⁷HAWKER, Phillipa. McGahan's Masculine Dour. *Australian Book Review*. 175, Oct 1995, 46-48.

Through these examples we see differing perspectives on the same piece of writing. I do not intend to assume what all readers will take from a text, but in looking at these reviews as exemplary of possible reading positions, Australian reviewers seem more capable of reading the Australian cultural implications and metaphorical level of what is ostensibly just another ‘Generation X’, urban anxiety book. Thus, the culturally-specific novel will be read in different ways by different readerships, and its various translations (intratextual and paratextual) will contribute to the reading positions accessed by new readers. Chapter Three will continue analysis of methods used by translators to create reading positions most conducive to maximal comprehension of the text. This can be done by attempting to educate readers, or to find ways to liken the text to something similar to what is available in the target culture. However, the discussion of myth in this chapter suggests that while, like language, national myths may bear some similarity to symbols or concepts available in other cultures, it is the particular accent given to them by the ongoing storytelling of the nation that ensures their cultural-specificity. While masculinist traditions, tales of outlaws or war, indigenous populations and the importance of the land are by no means exclusive to Australia, a particular way of telling and dealing with these things *is* culturally-specific.

Turner⁶⁸ has said that “the examination of the cultural-specificity of our narratives is not in any way an argument for their uniqueness but rather for a kind of Australian accent which is audible and distinctive when placed in relation to that of other speakers.” These are the things that contribute to that perspective that makes a novel distinctly

⁶⁸TURNER, Graeme. 1986, 84.

Australian; that which is so difficult to render in translation and so likely to be misinterpreted in transit. These novels reveal an Australia more complex than the stereotypes and show “that the multiple influences winding into Australian culture are pepping up the novel no end. If this is the Australian novel now, then it’s a shape-changing creature, alive and leaping.”⁶⁹ The same could be said of the Australian culture itself. However, hackneyed images remain in the public sphere. They are being dismantled and renovated but also resurrected and loved depending on the forum. They contribute to the innate Australianness of texts and undoubtedly complicate the movement of texts away from their place of belonging.

⁶⁹LIVETT, Jennifer. Sites of Resistance. *Island*. 55, Winter, 1993, 66.

Chapter Three

“That’s what Paradise is – never knowing the difference.”¹

Theoretical approaches to translation.

Chapters One and Two have shown that the cultural specificity of texts derives from language and representations of national mythology. I have further suggested that the inclusion of such references defines the levels of comprehensibility of texts for readers outside of the source culture. Each of the novels examined in this thesis depicts specificities of Australian culture and is therefore likely to undergo a translation of some kind when released internationally. The texts also construct subcultural and regional cultures (youth culture, Greek-Australian culture or the cultural mores of a city, for example) and are thus frequently translated in some way for other cultural communities within the heterogeneous Australian culture. This chapter will look at the diverse practical and problematic theoretical approaches available to translators when working with explicitly culturally-specific texts, with a view to applying these theories to the case studies in Chapters Five and Six.

Temporarily moving away from the corpus of novels under analysis here, the textual examples in Chapter Three will be drawn from a wide range of texts. This allows me to broadly demonstrate principles of translation theory and to retain specific examples from my chosen novels for close analysis in Chapters Five and Six. This chapter’s title illustrates the perceived desire for translations to be transparent; a

¹HELLER, Joseph. Something Happened. Quoted as introduction to PYM, Anthony. *Translation and Text Transfer*. Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Land, 1992.

good translation is commonly held to be one that reads like an original. This notion will be also be problematised throughout this chapter.

Introduction

Pym has asserted that in popular discussion of ‘translation’ the connotations of its Latin origin (as past participle of ‘transferre’ – to carry over or across) are overlooked. Pym’s argument is that “translation can be seen as a special kind of response to things that have been transferred or are meant to be transferred”²; that is, that texts have a place of belonging and movement away from this source is what necessitates translation. Translation is then immediately problematic because the text must undergo and be subjected to “a change of values”³ with each movement away from its source; it is not simply a matter of exchanging one language for another. It is the sense of movement that must be kept in mind to understand why translation occurs between readers of a shared common language as well as those of other communities. A Brisbane-based text, like *Zigzag Street*, will require translation in this way when it moves to Sydney, for example, or to Brisbane readers of a different generation to the protagonists (if we read a generation as a type of culture). The movement to the United Kingdom will be one more set of linguistic and cultural values further away from the Brisbane point of origin and so the amount of translation required will increase.

Pym sums up our relationship with translation saying: “it is possible to accept that everything we know about cultures beyond our own has come to us, has been

²PYM, Anthony. 1992,18.

³PYM, Anthony. 1992, 18.

appropriated or assimilated, through a process of transfer and translation.”⁴

Translation is what creates the images of a culture held by a recipient culture. Inter-cultural understanding, and the available repertoire of cultural images, relies on translation. When translation is read broadly in this context, it is evident that its definition is not restricted to the laborious linguistic work of trained translators but is observable in many different forms and mediums, such as the educational and promotional processes involved in textual production.

The notion of an available ‘repertoire’ of images has been used in Chapters One and Two to describe the ways in which people relate to language and to national identity myths. It is useful in terms of translation, as it operates as a diagnostic device: translators will make choices according to the assumed repertoire available to the perceived readers. Translators will choose to work within that repertoire, or to attempt to expand that repertoire by educating readers (in ways that will be discussed later). Gideon Toury⁵ summarises the repertoire as follows:

As is well known, every culture community tends to codify phenomena of various types which have semiotic value for its members, linguistic and non-linguistic alike. Every set of codified items forms a *repertoire*, ie., an aggregate governed by systemic relations which govern the availability of certain items and the unavailability of others for certain uses within that culture.

This suggests that readers make sense of a text by relating it to the things that already exist within their frames of reference. At the same time, translators will attempt to appeal to this (to rework texts with the repertoire in mind) to attempt to maximise comprehension of the translated text.

⁴PYM, Anthony. 1992, 17.

⁵TOURY, Gideon. What are Descriptive Studies into translation likely to yield apart from isolated descriptions? *In*: Kitty VAN LEUVEN ZWART and Ton NAAIJKENS, eds. *Translation Studies: the state of the art: proceedings from the first James S Holmes Symposium on Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991, 187.

Eva Hoffman⁶ suggests a sporting metaphor to discuss the ways in which cultural-specificity affects one's reading of a text. She has given the example of watching a football game in a foreign country and not being able to see the ball due to not knowing the rules of the game. "You can only keep your eye on the ball, it seems, if you have a rough prior idea of its trajectory". Likewise, readers of culturally specific texts require some prior knowledge, or some kind of translation, to follow the intricacies of a storyline. Extending Hoffman's analogy, this visitor would attempt to make sense of the game using the frames of reference available to her; in this case, what she already knows about sport. She will clearly understand that there are two teams wearing different uniforms. She will understand that they must use a ball and must win points in some way. From there, she will be forced to rely on the same types of tools used by readers who approach novels from other cultures.

She may assume the rules are the same as a game from her home country, but may then be slightly confused when anomalous activities take place. She may piece together rules from a range of games with which she is familiar and make sense of this new game by incorporating that range of images. She may rely on forms of paratextual translation, such as commentary by an announcer, the scoreboard or the shouts of those sitting around her. Finally, she may ask someone to officially translate the game by explaining the rules to her. At this stage, she may make sense of the game itself, but may still lack the enthusiasm for the game of other viewers as she will have less understanding of the importance of a team to its local supporters, and will feel no connection to the sport as a significant national icon.

This metaphor demonstrates the ways in which outside readers may interpret culturally-specific texts, and shows that such texts hold greater resonance for those

⁶HOFFMAN, Eva. *Lost in Translation*. London: Minerva, 1991, 135.

who are familiar with the culture of origin. A novel, like a sport, contains conventions and genres which certain cultures find familiar and others must work hard to interpret. Like making sense of the rules, readers must attempt to understand new genres or aspects of language in accordance with their own frames of reference. All the signs necessary for comprehension are contained within the (wider) text: the spectator can find out all she needs to know while sitting at the game. In the same way, readers seek translation from the novel's paratext and make assumptions about meaning based on their own repertoire of images. Translators must choose whether to domesticate a text (analogous to replacing the rules with the rules of a familiar sport, thus substantially changing the symbol in question) or to provide guidelines that allow readers to construct a meaning as close as possible to the original for themselves. The press and educational institutions will be shown in this thesis to take the role played by the 'commentator' in this metaphor, who explains the game as it goes along, assisting spectators (readers) to make sense of the action by working with the familiar repertoire.

1. What is translation?

Within this thesis, translation is taken in its broadest sense to incorporate all the factors that I envisage as contributing to the activity of making sense of a culturally-specific novel. At the same time, in this chapter I seek to review a variety of theoretical perspectives on what translation entails. There is held to be a number of different forms of translation and uses of 'translation' as a term, each of which is accompanied by its own inherently problematic terminology and governed by the

many paradoxes faced by translators in their attempts to reconcile theoretical desirables and practical needs.

A basic definition of translation has been given by Hatim and Mason⁷ who see it as “an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication (which may have been intended for different purposes and different readers/hearers)”. Within this seemingly innocuous definition, one of the inconsistencies of translation theory is already apparent: the notion of borderlines. I have repeatedly asserted that there are no neat borders between languages or cultures; cultures are “social spaces whose edges are unfixed, irregular and difficult to locate.”⁸ Yet in identifying the needs of a market, the language choices to be made or the priorities to be given to alterations of national mythology, translators are forced to ‘name’ the source and target spaces within which they are working.

Practical necessities are, in this way, in constant tension with ethical or theoretical viewpoints. Effectively what we ask of the translator is to smoothly translate from Language A to Language B (or Culture A to Culture B) while acknowledging that these are fluid entities with no fixed parameters. Pym usefully suggests that translation, however, may be the way of identifying such frontiers: the frontier can be drawn at the point where translation becomes necessary.⁹ However, even this neat conclusion is problematic in terms of the practical translation of novels, as each reader’s frontiers of comprehension will differ. Again, to make translation choices when transferring a novel, some general assumptions must be made about where to draw the frontier lines.

⁷HATIM Basil and Ian MASON. *The Translator as Communicator*. London: Routledge, 1997, 1.

⁸GEERTZ, Clifford. The Uses of Diversity. *Michigan Quarterly Review*. 25, 1986, 123

⁹PYM, Anthony. 1992, 26.

Following this notion of indeterminate borderlines, postcolonial theorists¹⁰ have envisaged the concept of translation as the process by which cultures merge and become hybrid spaces. Many people are said now to live “between cultures, amid languages, across borders.”¹¹ ‘Translation’ in this sense can also be used to discuss the way in which indigenous cultures are forced to reinvent their traditional beliefs for Western consumption: their traditional identity undergoes a ‘translation’ under globalising influences.

In another version of what we know as translation, Roman Jakobson¹² delineates interlinguistic (between languages), intralinguistic (within a language) and intersemiotic (from one form to another) translation. These concepts are useful to my thesis in that they allow for an understanding of translation within a common language as well as between languages. This also offers a role for the media in the translation process by including changes of form within its definition; though these terms are again dependant on the myth of boundaries, which underpins the enterprise of translation.

This thesis argues that translation is performed by the many educational and media-based processes involved in the release of a text, again reworking impressions of what is traditionally held as ‘translation’¹³. This will be analysed more closely in Chapter Four, but it is obvious that no novel moves from the source culture to a new readership without intervention. Aijaz Ahmad¹⁴ says that:

By the time a Latin American novel arrives in Delhi, it has been selected, translated, published, reviewed, explicated and allotted a place [...] That is to say, it arrives here

¹⁰See for example: Homi BHABHA. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

¹¹HAWLEY, John. C., ed. *Cross-Addressing – Resistance Literature and Cultural Borders*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1996, 8.

¹²See for example: Krystyna POMORSKA and Stephen RUDY. *Language in Literature/Roman Jakobson*. Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1987.

¹³ This is sometimes referred to as ‘translation proper’. I have avoided use of this term as I choose not to privilege one form of translation over another in this thesis.

¹⁴AHMAD, Aijaz. *In Theory. Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992, 45.

with those processes of circulation and classification already inscribed in its very texture.

A translation can be seen at each level of the movements of the text described by Ahmad. The process of transfer described includes choices, interventions, censors and explanatory stages which could all be considered translation of sorts. The ‘selection’ may be made with a specific readership in mind, or according to the desires of a funding body or publishing house. The reviews of a text may include information about the author, or references to the cultural background or conditions of production of the novel. In this way, there are many translators at work on any text. A text arrives in the hands of the recipient readers inscribed with many forms of intervention making it ‘suitable’ for insertion into a new cultural community.

This process of mediation inevitably affects the decisions of the translator. The translator must decide whether a translation should be performed to suit the recipient culture or to retain maximal facets of the original text. They must question whether the translation can be an ‘accurate’ version of the ‘original’ text (and again, the terminology is problematic), or to what extent it is acceptable to make the translated work a new and different version of the original to suit its new readership. They must also question whether cultural alterity is to be a priority in the quest for transparency.

2. Theoretical approaches to translation

With so much variation in understandings of translation as a term, it follows that there exists a vast and contradictory theoretical base for the study of translation. This interdisciplinary thesis is constructed envisaging a range of readers from different fields. Therefore, this chapter does not aim to map the entirety of the available discourse on translation, or to incorporate sustained analysis of any one

school of thought. I wish only to indicate particular points of reference that inform my thesis by offering a background history of study into translation.

2.1 Descriptive versus Theoretical translation studies

Critical discussion of translation can initially be broken into three areas: theoretical, descriptive and applied. Applied translation studies is the teaching and technical face of the translation field. I need not expand upon its role here. The remaining two categories are the sites of debate which influence my own work. Traditionally, the school known as Descriptive Translation Studies (“DTS”) embraced the study of actual phenomena; that is, existing translations and their contexts rather than the “more general regularities and principles”¹⁵ of theoretical translation studies. Gaining momentum in the 1970s, the aim of DTS became normative empirical analysis, working towards the isolation of one pure or definitive series of laws that might govern translation, based on practical analysis. DTS followers look at “one to one relationships and functional notions of equivalence”¹⁶; they believe in “the subjective ability of the translator to derive an equivalent text that in turn influences the literary and cultural conventions in a particular society.”¹⁷

Susan Bassnett¹⁸ has pointed out that, as in all fields, concepts are contested within the DTS school, and alternative viewpoints are increasingly common. Polysystem theorists (one branch of the DTS school), for example, presume “the social norms and literary conventions in the receiving culture (“target” system)

¹⁵HERMANS, Theo. Translational norms and correct translations. In: Kitty VAN LEUVEN-ZWART and Ton NAIJKENS. 1991, 155.

¹⁶GENTZLER, Edwin. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London: Routledge, 1993, 107.

¹⁷GENTZLER, Edwin. 1993, 107.

¹⁸BASSNETT, Susan. *Translation Studies*. Revised edition. London: Routledge, 1988, intro xiii.

govern the aesthetic presuppositions of the translator...”¹⁹ This highlights the common distinction made in translation practice between ‘target oriented translation’ and ‘source oriented translation’; that is, translations that are geared towards easy accessibility for the recipient culture or translations that aim to stay closer to the source text. In brief, most DTS translators are in favour of target oriented translations – whether their role is to be influential or locally assimilated – while other schools seek maximal retention of cultural alterity in translated texts. The case studies of Chapters Five and Six will exhibit the pay offs of each position.

While theoretical perspectives influence all areas of inquiry and practice within studies of translation, those who would align themselves with ‘theoretical translation studies’ see no neat resolution to the problems faced by translators. They see as ludicrous the idea that there may be one law governing the procedure. In the same way as many literary or cultural theories – which obviously feed into translation theory – ‘theoretical translation studies’ engage with the myriad poststructural, post colonial, feminist and other perspectives available to the process of translation. Some of the key sites of contestation within translation theory will now be outlined.

2.2 Fidelity

Translation theorists examine issues of borders, the heterogeneity of languages and the source/target orientation questions I have already presented. The other most commonly contested debate within translation theory turns on the notion of ‘fidelity’. Unlike many other fields, the translation process requires contemplation of the meaning of faithfulness and debates which aspects of text require such fidelity during a process in which many alterations will be made. Theories are many and varied on this issue given poststructuralist assertions that meaning itself is unstable (thus

¹⁹GENTZLER, Edwin. 1993, 107.

negating the need for fidelity to meaning), the understanding that all texts are the products of intertextuality (negating fidelity to one ‘original’ text), the freedom of formal constraints afforded to contemporary texts (negating the desire for fidelity to formal conventions) and the ‘death of the author’ (suggesting that fidelity to the ‘author’s intentions’ is obsolete). At the same time, a translated text that strays too far from the source text is considered by many to be a ‘bad’ translation – or even a version, adaptation or original work. Therefore, translators continue to debate which facets of the text deserve fidelity, or can feasibly be reproduced ‘faithfully’.

In the past, fidelity to the ‘author’s intentions’ was often the rule. More recently, literary and cultural theorists predominantly view texts as separable from their author and able to be infinitely interpreted by readers, who are perceived as active participants in the formation of meaning. Therefore, fidelity to the ‘author’s intention’ is rarely offered as a translation procedure. A number of alternative and diverse common practices for translation have been progressively developed in light of wider theoretical changing perspectives.

Danica Seleskovitch has written extensively on one such practice in the interpretative theory of translation popularised by the *École Supérieure des Interprètes et Traducteurs de Paris*.²⁰ This approach relies on fidelity to the meaning of a message rather than the author’s intention per se: this is commonly referred to as the theory of ‘*fidélité au sens*’ (or fidelity to meaning). Acknowledging that there may not be an exact equivalent word or phrase in the recipient language, ‘*fidélité au sens*’ suggests that a faithful reproduction of the “invariant core”²¹ of a message should produce an equivalent effect with the receiver. According to this theory, any phrase contains a core of meaning that will not be altered when translated. The variables

²⁰The influential Parisian school of translation and interpreting.

²¹BASSNETT, Susan. 1988, 26.

around that core may be remoulded in order to fit the second language. The aim is to inspire a similar response to the term or phrase from the foreign reader as was felt by the original reader to their version of the utterance. Bassnett²² uses the expression ‘Bon appétit’ to illustrate her uptake of this type of equivalence. There is no English phrase that fulfils the same function and the literal translation of ‘good appetite’ makes no sense. The translator must, therefore, recognise this untranslatability, consider the significance of the phrase in its particular context, identify the meaning and replace the phrase with something from the target language with the same core of meaning. Options given were ‘dig in’, ‘do start’ or ‘I hope you like it’.

One criticism of this approach can be found in the deconstructionist view of meaning as arbitrary. Language, in Derridean terms, is made up of chains of signifiers that link and correspond to other chains. In this way, a translation is only a version of the words; not representative of a “deep structure”.²³ Deconstructionist thought does not offer many practical solutions for translation. The act of translation, though, provides a case study for the deconstructionist insistence that signs, language and originality are social constructs. Edwin Gentzler posits that deconstruction “resists systems of categorisation which separate ‘source’ text from ‘target’ text” thus providing necessary problematisation of the concepts, but no alternatives. The deconstructionist approach is commonly adhered to in literary and cultural theory, leaving the translator again caught in the tension of maintaining current theoretical awareness while having to make practical moves.

With that in mind, the ‘bon appétit’ example could be seen to present very reasonable translation options. Though, while a closely similar message is being provided for the receiver in this example, the lack of a real equivalent means that

²²BASSNETT, Susan. 1988, 22-23.

²³GENTZLER, Edwin. 1993,146.

something of the source culture is lost in the translation. Furthermore, if only the core of meaning needs to be retained, any number of possible transpositions can be made to the text. Translating for equivalent effect offers the potential for large steps away from the original text. The loss of assertions of cultural identity must also be questioned in relation to this type of translation practice as such alterations to texts will inevitably result in a loss of cultural resonance (and a gaining of something quite different). The concept of the core proposes that the culturally-specific implications of a symbol can somehow be peeled away, leaving a key meaning that is able to be transferred. The findings of this thesis suggest that cultural meaning is essential to maximal understanding of the text and such alterations will have significant implications for meaning of the overall narrative; removing and replacing the ‘outer shell’ of a culturally-specific term will rarely be sufficient in terms of fidelity to meaning.

2.3 Style and form

‘Fidélité au sens’ has been likened to ‘dynamic equivalence’ or ‘communicative translation’ and is seen as being in opposition to other methods like ‘semantic translation’ or ‘formal equivalence’.²⁴ ‘Semantic translation’ suggests something closer to ‘word for word’ translation, which has been shown in innumerable examples to be inefficient due to the differing structures of languages. Hence, it is not highly regarded as a feasible translation approach. Formal equivalence, on the other hand, has continuing relevance as a contested translation problem; its concern is fidelity to the form and style of the original work.

The desire for formal equivalence poses significant problems for literary

genres such as poetry, where the retention of rhyme schemes and semantic allusions becomes difficult during transfer. It also becomes problematic in terms of equivalent cultural response to forms and genres. Bassnett²⁵, for example, cites a decision to translate Homer into English prose because “the significance of the epic form in Ancient Greece could be considered equivalent to the significance of prose in modern Europe”. The line between dynamic and formal equivalence is blurred in this case, where fidelity to ‘meaning’ is seen to necessitate a change of ‘form’.

The amount of formal change relies in this way on the intended function of the text in the recipient culture. The addition of footnotes as explanations of culturally-specific terminology, for example, risks changing the form of an original text. To attempt lengthy explanations of terms within a text, rather than exchanging them for local alternatives, may render the text “more sociological than aesthetic”.²⁶ The French translation of Sally Morgan’s *My Place* provides examples of the problem of formal equivalence.

Morgan’s mostly autobiographical novel explains her childhood experiences of uncovering her Aboriginal heritage, along with the narratives of some elderly relatives. The original novel includes author’s notes and elaborations, which attempt to make Aboriginal culture and language accessible to a non-Aboriginal Australian readership; an example of translation within a national community. In the French edition, *Talahue*, the translator adds numerous footnotes and maps to the existent author’s notes in order to clarify the use of untranslatable references to Australian culture. These notes include definitions of such things as politicians and political movements, Aboriginal language terms and aspects of the national culture like the

²⁴HATIM Basil and Ian MASON. 1997, 11.

²⁵BASSNETT, Susan. 1988, 26.

²⁶PYM, Anthony. 1992, 87.

‘Royal Show’. In this way, the book becomes readable as a sociological document, positioning the novel in the contentious role of a definitive study of Aboriginality.

The accessorising of this text with additional cultural information may be seen to be keeping with the notion of formal equivalence, as the source text itself had a pedagogic agenda and translated certain features for the original intended readership. However, *My Place* is publicised and taught in Australia as a novel, not a textbook. In this way, alterations that seem to be in keeping with the ‘sens’ of the original text still result in modified cultural perspectives.

Such changes also result in differing understandings of the author’s style. Chapter Four will look more closely at the notion of the ‘invisible translator’, but, in brief, this points to the fact that translated books are generally critiqued with reference to the author’s talent, rather than the translator’s. While authors are obviously seen as the point of origin for the narrative, the writing style being studied by readers or reviewers is frequently also attributable to the translator.

Tim Parks²⁷ asserts that, in terms of style, “however intimate the translator may become with the writer, there is always a huge distance between original and translation”. He has written about a case in which he gave students of translation the same piece of writing in English and Italian and asked them to decide which was the original text. They chose the Italian, “which seemed proper and correct” while the English was “bizarre” and disjointed. He then revealed the piece to have been written (in English) by D.H Lawrence. He suggests that:

Notoriously, it is those places where poetic prose deviates from standard usage, establishing a personal style and creating meaning through its distance from something else, that translation becomes tormented, if not impossible.²⁸

²⁷PARKS, Tim. Translating Style. URL: <http://www.timparks.co.uk/14.html> (6 July 2000a)

²⁸PARKS, Tim. Lost In Translation. *The Australian’s Review of Books*. 9 Feb 2000b, 21

Parks uses Milan Kundera's discussion of the topic to emphasise his concerns about the loss of 'style' in translations. Kundera²⁹ states that "for a translator, the supreme authority should be the author's personal style." However, "most translators obey another authority, that of the conventional version of [the language]". Kundera's German translators are said to have been challenged by the unconventional nature of Kundera's language use when moving from the original Czechoslovakian. To the claim "But that is not the way you say it in German", Kundera's reply was "It's not the way you say it in Czech either." His choice to deviate from linguistic convention in his own tongue is what creates his own writing style. Kundera has worked closely with his own translators in attempts to overcome this, and there still remain differences between the versions of his works.

Parks' overall argument is that translators frequently use a "richer and more literary vocabulary" than the original and "return "stylistic transgression" to convention".³⁰ Even in cases where attempts have been made to render a text into a non-standard variety of the recipient language, the stylistic specificities are unlikely to be reproduced. I will clearly demonstrate this in relation to Nikki Gemmell's *Cleave* in Chapter Six.

2.4 Domestication and exoticisation

When translators find it necessary to exchange culturally specific terminology with a locally comprehensible alternative, they are said to be 'domesticating' the text. This implies a target-oriented approach to translation where the aim of the translation is equivalent effect in a new readership: that is, that new readers will be able to find

²⁹PARKS, Tim. 2000b, 21.

³⁰PARKS, Tim. 2000b, 21.

levels of resonance with the text in spite of its cultural origin. This decision is made when it is assumed that the two cultural spaces in question do not share knowledge of a given item, and attempts to intratextually explain or footnote the term are not feasible. This approach is frequently taken with items such as brand names, vulgarities and idiomatic expressions where the original term would have no value in the recipient culture.

Like formal alterations to a text, domesticating procedures are put in place to reduce the ‘work’ a reader must do to interpret the novel. In effect, the translator researches the meaning of a term or formal convention, then exchanges that for something more recognisable to the perceived repertoire of the intended readers.

Christine Pagnoulle³¹ has said that translators

must resist the natural temptation of sharing the result of their interpreting work with readers, thus depriving them of this part of intellectual/emotional engagement with the text. ... Suppose you have a novel... in which narration and dialogues are interwoven without any external signs helping to distinguish one from the other; part of our reading process will be to recognise who is speaking when and to whom. And the game should be enjoyed by readers in French (or any language) as well as by readers in English.

Thus domesticating the text presents foreign readers with fewer layers on which to interpret a text, in addition to the obvious loss of specificities of the source culture or author’s style.

Peter Versteegen³² has spoken of the aim of translation as to “minimise falsification”. This allows for what he calls “unbridgeable differences”; acknowledging that some changes are unavoidable. While Versteegen does not advocate changes to the text purely to fit the mores of the recipient culture, his justification for domesticating a text is to avoid the receipt of the narrative as exotic.

³¹PAGNOULLE, Christine. Treasure Island, popular culture. *Translat2000 discussion group* (translat2000@yahooogroups.com). 27 Aug 2000. Archives retrievable at URL: www.translat2000.com.

³²VERSTEGEN, Peter. Some Critical notes on Holmes’ cross. In: Kitty VAN LEUVEN ZWART and Ton NAIJJKENS. 1991, 49

The retention of the original utterance may give the text an exotic place in the recipient culture that is contrary to the original function of the text. A contemporary novel, such as those under discussion in this thesis, which sets out to represent the mundane, may be seen as exotic simply due to the features of its source culture. The desert landscape featured in *1988*, for example, is depicted as relentlessly dull while for a foreign reader – or even a city dwelling Australian – to retreat to the arid spaces of Australia’s centre is perceived as a most exotic activity. The consumption of tropical fruit might be another example of the everyday appearing remarkable if not altered in translation. This situation then suggests replacing culturally-specific terminology for something with ‘equivalent’ function to retain stylistic considerations. In this way, minimal falsification of ‘meaning’ is seen to be achieved by falsification itself.

Mikhail Bakhtin³³ has written about the choice to domesticate or exoticise (in the context of translations that take place in a different time to the writing of the original):

[...] at least enclosure within the epoch allows us to learn something we did not know before - we at least learn something about the epoch, but by making it a version of ourselves we learn nothing.

This can be applied equally to translation of culturally-specific references in texts. By domesticating the text, the reader learns little about the source culture. But while a translator may be criticised for domesticating a text they may also be guilty of misrepresentation by choosing to ‘exoticise’ the narrative.

Like each of the paradoxes surrounding the translation practice, there are identifiable advantages and disadvantages to each method, leaving much to the

³³MORSON, Gary and Caryl EMERSON, eds. *Mikhail Bakhtin – Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, 285-286.

subjectivity of the translator. Lawrence Venuti³⁴ speaks of translation as a process by which “the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation.” This, then, is the meeting of deconstructionist thought with the practicalities of translation and reminds us of the important interpretative component, which enforces the tenuous nature of the links between original and source. In Chapter Four I will elaborate further on theories regarding the translator’s interpretative role.

2.5 Some effects of translation theory on dealing with cultural specificities

I have shown that translation is a perilous business resulting in inevitable alterations to texts and some loss of culturally located meaning in transferred works. The effect of subscription to the various theoretical positions outlined thus far will be closely analysed in Chapters Five and Six. Here, however, it serves my purposes to broadly illustrate some of the repercussions of alterations to culturally-specific texts before moving on to more practical assessment of translation possibilities.

The issue of domestication is easily highlighted in the example of proper nouns. ‘Australia’ will surely become ‘Australie’ in French translation but the exchange of ‘Zigzag Street’ with ‘La Rue Zigzag’ will be questioned. The advantage of such an alteration is to reduce the perceived distance between reader and source culture, and such changes are quite common in translated works. Pym³⁵ cites the example of biblical translations where the character whose English name is ‘John the

³⁴VENUTI, Lawrence. *The Translator’s Invisibility*. London: Routledge, 1995, 17.

³⁵PYM, Anthony. Transliteration (absolute equivalence) The proper name is sometimes improper. <http://www.fut.es/~apym/4.4.html>. (8 Jan 1999)

Baptist’ is represented in an “ecclesiastically authorised series” including Juan, Johann, Jean and so on, in order to bring the figure closer to each reading public. However, to alter *Zigzag Street* in the same way would mean virtually locating the story in a different city. To rename the characters and locations in such a culturally-specific text would mean eliding a significant amount of the narrative and forcibly having to change brand names, food types and other references to quotidian life.

A comic example of this is the French translations of the seemingly inextricably British tales of *The Famous Five*. Enid Blyton’s adventurous Five are found eating croissants and drinking coffee – quite a stretch from the sandwich and ginger ale picnics of the original. ‘Julian’ becomes ‘François’, ‘George’ becomes ‘Claude’. Changes like this cause a rippling effect where more and more details of the narrative must be altered to agree with earlier translation decisions leaving only a basic story outline that is comparable to the source text.

A less flippant example of the implications of such changes can be seen in the translation of legal or military documents, for example, where equally ‘free’ translation strategies may result in accusations of irresponsibility or deliberate falsification. Rochayah Machali³⁶ has written about the case of a geography text book which in its (original) Australian publication commences a discussion with “When Indonesia annexed the former Portuguese colony of East Timor in 1975 many Australians understood this as part of the process of decolonisation...”. The Indonesian government intervened on the translation of the text for domestic use and insisted upon the rewriting of this sentence as “When East Timor, the former

³⁶MACHALI, Rochayah. A cultural misunderstanding or a difference in perspective? A case in translation. In: Graham SQUIRES, ed. *Language, literature, culture: a selection of papers presented at Inter-cultural studies '98*. Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 1999, 54.

Portuguese colony, was integrated with Indonesia in 1975 many Australians...”(As reproduced in English by Machali). A subtle change of wording results in a distinct change of perspective and a change of the perceived history of the region. Thus, translation and domestication are powerful acts and the translator has a significant responsibility in terms of cultural representation.

Similar questions were raised during the process of translating Helen Darville’s highly controversial take on events in World War Two, *The Hand That Signed The Paper*³⁷, in 1996. Fears were held that Darville’s “distorted revisionist historical picture of the Holocaust” would translate badly; it could be less acceptable in a foreign context than an Australian one, provide incorrect information about Australia’s impression of the Holocaust, or give incorrect education to readers if not accompanied by a prologue or translators notes.³⁸ In this case, a heavily laden level of cultural acceptance of revisionist history and general notions of appropriateness had to become a consideration in the translation process.

In the early history of translation there are many stories of altered translations for reasons such as perceived propriety and the mores of the recipient culture. In 1714, Antoine Houder de la Motte (quoted in Lefevere³⁹) reduced the 24 books of the *Iliad* to 12 by leaving out the anatomical details of wounds, amongst other procedures. “I have followed those parts of the *Iliad* that seemed to me worth keeping, and I have taken liberty of changing whatever I thought disagreeable.” The text, to him, then formed “a better proportioned and more sensible whole than Homer’s original”. Perceptions of culture were equally effected by such approaches to

³⁷DARVILLE/DEMIDENKO, Helen. *The Hand that Signed the Paper*. St.Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994.

³⁸O’CONNOR, Terry. Hand Picked. *Courier Mail*. 18 May 1996, Weekend 7.

³⁹LEFEVERE, Andre, ed. *Translation/History/Culture – A Sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 1992, 26-28.

translation. Pierre Le Tourneur in 1769 (also quoted in Lefevere⁴⁰) stated that foreign authors are “not always models of taste” so resolved to “assimilate all that is good in our neighbours and reject the bad we have no need to read or know of.” Contrary to the notion of translations as cultural ambassadors, this is the translator as cultural censor – and in many ways not different to the Indonesian example given earlier.

A similarly entertaining quotation comes from Antoine Prevost⁴¹ in 1760 regarding his French translation of Richardson’s *Pamela*:

I have suppressed English customs where they may appear shocking to other nations, or made them conform to customs prevalent in the rest of Europe. It seemed to me that those remainders of the old and uncouth British ways, which only habit prevents the British themselves from noticing, would dishonour a book in which manners should be noble and virtuous.

Under certain circumstances this type of ‘censorship’ still exists. Hoche⁴² discusses what is currently acceptable as literary language and gives the example of the “prudishness” of literary language in Eastern Europe as opposed to the West. He says that:

Contacts with post-war English and American fiction and drama could make Slovak (or Hungarian or Russian ...) readers feel that English and American literary characters (sometimes also the narrator in fiction) speak too expressively, vulgarly, even obscenely, in spite of the fact that they – according to English and American readers – speak “normally”.

Again, this relates to the question of how the retention of certain facets of the original may change the function of words within the translated text. It is an important consideration in terms of the vulgarities frequent in the texts used in this thesis. In *Zigzag Street*, the acceptance of the repeated use of the word ‘crap’ manifests in the use of the book’s ‘crap and I’m proud’ idiom throughout reviews of the novel and in

⁴⁰LEFEVERE, Andre. 1992, 39.

⁴¹LEFEVERE, Andre. 1992, 39.

⁴²HOCHÉL, Brano. The cross-temporal and cross-spatial factors and the translation of literary language. In: Kitty VAN LEUVEN ZWART and Ton NAIJKENS. 1991, 44.

many references to the author. What is in essence a vulgarity has become a humorous way to deprecate yet celebrate oneself and one's lifestyle, and is not offensive to the perceived readership of the novel. This is, of course, aimed at a specific age group and type of reader, but its publicity is available to a much broader readership. The social acceptability of the expression relies on the ability of the readers to receive the use of the term in a certain context. The popular use of the term and the jocular nature of the novel and its promotions make the vulgarities less distasteful and permit them to become part of an acceptable literary repertoire. If read by someone outside that context, this could easily be misinterpreted as offensive.

Thus changes made to novels rely on the translator's discretion, their theoretical leanings and the mores of critical trends. Much is also assumed in the transfer process about the state of the recipient culture; its repertoire, the social position of literature and the marketing processes required to ensure the 'success' of a transferred novel.

It is pertinent at this point to analyse the external factors that contribute to the transfer of a text. I have discussed the reasons why *translation* happens, but I will now question why *transfer* occurs and how translated texts are made to function within the literary system.

3. Transfer and the literary polysystem

Translations and translators perform various roles within cultures. Translating itself "as a type of text-generating activity"⁴³ also differs between cultures. Thus, translation relies not only on linguistic or cultural knowledge but also on the systems

⁴³TOURY, Gideon. In: Kitty VAN LEUVEN ZWART and Ton NAIJKENS. 1991, 183.

governing transfer and receipt of texts within cultures. Translation theorist Itamar Even-Zohar derives his polysystem theories of text transfer from DTS origins. He seeks not to theorise about potential consequences, political motives or authenticity issues involved in the translation project, but takes a more descriptive approach about the roles translated texts assume in the current literary climate. His polysystem work discusses patterns which exist within the processes of transferring texts and the apparent centre-periphery struggle when texts move. His critics dislike his use of classification systems which sometimes appear to present an unchallenged producer-consumer relationship between author and reader along with limiting description of the ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ national literatures between which translated texts are said to move. A strong literature, for him, is one with a well-rounded collection of imports that are peripheral to a solid centre of home-produced works. While he understands some of the “unpalatable”⁴⁴ connotations of his work, what he describes is the reality, as he sees it, of the process of transfer; where texts are allotted a place within the recipient culture according to a number of selection criteria. I would like to unpack Even-Zohar’s concepts, as the notion of external forces positioning the reception of translated texts is a useful one.

Even-Zohar says that “the idea of structuredness and systemicity need no longer be identified with homogeneity”⁴⁵ so he represents the systems with which he works (such as language and literature) as polysystems: systems made up of “varying systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap”⁴⁶ A literary polysystem is envisaged as the interweaving series of genres and producers which allow us to

⁴⁴EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. The position of translated literature in the literary polysystem. *Poetics Today*. 11 (1), 1990, 48.

⁴⁵EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. Polysystem Theory. 1997a. URL: www.tau.ac.il/~itamarez/papers/ps-th-r.htm (16 April 1998).

⁴⁶EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. 1997a.

identify different types of literature and their different social purposes. The polysystem thesis also supposes a series of centres and peripheries belonging to the various systems within the polysystem. Translated literature constitutes a “most active system⁴⁷” within a given polysystem. Even-Zohar suggests that it is important to consider translated literature as a system (rather than an “arbitrary series of translated texts”⁴⁸ that fit within the wider literary polysystem) as from this base one can analyse the movement of texts rather than viewing them solely in terms of genre – the most common form of literary classification. If translated literature is recognised to be a system itself within the polysystem and perform a particular function within the literary sphere, it becomes possible to look at the multiple processes involved in the movement and how transferred texts may be made to work in terms of promoting or representing culture.

Even-Zohar argues for the recognition of a particular repertoire to be found in translated literature. This will be substantiated in later chapters as I analyse the choices made by translators in dealing with culturally-specific terminology. For example, if the majority of Australian translations of French texts use ‘dig in’ to serve as ‘bon appétit’, ‘dig in’ becomes part of an acceptable repertoire available to Australian translators of other French texts. A series of ‘possibilities’ may be developed to deal with the repeated occurrence of certain translation dilemmas. A repertoire can also be seen within extratextual translation forms. For example, Chapters Five and Six reveal a trend in the international press for commenting on the age of Australian authors – it is an important defining quality in the establishment of an authority to write about certain cultural perspectives. This is then part of the

⁴⁷EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. 1990, 46.

⁴⁸EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. 1990, 45.

repertoire made common and therefore accessed for consequent press coverage of new Australian authors.

The repertoire for Even-Zohar is the “aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the making and handling, or production and consumption, of any given product.”⁴⁹ I accept his use of repertoire as similar to that of Bakhtin’s speech genres. As mentioned earlier, this use of ‘repertoire’ sets up the idea that there are sets of conventions belonging to systems, genres and cultures that will influence the movement and reception of texts.

So, as a textual translation is carried out with all technical factors considered, it faces the extratextual translation processes of marketing, promotion and critical reception. The author will be given a public persona at this point to help readers access the text and genre will be a strong consideration in overcoming some readers’ resistance to the new or foreign. Translations are allotted a position within a polysystem relying on the assumed familiarity of readers with genres. Press coverage will invariably compare a new import to its contemporaries, or will construct the author as comparable to other authors who operate in the recipient polysystem, thus establishing an easy relationship for the new reader with the hitherto unknown writer based on the reliability of genre distinctions.

Contemporary texts that appear to transcend genre definitions are generally only resisting genre or combining genres – thus even as they do this they are being classified. US Network programmer Michael Dann has said: “...where a show is placed is infinitely more important than the content of the show”⁵⁰ and this thesis will show that this is often also the case for literature. Genres possess their own

⁴⁹EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. *Factors and Dependencies in Cultures*. 1997b. URL: www.tau.ac.il/~itamarez/papers/fac&dep.htm (16 April 1998).

⁵⁰CUNNINGHAM, Stuart and Toby MILLAR, with David ROWE. *Contemporary Australian Television*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1994, 11.

repertoires, which will be accessed by a translator in order to find equivalents. Certain genres (such as crime novels) are globally recognised for certain features that make them accessible in multiple communities. Less popular forms of literature pose greater difficulties especially if they contain large amounts of culturally-specific material, and will thus be categorised in some way by the media. The issue of genre will be examined further in Chapter Four.

According to Even-Zohar, all texts have a function depending on the make up of the polysystem and the strength of the national literature. In the case of ‘strong’ literatures however, translated texts frequently remain on the periphery of the system while the home literature forms the centre (thereby shaping and reflecting the mores of the society). A ‘weak’ literature produces little of its own work and therefore relies on translated texts to pad out the ‘lacks’ or ‘vacuums’⁵¹ existent in the system. One problem here is the assumption that a literature will not be satisfied with *only* its source products; that this necessarily makes for a ‘lack’ in the national literature. There must also be discussion of whether the lack is recognised by the culture itself or is suggested by the forces behind the international movement of the text. Like any marketing technique, it is easy to make a community believe that it has a need for the product. These ideas will be discussed further in Chapters Five and Six where I will speak about publicity and Chapter Four where I will discuss the idea of producers and consumers.

Even-Zohar goes on to discuss the role of translations after they have moved. Texts that belong to the central region of the polysystem are those which are popular, marketable and reflect the mores of the home culture: best sellers, well-loved authors, and traditional stories of the majority population. The movement of a translated text

⁵¹EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. 1990, 47.

into the central position of the overall polysystem will generally only occur if the translator has conformed to the tastes of the recipient culture. If not, the text remains peripheral within the system. Exceptions to this will be associated with the avant garde and “major events in literary history”.⁵² Rare translated works may create rather than conform to trends.

The position of the text will also reflect cultural relations between the two communities and the levels of cultural and political openness of cultures. Even-Zohar cites France as an example of a nation whose literature is not only central to its own polysystem but also to the wider European polysystem thus ensuring that much translated literature assumes an “extremely peripheral position”⁵³ in France. In this way the translation project on the whole can be seen as a conservative practice. This will also be the case where canonical or best-seller texts become the only ones to be privileged with translation, therefore being the only texts to move beyond their own culture. This means that not only is the canon preserved, but images of the source culture are selectively presented to the outside world – and the transferred texts are often only popular if conforming to the recipient culture’s previously held images of the source culture. The potential is there to conserve the literary conventions of the culture, the privileged role of particular authors, to maintain a particular image of the source culture and to encourage so-called ‘weaker’ literatures to create works in the style of the ‘stronger’ cultures. The political potential and possible colonising effects of such actions are evident.

There are other concerns regarding the choice of languages for translation and the effect of such choices on the preservation of native languages or the dreaded ‘Americanisation’ of cultures. I do not believe that Even-Zohar is either promoting or

⁵²EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. 1990, 46.

⁵³EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. 1990, 50.

blind to these concerns, though he does not address them. He theorises the facts of textual movement as they currently appear. Even-Zohar does consider historical change and the evolution of the polysystem, so power relations and the positions of ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ are not always stagnant, predetermined or directly correlatable to the political power of a culture.

The tendencies described by Even-Zohar’s theory of the process of translation also account for innovations in literary and stylistic conventions. In its innovatory capacity, a target text is effectively “down loaded”⁵⁴ into the polysystem. This analogy suggests not just tossing a random text into a literary arena but a process of selecting a text which may be useful or enjoyable and either making it compatible to current conditions, learning how to make sense of it or adapting conditions to accommodate it. Its popularity and effectiveness will influence the future of that type of text. The wide promotion and appreciation of new writers and hitherto unpublished cultural perspectives, the overturning of cultural stereotypes and the inspiration for ‘weaker’ cultures to commence writing in a variety of styles and languages (should they choose to) are some of the possible benefits of the transfer of texts, from this perspective.

There are certainly also blurred boundaries between these distinctions of ‘central’ and ‘peripheral’ and certain conditions make it possible for movement and exchange between centre and periphery, weak and strong. Therefore, in spite of the unpalatable nature of Even-Zohar’s terminology, his work allows us to dissect the movement and social positioning of translated texts along with ascertaining the factors which create these positions. He is important because he “uses notions of

⁵⁴CASAGRAN, Letitia. Monique Wittig Translated. Department of Romance Languages seminar series. University of Queensland, 29 May 1998.

translation equivalence and literary function, yet does not pull them out of history and prescribe a translation model that transcends time.”⁵⁵ His major offering to the field is the assertion that translation is not simply a secondary system – a byproduct of literary production – but a prominent system within the literary polysystem. Even-Zohar’s model is one of the first to show translations as dynamic rather than as poor copies of some authentic original.

Even-Zohar says that “even the question of what makes a translated work cannot be answered a priori in terms of an ahistorical out of context idealised state: it must be determined on the grounds of the operations governing the polysystem”.⁵⁶ Thus the rendering of a text into a different language and cultural space is not a sufficient definition of ‘translation’ which will be performed on different levels and to different degrees according to the state of the polysystem and the cultural relations between two communities and the consequent available repertoires.

This reinforces the idea of available images of culture as discussed in Chapter Two. Such representations are the dominant repertoire of images comprised of popularly recognisable genres. Even-Zohar⁵⁷ speaks of “canonised” repertoires by which he means those that have been made official by the dominant forces within a system. This is evident with the central area of the cultural ‘mainstream’ but occurs also within subcultural spheres. A subculture as a system has its own centre and periphery – and its own dominant sections.

So translation as an act occurs in response to the heteroglossia of language and the diachronic or historical relations between two cultures. The similarities and differences of the two spheres will become apparent in the translation. Overlaps will

⁵⁵GENTZLER, Edwin. 1993, 121.

⁵⁶EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. 1990, 51.

⁵⁷EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. 1997b.

be seen where the two cultures possess commonalities – where equivalents can be easily found. That is, where a repertoire of knowledge is shared or where speech genres occur in both locations. The differences will show themselves as the untranslatable and will be the source of practical dilemmas for translators.

4. Problems and “best possible” solutions

I have spoken so far about some of the technical and theoretical limitations and difficulties faced by translators. The translator may be aware of all fair and inclusive understandings of blurred boundaries, the importance of inter-cultural understanding and representation along with ethical obligations but will still be challenged by the fact that untranslatable elements in languages do exist and pragmatic decisions must be made. The greatest effort to remain faithful to any aspect of the original will run into difficulties at some point. If we are to read translation as a departure from an ‘original’ text (and while I acknowledge the theoretical alternatives, it suits my purposes to do so) in many ways, the translator can only aim for the “best possible failure”.⁵⁸ More optimistically, this could be rephrased as the most faithful possible translation given restrictions of time, space, money and marketability, and bearing in mind the available repertoires of each cultural space involved in the process.

On a practical level, translators have developed a number of tactics to allow them to achieve these ‘best possible’ translations. For terms which do not exist in the

⁵⁸CIARDI, John. Translators preface to Dante ALIGHIERI. *The Purgatorio*, New York: Mouton, 1961.

second language there are five commonly used options⁵⁹ which I will illustrate with examples from *Talahue*, the French translation of Sally Morgan's *My Place*.

