

THE OTHER WOMEN: INTERROGATING SEXUALITY IN ROSA PRAED'S LOST RACE ROMANCE, *FUGITIVE ANNE*

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Lost race romances of the Victorian period map out a narrative space delineated by discourses of imperialism and masculinist heterosexuality. In some ways sidestepping the imposition of mapped knowledge of geography and ethnography across the globe to fantastically revel in the few “blank spaces” left on the map, lost race stories generally replicate the patterns of hierarchy, alterity and domination which propelled that mapping in the first place. Rosa Praed's *Fugitive Anne: A Romance of the Unexplored Bush* (1902) unsettles the usual representation of Otherness that structures lost race stories. Placing a female protagonist in what is normally the role of the male explorer, Praed unsettles the usual contrast between familiar male homosocial imperialism and Otherness, both racial and gendered, embodied in figures such as Ayesha, from the Henry Rider Haggard novel *She* (1887). However, the most radical unsettling of Otherness is where the combination of a female protagonist and the “de-centring of the female subject” (Dixon 95) through multiple female characters in the novel opens gaps in which the connections between women and Otherness are exposed for scrutiny. Attempting to think through the relationships between women in this text shows that recognising same-sex female desire in *Fugitive Anne* disrupts the traditional patterns of Otherness in lost race romances. The complex set of relationships between the different female characters demonstrates how female desire is imbricated in the network of power, race and place that underlies lost race romances.

This paper begins by introducing the lost race romance, looking particularly at *Fugitive Anne* and its relationship to the genre. It then examines the different discourses of sexuality present in the text, ranging from “mateship” to the companionate marriage. It is argued that the multiple discourses of sexuality in the text create the conditions under which same-sex female desire can be read, demonstrated through a close reading of one section of the novel. Finally, it is suggested that the narratives of sexuality in the text take on a spatial dimension which is characteristic of the lost race romance.

The lost race romance, exemplified by Henry Rider Haggard's *She*, maps out both a narrative and geography structured by heterosexual masculinist sexuality. Penetrating into the “unexplored” wilderness, groups of white male explorers take on the landscape and the lost race, a group made Other by race and through feminisation. The degeneration attributed to these groups marks them as feminised,

as does their frequently female leadership. Despite the erotic blandishments of the lost race, the manly explorers ultimately reject and overcome them, proving both their adherence to Victorian ideologies of muscular Christian masculinity and their ability to exert control over self, Others and land. Lost race romances participate in the formulation and expression of British imperial superiority while simultaneously offering a counter-narrative characterised by anxiety, reflecting the complex range of popular cultural positions on British imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this period, lost race romances were prolifically published and widely read: "Within three months of its publication in 1887 *She* had sold twenty-five thousand copies. One reviewer [. . .] complained that it is 'impossible in any house to attempt any conversation which is not interrupted by the abominable introduction of *She*'" (Dixon 85).

Rosa Praed, an Australian-born novelist, living and writing in England, entered the lost race romance genre with the novel *Fugitive Anne: A Romance of the Unexplored Bush* in 1902. Though she may not have taken the genre entirely seriously – she dismissed it later as "all terrible nonsense" (Clarke 176) – Praed's intervention in this masculine territory demonstrates the alternative potentials of the lost race narrative. Despite her dismissal, *Fugitive Anne* circulated within a literary culture that took the lost race romance seriously. Andrew Lang, a well-known critic and major editorial influence on Haggard's *She* (Etherington xx-xxii), "wrote a leader on it [*Fugitive Anne*] in the Daily News" (Clarke 176).

Fugitive Anne uses many of the familiar narrative conventions of the lost race story, yet differs in a number of significant ways. The text opens by depicting a protagonist whose restricted circumstances contrast with the journey of exploration that begins the standard lost race romance. Anne Marley, forced to marry an abusive man, Elias Bedo, in order to support her sick mother and sister, flees from her marriage by jumping off a ship off the coast of Leichardt's [sic] Land, a fictional alternative to Queensland used in other Praed novels. With her Aboriginal companion Kombo she travels to a relative's farm, arriving to find it destroyed by the attack of a local Aboriginal tribe. The interweaving of colonial history, in the form of a fictionalised version of the Hornet Bank massacre and retaliatory destruction of the Yiman people (Clarke 16-17), with the fantastic presence of the lost race creates ambivalence towards historical authenticity and claims to land. Anne is captured by the Aboriginal tribe, but through her singing skills (having trained as an opera singer) they are persuaded that she is a goddess, and do not harm her. Eventually escaping from the Aborigines, she encounters Eric Hansen, a Danish scientist and explorer, whom she met on the ship. Travelling further inland, they discover a group called the Acans, a remnant of Mayan civilisation. Praed uses the concept of Lemuria, a lost continent that once connected Australia and South America (often discussed in the theosophical movement), to explain the presence of the Acans. Again through her singing power Anne is installed as high priestess, while Keorah the former high priestess sets her sights upon Eric. Eventually Anne is

exposed as a fraud, partially by the arrival of her husband, but luckily the volcano in which the Acans live explodes, killing the husband and obliterating the Acans, while Anne, Eric and Kombo make their escape to fame and fortune in England.