➤ Omission of the term

A passage in *My Place* lists a collection of brand names of sweets contained in a sample bag from the Royal Show. Smarties, Cherry Ripes, Samboy chips and Violet Crumble bars all become 'des sucreries' (sweets) in the French edition (76).

➤ Direct loan/transfer – retain the original (sometimes supported by an explanation of the concept)

In *Talahue*, the didgeridoo is footnoted as: Long instrument à vent tubulaire en bois produisant un son grave et profond selon une rythmique complexe mais avec peu de variation tonale.' (394) (Long, tubular, wooden wind instrument with a deep sound played with complex rhythms but minimal tonal variation.)

The expression 'Aussies' is retained with the footnote 'Australiens de souche, à l'exclusion des Aborigènes' (43) ('real' Australians, excluding the Aborigines').

The white characters' familiar term for a strong form of tobacco, 'Nigger Twist', is retained in the text but is footnoted with a translation 'torsade nègre' (372) (literal translation).

This is an effective way to translate such images and terminologies, but commercial literary texts rarely have sufficient space to footnote every culturally-specific reference. An average of three footnotes appears in the other French translations I have examined for this thesis, meaning that other translation alternatives must be chosen for the remaining Australianisms.

⁵⁹These are common beliefs but examples can be seen in NISKA, Helga. Strategies for Interpreting neologisms – A preliminary study. URL: <http://130.237.181.252/reportaa.htm> (13 July 1998) and Anthony PYM. Transliteration (absolute equivalence) The proper name is sometimes improper. URL: <http://www.fut.es/~apym/4.4/html> (8 Jan 1999).

➤ Substitution for a local alternative (domestication)

Morgan's grandmother visits the 'TAB' in the original text and plays 'tiercé', a specifically French system for betting on horses, in *Talahue* (77).

Sally's use of Vegemite is also replaced by peanut butter. This is an interesting choice as it is not a product frequently used in France; jam would be a more obvious choice. In this way, however, the translator marks the foodstuff as foreign, but not so foreign as to be unrecognisable.

➤ Loan translation – the literal translation of a source language term

The White Australia Policy is translated as 'une politique de l'Australie blanche' (241). This is also an example of the alteration of a proper noun as the 'faithful' translation could be read as describing a general approach rather than an official, legislated policy.

➤ Coining a new word or phrase

This is used in cases such as onomatopoeia or word play – where a word has been distorted or created in the original text thereby requiring an original term in the second language to retain the form. The character of Sally uses the negation 'naah' – representing the slang expression of 'no' in an exaggerated form. To render the French 'non' in a similar fashion, the translator has chosen 'naan' (63).

The sounding of a frog as 'Broak, Broak' is translated in a form more phonetically and lexically acceptable to the French language, but must sacrifice a play on words in the process:

"Broak, Broak! The noise startled me. I smiled. That was the old bullfrog telling us he was broke again." (14)

"Broac, Broac! Le bruit me fit sursauter. Je souris. C'était ce bon vieux crapaud qui nous croassait qu'il broyait du noir." (15)

(Broac, Broac! The noise made me jump. I smiled. It was the good old toad telling us he was down in the dumps again.)

Within a language there can be similar translation methods at play. When authors choose to utilise culturally-specific language within their texts, they will sometimes choose to translate the words within the narrative: a compromise between writing in English and depicting a different cultural space. Venero Armanno⁶⁰ does this in his representations of the Italian migrant experience in Australia:

Stronzo is a seriously Italian, Italian type of word. More so when used in one of the southern dialects, preferably Sicillian [...] take the word in the Sicillian dialect, pronounce it in the right way – gutturally, *shtroonzoo* – and a world-weary grubbiness just can't help but ooze from your soul. [...] Still, I get the feeling no translation can do justice to the Sicilian *stronzo*. You just have to live it.

An exciting new technological possibility is the creation of hypertext links: the screen icons that allow one to leap from the midst of an internet text to another page. In this way, an electronic novel may read as a solid text, but will include the possibility of links to dictionaries or encyclopedias, even light-hearted, interactive websites which may help the reader understand the initial text. The electronic version of *Zigzag Street* then, could be accompanied by a link to a Brisbane map and photos of locations.⁶¹ The references to popular culture could be highlighted by links to the website of a product, pop musician or radio station, for example, decreasing the foreignness of the references for a reader from a different culture.

The creator of the elaborate Nick Earls fan website, 'The Sunny Garden'⁶², has already created pages dedicated to each novel featuring photos of all the Brisbane locations and icons used in Earls' narratives. From supermarkets to restaurants, street signs and food products, this site makes it possible for readers from anywhere in the

⁶⁰ARMANNO, Venero. *Romeo of the Underworld*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1994, 1-2.

⁶¹See for example: Lara CAIN, What the hell is a Tim Tam? Reducing the space between cultures through electronic publishing. *M/C A Journal of Media and Culture*. URL:

<http://www.uq.edu.au/mc/9811/timtam.html>

⁶²PERKINS, Liz. *Sunny Garden*. URL: www.nickearls.net.au

world to research an item that has caused a “culture bump”⁶³ in their interpretative process. At the same time however, the website creator does not hail from Brisbane, and thus certain landmarks are photographed from unusual angles, or not depicted in a way that would necessarily resonate with Brisbane readers. The Village Twin Cinemas, for example, are ‘translated’ using a photograph of the building’s rather dull exterior. For Brisbane residents, it is the colourful ‘retro’ interior and the presentation of non-mainstream films that has built the cinema’s particular reputation. The choice of this site as a location for a ‘first date’ in *Zigzag Street*, allows Earls to speak about the social sphere of the character and his desire to appear knowledgeable about fashionable locations within the city. Thus, like Armanno’s “stronzo”, there is an element of lived experience accompanying resonance with culturally-specific signs that cannot often be replicated by translation attempts like The Sunny Garden’s photo gallery.

Hypertext as a form of translation has the ability to make words “mutate physically”⁶⁴ but while novels are still principally produced on paper, footnotes, insertions, glossaries, appendices and occasionally an author’s pretext perform this type of intratextual translation: enhancing the book’s paratext and creating a more accessible reading position for potential readers.

Untranslatable cultural terminology is extremely frequent in the texts chosen for this thesis. As seen in the previous two chapters, slang, vulgarities, brand names and popular culture make up a part of those difficult references. Culturally ingrained issues and accompanying myths, metaphors or idiomatic expressions (which develop immediately out of the history of the culture and form part of the national repertoire)

⁶³LEPPIHALME, Ritva. *Culture Bumps: An Empirical approach to the Translation of Allusions*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1997.

⁶⁴CANEY, Diane. Hypertext. *Austlit discussion group* (austlit@vicnet.net.au). 6 Dec 1999. Archives retrievable at URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au>.

are equally difficult. Metaphors and word plays may be one site where translating for equivalent effect is the only option. These figures of speech have their origins in such things as historical events, activities of daily life and media slogans. They also rely heavily on phonetics and a solid knowledge of previous such speech genres in order to understand the ‘play’.

In some cases there is an expression in the target language that has exactly the same meaning but uses a different allusion to convey the message. For example, ‘il faut hurler avec les loups’ (one must howl with the wolves) will inspire the same response in the French reader as ‘when in Rome do as the Romans do’ will for a reader of English. But on the whole, these matches are hard to make and pose infinite difficulty for works of poetry or poetic allusion, and may result in a subtle relocation of the cultural setting of the work, or a more significant loss of cultural-specificity.

As discussed in Chapter One, accent and dialects will prove problematic for the translator. If one were faced with rendering a Cockney accent into French, for example, one might replace it with a “social urban variety”⁶⁵ of French or with Standard French – where the other features of the characterisation must be sufficient to attribute a social position to the character. A further option is to create some kind of pseudo variety of French with a cockney accent. This must ideally then be done without patronising the speakers of the original dialect or misrepresenting the social position of the characters. “If you localise, all kinds of absurdities arise; if you don’t localise, you create a bland pabulum (sic) that nobody will find offensive but that doesn’t live.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵QUEIROZ de BARROS, Alexandra Assis Rosa. Translation of dialogues with regional accents. *Translat discussion group (now Translat2000 group)* (translat@wugate.wustl.edu). 20 May 1998. Archives available at URL: www.translat2000.com.

⁶⁶ROBINSON, Doug. Translation of dialogues with regional accents. *Translat discussion group (now Translat2000 group)* (translat@wugate.wustl.edu). 19 May, 1998. Archives available at URL: www.translat2000.com.

This chapter has shown that translation plays an important role in the movement of images of culture, cultural understanding and the reputation of the creative output of a culture. The type of translation produced and the consequent role of the translated text in its new home will rely on the theoretical disposition of the translator, his/her interaction with publishers and promoters, the genre of the text, the mores of the cultures involved and the state of the recipient polysystem. In Chapter Four I will look further at the role of the translator as interference in the process of production and reception and the use made of the author in the paratextual translation process.

Chapter Four

“A good book makes you want to phone the author.”¹

Sites of authority: readers and authors as translators.

Chapter Three has investigated the process of translation and has offered a background history of theoretical perspectives on translation. It has asserted that translation occurs both between languages and between language communities who share the same common language. Chapter Four will deal with translation in terms of those responsible for the creation and reception of texts: the author, the translator and the reader. It will also expand earlier suggestions that the ‘translator’ may take many forms. Gerard Genette’s theory of the influence of paratext will form the basis of this chapter’s assertions and will be supported by investigation of the ways in which genre, oppositionality and the notion of ‘celebrity’ work on the construction of reading positions. This will serve to fill out the allusions of this thesis’ title (‘Reading Culture’) by addressing the ways in which texts are presented to readers and the mores of the cultures in which readers and texts find each other (a society’s ‘reading culture’). It will also analyse the effects of these facets of the production of texts on readers’ abilities to engage with culturally-specific texts (to ‘read’ culture).

This chapter will employ examples from a variety of texts to illustrate theoretical viewpoints, in a similar way to Chapter Three. Again, this allows me to broadly demonstrate the principles of use to this thesis, while retaining my most pertinent case studies for Chapters Five and Six. This approach also contextualises

¹ BENNETT, Tegan. Quoted in BLAKENEY, Sally. Second Thoughts. Interview with Tegan Bennett. *Weekend Australian*. Jan 20-21 2001, Review 10.

the Australian novels chosen for closer analysis in this thesis, proving that they are not isolated examples of the phenomenon of paratextual influence.

Introduction

This chapter posits that ‘reader and author’ do not equal ‘consumer and producer’, as the production of the meaning of the narrative, and the sites of authority over that meaning, are many and varied. The reader is an active participant in the creation of meaning within a text. At the same time, this chapter’s title is a quote from novelist Tegan Bennett², who alludes to the notion that readers still desire a relationship with an authorial figure, who is not necessarily the ‘real’ author. This chapter will examine the tension between the author as creator and the notion that meaning is produced by multiple sources of translation. While the reader is active in the creation of meaning, he or she does not act in absolute freedom: that is, reading positions (ways of accessing texts) can be created through the processes of translation and transfer.

This process of influencing the reader’s approach to the text can be seen as strategic in that it has the potential to change the mentalities of readers.³ This change can be affected on a personal level or, as is pertinent to this thesis, change the readers’ preconceptions about a culture. Readers’ interaction with literature is involved in their process of identity formation, including their relationship with cultures outside their own. A culturally-specific text provides a site for possible cross-cultural

²BLAKENEY, Sally. 2001, Review 10.

³CHAMBERS, Ross. *Room for Maneuvre: Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991.

education and the contestation of stereotypes. Depending on translation approaches, however, it can also work to reinforce stereotypes in that it may rely on the repetition of myths and strengthen commonly held perceptions of national identity (as we have seen in Chapter Two). The approaches to translation involved in the transfer of a text between communities will determine the ways in which the reader will initially access the text. Thus certain forms of translation have an influential role in not simply rendering a text comprehensible, but in taking responsibility for the potential images of the source culture that emerge from the transfer. While a translation cannot be performed with the knowledge of exactly who will read the text and how, it will contain a number of potential ways of reading to guide the reader through their interpretation of the text.

The first section of this chapter will problematise definitions of ‘author’ and ‘reader’. Since Barthes and his contemporaries analysed the death of the author, it has been commonly held that the reader in many ways makes the text. According to this theory, the ‘meaning’ of a text does not exist without a reader: a text is merely inscribed with readability, which is converted to meaning when acted upon by the reader. Tony Bennett invokes useful terminology when suggesting that reading is the means whereby texts can be “productively activated” by the reader.⁴ A body of available knowledge of culture is clearly one factor that will influence interpretation. The reader’s perceptions of national myths, speech genres, textual genres, what is offensive or legitimate, traditions of story-telling, cultural stereotypes and many other fragments that make up the psychologies of the ways people interact with the world around them will take part in the ‘activation’ of a culturally-specific text.

⁴BENNETT, Tony. Tests, readers, reading formations. *In*: Phillip RICE and Patricia WAUGH, eds. *Modern Literary Theory: A reader*. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 1992, 206.

Throughout this thesis, the collection of personal and social ‘baggage’ that accompanies interpretation has been variously termed a ‘repertoire’ or a collection of ‘available images’. Umberto Eco eloquently refers to this as a “social treasury”, that is: “...the whole encyclopedia that the performances of that language has produced and the very history of the previous interpretations of many texts ...”⁵ Jauss has also termed this a “horizon of expectations” created by a knowledge of the “rules familiar from earlier texts”⁶ against which the reader positions the text at hand. The earlier chapters of this thesis have explained some of the sources that contribute to this repertoire as concerns images of culture. After defining ‘author’ and ‘reader’, this chapter will investigate how the repertoire contributes to readers’ understanding of texts and the ways in which processes of textual transfer and translation can modify that repertoire. To begin, however, it will be useful to elaborate on my earlier references to Genette’s paratext.

1. Paratext

Gerard Genette has suggested that the conceptualisation of ‘text’ as limited to the novel itself excludes a number of devices which contribute to the reader’s ability to realise a reading of a novel. His term ‘paratext’ includes all the many pieces of the puzzle that contribute to one’s reading of a work. Genette’s theories support my thesis that the meaning of a ‘text’ is constructed not solely from the words on the page, but from interviews, press releases, commentaries by the author, promotional

⁵Eco, Umberto. *Between Author and Text*. In: Stefan COLLINI, ed. *Interpretation and Overinterpretation: Umberto Eco*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 67-68.

⁶See for example: Hans Robert JAUSS. *Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory*. In: Phillip RICE and Patricia WAUGH. 1992, 85.

activities, the cover design and all other factors connected to its production. If the ‘text’, can be expanded to include these many factors, then it follows that translation must also be seen in these elements of the text.

Genette posits that that which is traditionally seen as the ‘text’ is “rarely presented in an unadorned state”⁷ but is accompanied by a number of other “productions” which “surround and extend” the material. Paratext for Genette is a “threshold [...] that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back”.⁸ Phillippe Lejeune (as translated by Genette) has similarly framed this as a “fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one’s whole reading of the text.”⁹ If reading is made possible by a selected repertoire of available images, then this fringe must be included in that repertoire. In this way, it is inseparable from the text as a contribution to the ability of a reader to engage with the text.

Inside the paratext exist the peritext and the epitext. The peritext is made up of those things materially attached to the text: the title, prefaces, chapter titles, author’s or translator’s notes. The epitext is defined as those elements “not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space.”¹⁰ The epitext, then, includes such things as interviews, public readings, reviews, anecdotes and letters. Epitextual elements may go on to be included as peritext in future editions of a work: a letter may become a preface, a press comment may be posted as a selling point on the novel’s cover. An interview can also work in place of a preface – particularly as press commentary often appears before the actual release of a text. In this way, the boundaries between text

⁷GENETTE, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. LEWIN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 1.

⁸GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 2.

⁹LEJEUNE, Phillippe. *Le Pacte Autobiographique*. Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1975, 45.

¹⁰GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 344.

and paratext are not fixed, but shifting, which again indicates a logical reading of the text as extended beyond the boundaries of the narrative proper. Paratext may even be extended to those things not linguistic, verbal or written. Genette speaks of iconic paratextual manifestations (illustrations or, I would include, photographs) along with material (such as typography) or factual (a mere detail known to the public) paratextual elements which all provide commentary on the text and influence perception and reception of the text.

The peritext has much to do with marketing and will often not involve the author's own input. Where the author does contribute, it is in the ironic capacity of "assistant to the publisher".¹¹ This adds weight to the argument that authorship is arbitrary with reader, publisher and other contributors to the epitext potentially having more influence over the 'meaning' of a novel than the author him/herself. The desire for readers, then, to know the author is a repercussion of the love of celebrity (which will be addressed later), rather than seeking 'authorial intention'. That is, readers desire knowledge of the author and the author's lifestyle and beliefs more than the desire to be dictated to about the author's intended meaning for the text. Indeed, the author's definition of meaning may 'spoil' the reader's interpretation, whereas the authority of the author to speak about the subjects dealt with in the novel, or the amiability of an author as celebrity, enhance the reader's own production of the novel. Genette suggests that while readers do not *need* to know details about the author, those who *do* know it will read the text differently. The evidence presented in this thesis suggests that this is indisputable.

Genette differentiates between "official" (as sanctioned by the author or publisher) and "unofficial" paratext.¹² Yet, I would contend, in the world of

¹¹GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 347.

¹²GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 10.

contemporary media, there is frequently little critical discernment between one and the other. Public desire for vicarious living and readers' desire to 'know' the author as a friend frequently lead to belief in and perpetuation of rumour – especially if it is not particularly outlandish. The popular press is also not required to source or footnote anecdotal evidence, thus the real words of the author and the interpretations of these become blurred in the public consciousness. The media epitext is mediated according to the:

situation of interlocution, in which to a certain extent the questions determine the responses, and by the process of transmission, which gives the intermediary and the media apparatus on which he depends a sometimes very important role in the ultimate formulation of the “recorded remarks”.¹³

Yet, Genette believes that the author “cannot evade the onus” if he/she is “trapped” by an interviewer: their commentary will, without doubt, be held as truth even if coerced into enunciation. It must also be stated that paratext is not addressed to a specific audience – it is available to ‘the public’ and therefore is not targeting informed readers or critical thinkers (though they will be included in the audience). Any one piece of paratext may be the first or only contact a reader has with a novel or author and, thus, becomes the authority on the matter for a certain period of time (until the reader is aware of support or contradiction).

A final distinction is made by Genette between paratextual “function” and paratextual “effect”.¹⁴ In essence, the peritext will always have a paratextual function, being put in place with a didactic or promotional intention. Within the epitext, there will be interviews that deal directly with the subject of the novel or press releases that are directly linked to defining the novel in some way; this, too, constitutes a paratextual function. However, also in the epitext, exist various

¹³GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 13.

¹⁴GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 344.

anecdotes, promotional activities or interviews which discuss broader details of the author's life, the source culture of the text or the conditions of production of novels in general. These are said to have a "paratextual effect", in that they do not directly link themselves to the 'text', but do influence readings of the work.

The paratextual effect is evident in the influence of film and television over perceptions of culture, and therefore other culturally-specific texts. Potential readers are likely to have been bombarded with images from film, television, print media or the internet before they approach a text. These interactions with the media contribute considerably to their available repertoire of images about a given topic – that is, their tools for interpreting a given text. Particularly with reference to culture, the images held by a reader will be predominantly derived from the media. Thus, when a youth-oriented novel such as those analysed in this thesis is transported, references may be drawn from relevant media images in order to make sense of the 'Australianness' of the novel. The celebrity status of Australian soap opera stars and musical acts in Europe and the United Kingdom has done much to assist the comprehension of Australian culture and language and, therefore, function with a paratextual effect on interpretations of Australian literature. As Clive James and Jerry Hall¹⁵ mused:

James – Jerry, before you saw *Neighbours* did you realise there was such talent in Australia?

Hall – Clive, before I saw *Neighbours* I didn't realise there *was* an Australia!

This broad way of envisaging the 'text' is pertinent to this thesis as it allows for inclusion of many aspects of textual production within the definition of translation. It underpins the arguments that will follow about the ways in which

¹⁵Barry Humphries *Flashbacks*. Episode 4. TV, ABC. Dec 13, 1998.

authors and readers are constructed within the literary polysystem and positions all types of translation as vital to the ‘productive activation’ of any text. I will now define the ways in which author, reader and translator(s) contribute to the process of textual production.

2. What is an author?

The attempt to decipher a text via the ‘author’s intentions’ is futile if we assume that meaning is something introduced by the author before being activated by the reader. Barthes and his contemporaries questioned the existence of truth itself, thus questioning the necessity to accept any one person’s version of textual meaning. In Barthes’ famous words, “To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing.”¹⁶ Barthes rejected the state of affairs at the time of his writing which meant that literature was “tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions ...” and that:

the explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* ‘confiding’ in us.¹⁷

Psychoanalytic literary theory has further secured the notion that the author can give little more than a superficial description of what the novel was ‘about’, given his or her own subconscious relationship with the novel and with language itself. The result of this denunciation of the author is evidenced in the aforementioned reader-oriented theories (which will be expanded later) and in the fidelity concerns of translation theorists as discussed in Chapter Three.

¹⁶BARTHES, Roland. *Image Music Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath. London: Fontana, 1977, 147.

¹⁷BARTHES, Roland. 1977, 143.

The limitation of meaning is theoretically undesirable but, in reality, occurs during translation practices, where choices must be made about what a symbol signifies in order to exchange it. Simultaneously, the press and publishers use the figure of the author to define markets and publicise texts. Readers desire a public profile for authors. The public makes heroes of people who achieve the most minor of victories if they are done under the eyes of the media. In this way, they also make celebrities of writers. It is no longer publicly permissible for an author to hide away in the garret. While some may still live in relative poverty, they can rarely avoid the whirlwind of promotional tours, public readings and media promotion that accompanies their publishers' necessary attempts to make money from a publication. Many publishers believe that "the cheapest kind of advertising you can get is to put your author on the road."¹⁸ Similarly, Robert Hughes¹⁹ says that "Successful authors are not necessarily the best, but the best marketed".

This indicates that there is a public desire to be informed about the source of the text; indeed to limit meaning in the way frowned upon by theorists. The reader's image of the author is generally pieced together from aspects of the text itself and the accompanying promotion and education. Toolan suggests that: "even if we know an author personally, we still perform the same process of forming a mental picture or representation (itself a kind of narrative) of that author to ourselves, as an integral part of the activity of knowing a person."²⁰ Bennett's quote at the beginning of this

¹⁸IVES, Laurel. The power of suggestion. *Weekend Australian*. 27-28 May 2000, Review 5.

¹⁹WILSON, Katherine. Advances Australia Unfair. *Courier Mail*. 27 March 2000, Weekend 7.

²⁰TOOLAN, Michael J. *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1988. 78.

chapter echoes a similar sentiment from J.D Salinger's *The Catcher in The Rye*²¹, in which Holden Caulfield says:

What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it.

This desire is particularly strong in terms of realistic fiction, where the events of the novel hit personal notes for many readers. This leads them to seek the author both within and outside the text.

The paratextual evocations of the author will be further dealt with shortly, but within the text, the author's presence has been referred to as the 'implied author'. This is the character whom we assume wrote the novel. From the information within the novel, the reader may speculate on the values, background and lifestyle of the author. This position is a "distinct and separate role"²² from that of the narrator, who is more clearly defined as fictional. The implied author is described in Toolan's reading of Wayne Booth: "the (partial, value-laden) picture of the author that a reader gets in – or takes from – a text"²³. Booth²⁴ has said of the author that:

However impersonal he may try to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner [...] our reactions to his various commitments, secret or overt, will help to determine our response to the work.

The image of the author is further enforced by the paratext, altering the reader's ability to determine the implied author purely on the basis of detail contained within the text. Frequently, the author within the text and the author constructed by promotion are conflated to contribute to an implied author character.

This, then, also creates an 'implied author's intention' which may not resemble an actual statement of meaning by the author, but may be the assumed line

²¹SALINGER, J.D. *The Catcher in The Rye*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958, 22.

²²TOOLAN, Michael J. 1988, 77.

²³TOOLAN, Michael J. 1988, 77.

²⁴BOOTH, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, 70-71.

followed by the author on the basis of the picture carried by the reader of the author's background and personality. For example, if an Aboriginal author writes a fictional novel about the stolen generation which is released accompanying a tale of the author's similar life experiences, there will frequently be absolute conflation of the values of the character and the author. The implied author's intention will be equal to anything the author has stated about his/her own family experience and the reader will expect a particular stance to be taken (anti-governmental sentiments, for example). The author, the implied author of the text and the implied author of the media become one and the same. The horizon of expectations of a reader is created in this way and points to the importance of the author figure in the contemporary interpretation of texts.

In this way, there exists a real author and "various official versions of himself" (sic).²⁵ These are constructed through the techniques an author chooses to utilise with the writing of each work and also with the ways in which the real author is made to work within his or her promotion. Within the text, the implied author is seen to unveil him/herself through such mechanisms as style and tone, and the ironic relationship between the events of the text and cultural norms. Here the author can be seen to make a value judgement about contemporary morals or lifestyles through the consequences that befall a character further to his/her actions, for example. Thus, the moral position of the text is assigned to the implied author and by default to the actual author due to the reader's desire to connect with the source.

No contemporary piece of literature is created in a vacuum and, therefore, no reader interprets texts without the influence of translational practices (which may include actual translation, the media, education, the advice of friends and so on).

²⁵BOOTH, Wayne C. 1961, 71.

Umberto Eco²⁶ contemplates the thinking of a reader who finds a Wordsworth text in a bottle. How would the reader interpret this with absolutely no context and no cognisance of the actual author? At best, he argues, the reader might guess at a period of origin from the style of the writing; perhaps even guess at the author by making comparisons to other similar works. Yet, the reader would have no way of telling whether this was the work of a contemporary author *imitating* the style of a predecessor. In theory, this circumstance would allow for the interpretation with the least amount of constraint due to authorial concerns. However, in contemporary literary polysystems, the feasibility of such scenarios is unlikely.

Events surrounding the 1997 French publication *Lila Dit Ça*²⁷ (*Lila Says* in translation) confirm the unlikelihood of free interpretation of texts, even in a case that comes close to Eco's 'text in a bottle'. *Lila Dit Ça* is allegedly the published format of a handwritten manuscript forwarded anonymously to a publisher on a number of exercise books. The publishers were sufficiently taken with the melancholy tale of 'real life' for poor immigrants in the Parisian banlieues to run the risk of publishing this disordered work. It prompted a "véritable guerre commerciale"²⁸ (a veritable commercial war) between American and British publishing houses squabbling over the translation rights. It has been translated and presented in each country with various highly marketable, 'grunge'- style covers. Notes to the original and the translated editions contain an editor's disclaimer making allowances for the poor grammar and omissions within the text: it was to be published in its 'original' format.

²⁶COLLINI, Stefan. 1992, 69.

²⁷CHIMO. *Lila Dit Ça*. Paris: Pocket Plan, 1997.

English Edition: *Lila Says*. Translated by David Watson. London: Fourth Estate, 1998.

²⁸NOUEL, Estelle. Les livres en français s'exportent bien. Radio France Internationale. URL: www.rfi.fr/fr.txt/kiosque/Mfi/culturesociete/300798-0.html (14 June 2000).

It has been typeset for readability, but contains photos of the original manuscript to prove its authenticity.

While part of the excitement surrounding such a text is inevitably the sense of the mysterious, the publisher does little to dissuade the reader from believing in the autobiographical claim of the work. Indeed, internet booksellers (such as Amazon.com and FNAC) list ‘Chimo’ – the novel’s lead character – as the author. A cult following has arisen for the novel, the publication of which coincided with the wave of similar grunge novels. The timeliness of this appearance is only one of a number of factors prompting sceptics to suggest that this was the work of a well-known author, or even someone commissioned by the publishing house. Yet the “incredible realism”²⁹ of the text encourages fans of the work to believe in the existence of ‘Chimo’. In this example of a text that was virtually found in Eco’s bottle, we see that marketing and the implied author are vital to a reader’s access and enjoyment of the text. The author is not entirely dead – even when his/her existence is in doubt.

The unveiling of an author other than Chimo for this text would be unforgivable to most readers, in spite of the fact that it is ostensibly a fictional novel like any other. Booth suggests that accusations of insincerity or a “lack of seriousness of works arise out of the conflict between the implied author and our knowledge of the real author’s life”.³⁰ This form of criticism is common today in both the popular press and academic circles. This confirms that while the author’s opinions may not be necessary for erudition of textual meaning, the public desires him or her to have some degree of authority to speak on behalf of the values, culture or other positions

²⁹ *Amazon.com*. Lila Says - Reader review. URL: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/1857025652/qid=988001204/sr=1-1/026-9074102-0185227> (14 June 2000).

³⁰ BOOTH, Wayne C. 1961, 75.

supported by the text. There remains a sense of betrayal or the loss of a role model when such ‘fraudulence’ is revealed.

Foucault has analysed the desire to know the author and has amalgamated the various images of the author into his concept of the “author function”. This is the whole of the constructed figure to whom we attribute works.³¹ Like Barthes, he suggests that the author is not an “indefinite source of significations which fill a work” but is “a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses...”.³² This is done by seeking a definitive meaning for a text, but also by the use of the author’s name as a means by which to box together a number of texts and classify and compare them against others. I will also discuss the importance of genre in this situation later.

Maggie Nolan’s³³ reading of Foucault summarises his thoughts thus:

For Foucault, the author is a principle of unity, the figure by which we fear and contain the proliferation of meaning. On the one hand, we want the author to be endlessly creative, yet, on the other we use the figure of the author as a locus of authority from which to limit meaning. This is further complicated by the strange process of identification that takes place as an effect of reading which is perhaps why an author not being who we think they are can cause hurt and even feelings of betrayal.

This brings us back to cases like that of *Lila Says* where the potential for disclosure of a fraudulent author overpowers the subjective ability of the reader to critically view a text as purely fictional. There are numerous notorious cases of this ‘hurt’ available to us from Australia literary history – the Demidenko/Darville scandal and the Mudrooroo case to name only two.³⁴

³¹RABINOW, Paul, ed. *The Foucault Reader*. London: Penguin, 1984, 101 – 120.

³²RABINOW, Paul. 1984, 118-119.

³³NOLAN, Maggie. Mudrooroo. *Austlit discussion group* (austlit@vicnet.net.au) 9 April 2000. Archives retrievable at URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au>.

³⁴Helen Demidenko (or Darville) and Mudrooroo have each been at the centre of highly publicised scandals regarding questionable claims to ethnicity. As both authors have written about very specific cultural environments, debate continues about the necessity for fictional novelists to prove their cultural origins in order for their work to be taken seriously. Demidenko also fought charges of plagiarism over her 1994 novel *The Hand that Signed the Paper*.

The latter cases have been extensively discussed in other publications³⁵, but lesser known situations also verify that authenticity is frequently an issue in Australian literature and arts. Adam Shoemaker cites the case of Sreten Bozic who wrote on indigenous themes under the pseudonym of B.Wongar in the 1970s. He made no claim to Aboriginal ancestry (which differs slightly from the cases of Demidenko and Mudrooroo) yet reviews (both national and international) referred to a thorough understanding of “savagery” and an affinity with traditional ways. All this, for Shoemaker “highlights the fact that there was such a keen desire, both internationally and domestically, to discover a great new Aboriginal writer of short fiction that one was literally *willed into being* by allusion and suggestion.”³⁶ The persona of Chimo has been similarly willed into existence.

Robert Drewe said, in a review of a Wongar novel (after his identity had been revealed): “Even a genuine belief that one is a reincarnated Arnhem Land Aboriginal inside a Yugoslav’s body residing in St Kilda, Victoria, doesn’t quite diminish this reviewer’s unease.”³⁷ Readers feel cheated when their image of the author is shown to be unfounded. There are specific issues related to the notion of authenticity in the case of Aboriginal Australian literature that have been adequately studied elsewhere.³⁸ Sally Morgan’s *My Place*, as a simplistic example of this complex field of inquiry, “established a perception of Aboriginal people for thousands of overseas readers”³⁹ and also for the domestic audience. Hence, if Sally Morgan were for some reason

³⁵See for example: Andrew REIMER. *The Demidenko Debate*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1996.

³⁶SHOEMAKER, Adam. Tracking Black Australian Stories: contemporary Indigenous Literature. In: Bruce BENNETT and Jennifer STRAUSS, eds. *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998, 339.

³⁷ROLFE, Patricia. The Mystery of the Best seller. *Bulletin*. 21April 1992, 109.

³⁸See for example: Stephen MUECKE. *Textual Spaces – Aboriginality and Cultural Studies*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1992.

³⁹SHOEMAKER, Adam. In: Bruce BENNETT and Jennifer STRAUSS. 1998, 342.

found to be a ‘fraud’, she could discredit not only herself but also the overall image of Aboriginality held by many.

Mythological tales (such as many Aboriginal stories) produce further issues about authenticity as they are derived from oral languages and have thus been retold over time with alterations. This notion of circular story telling is common to Indigenous cultures where stories may be reinterpreted and reappropriated, embellished, told with different protagonists and so on. This makes definition of the ‘author’ of a given traditional story extremely slippery. Pym⁴⁰ has discussed the problematic nature of translating myth in terms of fidelity.

[...] in the case of myth, there is no unique author who might be betrayed. The ultimate sources are unavailable; every version is already a transformation of a transformation; and thus no translator can be wrong or unfaithful.

In theory this suggestion may also be applied to wider national myths, further questioning the ideal of the necessary retention of cultural specificity. But, adherence to that philosophy may result in the loss of a considerable amount of cultural references. I do not think Pym is suggesting this as a feasible approach to translation, but is suggesting that ‘authorship’ is a subjective way of limiting meaning which can be affected by different types of translation, and interpreted in various ways by readers.

3. What is a reader?

If the author is not entirely responsible for the ‘meanings’ to be found in a text, then reading is a process of construction of meaning. “The act of reading is the concretisation of the consciousness of the author: like a musical score, it has intention

⁴⁰PYM, Anthony. On the translatability of Australian Aboriginal Myth.1998.
URL:www.fut.es/~apym/myth.html (16 Feb 2001).

and form, but is only realised in the act of performance.”⁴¹ While I am not interested in the notion of the author’s consciousness for the purposes of this thesis, this quote suggests that texts have only potential meaning until acted upon by the reader. The individual associations that readers will make with the signs provided in a text results in the fact that no two readings of a novel will be identical. Tzvetan Todorov has suggested that this is because “these accounts describe not the universe of the book itself but that universe transformed, as it is found in the psyche of each individual reader”.⁴² The ‘imaginary universe’ is created by the reader’s interpretative repertoire.

At the same time, many readings of a text will be *similar*. This suggests that while a text may not be imbued with an immutable ‘meaning’, it is likely to offer “certain ‘positions’ for a reader, certain vantage points from which it can be interpreted...”.⁴³ A text “predisposes its readers to a very definite type of reception by textual strategies, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics or implicit allusions.”⁴⁴ Translators (in various forms) have considerable power over these ways of interacting with the text, as they, like the author, govern the textual strategies incorporated in a translated work.

As discussed in Chapter Three, translations are performed to make culturally-specific texts comprehensible to readers from other cultural spaces. To make this transfer, translators must assume what alterations are required to work towards maximal comprehensibility. This then requires assumptions about the repertoire available to a target readership; that is, what they already know or are prepared to learn about a culture, and what needs to be changed completely in order that other

⁴¹GREEN, Keith and Jill LEBIHAN. *Critical Theory and Practice: A Coursebook*. London: Routledge, 1996, 188.

⁴²TODOROV, Tsvetan. *Genres in Discourse*. Translated edition. Translated by Catherine PORTER. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 42-43.

⁴³EAGLETON, Terry. *Literary Theory: An introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983, 120.

⁴⁴JAUSS, Hans Robert. In: Phillip RICE and Patricia WAUGH. 1992, 84.

communities will receive the message of the text. The ways in which such decisions are made are governed by subjectivity. In target-oriented translation practice (the most common to literary translation) such assumptions are made about the majority of the perceived demographic for the translated text, and alterations are made accordingly. This attempts to ensure that the reader is equipped (has a sufficient repertoire) to comprehend the text.

These processes of target-oriented translation (like all authorship) work with an ‘ideal reader’ in mind. This reader is someone who has

at his or her disposal all of the codes which would render it (*the text*) exhaustively intelligible [...] fully equipped with all the technical knowledge essential for deciphering the work, to be faultless in applying this knowledge, and free from any hampering restrictions.⁴⁵

Terry Eagleton states that this type of reader would need to be someone who is “stateless, classless, ungendered, free of ethnic characteristics and without limiting cultural assumptions.”⁴⁶ Not only is this character unrealistic, but the ‘practical’ ideal reader, as utilised by authors and translators, indeed *must* possess biases and ‘cultural baggage’. He or she must belong to a particular age group or nationality, for example, to maximally engage with a text that deals with issues that will resonate with only certain readers (like youth-oriented novels such as *Zigzag Street*). They must be familiar with certain turns of phrase or icons of popular culture for the text to be realised to its full potential.

Toolan suggests the recognition of an ‘implied reader’ who is “an inescapable *version* of a reader that we can assume an author to have in mind” (his italics)⁴⁷, though this definition of the implied reader has been contested elsewhere.⁴⁸ The

⁴⁵EAGLETON, Terry. 1983, 121.

⁴⁶EAGLETON, Terry. 1983, 121.

⁴⁷TOOLAN, Michael J. 1988, 80.

⁴⁸See for example: Wolfgang ISEK. *The implied reader : patterns of communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

‘ideal’ and ‘implied’ reading positions are sometimes conflated but, for the purposes of this study, if the ideal reader is seen as unattainable, then the implied reader might be seen as the pre-ideal reader, understood to have limitations and biases, whom the author and translator will work to educate.

This ‘ideal’ versus ‘implied’ positioning becomes clearer when looking at the translation process. Stanley Fish has spoken of “interpretative communities”: groups of readers, who may well share a common language, who will bring their particular cultural experience (as a member of numerous divisions and hybrids of any national community) with them to their interpretation of a text. In terms of the comprehension of culturally-specific texts, the *ideal* reader is perhaps the one who comes from exactly the same interpretative community as the text. Given earlier discussions of hybridity and overlapping of cultural spheres, the members of this community will be considerably smaller than the number of actual readers. Any envisaged *implied* reader of the transferred text (any reader outside of the source community) will be affected by cultural and linguistic differences; he or she will have a different interpretative repertoire. In translating a text, these differences are accommodated and translation decisions (including the best methods of promotion) are made knowing that the implied reader will not be the ideal reader so must be catered for in a different fashion. That is, the implied reader of the original text will not be the reader of the translated text, so translators will work to produce similar levels of resonance with a new implied reader in mind.

In imagining readers, authors and translators cannot truly envisage exactly who will pick up their novel or how it will be interpreted, as different levels of engagement occur between readers and texts. However, while a variety of readers and reading positions are possible, it is also true that certain readers are not likely to

easily engage with a culturally-specific text, and authors and translators are aware of this. For example,

[...] the ideal reader of *Finnegan's Wake* cannot be a Greek reader of the second century BC or an illiterate man of Aran. The reader is strictly defined by the textual and the syntactical organisation of the text: the text is nothing else but the semantic-pragmatic production of its own Model Reader.⁴⁹

Eco has framed the problematic notion of 'who' an author writes for in terms of a "model reader" who is "supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author generatively deals with them."⁵⁰ However, Eco sees as important the understanding, for both authors and translators, of working towards a perception of the reader who is not ideal, and thus providing educational material within a novel (in the text or the paratext). The processes of translation and transfer can approach this desirable relationship between reader and text by educating and persuading the reader to become closer to 'ideal'.

Approaches to 'education' within the text have been dealt with in Chapter Three (such as footnotes, explanatory sentences, choices made by an interlinguistic translator) but epitextual translation practices will be dealt with more specifically here. In short, the promotion of a text's release via the press, educational institutions and book stores are added to the 'repertoire' possessed by the reader and contribute to their interpretative abilities. Thus, when a reader with no knowledge of Australian culture reads reviews of a text which clarify culturally-specific aspects of the text, for example, their knowledge of the culture is enhanced and their interpretative ability increases. In the epitext, we see such things as the life of the author, details about the text which are unusual or exotic, comparisons with similar texts from the recipient culture and comparisons to works from the same genre. In this way, readers are never

⁴⁹Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the semiotics of texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979, 9-10.

⁵⁰Eco, Umberto. 1979, 7.

entirely free to ‘actively produce’ meaning from the text – they are guided by translational practices, including the paratext. Trinh T Minh-ha⁵¹ says:

Just as people read a translated work because they cannot read the original [...] they may come to a work first through reading an interview or they may read an interview so as to get a different flavour of the work. It’s not only a question of accessibility and interlinearity that is involved here, but also of the life-afterlife (sic) cycles that allow a work to travel and live on.

So, if we see translation as the procedure that renders texts comprehensible to other cultures, then we must include the epitextual facets of text as acts of ‘translation’.

They create a certain vision in the mind of the reader before the reader accesses the text. This ‘education’ is simultaneously a liberating and restricting act; it both increases the repertoire of images available to the reader and limits possible interpretations of the text, thus constructing a range of feasible reading positions.

4. What is a translator?

In spite of attention given to the authors, the name of the official translator is not mentioned in any of the publicity surrounding the English release of *Lila Dit Ça* or the French release of *My Place* (as just two of many possible examples). The translator’s name will appear on the cover of the novel, and is increasingly common on bookseller’s websites, but is largely ignored in epitextual discourses. In the case of *Lila Says*, someone has had to recreate grammatical flaws in a different language to make the translated text seem as authentic as the original, yet is not credited with any form of authorship. In this way, translation is regularly seen as manual rather than intellectual or creative labour in spite of all the concerns raised so far in this thesis and other studies. The translator “is a writer whose singular originality lies in the fact that

⁵¹MINH HA, Trinh T. Scent, sound and cinema. In: Mary ZOURNAZI. *Foreign Dialogues: Memories, Translations, Conversations*. Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 1998, 56.

he seems to make no claim to any”.⁵² Translators are rarely asked to speak about their work outside of specialised forums and are almost never sought out by the reader as any kind of ‘implied translator’. Translation is marginalised by “an essentially romantic conception of authorship” whereby the “ ‘original’ is an unchanging monument of the human imagination (‘genius’), transcending the linguistic, cultural and social changes of which the translation is a determinate effect.”⁵³ Translators indeed prefer to be praised for their invisibility – they effect a “weird self-annihilation”⁵⁴ in order to perfect a seamless product.

The translator is both ‘author’ and ‘reader’ of a given work; one whose:

[...] act of communication is conditioned by another, previous act and whose repetition of that previous act is intensive. Unlike readers who may choose to pay more or less attention to their listening/reading, translators must interact closely with their source text.⁵⁵

The translator must decide upon one meaning in order to make the changes, but must do so in a fashion that does not limit other possible readings and does not erode/override the style of the original author – so that an implied author is still present in the text. The ‘implied author’ of a translated work will inevitably be a combination of the implied author and the translator, but the reader must not perceive this to be the case. Marketing of a text will never focus on the life experiences of the translator, but will instead make use of the author to discuss cultural difference as if no change has occurred. That is, rather than ask the translator why he/she made a particular choice an interviewer may ask the author what is meant by an item of slang that has not been translated, for example.

⁵²BLANCHOT, Maurice. *Translating*. Quoted as introduction to Lawrence VENUTI, ed. *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. London: Routledge, 1992.

⁵³VENUTI, Lawrence. 1992, 3.

⁵⁴VENUTI, Lawrence. *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge, 1995, 8.

⁵⁵HATIM Basil and Ian MASON. *The Translator as Communicator*. London, Routledge, 1997, 2.

The other forms of translation of texts, as cited in this thesis, erase the official translator and reinstall the author as the source of meaning. At the same time, the contributors to the paratext of a novel become self-appointed translators of the work by assuming what the readership may need to know about the book before reading it and finding ways to include definition and explanation in the paratext to enhance comprehensibility. I will elucidate the power of these varied forms of translation by elaborating on some key theoretical perspectives where the influence of the paratext as translation is evident: the construction of ‘genre’, the notion of ‘celebrity’ and the theory of oppositional reading.

4.1 Genre

Genre is a way of limiting and producing meaning. It is one of the first ways that readers or audiences identify texts: it is the briefest, most concise of descriptions given if one wants to quickly decide whether or not a text is to one’s taste. A literary or fictional genre may suggest such textual groupings as ‘romance’ or ‘crime’ novels. Other genres exist within the reading repertoire that are not so recognisable by name, such as ‘the quest for personal development’ or ‘the fish-out-of-water’ comedy. Audiences come to trust a genre, which has attached to it a specific repertoire of stylistic conventions.⁵⁶ Genre then can function as one of the major means by which a reader can interpret a text which contains culturally-specific references. If a reader can not make sense of everything contained in the text, they can at least make sense of the superficial storyline because it will resemble texts they have been exposed to in the past.

⁵⁶CUNNINGHAM, Stuart and Toby MILLAR, with David ROWE. *Contemporary Australian Television*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1994,10.

It has been said that in popular fiction, the author is subordinated to genre. The British release of *Zigzag Street* included one review (and there were several similar) titled “What do you get when you cross Nick Hornby with Bridget Jones?”⁵⁷ In yet another disruption of fact and fiction, the British author (Hornby) and a character from Helen Fielding’s successful London-based *Bridget Jones’ Diary*⁵⁸ are said to combine into one ‘Nick Earls’. Thus the author’s name effectively becomes a genre in itself (like ‘Shakespearian’ or ‘Dickensian’). Fielding and Hornby have each released several highly successful examples of the ‘twenty-something life in the nineties’ genre and thus Earls’ association with their names makes his work appear instantly accessible for a new audience in spite of the text’s frequent Australianisms (this will be expanded in Chapter Five). This may work to the detriment of observations of cultural difference however, as the assumption that one understands the details of a novel based on one’s familiarity with a genre may lead to an elision of the very things that make the text different.

While genre works positively as a marketing tool and an easy means of classification, there are also negative connotations associated with novels that conform to particular genres. Romance fiction, for example, is often not regarded as ‘serious literature’. Distinctions between the ‘literary’ and the ‘popular’ are far less distinct in contemporary fiction. The texts utilised in this thesis are not canonical but cannot be relegated to the sphere of ‘popular’ (in its negative sense) or ‘trash’ fiction by virtue of their interrogation by the Academy, their multiple interpretations, their lack of conformity to a singular genre (though they are formulaic in some ways and may be painted by the press as belonging to a genre) and their agreeable critical

⁵⁷COOPER, Tim. Q. What do you get when you cross Bridget Jones with Nick Hornby? A. The man on the right. *Evening Standard*. 2 March 1998, 26.

⁵⁸FIELDING, Helen. *Bridget Jones’ Diary*. London: Picador, 1997.

reception. Their exclusion from the canon may even leave them open to more productive interpretation. Bennett⁵⁹ says that in the case of canonised texts (which can be seen to form a genre):

[...] there is a considerable degree of coincidence between discourses of academic criticism and the reading formations that productively activate such texts. Inasmuch as, for most readers, some form of acquaintance with those discourses constitutes a necessary apprenticeship for reading, this coincidence constitutes the means by which readers are socialised into the literary community. In the case of popular fictions, however, no such coincidence exists.

As the lines between the literary and the popular continue to disintegrate, I would argue that translation practices, predominantly in the form of the media, have taken the place of academic discourses (or in some cases, combine with) in guiding readers through their productive activation of texts. The desire of publishers and the media is to make a text marketable and desirable, and the reinforcement of genre categories assists in this. Genre works as a type of translation because it allows reader to feel that a text is not so foreign as to be incomprehensible. A genre (or the name of an author associated with that genre) is often a unifying factor between international literatures, and the traits of a given genre may be shared between cultural repertoires. Some specific examples of the ways in which genre effects placement in the polysystem will be explored in Chapter Five.

⁵⁹BENNETT, Tony. *In*: Phillip RICE and Patricia WAUGH. 1992, 211.

4.2 Celebrity

Celebrity status “confers on a person a certain discursive power: within society, the celebrity is a voice above others, a voice that is channelled into the media systems as being legitimately significant.”⁶⁰ When authors are attributed a celebrity status in society, their opinion is considered significant, but so are their private lives, their background and their cultural origins. The celebrity status of an author will correlate with the amount of epitextual material that is available to the reader. In this way, celebrity status of an author influences the interpreting of his or her textual outputs.

P. David Marshall⁶¹ has analysed the social construction of celebrities at length, and concludes that the role of celebrities is to help the population make sense of their social world. I would suggest that this may be especially true of a celebrity (an author in the case of this thesis) whose work deals directly with contemporary day to day problems. Marshall’s work questions why a celebrity, for example, is required to speak about his or her life and why the public desires access to such information. In the case of authors, and in particular the authors of realistic contemporary fiction as used in this thesis, I have argued that readers desire an image of the author that resonates with their connection to the text. The reader has, or will, use the text to make meaning of his or her own life and, thus, desires an author who is ‘qualified’ to speak about their concerns and issues. In the case of someone like Nick Earls, who is writing about relationship problems and male frailty, the reader wants to learn about the author’s own flawed personality and private life. It is common to conflate the

⁶⁰MARSHALL, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in contemporary culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, Preface x.

⁶¹MARSHALL, P. David. 1997.

author with the character, but on a real level, most readers know that they are reading fiction. At the same time, they do not want to discover that the author is a ‘fraud’ in that they do not have a personal understanding of issues that have become very personal to the reader.

Genette has discussed the significance of the author’s name; the importance of which can be linked with more general perceptions of ‘celebrity’. In the publisher’s peritext, the positioning of the author’s name on a cover is important. In general, the size of the lettering will reflect the author’s reputation. This is similar to the billing of actors on a film poster or at the start of a television program. Genette observes that when the specificities of a series prevent large lettering for an author, a dust jacket or a band around the text will often indicate the author’s name. Large scale fame, or simulation of such, will be seen in the text that bears only the surname of the author. Simulation occurs when a publisher chooses to “engage in promotional practices that somewhat anticipate glory by mimicking its effects.”⁶² Genette cites Phillip Lejeune who says that “someone doesn’t become an author until his second publication, when his name can appear at the head not only of his book but also a list of works ‘By the same author.’”⁶³ Of course there are exceptional cases of famous authors with only one text in their repertoire, however, Genette uses Lejeune’s “witticism” to support his assertion that the author is a commodity to be played with and marketed by publishers. This moves increasingly far away from dated understandings of the author as a divine source of meaning, and demonstrates the importance of theories of ‘celebrity’ for any study of contemporary literature.

In this way, the name is not simply a statement of identity, it is “the way to put an identity, or rather a “personality”, as the media call it, at the service of the book:

⁶²GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 39.

⁶³GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 45

“This book is the work of the illustrious So-and-So”.⁶⁴ At the same time, the irony of this form of acknowledgement of celebrity is that the name on the cover is the name of “whoever is putatively responsible” for the work, and famous cases suggest that this may not be the author in question. Thus, again, celebrity is a false statement of power, but is perpetuated in many forums; in literary spheres as much as other media environments.

Just as readers require certain values and qualifications to be present in the author, society in general asks these things of other celebrities. Celebrities are put on a pedestal as they, according to Marshall, embody the Western ideal of individual success. Consequently, readers and audiences seek justification of that success and celebrities are asked to assure the public that their conduct in public and in private is “good and moral.”⁶⁵ In judging ‘good’, I would add that these actions should conform to the social and cultural mores of the readership. Hence, when texts and authors move, the press must work to ensure that the personality of the author moves in the same direction – that it is translated, with the text, for a new readership. I will demonstrate this assertion clearly in Chapters Five and Six.

Marshall suggests that the “celebrity function” works in a similar way to Foucault’s “author function”: it is a symbol; a way of containing meaning that might otherwise be infinite and, therefore, unfathomable. Celebrity is “a way in which meaning can be housed and categorized (sic) into something that provides a source and origin for that meaning.”⁶⁶ This supports my suggestion that rather than seeking out ‘the author’s intention’ in its traditional sense, readers are seeking a symbol of

⁶⁴GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 40

⁶⁵MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, x.

⁶⁶MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, 56

meaning – a way to rationalise the origins of their own feelings towards the text, and towards their lives.

Within this search for meaning, Marshall suggests that celebrities represent “different interests to different audience groups”.⁶⁷ In this way, Marshall puts forward that celebrities themselves may be read as texts: able to be interpreted in different ways by different audiences or as signs that are part of a system of signs, therefore necessitating a reading that includes relational analysis of other signs and semiotic situations.

Vital to the understanding of this notion of celebrity, then, is intertextuality.

Although a celebrity may be positioned predominantly in one mediated form, that image is informed by the circulation of significant information about the celebrity in newspapers, magazines, interview programs, fanzines, rumors (sic) and so on.⁶⁸

Marshall’s image of intertextual relations in the cultural construction of a celebrity, can be read as translation. The celebrity as text is defined (translated, made sense of) by the wider media. Marshall indeed refers to this media influence as “interpretive writing”.⁶⁹

The ideal celebrity, then, will have the ability to appeal to a wide range of audiences: to appear attractive to one group without repelling all others. This is difficult to achieve as many celebrities are chosen because of their subcultural value. Just as a piece of clothing may be appropriated from one area to become a symbol of a subculture (the safety pin, the basket ball cap), so celebrities act as symbols of identification of subculture. Thus, to have appeal across subcultural groupings is rare (and here I would read the perceived ‘mainstream’ as a subculture, but also composed of further subcultures). Another important quality of the celebrity is to appeal to an

⁶⁷MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, 58

⁶⁸MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, 58

⁶⁹MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, 58

audience in the way of a marketed product. The ideal here is to stimulate a ““mass” or collective response” to the “product” to increase sales and press coverage, while also offering opportunity for individual desire and connection to the product.

Marshall suggests that these are the basic principles of advertising.⁷⁰

At the same time as celebrity is desired and recognised, Marshall says it is “ridiculed and derided because it represents the center (sic) of false value.”⁷¹ While the public looks up to and desires knowledge of the celebrity, audiences can still acknowledge that the media is interfering with direct knowledge of the person. There is also resentment of the celebrity who is seen to have achieved success without the “requisite association with work”.⁷² To maintain a positive position in the public eye, celebrities are required to articulate the hard road they have travelled, not to indulge in gross displays of wealth and to maintain a sense of irony or self-deprecation in interviews or public performances. This is of particular importance in the cases of Australian celebrities, where the ‘tall poppy syndrome’ (as discussed in Chapter Two) governs the longevity of any celebrity’s public life. There is a repeated trend in Australian celebrity culture of criticising those who become too detached from their origins. This is where authors like Earls, McGahan and Tsiolkas have succeeded; they publicly proclaim links to the lifestyles of their protagonists (modest dwellings, for example) and self-deprecating humour about their position as celebrities.

To demonstrate Marshall’s suggestion that celebrity status is tenuous, I will make use of a phase of ‘bad publicity’ that plagued Brisbane author Venero Armano in late 2000. Armano is another ‘local hero’ of the Brisbane literary scene who, for the past ten years, has maintained a very similar public reputation as the other authors

⁷⁰MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, 64

⁷¹MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, xi

⁷²MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, xi

cited within this thesis. He has had a steady success rate (rather than any one extremely popular work) and his Brisbane-based tales of love and treachery amongst Italian-Australian migrant families have been translated into several languages. He is a popular guest at festivals and readings around Australia and is often likened to the passionate, if misguided, protagonists of his texts. In these ways, he fits the mould of the desirable celebrity author – appealing to various market groups simultaneously and providing numerous public occasions for readers to connect with him.

A scathing initial report in Brisbane's *Courier Mail*⁷³ (hitherto a champion of Armanno's achievements) stated that the author had received over \$155,000 in government grants for his work over 8 years. This was played up as a slight against tax payers in an exposé-style article which included an interview with a plumber – summoned as the token expert on doing 'real work' for a living. While Armanno defended his right to this money as necessary for his "cultural contribution" to Australian arts, the reporter made much of his home being in "Brisbane's exclusive inner-western suburbs." The plumber suggested "you've got to make your own way in life sooner or later... he can try plumbing if he likes".

The juxtaposition of Armanno and the plumber created distance between the author and the 'general public'. This is a disadvantageous insinuation for Armanno given Marshall's suggestion that the successful celebrity must appear to be on the same level as the reading public. The myth of the charming but self-effacing masculine hero, as described in Chapter Two, comes into play here. The photos accompanying the aforementioned article and the numerous follow-up stories were exactly the same publicity shots used earlier to show Armanno as an attractive, good-natured 'Italian boy'. His home is used as an example

⁷³DEBRITZ, Brett. Words worth! Public cash for top author. *Sunday Mail*. 10 Dec 2000, 5.

of his 'wealth' (this can be compared to similar photos of Nick Earls' home which have been used by the same publication to position him as 'successful'. See Illustration 1). There is no mention of Armanno's successful career in the computer industry before he began writing (which may have funded his current living arrangement), or any criticism of the arts funding bodies responsible for his income. Instead, the author himself is the focus of commentary and a representative target for all who feel that arts funding in general is a 'waste of tax payers' money'. This demonstrates the power of the media in the creation, and denigration of celebrities. It also serves as a study of the public desire for an author who 'represents' a given culture to remain close to that culture: details of an author's life that clash with reader's commonly held perception of him or her leads to accusations of 'fraudulence' like those levelled at Armanno.

The authors discussed within this thesis have been made to work, by the press and their publishers, as representatives of cultural environments. Their celebrity status, at least in the earlier stages of their careers, is often attributable to the connection made with audiences from the authors' source cultures. Andrew McGahan's reticence at being a part of the publicity of his texts has been responsible for the industry term 'the McGahan myth' – this is the misleading belief that you can succeed as a writer with little industry contact.⁷⁴ At the same time, for the community from which his texts spring, his work has provided a series of urban legends which allow various readers to claim participation in the events of the texts, which are 'inspired' by real occurrences in McGahan's life. Nick Earls, likewise, achieved attention within Brisbane's reading community by admitting that many characters were composites of friends, family and community figures. Both authors

⁷⁴WILSON, Katherine. 2000, Weekend 7.

Illustration 1: The use of Venero Armano's and Nick Earls' homes as measure of success.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Armano is said to live in “Brisbane’s exclusive inner-western suburbs.”⁷⁵ Earls’ “unassuming” home allows him to celebrate “the richness of everyday life that surrounds him in the inner-western suburbs.”⁷⁶ The perspective is changed to suit the purpose of the article and the journalist’s desired public response to the author.

⁷⁵ DEBRITZ, Brett. Words worth! Public cash for top author. *Sunday Mail*. 10 Dec 2000, 5.

⁷⁶ KILLEN, Sandra. Earls Castle. *Courier Mail*. 26 Oct 1999, Our House 3.

generated excitement at this prospect with rumours being propagated about who may have provided the inspiration for more controversial figures. This works positively in terms of generating publicity and boosting the authors' reputation, but both McGahan and Earls have also suffered bad press at the hands of those who claim to be one of the novel's characters. These close links for local audiences between the characters and the community also increase the potential for conflation of the author with the lead protagonist.

Stuart Glover, on whom Earls' Richard Derrington was loosely based, has gone so far as to write back to the novel and the public by publishing his own critique of the experience of having your 'stories' stolen from you.⁷⁷ Here, the real-life version of the character uses epitextual translation processes to disrupt the authenticity of the text and unbalance the reader's vision of the implied author. He does this by insisting that there is no connection between Derrington and Earls (as is frequently assumed) and by painting Earls as less than the extremely likeable public persona with whom most readers are familiar. It would seem that Glover initially agreed to Earls' use of certain details of his life which were exaggerated and distorted for the basis of the comic novel. But evidently he did not envisage the novel's huge domestic and international readership nor the fact that there would be so much assumption that Earls himself was the source of the stories. Within Brisbane literary circles the breakdown of the real-life friendship between Earls and Glover has been public, and thus influences the reader's manipulation of the implied author. Outside of the text's source community Glover's identity remains hidden, increasing the likelihood of outside readers creating an implied author based on the Derrington

⁷⁷GLOVER, Stuart. The Disloyal Subject: The consequences of non-fiction in Zigzag Street. *Imago: New Writing*. 10 (2), Spring 1998, 17-23.

character and Earls' publicity. Again, specific examples of this will be discussed in later chapters.

The transition of book to film is another site where the power of celebrity influences interpretation. The process of film adaptation raises a number of concerns that are theoretically 'unfashionable' such as: authenticity (original is authentic) fidelity (adaptation is dilution or deformation) art-form specificity (the literariness is lost in film or vice versa) and massification (the original must be more "cognitively demanding" than the adaptation or the adaptation would not be more popular for a mass audience).⁷⁸ Films too become paratextual translation tools for the novel; if one has enjoyed the film, one may be inspired to read the book.

In the movement of books to film, we see the actors assuming an authorial role "simply by virtue of the fact of his or her visibility on the screen and in screen-oriented media. Actors imprint their own signature on a film and this signature may be complete enough to erase other kinds of authorial signatures."⁷⁹ This is clearly visible in the case of the transfer of Christos Tsiolkas' *Loaded* into the film *Head On*. If there was already a typical lack of distinction between Tsiolkas and his character, Ari (both of whom are denominated as young, Greek and gay) then this was further complicated by the casting of Alex Dimitriades in the film role. Evidently young and Greek, Dimitriades' sexuality was of primary importance for interviewers. Dimitriades chose (or was advised) not to confirm or deny suggestions of homosexuality which lead many to assume it anyway in their desire for an authentic representation of the character. The conflation of Dimitriades with Ari overwhelmed the association of Tsiolkas with Ari for the general public. This association of actor

⁷⁸CARTMELL, Debra, HUNTER, I.Q., KAYE, Heidi and Imelda WELEHAN, eds. *Pulping Fictions: Consuming Culture across the Literature/Media Divide*. London: Pluto Press, 1996, 11.

⁷⁹GELDER, Ken. The Vampire Writes Back: Anne Rice and the (Re) Turn of the Author in the Field of Cultural Production. In: Debra CARTMELL, et al. 1996, 35.

and character is common, however cases such as this one exemplify the power of the press to blur the lines between *author* and *actor* by ensuring that each has some ‘right’ to represent the culture depicted in the novel/film. In this sense too, actor, author and character combine to represent the mores, values and tropes of the depicted community (here the gay, Greek youth of Melbourne’s inner suburbs). The texts help readers/viewers from outside make sense of the community. For readers outside Australia, these texts will influence the readers’ vision of Australia itself. In this way, the extratextual translation processes ensure that authors, like actors, become ambassadors for their source culture and the readers’ ‘implied’ vision of the individual author, actor or other is derived from the authority so invested in them.

An interview with Australian actor Frances O’Connor reveals the ways in which public figures can be made to represent their source culture in order to gain favour with readers. Upon the release of an internationally produced film, the interviewer describes her thus:

O’Connor has an unaffected naturalness about her, reflected in her simple charcoal jeans, shamrock green top (suitably reflecting her father’s Irish ancestry), and black sandals. But the external simplicity contrasts with the internal crackle.⁸⁰

This description is drawn from an article titled “Vive La Frances” – a play on words but also an allusion to the importance of her international success. She is given the accolade of being an “export-quality woman”. This one paragraph buys into a number of long held Australian traditions as discussed in Chapter Two: O’Connor is special because she has succeeded not only in Australia but has proved the quality of Australian talent to the international market. She is unmistakably ‘Australian’ due to her naturalness and casual attire. Still, she gives a nod to Australia’s Anglo-Irish heritage through her wearing of the green jumper. She must be at once unassuming

⁸⁰YALLOP, Richard. Vive La Frances. *Weekend Australian*. 15-16 Jan 2000, Review 16-18.

and powerful, natural but vibrant and embracing of foreign success while having her feet firmly planted in Australian history. The final sentence may indeed paint Frances' character as allegorical of the way Australia would like to see itself: external simplicity contrasted with an internal crackle.

This is the way in which the celebrity function ensures that actors, authors and others are made to work as cultural ambassadors. Their personal history is relevant to readers/viewers domestically as it makes them likeable – thus, we are more likely to feel we relate to them as people and are more open to accepting the product they represent. We are familiar with this type of treatment of media personalities but it is not often thought of as a means of making sense of a text in the way that I suggest is the case for authors in transfer. It is one thing to question what the author meant by a particular scene of his or her novel, but another to rely on knowledge of the author's personal life to draw such conclusions. Thus the celebrity status of an author works as a form of translation because it is used as an interpretative tool.

4.3 Oppositionality

As generic conventions and the appeal of celebrities work to convince readers that a text is accessible, the combination of the influences of translation devices results in a change of mentality for readers outside the source culture of a text. Translations (including texts transferred for other speakers of English) which do not make blanket use of domesticating procedures have the potential to educate readers and encourage them to make further investigations into the incomprehensible culturally-specific aspects of the text. Translation, in all of the guises displayed so far, constitutes a method of quiet reform in the thought processes of readers. It is a

means of using existing systems to assert small challenges to the status quo. This has been theorised by Ross Chambers and Michel De Certeau, whose approaches will be expanded upon shortly.

While rewriting an Australian novel in French, the translator may make the choice to retain certain Australianisms or to create new hybrid words so as not to dissolve the cultural differences within the text. Thus, while constrained by certain cultural mores, the translator can construct an educational production of the text, which works to the advantage of cross-cultural understanding. Likewise, by suggesting that Earls is like Hornby and Jones, the translator (in the form of extratextual press translation) decreases potential resistance to the text because of its foreignness. The text finds a prominent place within the polysystem and can then begin its 'work' on cultural communication (which it does by virtue of its inclusion of culturally-specific language).

In the particular case of a nation like Australia, which is frequently perceived as 'peripheral' in terms of literary influence, this ability to acquire a position then overturn stereotypes, is advantageous. An aggressive assertion of national identity in film or literature texts (such as *Crocodile Dundee*⁸¹, for example) can often only serve to reinforce stereotypes, or may be resisted from the outset and so not engaged with at any level. The international acceptance of certain Australian products over others can of course be read in postcolonial terms as compelling Australians to conform to international standards or tastes in order to be accepted. However, a more positive reading suggests that by creating products which are similar yet different to the polysystem's 'central' models, Australian cultural producers can be more productive in their assertion of national talent.

⁸¹ *Crocodile Dundee*. Directed by Peter FAIMAN. Rimfire Films, 1986.

Michel De Certeau⁸² has been mentioned elsewhere in this thesis as the source of theories of tactical opposition to everyday matters. He speaks of the person who takes a shortcut to work, or who absconds with a few extras from the office stationery cupboard as one who is launching small challenges to the powers that govern his or her life. It is a way of coping with the drudgery of employment or simply a way of enjoying ‘getting away with’ something that has no major legal implications. Most importantly, it is a way of becoming quietly empowered: the employer may be assumed to have the upper hand, but the employee challenges that power by taking it upon themselves to take a longer lunch hour or to do a particular task half-heartedly. Many of these practices are so common that they are rarely even considered unethical. In short, these practices “consist of transforming imposed structures, language codes, rules, etc., in ways that serve individual or group purposes other than those “intended”.”⁸³ Thus, when a translator chooses to break from convention to make a particular point, when subcultural or hybrid language groups reappropriate words from the standard language and encode them in a way comprehensible only to them, or when a culturally-specific Australian text enters a different polysystem under the guise of being similar to what is already there, oppositional behaviour is being practiced.

This type of oppositional behaviour may be seen as ultimately conservative “in that it helps the existing power structure to remain in place by making the system liveable”.⁸⁴ This is similar to Itamar Even-Zohar’s discussion of conservatism within the polysystem, as seen in Chapter Three. However, Ross Chambers suggests that in the form of discourse and oppositional narrative, this behaviour has a unique potential

⁸²CERTEAU, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven RENDALL. Berkeley: California University Press, 1984.

⁸³CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 6.

⁸⁴CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 1.

to change states of affairs by changing people's "mentalities": their ideas, attitudes, values, feelings and desires.⁸⁵ Chambers makes the distinction between opposition and resistance. Opposition involves working within the system to survive and perhaps invoking gradual changes of mentality, whereas resistance involves working with a counterforce to attack the system.

Resistance in terms of publishing a culturally-specific novel might take the form of releasing the text with no extratextual translation and containing all cultural references. Examples might be releasing the text in Australian English in France, or filling a text with slang specific to one group of Brisbane teenagers and releasing it in Melbourne with no additional notes. The unlikely success of such a text would cause a readers to look elsewhere to find the meanings of word or to learn English to understand the text. The most likely outcome, however, is that no one would buy the text outside of its source culture (which is not the desire of publishers). This is avoided if changes are approached gradually and the text is ostensibly disguised as being acceptable to the new environment – at which point, the remaining cultural references will act as educational devices.

“Oppositional behaviour does not seek change, although it may produce it, because it does not perceive the power it is opposing to be illegitimate (even though it is experienced as alienating).”⁸⁶ So, the author/translator/publisher of an Australian novel does not perceive it as illegitimate that they should be required to make some alterations for the easy acceptance of their text into a new cultural environment. Yet, they may produce change through their choices to retain aspects of the culturally-

⁸⁵CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 1.

⁸⁶CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 9

specific text in their original form. The rule of oppositional behaviour is to use “the characteristics of power *against* the power and *for* one’s own purposes.”⁸⁷

Oppositional behaviour then varies in degrees of “overtness”.⁸⁸ As we have seen in Chapter Three, both intratextual and extratextual translators have many options available to them and multiple ways of dealing with cultural images. The cultural specificity of the novel when it moves from its source can be overt (no change to the text, but plentiful press material to reassure readers) or subtle (rendered into a different language but containing a smattering of words retained in English). But, it will never be so overt as to move with no form of accompanying translation. De Certeau says that the “modus operandi” of oppositional behaviour is disguise.⁸⁹ As has been asserted several times within this thesis, disguise (transparency, invisibility) is clearly also the key to good translation. So, transferred and translated texts might be disguised as members of the target polysystem in order to be accepted even if they are strongly culturally-specific in their original nature. If this is not done by complete translation of the language itself, it will be achieved by extratextual smoothing of the transition (as was seen in the ‘Earls’ equals ‘Hornby plus Jones’ example).

Conclusion

This chapter has defined ways in which the relationship between author, reader and translator can be theorised. While not suggesting that all readers will interpret texts in any one fashion, I have suggested that the paratextual facets of a

⁸⁷CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 10

⁸⁸CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 8

⁸⁹CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 8.

novel, along with the influence of such things as genre, celebrity status and oppositional practices offer a series of reading positions to readers, relinquishing their theoretical freedom of interpretation. I have also suggested that translation choices may be responsible for the impressions of a culture to be held by foreign readers. Thus, translation becomes a political action, which must consider the repertoire available to new readers before making translation choices to accommodate these.

Hans Robert Jauss (in Marshall) suggests that literature can play a “socially formative” role in “the identification of aspirations, needs, and desires within society.”⁹⁰ It has the capacity to change the desires of an audience – yet its production is governed by the desires of the same group. Thus there is complex interplay of power in determining what will succeed. An oppositional tactic can be achieved by translators in this way by appearing to pander to mass desire, but indeed allowing the text to contain radical concepts. The Australian novel, in this situation, can then be disguised as something acceptable to the target polysystem (as belonging to a popular genre, for example), but be transferred without altering the cultural-specificities of the text. Its movement then gives the impression of being dictated by the population, when in fact, it is altering the public’s perception of what they will desire in future. Thus the use of genre, celebrity status and oppositional textual productions work on responding to, and creating, desire for a product.

The use of literature as a means to create desire for a cultural product is successful because of the status of literature as both “Court Poet” and “Wild Child”.⁹¹ That is, the respected status of literature makes it a legitimate site from which to push acceptable boundaries. Chambers speaks here of ‘literature’ in the high brow sense, which I have asserted earlier is a more flexible categorisation in contemporary

⁹⁰MARSHALL, P. David. 1997, 67.

⁹¹CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 4 – 6.

reading. I would argue that the youth oriented, grunge style novels analysed in this thesis provide an effective example of the combination of the above two roles. They are controversial and often feature protagonists who fit quite literally into the “Wild Child” persona, but are not unsophisticated in spite of their parochial natures. Their inclusion on academic reading lists and favourable critical reception also move them further away from the ‘trash’ fiction appellation. They can be read on the level of humorous or streetwise tales of awkward sexuality and substance abuse, or can be read for intense psychoanalytic symbolism. As very much the respected and the oppositional in one package, these novels possess a particular ability to alter the cultural repertoires of new readers.

Further to this, the culturally-specific nature of these texts necessitates some form of translation to accompany their release. As I will show in Chapters Five and Six, younger authors who are new to the literary scene, require more paratextual translation than canonical writers who have an established reputation that paves the way for each new release. It is for this reason that the blurred lines between author, implied author and character permeate public perceptions of the author; this occurs as all parties use the translational devices available to them to establish a reputation for the newcomer.

Chambers’ suggestion of the power of oppositional narrative “derives from the curious phenomenon of *authority*, whereby anyone, given the opportunity to speak, may so use words as to change situations.”(his italics)⁹² This can be applied to many speaking situations. In the case of novels, we have already seen how important it is for the reader to ascertain the author’s ‘right’ to speak about the subject matter. Once that authority is fixed and convincing (the reader is able to trust in the information at

⁹²CHAMBERS, Ross. 1991, 1.

hand because they believe that they understand its source) they may be more receptive to other messages (such as cultural information). Textual and paratextual translation practices increase the social treasury available to readers in order for them to productively activate a text. This is where the power to make changes lies. Having been convinced that they have the tools to make sense of this text because it seems to belong within their familiar polysystem and derives from an author who is trustworthy, readers may not be resistant to any change of mentality (and cross-cultural education) that may be inspired by the novel's contents.

The suggestions of this chapter are intended to be ways of theorising potential available reading positions. Neither theorist, nor translator, can truly anticipate who will be the readers of a text, and how they will respond to the work. Anne Freedman⁹³ has pointed out that "all cultures include within their range of practices strategies for interacting with other cultures." For some readers, then, they will approach the text in the knowledge that it is a translation and will draw upon their repertoire of past interactions with translations. They may anticipate flaws, or be wary of sites where an inclusion of a domesticated reference seems clumsy, amongst other ways of reading.

Further to this, Barthes is cited by Green and LeBihan⁹⁴ as providing an important reminder that the reading literature is designed to be an enjoyable activity

⁹³FREADMAN, Anne. The Culture Peddlers. In: Graham SQUIRES, ed. *Language, literature, culture: a selection of papers presented at Inter-cultural studies '98*. Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 1999, 7-26, 9.

⁹⁴GREEN Keith and Jill LEBIHAN. 1996, 26.

as much as it is to be analysed academically. They read Barthes as suggesting that reading is a

[...] subjective, transient and pleasurable activity. We do not read each part of the text with equal interest or involvement, but rather miss out bits and gloss over others. [...] if we are to suggest that readers actively make meaning, and make that activity the focus of criticism, then we must take into account the fact that reading is a much looser and more haphazard activity than at first it would seem.

It can be assumed that this then also applies to translated texts: readers will not seek to interpret every fine detail of a culturally-specific work. Thus there will always be a body of readers who are happy to 'skip over' culturally-specific terminology as long as they 'get the gist' of the story.

Thus, while this thesis cannot account for the responses of actual readers, it can suggest ways in which readers are likely to interpret texts under the virtually unavoidable influence of many translation practices. Chapters Five and Six will demonstrate the cases of Nick Earls and Nikki Gemmell, whose texts have been released with considerable promotional accompaniment. These cases show evidence of use of the author's background as an interpretative tool, the importance of the celebrity function and genre on the interpretation of texts and the ambassadorial and oppositional potential of Australian texts on international release.

Chapter Five

“Brisbane’s favourite son”¹

The transfer and translation of Nick Earls’ *Zigzag Street*.

Chapter Five will provide practical application of the issues discussed in Chapters One to Four. Here we will see the work of Nick Earls analysed in terms of its cultural-specificity and the ways in which it has been translated for readerships away from its source culture of Brisbane. This chapter will show examples of what makes a text culturally-specific, types of translation and types of translators involved in the text’s movement, using *Zigzag Street* as the primary example, but supporting this with Earls’ other works and brief examples from additional authors. It will also demonstrate the use of the author as a translation tool, the role of the media and the potential within the process for oppositional activity. Overall, this chapter will begin the movement towards a conclusion that proves the relativity of absolute reader freedom and shows that translators establish a variety of reading positions for readers.

Introduction

Chapter Four asserted that the reader ‘realises’ the text: that is, that the text is imbued with potential meaning, but this will be modified when acted upon by a reader. The reader will interpret the text according to the repertoire of sense-making images available to him/her including education, personal history and so on. This chapter will show that translation devices significantly enhance this repertoire. As no text is received

¹McCOLL, Mary Rose. View from the Verandah. Brisbane Writers Festival, 1998.

in a vacuum, the various types of translation that accompany the publication of a text contribute significantly to the reader's ability to make sense of the text.

Translation has been defined in this thesis as the act of making a text comprehensible for a culture other than the one in which it was produced². We will see evidence in this chapter of the author, the cover design, the press and other aspects of publication being used as translation tools. The reading positions established by translation affect a reader's comprehension of the story as well as of the text's source culture. It is difficult to imagine a reader who has access to a text without some form of peritextual or epitextual translation to assist with their perception of meaning. These forms of translation actually work to limit possible meanings by imposing a framework of interpretation on the novel and enabling readers to find ways in which to make sense of culturally-specific elements of the text. They also offer opportunities for novels to be oppositional in that translation acts as a disguise to allow the book to enter the foreign polysystem where it may act on the system to change it (or to change perceptions/stereotypes of the source culture.)

To investigate these processes, this chapter will scrutinise the movement of *Zigzag Street*, and its author Nick Earls, away from the Brisbane source towards other English-speaking communities. I will perform close analysis of the release of Earls' work in the United Kingdom as a case study of the movement between communities that ostensibly share a standard language. I will also look at the movement of the text towards other regions of Australia and, briefly, its English release in India and the United

² As stated elsewhere, the feasibility of this definition hangs on a necessity to identify cultural borders, which I have said is not desirable. Yet, the transfer process of texts, as shown in Chapters Five and Six, indicates that publishers, readers and translators are constantly making use of such borders. Further analysis of this matter of border definition will be outlined in the conclusion to this thesis.

States. The types of translations needed vary according to the distance of the text's movement from the source culture, though this distance is not necessarily linear. Translation can reveal cultural overlaps, those things assumed to be comprehensible between cultures and those that are not standard, even in a situation involving a shared standard language.

This chapter commences with background information about the reading culture in place in the United Kingdom, and ways in which that effects the movement of Australian literature into the recipient literary polysystem. Genette's categories of text will then be utilised to examine the process of transfer and translation of Australian novels towards English-speaking environments.

1. Australian texts in the United Kingdom

The explosion in popularity of Australian artistic endeavours in the United Kingdom from the 1970s onward has been optimistically described as “the Australian colonisation of the ‘old country’”.³ However, in 1988, Peter Quartermaine described the British image of Australia as a “land of time-weathered clichés”.⁴ He suggested that, in spite of the regular success of Australia's artists, novelists and other public figures in Britain, Australia itself exists, in the British imagination, in a “subliminal fashion” with little real understanding beyond the stereotypes and those things which have equivalents in Britain. Much has been written over the years about the Australian – British

³SLATTERY, Luke. Post cringe whinge. *Weekend Australian*. March 11-12 2000, Review 11.

⁴QUATERMAINE, Peter. British perceptions of Australian arts in the postwar decades. In: Tony DELAMOTHE and Carl BRIDGE, eds. *Interpreting Australia: British perception of Australian since 1770*. London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1988, 83

relationship, and the extensive historical and cultural relations between the two do not need to be analysed again here. In 2000 and beyond, it can be assumed that on a real level the British public can distinguish between gross manifestations of stereotype and lived experience when approaching interaction with other cultures. However, the quotations above (and the evidence of this thesis) reveal that Australian artistic outputs are still retained in a peripheral position in the United Kingdom polysystem, and the paratextual framework surrounding literary releases continues to make use of hackneyed images of the nation.

The surge in popularity of Australian film and television in the United Kingdom since the 1980s has without a doubt increased familiarity of the British public with certain contemporary images of Australia. This type of familiarity does decrease the belief in classic stereotypes, but simultaneously offers a false belief in the ability to deeply understand a culture after exposure to a small number of texts. Of course, there are many similarities between British and Australian lifestyles – as is the case between most Western nations – and our colonial links strengthen coincidences in our approaches to humour, for example, or the trappings required for our desired basic quality of life. However, to assume equivalence is to overlook significant cultural differences and, in the case of a text like *Zigzag Street*, to ignore the efforts made to display the individual characteristics of a city like Brisbane.

When London's *Evening Standard* suggested that *Zigzag Street* was “embellished with comfortable cultural references [...] which give the book an irresistibly intimate tone”⁵ it suggested a lack of difference between the cultures. This conflation of the two

⁵COOPER, Tim. Q. What do you get when you cross Bridget Jones with Nick Hornby? A. The man on the right. *Evening Standard*. 2 March, 1998, 26.

cultural spaces is, in itself, a translation. It suggests that readers make sense of this text by assuming that it is not indeed foreign. Thus readers are given a voice of authority (the press) that tells them to believe in their ability to interpret the novel. This is one example of a reading position established by translation: the reader is positioned as not being foreign to the experiences of the protagonist. The reading culture formulated by 'translators' in the United Kingdom generally encourages two possible reading positions: viewing the text as exotic or stereotypical, or viewing the text as part of an extension of the British literary polysystem. Each of these positions comes with positive and negative repercussions, which will be expanded later.

2. Paratextual effect: wider community understanding as translation

Moving away from things directly linked to the text, a number of other translation positions exist in the wider community. There is clearly a maze of factors that contribute to the movement of images of culture between polysystems. However, we rarely position these things in terms of translation. Any reader's understanding of the cultural context of a novel is affected by their lifetime of education about facets of the text; that is, social issues, cultural mores, conditions of production of texts. An international reader's personal travel experiences or the travel tales of others will be included in their interpretative repertoire when reading an Australian text.

Amongst the many media and travel related projects that exist between countries, there are also a number of government funded initiatives to create noise about Australia's industry and lifestyle. Funding bodies, such as the Australia Council, have been dealt

with earlier in this thesis, and clearly play a role in the ways in which texts come to represent their source cultures. London also hosted ‘Australia Week’ in July 2000 featuring a ‘Thanksgiving Service’ at Westminster Abbey, a special sitting at the House of Commons and a vast and varied program of arts and entertainment with an Australian flavour. Though the event ultimately received very little press coverage in the United Kingdom, it could be viewed as an opportunity for ‘translation’ of Australianness: to increase the repertoire of available images of Australia held by potential readers/viewers of Australian texts.

Institutions like Australia House (Australia’s London Embassy) and The Commonwealth Institute and accompanying Commonwealth Resource Centre maintain a constant program of events related to all Commonwealth nations. Again, this can be seen as positive in terms of opportunities for Australian work to reach foreign audiences. Conversely, the grouping together of the diverse nations of the ‘Commonwealth’ in this way may actually distance the lived experiences of these populations from that of United Kingdom readers. It depicts Westernised nations, such as white Australia, in the same framework as countries with diverse lifestyles and social arenas – potentially positioning them all as exotic ‘others’ to the central British systems.

These events and projects possess an ‘epitextual function’ in informing the wider repertoire of readers before they approach a culturally-specific text. Likewise, readers will be mindful of general media images of the culture featured in the text. They may have an awareness of the film or television outputs of the country, or have read many other similar novels which have added to their repertoire of available images. Contact with Australian popular music and television programs is particularly important in the

United Kingdom situation in that the main audience for youth-oriented soap operas or pop music, for example, is likely to be of a similar age to target readers of a text like *Zigzag Street*. Familiarity with the wider cultural products of a culture increases the level of comfort and resonance available to readers.

The variable nature of readers' familiarity with culture ensures that each reading of a text is completely individual. At the same time, however, the epitext contains guides to comprehension of a culturally-specific novel put in place by the author, publisher or media, along with the translation work of bookstores and educational institutions, which work directly on educating readers about ways in which texts 'should' be read. I will complete this section's discussion of translators within the United Kingdom polysystem by broad examination of the ways in which education, the media, publishers and familiarity with genre work to translate Australian texts in the United Kingdom, before moving onto close analysis of Earls' transfer.

2.1 Education as translation

It is increasingly common to see Australian literature being offered in international universities. These courses provide the opportunity for analysis of Australian texts and for the provision of a detailed cultural context to accompany a student's reading of a novel. The BA (Australian Studies) at the University of Wales, the electives 'Home or Away? An Introduction to Twentieth Century Australian Literature' and 'Prisoners of Childhood: Contemporary Australian Autobiography' within the BA (English) at University College Dublin, and the MA in Area Studies (Australia) at the Sir

Robert Menzies Centre for Australia Studies, King's College, London, were analysed for this project.

On the whole, these courses tend not to venture further than the canon: Patrick White, Peter Carey, Les Murray, Katherine Susannah Pritchard and Miles Franklin, for example. Only the University College Dublin included Andrew McGahan's *1988* on the reading list. This preference for the canon can be seen as a way to preserve a perceived standard of literature worthy of university study and a way to ensure easy availability of the texts for students. Unlike Australian degrees in literature, foreign students may also have only one semester unit to analyse the entire history of Australian literature, so period works may be useful for a general analysis of Australia's past. Furthermore, theoretical studies of the canonical works are often more easily accessible, or affordable, than newer academic texts. In terms of Aboriginal literature, Mudrooroo (whose Aboriginality has been queried in Australia) was the primary source of 'authentic' Indigenous text. Sally Morgan's *My Place* was the only other Aboriginal work being taught (again at University College Dublin), raising questions (as alluded to in Chapter Three) about the repercussions of only a small number of easily accessible Aboriginal works being available to international readerships (there is a risk that these texts will erroneously be seen as representative of all Aboriginal experiences). Limiting studies to the canon also may encourage a view of Australia as incapable of producing some of the contemporary genres of literature produced elsewhere.

A limited survey of the opinions of students was conducted in Wales (by personal interview)⁶ and Dublin (via accessing course feedback forms).⁷ These anecdotes proved

⁶Interviews conducted under the supervision of Dr Andrew Hassam. University of Wales, Lampeter, 19 March 1999.

the strength of literature courses as sources of cultural translation. The Welsh students revealed that their study of Australian literature had encouraged them to keep up with Australian current affairs. They are privileged with access to the ABC news at the university, along with a very current collection of academic and popular journals. They were familiar with Australian television, very aware of slang terminology and many either had travelled or wanted to travel to Australia – proving the ambassadorial role of literature as a cultural product. Most agreed that they had known little about Australian literature prior to commencing the course.

Similar results could be found in the Dublin feedback sheets. Responding to the question: “What do you feel you have learned from this course?” Students made such comments as:

“Considering that I previously knew nothing about Australia besides *Neighbours* and *A Country Practice* and now have a real interest in Australian literature.” (sic)

“I’ve learnt that there is far more to Australian literature than I expected.”

“gained a knowledge that all the classics are not from the nations on our main course” (ie Britain, Europe and America)

“*1988* was an eye opener because it is very different to the other texts on the 3rd year course in general”.

An argument can clearly be made for the power of education as a translation tool and a way of enhancing readers’ cultural repertoires. This level of education is, however, not available (or desirable) to everyone, so similar types of education/translation remain the domain of more public points of textual access – such as bookstores and the media.

⁷Feedback forms for Bachelor of Arts subjects at University College Dublin supplied by Dr Catherine Pratt, February 2000.

2.2 Publishing and the media as translation

The British literary polysystem has a solid centre of local works from which to draw. With a long literary history, responsibility for establishing a canon that is respected and familiar throughout the world and a vibrant contemporary industry, it is not surprising to read that, statistically, British people are not avid readers of translated works. “There is, in Britain, a deep running river of hostility towards anything that comes from another language [...] or – just a lack of curiosity,” says Christopher Macle hose (Chairman of publisher The Harvill Press).⁸ Andrew Field has further posited that “there’s an exceptional insularity about English-speaking people no matter where they are.”⁹ Works in translation (in the strict sense of the word) account for only 3 percent of titles published in the United Kingdom.¹⁰ There are occasional best-selling translated works, which succeed due to a global interest inspired by literary awards, film rights or a high author profile, but there remains a general resistance to titles that are not set in familiar terrain. The only exception might be mainstream American works – which require little translation due to the abundance of images continually available to residents of other cultures. “We can all talk their talk, after hours of TV and movie watching” says

⁸WAGNER, Erica. A Healthy nation should rejoice in translation. *Times*. April 23, 1998. URL: www.the-times.co.uk (7 Aug 1998).

⁹FIELD, Andrew. Translation? No, wait for the movie. *Courier Mail*. 12 July 1997, Weekend 8.

¹⁰WAGNER, Erica. 1998.

British critic Helen Hawkins in an article about why English comedians need to change their routines to travel while American ones do not.¹¹ A certain elitism also still exists as concerns the British and Australian polysystems, often evidenced in the anecdotal tales of authors. Peter Carey recounts a tale of arriving in London and speaking with a taxi driver: “You over here for the culture?” “Actually, I’m exporting some,” replied Carey confidently. “Oh, *Neighbours*?” said the driver.¹²

Like American texts, Australian novels are assumed not to require translation – and they usually are not translated in the traditional sense when they move to the United Kingdom. (Chapter Six will show cases in which this has occurred.) The movement towards the United States, by contrast, often requires translation due to what is clearly a far greater perceived resistance on the part of American readers to engage with foreign texts. However, the fact that Australian slang and national mythology is not as familiar to United Kingdom readerships as are the American vernaculars, for example, means that they are not as easily digestible as other foreign works in English. Hence, authors, publishers and others continue to take on the role of translator to ensure smooth passage of Australian texts into the British polysystem. Ben Ball¹³ says

While Australia realises it no longer need defer to any country to approve of its creative output, we’ve also realised that we do need to convince people to buy it. Australian authors want to be part of the global market, and Australia, as a literature-producing nation, is calling for British attention.

This attention is achieved through the media.

Australian producers of texts are working hard to be noticed and accepted in the British polysystem, yet where there was once a desire for the exotic, there is now a

¹¹HAWKINS, Helen. Foreign comics have their cultural baggage to declare. *Weekend Australian*. 11-12 April 1998, 9.

¹²WYNDHAM, Susan. An unusual life. *Australian Magazine*. Aug 20 – 21 1994, 42-46, 48.

negative side to the retention of culturally-specific references. Ben Ball¹⁴ says:

Australian publishers are constantly having books turned down as ‘too Australian’ for the British market. For those works that are published in Britain, Australianness – of both subject and style – is something to be overcome rather than capitalised on.

Zigzag Street has, of course, been successful in the United Kingdom market. Publishers are reluctant to part with sales figures, but press commentary seems to attest to the book’s popularity: “When *Zigzag Street* was published Australia went mad, then we did.”¹⁵ So, it can be assumed that the highly culturally-specific nature of the novel has been disguised in some way for the foreign market in order for it to perform so well. This chapter will analyse that disguise later.

The paradox at work here follows the reading positions cited earlier in this chapter: with texts needing to be exotic or not foreign at all to succeed in the British polysystem, though Ball’s commentary above suggests that exoticisation is no longer a favoured option. Curiously, the only authors permitted (by the press and publishers) to be obvious in their connection to Australia are canonical texts – which frequently do not depict Australian life in their narratives. It could be argued that Australian authors need to be costumed as comparable to British writers to attain entry into the foreign polysystem, but once established there (or having gained respectability of some kind)

¹³BALL, Ben. They like our wines and our soaps so why not our books? *Sydney Morning Herald*. 30 June, 2000. URL: www.smh.com.au/news/0006/30/features/features2.html (12 Oct 2000).

¹⁴BALL, Ben. 2000.

¹⁵ALLISON, Richard. Interview with Nick Earls. Radio BBC2. London, 9 March 1999.

they will be called upon as spokespeople for Australian national identity. Earls, as a non-canonical author is rarely asked in United Kingdom interviews to speak about Australia, whereas David Malouf, for example, who no longer lives in Australia is regularly summoned for that purpose. To put the British treatment of Earls into context, I surveyed a range of press promotions of other Australian authors. The archive of clippings surveyed (held at the Commonwealth Institute, London) covered the United Kingdom release of texts from 1993 onwards, and was principally drawn from the *Times Literary Supplement*. I found no articles within this particular collection about the younger authors examined in this thesis, with the emphasis being on canonical works.

Throughout the articles examined, canonical authors like Malouf and Carey – whose work is rarely set in contemporary Australia – are without exception required to speak about Australian identity in the British press. In all interviews sighted, these two authors in particular were asked to speak extensively about notions of exile, homelessness, convict history and so forth. Thus, the most internationally reputable faces of Australian culture are in essence only perpetuating the same stereotypes. Their work is highly respected – and therefore their opinions are respected. While Earls is said to have been born in Northern Ireland – and thus partially reclaimed as British – Malouf, who rarely spends time in Australia with Italy as his home base, is asked to provide definitive answers on the current state of Australian life. His work discusses bush life, convict history and Anglo-Australian pre-federation relations so is seen as more authentically Australian than something like *Zigzag Street*, which deals with

contemporary issues. In spite of a long list of world standard awards, one interview suggests that: “Malouf is still perhaps known here more as a Great Australian Writer, rather than a Great Writer full stop.”¹⁶ This is interesting as Earls is not encouraged to portray himself as an Australian writer. Malouf, in this article, wishes not to be “pigeonholed” as another “Australian identity novelist” – as it seems clear that British readers have access almost exclusively to this type of Australian text. Also popular are works by Nicholas Jose, Tim Winton and Les Murray – all of whom consciously set up their texts in this way. Australianness, it seems, is valid in a text as long as it is dealing with traditional identity formation and Anglo-Indigenous race relations.

Elizabeth Jolley sets most of her novels in contemporary Australia. Revealing the domesticating approach, the British press suggests that they contain “echoes from England, and from Europe too.” While her English heritage is prioritised (she moved to Australia in her thirties), it is “as an Australian writer that she is ranked and esteemed.”¹⁷ Thus even the most respected of Australian writers are positioned as outsiders to the British polysystem. They are ‘ranked’ within a separate set of criteria applicable only to Australian writers, rather than writers in general, suggesting a lower standard of work than similar writers in the United Kingdom, in spite of their extensive accolades. This is perhaps the motivation behind the publisher’s decision not to have *Zigzag Street* ‘ranked’ as an Australian novel (as I will demonstrate later). While Earls’ heritage is mentioned in United Kingdom interviews, the genre in which he writes far outweighs his nationality as a way for readers to define his work, and his press, promotion and cover designs in the United Kingdom have been tailored specifically to address the genre in question.