Robert Dixon argues that “the lost-race formula allowed Praed to explore new roles for women and men that were unconventional not least because they are, at least for a time, free of sexuality” (94). This freedom is made possible, I would argue, not by the absence of sexuality, but rather by the layering of numerous discourses of sexuality in the novel. The array of different points of view from which to read sexuality in the text opens up the potential for the co-existence of alternative forms of sexuality alongside the heteronormative structure commonly found in the lost race romance. The text itself foregrounds the process of reading sexuality, and the role of cultural tools for constructing narratives of sexuality, in the representation of Keorah’s courtship of Eric. His inability to read Acan signifiers of desire – sharing a drink from a special type of goblet and lighting a lamp – while still performing these actions highlights the performative nature of sexuality, the power that inheres in the ability to co-opt participation in this performance, and the importance of comprehension in negotiating codes of desire.

The standard lost race romance is built around a tension between the homosocial bonds between the white male explorers and the exotic heterosexual eroticism offered by the lost race, a tension that is ultimately resolved in favour of male homosociality. In *Fugitive Anne*, the presence of a female protagonist makes this formulation of sexuality impossible, though it might remain as a background understanding for the generically informed reader. Praed uses the concept of “mateship” in attempting to reconcile the contradictions created by the female protagonist: homosocial bonding is ruled out, and while the overall narrative arc of the novel is based on the romantic relationship between Anne and Eric, the relationship is complicated by Anne’s marital status and the need to resist the narrative closure enforced by the resolution of the relationship in marriage. Praed’s attempt to reformulate “mateship” as encompassing both men and women also acts to modify heterosexual relationships. Helen Thomson has argued that in Praed novels such as *Fugitive Anne* and *Lady Bridget in the Never-Never Land* (1915) “the ideal heterosexual relationship was one based on a form of mateship which had been forged in the bush” (28). The space of the bush, and the “mateship” relationships enabled in that space, offer “liberating potential” (Thomson 29), especially from class. However, the colonial context within which “mateship” and Australian romance is formulated is complicated by appeals to “the values of the past, which were invariably English” (Thomson 21). Thomson sees Praed as an exception among Australian romance writers as she “tends to bring her Australian heroines back home to the bush, after discovering the social, moral and physical inadequacies of England” (28). While Thomson portrays Praed’s heroines as making a choice between Australian colonial identity and British identity, epitomised by a choice

between Australian and English suitors, *Fugitive Anne* seems to advocate a third space with its selection of a Danish suitor.

While the discourse of “mateship” provides one way to read heterosexual relationships in the text, Kay Ferres critiques “the equation of romantic love with national loyalty,” pointing out that it “takes for granted that the romance heroine’s quest for fulfilment is bound up with conventional heterosexual desire” (239). One key consequence of the insertion of a female protagonist into the lost race romance is that the encounter between the white male explorers and the female leader of the lost race becomes an encounter between two women. Dixon argues that this doubling creates “a de-centring of the female subject” (95). However, another way in which *Fugitive Anne* differs from the standard lost race romance is through the unusual presence of multiple female characters, mainly the other Acan priestesses. A complex net of relationships between women is created in the novel, which disrupts patterns of alterity and produces the conditions for an alternative reading of sexualities in the novel, as will be discussed later in this paper. Anne’s identification as “Mormodelik! The Spirit of the Pleiades” (Praed 77) (the Pleiades being the constellation known as the Seven Sisters) suggests the strength of this underlying presence of female community.

Anne’s position as protagonist alters the normal structure of the lost race romance, where men are at the centre, venturing into the margins to investigate the mysterious female object. Installing Anne as protagonist shifts the representation of women in the text from object to subject status. Yet as the novel opens, Anne is marked by absence and silence – in the first three chapters we have only other characters’ descriptions of her. Anne’s own voice is present only in a letter to her mother, which, as a faked suicide note, “deliberately recruit[s] signs from the late nineteenth-century medical discourse on feminine hysteria” (Dalziell 31). In her first direct depiction in the text, she is disguised as a boy and a Lascar, her gender and racial identity destabilised. Upon arriving in Aca, Anne is placed within the female community of priestesses, and juxtaposed with Keorah, the former high priestess. This confrontation between Keorah and Anne is one surrounded by other women – the priestesses – who help or hinder as appropriate. This confrontation is presented more in terms of freedom, particularly sexual freedom and self-control, than as being a simple fight over a man that to some extent enables both Keorah and Anne. In this enabling aspect of the relationship between outsider and Other, Praed differs considerably from the mainstream lost race formulation of relationships, which are framed in terms of domination and subjugation. While to see Keorah as a feminist liberator and helper for Anne would overstate the case, she does give Anne a position of institutional power, as High Priestess, and treats her as an equal, however hostile. Further, Keorah provides a model of assertive female sexuality and female leadership.

Fugitive Anne opens with Anne escaping from her husband and marriage. It ends with her second marriage to Eric Hansen, a seeming reinstatement of

heterosexual norms, if in a slightly renegotiated form. This renegotiation draws on, and forms a part of, debates about marital (mis)conduct that occurred through the second half of the nineteenth century. Marriage is initially represented in the text in terms of work: “a job that’s just a little more complicated than grubbing out stumps on a clearing” (