¹⁶DALLEY, Jane. Books. *Independent on Sunday*. 4 April 1996, 26.

¹⁷BINDING, Paul. Salvation among the kindly riff-raff. *Times Literary Supplement*. 3 Oct 1997, 22.

2.3 Genre as translation

The importance of genre in terms of comprehension was discussed in Chapter Four and will be reprised here with more specific attention to the cases of Earls and his contemporaries. Genre is one of the first ways in which readers decide whether a text fits with their habitual reading tastes. It governs the type of cover design and marketing deployed by the publisher along with the positioning of the text within a book store. Importantly, in terms of translation, it can be used to convince a reading community that the book is comprehensible to them. That is, if a culturally-specific text is made to appear similar to texts familiar to the reader and keeps within the general conventions of its genre, the reader will assume that it is not outside of their sphere of comprehension. Thus, a detective novel set in an exotic clime filled with localised slang, for example, will be perceived as comprehensible because the reader will know what to expect from the storyline. The ‘detective’ involved is frequently at least partly based on familiar stock characters and the novel will conclude satisfactorily if it complies with the genre. The reader will still have a range of options here with respect to culturally specific terminology in that he/she may seek out interpretation of the unfamiliar terms or locations, but the option of simply disregarding foreign terms will be increasingly possible if they are reading a familiar storyline. There will be an assumption that the text is comprehensible because it is ‘just like’ other familiar texts and therefore not viewed as incomprehensibly foreign. In this way, readers may erroneously judge cultural references in accordance with elements of their own culture.

In the case of the youth-oriented novels discussed in this thesis, the notion of genre is extremely important. Tsiolkas’ *Loaded* and McGahan’s *1988* were immediately

associated with the term ‘grunge’ upon their release. Fortunately for them, this made their texts desirable to a youth market, but also interesting to academics, librarians or others who analyse social phenomena. Such works are also appealing to filmmakers who quickly snapped up options of the work of both authors (as well as *Zigzag Street*), thus widening their appeal base. Importantly, the grunge movement was widespread in the Western world meaning that Australian grunge literature held an interest for a wider international audience, in spite of the distinctly Australian situations, problems, slang and other localised aspects employed in these texts. Other titles, such as Luke Davies’ *Candy* and Justine Ettler’s *The River Ophelia*, have likewise been well received internationally based on their belonging to this genre. Such things as press coverage, interviews and cover design, indicate the text’s connection with a genre. Luke Davies’ *Candy* provides an interesting example of genre over content in the movement from its Sydney home to the United Kingdom.

Candy (the name of the protagonist and a slang word for heroin) is a novel about a couple’s relationship with each other and with drug addiction. It was released in Australia featuring a muted blue and purple image of a man and woman reaching for each other (see Illustration 2). Their veins are prominent and below the author’s name and the title are the words “...there is only heroin, there is only Candy, the three of us adrift on the endless sea of love.” It was well-received in Australia as a confronting but literary contribution to Australia’s youthful, contemporary catalogue. Its association with ‘grunge’ – like the work of McGahan and Tsiolkas – was made by the press after the phenomenon had taken hold. In the United Kingdom, by contrast, *Candy* is sold as a grunge text without doubt. This risks relegating the work to the status of ‘genre’ or

Illustration 2: Australian cover design of Luke Davies' *Candy*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Illustration 3: United Kingdom cover design of *Candy*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

‘popular’ fiction, which is very different to the more literary or sociological face given to the text by marketing approaches in Australia.

The United Kingdom cover of *Candy* features a young, thin girl preparing to inject herself (see Illustration 3). Her legs are apart and her underwear is visible: her bright red lipstick stands out though the image itself is blurred. She sits among cushions covered in animal print against a stained, grey wall. Between the title and the author name the cover reads (in capital letters): THERE IS ONLY HEROIN, THERE IS ONLY CANDY...BEFORE YOU REALISE YOU HAVE NO BRAKES, YOU’RE GOING PRETTY FUCKING FAST. The multi-coloured capital letters used for this blur the distinction between Candy the character and candy the drug (by removing the capital letter associated with a name). They also liken the text to the work of authors such as Irvine Welsh, which are known for the use of psychedelic covers (imitating the drug use within). The use of ‘fuck’ on the cover is rare – even for grunge texts. This limits display options of the text in certain bookstores and makes the book appear more obviously ‘hard core’ than does the Australian cover. There is nothing made of the Australian setting of this novel despite its location in Sydney and Melbourne, and the usual smattering of culturally-specific terminology. Alison Potter’s UK review of *Candy*, in *This Is London*¹⁸, states that:

The skinny blonde girl about to shoot up on the cover leaves one in no doubt about the subject of Candy [...] this is a shame, as the book is not another “I survived heroin autobiography”. It gives the impression that the publishers are trying to market the book as an Australian *Trainspotting*, which is to miss the central point of the novel.

¹⁸POTTER, Alison. Review. 27 April 1998. URL: www.thisislondon.co.uk/dynamic/lifestyle/books/top_article.html?in_review_id=42431&in_review_text_id=32230 (10 May 1998).

Unlike many Australian novels in the past, which were flagged as Australian for the sake of exoticism, these youth oriented works reveal a trend for the assimilation of Australian novels directly into a genre and sales are made on that basis. Therefore, any slang that may pose a problem for the reader can be dismissed on the basis that the reader will engage with the genre and possibly ignore what is not immediately understood. Welsh's *Trainspotting* experienced the same process – being written in strong Scottish vernacular. The young reader's ability to connect with the genre and to relate to the youth culture as displayed in the text (drug or club culture, for example) allows them to move past incomprehensible cultural notions. Interestingly, the American cover of *Candy* seems to combine both approaches – it features the hackneyed lime green cover associated with Welsh et al, with an image of tarnished spoons (a more abstract symbol of drug use). The cover blurb cites a review featured on the back cover of the Australian edition saying that text is “compassionate and knowingly observed” – which places it back in the realm of more serious literature.

Likewise, *Zigzag Street* is included in the popular ‘confused twenty/thirty something’ genre popularised by Nick Hornby and Helen Fielding along with television programs such as *Friends*, *Seinfeld* and *This Life*. This genre seems to have appeared just post-grunge, telling a tale of similarly dysfunctional people, but in slightly less drug-reliant circumstances. Earls has been associated with grunge in Australia, though the middle-class values espoused by his characters caused him to comment that he prefers the label of ‘untidy realism’ as opposed to the ‘dirty realism’ of the grunge set¹⁹. These are

¹⁹ EARLS, Nick. Master of Untidy Realism. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 28 March 1998, Spectrum 9.

tales of urban professionals dealing with the more mundane aspects of life in the 90s who have minor problems with alcohol and smoking, unsuccessful though not unsafe sexual adventures and a considerable amount of introspection. The appeal of this genre can be found in the notion that “reading this book is like chatting to a mate in a coffee lounge”.²⁰ The texts are seen as depicting a “very modern, very familiar, very human set of people doing very ordinary things: getting drunk, getting pregnant, having affairs, having dinner parties and shopping at Ikea.”²¹ Readers seek familiarity in these texts and seek reassurance for their own peccadilloes. They are seen by the press in both Australia and the United Kingdom as celebrations of the facade of success and validate the pressures involved in seeking a partner, dealing with the daily grind of work, maintaining body confidence, keeping up with the Joneses and other middle-class concerns. Ironically, in an early review of Earls’ work, one critic said that “most of the stories are blind to the possibility that the self-absorption of the young middle-class male may not be a universally riveting spectacle.”²² It has proved itself to be a brand of contemporary realism that is highly desirable to readers or viewers of the age of the protagonists – and still popular with other age groups.

Given the international popularity of the texts, it is assumed that this awkward, ‘battle of the sexes’ style humour travels easily and that these books will be immediately comprehensible to readers away from the source culture. I will analyse here the ways in which press from the United Kingdom appears to have interpreted Earls’ work – which gives some insight into the reading positions established for readers from that area.

²⁰McCROSSIN, Julie. Here comes the big change. *Courier Mail*. 8 April 2000, Weekend 7.

²¹TURNER, Geoff. Control Freak. *Sunday Mail*. 21 Nov 1999, 34.

²²KENEALLY, Catherine. You are young and you are self-absorbed. *Australian Book Review*. 145, 1992, 27.

Similar processes are at work where British books are released in Australia: a *Sunday Mail* review of British author Mike Gayle (who has been compared to Earls) uses *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* author John Gray to affect the same types of comparative translation. “John Gray...may have made a squillion from his turgid tomes, but that doesn’t make them easy to read. You’ll have no trouble reading this amusing romance.”²³ As stated in Chapter Four, popular fiction monitors the tastes and desires of its audiences. The popularity of both grunge and the ‘twenty/thirty something angst’ genres can be read in this way. They reflect these contemporary identities, and simultaneously reinforce them. In terms of culture, the mundane, day to day experiences reflected in these texts provide intricate detail of cultural specificity. Grunge and the later contemporary realist texts, reveal that slang, popular culture, brand names, idiomatic expressions and intertextuality are the stuff of belonging to a cultural grouping. The global popularity of many icons of youth culture implies that, like genre, there is little cultural difference between texts from diverse origins.

The similarities between the various examples of the genre from different cultures mean that international readers can find a certain appeal in any text. There is an assumption that the text does not require translation because it is ‘just like’ similar examples in the new polysystem. For this reason, there is a great risk of elision of culturally-specific terminology which may just be ignored by readers. At the same time, there is a great possibility for oppositional behaviour in terms of overturning stereotypes. The acceptance of the text as similar to the home product proves that the stereotypical impression of the source culture’s literature is erroneous while also offering a

²³TURNER, Geoff. 1999, 34.

representation more in tune with contemporary readers of the source culture. Dressed as that popular genre, a foreign novel is welcomed into a more central position in the polysystem than it might attain if it were flagged as foreign.

Having examined the reading culture and state of the polysystem in the United Kingdom, I will now examine the specificities of the transfer of *Zigzag Street* away from its Brisbane home. Section Three will commence with a summary of reasons why *Zigzag Street* ‘belongs’ in Brisbane and Section Four will look at ways in which the text’s values have been altered/translated to accommodate other readers of English.

3. Cultural-specificity/Australianness in *Zigzag Street*

3.1 Language and myth

Zigzag Street, as with others of Earls’ works, makes extensive use of Australian idiom. It uses slang, brand names and various icons and identity myths of Australian culture to textually create a Brisbane that local readers can relate to and outside readers can find appealing. As has been stated regularly throughout this thesis, other readers will understand the novel in many different ways, but for Brisbane readers, *Zigzag Street* provides a rare glimpse of their city as a workable backdrop for a contemporary novel without jingoistic celebration or patronisation. Earls²⁴ has said,

There was a time when I, like a lot of other people didn’t appreciate Brisbane. It took me a while to work out that in terms of fiction Brisbane has a lot to offer. It’s a great place to live, it has the colour and the characters and it’s really coming into its own as a literary place to live. I love it here and I think that comes through in *Zigzag Street*.

²⁴WHITING, Frances. Fact makes great fiction. *Sunday Mail*. 8 Sep 1996, 21.

To authentically create the Brisbane in which Earls and his characters were living, the author made no attempt to intratextually translate facets of Brisbane life in the way that can be seen in many texts or films made with an international market in mind. For example, when the Australian film *The Castle*²⁵ was released in the United States, certain colloquialisms had to be dubbed for a new audience. The second film by the creative team, *Working Dog*, *The Dish*²⁶, featured an American character amongst the leads. This inclusion meant that any slang term was actually translated by the characters for the American character – in this way also translating the terms for potential foreign audiences. This type of translation within the text is common in Australian pieces that are created with the potential for international release; Australianisms are either avoided altogether or translated in some way within the narrative. Tsiolkas' *Loaded* does this with its extensive descriptions of parts of the city – not just describing the environment, but what the environment means to the people around it. See for example, page 41: “I detest the East...the whitest part of my city, where you’ll see the authentic white Australian, is in the eastern suburbs. A backdrop of Seven Elevens, shopping malls, gigantic parking lots.” *1988* also does this to some extent – as its lead characters learn about culture, so does the reader. *Zigzag Street* is different in that it does not attempt to educate.

The narrative voice in *Zigzag Street* assumes familiarity with landmarks and terminology – as if he were speaking to a friend who would know exactly what was meant by the sites, words and images. *Zigzag Street* reflects the target audience’s ways of seeing itself and the city. It cannot be assumed that all Brisbane residents live in Earls’

²⁵ *The Castle*. Directed by Rob SITCH. Working Dog Productions, 1997.

²⁶ *The Dish*. Directed by Rob SITCH. Working Dog Productions. 2000.

Brisbane (this is aimed at readers of a certain age group and class status) but, given the broad range of favourable response to the novel in Brisbane, Earls has represented a large number of Brisbane residents in some way.

Earls' work is detailed and specific in its use of icons and idioms. Brand names, for example, are a facet of commercial modern life which unite members of a community. When Earls chooses to specify the eating of an 'Ice Graffiti Icy Pole' rather than just any ice cream or the reading of the *Sunday Mail* rather than any newspaper, he makes a statement about the culture in which the characters live. This establishes a favourable reading position for Brisbane locals and potentially alienates readers from elsewhere, or exoticises the narrative. Outside readers may still be able to grasp that the *Sunday Mail* is a newspaper, but a local reader will picture exactly which paper Earls is referring to. Earls avoids longer explanatory sentences to accompany his use of such terms; explaining the packaging and texture of the ice block, for example, is a translation method sometimes employed by novelists who expect their work to move to a foreign audience.

Large sections of soul-searching introspections by Earls' characters are based on icons of popular culture such as 'the Solo man' (from a popular soft-drink advertising campaign). Such icons locate the text in a particular time and place and buy into the traditional conceptions of masculinity as discussed in Chapter Two. Other facets of the characters' lives, such as a relaxed attitude to work, allude to other the stereotypical Australian myths of identity. These things represent ways of living, ways of dealing with everyday life, which exemplify the subtle nuances of a cultural community. These

are the things that theoretically may limit the potential movement of the text, at the same time as the source community celebrates them.

3.2 Author as local identity

The cultural specificity of Earls' novels is enhanced by the elevation of the author to the status of 'local hero'. This increases his readership locally and is a facet of the author function that cannot be repeated elsewhere, in spite of the superficial similarities in his press coverage around Australia and in English-speaking communities. It is worth detailing Earls' rise to celebrity status in his hometown.

Nick Earls had been making small forays into the literary world since the 1980s with his first serious published poems and short stories beginning to appear in 1992. At that time, a collection of short stories, *Passion*, became his first book though it was not well-received by critics and sold a respectable but not overwhelming 900 copies. 1994 brought a novel for young adults titled *After January* and it was here that Earls began building a reputation as a 'Brisbane writer' by setting his tales in familiar locales and making use of local icons. *After January* is the story of a teenager who has just finished his final year of school and is spending the summer holidays in Caloundra, north of Brisbane, waiting for the offers of university placement to appear in the *Courier Mail* (Brisbane's major newspaper). He includes the use of popular music and films befitting a teenage boy and does not shy from use of local slang. Unlike other teen authors, such as John Marsden however, Earls maintains realism within his work that does not require extreme vulgarities or graphic sexual scenes to intrigue a teen reader. For this reason,

many see his young adult books as parent and librarian-friendly reading for teenagers which is still not dull or fanciful.²⁷ This is often seen as an ideal for the teenage market. At this early stage, the public face of Nick Earls was likeable, humorous and faithful to the local setting – at a time when most Queensland writers were still fleeing to Sydney and Melbourne to establish their careers.

Having established a place for himself in the Brisbane literary arena in this way, Earls was privileged with a very public launch of *Zigzag Street* at the Brisbane Writers Festival in 1995. The launch was held in Red Hill – at a venue minutes from *Zigzag Street* itself. The author pleased the locals by reading passages from his new work that showcased the Brisbane suburb. Word of mouth ensured an initial ‘buzz’ about the novel, which quickly became a ‘cult favourite’ for Brisbane readers.

The Brisbane setting soon became an important selling point for the novel, with bookstore owners emphasising the Brisbane backdrop at the point of sale. The press too used this feature in promotion. “*Zigzag Street* is a delightful read, and for Brisbanites a familiar one.”²⁸ A small number of novels had been set in Brisbane before, David Malouf’s *Johnno* being the most well-known, but they had never spoken of Brisbane as favourably as did Earls. Local readers expressed absolute resonance with Earls’ Brisbane and, because the book was well-written, there was no ‘cringe’ invoked about the author’s

²⁷ See for example Earls’ comments on this topic in EARLS, Nick. *Shades of success*. *Courier Mail*. 19 Aug 2000, Books 6.

²⁸ JOHNSON-WOODS, Toni. *Life’s Little Ironies*. *Review*. Feb 98, 10.

Brisbane background (as was the case with many earlier Brisbane writers). The press celebrated the literary nature of the text as well as its humour:

Slick, clever dialogue...literary fiction for the hip young thing with a sense of humour.²⁹

Wise, graceful, but above all and beyond all very, very funny, *Zigzag Street* is a distinct pleasure.³⁰

Earls' profile in Brisbane escalated as press coverage increased and his schedule of public appearances gained momentum. Earls gained a reputation for animated public readings of his work through various bookstore appearances and the 'Writers Festival' circuit. The inclusion of an email address inside the cover of *Zigzag Street* "turned Earls into something of an agony uncle, attracting vanloads of fan mail from all the other Richard Derringtons who read it – and the women who live with them."³¹

Through the use of a story common to many people (the break up of a relationship) and the connection of the work to the trend of 'young man in crisis' texts and films that were appearing simultaneously, Earls built a solid local fan base. The novel made use of, and was compared to, *Seinfeld* or *Friends*-style humour. But this was a tale of Brisbane, not New York, and the locals loved it. "I wanted to get Brisbane right, but my kind of Brisbane" Earls said.³² The subject matter is:

[...] dealt with deftly by Earls who seems to have created his own Brisbane-based genre [...] like McGahan and Armano he has also embraced his own locale, without recourse to exotic foreign places for special effects. No, this is the Brisbane we all love (most of the time) and there are recognisable places and activities which centre the novel here, in our town.³³

The streets are the stars of Nick's books...³⁴

²⁹SIBREE, Bron. Slick pursuit of ultimate irony. *Courier Mail*. 28 Sep 1996, Weekend 7.

³⁰JAMES, Frederick. Zig-Zag Street. (sic) *Review*. Sep 1996, 19.

³¹COOPER, Tim. 1998, 26.

³²EARLS, Nick. Guest lecture. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology, 27 March 1998.

³³BROWN, Phil. Inprint. *Brisbane News*. 18-24 March 1998, 16.

³⁴McGOWAN, Tracey. Interview with Nick Earls. *Today Tonight*. TV, Channel 7. 8 Oct 1999.

Other Brisbane authors, like McGahan and Venero Armanno are similarly made to work by the press as ambassadors for their home town, though this is registered most strongly in the home town itself. Their texts are also set in Brisbane, but are less tied to the city itself for culturally-specificities. McGahan's work fits more easily into wider Australian grunge and identity fiction categories, while Armanno's work (like Tsiolkas') consciously details migrant life in Australia, therefore containing a larger amount of intratextual translation.

While some mentions had been made in earlier press about Earls' former career as a doctor, the release of a 'medical romance', *Bachelor Kisses*, meant that this detail of Earls' life became important to promoting all of his texts. "Doctor's novel a great success"³⁵ read the headlines and reviews were filled with twee medical puns. The promotion of Earls' former career served a number of purposes: firstly, it secured in the minds of readers that the author was respectable, intelligent and middle class thus ensuring no jokes about the perceived backwards nature of Brisbane writing. Secondly, a medical background, in general practice, peculiarly endowed Earls' with the ability and authority to speak about the psychology of his characters, enhancing his credibility as an 'agony uncle'.

Thirdly, it solidified for many what was already assumed about Earls' characters and himself – that they were one and the same. I mentioned in Chapter Four that there was a certain amount of scandal surrounding the relationship of Earls, his *Zigzag Street* protagonist and academic/writer Stuart Glover. Certain readers, involved in the local scene, were able to disassociate Earls from Derrington after Glover's unveiling, but the

³⁵ENGLUND, Vicki. Doctor's novel a great success. *Courier Mail*. 22 May 1996, 20.

Illustration 4: Publicity photo on release of *Bachelor Kisses* shows Earls' head merged with cover design.³⁶

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Illustration 5: Publicity photo for dramatised version of *After January* shows Earls' head over character's body.³⁷

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Illustration 6: Publicity photo on release of *Perfect Skin* shows Earls holding an unnamed baby.³⁸

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

³⁶ WHITING, Frances. Kiss & Tell. *Sunday Mail*. 5 April 1998, Sunday 6.

³⁷ La Boite Theatre. *2000 Season Guide*. La Boite Theatre, Brisbane, 1999.

³⁸ SANDS, Judy. The joys of being a dad. *Courier Mail*. 25 March 2000, Weekend 4.

medical protagonist in *Bachelor Kisses* was far more easily assumed to be Earls in disguise. Despite Earls' regular denial of the fact that the books were any more than loosely based on his own life experiences, the public and the press required him to enact the same personality. "Earls is a medical graduate and was himself (we assume) a young doctor looking for love"³⁹ says one review. This desire to conflate author and character is a sense-making device and encourages belief in the realism of the subject matter – a desirable trait in a text that deals with average contemporary problems which may have been experienced by many readers.

The conflation of Earls with his characters continues throughout his press coverage. The key promotional photo on the release of *Bachelor Kisses*⁴⁰ shows Earls holding up the cover of the book which features the lower half of a woman's face so that his own eyes appear as her eyes – or her face appears as his (see Illustration 4). A promotional photo for the dramatised version of *After January* in 1999 showed the body of a young man on a surf board (depicting the protagonist) with Earls' face superimposed over the teen's head⁴¹ (see Illustration 5). Accompanying the newspaper publication of Earls' short story 'The haircut of a more successful man' was a caricature depicting Earls' face between the breasts of a scissor-wielding hairdresser – a direct correlation with the predicament of the story's character.⁴² A promotion for Earls' later novel *Perfect Skin* (in which the *Bachelor Kisses* lead, Jon Marshall, is revived in the role of a single father) shows Earls holding an unnamed baby from a child care centre – the article states

³⁹BROWN, Phil. 1998, 16.

⁴⁰See for example: WHITING, Frances. Kiss and tell. *Courier Mail*. 5 April 1998, Sunday 5.

⁴¹*La Boite Theatre 2000 Season guide*. La Boite Theatre. Brisbane, 1999.

⁴²EARLS, Nick. The haircut of a more successful man.(Excerpt). *Courier Mail*. 6 March 1999 Weekend 7.

that Earls has no children of his own⁴³ (see Illustration 6). This article describes Earls “recent experience with fatherhood” which turns out to be the fact that he was writing about a baby. A final example describes a journalist visiting Earls’ home where “several things are apparent” including the fact that “he’s been away, overseas, on a promotional tour. The slight disarray appears to be evidence of that and perhaps the fact that his wife, Sarah, is away at the moment.”⁴⁴ Earls is relegated to the hapless, disorganised role of his pathetic characters and is imbued with a sexist approach to household duties that may be held by some of those protagonists. “From the Coronation Drive bike way to the RE Hotel, Nick’s local haunts become his character’s hangouts...”⁴⁵ As far as the press are concerned, if Earls and his protagonists are not the same people, then they are certainly good friends.

While *Bachelor Kisses* was still set in Brisbane, the references were “more oblique than is usual in the Earls canon” making the story less “landlocked” but, continues Toni Johnson-Woods, “this is both a good and a bad thing. We in the northern climes rather like to read about streets we know.”⁴⁶ So, Brisbane continued to own Earls in spite of the changes beginning to happen to his writing. Over the next few years, Earls’ celebrity status accorded him a sort of ambassadorial role for Brisbane and major celebrity status in the Brisbane press and literary spheres. After discussing an upcoming international tour the press said: “after that it’s back into the study, in much the same way

⁴³SANDS, Judy. The joys of being a dad. *Courier Mail*. 25 March 2000, Weekend 4.

⁴⁴BROWN, Phil. Spinning a yarn. *Brisbane News*. 7-13 April 1999, 28-29.

⁴⁵McGOWAN, Tracey. 1999.

⁴⁶JOHNSON-WOODS, Toni. 1998, 10.

as a rock star heads back to the studio after the tour.”⁴⁷ Rarely does an author gain ‘rock star’ status in this way.

Earls was featured on radio station Triple J’s ‘unearthing Brisbane’ series where prominent Brisbanites toured journalists around the city’s significant landmarks.⁴⁸ He was also asked to supply his favourite restaurant for review – where he cited Baan Thai, (the favourite of the protagonist of *Zigzag Street*)⁴⁹ and his desired Christmas present⁵⁰ amongst other celebrity based lightweight media features. His home was featured in the *Courier Mail*’s lifestyle pages (“Earls’ Castle”)⁵¹ where he was said to live in “an unpretentious, leafy street where he works in a backyard office” mirroring “the casual lifestyle of characters in his books...”

By 1998, Earls required no introduction to Brisbane readers. The article “Nick’s off to Hollywood”⁵² shows that a surname was no longer necessary for readers to know who the article was about. The subheading, under the photograph, says “Doctor Love: Brisbane author Nick Earls”. This article again emphasised the qualities that give Nick his celebrity status: his medical background, his unpretentiousness (feeding the identity myths necessary for celebrity success in Australia), his authority to write about relationship problems, his Brisbane background and his humour. This article also

⁴⁷BROWN, Phil. 1999, 28-29.

⁴⁸CATTERNS, Angela. Interview with Nick Earls. Radio Triple J. Sydney, 24 May 1999.

⁴⁹HAY, John. My Favourite Restaurant. *Sunday Mail*. 10 May 1998, Sunday 31.

⁵⁰*Courier Mail*. It’s a book wrap. Dec 18 1999, Weekend 8.

⁵¹KILLEN, Sandra. Earls Castle. *Courier Mail*. 26 Oct 1999, Our House 3.

⁵²YALLAMAS, Lisa. Nick’s Off to Hollywood. *Courier Mail*. 2 July 1998, What’s On 7.

displays another trend that differs from the handling of many other such celebrities: rather than presenting Earls as a love-interest/object they emphasise the fact that he is happily married and willing to talk about his happy childhood. Earls becomes the quintessential boy next door – there is nothing about him to dislike as far as the press (and consequently the implied reader) is concerned. Thus, Earls becomes a local hero and is imbued with classically desirable Australian qualities because he is successful but down-to-earth, funny but flawed in a way that means that people find him approachable and affable. “It’s a scary thing... You realise you’re just someone who has had a pretty regular time of it and told a couple of stories. Then there’s this idea that your opinion might be worth something. I’m not sure mine is... but I try hard.”⁵³ With comments like these, he assures readers that he is not a pretentious writer.

Earls makes reference in a number of interviews to his alter ego, ‘Shed Man’. Earls’ home has a purpose-built writing studio, which he refers to as the shed, and “Shed Man is not the sort of person you’d ask around for dinner.”⁵⁴ What could be a dislikeable image of the dishevelled, unwashed and grumpy Shed Man, for Earls only adds to a romantic image of ‘the author’ that accompanies the ‘down-to-earth’ lovable persona for which he is renowned. In Brisbane he finds himself in the rare celebrity position of being ‘loved’ (in the public sense) for the positive and negative aspects of his public persona. Through Shed Man he also widens his audience – accessing both male and female readers, simultaneously invoking the writer in the garret and the average ‘bloke’ in the back yard. Comparisons can be drawn here between this use of Earls’ home and the descriptions of Venero Armano’s lifestyle as discussed in Chapter Four. Earls’ home (in

⁵³SORENSEN, Rosemary. Complex Prowler. *Courier Mail*. 21 Feb 1998, Weekend 7.

⁵⁴WHTING, Frances. 1998, Sunday 5.

the same area of Brisbane as Armanno's) is viewed as leafy and casual, while Armanno (as enemy of the taxpayer) lives in the "*exclusive* inner-western suburbs"(my italics). In simplistic terms, Earls is successful in making his lifestyle seem part of an overall package combining desirability and modesty – while Armanno has been framed as committing the ultimate sin for an Australian celebrity with visible displays of 'wealth'. Earls, too, has received plentiful grants and funding arrangements for his work, but was fortunate enough not to be targeted in the same way.

Earls has gone on to appear in countless articles about successful Brisbane writers and is frequently called upon to speak on behalf of the Brisbane writing community. In television appearances, he has been interviewed standing in Zigzag Street itself or in front of some equally notable Brisbane landmark. 1998 figures suggest that some fifty people (including international tourists) had purchased meals at Baan Thai because of reading the book ("In a way that could be seen as quite a daggy response to a book, but I just love it").⁵⁵ Earls' launches appear in the social pages of Brisbane's major press, his books are always given front of store/window displays on release in Brisbane and his public appearances sell-out. He is "Brisbane's favourite son"⁵⁶ taking the place of David Malouf as the textual creator of Brisbane, gaining a broader audience than Malouf by bridging the gap between serious and not-so-serious readers of fiction; appearing on school and university book lists while still featuring in the light-weight pages of local rags. It is rare for an Australian author to achieve such broad-ranging celebrity and there is no doubt that this persona seriously enhances the appeal of his work to a local

⁵⁵DICK, Eileen. Make'em laugh, make 'em laugh. *Time Off*. 11-17 Feb 1998, 16.

⁵⁶McCOLL, Mary Rose. 1998.

readership. One review says that the characters are “in Nick Earls’ town, Brisbane...”⁵⁷ He indeed has the key to the city.

In summary, the use of Brisbane as a setting creates a resonance felt by local readers that can be seen as a feeling of belonging to the text. “I like the idea that there are some people here who think it adds something, that it connects with their neighbourhood and where they buy their groceries.”⁵⁸ There is a sense in which readers may actually feel part of the story – as though they could have been at that store on the same day as Earls’ protagonists had their adventures. This is a reading position that cannot be replicated outside of the source culture (as I will demonstrate later). The press plays up other levels of resonance to decrease the distance. As Pym has said, ‘texts belong’ and *Zigzag Street* must undergo a reassignment of values to successfully move away from the source culture. This movement requires translation. Translation will instigate a shift in the ways in which readers will be asked to make sense of the text as the level of personal resonance is decreased.

The acceptance of Earls’ work within wider Australia was less swift and more critical at the outset. Press commentary away from Brisbane shows evidence of the first signs of translation. The *Australian*’s first significant coverage of *Zigzag Street*⁵⁹ requires the journalist to define that the street is a real street in Brisbane. The article describes the Red Hill area and makes reference to Earls’ walking in the steps of David Malouf – perhaps the only author erstwhile recognisable as making use of Brisbane as a setting.

⁵⁷BRADY, Tess. No tomorrow. *Australian Book Review*. Sep 1999, 40-41.

⁵⁸BROWN, Phil. *Brisbane by the book*. Brisbane News. 22-28 March 2000, 4-7.

⁵⁹SIMONS, Margaret. All you read is love. *Australian’s review of books*. October 1996, 3-4.

Beyond these cursory references, the Brisbane setting is presented as relatively unimportant, despite the site-specific nature of Earls' work. Instead, the genre and Earls' background take over as the ways for new audiences to relate to the work:

There are shades of Alvin Purple in Jon Marshall's adventures [...] and the author's style has been compared to Woody Allen and Nick Hornby...⁶⁰

With this his third novel on the subject, Nick Earls, a young man himself, could be seen as a bit of a specialist on young men and love...⁶¹

Hopefully young Nick will earn enough to keep him out of the surgery and behind the typewriter where he belongs.⁶²

A doctor in his mid-thirties would rarely be spoken about in such condescending terms were he not being required to work as a spokesperson for all dysfunctional young men.

Headlines featuring medical allusions accompany a number of articles up to 1998 making use, again, of the notion of respectability and authority on subject matter.⁶³ Also important to national reviews is Earls' international success. The Brisbane celebrity status of the author is less important in national reviews, but his celebrity potential as an 'Australian author' is used. At the release of *Bachelor Kisses*, stories begin to focus on the fact that "His first novel, *Zigzag Street*, is about to be released in the United Kingdom and Germany..." and that film offers and deals have commenced.

In general, wider national reviews of Earls' work focus on the storylines and make much of the 'new man' subject matter of his work. His celebrity status is less in the national arena, though his sales figures remain high. His books are not guaranteed instant priority in bookstores and his appearances –while successful – are not accorded the high level of social status and sell-out crowds of Brisbane performances. However, like the

⁶⁰HOUSTON, Melinda. Read of the Week. *Inside Melbourne*. March 1998, 29.

⁶¹ENGLUND, Katherine. Ordeals of young in love. *Adelaide Advertiser*. 21 Feb 1998, 27.

⁶²HOUSTON, Melinda. 1998, 29.

⁶³COSIC, Miriam. Craft without charm. *Australian*. 21-22 March 1998, Review 29.

Brisbane audience, the Australian readers have had the opportunity to see Earls in such forums as television appearances and fan web sites. Earls has also put his face to political campaigns regarding the controversial introduction of a Goods and Services Tax on books and republicanism though it is hard to ascertain the impact on the causes of his support. Earls has also been able to use his celebrity status for charity fundraising work. His appearances on youth radio station Triple J as a comic, political satirist show his perceived national appeal as a spokesperson for youth issues if not wider political concerns.⁶⁴

Having now also released a more serious collection of short stories and won awards (such as the prestigious Children's Book Council 'Book of the Year for Older Readers', 2000) Earls' national persona has become more 'adult' though his youthful, down-to-earth nature continues to be a feature of his persona for interviews. Reviews of his work have now appeared in everything from smaller regional papers to the *Bulletin* and *Vogue*. "Earls' ties to his home town are obvious: local landmarks, weather and music all figure in his novels [...] His work, however, is travelling further than he expected."⁶⁵

4. Sites of authority/types of translation

Having outlined Earls' importance as a celebrity in Brisbane and wider Australia, and the culturally-specific nature of his work, it is clear to see that some form of translation will be required for cultures further away from the source to maximally

⁶⁴MACDONALD, Sarah. Interview with Nick Earls. Radio Triple J. Sydney, 29 Jan 1999.

⁶⁵DICK, Eileen. Jam session. *Studio 4 Men*. March 1998.

engage with the text. While this thesis argues that translation forms a part of the paratext of any novel, these types of translation intensify the further a text moves from its point of origin. A closer analysis of the move to international communities is useful here also because this is the type of move where representations of a national culture become most evident. Much Australian press lauds the international release of Australian novels: international success is perceived as ‘true’ success. Hence, a comparison between the types of translation accompanying Earls’ national and international releases showcases the need for greater attention to the translations often taken as commonplace.

Within the words of *Zigzag Street*, no alterations have been made for the movement between English-speaking cultures (with the exception of the United States which will be discussed later). The peritext, however, takes over the role of translator as the text is marketed according to the perceived needs of the recipient polysystem. Earls’ work is released in Australia, the United Kingdom, South Africa and various European and Asian regions in its original English. Therefore, the types of translation spoken about in this chapter are not, on the whole, linguistic. They can be read as types of translation because they assist in making a text comprehensible to a readership away from the source.

The comprehensibility of work like Earls’ outside of the source culture relies on a number of different translators, which alter the reading positions made available to readers and problematise the sites traditionally seen as places from which readers seek meaning: authorial intention, free interpretation and personal experience, for example. They act as guides and are therefore ‘ways of making sense’ of the text. These aspects of textual production and interpretation include: book stores, the author function, the role

of the publisher and the work of the press alongside the wider community-based forms of translation mentioned earlier in this chapter.

4.1 Bookstore promotion as translation

As *Zigzag Street* was released prior to the commencement of this thesis, for this project, I tracked the London promotional tour of Nick Earls on the release of his second novel, *Bachelor Kisses*. This text is also set in Brisbane and features Earls' trademark collection of Brisbane-based references. It features *Zigzag Street*'s protagonist, Richard Derrington, at a younger age sharing a house with medical intern, Jon Marshall, and deals with many similar issues to those outlined in Earls' earlier work. Its bookstore promotion can thus be taken as comparable to the British release of *Zigzag Street*.

In a six-day period, Earls conducted personal meetings in ten bookshops scattered around London's centre, amongst numerous interviews and meetings with the press and publishing house. As would be the aim of any publicist, Earls' team ensured he had wide coverage in the media and *Bachelor Kisses* was likely to attract attention on the strength of the cult-success in the United Kingdom of *Zigzag Street*. It is interesting, however, that so much time was allotted to instore promotions during such a tight schedule. Like the interview process, it is essential for authors now to make themselves known to book shop owners. Earls did not conduct instore signings for the public on this tour but signed copies of the books in bulk which were then displayed on bookshelves with the label 'signed by the author' emblazoned on the cover.

Illustration 7: Australian cover of Nick Earls' *Bachelor Kisses*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Illustration 8: United Kingdom cover of *Bachelor Kisses*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Ensuring awareness of the text by the bookstore staff was the aim of the meetings, rather than personal contact with the public as such. In this way, bookstore staff become another example of translators as they have a power over the ways in which the text will be presented to the reading public. The result of Earls' tour was that *Bachelor Kisses* was available the following week in all major bookstores in the London area. All stores that Earls had visited during his tour had created a major display of his novels in the window or near the front counter.

One reason for the importance of personal promotion of this text in London could have been the fact that *Bachelor Kisses* appeared in the United Kingdom with a highly controversial cover featuring a young medical student balancing an encyclopedia on his (hidden) erect penis (see Illustration 8). The Australian cover was colourful with a light-hearted sexual playfulness being alluded to, but far more conservative than its British version (see Illustration 7). The novel was also reduced in size from the 'C' format used in Australia (high quality, larger than average size) to 'A' format (smaller, 'pocket' style that usually indicates a 'genre' novel). In a number of stores, where Earls' had not signed and met staff, the novel was piled onto a 'general fiction' table with other romantic or humorous novels in the same format and priced below the recommended retail price used in other stores. In one store, the book was placed in the 'erotica' section – a ludicrous suggestion based solely on the graphic nature of the cover. Staff of two stores suggested the cover was 'tacky' and said that they would not choose it for a major display.

Again, this shows the importance of Earls' work as 'assistant to the publisher' in ensuring bookstore staff were aware of the subject matter of the text. In terms of

bookstore displays as forms of translation, the perception is that you can judge a book by its cover. Bookstore staff will be responsible for positioning the text within the store and then for letting potential readers know what to expect from the text. In this way, bookstores become translators and have an authority not just over sales, but over the way a reader will approach a text.

4.2 The author function as translation

The importance of the author function, as opposed to authorial intention, cannot be overlooked in terms of translation. In Nick Earls' case, there is a strong connection made by the press and by many readers with the characters of his novels, and if not with that, then with a persona that is perceived to be capable of producing the text – an ideal author of sorts, who has experience and authority to write about certain situations. In many ways, this contemporary realist literature is not about symbolism or obscurity. Given that the texts speak about everyday, contemporary problems, the author is looked to as someone with whom the reader can communicate with or relate to. This is very true of the public relationship with Nick Earls. Earls' fan mail presents readers as 'mates' of the author. They write to him on a very casual and friendly level to ask advice or make comment on his work. The following article of fan mail to Earls is an example:

I bought *Bachelor Kisses* a couple of days ago at Heathrow...do you have any idea how bad the book cover is over here? (i'm assuming they'd have something cooler in oz) It's got a cheesy looking naked guy on the front with a medical text covering his shlong. Such was the level of cheesiness, I ripped the cover off (sorry) – partly because it sucks and partly due to the fact that I was getting hassled big time in Amsterdam when I was trying to have a quiet read in coffeeshops.⁶⁶ (sic)

⁶⁶EARLS, Nick (nickearls@mpx.com.au). Reader review. E-mail to Lara CAIN. 18 May, 1999.

Earls' public persona makes readers feel free to communicate their problems to him. The press attention to his medical background also seems to encourage this. In Queensland, this relationship is particularly strong. While local hero connection with Earls cannot be replicated in the wider community, the press ensures that Earls, as author, carries a similar persona in other regions. His Brisbane base becomes less important a feature, but his youth, medical background and likeable nature increase in significance to convince readers in other cultural spaces, who have less regular contact with the author, that he has an authority to speak about the problems of the protagonists. This education of the potential readership about the author's background fulfils the reader's desire to seek translation of the text in the author, without asking for authorial intention per se.

When Earls' work is moved to the United Kingdom, his Australianness becomes less significant. In most United Kingdom interviews, it is noted that Earls was born in Northern Ireland. This is used to make it appear that he has a certain level of belonging in the United Kingdom. For the *Evening Standard* interview, Earls was "12,000 miles from his adopted home" thus being partially reclaimed as British. *Buzz* states: "No one will be able to resist the author's wit and charm. And he's Australian, too."⁶⁷ The affability, medical background and general trustworthiness are still, however, counted as most important in the author/reader relationship. "As befits a writer who used to be a doctor, Earls' prose provides a clinical dissection of the psyche of the Nineties man..."⁶⁸

I have made use earlier of the title "What do you get when you cross Nick Hornby and Bridget Jones?" as used in London's *Evening Standard*.⁶⁹ Here we see the conflation

⁶⁷*Buzz*. Bachelor Kisses Review. No date available. Cited by EARLS, Nick (nickearls@mpx.com.au). E-mail to Lara CAIN. 26 May 1999.

⁶⁸COOPER, Tim. 1998, 26.

⁶⁹COOPER, Tim. 1998, 26.

of authors and their characters as discussed in Chapter Four. Bridget Jones is more real as a person than her creator Helen Fielding, and by making comparisons like those seen in the title, we are led to confuse all the authors with their characters. Nick Earls – a man we do not know personally – is dubbed to be like Bridget Jones – a fictional character. We are not comparing author with author, but persona with persona and the reader is made to believe that there is little difference between the two. Earls says of Hornby that he has never read his work but “since I’ve been promoting in Britain his name has been mentioned so many times I feel as if I know him.”⁷⁰ One United Kingdom interview suggests that “In Australia this man is known as the male equivalent of the creator of Bridget Jones.”⁷¹ though Fielding’s work was released in Australia after Earls’ earlier novels.

Like the Australian press commentary on Earls, his British press makes him work as the likeable, down-to-earth but jocular character that encourages readers to feel as if he is that mate in a coffee shop. At the same time however, his British press seems to make much of his class status, his five hundred bottle wine cellar and his seven year marriage to a Brisbane lawyer. These facts constitute cultural capital – they elevate Earls from any confusion with ‘trash’ novelists and increase his perceived authority over the subject matter. With these facts in mind, readers are not asked to believe that Earls is Derrington now, but that he once was and has moved past it. This is even more of a positive position because it gives hope to readers who feel a connection with Derrington. Inclusion of details such as these also serves to broaden Earls’ readership.

⁷⁰COOPER, Tim. 1998, 26.

⁷¹ALLISON, Richard. 1999.

As was mentioned in Chapter One, this novel is read as intelligent contemporary fiction. Thus, the knowledge of Earls' educated, well-off, stable home life make him appealing to young and old, trustworthy and settled, no longer the confused lad of his texts – but a legacy to the ability of the confused lad to move on and succeed. After discussion of the wine cellar and other elements of Earls' life, the *Evening Standard* interview has Earls saying: "I studied medicine because I thought the odds were probably against me making a living out of writing".⁷² This brings him down to earth; he is not even an 'artiste' by trade, he is just a regular guy. The 'Shed Man' spoken about in Australian reviews, does not appear in the United Kingdom as his 'shed' becomes a "little building at the bottom of the garden"⁷³ built to house the wine and as a writing studio. Earls himself also knows how to work the British press, changing 'duvet' for 'doona' or 'pounds' for 'kilos' where appropriate. He suggests that his stories have a *This Life* feel to them⁷⁴ (alluding to a successful British series rather than the comparisons to America's *Seinfeld* that are more frequently made in Australia.) Important too, to Earls' international success is his authority to speak on the plight of his characters. He is referred to as an 'expert' on "dysfunctional human beings"⁷⁵ continuing the conflation of his medical degree with a psychology background, and setting himself up as similar to his protagonists.

⁷²COOPER, Tim. 1998, 26.

⁷³EARLS, Nick. How I write. *Times*. 4 April, 1998. URL: www.Sunday-times.co.uk/Kindgom:80/news/pages/Times/frontpage.html?1218231 (10 April 1998).

⁷⁴See for example: COE, Gideon. Interview with Nick Earls. Radio GLR. London, 10 March 1999.

⁷⁵ALLISON, Richard. 1999.

4.3 The peritext: the publisher as translator

Publishers obviously have a desire to promote a text and ensure its popularity and saleability. The initial press release on behalf of the publisher will be the first contact made between text and the press and bookstores. Publishers are also responsible for organising publicists and ongoing public relations between the author and the outside world. Importantly, cover design is also the role of the publisher and an important consideration in terms of culture. Choices of cover design are made based on the assumed desires of the market – trends and genre requirements, but also mores and tastes of the recipient readership. Comparison of the covers of the same text in different cultures reveals much about the target polysystems.

The initial publication of *Zigzag Street* in Australia featured a hip though artistically obscure graphic of the title. Earls' name is small and nestles among the letters of the title. Within the letters appear pictures of elements of the text: a man's face, baked beans, a cat (see Illustration 9). The novel appeared in the 'B' format (standard for literary works) which indicates a "good, well-written book" according to Louise Thurtell

Illustration 9: Original Australian cover design of Nick Earls' *Zigzag Street*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Illustration 10: Second reprint Australian cover design of *Zigzag Street*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Illustration 11: United Kingdom cover design of *Zigzag Street*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

from Transworld.⁷⁶

In the third reprint of the text, Transworld chose to alter the cover design. The new look *Zigzag Street* cover became colloquially known as ‘the *Trainspotting* cover’ (see Illustration 10). In keeping with the popularity of the grunge genre, with which the text was associated at the time (prior to the wider popularity of the ‘untidy realism’ movement) the text was repackaged with the aim of targeting a younger market and more male readers. It is lime green with a bemused looking youth with a shoe on his head. In large letters it states: “...a laugh-out-loud book” *Sydney Morning Herald*. The far less interesting second cover did increase sales and remained the permanent version of the cover until 2000. At that time, yet another change introduced a return to abstract colours and images – perhaps in keeping with Earls’ new, more mature readership won over after the release of *Headgames* (a collection of surreal short stories) and *Perfect Skin* (dealing with parenthood and responsibility more than the awkward youths of past texts).

With the movement to the United Kingdom, the cover was altered. By the time the text was released in the United Kingdom, the popularity of *Trainspotting* had abated. The round shouldered perplexed youth was no longer seen to be a marketable cover image (see Illustration 11). The United Kingdom colours are subdued, more adult perhaps. The man whose face graces the United Kingdom cover is clean cut and features a bottle of red wine on his head – reflecting the disastrous dinner party scenarios that occur throughout the text, rather than implying any connection to drug culture. The United Kingdom cover features no press commentary as peritextual translation. This appears, however, on subsequent British releases of Earls’ work when a repertoire of British media coverage can be drawn upon for inclusion.

⁷⁶BALDRY, Moya. Literary Cover Ups. *Queensland Writers Centre News*. Dec 1998/Jan 1999, 27.

4.4 The epitext: The press as translator

Aside from its role in promotion of the author as a spokesperson for culture, the press also directly assumes the role of translator by using the same techniques of translation that have been spoken about elsewhere. When faced with culturally-specific terminology, a press review of a text will domesticate (by exchanging for a local alternative), translate intratextually (by adding a clarification), or, most commonly, combine the two options by stating that the product is extremely similar to something easily recognisable for the foreign reader.

A useful example of domestication can be seen in an example from the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Journalist Peter Roebuck wrote, in an article about a recent cricket match (the names allude to players): “Langer might have been in the Dardanelles. Gilchrist seemed to think he was at Cottesloe Beach.” This copy appeared simultaneously in London’s *The Times* as : “Langer might have been in a war zone. Gilchrist seemed to think he was on Bondi Beach.”⁷⁷

In the case of Earls’ work, however, domestication is uncommon. Forms of translation can be seen occasionally, for example: “The film rights to *Zigzag Street* (it’s a real street close to where Earls grew up in Brisbane) have already been sold ...”⁷⁸ Here brackets fill the role often assumed by footnotes in a novel. On British radio⁷⁹, the Australian song, ‘Bachelor Kisses’, the inspiration for Earls’ second novel, was played

⁷⁷*Sydney Morning Herald*. Column 8. 25 Nov 1999, 1.

⁷⁸COOPER, Tim. 1998, 26.

⁷⁹COE, Gideon. 1999.

during his interview – another example of translation. But, as the text has been moved between cultures without textual change, the press must try to convince potential readers that the text is not incomprehensibly foreign. We have seen the references to Nick Hornby and Helen Fielding, which go some way towards illustrating this notion of finding local equivalents for foreign imports. Such comparisons are plentiful in Earls' United Kingdom press. For example:

Endearing and infuriating by turns, he is trying to re-organise his mind after splitting up from the love of his life – and the result is full of Behaving Badly style farce and despair.⁸⁰

The first Aussie to make me laugh out loud since Jason Donovan.⁸¹

...to be blunt, Zigzag Street has the funniest farting scene since Blazing Saddles.⁸²

Set in Australia, “Zigzag Street” is the entertaining and often hilarious story of how he comes to terms with the loss of romantic love and his gradual route to a new beginning. This delightful romp is also part tongue-in-cheek social comment, packing razor-sharp witty dialogue with a frenetic non-stop barrage of amusing observations about life as we live it today.⁸³

The importance of this last quotation is its reference to the way ‘we’ live life today. It assumes there is no difference between the cultural spaces of text and reader.

As a comparison, Earls' release in English in India made more specific use of the exotic Australian origins of the text, however, local comparisons are still important to comprehension. The most evocative of these is entitled “Outback Encounters” – clearly a direct use of stereotype as Earls' work has nothing to do with the outback.⁸⁴ In it, the reviewer states that Earls' second novel shot to the top of the Australian charts – where Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* was “at a consistent second place for several

⁸⁰ *Liverpool Echo*. 17 Jan 1998, 18.

⁸¹ *Mirror*. Bachelor Kisses Review. No date available. Cited by EARLS, Nick (nickearls@mpx.com.au). E-mail to Lara CAIN. 26 May, 1999.

⁸² *Caithness Courier*. Comedy, farce and romance. 11 March 1998.

⁸³ *Inverness Courier*. Walking back to happiness – erratically. 27 March 1998, 25.

⁸⁴ *First City*. Outback Encounters. April 1999, 110-111.

weeks.” Notably, as in the United Kingdom examples, Indian readers are shown that Earls is as popular as one of their local heroes and so should be liked by Indian readers. The *First City* review states that “Although rooted in Brisbane, with its typical slang, Earls feels that his stories have universal appeal.”⁸⁵ The journalist is acknowledging that aspects of the source culture may be difficult to understand, but overall the novel is accessible. Again, the press assumes the role of ‘authority’ here in convincing the readers that the text is worth reading. Earls’ Australian residence is openly discussed in India, but his United Kingdom birth is also used to make him seem more pan-national than strictly Australian.

Earls is said to be a “British-Australian”⁸⁶ writer in one example from the Indian press. In another, he is described as a “36 year old Ireland-born United Kingdom passport holding Australian”.⁸⁷ Cultural associations are drawn out via the things that the two nations have in common, cricket, for example. “...born in Northern Ireland, Nick Earls moved to Australia at the age of eight and insists “I am quite an Australian. In every cricket match which Australia is playing, I want to win”.”⁸⁸ Further comparisons to Arundhati Roy come with the comment: “Nick has read some Indian authors too. “I heard Arundhati Roy read from her, *God of Small Things* some time ago [...] It was terrific

⁸⁵*First City*. April 1999, 111.

⁸⁶*Hindustan Times*. The Zig-Zag Street boy enthralled. 17 March 1999.

⁸⁷SANDHU, Anupreet. Aussie humorist tickles. *Express Chandigarh Newslines*. 17 March 1999.

⁸⁸*Chandigarh Tribune*. Doctor-turned-writer in city. 16 March 1999.

listening to her”.⁸⁹ I note that, in this quotation, Nick does not actually admit to having read Roy’s book, but the comparison must be made in order to allocate Earls a place in the Indian polysystem. All of these examples speak about the ways in which the press assumes the role of translator and contributes to the potential reading positions of readers.

Conclusion

The United States release of Earls’ *Bachelor Kisses* and *Perfect Skin* brought some last minute considerations to the questions of interlinguistic translation raised by this thesis. Further study could extend investigation of the reasons why it seems necessary to translate Australian English for the U.S. market, and not (usually) any other English speaking environment. Earls’ debates with his American editorial team over the “final Americanized text” (as it is referred to in his contract) show that domestication is still highly desirable for American publishers – and perceived as necessary for American readers. The publisher’s desired changes to Earls’ work (some of which he opposed) included the exchange of ‘football’ for ‘soccer’, and the elimination of the words ‘pikelet’ and ‘leg spin’ – deemed incomprehensible as terms and too culturally-specific in meaning.⁹⁰ Likewise, ‘lounge room’ became ‘den’, and ‘uni’ became ‘college’ or ‘med school’. The name of the Brisbane suburb Indooroopilly had to be scrapped altogether as it was deemed impossible for American readers to pronounce.

⁸⁹SANDHU, Anupreet. 1999.

⁹⁰All examples drawn from personal and email discussions with Nick Earls, November 2000.

American society does not generally use the metric system except in repeated expressions where the metric terminology forms part of a recognisable signifier. For example, a 5 or 10 'K' run would be recognisable as a type of running time authorised in the sporting world. Similarly, drug culture makes use of kilos as a measurement, though no cookbook would do the same. Thus, Earls' protagonist in *Perfect Skin* now pauses two *miles* into his 5K run, and a scene where the character goes to a tea website to 'order a kilo' had to be cut.

There is insufficient space in this thesis to elaborate extensively on the American situation, but its usefulness in this chapter is to demonstrate the repercussions of domestication of narratives within supposedly common linguistic spaces. As stated throughout this thesis, the cultural specificity of novels like Earls' is found in the small details of daily life – exactly the items of the narrative seen as necessitating change in the United States editions of the work. To change 'football' to 'soccer', for example, is to misrepresent the reality of life for Earls' protagonists, and other Australians. More importantly, the repeated decision to domesticate novels in this way means that readers are never able to develop a repertoire of images to draw upon when making sense of an Australian text. We will see similar measures at work in the United Kingdom edition of Nikki Gemmell's *Cleave* in Chapter Six.

What is shown throughout the rest of this chapter is the more common approach taken to the transfer of texts between communities who ostensibly share a standard language. That is, the language of the novel itself is not altered, but the paratext supplies extensive forms of translation that establish a selection of reading positions to those who read the novel.

In the situation of transfer of the Brisbane-based novel *Zigzag Street* to other regions of Australia, minimal translation is provided or assumed to be required. A ‘translation’ of the author’s reputation occurs along with minor definitions of locations (such as the signalling of Zigzag Street as a real street). In terms of the packaging of the novel, the changing cover designs of the text show a form of translation targeting new readers. In this way, cultural space is not about geographical distance, but about different ‘cultures’ within Australia’s reading culture. That is, the different covers aim to attract diverse markets of readers, who may not have been drawn to the original cover. Media and promotional coverage of Earls’ work within Australia can be read as a broad extension of the text itself, comprising many ways of enhancing the reader’s repertoire before they make contact with the novel.

In the movement to the United Kingdom, we see a change in the types of translation chosen; with less emphasis on Australia as an exotic source culture than previous examples of transferred literature, and more emphasis on the author and the genre as sites of translation activity. Given Australia’s previous relationship with the United Kingdom, the results seen here may be viewed as a colonising act: to gain acceptance in the recipient polysystem, a text must conform entirely to the mores of that system. To choose not to do so would ensure the text would remain peripheral to the system (in commercial terms, it would not become a best-seller.)

As was explained in Chapter Four, however, an antithetical reading is possible, which sees the central position of *Zigzag Street* in the United Kingdom as a powerful opportunity for education of the reader. Wearing the guise of a text acceptable to the central area, the text is able to move between cultures without textual alteration meaning

that readers receive the text in an authentic state (unlike the situation in the United States). Readers are thus positioned in a way in which they must confront the cultural-specificities of the text – at which point they may choose to research the meanings or continue to gloss over them. In terms of oppositionality, this type of movement can be seen as a tactic which works against the structures of power (which enforce conformity). In terms of Even-Zohar's work, this means that the text is seen as conservative, but is in fact innovative. The retention of culturally-specific language also means that readers will begin to develop a repertoire of images of the source culture which they will then carry with them to future texts.

Both conformity to genre guidelines, and the tactical approach to disguising the text work to avoid a situation in which the reader fears approaching the text because it is too 'foreign' – or not to their tastes. This appears to be particularly important in the case of transfer to the United Kingdom where, evidence in this chapter suggests, there exist: resistance to foreign/translated texts, doubt about the literary aptitude of Australian writers, belief in stereotypical visions of Australia, strong support for local product and specific genres that dominate the centre of the polysystem. Overtly Australian texts do not 'sell', and therefore do not reach a wide enough readership to perform any kind of educational or ambassadorial roles. The insistence seen in paratextual aspects of translation of equivalence of the text to 'local' products ensures that texts are more accessible, therefore having more oppositional potential. This paratextual translation is performed by use of those facets of popular culture that are shared between the two cultural spaces, and by creating a public persona for the author that reappropriates, rather than totally alters, the author's position in his/her source culture.

Ironically, the choice for Earls' novels to be made to work as part of an existent genre in the United Kingdom is particularly pertinent to the oppositional potential of the work. As stated earlier, the unique pay off of Earls' genre of writing and the public relations techniques of this type of author, is that both text and writer may be read as 'wild child' or 'court poet' in terms of the ways in which they are presented to the public. Were Earls viewed exclusively as a wild child (or his work seen purely as popular, humorous fiction) he may not have succeeded in securing such a central position in the polysystem – as his work would have more limited appeal. At the same time, the 'court poet' position implies a type of literary greatness that would not permit Earls the freedom of indulging in the extensive cultural-specificities at work in his texts. To combine the two allows an author a broader audience, for starters, but also allows the text to move between cultural spaces in terms of translation: to be reviewed in both the *Times* and in *Cleo*, for example.

In all cases, it is clear that readers desire access to sites of authority that work as translators for texts. Readers use education, bookstore promotion, genre, author function and other forms of translation to make sense of culturally-specific texts. Chapter Six will extend this analysis by looking at the situation of an altered standard language. It is generally assumed that translation, in its traditional sense, creates much different problems of interpretation and fidelity to the movement of texts between English-speaking communities (in this case). The final chapter will show that in fact quite similar methods of translation are at work in the case of a novel's transfer from Australia to France, where, again, the author and other paratextual sites of translation are utilised to establish a position for the novel within the foreign polysystem.

Chapter Six

“L’exploratrice des antipodes”.¹

The transfer and translation of Nikki Gemmell’s *Cleave*.

Chapter Five has examined the transfer of texts between cultural communities that share a standard language by reading the ways in which Genette’s aspects of text can be seen to include opportunities for translation. Chapter Six will examine translation between languages with the aim of proving that even when language is altered, it is the paratext that predominantly constructs reading positions. A more intricate translation of language itself is obviously needed in the case of interlinguistic transfer, but translations performed by the press and other epitextual facets of the text function in the same way as they do during transfer within a language. Like ‘traditional’ translation, the paratext reveals domestication, exoticisation and fidelity issues that affect the ways in which the text will be presented. Thus, the case studies provided in this chapter will solidify the argument that many types of translators govern the production of texts, and these translators have responsibility over the types of cultural images that are moved between communities.

Chapter Six will closely examine the transfer of Nikki Gemmell’s novel *Cleave* to France. It will also make mention of the transfer and translation of Fiona Capp’s *Night Surfing* and will briefly comment on the transfer of texts used in earlier chapters. Following the pattern of Chapter Five, I will commence by summarising Australia’s literary relationship with France, to establish an understanding of national reading cultures and their influence on comprehension. I will continue with examination of cultural specificity within the novel, the paratextual and epitextual

¹CLAVEL, André. Nikki Gemmell - bourlingueuse des antipodes. *Le Temps*. 22-23 Jan 2000.

facets of the text and the role of the author. Ironically, in order to present this material to a range of readers, it has been necessary to translate French quotations into English. My translations from the French within this chapter (presented here in square brackets) attempt to present the clearest possible English version for the purposes of analysis and are therefore not intended to be poetic or to adhere to literary conventions in English.

The title of this chapter makes use of the heading of a French promotional article about *Cleave*.² This title positions Gemmell as the “explorer of the antipodes” linking author to character, and character to country. This alludes to the fact that authors, and texts, can be made to work as ambassadors for their cultural backgrounds when their texts are transferred. In this way, Gemmell’s commentary on the work, and her responses to queries about her culture of origin, will have a paratextual effect on international reading positions. Gemmell’s work is viewed internationally as an ‘accurate’ representation of Australianness, thus defining and translating what it means to be Australian.

1. Australian texts in France

The relationship between Australia and France is significantly different from that of Australia and the United Kingdom in the area of literary transfer. This will be examined here in terms of polysystem theory. While Australian literature was, in the past, perceived as an inferior subsection of the British polysystem, in France it was rated alongside other post-colonial nations’ work – such as that of African nations –

²CLAVEL, André. 2000.

and desired for its exotic qualities. Unlike the United Kingdom situation, this suggests that Australian literature in France is not ‘disguised’ as compatible with the centre of the polysystem, but remains peripheral and is most often positioned as a new and innovative artistic expression. In the past, Australian literature in France was seen as savage, close to nature, even primitive. There was far less interest in the literary works of white Australians than Aboriginal Australians (though, as stated elsewhere in this thesis, a number of the celebrated ‘Aboriginal’ texts of the time were not strictly the work of Aboriginal people). Since Australians began to win high profile literary awards (along with simultaneous prominence of filmmakers, actors, musicians and fashion designers) there has been a visible increase in the volume of Australian novels being translated into French. Until the late 1990s, my archival research indicates that, in terms of work by non-Aboriginal writers, only canonical works and genre fiction (such as Arthur Upfield’s detective novels) achieved conspicuous sales and media attention in France.

Recent years have seen Australia and Australian cultural outputs receive the problematic ‘flavour of the month’ treatment in France, as seen ten to fifteen years ago in the United States. This is visible through the opening of a number of Australian restaurants and pubs in Paris, the success of Australian soap operas and films and the huge interest in Aboriginal art reflected in regular festivals and exhibitions. Popular culture is a strong indicator of the mass appeal of a culture’s artistic endeavours, and French *Elle* magazine (in 1998) titled an article “La déferlante australienne” [the Australian wave]. This piece featured background information on Australian celebrities such as Toni Collette, Natalie Imbruglia and Cameron Daddo along with fashion designers, Akira Isogawa and Collette Dinnigan. “En Europe, les antipodes sont à la mode” [In Europe, the Antipodes are in fashion]

the article stated.³ Particularly in anticipation of the Olympics in Sydney, the French media have worked tirelessly in recent years to make sense of the far away Antipodean country, with varying degrees of accuracy and consideration. In essence, the savage and primitive images of the culture held prior to the 1970s remain in place, though they are accompanied by a strangely anomalous interest in Australian wine, cuisine and artistic culture. There is an obsession with ‘the bush’ apparent from the French media that appears to assume all Australians have a natural affinity with outback life. Author Robert Dessaix, for example, successfully released his biography, *Une Mère et sa Honte, (A Mother’s Disgrace)*⁴, in France in 2000 to favourable press coverage.⁵ In spite of Dessaix’s growing up “dans un quartier nord de Sydney” [in a northern suburb of Sydney] he is framed by the French media as “cet écrivain australien surgi du bush...”⁶ [this Australian writer who has arisen from the bush]. We will see this desire to imbue all regions of Australia with some connection to bush life demonstrated in Nikki Gemmell’s press also. This suggestion is partly based on a naïve impression of Australian life by the French press, but also buys into the identity myths expressed in Chapter Two: that is, the ‘bush’ as home and site of creative inspiration is in many ways perpetuated through the choices of Australian texts that are translated for foreign readers.

While stereotypes and generalisations are always problematic, the interest in such versions of the Australian experience within the French repertoire of cultural images could be of benefit to the reading public. It allows for analysis and questioning of Australianness by the media; while the culture is seen as foreign, it is

³*Elle*. La déferlante australienne. Dec 1998, 9-11.

⁴DESSAIX, Robert. *A Mother’s Disgrace*. Pymble, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1994. French edition: *Une Mère et sa Honte*. Translated by Ninette BOOTHROYD. Paris: Reflet, 2000

⁵GARCIN, Jérôme. Dessaix inconnu. *Le Nouvel Observateur*. 13-19 Jan 2000, 89.

⁶GARCIN, Jérôme. 2000, 89.

possible that readers are less likely to assume that the two cultures are the same, in the way seen in the United Kingdom examples. Unlike the United Kingdom market, which subsumes the Australian texts shown in Chapter Five and ignores their cultural specificity, the French market highlights differences while still employing similar epitextual methods of translation as the UK media. Though there are negative repercussions of the use of stereotypes, there is also room for identifying cultural difference and specificity.

At the same time, the recent increase in Australian images in France, especially from popular culture, seems to be providing the first indications of perceptions that link more closely with those held by the UK (that is, that the cultures are ultimately similar). Australian soap opera *Heartbreak High* has become one of France's top rating programs. The action takes place in the suburbs of Sydney, but a journalist for French soap magazine, *Les Clés de l'actualité*, says "Mais cela pourrait être Paris, Lyon ou Marseille."⁷ [But this could well be Paris, Lyon or Marseilles]. While there will clearly be visible differences between the lifestyles of the protagonists in a French youth-oriented soap opera and the Australian one in question, the genre is sufficiently familiar for French viewers to see it as comparable to their own products. An argument could also be made here for the increasing globalisation of culture, where problems and products for teenagers are comparable throughout the Western world, ensuring marketability of programs targeting that age group. The condition of the French polysystem as discussed in this thesis will, therefore, likely be altered in years to come.

One advantage of releasing texts in France for contemporary Australian writers is that there seems to be a greater willingness to deal with translated works

⁷JELOT-BLANC, Jean-Jacques. *Les Clés de l'actualité* 27 May-2 June 1999, 4-5.

within the French polysystem than the monolingual preferences of the UK market. This points to a highly confident, strong polysystem.⁸ Innovative works are welcome within the French system, as it perceives no threat to the strength of the central local products (this will be problematised later). Author Nikki Gemmell⁹ has said of her French promotional tour in 2000,

France is very used to foreign fiction, and writers not speaking the language. At FNAC¹⁰ I had people reading my books and translating my answers to audience questions – in all cases it was the translator’s job to facilitate the work of visiting, English-speaking authors.

Gemmell’s comments reveal a willingness in France to find ways of understanding foreign works, and an openness towards visiting international writers. Herbert Lotman¹¹ says that, in 1999, 70% of the international rights acquisitions by leading French publishers were English-language books. A considerable amount of this number is made up of genre fiction, with crime fiction from any source culture always having a large readership in France.

Amongst the many people I interviewed while researching this thesis, a chance encounter with a French man on the street curiously provided one of the most useful insights into the Franco-Australian relationship. He described Australia as like America with an “*esprit européen*” [European spirit/air]. This may be why Australia is so desirable to the French at present, since there is an equally apparent fascination with American culture in France but a resistance to the perceived greed and imperialism attached to it. Like America, there is a great physical and psychological distance perceived between Australia and France which, though it may well be felt by some, is not apparent in public British discourse about Australia. The British press

⁸ This might also suggest a very weak polysystem, with a necessity to import works from elsewhere. However, in the French situation, a substantial history of domestic works suggests that this is not the case.

⁹ Personal interview with Nikki Gemmell. E-mail (nikkigemmell@hotmail.com). 4 Dec 2000.

¹⁰ FNAC is France’s leading book retailer. See for details: www.fnac.com.

continues to position Australian arts as part of the British polysystem – either as poor relations, or amusing tourists. Thus, the ‘reading culture’ into which an Australian text will be transferred plays a key role in the ‘translation’ of the novel, as general community understanding of Australianness and of the acceptability of translated/transferred texts will govern the initial reception of the text.

2.Paratextual effect: wider community understanding as a form of translation

Any reading of a text is informed by images contributed to the sense-making repertoire by ‘translators’ in the wider community, such as education, tourism and media coverage. Paris, for example, is home to a number of shops, pubs and restaurants whose Australian theme is based on bush imagery and Aboriginal art. ‘The Australian Dream’ on Quai de la Tournelle in Paris stocks Australian products, such as Vegemite and wines, along with coffee table art and other souvenirs. Unlike many such locations, which are frequented by Australian tourists or expatriates looking for reminders of home, this store boasts a predominantly French clientele. Hence, this store becomes a translator of Australian culture, which will influence the ways in which its clients read Australian novels.

At the same time as the tourist-oriented images of Australia are being sold in stores, there are also more multifaceted images of Australia being offered to French readers. From educators to art curators, translators can be found in an increasing number of courses, exhibitions and promotions that cater for the French desire to learn more about the Australian culture – particularly the Aboriginal culture. Australian work is often described as being new, fresh and original. Australian

¹¹LOTMAN, Herbert R. France: A growing taste for Anglo-American Authors. *Publishers Weekly*. 4 Sep 2000, 52-54.

literature could thus be seen as filling a demand for the exotic, but this desire for originality could also indicate a ‘lack’ in the French polysystem, which is steadily being provided for by the growing number of Australian translations and ‘translators’. For Marc de Gouvenain, of publisher Actes Sud, it is the interaction between people and the landscape that makes Australian literature interesting. “In Europe we no longer see the landscape with young eyes. Australian authors have a fresh way of seeing things.”¹² These broader factors contributing to foreign impressions of Australia, and therefore reading positions, may be seen as having a paratextual effect; while not specifically concerned with the novels themselves, they affect the ways in which Australian novels are read. Other sites in which texts are translated in this way for the public include educational institutions, bookstores and the media. As in Chapter Five, these will now be dealt with individually in order to establish a picture of the state of the French polysystem and reading culture.

2.1 Education as translation

As stated in Chapter Five, formal educational institutions play a role in directing certain readers towards reading positions. The testimonies of students in the United Kingdom showed that by combining the teaching of culture and literature, many students had undergone major changes of opinion about their impressions of Australian culture. Likewise in France, a glance at some of the ways in which Australian literature is being taught to French students reveals the ways in which education works as a form of translation. Commentary also exposes student expectations about Australian texts, which gives some indication of wider community understandings of Australianness.

¹²TURNBULL, Sarah. Australian Authors in demand. *Bulletin*. Oct 28 1997, 35.

Dr Deirdre Gilfedder (an Australian university lecturer at Clermont-Ferrand) teaches Australian studies, within an English department, using examples of contemporary literature and film. Gilfedder says that while Australian stereotypes are rife in French culture, her students study a variety of aspects of Australian life, though most have a preference for studying Aboriginal issues. Gilfedder says that the French are “obsessed”¹³ with Aboriginal culture. This obsession, she believes, may stem from a background in studies of Rousseau, which leaves French students hungry for contemporary expressions of ‘savage’ civilisations that exist in a natural state away from the trappings and controlling institutions of Western civilisation.

In terms of literature, Gilfedder says that David Malouf is a “fashionable” read in France, but this is not necessarily for his Australianness. In her courses, however, she teaches Sally Morgan’s *My Place* amongst works by Malouf and other canonical writers, but regularly incorporates contemporary works where possible. She has used *Zigzag Street* (in English) in the classroom, for example. In this way, teaching must serve as a form of translation as teachers like Gilfedder will give a context to each culturally specific term in a work like *Zigzag Street*. This, in turn, will be an addition to the student’s repertoire which will then go on to help him or her interpret future Australian texts.

This situation is comparable to that described by the analysis of educational institutions in Chapter Five, where canonical authors and Aboriginal writers were seen to be the most popular options for students in the United Kingdom. I was unfortunately unable to interview French students on their opinions of the courses in Australian literature and culture, but Gilfedder’s commentary suggests that students are usually very surprised by the data presented to them in courses – being more

¹³Personal interview with Deirdre Gilfedder. Paris, 15 March 1999.

familiar with stereotypes and generalisations about the country before the course. For those who do not have the opportunity to formally study Australian culture, this type of epitextual translation must come from sites of general public access to texts such as book stores and the press.

2.2 Bookstores and publishing as translation

The popularity of Australian literature is apparent in the success of the Australian Bookshop in Paris. Canonical Australian authors, such as White and Malouf, can be found in many major French book stores, but the Australian Bookshop and its proprietor, Elaine Lewis, have facilitated the popularisation of titles by many younger and less well-known Australian authors. The book store organises launches and festivals and mediates the meeting of publishers, translators and authors. Authors frequently tour with the English edition of their novels and secure translation deals through the bookshop's festivities.

From the opening of the shop in September 1996 to March 1999 (when I visited the store) over sixty guest appearances and readings by Australian authors had been organised by the Australian Bookshop, making it a most significant contributor to the reputation of Australian literature in France. Lewis' decision to stock "real"¹⁴ stories about Australia along with the popular (Upfield) or canonical (Malouf) makes her, again, a translator: She is making the culture comprehensible by ensuring the novels she sells promote a 'realistic' image of the country (this is, of course, subjective, but the general aim is to reject stereotypical offerings.) Lewis feels that many of the other Australian-themed stores in France simply perpetuate stereotypes.

¹⁴Personal interview with Elaine Lewis. Paris, 13 March 1999.

Such stores “have their place” but Lewis prefers “a better clientele with a real interest in Australia”. She will suggest that shoppers purchase “Alexis Wright before Sally Morgan, Earls before Upfield”.¹⁵ In this approach, Lewis confirms my earlier suggestion that work by lesser-known writers, such as grunge novels, regularly offers clearer examples of cultural identity than many canonical works due to the concern with the ‘everyday’. Lewis thus steers away from promoting Australia’s examples of ‘high culture’, with a preference for cultural documentation.

With some thirty universities now doing some form of Australian studies in France, many of Lewis’ customers are students or academics. She also sells videos, travel guides and posters – but not souvenirs. The whole experience of being in the store is educational in that it contains no stereotypical or purely tourist oriented pieces. Lewis estimates that 85% of her customers are French.¹⁶ She also runs a reading group – taking on a teacherly role for those who are not attending a university course in Australian literature. *The Bulletin* aptly summarised the way in which Lewis works as a translator: “Forget kangaroo-emblazoned pubs and Aussie wine and beer. The latest Australian craze in France is rather more cerebral.”¹⁷ The following anecdotal reference may serve to illustrate the usefulness of Lewis’ approach.

Whilst visiting Lewis in her then makeshift store (the shop was almost closed for administrative reasons by French authorities but protest was sufficient to continue the store’s existence), two French women came into the shop. They were about to travel to Australia and were interested in books about “the pioneers” and “the convicts”. Their interest in the history of the country they were about to visit was

¹⁵Personal interview. 1999.

¹⁶GEORGE, Peter. Interview with Elaine Lewis. ABC Radio National. 9 Oct 1998.

¹⁷TURNBULL, Sarah. 1997, 34-35.

admirable, but limited. After Lewis' sales pitch, they left with Nick Earls' *Bachelor Kisses*, Facey's *A Fortunate Life*, Mudrooroo's *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* and a non-fictional work on the 'Stolen Generation'. Good business on one hand, but an excellent example of active translation at the same time. The girls arrived with one image in mind and left with a completely different picture and a diverse range of opportunities to learn more about the culture. In this way, Lewis is a translator and cultural ambassador. In a 1998 interview Lewis made the important point that at that stage there was also no Australian tourism office in Paris (London was the closest) so she was serving the purpose of travel adviser for potential tourists.¹⁸ She says¹⁹

[...] the good thing [...] is that they actually buy novels as well, they'll start off with guides and maps but then they'll say 'now have you got something I can read, something that tells me a bit about Australia?' So, even through the tourism we're promoting the literature.

Lewis says that while cover designs chosen by French publishers for Australian texts tend to be stereotypical (as I will discuss later in this chapter) the intentions are good and the interest is genuine. She believes that British covers of the same works are about "marketing and sleaze"²⁰ and miss the "point" of many Australian works. Lewis always attempts to sell the Australian covers of English-language editions, rather than the British. Importantly, this makes her customers some of the few to access original, untranslated editions of works from Australia – other European readers will see only the UK cover if they purchase a text in English.²¹

Lewis maintains current knowledge of publishing trends and her ability to market texts comes from an understanding of the ways in which publishers deal with

¹⁸GEORGE, Peter. 1998.

¹⁹GEORGE, Peter. 1998.

²⁰Personal interview. 1999.

²¹Personal interview, 1999.

Australian works. Many French publishers release Australian novels as part of a specific imprint, for example. Actes Sud (who published Fiona Capp's *Night Surfing/Surfer La Nuit*) have a specific interest in publishing world literature. Australian literature published with Actes Sud appears in an 'Antipodes' series including work from New Zealand and non-French-speaking Pacific Islands. Such series function in a similar way to the inclusion of texts within genres by suggesting that works from assumedly similar areas of the world will have thematic links: if the reader likes one of these texts, they will have certain expectations of the others in the series. In Actes Sud's translated series, the French are "invited to discover a new country and at the same time they will be carried into a universe populated with characters who will be strangers to them but who paradoxically will bring them back to themselves" according to Estelle Lemaitre (a representative of the publisher).²² The publisher actively seeks books "which at the same time can convey what is distinctive about a country but which also have universal content." Actes Sud does print runs of 3 – 5,000 with the books in its Antipodean series which is a "considerable" number in the French system²³. Lemaitre says that in choosing books, the literary quality is more important than evocations of landscape and so on, though she admits that there is "an educational intention" behind the choices made.

Marc de Gouvenain (Actes Sud's translator and scout for Australian works) snapped up Fiona Capp's *Night Surfing* for translation at its launch at the Australian Bookshop. He says: "For me it's typically Australian. It's not the mythical Australia, the bush and the desert, but the characters are still deeply involved in the landscape, they live, love and go to the beach."²⁴ Gouvenain's intention is not to present

²²STRETTON, Andrea. Interview with Estelle Lemaitre. TV ABC, *Sunday Arts*. 31 Oct 1999a.

²³STRETTON, Andrea. 1999a.

²⁴TURNBULL, Sarah. 1997, 35.

stereotypes, but still to offer something exotic and educational. While it may be understood that not all of Australia is bushland, the assumption of connection to landscape remains prominent and is clearly reflected in the covers chosen for novels and the media coverage accompanying the release of Australian work.

It is clear then that both publishers and booksellers have pedagogical agendas within the ways in which they promote Australian texts. They see themselves as translators of the culture, not just the texts, and acknowledge their roles in the understanding of Australianness in France. This is markedly different to the reading culture at work in the United Kingdom, where the Australianness of books is frequently hidden to ensure success, unless an exotic storyline is viewed as marketable or sociologically interesting. There are no attempts revealed in my analysis of United Kingdom publishing trends to educate the British public about Australianness. Rather, the mission is to make it palatable to readers and comparable to local works. As stated earlier, this suggests that in the French case, while readers are subjected to erroneous stereotypes, there is a desire to learn about the culture. Novels, then, play a crucial ambassadorial role, assisted by the many translators involved in their transfer.

2.3 The media as translation

It is clear to see that from the late 1990s onwards, respect and knowledge of Australian literature in France increased dramatically. In 1998, television station France 3's nightly book series *Un Livre un Jour* [A Book a Day] produced twelve editions dedicated to Australian literature. Around four million viewers are estimated to have seen these programs. The books chosen for the special included new talent,

such as Fiona Capp, along with David Malouf and Arthur Upfield, Tim Winton, Sally Morgan and others.²⁵ In 2000, however, with the Olympics looming large, Australian cultural activities received the highest media accolade possible in France: promotion by cultural connoisseur Bernard Pivot. Pivot's television program, *Bouillon de Culture* [Culture Soup/Brew] is one of the most highly respected forums for cultural commentary in France; if Pivot makes a literary recommendation, the book has been known to sell out book stores the next day. Each year, Pivot orchestrates a series of foreign editions of his program and in early 2000 it was Australia's turn. *Arts Sunday* (arguably Australia's closest comparison to *Bouillon de Culture*) presented a French special edition to precede the airing of the program in Australia featuring interviews with Pivot and other notable Franco-Australian figures (such as art dealer and commentator, Stefan Jacob.) It must be noted that Australians are by no means innocent of the use of stereotypes, as this special featured many viewpoints of the Eiffel Tower and a Piafesque soundtrack.

In the Australian edition of *Bouillon de Culture*²⁶, Pivot promoted thirty-six Australian fiction and non-fiction titles – along with music, art and some analysis of Aboriginal issues. His recommended titles will inevitably sell to a degree that would have been impossible to achieve without this publicity. Again, Pivot is an example of active epitextual translation – making a culturally-specific text more comprehensible and accessible for a foreign readership. He provides a cultural context placing French readers in a reading position that allows for a more comprehensive reading.

²⁵*Un Livre Un Jour explore l'Australie!* URL: www.sv.vtcom.fr/ftv/fr3/livre/australie.html (30 March 1998).

²⁶*Bouillon de Culture* (Australian Broadcast). TV, ABC. 6 Dec 1999.

The Australian press interviewed Pivot about his career and his impressions of Australia. He said²⁷

My knowledge of Australian culture is minimal. I'm rather ashamed of it. This is why I would like to go to Australia, to get knowledge, find out what is happening culturally in this new country, this country at the other end of the world. To abandon stereotypes and to let French people like myself know about Australian culture, and through that come to know Australia and Australians.

The final claim of this statement is evidence of the perceived power of the paratextual effect of translators like Pivot: by exploring aspects of a culture as presented by Pivot, a reader comes to believe that they have a sufficient repertoire to understand members of the culture – and to feel resonance with the cultural output. This may or may not actually work in terms of 'accuracy', but it is a significant reading position established by translation methods. It makes readers believe that the text is comprehensible to them.

Pivot's Australian-based program provided a heterogenous translation of Australianness in that it featured the conflicting opinions of a panel of six Australians, from academic and artistic backgrounds. This 'cross section' of Australian culture in truth represented the views of only limited class and professional spheres, but fortunately they did not all agree on the issues on which they were asked to comment as representatives of all Australians. As well as promoting Australia's arts, the panel was asked questions like "What is the most important date in Australian history?" along with inquiries about Aboriginal rights and Republicanism. Pivot often purposefully redirected questions towards his own preconceptions of Australia: a clever move in that they were no doubt common misconceptions which were then redefined by the panel. For example, when the issue of Australia's relationship with the bush was answered in terms of economic and

²⁷STRETTON, Andrea. Interview with Bernard Pivot. 22 Sep 1999b. URL: http://arts.abc.net.au/bouillon/stretton_txt.htm (12 Oct 1999).

political issues, Pivot requested the poetic and imaginary version of the story – to hesitant responses from the panel. The bush was painted as difficult and controversial rather than exotic, and Aboriginal affinity with the land was problematised, not assumed. In amongst this, images of the desert, Uluru and Sydney Harbour were edited into the dialogue scenes, combining that which is recognisable and marketable with the new things that would be learned by the French audience. While flawed in places, the potential of such a program as a translation tool is clear.

The examples listed above offer an understanding of the images of Australia and Australianness current available in the French literary marketplace. The combination of these various forms of translation affects the possible reading positions assumed by French readers of Australian work. I will now closely analyse the release of Nikki Gemmell's *Cleave* in France. As was done in Chapter Five, I will progressively look at what makes *Cleave* a specifically Australian text, how Nikki Gemmell as an author is made to work as a representative of her culture and the role of the press. Unlike Chapter Five, this analysis will require a more lengthy examination of linguistic translation itself before looking into other forms of translation. I will show that many alterations have been made to the text in the movement from Australia to France, but, in spite of this, the press continues to make much of the text as an opportunity for understanding Australianness. The press continues to attempt to fill the gap between language translation and reception of the novel, defining and shaping images of the culture as it promotes the text.

3. Cultural Specificity – Australianness in *Cleave*.

In Chapter Five, the language and mythology of *Zigzag Street* was examined separately from discussion of translation in order to establish what made the novel culturally-specific. Here I will utilise both the Australian and the French versions of *Cleave* to demonstrate both what I see as local repertoire and what was considered by the language translator to be culturally-specific. I will perform this analysis of linguistic difference first, so that I can go on to establish an argument that the other types of translation as discussed in Chapter Five are very similar to those analysed here despite the change in language.

Cleave and Gemmell's first novel, *Shiver*, were published simultaneously by two different imprints of one French publishing house. Pooling promotional resources meant Gemmell appeared in the majority of French magazines and newspapers along with television appearances (rare for an Australian author). Gemmell also benefited from being based in London at the time of the texts' release, making swift journeys to France for interviews possible (she made five trips to France in the eight months surrounding the books' publication).²⁸ This left her in an unusually privileged position for a young Australian author (she says "I suspect I got more coverage in France than I do in Australia"²⁹), and the result was two bestselling novels. (*Cleave* is said to have sold around 25,000 copies in French translation.)³⁰

Throughout Gemmell's French publicity, it was *Cleave* that consistently received the most attention. This is most likely because of its outback setting, which would appeal to the visions of Australia currently desirable within the French reading

²⁸Personal interview. 2000.

²⁹Personal interview. 2000.

³⁰LOTMAN, Herbert. 2000, 54.

culture. Before looking further at the reception of *Cleave* away from its Australian source culture, it is necessary to analyse what it is about *Cleave* that positions it as a culturally-specific novel and the factors that have ensured its success as a representation of Australianness for other cultures.

3.1 Language and myth

One of Gemmell's agendas in *Cleave* is to dismantle the myths discussed in Chapter Two of the Australian affinity with the desert and the bush. While her female lead is strong and capable in many ways, the bush is depicted as a complex site where no singular skill set ensures survival. This problematisation of 'the bush' seems to be missed in some of the French press coverage of the novel's release. It is seen as harsh, but romantic nonetheless and a place where Australians are capable in a way that Europeans would not be. Though the bush is a complicated space for Gemmell, she does not subvert the Australian literary tradition of placing characters in the bush to 'find themselves'. While McGahan did subvert this to some extent with the minimal recognition of changed identity and no real epiphany befalling the characters in their bush location, Gemmell's heroine finishes her quest with a new state of self-awareness. Conforming to the literary convention, the protagonist leaves the bush after her self-discovery, but does not return to the city, opting instead for the half-way point of rural Tasmania. The heteroglossia involved in this storyline is a key factor in maximal comprehension of the protagonist's motivations. International readers, as was shown in McGahan's reviews in Chapter Five, may miss much of this.

The difficult union of Aboriginal ways and Western traditions is highlighted in *Cleave*, which shows the hodge-podge lifestyle brought about by continued historical misunderstandings and missionary activities in the area that features as its setting. While the white people clearly lack knowledge of the land as held by some of the Aborigines, there are also Aboriginal people divorced from this connection due to their displaced sense of being. The text's protagonist, Snip, is privileged with a mostly agreeable reception from the Aboriginal community she visits, but is welcome because she acknowledges her place in their culture without trying to change it. In this way, Gemmell questions attempts by white Australians to assist what they see as dysfunctional communities and she problematises possible solutions with complete deference to the position of the community members themselves. She provides an unusually sensitive and distanced discussion of one Aboriginal culture through the eyes of a white person. I will show later that this was seen by some French press as a lack of ability to discuss Aboriginal issues. There appears to be an expectation that any Australian book that touches on Aboriginal issues must explain Aboriginality to a foreign reader. This book indeed does this, but not in the way anticipated by French readers; that is, Gemmell does not attempt to speak *for* the community, but acknowledges the gaps and secrets in the process of understanding between the two cultural spheres. In this way, Gemmell is made to work as a translator in spite of her refusal to translate. In this way of framing the construction of intercultural understanding, there is no space allowed for 'silence': it is assumed that cultural understanding via paratextual translators is always *possible*.

Australianness in *Cleave* is depicted in language, landscape and mythology. Gemmell indulges in frequent word play within her text, along with use of accents specific to certain characters and recognition of Aboriginal language and speech

patterns. There are many references to brand names and slang along with icons of rural Australian identity that are significant to the authenticity of the story. There have been numerous texts written in many different ways about the Australian outback and central Australian desert, however, historically many of these were romanticised or formalised for reasons of stylistic convention. Gemmell uses her own experience of living in an Aboriginal community and the freedom associated with contemporary Australian writing to authenticate her tale. As was discussed in Chapter Three, linguistic translation occurs in a variety of ways within any novel and the translations of *Cleave* reveal many of these.

Les Noces Sauvages (the French translation of *Cleave*) shows examples of domestication, footnoting and explanatory sentences along with problems of accent and idiom. The majority of the word play within this novel is not translated in the French edition. This will establish a different perception of the author's writing style for the French reader. There is playfulness in the writing of the original that distinguishes it from more standard interpretations of Australian bush life and this will not be discernible in the French case. It is ironic that the French desire that which is new and fresh from Australian literature, yet it is much of this freshness and originality that must be altered in the translation process. The British and American versions of *Cleave* were also assumed to require domesticated translating (such terms as 'ute', 'thong', 'esky' and 'stroller' were exchanged for local alternatives in both markets). Gemmell's United Kingdom publisher suggested the addition of a glossary of terms to the novel, but Gemmell was against this, preferring short explanations of terms within the text.³¹ Gemmell insisted upon this approach for 'ute', which posed problems in every international market. While this tactic is ideal, it is clearly

³¹Personal interview. 2000.

impossible to include such an explanation for every problematic term, so many terms were domesticated instead. Furthermore, in Gemmell's United Kingdom press we still see the ute described as a "truck"³², indicating that further translation of the object was seen as necessary for British readers.

Clearly demonstrating the translator's invisibility, numerous international reviews critique Gemmell's 'style', which, particularly in the French case, has been dramatically altered. Gemmell uses word play and extensive metaphor, idiom and non-standard language to punctuate her story. In France, that which is taken to be Gemmell's 'style' has been compared with well-known authors such as Michael Ondaatje and Cormac McCarthy³³. In the United Kingdom, her style is referred to as "idiosyncratic", "hysterical" and "sometimes even a bit silly [...] but verbal histrionics aside, Gemmell's grasp of character is astute, and her themes expansive."³⁴ Another publication suggests "Gemmell's stylistic quirks include compound adjectives [...] archaic wordiness [...] and just plain weirdness..."³⁵ So that which is taken as innovative and desirable in France, is seen as unskilled or overly experimental in the British system. In both cases, changes have been made to the original, though the United Kingdom version will more closely represent Gemmell's own 'style'. Again, perhaps this reflects the conditions of the reading cultures (in the willingness to accept Australian or other transferred texts into the system) and the state of the polysystem (experimental works pose a greater threat to traditional mores which is problematic in the United Kingdom, but embraced without fear in France).

³²See for example: Julie WHEELWRIGHT. Soul survivor. *Times*. 31 July 1999.

³³MAZINGARBE, Danièle. Nikki Gemmell, "l'espace me manque". *Madame Figaro*. 8 Jan 2000, 28.

³⁴ATKINS, Lucy. Outback Odyssey. *Times Literary Supplement*. 23 July 1999, 23.

³⁵MACFARLANE, Robert. Review. *Observer*. 6 Aug 2000, 14.

Gemmell's word play often serves to summarise a situation by avoiding drawn out dialogue, in keeping with the personal styles of the text's 'no-nonsense' characters. The following example, which was translated for overall meaning in the French, gives the reader a sense of the purposeful, casual brevity of the meeting of Snip and Dave (who answers a newspaper advertisement to accompany Snip on her road trip from Sydney to central Australia):

The where-they're-at in the other-half stakes is quickly, cleanly established. He's called Dave. He's twenty-six. He's just out of a seen-from-afar-at-a-bar situation that never really connected. (9)

In translation this reads:

Chacun passe rapidement en revue sa situation. Il s'appelle Dave. Il a vingt-six ans. Il sort à peine d'une histoire du genre vague rencontre dans un bar, qui n'a jamais vraiment donné quoi que ce soit.' (14)
[Each rapidly gives a review of their personal situation. He is called Dave. He is twenty-six. He is just out of a rather vague relationship, a meeting in a bar that never really came to anything.]

There are numerous examples of this type of word play, which lends originality to Gemmell's writing style and adds to the reader's comprehension of the characters.

On page 27: 'They drive quickly through it to saltpan country, and stop the car and get out and runrunrunasfastastheycan into a silvery, moon-plain vastness...'
The word play here lends momentum to the scene and gives a breathless quality to the actions of the characters. The reader feels their speed and desire to run to the beautiful vista in the writing style. Again, the French translation does not alter the meaning but changes the feeling and style of the writing. The word play in the original version also alludes to a children's story (*The Gingerbread Man*) hence implying a child-like playfulness and excitement in the actions of the characters.

Ils ont vite fait de dépasser la ville et de se retrouver dans la région des puits salants. Là, ils s'arrêtent, descendent de la camionnette et courent, courent, courent à perdre haleine dans un décor lunaire, tout d'immensité argentée. (28)
[They quickly pass the town and find themselves in the saltpan region. There, they stop, get out of the truck and run, run, run until they're out of breath to the lunar landscape, vast and silvery.]

The small changes visible in these examples result in a loss of fidelity to Gemmell's style and altered or limited meanings of certain expressions. While the translated work is designed to ensure that readers will comprehend the story, they will only be receiving a portion of the meaning that was available in the original. In the ongoing translation paradox, the new version will contain other meanings and allusions not available in the original, proving that reading positions are a construction of the translator(s) more than the author of texts.

One of the most important features of Gemmell's text is her nod to the word play of Aboriginal English and Aboriginal languages. These are used in dialogue between Aboriginal characters within the text, but also used by the narrator to establish difference and to translate the culture of the region where Snip lives for other readers. When Snip first returns to the Aboriginal community – where she had spent some of her childhood – she begins to embrace the local idiom:

Snip is beginning to talk Yapa way. Dropping 'and' and 'the', economical way. Saying little one, skinny one, cheeky one. Remembering that fire can be cheeky, and a noisy dog can be cheeky, and tea that spills, and kids. Remembering ringamanu is telephone and sweepamanu is broom. Remembering the year is spelt the graffitti way – 8T7 9T4. Yapa is 'Aboriginal person'; 'we-yapa is a lament, 'poor you'. (74/75)

Snip se remet à parler le jargon du coin. Elle laisse tomber les «et», ainsi que la plupart des articles. Va au plus simple. Désigne les choses ou les gens en disant «le petit», «le maigre» ou «l'insolent», sans oublier que le mot «insolent» peut être utilisé indifféremment pour désigner le feu, un chien qui aboie trop fort, du thé qui se renverse, ou un groupe de gamins. Elle se souvient que *ringamanu* veut dire «téléphone»; *sweepamanu* «balai»; *yapa* «aborigène» et *weyapa* «Pauvre de toi!» (63)

[Snip is returning to speaking the local jargon. She leaves out 'and' as well as most of the articles. Going more simply. Calling things and people 'the little one', 'the skinny one' or 'the cheeky one', without forgetting that the word 'cheeky' can be used indifferently to describe the fire, a dog that barks too much, tea that spills or a group of kids. She remembers that *ringamanu* means 'telephone', *sweepamanu* 'broom', *yapa* 'Aborigine' and *weyapa* 'poor you'.]

The changes between the two versions of the text here are demonstrative of the types of translation choices made throughout the novel. While Gemmell goes to lengths to

describe the speaking style of the Yapa people, she also incorporates the style into the broader narrative approaches. Snip begins to imitate this style, as does the narrator. This cannot be replicated in the French translation. The importance of words like 'ringamanu' is the realisation of the hybridity, creoles and dialects in postcolonial languages. This is an explanation of the community's speech patterns and also a statement about the history of the region (where missionaries forced English upon the locals.) 'Ring' and 'sweep' are recognisable English words alluding to the adoption and appropriation of certain English terms into the Aboriginal language of the area. To a French reader with no English knowledge, these may well appear as wholly Aboriginal language terms – therefore losing the political resonance of the scene. The use of 'le petit' in French is commonplace, so the suggestion that calling everybody 'cheeky one' and so on is a particular trait of the Yapa people loses significance. Furthermore, it proves almost impossible for the translator to actually drop 'articles' as the quote suggests, as 'the' (le/la/les) has a different function in the French language than in English. Finally, the reference to graffiti style dates is completely omitted from the French text.

Throughout the text these language patterns are used by Gemmell to explain the culture of the area – but also to show that it is the white person who is an outsider in the space. It is an important move in contemporary Australian writing to show an Australia that is not white-dominated and where cultural mores need to be explained to white visitors. It also demonstrates the continuing evolution of Aboriginal cultural ways and the incorporation and appropriation of other traditions into those cultures (for better or worse). Thus there is a certain irony in some of Gemmell's uses of this way of speaking which may be lost on international audiences; to engage with irony, the reader must first be familiar with the origin of the object to be satirised. Gemmell

frequently concludes passages about the Aboriginal people with the phrase ‘Yapa way, that way’. Again, this imitates speech patterns and displays differences and particular characteristics of the Yapa people. ‘Yapa way’, ‘Aboriginal way’, or ‘Blackfella way’ are used similarly throughout *Cleave*. In the French text, these are translated as ‘à la manière des aborigènes’ (41) [in the way of the Aborigines] or ‘c’est un truc Aborigène’ (46) [it’s an Aboriginal thing]. This is a case of perceived ‘fidélité au sens’ as the basic meaning of the expression is carried over. However, a deeper reading of the use of these expressions is not available to French readers as they may not have access to the ironic/expressive use of the Aboriginal language patterns themselves. It is also important in certain places that Gemmell distinguishes between what is the ‘Yapa way’ and what is a broader Aboriginal cultural trait. A certain homogenisation of Aboriginality could be taken from the French text. Gemmell’s use of ‘blackfellas’ is also meaningful. This is a term that has changed in signification from being common but unproblematised, to having racist connotations, to being reclaimed and reappropriated in some areas with a certain pride (in the way of ‘queer’ or contemporary Australian ‘wog’ comedies as discussed earlier in this thesis). Its use is omitted from the French text.

There are many examples of Gemmell’s employment of Aboriginal English and other Aboriginal language varieties in *Cleave*. Goanna hunting, for example, is discussed thus: ‘goanna go, old one that one, goanna go’ (74), and in French: ‘La chasse au goana, vieille tradition, la chasse au goana (62) [Goanna hunting, old tradition, goanna hunting]. The speech pattern is also used ironically for humour. Snip recalls a friend’s decision to tear out the last three pages of all her boyfriend’s books in anger: ‘City way, that way’ thinks Snip (61). This ironic use of the language pattern might be read as implying that such childish punitive actions would not be a

part of the Yapa way of life, or that there are correlations between the page-ripping action and the belief in punishment by the community that exists among the Yapa. The French translation says: *C'est vraiment une idée de flippée des villes* (52) [it's a real city girl idea] signifying a city/country divide rather than an Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relationship.

Speech patterns of other characters are altered for the French text, though some attempt is made to allude to accents. Gemmell writes an accent into phrases like 'out ya get' (7) or 'black and white fill-ums'(88). These are translated into informal French in the case of direct dialogue ('sors de là' (13) [get out of there]) but are generally dispensed with if they are allusions used by the narrator (fill-ums become films). One of the more difficult words to translate appears to be the continual use by different characters in different contexts of the word 'mate'. It is variously translated as 'mon pote' or 'mon gars', implying 'buddy' or 'my boy'. The translator's choices connote informality, even coarseness, that would not be achieved by the use of other terms for 'friend' such as 'mon ami' [my friend] or 'mon camarade' [my comrade]. The negative repercussion, however, of alternating the two different translations of mate throughout the text is that the repetitive nature of the use of the word – and the fact that it does cross over various registers and age groups of users – is lost. Similarly, the use of 'bloody' is translated according to the phrase it is associated with. 'Bloody hell' (43) is translated as 'Putain de Dieu' (40) [whore of God] (a form of vulgarity/swearing) whereas 'A great big bloody hole in the fuel tank'(164) becomes 'un trou d'enfer dans le réservoir d'essence' (128) [a hole from hell in the fuel tank] – a different adjective available in the French repertoire takes the place of 'bloody'. Again, the fact that no single alternative can be used in French

for all occasions of the use of ‘bloody’ means that the significance of this peculiarity of Australian English cannot be replicated in the French text in any way.

As with *Zigzag Street* and other contemporary Australian texts, the use of brand names and icons of popular culture contributes to the cultural specificity of *Cleave*. These are textual features that assume understanding by the reader for they will rarely be intratextually translated. Important to *Cleave*’s subversion of the masculine space of the outback is Gemmell’s use of names of cars – and Snip’s familiarity with these, even if she is not au fait with mechanics. The Valiant Regal and the Holden Ute are repeatedly referred to by their brand names reinforcing their relevance to the source culture and their importance as authentic artefacts of the culture and lifestyle depicted in the text. The Valiant is referred to as the ‘break’ (13) [station wagon] throughout the French edition while the ute (which Gemmell has stated was one of the most problematic words to translate in many languages³⁶) is variously referred to as the ‘pick-up’ or the ‘camionette Holden’ [Holden truck] – both of which imply a more American style truck than the smaller-cabined standard ute common in Australia. Though not an Australian make, the Kombi van is a significant icon of both bush and surf culture in Australia. In French it is simply translated as a van.

While Milo and Bushell’s tea are removed from the French edition, Vegemite is retained and footnoted. This shows the changes in awareness of Australian icons in the French repertoire in recent years. At the time of the translation of Sally Morgan’s *My Place* (1996), Vegemite was completely removed and replaced by peanut butter (as discussed in Chapter Three). The increased international availability of the product and the increasing translation of Australian texts (which thus calls for

³⁶Personal interview. 2000.

standards in translated repertoire) means that Vegemite is now considered a sufficiently important icon to be worthy of retention as a cultural signifier. It is footnoted, however, in this text, perhaps because it is later used in a racist word play, which relies on comprehension of the colour of the product. Vegemite is translated thus: ‘Pâte à tartiner noirâtre, à base de levure de bière’ (19) [black spread for bread, made from a base of brewer’s yeast] aiding comprehensibility of its use in the coarse appellation of an Aboriginal community as a ‘Vegemite Village’ (15) – Village de Vegemite (19). Two other footnotes are used within the text: one explains that a certain turn of phrase was used in French in the original text – this is a translator’s convention. (96) The second is attached to an explanation that Snip’s mother, Helen, is referred to as ‘Hel’ by Bud because his life with her was hellish. The footnote explains the double meaning of the abbreviation. (144). Thus, it seems that footnotes have been used here only when it seemed essential to retain a culturally-specific reference that was important to comprehension. The translator’s subjectivity in terms of ‘faithful’ choices is revealed here. This is unlike earlier translations, such as *My Place*, where footnotes were used regularly throughout making the text appear more sociological in style. (It is important to note also that *My Place* did have a pedagogic objective, so footnotes were not out of context in terms of formal equivalence.)

A collection of the distinctive ‘Daddy Long Legs’ spiders in the corner of a room are simply ‘les araignées’ (43/40) [the spiders]. The common use of ‘Woolies’ as an abbreviation is replaced by its proper name (recognisable internationally) of Woolworths (67/57) which does not observe that abbreviations of this sort are common in Australian English. The ‘milkbar’ is replaced with the ‘commerce’ (100/82) [a term for any smaller shop] and the lamington Snip buys there is translated as ‘une génoise au chocolat’ (101/82) [a sponge cake covered in

chocolate]. Many of these are clearly adequate attempts at translation, and there may well be no feasible alternative, but it is important to note what is lost to both culturally-specificity and the author's style. Stereotypical worker's shorts, King Gees (made of rugged denim and worn short for hot climates) are translated as 'son bermuda' [his bermudas], implying a rather different type of garment. Throughout the text, the Paddlepop ice cream is significant – as Snip reminisces about her childhood fetishes. Certain older friends refer her to as 'Miss Paddlepop' due to her earlier passion for the brand. This is replaced with an 'esquimau', a different type of ice cream which is recognisable to French readers. Miss Paddlepop becomes 'La demoiselle aux esquimaux' (143/113).

Proper names (which regularly pose problems for translators) are generally retained within the text but occasionally elaborated with an extended sentence. Where a character lives in 'The Rocks' in the original, the French edition has her 'dans un endroit appelé The Rocks' [in a place called The Rocks] (102/83) so that there is no confusion that this is the name of a place. Likewise, 'Broome' is referred to as 'La ville de Broome' (61/52) [the town of Broome] intratextually adding information for readers who may not immediately recognise the location. An interesting opportunity for locating similarity and difference comes in the discussion of the names given to Aboriginal children by missionaries and other white teachers and officials, or as inspired by the media, over the years of the community's development. The references to popular cultural names are unchanged in translation ('Sylvester, Scully, Bart') whereas the biblical names are swapped for their French alternatives (the ecclesiastically authorised series as cited by Pym in Chapter Three): Gideon, Zacharia (sic) and Noah become Gédéon, Zacharie and Noé (69/58). In this situation, the names are being spoken about broadly so are translated, if a character

were actually named Noah, for example, it would most likely remain unaltered in translation. At the same time, it is misleading to suggest that Aboriginal children might have French names, or that biblical names are universal.

Much is made in the French promotions of this text of the fact that Australians love nicknames – Snip, Bud (her father) and others in the text are called almost exclusively by these names. A story is told among the characters of a man who lost an arm out of a car window and gained the nickname ‘Breezy’. This episode tells of the ironic and sarcastic nature of nickname allocation that results in well-known appellations such as ‘blue’ for red haired people. The French translation of this is ‘l’homme au bras dehors’ (16/20) [the man with his arm outside] which misses the point entirely.

In terms of the domestication of the text, there are two occasions that cite distinctly French beverages, which are rarely seen in Australia and would almost certainly be unavailable in the outback. A ‘ deep cool hush like a long cool drink’ (17) becomes a ‘Il règne un calme profond, frais comme un diablo menthe’ (21) [a profound calm, fresh like a diablo menthe] (diablo menthe is a common French mint and lemonade drink). This transposition seems unnecessary, as there was no local drink type to be translated. The choice has been made, however, in the way that idiomatic expressions are frequently translated; the allusion is replaced with something seen in French culture to symbolise what is cool and refreshing. Later, where Snip as a child drinks ‘pink lemonade’ (108), she is said to drink ‘grenadine’(84) a colouring juice generally only used in cocktails in Australia and highly unlikely to be available to a child in the bush.

As has been stated throughout this thesis, my intention here is not to place value judgments on what is a good or bad translation. Linguistic alterations, in

contemporary times and certainly in the case of literary transfers between Western nations are rarely made for political or self-serving ends. Changes are generally the result of inevitable dilemmas faced by the translator who must make their perceived best possible choices in an economic and marketable fashion. In this chapter it has been necessary to establish some of the more significant alterations that have been made to the text during transfer in order to analyse their cultural repercussions. There are, however, some choices made by the translator that might be seen as genuine errors and these have a specific effect on the images of culture they represent. A pierced eyebrow is translated as a pierced eyelid (121 /95), for example. The buttery toast with Vegemite presented to Snip in a motel and seen as ‘decadent, the way grandmothers do it’ (14) becomes ‘aussi écoeurants que des tartines de grand-mères’ (19)[disgusting/nauseating like grandmother’s bread and butter]. This dramatically alters the scene removing the naughty but nice implication of a grandmother’s heavy-handed approach to butter.

Later there is discussion of the initiation ceremonies conducted amongst certain Aboriginal people. The practice of splitting a man’s penis is being joked about in conversation, with a provocative woman suggesting the penis looks like a ‘burnt banger’ after the process. (123) This is translated as ‘pétard brûlé’ (97) [an exploded firework]. It is possible that this interpretation could be read by some, but the more likely connotation of the comment – intended to be slightly bawdy and to make the men in the room cringe – is a reference to an overcooked sausage (which has a tendency to split and spill out at the end). These kinds of alterations to text are extremely common within translations due to the subjectivity involved in interpretation of the original by the translator. It is clear that the reading position of the foreign readers is markedly influenced by translation choices.

3.2 Genre and the author as local identity

Genre is a less important factor in the movement of Gemmell's novel towards outside markets than it was in the cases in Chapter Five, as *Cleave* is not associated with a particular trend or movement. It forms part of what might vaguely be known as 'contemporary literature' affording it a certain credibility (both in Australia and elsewhere) but also making the use of slang and other non-conventional language systems acceptable. Its blunt style, along with the author's age, has had it occasionally connected to 'grunge' writing in Australia, though this has not been the case internationally. Most important in terms of genre is setting of the text. Gemmell has said, it is "rare – in Australia as much as anywhere – for a novel to be set extensively in a remote Aboriginal community"³⁷ which appears to prove fascinating for an international audience. Yet, the use of such a rural setting for a self-discovery novel does ensure *Cleave*'s inclusion in an Australian tradition of similar tales where protagonists undertake physical and psychological journeys simultaneously. Apart from this, Gemmell's genre is said to be that of the 'hot young writer' – if not grunge, her work fits with the many new, young writers popularised in recent years as part of a new wave of Australian literature. As was the case with Nick Earls, Gemmell has a particular status within Australia that is made use of in her publicity. Before moving on to an examination of the movement of Gemmell's text, it is necessary to analyse her position within her source culture as this contributes to the cultural specificity of the text as a whole.

Gemmell has "earned XYZ gen street-cred from her years as Triple J's newsreader"³⁸ During her work as a journalist, she lived and worked in Antarctica

³⁷Personal interview. 2000.

³⁸WALDREN, Murray. Sparkling Wasteland. *Weekend Australian*. 12-13 Sep 1998, Review 14.

and the Northern Territory, the settings for her novels. As is the case with almost all younger, Australian writers, her novels are assumed to be autobiographical despite her protests and the deliberate appendage of 'A Novel' to the titles of her works. As with other authors examined here, the press continues to reinforce the real-life connections of her texts and conflates her statements that the texts are loosely based on her experiences with the suggestion that they are entirely based on her life.

"Today, she still insists *Shiver* is fiction, but acknowledges its strong resemblance to her own experience."³⁹ Gemmell's youth is also a key factor in the ways of assessing her work and in most Australian reviews she is referred to as 'young', for example: "Best-sellers a snip for young author"⁴⁰ In most recent press commentary, Gemmell was interviewed while pregnant. This fact is said to be the greatest test for the author as it "will force her to stop, to stay still, to run no more. To be, in other words, the opposite of everything Nikki Gemmell has been for 20 years."⁴¹ This positioning of Gemmell as a woman who is always moving and seeking adventure connects her directly to her protagonists.

Gemmell's novels have sold well in Australia, but have not achieved the cult status of the work of Earls or McGahan. For this reason, even in the coverage of her second novel, the Australian press extensively outlines Gemmell's background and 'authority' to write about her characters. She is shown to have come from a working class background and worked hard for the achievements she has made.

The daughter of a Wollongong coalminer, she is described by one former colleague as having "an incredible capacity for head-down work. She was just determined to become a novelist, to follow it through."⁴²

³⁹GUILLIATT, Richard. The Gypsy in her Soul. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 19 Sep 1998, Good Weekend 42.

⁴⁰YEAP, Sue. Best-sellers a snip for young author. *West Australian*. 19 August 1998, Today 14.

⁴¹ZUEL, Bernard. Strange encounters. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 18 March 2000, Spectrum 3.

⁴²GUILLIATT, Richard. 1998, Good Weekend 42.

Thus, the media allows her to work within the desirable Australian celebrity model of one who has achieved success only after hard work. Gemmell also has a Masters degree in writing, though this is rarely acknowledged in her reviews or interviews. It is clear that the perceived audience desire is for a writer who has *experienced*, rather than created, the environments in which her characters find themselves.

While international reviews see Gemmell's landscapes as harsh and antisocial (as I will discuss later), Australian reviews see these landscapes merely as backdrops for the search for identity. "Her books explore the landscape, both physical and emotional."⁴³ says Murray Waldren. Frances Atkinson speaks of the comparison of Antarctica and the outback: "The two landscapes are strikingly different, but the emotional terrain is the same."⁴⁴ While the reviews remark upon Gemmell's textual creation of the Australian landscape, it is very much depicted as a familiar setting for a novel dealing with personal searches. This correlates with the assertions of Chapter Two that Australian novels frequently include this type of journey to the bush/outback to analyse a character's personal journey. More challenging and even interesting to the Australian press is Gemmell's decision to move to the United Kingdom. "But now Nikki Gemmell has moved somewhere really inhospitable – London."⁴⁵ While London itself is not exoticised by the Australian press, it carries with it the opportunity for lauding Gemmell's international publishing deals and film contracts which, as always, are used to indicate her level of success – it is never enough to be successful solely in Australia.

Gemmell suggests that her move to the United Kingdom was strategic in that she "...did not want to be known as a radio personality that bashed out a novel. So I

⁴³WALDREN, Murray. 1998, Review 14.

⁴⁴ATKINSON, Frances. A sea of hope. *Age* (archives). URL: <http://www.theage.com.au/books/archives/gemmell.html> (11 Jan 2001).

⁴⁵GRIFFIN, Michelle. Melbourne Writers Festival Review. *Age*. 25 Aug 1998, 3.

decided to pack up to see if I could make it here as a writer, I came to the UK as an anonymous person with no history.”⁴⁶ While Gemmell’s past may not have been immediately apparent to readers in the United Kingdom, I will show later in this chapter that the United Kingdom’s press characteristically carries over elements of Gemmell’s author function (as it exists in her source environment) to translations of the work for a new market. I maintain that no author appears to the reading public as ‘anonymous’ with ‘no history’. Gemmell is given the face of the ‘girl next door’ in a similar way to Nick Earls, however her media background is said to give her an edge in terms of marketability. Unlike Earls whose success is read as incidental, Gemmell is assumed to have worked the media to her advantage in some way. Much of this is based on her appearance and begs questioning of the different handling of authors in Australia according to gender.

Gemmell, then, is pretty hot, a significant comer in an Oz-lit looking for fresh voices. And it doesn’t hurt that she is a sassy, photogenic thirtysomething with an endearing directness.⁴⁷

She could have been delivered by Central Casting: a confident, striking, Simone de Beauvoir-quoting, thirtysomething whose second novel has catapulted her into the big time. Richard Guilliat meets the perfectly packaged Nikki Gemmell.⁴⁸

Graced with pale good looks, an improbably wide telegenic smile and a media-savvy attitude derived from a decade’s work as a journalist, she seems on first impression to have walked fully formed out of a marketing profile for a Hot Young Writer.⁴⁹

Amidst all of Earls extensive appearances and public events, he is never cited as being “media savvy”. Gemmell’s ability to work with a variety of audiences is evident in her use of elaborate literary quotations within interviews, along with frequent references to popular culture, which keep her connected to her younger fans. “Michael Ondaatje is my Billy Corgan (Smashing Pumpkins) or my Dave Grohl (Foo

⁴⁶YEAP, Sue. 1998, Today 14.

⁴⁷WALDREN, Murray. 1998, Review 14.

⁴⁸GUILLIATT, Richard. 1998, Good Weekend 42.

⁴⁹GUILLIATT, Richard. 1998, Good Weekend 42.

Fighters)”.⁵⁰ Earls uses exactly the same approaches to accessing a variety of age groups and backgrounds in his interviews, however Gemmell’s is depicted as somehow more calculated. One of Gemmell’s more celebratory reviews says:

One minute she’s telling you about the gypsy in her soul and tossing around literary aphorisms [...], the next she’s dispensing perfect sound bites (“I am constantly seeking fresh landscapes and experiences as fuel for my writing”).⁵¹

This cynical comment paints Gemmell’s statements as rehearsed. While it is possible to see similar anecdotes repeated (rehearsed?) by Earls in several publications, such suggestions are never seen in his press.

In terms of her writing style, Gemmell is presented in the international press as brazen and outrageous. Her depictions of female characters are viewed as typical Australian women –seen to be hard, tough and manly. The Australian press sees her work as “raw”⁵² rather than shocking, while her use of women in tough conditions “puts a modern gender-spin on Australia’s usual frontier mythology...”.⁵³ “I’m interested in the flip side of the boy’s own adventure story”⁵⁴ Gemmell says, showing her characters as unusual, rather than typical Australian women as they are read internationally.

Publishers overseas, especially in England, look at my books and say ‘You Australian women are so tough’. They think we’re all like Germaine Greer. I think my women characters are really quite vulnerable.⁵⁵

Waldren agrees that there is “still a tendency to be disconcertingly dewy-eyed”⁵⁶ within Gemmell’s novels, both of which are ultimately love stories as much as they are adventure novels. Atkinson⁵⁷, too, plays up love and insecurity as key facets of

⁵⁰DEMPSEY, Dianne. A New Leaf. *Sunday Age*. 25 May 1997, Agenda 6.

⁵¹GUILLIATT, Richard. 1998, Good Weekend 42.

⁵²See for example: WALDREN, Murray. Hype and glory. *Weekend Australian*. 30-31 Dec 2000, Review 4.

⁵³GUILLIATT, Richard. 1998, Good Weekend, 42.

⁵⁴GRIFFIN, Michelle. 1998, 3.

⁵⁵GRIFFIN, Michelle. 1998, 3.

⁵⁶WALDREN, Murray. 1998, Review 14.

⁵⁷ATKINSON, Frances. 2001.

Cleave – factors that are largely overlooked in the international depictions of harsh landscapes and harsh people.

In general, Gemmell works in Australia as a young, innovative writer but is rarely called upon to make comment about Australian social issues though she is frequently asked these questions overseas. Gemmell represents her culture within Australia by being presented as an assertive, young woman who writes in a style familiar to members of her generation. Ironically, Earls is regularly called upon to discuss social or political matters in Australia, but internationally is required only to speak about his texts and personal life.

4. Sites of Authority/types of translation

The purpose of a close textual analysis of the two editions of *Cleave* was to provide a survey of translation strategies, but also to establish the fact that the text is altered considerably when it moves away from its source. What we see, however, in the press coverage of this novel's French release is affirmation of the text's comprehensibility for the French readership, with little explicit attention to the translation techniques that make it so. Like Nick Earls, we see a fascination in the author as an important factor of *Cleave*'s marketability. We also see the press using comparisons to local or other recognisable products as ways for readers to orient themselves around the text in question.

Gemmell's books feature Australian protagonists, though *Shiver* is set predominantly in Antarctica. The central Australian backdrop of *Cleave*, however, seems to be appealing to French critics (and readers). The current French interest in all things Aboriginal means that Gemmell's *Cleave* is perceived as being set “au

coeur du pays aborigène”⁵⁸ [in the heart of the Aboriginal country]. Subheadings within the articles surveyed for this chapter included “Aventure et secrets de famille dans le désert australien.”⁵⁹ [Adventure and family secrets in the Australian desert] “Un séjour de plusieurs mois chez les aborigènes”⁶⁰ [A stay of several months with the Aborigines], or simply “Déserts”⁶¹ [Deserts], showing the importance of this concept in marketing the book. Interestingly, no articles mention the Olympic city of Sydney (which features significantly in the text). It is clear that Sydney is not the ‘real’ Australia for the French, and this assumption is indeed reinforced by the fact that Snip travels away from Sydney to find her ‘real’ self. Thus author and character, along with the novel’s setting, are positioned in accordance to the images already available in the French reading public’s repertoire. The sites of authority that offer definitions of these aspects of the culture include the author and the paratextual translators.

4.1 The author function as translation

The clear difference between the cases of Nikki Gemmell and Nick Earls is that Gemmell’s Australianness is a key factor in her international publicity. I conclude that this is because in Gemmell’s case, Australianness is the subject of her text and is, thus, the area in which she is asked by readers to be an expert. Earls’ area of ‘expertise’ (the site where his authority is required) is relationship issues and his Australianness therefore sinks into the background of his international press. Therefore, Gemmell is treated as having an ambassadorial role and seen as a

⁵⁸*Nord Éclair*. Nikki l’Australienne. 27 Jan 2000.

⁵⁹*Femme Actuelle*. Écouter voir lire. 10-16 Jan 2000.

⁶⁰DUVAIN, Phillipe. L’écrivain oublié par Pivot. *Le Parisien*. 7 Jan 2000.

⁶¹SOUBLIN, Jean. Une vocation de routarde. *Le Monde*. 10 Feb 2000.

translator of Australian beliefs and lifestyles. Any comment made by her on this subject will be taken as a 'truth' representative of much of the rest of the Australian population.

In her international press, Gemmell has frequently been quoted as making very generalised statements about Australia and Australianness. These comments have some power over images of Australian culture held by international readers of Gemmell's work. In a London magazine Gemmell⁶² says:

I have become much more scrubbed and I don't swear as much [since moving to London]...I don't know if you've noticed, but Aussie girls say f*ck this and f*ck that (sic). I used to speak like that too.

With statements like this, Gemmell reinforces stereotypes about the hard and uncouth nature of Australian women that are suggested in her press following the independent characters she creates in her fiction. The suggestion that British (in this case) girls do not swear is naïve and bizarre given Gemmell's thoughtful consideration of issues of cultural difference in her work. Her diverse journalism career should also have endowed her with an ability to see past cultural generalisations. Gemmell's opinions are her own, but it is possible that these kinds of comments are part of Gemmell's 'calculated' working of the press to her advantage: perhaps in each country, she tells readers what they want to hear? Alternatively, she may have been misrepresented, in which case the press is creating what is desirable for the reading community.

⁶²PAIN, Kate. A Rough Write. *Southern Cross Magazine*. 22 Sep 1999, 45.

Her power as an ambassador for Australia and as a translator of Aboriginal and wider Australian culture is strong in the United Kingdom press.

With Australia so much in focus at the moment, a book that promises to convey a genuine understanding of this country's emerging culture is bound to have a market. [...] Gemmell, who was born in Wollongong, avoids the package tour and writes convincingly of survival in a place where only the true native knows how to get out alive.⁶³

Gemmell is said to give readers a 'genuine' picture of the Australian culture. This is the type of authority sought from Gemmell, even though her work is fictional and many facets of the text deemed too Australian for United Kingdom comprehension have been altered. The allusion to the 'emerging' culture of Australia and the notion of a 'true native' show a lack of problematisation of Australian social issues and a lack of understanding of Australian history within the British reading culture. We see, again, why Earls' publisher may have chosen to simply hide the fact that his works were Australian rather than subject them to generalisations and propaganda.

Unlike the Australian press, landscape and the natural environment become important to an understanding of Gemmell's work in international coverage.

"The desolate landscapes of central Australia, eerily beautiful and cruel, are superbly evoked in *Cleave*."⁶⁴ One journal states: "Her success has also helped to bridge the gap between white and black Australia."⁶⁵ A vast generalisation, this alludes to the educational possibilities of *Cleave*, but suggests an influence far beyond the capabilities of one novel. As is generally the case with the Australian celebrities, Gemmell's British press also buys into the necessity to be grounded, though talented: "Despite her success, the best-selling author has no intention of locking herself away

⁶³HERBERT, Christine. Oz Wizard. *Jersey Evening Post*. 29 Sep 2000.

⁶⁴WALTERS, Margaret. Books. *Sunday Times*. 5 Sep 1999, 8.

⁶⁵PAIN, Kate. 1999, 45.

in an ivory tower; this is a girl who likes and thrives having her feet on the ground.”⁶⁶

This also serves as a comparison between Gemmell and her lead protagonists.

Comparisons between Gemmell and her characters are constant within the French promotion of the novels also, with frequent mention being made of Gemmell’s personal experiences in the Antarctic and Central Australia. These voyages clearly inform Gemmell’s work, but she maintains that her stories are not biographical. As in the case of Nick Earls, constant comparison leaves readers of reviews to assume that it is very likely that Gemmell and Snip and/or Fin (the protagonist in *Shiver*) are the same person. As in Australia, Gemmell’s personal struggle against adversity becomes a prerequisite for her ability to write about her heroines. Gemmell is “l’exception célèbre d’une dynastie de mineurs”⁶⁷ [the celebrated exception from a family of miners] who was educated thanks to a “bourse pour enfants pauvres”⁶⁸ [a scholarship for poor children]. Estranged from her own father for a time, comparisons to Snip’s life journey abound for Gemmell. As is the case with Nick Earls, no amount of denial can overpower the collective impression of the media: “A lire ses romans, Nikki Gemmell doit avoir quelques problèmes avec ce père.”⁶⁹ [to read her novels, Nikki Gemmell must have some problems with her father]. Gemmell, like Earls, consistently denies correlation with her characters outside of her experiences of the environments of the texts, however the assumption remains that her denial is unfounded – that perhaps she herself does not see the obvious correlation. “...cette jeune femme de 33 ans dénie ressembler à sa dernière héroïne [...] elle possède tout de même un lien avec son personnage principal ...”⁷⁰ [this young 33 year old women denies resembling her last heroine...all the same she

⁶⁶PAIN, Kate. 1999, 45.

⁶⁷DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. Nikki Gemmell, chasseur des phrases. *Le Figaro*. 24 Feb 2000a.

⁶⁸DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000a.

⁶⁹SAUVAGES, Christian. Nikki Gemmell, en quête du père. *Journal du Dimanche*. 23 Jan 2000.

possesses some connections with her principal characters.] Like many of the authors discussed in this thesis, the fact that Gemmell's protagonist is the same gender and roughly the same age as herself seems automatically to imply an autobiographical dimension to her work. This is not uncommon, but the repercussion of this in terms of culture is that Gemmell will come to represent the nation in that she is assumed to have the same knowledges as Snip – if Snip as a character is some kind of archetypal Australian woman, then Gemmell must reinforce this.

For this reason, Gemmell's appearance is often remarked upon as surprising to French reviewers and interviewers. "C'est une toute jeune femme pleine d'enthousiasme et prompte à sourire ... Tout le contraire de ce qu'on imagine après avoir lu les deux ouvrages..."⁷¹ [She is a young woman full of enthusiasm and quick to smile... The contrary of what one imagines having read her two books]. Surprise is registered at Gemmell's slight physique and pleasant demeanour. It is suggested that this is the "première illusion de l'écriture"⁷² [the first illusion of writing]; that is, that her character is so convincing that one is surprised if it is not entirely autobiographical. Though her appearance differs from what is expected (showing from the outset the inability of readers to disconnect character and author) the implication is that she is hiding the side of herself that is like her characters, rather than being different from them. A number of references are made to concealing one or the other persona; it is some kind of deceit rather than a simple difference between author and character: "Sous la plume de l'aventurière se cache une femme délicate, presque miniature, dont la très fine taille souligne la grâce."⁷³ [Beneath the pen of the

⁷⁰LITTAMÉ, Fabrice. Les noces de Nikki Gemmell avec la nature et le verbe. *L'Union*. 9 Jan 2000.

⁷¹*La Croix*. Nikki Gemmell, une romancière venue d'Australie. 2 March 2000, 20.

⁷²DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. Nikki Gemmell, l'aventure aux antipodes. *Le Figaro Littéraire*. 10 Feb 2000b.

⁷³DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000b.

adventurer hides a delicate woman, almost miniature, whose fine stature emphasises her gracefulness].

“I was perceived in France as a particularly exotic type of woman, brazen with my sexuality, adventurous, tough, blunt, somehow different from French women. The reality of meeting me in person didn’t quite live up to the expectation!”⁷⁴ Gemmell has said of her experience with the French press. Gemmell may be tough and adventurous – she has lived and worked in the harsh regions where she bases her novels during her time as a journalist – but all these impressions are based solely on the literary characters. The novels have a ‘no nonsense’ feel to them and, while the heroines are involved in romances, they are not prone to swooning or incapable of survival on their own. French reviews suggest that Gemmell’s work is “neuve, rapide, audacieuse, concise comme celle des Aborigènes”⁷⁵ [neurotic, rapid, audacious, concise like that of the Aborigines]. She is said to capture “l’économie de mots des Aborigènes”⁷⁶ [capture the economy of words of the Aborigines] and, for this reason, is perceived as blunt. (Ironically, my earlier textual analysis appears to clearly point to a lack of replication of Gemmell’s attempts at linguistic brevity.) Her plain-spoken image is reinforced by the open nature with which she discusses issues – both political and personal – that are raised in the novel.

The French media repeatedly questions representations of femininity and sexuality in the novels and it is seen to be a reflection of Gemmell’s own ‘brazen’ nature. Female sexuality in *Cleave* is presented candidly. Snip is a character who has difficulty with commitment and has always been a free spirited individual, always ‘on the move’. Consequently, one-night-stands are not uncommon in her life. She confesses to having used sex as a way of getting attention from her father in earlier

⁷⁴Personal interview. 2000.

⁷⁵DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000a.

years – sleeping with his boozy mates in country hotels. She has even taken work as an escort for a short time. Her sexual relationship with Dave is described graphically, though not unromantically. Likewise Snip masturbates, but with none of aggression or the tortuous overtones of grunge novels like *1988*. Gemmell is frank in her descriptions of the physicality of sex, but the writing is not offensive or outrageous. For some French critics, however, this directness was indecent.

Libération (not a conservative or right wing publication) reviews Gemmell thus:

Il y a chez Nikki Gemmell une volonté explicite d'écrire comme un homme [...] la crudité, la vulgarité, les beuveries, les fusils, l'aventure, l'érotisme et la pornographie [...] Le mieux pour Gemmell sera d'écrire un roman entièrement anatomique.⁷⁷

[There is in Nikki Gemmell an explicit desire to write like a man ... crudeness, vulgarity, drinking binges, guns, adventure, eroticism and pornography... Gemmell would do better to write a book entirely anatomical.]

Gemmell here is not only breaking stereotypes of women's roles, but is completely refused acknowledgment of her femininity.

For others reviewers, both Fin and Snip's sexuality is liberated and exotic in a way perceived as different to that of French women. "I was asked again and again if this was a particularly Australian way of operating"⁷⁸ Gemmell has said about the sexuality of her characters, revealing a desire for interviewers to have an author speak on behalf of a gender culture as much as a national one. The infrequency of this type of blunt, female voice in the French literary polysystem seems to mark Gemmell's work as foreign and establishes her as a voice for her source culture, the culture of 'young Australian women'.

Nikki Gemmell parle beaucoup des femmes. Elle les aime indépendantes, courageuses, sexy et bourlingueuses [...] les personnages de Nikki Gemmell sont des aventurières. Les hommes, elle ne leur accorde que des seconds rôles ...⁷⁹

⁷⁶DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000b.

⁷⁷BOUQUIN, Stéphane. Snip kangourou. *Libération*. 24 Feb 2000

⁷⁸Personal interview. 2000.

⁷⁹HALOCHE, Laurence. Hémisphère femmes. *Figaro Magazine*. 5 Feb 2000.

[Nikki Gemmell speaks a lot about women. She likes them independent, courageous, sexy and willing to travel ... Nikki Gemmell's characters are adventurers. The men are only given secondary roles.]

Gemmell is required to define what it means to be a strong woman in Australia. The notion of a female Australian hero is contrary to stereotypes of the masculinised outback as held by certain foreign readers. This is not only the case in France. Gemmell (quoted in French) says “Les Anglais sont assez choqués par mes romans et me disent toujours du bout des lèvres «vous, les femmes australiennes, vous êtes des dures!»”⁸⁰ [the English are also shocked by my books and are always reluctantly saying to me “you Australian women are tough!"]. One French article speaks of the historical “stupidity” of Australia, citing an horrendous tale of torture of the Aboriginal people from the time of colonisation along with the rejection of the opportunity to become a republic. To survive in Australia “les femmes se doivent d’être couillues”⁸¹ [the women must have balls]. Snip, of course, was raised as a boy and is clearly exceptional as a representation of Australian women, but this is not how she is read in this French review.

Unlike the coverage of *Zigzag Street* in the UK, no French review of *Cleave* neglects to mention that Gemmell is Australian. And they do so in the most blatant of ways. “Deux romans d’une jeune Australienne”⁸² [Two novels by a young Australian] says *Le Monde*. “Nikki Gemmell, l’aventure aux antipodes”⁸³ [Nikki Gemmel, adventure in the antipodes] says *Le Figaro Littéraire*. “Nikki l’Australienne”⁸⁴ [Nikki, the Australian] says *Nord Éclair*. Her youth is also important – she must be made to represent a particular demographic. This obsession with youth renders Gemmell eternally 33 years old – the age is stated in the inside

⁸⁰DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000b.

⁸¹ROMON, Phillipe. Snip, héroïne couillue. *L'événement du Jeudi*. 27 Jan/2 Feb 2000, 29.

⁸²SOUBLIN, Jean. 2000.

⁸³DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000b.

cover of the French edition – a rarity in publishing and certainly never used in Australian editions. In the same way as was seen with Nick Earls, however, the press finds the author’s age necessary as a translation tool; Gemmell is young, therefore she has the right to write about young protagonists. As a reader, you can put your faith in her and allow yourself to relate to the characters because the author is not a ‘fraud’. Furthermore, Gemmell’s career as a journalist works in the same way as Earls’ medical career with introductory sentences like: “L’auteur, une jeune journaliste de 33 ans...”⁸⁵ [The author, a young 33 year old journalist...]. Journalism gives her respectability and authority, allowing her to be simultaneously young, wise and a capable writer with the authority to write about the nation. Similarly, Gemmell tells in her French publicity of the nickname ‘Hump’ which she had as a child – based on the likening of her surname to ‘Camel’. “Nikki porte un surnom comme la plupart des Australiens”⁸⁶ [Nikki has a nickname like most Australians] says *Madame Figaro*. This paints Gemmell as young, with a sense of humour and again, representative of the nation in that she complies with the stereotypes of the national image.

Gemmell is frequently required to respond to questions on behalf of her country. Her novels and her French interviews ask her to translate Australianness for French readers. She says: “Je voulais emmener le lecteur là-bas, le promener dans le désert, l’obliger subrepticement à regarder le paysage.”⁸⁷ [I want to carry the reader there, to walk in the desert, to compel them surreptitiously to look at the countryside]. This notion of carrying the reader away to the environment of the novel is the wont of any writer. But in this case, Gemmell is being asked to do more than

⁸⁴*Nord Éclair*. 2000.

⁸⁵DUVAIN, Phillipe. 2000.

⁸⁶MAZINGARBE, Danièle. 2000.

create a believable world as a backdrop for her story: she is being asked to translate the nation for foreign readers. Gemmell is repeatedly asked in her interviews about the Olympic Games and the Republican movement, about the plight of the Aborigines and about the state of the arts in Australia. It is regularly stated that Gemmell resides in the UK at the time of the interview, however she is asked whether excitement is mounting about the Olympics. She says⁸⁸:

Avec les JO, il y a une véritable excitation qui monte en Australie. La littérature, le cinéma, l'architecture explosent [...] les Australiens commencent à comprendre qu'ils vivent non en Europe mais dans le Pacifique. Mais je suis républicaine... [With the Olympic Games, there is a real excitement mounting in Australia. Literature, cinema and architecture have exploded... Australians are beginning to understand that they live in the Pacific, not in Europe. But I am a republican...]

Whether or not Gemmell intended it, she is made to speak for all Australians here and comes across as implying that Australia's arts scene has only just exploded because of the Olympics. She is asked about Australia's literary tradition and again answers for all:

Il existe avant tout une grande tradition sportive en Australie [...] les parents préfèrent-ils voir leurs enfants pratiquer un sport que de devenir écrivains! [...] Mais de nombreux écrivains australiens doivent quitter leur pays pour écrire [...] parce que le sport y prend trop de place! La situation est la même pour les cinéastes.⁸⁹ [There exists in Australia a long and grand sporting tradition [...] parents prefer their children to play sport than to become writers! [...] But many Australian writers must leave the country to write [...] because sport has pride of place. The situation is the same for film makers.]

This attitude is contrary to Earls' opinions about Australians having to move overseas to write – and contrary to evidence that Gemmell herself did not have to leave to be published. These statements perpetuate an outdated, cringing view of the state of Australia's arts which seem unusual given Gemmell's obvious love of the country.

⁸⁷DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000a.

⁸⁸SAUVAGES, Christian. 2000.

⁸⁹DUTASTA, Alain. En Australia il y a d'abord le sport.... *La Nouvelle République*. 2 Dec 2000.

When asked about the advantages of life in Europe, Gemmell continues to reinforce stereotypes: “Paris me fait penser que j’étais très féminine [not something one feels] quand il faut changer la roue d’un 4 x 4! A Paris je mange du chocolat et je fais du shopping...” [Paris makes me feel feminine (not something one feels) when it is necessary to change the tyre of a four wheel drive! In Paris I eat chocolate and go shopping....] says Gemmell, as if it were not possible to do such things in Australia. “J’aime beaucoup le vin français, bien meilleur que celui d’Australie!”⁹⁰ [I really like French wine, much better than Australia’s!]

Gemmell says that she felt awkward about being asked to represent Australia in the French press, and always tried to qualify statements by saying that she had lived in England for the previous three years.⁹¹ She claims to have also tried to direct questions to her own experiences rather than make general statements about the Australian culture. However, this is clearly not always the way in which she has been represented by the press.

The concept of space is another facet of Australian life that appeals to the French readership. The vast Australian desert seems fascinating to the French press (“Il y a ici des déserts grands comme trois fois la France et des fermes aussi étendues que la Belgique”⁹² [There are deserts three times the size of France and farms as big as Belgium] and this relationship to the desert is a frequent question for Gemmell. Again, whether or not intended, she speaks for all Australians: “En Europe, vous vivez avec l’architecture, nous nous vivons avec le sol. Avec la terre sous nos pieds.”⁹³ [In Europe, you live with architecture, we live with the soil. With the earth under our feet.] Responses such as these are then filtered into the French repertoire of

⁹⁰DUTASTA, Alain. 2000.

⁹¹Personal interview. 2000.

⁹²PIVOT, Bernard. L’Australie et la fascination pour l’outback, désert immense et profond. *Le Journal de Dimanche*. 12 Dec 1999.

available images of Australia. The author is the translator of the beliefs of an entire nation. With “un rire comme un grand espace”⁹⁴ [a laugh like a vast space] Gemmell is Australia personified: the bright, open, young country. Her comments, positive or negative, will be taken into the French repertoire as she has been positioned as an authoritative speaker.

Given that *Cleave* touches on Aboriginal issues, it is logical that Gemmell may be asked about her experiences with the Aboriginal community in which she lived herself. Rather, she is asked to explain Aboriginality or to give an opinion on colonisation. Gemmell, displaying a clear understanding of the complexities of Aboriginal culture, sometimes answers tactfully: “Je ne comprends pas cette culture dont je n’ai qu’une vision partielle, mais je la respecte infiniment”⁹⁵ [I don’t understand this culture, into which I have only a partial insight, but I respect it infinitely] but as journalists press on she finds herself discussing government policy from colonisation to the Keating era and beyond. Not only is she asked then to translate Australian society and politics, but to be a spokesperson for the Aborigines. She dismisses this sort of claim with statements like the above, saying that she has been privileged with certain information because of her work as a journalist, but still does not claim to know everything.⁹⁶ Yet, her work is likened to Bruce Chatwin’s *Songlines* – not compared for literary quality but for the ability to convincingly present Aboriginality. *Songlines* is said to “évoquer magistralement la communion des Aborigènes avec l’espace, cette spiritualité chantée au gré des vents et des sables.” [majestically evokes the connection of the Aboriginal people to the land, the spirituality sung with a feeling for the wind and the sand]. Gemmell’s novel tells us

⁹³MARTIN, Daniel. Nikki Gemmell, une femme au désert. *La Montagne*. 6 Feb 2000.

⁹⁴DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000b

⁹⁵HALOCHE, Laurence. 2000.

⁹⁶MARTIN, Daniel. 2000.

something of this Aboriginal culture “sans atteindre ce niveau”⁹⁷ [without reaching this level]. *Le Monde* suggests that the Aborigines as a theme are a “passage obligé dans la fiction australienne, qui ici n’apportent pas grand chose”⁹⁸ [an obligatory inclusion in Australian fiction, which doesn’t offer much here] – in spite of Gemmell’s efforts her text is here said not to tell us much about Aboriginal culture. Ironically, the English born Chatwin, rather than an Aboriginal author, is chosen as the most desirable translator of Aboriginality.

Gemmell’s refutation of the right to speak about Aboriginal issues is seen as a lack of ability to do so, rather than a choice or an acknowledgment of the complexity of Aboriginal culture and respect for speaking positions. Gemmell has said that she declined to answer certain specific questions about Aboriginal culture, stating a preference for an Aboriginal person to be the one to give definitions.⁹⁹ These negations were clearly left out of the interviews as they appeared in the press. Retention of Gemmell’s refusals to respond would teach foreign readers more about Aboriginal culture than many glib descriptions of artefacts regularly offered to foreign readerships. Misquotations in some contexts can also risk genuine racist implications – for example the use of the abbreviation ‘Abos’ appears in the French press.¹⁰⁰ This may have been picked up from Gemmell’s text, but must be understood as a racist term not used casually when referring to the Aboriginal people: it is used in Gemmell’s text by uneducated ‘rednecks’ in central Australia and is not shown as the norm.

⁹⁷LECOULTRE, Cécile. Alice Springs au pays des merveilles. *24 Heures*. 31 Jan 2000.

⁹⁸SOUBLIN, Jean. 2000.

⁹⁹Personal interview. 2000.

¹⁰⁰BOISSEAU, Rosita. Livres. *Biba*. Feb 2000

4.2 Peritext: Publisher as translator

The peritextual facets of the French translation of *Cleave* show the power and influence of the publisher as a translator. The cover design is the first site of contact with images of Australia. Gemmell's original novel features a sun drenched ochre landscape, an infinite highway stretching to the horizon (see Illustration 12). Gemmell¹⁰¹ says that the ochre colouring was the only element of the original image retained in international publishing of the text. The only exception to this is the US hardcover release, which features golden sand dunes. When asking for alteration to this, Gemmell was told that the American readers "wouldn't know any different". As in many cases seen during my research of the American market, there is no attempt made at educating readers. The French edition retains the colour scheme, but features the more recognisable, but trite, image of Uluru (see Illustration 13). Gemmell has said that "many Europeans (publishers) opted for an easy Aboriginal motif".¹⁰² This is frequently used in French publications of Australian works, even when, as is the case with *Cleave*, the site of Uluru does not feature in the text. The choice is made to make it clear to readers at a glance that the text is Australian and potentially deals with Aboriginal issues. This is particularly marketable in France. The Australian cover of *My Place* features one of Sally Morgan's own paintings which depicts her family's journey of discovery of their heritage (see Illustration 14). It is replaced in the French edition by a postcard-style photo of Uluru (see Illustration 15). The spine carries a creeping lizard and the title becomes *Talahue* – the Aboriginal name of Morgan's grandmother. It is presented to the international market as a distinctly Australian book with Aboriginal themes; as an educational opportunity. *My Place*

¹⁰¹Personal interview. 2000.

¹⁰²Personal interview. 2000.

Illustration 12: Australian cover design of Nikki Gemmell's *Cleave*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Illustration 13: French cover design of *Cleave* (*Les Noces Sauvages*).

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

exemplifies the ways in which the social role of texts and images of Australian cultural norms can differ in the course of transferral according to the way in which the narrative is presented to the reader via paratextual translation devices. Daniel Martin's¹⁰³ review of *My Place* suggests that it is a “livre-témoignage sur l’histoire de l’Australie entre 1893 et 1983...” [a written account of the history of Australia between 1893 and 1983...]

The French publisher of *Cleave* also faced a dilemma over the title. The word ‘cleave’ does not have any equivalent in French. The significance of the original title – the notion of ‘to cleave’ meaning both to join together and to separate – is referenced a number of times throughout the original novel both literally and metaphorically: The dual meaning of the word is discussed by Snip and her father, Bud, but is also demonstrated in the many unions and separations faced by the characters who are frequently separated by space but joined in spirit, for example. The French title suggests marriages/weddings (les noces) with ‘sauvages’ dually implying wild/savage or unofficial (perhaps inviting the French reader to think of Rousseau?). The French title makes reference to the notion of unofficial union (Snip and Dave consider themselves married under the stars in lieu of official ceremony). There is also frequent mention in the text of marriage in the Aboriginal tradition (not necessarily conforming to Western notions) and of the problematic and, eventually, violent marriage of Snip’s parents. Thus the importance of unions and separations is not entirely evaded, though the simplicity and effectiveness of *Cleave* as a title is bypassed. The title, *Les Noces Sauvages*, does have a relevance to the story (and is indeed far more interesting and thoughtful than the mundane US choice *Alice Springs*) but the change of title also necessitates a number of other alterations: a

¹⁰³ MARTIN, Daniel. *Talahue* review. Éditions Métailié website. URL: www.strateges.com/eric/responses/livre.asp?ID=121 (10 May 2001)

Illustration 14: Australian cover design of Sally Morgan's *My Place*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

Illustration 15: French cover of *My Place* (Talahue).

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

poignant discussion between Snip and Bud of the dual meaning of 'cleave' is omitted from the French version. (178/139) Quotations making use of the word introduce the novel. These have been translated functionally in the French text. In French, the

quotations make reference to joining and separating, but they may have significantly less meaning for the French reader given that the reading position established no longer guides the reader to an understanding of the significance of this duality. The title chosen in French is also quite similar to certain well-known French texts and is thus referred to as clichéd on occasion in the French press.¹⁰⁴ (*Les Nocés Barbares*, *Les Nocés Fatales*, *Les Nocés de Haine* and *Les Nocés de Fer* [Barbaric Unions, Fatal Unions, Unions of Hate and Unions of Fire] are just some examples available from a brief search of FNAC's website). In this situation, the domesticating choice makes the text so compatible to local products that it buys into the repetition of previous titles – this creates a level of heteroglossia not seen in the original work.

Finally, it is worth noting that Snip's adventure comes to a close when she refuses Dave's offer of marriage knowing that to be truly happy she must be free to travel and paint. In the Australian text, however, a short epilogue shows us that Snip has gone on to win an art prize and that Dave is there to see her accept it. While the specific nature of her relationship with Dave remains unclear, there is clearly a closeness and there are 'secrets' between them which implies a continuing relationship. The French edition omits this epilogue leaving the conclusion more ambiguous – which suggests something about the types of literature sought by the French reading market. The French press's fascination with the freedom and independence displayed by Snip as a woman may account for the alteration of the conclusion in the French edition. Perhaps had she stayed with Dave, she would have seemed less brazen and adventurous – one of the major marketing appeals of the text.

¹⁰⁴DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000b

4.3 Epitext: Press as translator

To analyse the role of the press as translator, and to show that the case of *Cleave* is not an isolated example of the paratextual translations at work on Australian texts in France, it is worth briefly looking at the 1998 French release of Fiona Capp's *Night Surfing*.¹⁰⁵ Along with detailed descriptions of landscape and climate, Capp utilises the slang and icons of surf culture and some Australian brand names to bring realism to her dark novel, set in a Victorian coastal town. Cover design again speaks of differing perspectives about Australianness, and particularly here, beach culture. The Australian cover reflects the moody nature of the narrative, while its French counterpart shows the sunny stereotype of seaside life (see Illustrations 16 and 17). In terms of media 'translation', *L'Humanité*¹⁰⁶ generously suggests that *Surfer La Nuit* has more to offer than US beach drama series, *Baywatch*. It flags the novel's setting as being different to any music video or soft drink commercial which may have provided the reader's previous relationship with the Australian beach. The narrative and character development is certainly discussed in the press but the landscape is explored in melodramatic and romantic detail. The Australia seen in the promotions of *Surfer La Nuit* is not like France, in the way that *Zigzag Street*'s Australia became like the United Kingdom. However, Australian

Illustration 16: Australian cover design of Fiona Capp's *Night Surfing*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

¹⁰⁵This has been expanded in: CAIN, Lara. More to offer than Baywatch – International press commentary on the release of Australian novels. *Inter-cultural Studies: A Forum on Social Change and Cultural Diversity*. University of Newcastle. 1 (1), Feb 2001, 7-13 and CAIN, Lara. Translating Culture: Literary representations of Australian culture on the world stage. *Working Papers in Australian Studies No. 117*. London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 2001.

¹⁰⁶*L'Humanité*. Sur les rives d'un si grand pays. 24 Oct 1997.

Illustration 17: French cover design of *Night Surfing (Surfer La Nuit)*.

This image is not available online.
Please consult the hardcopy thesis
available from the QUT Library

images alone also seem insufficient in defining the text. There is not a comprehensive range of Australian images available in the French repertoire on which to draw so the culture is made accessible by piecing together other images that the reader is assumed to recognise. It is also possible to read this Australia as a place able to be mistaken for somewhere equally distant from France – such as the United

States. There are clear similarities here with the treatment of *Cleave*, except that a wider range of Australian images is clearly available since 1998.

The French press views *Surfer La Nuit* as a “véritable poème”¹⁰⁷ [a veritable poem] as they make much of the metaphoric imagery that links the ocean with the emotions, but it could not be denied that the French promotion also heavily relies on the exotic backdrop of the text and uses references to the 2000 Olympics, kangaroos and didgeridoos (none of which appear in the novel). It is even remarked that Capp is a “young Australian novelist full of potential just like the youths who roam around Bondi Beach between waves and terrace cafés...”¹⁰⁸ (my translation). Nikki Gemmell received the same type of descriptions – young, vibrant and bright: the author is like the characters, which are reflective of the country itself. *Le Journal de Dimanche*¹⁰⁹ titles its review “Capp on the new Australian wave” (my translation) which fits with images I have retrieved in other work on this topic of the French vision of Australian writing as “fresh”, “powerful and young” or “something new, something with life”¹¹⁰. “Plus le vent vient de loin, plus il est chargé de parfums” [the further the wind travels, the more heavily fragrant it becomes] says one press review of this novel.¹¹¹

In keeping with the available repertoire of images of Australia in France, Nikki Gemmell was imagined as wild and exotic: “A lire *Les Nocces Sauvages* de Snip la fugueuse avec la nature plus hostile, on imagine Nikki Gemmell, sa créatrice,

¹⁰⁷*Magazine Littéraire*. Surfer La Nuit. Dec 1997..

¹⁰⁸*Journal de Dimanche*. Capp sur la nouvelle vague australienne. 9 Nov 1997.

¹⁰⁹*Journal de Dimanche*. 1997.

¹¹⁰Comments made by the French translators and directors of a collection of Australian plays (including Hannie Rayson’s *Hotel Sorrento*) chosen for public presentation in Paris as part of a cultural exchange project. GLEDHILL, Matthew. The French selection. *Bulletin*. 27 June 1995, 84.

grande et puissante comme un Crocodile Dundee féminin.”¹¹² [To read *Les Noces Sauvages* of Snip, the run away with a hostile nature, one imagines Nikki Gemmell, the author, big and powerful like a female Crocodile Dundee]. In spite of all that has been said about the increasing awareness of Australian literature and potential for overturning of hackneyed images, in 2000, the French press, like the British continues to make use of comparisons to recognisable images to make sense of a new Australian text. The road story element of *Cleave* makes Gemmell like Kerouac.¹¹³ This may also be due to the grunge nature of the text, sometimes perceived as post-Beat. She is repeatedly likened in style to “celui des écrivains qu’elle admire: Michael Ondaatje, Cormac McCarthy, Salman Rushdie”¹¹⁴ [that of the writers she admires...]. In the French context, Gemmell is compared to Le Clézio, and her heroines to the brazen Zazie (from the popular French novel by Raymond Queneau, *Zazie dans le Métro*).¹¹⁵ Word plays in the headlines of Gemmell’s press allude to other well-known texts: “La folle du désert”¹¹⁶ (from the French title of *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*) and “Alice Springs au pays des merveilles”¹¹⁷ [Alice Springs in wonderland].

For the French, Australia is a “terre de surprises et d’exotismes divers” [land of surprises and diverse exoticisms] and Gemmell, it is regularly stated¹¹⁸, carries the reader to an Australia “loin des cartes postales”¹¹⁹ [far from the postcards]. Whether near or far from postcard images, however, the characteristic Australian landscape is clearly the starting point around which readers are asked to orient themselves in order

¹¹¹ *Journal de Dimanche*. 1997.

¹¹² DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000b

¹¹³ TISON, Christophe. Livres. *Cosmopolitan*. Feb 2000.

¹¹⁴ MAZINGARBE, Danièle, 2000.

¹¹⁵ QUENEAU, Raymond. *Zazie dans le métro*. Paris: Gallimard, 1959.

¹¹⁶ LINDECKER, Jacques. La folle du désert. *L’Alsace*. 14 Jan 2000.

¹¹⁷ LECOULTRE, Cécile. 2000.

¹¹⁸ WALTHER, Daniel. Australie: deux voyages initiatiques. *Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace*. 21 Jan 2000.

to comprehend Gemmell's work (as was the case with *Surfer La Nuit*). This occurs due to the same lack of available images in the repertoire, rather than comparing Gemmell's Australia to something French or American, however, they are comparing it to an image of Australia which is in many ways equally distant from any 'authentic' Australia.

The press uses Gemmell herself as a translation tool and her writing style is said to relocate readers to a foreign and exotic clime. The image of Australia that is gathered from the book, according to the press, is wild, savage, exotic and passionate and very far both physically and psychologically from France. *Cleave* is a "hymne à la vie sauvage"¹²⁰ [hymn to savage life] and is set in "l'Australie originelle"¹²¹ [the real Australia] conforming to the national mythologies displayed in chapter Two. For the French media, there is no better book to "allumer des passions australiennes"¹²² [fire up the passions for Australia].

An increased familiarity with Australian literature is evident in the Gemmell case, and absent from Capp's or Morgan's reviews. There is an attempt to locate Gemmell within an Australian literary tradition. "La vie est un roman, en Australie plus qu'ailleurs"¹²³ [Life is a novel, in Australia more than anywhere] and there is an excitement evident in France about the increasing number of available translations. Australian literature is looked upon favourably as Gemmell's work is said to touch "les voyageurs autant que les poètes" [touches travellers as well as poets] and to have "une dimension presque mythique" [almost a mythic dimension] in its handling of issues such as honour and freedom.¹²⁴ There is even an assertion made about the

¹¹⁹CLAVEL, André. 2000.

¹²⁰MAZINGARBE, Danièle. 2000.

¹²¹DUVAIN, Phillipe. 2000.

¹²²DUVAIN, Phillipe. 2000.

¹²³DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000a.

¹²⁴SOUBLIN, Jean. 2000.

English market: “Après le football et le rugby, la vengeance sera littéraire”¹²⁵ [After the football and the rugby, revenge will be literary]. Though, outside of Gemmell, the canon still dominates. Bruce Chatwin is raised in a number of Gemmell’s French reviews, along with Helen Garner, Elizabeth Jolley and Alexis Wright¹²⁶, Malouf, White, Moorhouse and Carey.¹²⁷ Gemmell is said to be “une nouvelle recrue”¹²⁸ [a new recruit] to this list – and is thus made comprehensible by contextualisation. “En Australie, il n’y a pas que des kangourous. On y trouve aussi quelques écrivains, et des meilleurs.”¹²⁹ [In Australia, there are not just kangaroos. You also find writers there, and some of the best.]

Conclusion

The *Cleave* case study serves to demonstrate that translation and translators are a major contributor to the ways in which readers access texts. They work to create (and are influenced by) the reading culture of a community and construct the

positions which make reading (making sense of) a culture possible. Chapter Five demonstrated that even where there is no alteration to the language of a text, translators are still at work in every stage of the production and release of a novel. Chapter Six gives examples where the language of the text is altered, but the translators within the paratext still orchestrate reading positions. A series of

¹²⁵DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. 2000b.

¹²⁶MONTVERT-CHAUSSY, Isabelle de. Nikki Gemmell dans le désert australien: L’êtreinte de rêve. *Sud Ouest Dimanche*. 30 Jan 2000.

¹²⁷CLAVEL, André. 2000.

¹²⁸CLAVEL, André. 2000

¹²⁹CLAVEL, André. 2000

similarities and differences is visible between the *Cleave* case and that of *Zigzag Street*.

In both examples, we see the importance of the author function as a means of translating the text and the source culture of the novel. This thesis demonstrates conclusively that while the author may be ‘dead’ in terms of direct definitions of the ‘meaning’ of a novel, he or she is a most active part of the process of ‘reading’ in that his or her life will be called upon as evidence of authority over subject matter. This phenomenon is most prevalent in the work of younger, realist writers where the lines between fact and fiction are notably blurred in discourse about the production of the novel. Realist authors are required to become spokespeople for their cultures of origin. For Earls, this ‘culture’ is Brisbane’s twenty/thirty something, lovelorn professionals and, in many cases, for wider Brisbane as a whole. Gemmell’s ‘culture’ is ‘young Australian women’ though she is made to work quite differently from Earls. Within Australia, Earls is known as a ‘Brisbane’ author, while in international media he is spoken of in terms of his youth and authority to speak about emotional problems. Locally, Gemmell is only seen to represent young, Australian authors – she is rarely asked to speak about broader cultural issues. Internationally, the subject matter of her texts dictates a necessity to question Gemmell as an expert on national concerns. These chapters have presented a range of contributing factors to the differing positions established for these two writers. What is important to the arguments of this thesis is that authors are undeniably a significant presence in the process of ‘production’ of texts by readers. As “assistants to the publisher”¹³⁰, authors work with the media, critics, book shop owners and educators to construct an

¹³⁰GENETTE, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. LEWIN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997,347.

elaborate paratext, which expands the repertoire of images available to readers before they read a novel.

Chapter Five asserted that the incorporation of Earls' work into the British polysystem may be viewed in terms of oppositional behaviour. Wearing the guise of a local work, and being made palatable by epitextual translation factors, Earls' United Kingdom texts can be moved without linguistic alteration. For this reason, there is potential for education of the target readership as the words of the text itself have not been domesticated. By contrast, Gemmell's work is flagged obviously as Australian. This decision by the publisher to market Gemmell as an Australian writer could be seen to be influenced by the international interest in Aboriginal culture. Earls's extensive use of a local repertoire ensures his text is no less Australian than Gemmell's outback adventure, but the perception is clearly that it is harder to disguise a text based in a rural setting. The exotic nature of this landscape also encourages its promotion as a feature of the novel. It could be said, then, that Gemmell's international release offers a greater potential for cultural education as her novel is not assumed to be 'like' local product. Flagging the text as foreign, however, has led to the perceived necessity to translate the language (even in the United Kingdom) and to the press's construction of the narrative as an exotic adventure story. This reading position may lead to elision of the serious political considerations contained within the text. Much United Kingdom promotion reads this novel as a romantic road trip – ignoring the degradation, racial tension and intertextuality involved in Gemmell's depiction of outback Australia. In France, these social issues receive greater attention, but Gemmell is then seen as defining the Aboriginal experience for foreign readers. It is ironic that the text which underwent

the greatest amount of change from the original is the one chosen to be an 'accurate' representation of Australianness.

In terms of the polysystem, Gemmell's work remains peripheral in both France and the United Kingdom due to its marked foreignness. In France, however, this is seen as a desirable quality and has ensured plentiful publicity and high praise for the originality of the writing. In the United Kingdom, Gemmell's press is tentative about the book's rightful position, with the writing style being criticised for its experimental nature and the subject matter being perceived as typical Australian fare. Again, there is a dual reading of this positioning available. France's acceptance of innovative texts may be due to an innate security in the state of the literary polysystem. Thus, translated works remain peripheral but popular and are desired to fill a 'lack' in the periphery. They may never become 'central' texts, but fulfil a desire within the French culture for educational or exotic works. In the United Kingdom, there has been greater exposure to Australian outback tales over the history of Anglo-Australian relations. Perhaps Gemmell's peripheral position in the United Kingdom is due to heteroglossia, in that United Kingdom readers perceive her work as part of a hackneyed tradition? Alternatively, innovative texts could be seen as threatening to the centre of the British polysystem, which may be in a weaker position than that of France. The polysystem may 'lack' originality, but initial foreign contributions to that lack may be treated with suspicion. A final reading of the British reception situation is the patronising approach seen in many examples of British approaches to Australian arts: Australian works are read as poor cousins of British equivalents and remain peripheral for this reason. In reality, it is probably a combination of all factors that finally give a novel its position within the system. Again, however, Chapters Five and Six demonstrate that it is paratextual translation,

more than the textual material, that governs this positioning process: regardless of the choices made in the French translation of the actual words of Gemmell's novel, the press coverage is what has made the book a best-seller.

As stated at the conclusion of Chapter Four, readers may also choose to ignore culturally-specific references entirely and not subscribe to the positions constructed by the paratext. This will not be an 'incorrect' reading of the text, but will include only limited cross-cultural education. All reading positions are valid if reading is perceived as a purely pleasurable or recreational activity. However, we have seen within this thesis the specific desires of many 'translators' to educate readers, to initiate readers into different cultural environments. The specific agenda of large funding bodies such as the Australia Council is to promote Australian cultural endeavours – to enhance the reputation of Australian arts, and to increase understanding of Australia's diverse cultures. These desires may be in conflict with some of the translation choices evidenced within these chapters, which shows that translators have a significant power over images of culture to be held by outside readers.

Conclusion

‘Everything we know about cultures beyond our own has come to us [...] through processes of transfer and translation.’¹

Translation is commonly viewed as a process of transferring a text from one language to another. Here, discussed under a broader definition, it has been shown to be the major contributor to the creation of a community’s reading culture, and to the ways in which readers make sense of cultural representations. This thesis has analysed the multiple meanings of ‘reading culture’ with a view to exposing the power of translation(s) over the ways in which readers are positioned in relation to culturally-specific repertoires in texts and the state of the literary polysystem that makes the texts available to readers, along with the ‘scandal’ (as Venuti has called it²) of the lack of public recognition of that power. The ways in which readers ‘read culture’ have been shown to develop out of the many different methods employed by a variety of translators (including the press, educational institutions and bookstores) along with the translation (in the traditional sense) of novels. Similarly, the ‘reading culture’ of a given nation, region or other cultural sphere is developed by, and responded to in, the choices made by translators within the community. This thesis does not assume that all these forms of translation and manipulation of reading positions are equivalent – there are clearly different things at stake at each point of translation – but the originality of this thesis lies in the suggestion that these things are all forms of translation, and that they can be attended to using theories hitherto reserved for analysis of ‘traditional’ translation.

¹PYM, Anthony. *Translation and Text Transfer*. Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Land, 1992, 17.

²VENUTI, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an ethics of difference*. London: Routledge, 1998.

While intellectual or academic criticism of contemporary texts has concerned itself periodically with the analysis of the traditional translation process, popular criticism (the most accessible review forum for the majority of potential readers) generally lacks critique of the translation process. This serves to perpetuate public ignorance about the ways texts are presented to readers. General public perception (as much as that can be feasibly assumed) seems to suggest preference for romantic ideals about the nature of textual transfer. Nick Earls, for example, says that the key to becoming a best selling author is ‘writing stories that people want to tell their friends about. It’s word of mouth that sells books.’³ Word of mouth has most definitely been a powerful form of publicity for his work, however it is only one of a number of complex processes of translation involved in the successful release of texts. Word of mouth alone could not move texts around the globe without the many forms of translation visible in the paratext of any novel. The power of translation involved in these movements is rarely acknowledged in detail, causing readers to believe in the authority of paratextual links to a novel to inform them of cultural images.

Much of the power contained in paratextual translation lies in the authority given to popular reportage in the contemporary literary and publishing systems. Sales of novels are often generated on the back of celebrity-style stories about authors’ lives and inspirations, publishing advances or real-life connections to fictional narratives. Turner et al⁴ suggest that the popularisation of the ‘celebrity story’ in an increasingly diverse range of media outputs signals a move away from ‘traditional definitions of what constitutes useful or appropriate knowledge about public affairs.’ They continue by stating that ‘the source of these new kinds of

³SEXTON, Kristy. Question time. *Courier Mail*. 6 May 2001, Body and Soul 4.

knowledges is not the experts or the social elites, but the popular media.’⁵ Thus the author as celebrity, or as newsworthy figure, especially in the case of those who write realistic novels, becomes a site of authority for identity formation. The fabricated ‘friendship’ (as discussed in Chapter Four) between author and public thus becomes a key factor in the economic viability of many texts (and certainly the realistic, youth-oriented texts examined here). This will then become part of the translation process when texts move. It is for this reason that the reliance on popular criticism as representative of, and an influence on, reading positions is as valid as any survey of academic criticism. The popular review process has been used here to expose the many levels on which changes might occur during translation.

These changes are brought about by a variety of interested parties and by social and financial forces. Venuti, who sees many such changes as quite contemptible, says that the ‘scandals of translation are cultural, economic, and political.’⁶ It is perhaps excessive to position the findings of this thesis as ‘scandals’, as outside of projects such as this, the fact that certain cultural meanings get ‘lost in translation’ and that publishing relies on economics, are taken as givens. However, Venuti’s dramatic terminology does suggest a necessary questioning of the ways in which translation works, along with a desire to increase public awareness of the creation of reading positions by translators and their influence on representations of culture. I wish to summarise my findings by exploring Venuti’s categories. I will, however, reposition these fields of inquiry to discuss the varying agendas seen in each area of concern, leaving readers to decide what then counts as ‘scandalous’.

⁴TURNER, Graeme, Frances BONNER and P. David MARSHALL. *Fame Games: The production of celebrity in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 6.

⁵TURNER, Graeme, Frances BONNER and P. David MARSHALL, 2000, 6.

⁶VENUTI, Lawrence. 1998, 1.

Politics and translation

The possibilities of what is at stake politically in translation are multifaceted (including national/governmental politics, personal agendas and professional edicts). ‘Political’ decisions can be seen at many levels of the translation process. In terms of the possible practical application of work such as mine, politics is just one aspect of translation that lacks public recognition and might be useful to funding bodies and publishing houses in translational endeavours. The political agendas involved in the act of translation vary in levels of inevitability and calculation, and can be seen in the movement of texts both within and between standard language environments.

Chapter Three described examples of the politics of perceived cultural superiority from the eighteenth century, where translators made significant alterations to texts for reasons of taste or perceived propriety. The unapologetic nature of these earlier translation decisions renders them scandalous to later readers; however, similar changes are still frequent in contemporary work. In the majority of current situations, the extent of alterations will not be as vast as those described by De la Motte or Prevost in Chapter Three. A degree of subjectivity is inevitable, however, in the translator’s decisions, given that all texts are products of, and respond to, the time and space in which they are created. The choice to domesticate a text has its foundations in appealing to the tastes and mores of the target culture at a given point in time, for example.

In terms of the translation of contemporary Australian literature, however, there is a significant difference of reader and critical response to the one likely to be prompted by Prevost and his contemporaries’ anecdotes. A certain resignation about inevitable changes seems prevalent in the Australian situation in a way that is also

not seen in response to translation of French work into English, for example. Rather than greet textual changes with suspicion, the Australian popular press (and even wider criticism) often views them as the price that must be paid for international success. For many, the replacement of certain ‘Australianisms’ with locally comprehensible alternatives is justifiable if leading to an increased international knowledge of Australian artistic and literary offerings: some of the losses in terms of culturally-specific repertoire may be balanced by gains in the sense of a wider release for the text. Yet, there is a risk that some may become blind to the distinct disadvantages of certain alterations, so caught up are they in the notion that diffusion of a text means success. We see, again, the ‘cultural cringe’ played out here, if the only way to achieve ‘real’ (international) success is to *change* aspects of the culture rather than educate others about them.

Frequent changes are made to the culturally-specific repertoires of Australian novels to facilitate foreign comprehension of the narratives. This thesis has sought to problematise the results of some changes to cultural content, but my work competes with wide acceptance of domesticating techniques. Discussion was raised in Chapter Three of certain theorists’ belief in target-oriented translations. However, away from the theory and under the influence of the ‘cultural cringe’, the international success of Australian work remains such a highly desirable accolade that many Australian writers and publishers are willing to make sacrifices of culturally-specific terminology in the quest for marketability and increased audiences.

The school of thought referred to has been represented by Andrew Reimer⁷ who says that the successful reception of Karin Mainwaring’s *The Rain Dancers*⁸ in

⁷REIMER, Andrew. *Cherchez la sheila*. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 19 May 2001, Spectrum 7.

⁸MAINWARING, Karin. *The Rain Dancers*. Originally produced by the Sydney Theatre Company, 1992. French language version: *Les Danseurs de la Pluie*. Translated by Jean-Pierre RICHARD. Carnières-Morlanwelz, Belgium: Éditions Lansman, 1995.

Paris, was possibly due to “the excellence of Jean-Pierre Richard’s French version.”

He continues:

The Rain Dancers is a strong, effective play Undoubtedly to my mind, however, Richard’s translation *Les Danseurs de la Pluie*, sharpens and focuses these implications in a manner which observes the spirit of Mainwaring’s text but strips it of infelicities of style and diction.

This opinion suggests that the translation smoothed out the edges of a rougher original version. Reimer obviously does not speak for all viewers of the play, but represents the cringing Australian tradition of bowing to the ‘sophistication’ of international writers. Reimer goes on to suggest that a similar phenomenon may well have assured the success of other Australian writers whose work has received higher accolades in France than at home (he cites Gemmell’s work specifically along with that of grunge feminist authors Linda Jaivin and Justine Ettler). Reimer says of Jaivin’s *Eat Me* that its French version ‘struck’ him as ‘a shade more pointed and stylish than the original text.’ Importantly too, for Reimer, it is the translator’s style, rather than the author’s narrative that makes the book readable in the foreign market.

This thesis has shown this to be true inasmuch as the translation has been geared towards the tastes and mores that govern the recipient market. It can be seen as problematic, however, to suggest that this is always the best approach, that the deletion of Australianisms from novels is what makes them marketable, or that there are not other aspects of the narratives in question that render them interesting to international readers. Reimer does briefly acknowledge the attraction of the exotic as another significant factor in Australian success, but also posits that the critical success of texts like Ettler’s modern melange of Sade and Shakespeare, *The River Ophelia*, was greater internationally due to the higher levels of sophistication of readers. “You need to command cultural and literary sophistication [...] to appreciate Ettler’s intricate games with the Marquis de Sade” says Reimer, paraphrasing the

opinions of French Australian studies academic Xavier Pons. This is a sophistication not shared by Australian readers or critics according to these pundits.

An alternative view of this situation is offered by Tim Parks⁹, who says that

What is disturbing, if one wishes to be disturbed by such things, is with what appetite the public laps up translated literary works whose essential cohesion has all too often, though by no means always, been lost in translation. Might it be, I sometimes fear, precisely that loss of depth that makes translations attractive?

It could thus be argued that the removal of the culturally-specific repertoire indeed ‘dumbs down’ the translated work sufficiently for foreign audiences to engage with the text without additional inquiry. In a complex text, the paring back of aspects of the dialogue could in fact simplify concepts and make them more palatable for a wider reading public. The Reimer article potently represents the cultural cringe at work – a philosophy that undermines deserved accolades for certain writers and misrepresents the significance of the international success of others.

Reimer acknowledges that some Australians have ‘voiced misgivings’ about these representations of Australian culture. But, he goes on to suggest, this state of affairs should be exploited, not lamented. ‘The export trade learnt that long ago, it is no use trying to sell Vegemite to Europeans.’¹⁰ This thesis shows, however, that there are ways of selling ‘Vegemite’ that might aim to define its cultural value and educate the foreign public about its existence. It could be argued that there is less value in selling them peanut butter in the hope that they will buy something they already have plenty of.

Chapters One and Two have demonstrated the intrinsic link between Australian language usages, national mythology and the meanings of texts (I will

⁹PARKS, Tim. Lost in translation. *Australian's Review of Books*. 9 Feb 2000b, 27.

¹⁰REIMER, Andrew. 2001, *Spectrum* 7

return to this shortly in discussion of ‘cultural stakes’). While potential interpretations of texts should not be limited to these, a higher level of understanding of the Australian culture will be achieved by reading these symbols in their original form. Of course, retaining the original is not always technically possible for the many reasons and issues of limitation discussed throughout this thesis. However, the conscious alteration of Australianisms for reasons of ‘improvement’ of the narrative seems unethical and unnecessary. This perspective bears little difference to the eighteenth century anecdotes; it contradicts the intentions of funding bodies and publishers seeking to release innovative, culturally-specific work and moves towards the creation of an original work (rather than a translation) which does little to educate new readers about the source culture.

Acknowledging that there is no feasible ‘ideal’, the case studies viewed here have also suggested a reading of the situation that attributes a covert, subversive power to be found as a result of the target-oriented approach. I will continue to take Vegemite as a somewhat glib, though useful, representative of all things culturally-specific. Changes in methods of translation are evident between Sally Morgan’s 1997 French translation – where Vegemite was removed altogether, and the 2000 reworking of *Cleave* – where Vegemite became a significant enough cultural icon to be worthy of footnoting despite changes to other aspects of the narrative that rendered some symbols far more ‘French’. The ‘tactic’ (in de Certeau’s use of the term¹¹) of disguising a book as palatable to the foreign market by translating it according to generic conventions or appealing to tastes for exoticism, finds a wide market for the book. By ensuring the text will actually be financed, sold and read, other educational opportunities can be included in the text. By making *Cleave* appear

¹¹CERTEAU, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven RENDALL. Berkeley: California University Press, 1984.

desirable to the assumed tastes of the French reading public, rather than marketing it as a potentially inaccessible or difficult read, the text reaches more readers who will, now, have some idea of what Vegemite means. Over time, this will broaden the available repertoire of that market and eventually ‘Vegemite’ (or any other culturally-specific term) will require no translation at all. Simultaneously, Australia’s literary and artistic reputations will be advanced through awareness of greater numbers of titles and authors, leading to increased funding of future projects.

This thesis has also observed similar patterns in intralinguistic transfers, such as that of Earls’ work to the United Kingdom. Here, the work was seen to require no textual translation at all, with all translational efforts taking place in the paratext. The suggestion evidenced in this case study is that United Kingdom readers see no difference between the two languages, thus potentially ignoring and misunderstanding the cultural repertoire. Again, however, the potential for oppositionality is visible, as the assumed similarities between the two cultures allow books to enter the British polysystem without change. In this way, the interpretative frameworks available to United Kingdom readers should be broadened as the gradual repetition of symbols through increased transfer traffic begins to formulate meanings attributable to the culturally-specific terminology.

There are thus two sides to the coin of the issue of domesticating translations, and the real effect of these processes cannot be assessed without surveying individual readers for their responses. This thesis, however, does not seek to suggest ways in which readers *will* respond to texts, but rather how they are *asked* to respond by textual and paratextual translation strategies. Increased public awareness of the politics involved in translation will increase readers’ abilities to critically read the paratext of transferred works, perhaps inspiring them to be willing to work a little

harder to make sense of cultural images – and encouraging publishers to give them that opportunity.

Economics and translation

One of the major factors in the necessity for translators (in the traditional sense) to domesticate elements of novels is economics: another term with multifaceted interpretations. Economy of time, space and finance is essential in the business of contemporary publishing, meaning translators are not able to include lengthy footnotes or explanations for each culturally-specific term they may wish to retain during the transfer process. Of similar economic importance is the fact that translation, in its broader definition, is a key factor in the marketability of novels, as press commentary, author appearances and so on contribute to the sales success of any text.

Economic agendas impact upon the quality of translations, a fact that amounts to a scandal for critics like Venuti. Translators are rarely the recipients of literary royalties, for example, often being viewed as little more than a mechanical aspect of the process of international release, and thus receiving one-off payments for their work.¹² Translators are generally seen as secondary to authors in terms of the creative input to the work, and are paid accordingly. The author also, as mentioned, is a key contributor to the economic success of the book in his/her role as ‘assistant to the publisher’¹³ – encouraging a circle of economic interdependence, quite common in any industry making use of a public personality, which excludes involvement of the

¹²Venuti has written extensively on the legal rights of translators in this sense so I will not elaborate on this here. See for example: VENUTI, Lawrence. 1998, 31-66.

translator. Economising on the hire of translators, or expecting translators to work quickly and for little money, may potentially lead away from careful, high quality translations.

An economic agenda is also visible in this thesis' discussion of the importance of genre as a means of governing available space in the polysystem. British and American genre fiction (such as detective novels and even grunge trends) establishes precedents against which 'newcomers' to the culture are compared, offering a point of entry for similar Australian texts. Australian literature thus remains in the unusual position of being seen as comparable to work from other English speaking countries while still offering foreign and exotic narratives. This paradox is evidenced in the paratextual translations analysed in Chapters Five and Six, which show that translation can be performed by comparing a text or author to a local product or to exotic images from the readers' assumed available repertoire. It is in this way that paratextual translation clearly delineates potential reading positions.

The choices of texts that are made available to foreign markets are economically strategic. A spokesperson for the Literature Fund of the Australia Council for the Arts, Patrick Morgan¹⁴, says of the Fund's translation grants scheme (the major Australian grants program for literary translation):

We are pleased to support translations of Australian classics – White, Carey, Herbert – as well as translations into English of contemporary works which have been the focus of literary attention in places as diverse as Denmark, Japan and France.

This clearly prioritises marketable, canonical works over more economically risky, innovative Australian texts, which arguably provide more current, locally-produced images of Australianness. A preference is also shown here for the importation of international works rather than the exportation of local product. In theory, this marks

¹³ GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 347.

Australia, in Even-Zohar's parlance, as possessing a 'weak' literature in need of inspiration from elsewhere. Morgan's comments, however, do not represent the entirety of what the Fund actually *does* support – nor the work that is being funded from elsewhere (such as individual publishing houses, though these too must acquiesce to market trends in some ways). However, the Fund's mission statement does posit that it encourages applications from overseas publishers 'who are establishing an Australian list'.¹⁵ Again here, the emphasis seems not to be on individual texts of merit, but on establishing a system or ongoing financial arrangement for translated texts. This supports the earlier conclusion that alterations to culturally-specific terminology are viewed as less problematic if the texts are contributing to a perceived future market for texts, which may then have the opportunity to retain Australianisms as the foreign repertoires will have been altered.

Further economic considerations in the process of publishing and retention of cultural alterity can be viewed in the example of the Literature Fund's policy on Indigenous literature. The Fund supports a wide range of Aboriginal artistic endeavours, and admirably states that it

values the traditions and capacity for innovation that exist in the Australian multicultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society and encourages the creativity and artistic expression resulting from this diversity.¹⁶

However, to ensure saleability of texts, novels must be predominantly written in English. This economic circumstance is visible in most postcolonial writings. Given the diminution over time of many native languages, it has been necessary for the Indigenous writer to 'convey in a language that is not one's own, the spirit that is

¹⁴AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF AUTHORS. 1998 Translation grants program - \$100,000 in grants awarded. Media release. 12 August 1998. URL: www.asauthors.org/press3.html (6 October 1999).

¹⁵LITERATURE FUND OF THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS. URL: www.ozco.gov.au/literature/present.html. (6 Jan 2001)

¹⁶LITERATURE FUND OF THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS. URL: www.ozco.gov.au/literature/present.html

one's own'¹⁷ in order to reach a wide market. Much Indigenous literature is now coming to deploy the 'political' linguistic tactic of non-translation: whereby non-Indigenous readers are made to feel alienated from works due to the retention of native terminology. This was similarly apparent in the use of Greek in *Loaded*, or the frequency of Brisbane-based icons in *Zigzag Street*. The decision to translate or not is both political and economic in these cases and forms part of the aforementioned 'tactical' transfer of works to outside communities. Aboriginal literature suffers doubly from the linguistic imperialism that dictates alterations to texts, as writers must first resign themselves to working in English (in the case of predominantly English-speaking cultures), then have that too altered in foreign translations. This thesis has not addressed the translation of Aboriginal literature at length, as it requires separate theoretical frameworks to be justly analysed. However, a similar type of double translation occurs in the changes made to Gemmell's careful attempt to recreate Aboriginal language usage. Thus, economic viability of language choices in certain circumstances may perpetuate homogeneity in literatures or national reading cultures, as easily as it may offer innovation.

The saleability of novels is in many ways governed by the notion that a 'good' translation should not appear to be a translation. In my case studies, paratextual translation works to convince readers that the actual translated/transferred novel does not feature insurmountable 'culture bumps'¹⁸ and will read as a self-contained narrative. In order to maintain this façade of easy readability, the technical translator him/herself must remain invisible. He/she will not be sought out as a

¹⁷RAO, Raja. *Kanthapura*. New York: New Directions, 1938, vii.

source of authority on the subject matter of the text and will generally not become known to the public except for inclusion (in small print) on the cover or title page. Paratextual translation works to further elide the role of the actual translator by elevating the status of the author and the significance of ‘authorial intention’ in the form of discourse about writer’s private lives and the writing process. Contemporary celebrity culture requires authors to make public appearances and truly become the ‘faces’ of their own work if high sales are desired.

Chapter Six spoke of the importance of programs like Bernard Pivot’s *Bouillon de Culture* as opportunities for authors to work as translators of culture. Pivot’s respectability and exalted public profile also makes celebrities of his guests. Nikki Gemmill’s appearance on the high-energy, youth-oriented French program *Nulle Part Ailleurs* is said to have ensured her ‘a passport to the world of high-volume sales and popular success.’¹⁹ Gemmill appeared on *Nulle Part Ailleurs* alongside actor Denzel Washington, thus the author was equated with high-profile celebrities. Nick Earls’ Australian publicity trail is comparable, featuring television appearances in similar pop culture forums (such as *Good News Week* and *Recovery*). In this way, the contemporary author is positioned among those ‘new sources of knowledge’ cited earlier by Turner et al.

‘Authority’ over subject matter was once sought in the author because he/she was viewed as a distanced intellectual, more knowledgeable than the reading public, and his/her ‘intentions’ were read as the final word on the limitation of textual meaning. As alluded to by Turner et al, the contemporary author’s role has been

¹⁸LEPPIHALME, Ritva. *Culture Bumps: An Empirical approach to the Translation of Allusions*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1997.

¹⁹REIMER, Andrew. 2001, Spectrum 7.

restructured by what Andrew Wernick calls the ‘promotional culture’²⁰ (press and so on) that now governs the relationship between knowledge and public. Wernick’s term suggests that paratextual translation works as a system within itself. It feeds off and into other paratextual representations, allowing us to view the text in Genette’s terms of an unstable, unlimited document with infinite possibility for additions and reinterpretations. As celebrities in this system, authors’ lives and opinions become extensions of the text. In terms of culture, authors are thus asked to be translators themselves; to define the cultural spaces they represent (be they national, regional, gendered or otherwise). This has been evident here through Earls’ positioning as psychologist, ‘agony uncle’ and ‘boy next door’. Gemmell is likewise repeatedly asked by the foreign press to explain Australian politics and Aboriginal issues.

Turner et al²¹, speaking specifically of film or sports stars paid to promote products which may have little to do with their own knowledge or training, say that

Celebrities are called on to (and do) carry meaning in situations far beyond what might reasonably be seen as their professional expertise and to audiences far exceeding those who might be supposed to be interested in the products they represent.

The public is expected to be more open to purchasing the product on the basis that a favourite star claims to use it. One important addition to this logic, in terms of the celebrity author, is that the press also imbues novelists with a certain intellectual capacity not always expected of film stars or models, for example. For this reason, authors are positioned explicitly as authorities over any facet of life they can be seen to discuss in their work. Particularly in terms of contemporary, realistic novels, readers see their own lives reflected in the texts and seek assurance from background information about authors that the cultural spaces represented are valid.

²⁰WERNICK, Andrew. *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression*. London: Sage, 1991.

²¹TURNER, Graeme, Frances BONNER and P. David MARSHALL. 2000, 164.

Alternatively, a reader may have a voyeuristic interest in the subject matter and seek validation of their perceptions of reality from knowledge about the author. When the author is shown to have a similar background to the protagonists, the press ensures that that information is made available to readers. This improves the reader's relationship with the text and ensures higher sales. Peter Rix²² (who manages high-profile Australian musicians) says that

You don't become a star by trawling around Australia playing seven hundred jobs in two years. You become a star by manipulating the forms of media that are there to your own ends.

This manipulation of the reader through paratext is the job of publishers and other 'translators', along with authors in their role as publisher's assistants, in Genette's words.²³ As celebrities, authors set trends and provide enviable models to fulfil a variety of public desires, including a relationship with dominant national mythologies. The authors come to represent their cultures (remembering the suggestion in Chapter Six that Gemmell had a laugh like a vast, open space, literally embodying the French image of Australia). These functions of the author become a significant part of the extended text and help establish interpretative frameworks for readers. In this project's analysis of transfer, we see the social status of the author carried over or recreated in different cultures responding to the economic trends and lacks in the new polysystem. This works to formulate a responsive recipient reading culture.

Culture and translation

²²RIX, Peter. Quoted in personal interview with the authors in TURNER, Graeme, Frances BONNER and P.David MARSHALL. 2000, 93.

²³GENETTE, Gerard. 1997, 347.

Both the political and economic facets of the process of transferring texts to different reading cultures inform the major focus of this thesis: the analysis of that which is at stake in terms of cultural changes. To reiterate earlier statements, the purpose here is not to expose ‘flaws’ in translated texts or to suggest value judgements about ‘good’ or ‘bad’ translations. My project is to investigate the influence of translation on the potential ways in which readers might interact with Australian fiction. Politically, it is the decisions of linguistic translators about linguistic choices and the decision to domesticate, exoticise or not to translate at all, that form the basic representations of culture that appear in a transferred novel. Assumptions about the available repertoire within the target reading culture will influence these decisions. This repertoire is then responded to and influenced by paratextual translation, which works to provide economic possibilities for translation to occur, working within the literary polysystem of the given culture. We have seen that this may occur both within and between so-called standard languages. Again, translation in its many forms can thus be seen to shape the reading culture and to affect readings of cultural images in the target culture. Additionally, as seen in Chapters One and Two, images are fed in this way back to the culture that created them, influencing the way a culture sees itself through the repetition of myths.

Throughout this thesis, I have engaged in a cyclical debate with myself and those in my field about the definition of ‘culture’. Many of my assertions here rest on the ability to somehow delineate the locations of ‘Culture A’ and ‘Culture B’, in order to then discuss the movement of a text from one to the other. I have repeatedly stated that cultures are dynamic and heterogenous, not fixed and homogenous, yet I ask the reader to stay with me as I discuss sending a book from ‘Australia’ to ‘France’. This seeming paradox is not mine alone, and reappears in many of the

theoretical works on which I have relied to inform this work. One solution is to follow Pym's argument that culture might be defined at the point where translation becomes necessary – but then how do we decide on the 'point' if there are many 'points' that themselves are not linear or arrived at simultaneously? While it is extremely difficult to define culture, there remains a need to *name* cultures – and each of the 'translators' discussed in this thesis makes use of these names in some way.

So, what's in a name? The process of naming a culture provides the illusion of the existence of that culture. This includes the illusion of cultural membership/belonging – members are able to say 'I'm Australian' without knowing what Australianness actually is. Following from this is the illusion of homogeneity or, at best, an illusion of fixed heterogeneity (the understanding that we are not all the same, but the possible variations are still within our sphere of comprehension.) Thus, during the 'translation of Australianness' we are actually translating something that was mythical to begin with – and a different myth is being created on the 'other side'.

There are clearly pay offs to assuming that you *can* draw borders around cultures (or at least to making use of the culture's name); it makes the culture easier to analyse and it facilitates the translation process if a book can be said to go from 'English' to 'French', for example. Yet, if we subscribe to the notion of culture as a fabrication, a mythology or illusion, the borders might be drawn differently on different days by different people for different books. To return to this thesis' title (the question of the 'transfer of Australianness') then, we might say that 'Australianness' is not being translated at all – but is being recreated in each different location. 'Australianness' for Australians is, in many ways, as much of an illusion as

‘Australianness’ in France or elsewhere. It is created. Thus, every translation choice moves towards making an ‘Australia’ which is appropriate for the target/recipient culture (based on historical relations, cultural knowledge, former translations and so on). So the translator decides not what Australianness is, but what it is for certain members of the French reading public in the year 2001. This will differ from what Australianness is for the British in 1998, or any other example we might care to choose. This may be as close as the results of this research will allow me to get to a definition of culture. But this nebulous definition does not undermine the other assertions of the thesis. No matter who is constructing the culture in question, there remain issues of ‘loss’ and ‘gain’ in the translation process. Just as it is easy to neglect a problematisation of translation on the basis that something will always get ‘lost in translation’, it is overly simplistic to say that as there is no such thing as a fixed culture, all changes are justifiable.

Maximal interpretation of the cultures represented in the novels discussed here is most likely to be achieved by the combination of traditional and paratextual translation strategies. This thesis has argued, however, that these devices do not lead towards a finite interpretation of a text, but open up new meanings, often different to the ‘original’ text, which work within the systems governing reading. Readers are not dictated to about ways to interpret a novel (there is no ‘author’s intention’ which must be followed) but they are equally not free to make meaning of the novel independent of the interference of translators. They are likewise limited in their ability to interpret cultural images, as those positions set up by many forms of translation over time create the only repertoire of images available to foreign readers: all cultural understanding is based on a process of comparing and contrasting against that which is already known. As I have repeatedly stated, the many different ways of

accessing textual meaning are equally valid but a lack of cross-cultural understanding will surely be the result of major alterations to a novel's content.

These changes and reading positions have been shown here as rarely being the responsibility of the authors themselves. However, there are some interesting examples of situations where authors have attempted to work against the necessity for cultural alterations. Chapters Four and Five gave examples of methods of intratextual translation (such as the inclusion of an American character in *The Dish*). In another example, Parks²⁴ recounts a decision by Kazuo Ishiguro to make *The Remains of the Day*²⁵ function equivalently in a range of foreign environments. Ishiguro is said to have 'criticised his British contemporaries for writing in a style that made translation difficult.' The austere narrative style, which was used to convey the 'emotional limitations of his protagonists', was apparently designed in part to facilitate future translations of the work. English-speaking critics read the book as capturing the essence of the emotionally frigid characters; this frigidity having been exaggerated for the benefit of translators. As shown in Reimer's discussion, this should ideally position the novel for reinterpretation in other languages. Parks²⁶, however, muses that

the precise conventional voice disappears entirely in Italian where such a controlled form of expression is common in prose fiction. The distance Ishiguro established from other writers in English thus fails to come across.

In this case, Ishiguro has made the decision to anticipate translation by reducing the possibility of culture-based alterations. Clearly, however, this is still not successful in all cultural environments. This returns me to consideration of the translational paradoxes discussed throughout this dissertation. The most well-intended or carefully considered attempts at retention of cultural icons are still not

²⁴PARKS, Tim. 2000b, 27.

²⁵ISHIGURO, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day*. London: Faber and Faber, 1989.

immune to inevitable change – if not of language, then of form or style or other aspects of the text which themselves might be culturally-constructed.

While lamenting these losses in one sense, this thesis has sought to suggest a possible positive reading of the movement of altered Australian novels to other environments. That is, ‘conflicting modes of translating’ might ‘set up and frustrate an expanding horizon of expectation’.²⁷ Pym’s words here speak of myth, but I believe they can be utilised to speak of the wider response to translated texts. The interrelated systems of textual and paratextual translation, with all their diverse alterations and problematics, should, if viewed critically, allow for the expansion of interpretative repertoires and new ways of viewing both textual and cultural production and reception.

Future directions

This thesis stands as an original contribution to a field of inquiry that is only just beginning to attain academic interest. While translation and Australian literature as separate theoretical spheres have been studied at length, the combination of the two is still rare in the academic domain, and even rarer in terms of popular public access to analysis of translation in action. Work in this field should be of benefit to the creators of illusions: authors, publishers and funding bodies who have an interest in transferring Australian publications to new markets. However, I do see a number of avenues for research that could be undertaken in another project.

As is the case for translators, issues of time, space and access to information have placed limits on the scope of this project. As stated in my introduction, the

²⁶ PARKS, Tim. 2000b, 27.

parameters of this thesis have been necessarily limited to a small selection of Australian case studies, and to transferral towards the United Kingdom and France for reasons of access to language and appropriate documentation. A further unavoidable omission here, in terms of data, is the actual sales figures of novels. Authors and publishers are extremely reticent to part with such information, giving only estimates or suggestions that something is ‘selling well’. While this makes it difficult to offer proof of the economic success of novels, it does further strengthen my suggestion that the illusion of success is more frequently created by publicity than fact. The term ‘bestseller’ is revealed to be an arbitrary term bandied about with little substantial proof in many of the popular reviews that I surveyed here. The ‘success’ of a text is thus delineated by the public discourse surrounding its release and follow-up promotion. Various parties speak of ‘success’ in different ways in the reviews used for this project – and ‘translation’ (in terms of international release) is seen as a mark of success within itself.

A variety of popular and academic critiques of novels was surveyed for this thesis, without specific parameters. I did not set out to examine reviews in any particular kind of publication, such as tabloid press, broadsheet journalism, women’s magazines or entertainment press. Rather, I have embraced any text’s paratext (in the form of a diverse collection of articles) as an interrelated system of appended information that expands and continues the meanings of the novels themselves. Another study might separate the specific types of journalism looked at here, or comment on the political leanings or other allegiances of each publication. The range of articles used as evidence here is inevitably not exhaustive, as the daily monitoring of all international publications is beyond the capabilities of one person.

²⁷PYM, Anthony. On the Translatability of Australian Aboriginal Myth. 1998. URL: www.fut.es/~apym/myth.html (16 Feb 2001)

The assistance of authors and publishers in providing me with this type of resource has, however, ensured that the press coverage in this thesis is wide and diverse.

Theoretically, this project has been original in its application of translation theory to the Australian, youth-oriented literature situation. There are clearly other feasible theoretical positions worthy of application to my data. Postcolonial theories, for example, have informed my work periodically, but could offer other perspectives on the cultural relationships between certain communities. My desire to critique the texts themselves, along with popular discourse and so on, in terms of ‘translation’, and my interest in the celebrity culture of authorship, limited the space available for reading this data through alternative theoretical frameworks.

There are also many other Australian texts and other cultural and linguistic exchanges that would be worthy of investigation using the theoretical framework employed here. One area of specific interest would be the release of Australian texts in Germany; which has long been a supportive market for Australian releases and was the first international recipient of Earls, McGahan and Tsiolkas, along with other young Australian authors. The strong German involvement in ownership of, or investment in, many publishing houses that work out of Australia is a factor that could not be adequately dealt with here. With German language capabilities, future researchers could find this situation a fruitful basis for case studies. Likewise, the situation of English translation towards the United States could be examined further, given the almost invariable desire of US publishers to eradicate culturally-specific language and make significant changes to titles, covers, bookstore positioning and other marketing practices.

The use of youth-oriented fiction, and the questioning of the American transfers, also offers an opportunity for further investigation of the notion of

globalisation. There is evidence in this thesis to suggest an increasingly globalised youth culture (icons of popular culture are recognisable in a range of different cultural spaces) and the notion is occasionally put forward that there is now less necessity to worry about the types of cultural translation discussed in this thesis. Many films, popular music and, increasingly, novels now move quickly across ‘cultural boundaries’. The internet too, encourages communication without physical cultural borders – indeed without any physical transfer. Yet, the texts chosen for analysis here are aimed at a youth market, and therefore may be taken as evidence of the fact that there is not yet a seamless, pan-national youth culture that does not require translation of its icons. Earls’ books may travel well between cultures, but not unassisted.

This study shows that there is not even homogeneity between Australia and the United Kingdom – whose psychological proximity is great – let alone other such pairings. So, when *Les Clés de l’Actualité*²⁸ suggested that Sydney-based *Heartbreak High* could be easily set in ‘Paris, Lyon or Marseilles’, it neglected to acknowledge the fundamental differences in the lives of the equivalently aged protagonists. The article suggests that all young people experience such things as peer pressure and unrequited love, and this may certainly be true. However education systems differ markedly, fashion is different, slang is different and gender relations are different. Politics and national traditions are different. French young people view a range of English-speaking television programs (dubbed or subtitled), while Australian young people only have access to the news and occasional films in French. There are many differences evident between the life experiences of these groups of young people – so the movements of texts can rarely, if ever, occur without ‘translation’. Globalisation, then, is inextricably linked to translation and the illusion

of seamless crossover. Even McDonalds alters its product list for release in different countries.

Some late additions have contributed to my research on Nick Earls' promotions, as his most recent text, *World of Chickens*, was released after the bulk of this project had been completed. The following excerpt from a review of this novel shows that the issue of lack of awareness might be one area of the study of translation to which we can justifiably apply the term 'scandalous':

Earls sets the book, as with his earlier works, in Brisbane – and does so with some triumph. Although he sells well in the US and Britain, he doesn't attempt any anodyne global village prose – a gherkin is a gherkin, and so is a horn monger, a purple Valiant, a Tim Tam, a Brizgarita cocktail and Moggill Road, Taringa.²⁹

Earls has made a great contribution to Brisbane-based literature and his unapologetic use of the Australian vernacular is valuable. However, there continues to be a lack of public and critical awareness of the fact that the novel will change in transfer. Again, it might be argued that part of the illusion of Australian cultural belonging is to believe that our texts will be valued elsewhere without alteration in the same way that they are valued here. Like all cultures, we similarly like to believe that we are reading 'authentic' versions of the translated works that make their way into English. What is being offered internationally, though, is not 'Australianness', or not as it is known at home. Rather, it is a different form thereof. It is easy to identify the stereotypical or anachronistic images of any given culture that might appear during these changes – but this is also about the meeting of two cultural spaces and the types of definitions that are *possible* in that site of meeting; the 'available definitions' within a specific repertoire of cultural images. It may be contentious to classify such

²⁸ JELOT-BLANC, Jean-Jacques. *Les Clés de l'actualité* 27 May-2 June 1999, 4-5.

²⁹ KUROSAWA, Susan. Memorable minutiae. *Australian*. 10 November 2001, Review 12.

re-imaging of Australianness in terms of losses or gains, but we cannot pretend that these many Australias are the same. Consider the following metaphor:³⁰

When a magician performs any disappearing/reappearing trick, for example, the movement of a coin from one location to another, the audience is asked to believe that the same coin has moved from one place to the other seemingly without alteration: it disappears at one end and reappears somewhere else unchanged. Yet, the ‘magic’ is frequently achieved by having a second, different coin secreted elsewhere. The object is indeed not the same object at all. This useful analogy works neatly for the question of translation – a text moves ‘magically’ from one culture to another and no one is supposed to notice the process of getting it there. Like the magic trick, the reader is distracted by what is occurring in the foreground (The story? Aspects of its promotion? A celebrity author?) and thus oblivious to the trickery going on behind the scenes. The translator (incorporating all forms of translation cited here) as illusionist convinces the reader if the text is able to ‘reappear’, seemingly without alteration, in the new location – and the reader must never spend too much time thinking about where the original text is now hidden.

There is a significant difference, however, between the magic trick and the translation situation, which is that the text that reappears elsewhere usually does not look the same as the original. Yet, the reader is somehow still convinced that the ‘magician’ has relocated the original book. In many ways, the purpose of this thesis was to spoil the magic a little; to expose some of what goes on behind the smoke screen and to suggest ways in which the reader is positioned, by various interested parties, to get the best view of the trick. Translation, like magic, is an art form that aims to produce beautiful, seemingly effortless illusions of transfer. Target/recipient

³⁰A version of this was originally suggested by Dr Barbara HANNA in personal communication, 21 November 2001.

readers, who gain access to texts from far and wide, offered to them in a comprehensible fashion, will appreciate these illusions. However, this thesis has shown that while translations are key contributors to the creation of reading cultures, they will not always encourage the most advantageous, critical reading *of* cultures.

Bibliography

N.B. Numerous personal interviews were conducted during the research of this project. See chapter footnotes for details.

AHMAD, Aijaz. *In theory. Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992.

ALIGHIERI, Dante. *The Purgatorio*. Translated by John CIARDI. New York: Mouton, 1961.

ALLEN, John Jnr. Battle over translation body reflects wider liturgical wars. *National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas). 7 Jan 2000, 5.

ALLISON, Richard. Interview with Nick Earls. Radio BBC2. London, 9 March 1999.

Amazon.com. Lila Says - Reader review. URL:
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/1857025652/qid=988001204/sr=1-1/026-9074102-0185227> (14 June 2000).

ANDERSON, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd ed., London: Verso, 1991.

ARMANNO, Venero. *Romeo of the Underworld*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1994.

ASHCROFT, Bill, Gareth GRIFFITHS and Helen TIFFIN. *The Empire Writes Back : theory and practice in post-colonial literature*. London: Routledge, 1989.

ATKINS, Lucy. Outback Odyssey. *Times Literary Supplement*. 23 July 1999, 23.

ATKINSON, Frances. A sea of hope. *Age* (archives). URL:
<http://www.theage.com.au/books/archives/gemmell.html> (11 Jan 2001).

AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS. *Australia Council Grants Handbook*. Sydney, 1998.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF AUTHORS. 1998 Translation grants program - \$100,000 in grants awarded. Media release. 12 August 1998. URL:
www.asauthors.org/press3.html (6 October 1999).

BALDRY, Moya. Literary Cover Ups. *Queensland Writers Centre News*. Dec 98/Jan 99, 27.

BALL, Ben. They like our wines and our soaps so why not our books? *Sydney Morning Herald*. 30 June, 2000. URL:
www.smh.com.au/news/0006/30/features/features2.html (12 Oct 2000).

BARNES, John. Legend. *In*: Richard NILE. 1994, 41-57.

- Barry Humphries Flashbacks*. Episode 4. TV, ABC. Dec 13, 1998.
- BARTHES, Roland. *Image Music Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath. London: Fontana, 1977.
- BASSNETT, Susan. *Translation Studies*. Revised Edition. London: Routledge, 1988.
- BENNETT, Bruce and Jennifer STRAUSS, eds. *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- BENNETT, Bruce. Myth. *In*: Richard NILE. 1994, 58-73.
- BENNETT, Tony. Tests, readers, reading formations. *In*: Phillip RICE and Patricia WAUGH. 1992, 206-220.
- BERNARD, John R. Regional Variation in Australian English: A Survey. *In*: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR. 1989, 255-259.
- BHABHA, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- BINDING, Paul. Salvation among the kindly riff-raff. *Times Literary Supplement*. 3 Oct 1997, 22.
- BLACKMAN, Maurice. Postcolonialism? Transculturalism? The case of French-Australian writer Paul Wenz (1869-1939). *In*: Brian EDWARDS and Wenche OMMUNDSDMEN. 1998, 145-153.
- BLACKMAN, Maurice, ed. *Paul Wenz: Diary of a New Chum and Other Lost Stories*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1990.
- BLAIR, David. Australian English and Australian Identity. *In*: Gerhard SCHULZ. 1993, 62-70.
- BLAKENEY, Sally. Second Thoughts. *Weekend Australian*. Jan 20-21 2001, Review 10.
- BOISSEAU, Rosita. Livres. *Biba*. Feb 2000.
- BOOTH, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Bouillon de Culture* (Australian Broadcast). TV, ABC. 6 Dec 1999.
- BOUQUIN, Stéphane. Snip kangourou. *Libération*. 24 Feb 2000.*

* To ensure a broad coverage of sources from the popular press, a number of magazine and newspaper articles were forwarded to me from the archives of authors and publishers. Many of these did not include full bibliographic details and are not archived elsewhere. These items can be forwarded to readers if verification is necessary.

BOWMAN, Martin and Wajdi MOUAWED. Trainspotting: The Translation of Swearing. URL: <http://publishing.about.com/arts/publishing/cs/translation/index.htm> (7 Jan 2001).

BRABAZON, Tara. A red light sabre to go, and other histories of the present. *M/C A Journal of Media and Culture*. 1999, 2 (4). URL: <http://www.uq.edu.au/mc/9906/sabre1.html> (10 Aug 1999)⁺

BRADY, Tess. No Tomorrow. *Australian Book Review*. Sep1999, 40-41.

BROWN, Phil. Brisbane by the book. *Brisbane News*. 22-28 March 2000, 4-7.

BROWN, Phil. Spinning a yarn. *Brisbane News*. 7-13 April 1999, 28-29.

BROWN, Phil. Inprint. *Brisbane News*. 18-24 March 1998, 16.

BRYANT, Peter. Regional variations in the Australian lexicon. In: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR. 1989, 301-314.

BURKHARDT, Joanna M. 1988 Review. *Library Journal*. 122 (1), Jan 1997, 148.

Buzz. Bachelor Kisses Review. No date available. Cited by Nick EARLS. (nickearls@mpx.com.au). E-mail to Lara CAIN. 26 May 1999.

CAIN, Lara. More to offer than Baywatch – International press commentary on the release of Australian novels. *Inter-cultural Studies: A Forum on Social Change and Cultural Diversity*. Newcastle, NSW: University of Newcastle. 1 (1), Feb 2001, 7-13.

CAIN, Lara. Translating Culture: Literary representations of Australian culture on the world stage. *Working Papers in Australian Studies No. 117*. London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 2001.

CAIN, Lara. What the hell is a Tim Tam? Reducing the space between cultures through electronic publishing. *M/C: A Journal of Media and Culture*. URL: www.uq.edu.au/mc/9811/timtam.html ⁺

Caitness Courier. Comedy, farce and romance. 11 March 1998.

CANEY, Diane. Hypertext. *Austlit discussion group* (austlit@vicnet.net.au). 6 Dec 1999. Archives retrievable at URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au>.

CAPONE, Giovanna, ed. *European Perspectives, Contemporary Essays on Australian Literature*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1991.

⁺ The URL given here was correct at the time of research. *M/C: A Journal of Media and Culture* can now be accessed at: www.api-network.com/mc/

- CAPP, Fiona. *Night Surfing*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1996.
French edition: *Surfer La Nuit*. Translated by Marc de GOUVENAIN. Paris: Actes Sud, 1998.
- CARTMELL, Debra, HUNTER, I.Q., KAYE, Heidi and Imelda WELEHAN, eds. *Pulping Fictions: Consuming Culture across the Literature/Media Divide*. London: Pluto Press, 1996.
- CASAGRANDE, Letitia. Monique Wittig Translated. Department of Romance Languages seminar series. University of Queensland, 29 May 1998.
- CATTERNS, Angela. Interview with Nick Earls. Radio Triple J. Sydney, 24 May 1999.
- CERTEAU, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven RENDALL. Berkeley: California University Press, 1984.
- CHAMBERS, Ross. *Room for Manoeuvre: Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991.
- Chandigarh Tribune*. Doctor-turned-writer in city. 16 March 1999.
- CHIMO. *Lila Dit Ça*. Paris: Pocket Plan, 1997.
English Edition: *Lila Says*. Translated by David WATSON. London: Fourth Estate, 1998.
- CLAVEL, André. Nikki Gemmill - bourlingueuse des antipodes. *Le Temps*. 22-23 Jan 2000.
- CLYNE, Michael. *Intercultural Communication at Work: Cultural Values in Discourse*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- CLYNE, Michael. The role of language in Australian society. In: Gerhard SCHULZ. 1993, 52-61.
- CLYNE, Michael, ed. *Australia Talks: Essays on the Sociology of Australian Immigrant and Aboriginal Languages*. Canberra: Australian National University, 1976.
- COE, Gideon. Interview with Nick Earls. Radio GLR. London, 10 March 1999.
- COLLINI, Stefani, ed. *Interpretation and Overinterpretation: Umberto Eco*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- COLLINS, Peter and David BLAIR, eds. *Australian English: The language of a new society*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1989.
- COOPER, Tim. Q. What do you get when you cross Bridget Jones with Nick Hornby? A. The man on the right. *Evening Standard*. 2 March, 1998, 26.

- CORSON, David. Social class difference in the lexicon. *In*: Suzanne ROMAINE. 1991, 340-361.
- COSIC, Miriam. Craft without charm. *Australian*. 21-22 March 1998, Review 29.
- Courier Mail*. It's a book wrap. Dec 18 1999, Weekend 8.
- CRAVEN, Ian, ed. *Australian Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Crocodile Dundee*. Directed by Peter FAIMAN. Rimfire Films, 1986.
- CUNNINGHAM, Stuart and Toby MILLAR, with David ROWE. *Contemporary Australian Television*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1994.
- DALLEY, Jane. Books. *Independent on Sunday*. 4 April 1996, 26.
- DARVILLE/DEMIDENKO, Helen. *The Hand that Signed the Paper*. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994.
- DAVIES, Luke. *Candy*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1997.
United Kingdom Edition: *Candy*. London: Random House, 1998.
- DAY, David, ed. *Australian Identities*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1998.
- DAY, David. The demise of the digger myth: Australian identity in a post-colonial world. *In*: David DAY. 1998, 73-95.
- DEBRITZ, Brett. Words worth! Public cash for top author. *Sunday Mail*. 10 Dec 2000, 5.
- DELAMOTHE, Tony and Carl BRIDGE, eds. *Interpreting Australia: British perception of Australian since 1770*. London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1988.
- DELAMOTTE, Jean Paul. *Amours de Rencontre (papiers australiens): a la rencontre de la culture australienne*. Paris: La Petite Maison, 1993.
- DEMPSEY, Dianne. A new leaf. *Sunday Age*. 25 May 1997, Agenda 6.
- DENT, Jackie. Hear no evil in C-word, says Nine. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 24 Sep 1999, 3.
- DESSAIX, Robert. *A Mother's Disgrace*. Pymble, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1994.
French edition: *Une Mère et sa Honte*. Translated by Ninette BOOTHROYD. Paris: Reffet, 2000.
- DEVINE, Frank. That's Language. *Weekend Australian*. 16-17 Jan 1999, Review 14.

- DICK, Eileen. Jam Session. *Studio 4 Men*. March, 1998.
- DICK, Eileen. Make'em laugh, make 'em laugh. *Time Off*. 11-17 Feb 1998, 16
- DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. Nikki Gemmell, chasseur des phrases. *Le Figaro*. 24 Feb 2000a.
- DUPONCHELLE, Valérie. Nikki Gemmell, l'aventure aux antipodes. *Le Figaro Litteraire*. 10 Feb 2000b.
- DUTASTA, Alain. En Australia il y a d'abord le sport.... *La Nouvelle République*. 2 Dec 2000.
- DUVAIN, Phillippe. L'écrivain oublié par Pivot. *Le Parisien*. 7 Jan 2000.
- EAGLESON, Robert D. The evidence for social dialects in Australian English. In: Michael CLYNE, ed. 1976, 7-28.
- EAGLETON, Terry. *Literary Theory: An introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.
- EARLS, Nick. Shades of success. *Courier Mail*. 19 Aug 2000, Books 6.
- EARLS, Nick. *Perfect Skin*. Ringwood, Vic: Viking, 2000.
- EARLS, Nick. Boy's Games. Public reading at Jameson's Bar and Restaurant, Brisbane. 20 July 1999.
- EARLS, Nick (nickearls@mpx.com.au). Reader review. E-mail to Lara CAIN. 18 May, 1999.
- EARLS, Nick. The haircut of a more successful man. (Excerpt). *Courier Mail*. 6 March 1999 Weekend 7.
- EARLS, Nick. *Headgames*. Ringwood, Vic: Viking, 1999.
- EARLS, Nick. *Bachelor Kisses*. Ringwood, Vic: Viking, 1998.
United Kingdom edition: *Bachelor Kisses*. London: Macmillan, 1999.
- EARLS, Nick. How I write. *Times*. 4 April, 1998. URL: www.Sunday-times.co.United Kindgdom:80/news/pages/Times/frontpage.html?1218231 (10 April 1998)
- EARLS, Nick. Master of Untidy Realism. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 28 March 1998, Spectrum 9.
- EARLS, Nick. Guest lecture. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology, 27 March 1998.

- EARLS, Nick. *Zigzag Street*. Moorebank, NSW: Transworld, 1996.
United Kingdom edition: *Zigzag Street*. London: Macmillan, 1998.
- EARLS, Nick. *After January*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1996.
- EARLS, Nick. *Passion*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1992.
- EDWARDS, Brian and Wenche OMMUNDSEN. *Appreciating Difference: Writing Postcolonial Literary History*. Geelong, Vic: Deakin University Press, 1998.
- ECO, Umberto. Between author and text. In: Stefan COLLINI, ed. 1992, 67-88.
- ECO, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the semiotics of texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979, 9-10.
- Elle*. La déferlante australienne. Dec 1998, 9-11.
- EMERSON, Caryl and Michael HOLQUIST, eds. *M. M. Bakhtin: Speech Genres and Late Other Essays*. Translated by Vern W. Hobbs. Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986.
- ENGLUND, Katherine. Ordeals of young in love. *Adelaide Advertiser*. 21 Feb 1998, 27.
- ENGLUND, Vicki. Doctor's novel a great success. *Courier Mail*. 22 May 1996, 20.
- EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. The making of repertoire and the role of transfer. *Target*. 10 (2), 1998, 357-361.
- EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. Polysystem Theory. 1997.
URL: www.tau.ac.il/~itamarez/papers/ps-th-r.htm (16 April 1998).
- EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. Factors and Dependencies in Cultures. 1997.
URL: www.tau.ac.il/~itamarez/papers/fac&dep.htm (16 April 1998).
- EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. The position of translated literature in the literary polysystem. *Poetics Today*. 11 (1), 1990, 45-51.
- Femme Actuelle*. Écouter voir lire. 10-16 Jan 2000.
- FIELD, Andrew. Translation? No, wait for the movie. *Courier Mail*. 12 July 1997, Weekend 8.
- FIELDING, Helen. *Bridget Jones' Diary*. London: Picador, 1997.
- First City*. Outback Encounters. April 1999, 110-111
- FISKE, John, HODGE, Bob and Graeme TURNER. *Myths of Oz: Reading Australian Popular Culture*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1987.

- FREADMAN, Anne. The Culture Peddlers. *In: Graham SQUIRES*. 1999, 7-26.
- GARCIN, Jérôme. Dossaix inconnu. *Le Nouvel Observateur*. 13-19 Jan 2000, 89.
- GEERTZ, Clifford. The Uses of Diversity. *Michigan Quarterly Review*. 25, 1986, 105-126.
- GELDER, Ken. The Vampire Writes back: Anne Rice and the (re)turn of the author in the field of cultural production. *In: Debra CARTMELL et al.* 1996, 29-42.
- GEMMELL, Nikki. *Cleave*. Milsons Point, NSW: Random House, 1998.
 United Kingdom edition: *Cleave*. London: Picador, 1999.
 French edition: *Les Noces Sauvages*. Translated by Dorothée Zumstein. Paris: Belfond, 2000.
- GENETTE, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. LEWIN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- GENTZLER, Edwin. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- GEORGE, Peter. Interview with Elaine Lewis. ABC Radio National. 9 Oct 1998.
- GHANDI, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1998.
- GLEDHILL, Matthew. The French selection. *Bulletin*. 27 June 1995, 84.
- GLOVER, Stuart. The Disloyal Subject: The consequences of non-fiction in Zigzag Street. *Imago: New Writing*. 10 (2), Spring 1998, 17-23.
- GREEN, Keith and Jill LEBIHAN. *Critical Theory and Practice: A Coursebook*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- GRIFFIN, Michelle. Melbourne Writers Festival Review. *Age*. 25 Aug 1998, 3.
- GUILLIATT, Richard. The Gypsy in her Soul. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 19 Sep 1998, Good Weekend 42.
- GUY, Gregory and Julia VONWILLER. The high rising tone in Australian English. *In: Peter COLLINS and David BLAIR*, 1989, 28-30.
- HALOCHE, Laurence. Hémisphère femmes. *Figaro Magazine*. 5 Feb 2000.
- HATIM, Basil and Ian MASON. *The Translator as Communicator*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- HAWKER, Phillipa. McGahan's Masculine Dour. *Australian Book Review*. 175, Oct 1995, 46- 48.

HAWKINS, Helen. Foreign comics have their cultural baggage to declare. *Weekend Australian*. 11-12 April 1998, 9.

HAWLEY, John. C., ed. *Cross-Addressing – Resistance Literature and Cultural Borders*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1996.

HAY, John. My Favourite Restaurant. *Sunday Mail*. 10 May 1998, Sunday 31.

HEBDIGE, Dick. *Subculture – The meaning of Style*. London: Methuen and Co., 1979.

HERBERT, Christine. Oz Wizard. *Jersey Evening Post*. 29 Sep 2000, Extra 12.

HERMANS, Theo. Translational norms and correct translations. *In*: 155-170.

Hindustan Times. The Zig-Zag Street boy enthralled. 17 March 1999.

HOCHEL, Brano. The cross-temporal and cross-spatial factors and the translation of literary language. *In*: Kitty VAN LEUVEN-ZWART and Ton NAIJKENS, eds. 1991, 41-48.

HODGE, Bob and Vijay MISHRA. *The Dark Side of the Dream*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1990.

HOFFMAN, Eva. *Lost in Translation*. London: Minerva, 1991.

HOLQUIST, Michael, ed. *The dialogic imagination: four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Translated by Caryl EMERSON and Michael HOLQUIST. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

HOUSTON, Melinda. Read of the Week. *Inside Melbourne*. March 1998, 29.

HORVATH, Barbara. *Variation in Australian English: The sociolects of Sydney*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Inverness Courier. Walking back to happiness – erratically. 27 March 1998, 25.

ISER, Wolfgang. *The implied reader : patterns of communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

ISHIGURO, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day*. London: Faber and Faber, 1989.

IVES, Laurel. The power of suggestion. *Weekend Australian*. 27-28 May 2000, Review 5.

JAGGARD, Ed. The Australian Surf Lifesaver as a National Symbol, 1920 – 1960. *In*: David DAY, ed. 1998, 58-72.

JAMES, Frederick. Zig-Zag Street.(sic) *Review*. Sep 1996, 19.

- JAMESON, Frederic. Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism. *New Left Review*. 146, 1984, 77.
- JAUSS, Hans. Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory. *In: Phillip RICE and Patricia WAUGH*. 1992,
- JELOT-BLANC, Jean-Jacques. *Les Clès de l'actualité*. 27 May-2 June 1999, 4-5.
- JOHNSON, Syrie. Selling melancholy for men. *Evening Standard*. 3 Aug 1998. URL: www.thisislondon.co.uk/Kindgom/dynamic/lifestyle/review.html?in_review_id=64961& (10 Aug 1998).
- JOHNSON-WOODS, Toni. Life's Little Ironies. *Review*. Feb 1998, 10.
- Journal de Dimanche*. Capp sur la nouvelle vague australienne. 9 Nov 1997.
- KENEALLY, Catherine. You are young and you are self-absorbed. *Australian Book Review*. 145, 1992, 27.
- KILLEN, Sandra. Earls Castle. *Courier Mail*. 26 Oct 1999, Our House 3.
- La Boite Theatre 2000 Season guide*. La Boite Theatre. Brisbane, 1999.
- La Croix*. Nikki Gemmell, une romancière venue d'Australie. 2 March 2000, 20.
- LECOULTRE, Cécile. Alice Springs au pays des merveilles. *24 Heures*. 31 Jan 2000.
- LEFEVERE, André, ed. *Translation/History/Culture – A Sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- LEJEUNE, Phillipe. *Le Pacte Autobiographique*. Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1975.
- LEPPIHALME, Ritva. *Culture Bumps: An Empirical approach to the Translation of Allusions*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1997.
- L'Humanité*. Sur les rives d'un si grand pays. 24 Oct 1997.
- LINDECKER, Jacques. La folle du désert. *L'Alsace*. 14 Jan 2000.
- LITERATURE FUND OF THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS. URL: www.ozco.gov.au/literature/present.html. (6 Jan 2001)
- LITTAMÉ, Fabrice. Les noces de Nikki Gemmell avec la nature et le verbe. *L'Union*. 9 Jan 2000.
- Liverpool Echo*. 17 Jan 1998, 18.
- LIVETT, Jennifer. Sites of Resistance. *Island*. Winter, 55, 1993, 66-69.

- LOTMAN, Herbert R. France: A growing taste for Anglo-American Authors. *Publishers Weekly*. 4 Sep 2000, 52-54.
- MACDONALD, Sarah. Interview with Nick Earls. Radio Triple J. Sydney, 29 Jan 1999.
- MACFARLANE, Robert. Review. *Observer*. 6 Aug 2000, 14.
- MACHALI, Rochayah. A cultural misunderstanding or a difference in perspective? A case in translation. *In*: Graham SQUIRES. 1998, 52-65.
- MADDOX, Bruno. Australia: Not that boring. *New York Times Literary Review*. 23 Feb 1997, 11.
- Magazine Littéraire*. Surfer La Nuit. Dec 1997.
- MAINWARING, Karin. *The Rain Dancers*. Originally produced by the Sydney Theatre Company, 1992. French language version: *Les Danseurs de la Pluie*. Translated by Jean-Pierre RICHARD. Carnières-Morlanwelz, Belgium: Éditions Lansman, 1995.
- MALOUF, David. Queensland Art Gallery seminar series. 26 Aug 1999.
- MARSHALL, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- MARTIN, Daniel. Nikki Gemmell, une femme au désert. *La Montagne*. 6 Feb 2000.
- MARTIN, Daniel. *Talahue* review. Éditions Métailié website. URL: www.strateges.com/eric/responses/livre.asp?ID=121 (10 May 2001)
- MATTHEWS, Anthony. Samosota: Polyphony and Heterglossia in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. Seminar presentation. Canberra: Australian National University. 28 May 1998.
- MAZINGARBE, Danièle. Nikki Gemmell, "l'espace me manque". *Madame Figaro*. 8 Jan 2000, 28.
- McCOLL, Mary Rose. View from the Verandah. Brisbane Writers Festival, 1998.
- McCROSSIN, Julie. Here comes the big change. *Courier Mail*. 8 April 2000, Weekend 7.
- McGAHAN, Andrew. *1988*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1995.
- McGOWAN, Tracey. Interview with Nick Earls. *Today Tonight*. TV, Channel 7. 8 Oct 1999.
- McKENZIE, Andrew. Global Vision. *Weekend Australian*. 30-31 Oct 1999, 29.

- MINH HA, Trin T. Scent, Sound and Cinema. *In*: Mary ZOURNAZI. 1998, 53-76.
- Mirror*. Bachelor Kisses Review. No date available. Cited by EARLS, Nick (nickearls@mpx.com.au). E-mail to Lara CAIN. 26 May, 1999.
- MONTVERT-CHAUSSY, Isabelle de. Nikki Gemmell dans le désert australien: L'étreinte de rêve. *Sud Ouest Dimanche*. 30 Jan 2000.
- MORGAN, Sally. *My Place*. Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1987. French edition: *Talahue*. Translated by Cécile Bloc-Rodot. Paris: Éditions Métailié, 1997.
- MORRIS, Desmond. *Gestures: their origins and distribution*. London: Cape, 1979
- MORRIS, Meaghan. Panorama: The live, the dead and the living. *In*: Graeme TURNER. 1993,19-58.
- MORSON, Gary and Caryl EMERSON, eds. *Mikhail Bakhtin – Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- MUECKE, Stephen. *Textual Spaces – Aboriginality and Cultural Studies*. Kensington, NSW: University of New South Wales Press, 1992.
- MUECKE, Stephen, Alan RUMSEY and Banjo WIRRUNMARRA. Pigeon the outlaw: History as texts. *Aboriginal History*. 9 (1), 1985, 81-99.
- MULLER, Vivienne. 1988 Review. *Imago: New Writing*. 9 (1), Autumn, 1997a, 134-137.
- MULLER, Vivienne. To the Island: Myths of identity and belonging in Andrew McGahan's 1988. *Association for the Study of Australian Literature Conference Proceedings*. 1997b, 31-36.
- MURRIE, Linzi. Changing Masculinities: Disruption and Anxiety in Contemporary Australian Writing. *Journal of Australian Studies*. 56, 1998, 169-179.
- NILE, Richard, ed. *Australian Civilisations*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- NISKA, Helge. Strategies for Interpreting neologisms – A preliminary study. URL: <http://130.237.181.252/reportaa.htm> (13 July 1998).
- NOLAN, Maggie. Mudrooroo. *Austlit discussion group* (austlit@vicnet.net.au) 9 April 2000. Archives retrievable at URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au>.
- Nord Éclair*. Nikki l'Australienne. 27 Jan 2000.
- NOUEL, Estelle. Les livres en français s'exportent bien. Radio France Internationale. URL: www.rfi.fr/fr.txt/kiosque/Mfi/culturesociete/300798-0.html (14 June 2000).

- O'CONNOR, Terry. Hand picked. *Courier Mail*. 18 May 1996, Weekend 7.
- PAGNOULLE, Christine. Treasure Island, popular culture. *Translat2000 discussion group* (translat2000@yahoogroups.com). 27 Aug 2000. Archives retrievable at URL: www.translat2000.com.
- PAIN, Kate. A Rough Write. *Southern Cross Magazine*. 22 Sep 1999, 45.
- PARKS, Tim. Translating Style. URL: <http://www.timparks.co.uk/14.html> (6 July 2000a).
- PARKS, Tim. Lost In Translation. *The Australian's Review of Books*. 9 Feb 2000b, 21-22, 27.
- PAUWELS, Anne. Gender Differences in Australian English. In: Suzanne ROMAINE. 1991, 318-361.
- PEARCE, Sharyn. Literature, mythmaking and National Identity. The case for Seven Little Australians. *Papers*. 7 (3), 1997, 10-16.
- PERKINS, John and THOMPSON, Jack. The Stockman, the Shepherd and the Creation of an Australian National Identity. In: David DAY, ed. 1998, 15-25.
- PERKINS, Liz. *Sunny Garden*. URL: www.nickearls.net.au (various dates).
- PIVOT, Bernard. L'Australie et la fascination pour l'outback, désert immens et profond. *Le Journal de Dimanche*. 12 Dec 1999.
- POMORSKA, Krystyna and Stephen RUDY. *Language in Literature/Roman Jakobsen*. Massachussets: Belknap Press, 1987.
- PONS, Xavier. Stamp Duty. In: Ian CRAVEN, ed. 1994, 36-45.
- PONS, Xavier. Australian novels in French. *Australian Literary Studies*. 6 (4), Oct 1974, 419-422.
- POTTER, Alison. Review. 27 April 1998. URL: www.thisislondon.co.uk/dynamic/lifestyle/books/top_article.html?in_review_id=42431&in_review_text_id=32230 (10 May 1998).
- PRATT, Catherine. Landscape. Austlit discussion group (austlit@vicnet.au). 28 May 1998. Archives retrievable at URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au>.
- Publishers Weekly*. 1988. 243 (49), 2 Dec 1996, 41.
- PURCELL, Leah and Scott RANKIN. *Box The Pony*. Sydney: Hodder Headline, 1999.

- PYM, Anthony. Translating Linguistic Variation: Parody and the creation of Authenticity. 2000. URL: <http://www.fut.es/~apym/on-line/authenticity.html> (16 Jan 2001).
- PYM, Anthony. Transliteration (absolute equivalence) The proper name is sometimes improper. URL: <http://www.fut.es/~apym/4.4/html> (8 Jan 1999).
- PYM, Anthony. On the translatability of Australian Aboriginal Myth. 1998. URL: www.fut.es/~apym/myth.html (16 Feb 2001).
- PYM, Anthony. Doubts about deconstruction as a general theory of translation. *TradTerm*. 2, 1995, 11-18.
- PYM, Anthony. *Translation and Text Transfer*. Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Land, 1992.
- QUATERMAINE, Peter. British perceptions of Australian arts in the postwar decades. In: Tony DELAMOTHE and Carl BRIDGE. 1988, 83-99.
- QUEIROZ de BARROS, Alexandra Assis Rosa. Translation of dialogues with regional accents. *Translat discussion group (now Translat2000 group)* (translat@wugate.wustl.edu). 20 May 1998. Archives available at URL: www.translat2000.com.
- QUENEAU, Raymond. *Zazie dans le métro*. Paris: Gallimard, 1959.
- RABINOW, Paul, ed. *The Foucault Reader*. London: Penguin, 1984.
- RAO, Raja. *Kanthapura*. New York: New Directions, 1938.
- REIMER, Andrew. Cherchez la sheila. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 19 May 2001, Spectrum 6-7.
- REIMER, Andrew. *The Demidenko Debate*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1996.
- RICE, Phillip and Patricia WAUGH, eds. *Modern Literary Theory: A reader*. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 1992.
- ROBIN, Libby. Urbanising the Bush: Environmental disputes and Australian National Identity. In: David DAY. 1998, 116-127.
- ROBINSON, Doug. Translation of dialogues with regional accents. *Translat discussion group (now Translat2000 group)* (translat@wugate.wustl.edu). 19 May, 1998. Archives available at URL: www.translat2000.com.
- ROLFE, Patricia. The mystery of the best seller. *Bulletin*. 21 April 1992, 109.
- ROMAINE, Suzanne, ed. *Language in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

- ROMON, Phillipe. Snip, héroïne couillue. *L'événement du Jeudi*. 27 Jan/2 Feb 2000, 29.
- SALINGER, J.D. *The Catcher in The Rye*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958.
- SALTER, John. What makes Australian literature Australian? *Antipodes*. 9 (1), June 1995, 15-22.
- SANDHU, Anupreet. Aussie humorist tickles. *Express Chandigarh Newsline*. 17 March 1999.
- SANDNER, Judith. Representations of Newcastle. Inter-cultural Studies '99 Conference. University of Newcastle. Oct 1999.
- SANDS, Judy. The joys of being a dad. *Courier Mail*. 25 March 2000, Weekend 4.
- SAUVAGES, Christian. Nikki Gemmell, en quête du père. *Journal du Dimanche*. 23 Jan 2000.
- SCHULZ, Gerhard, ed. *The Languages of Australia*. Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1993.
- SEAL, Graham. *The Outlaw legend*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1996.
- SEAL, Graham. The Wild Colonial Boy rides again and again: An Australian legend abroad. In: Ian CRAVEN. 1994, 161-172.
- SEDGEWICK, Eve. *Between men: English literature and male homosocial desire*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985
- SEXTON, Kristy. Question time. *Courier Mail*. 6 May 2001, Body and Soul 4.
- SHOEMAKER, Adam. Tracking Black Australian Stories: contemporary Indigenous Literature. In: Bruce BENNETT and Jennifer STRAUSS. 1998, 332-399.
- SIBREE, Bron. Slick pursuit of ultimate irony. *Courier Mail*. 28 Sep 1996, Weekend 7.
- SIMONS, Margaret. All you read is love. *Australian's Review of Books*. October 1996, 3-4.
- SLATTERY, Luke. Post cringe whinge. *Weekend Australian*. March 11-12 2000, Review 11.
- SORENSEN, Rosemary. Complex prowler. *Courier Mail*. 21 Feb 1998, Weekend 7.
- SOUBLIN, Jean. Une vocation de routarde. *Le Monde*. 10 Feb 2000.

- SPENCER, Beth. Mapping Desire – Christos Tsiolkas' Loaded. *Ozlit Reviews*. URL: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ozlit/rev-9613.html> (19 June 1998).
- SQUIRES, Graham, ed. *Language, literature, culture: a selection of papers presented at Inter-cultural studies '98*. Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 1999.
- STOLL, Caroline. Andrew McGahan: Die Geschichte mit Cynthia. *Stadtmagazin Berlin*. 16 July 1997.
- STRETTON, Andrea. Interview with Estelle Lemaitre. TV ABC, *Sunday Arts*. 31 Oct 1999a.
- STRETTON, Andrea. Interview with Bernard Pivot. 22 Sep 1999b. URL: http://arts.abc.net.au/bouillon/stretton_txt.htm (12 Oct 1999).
- Sydney Morning Herald*. Column 8. 25 November 1999, 1.
- TAMIS, Anastasios. Modern Greek in Australia. In: Suzanne ROMAINE. 1991, 249-262.
- TAYLOR, Brian A. Towards a sociolinguistic analysis of 'swearing' and the language of abuse in Australian English. In: Michael CLYNE, 1976, 44-62.
- The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Directed by Stephen ELLIOT. Latent Image/Specific Films, 1995.
- The Castle*. Directed by Rob SITCH. Working Dog Productions, 1997.
- The Dish*. Directed by Rob SITCH. Working Dog Productions. 2000.
- The Wog Boy*. Directed by Aleksis VELLIS. 20th Century Fox, 2000.
- TISON, Christophe. Livres. *Cosmopolitan*. Feb 2000.
- TODOROV, Tsvetan. *Genres in Discourse*. Translated edition. Translated by Catherine PORTER. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- TOOLAN, Michael J. *Narrative: A Critical linguistic introduction*. London: Routledge, 1988.
- TOURY, Gideon. What are descriptive studies into translation likely to yield apart from isolated descriptions? In: Kitty VAN LEUVEN ZWART and Ton NAAIJKENS, eds. 1991, 179-192.
- TSIOLKAS, Christos. *Loaded*. Milsons Point, NSW: Random House, 1995.
- TURNBULL, Sarah. Australian Authors in demand. *Bulletin*. Oct 28 1997, 35.
- TURNER, Ethel. *Seven Little Australians*. Melbourne: Ward Lock, 1894.

- TURNER, Geoff. Control Freak. *Sunday Mail*. 21 Nov 1999, 39.
- TURNER, Graeme, Frances BONNER and P.David MARSHALL. *Fame Games: The production of celebrity in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- TURNER, Graeme. *Making It National – Nationalism and Popular Culture*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994.
- TURNER, Graeme, ed. *Nation Culture Text – Australian Cultural and Media Studies*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- TURNER, Graeme. *National Fictions: Literature, film and the construction of Australian narrative*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1986.
- TURNER, Stephen, In exile at home: the post-colonial condition. Adventures of Identity: constructing the multicultural subject conference. Sydney, Goethe Institut, July 30 - Aug 2 1998.
- Un Livre Un Jour explore l'Australie!* URL: www.sv.vtcom.fr/ftv/fr3/livre/australie.html (30 March 1998).
- VAN LEUVEN ZWART, Kitty and Ton NAAIJKENS, eds. *Translation Studies: the state of the art: proceedings from the first James S Holmes Symposium on Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991.
- VENUTI, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an ethics of difference*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- VENUTI, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- VENUTI, Lawrence, ed. *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- VERSTEGEN, Peter. Some Critical notes on Holmes' cross. In: Kitty VAN LEUVEN ZWART and Ton NAAIJKENS, eds. 1991, 49-77.
- WAGNER, Erica. A Healthy nation should rejoice in translation. *Times*. April 23, 1998. URL: www.the-times.co.uk (7 Aug 1998).
- WALDREN, Murray. Hype and glory. *Weekend Australian*. 30-31 Dec 2000, Review 4.
- WALDREN, Murray. Sparkling Wasteland. *Weekend Australian*. Sep 12-13 1998, Review 14.
- WALSH, Michael. Overview of Indigenous languages of Australia. In: Suzanne ROMAINE. 1991, 27-48.

- WALTHER, Daniel. Australie: deux voyages initiatiques. *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*. 21 Jan 2000.
- WALTERS, Margaret. Books. *Sunday Times*. 5 Sep 1999, Books 8.
- WARD, Russell. *The Australian Legend*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- WARREN, Jane. 'Wogspeak': Transformations of Australian English. *Journal of Australian Studies*. Sep 1999, 86-94.
- WECHSLER, Robert. *Performing without a stage: the Art of literary translation*. Catbird Press: North Haven, 1998.
- WERNICK, Andrew. *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression*. London: Sage, 1991.
- WHEELWRIGHT, Julie. Soul survivor. *Times*. 31 July 1999, Metro 21.
- WHITE, R.S. A brief Cultural History of Vegemite. In: Ian CRAVEN, ed. 1994, 15-21.
- WHITING, Frances. Kiss and Tell. *Courier Mail*. 5 April 1998, Sunday 5.
- WHITING, Frances. Fact makes great fiction. *Sunday Mail*. 8 Sep 1996, Magazine 21.
- WILSON, Katherine. Advances Australia Unfair. *Courier Mail*. 27 March 2000, Weekend 7.
- WYNDHAM, Susan. An unusual life. *Australian Magazine*. Aug 20 – 21 1994, 42-46, 48.
- WYLER, Lia. *Translat2000 discussion group* (translat2000@yahoogroups.com). 13 Jan 2001. Archives available at URL: www.translat2000.com
- YALLAMAS, Lisa. Nick's Off to Hollywood. *Courier Mail*. 2 July 1998, What's On 7.
- YALLOP, Richard. Vive La Frances. *Weekend Australian*. 15-16 Jan 2000, Review 16-18.
- YEAP, Sue. Best-sellers a snip for young author. *West Australian*. 19 Aug 1998, Today 14.
- ZOURNAZI, Mary. *Foreign Dialogues: Memories, Translations, Conversations*. Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 1998.
- ZUEL, Bernard. Strange encounters. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 18 March 2000, Spectrum 3.

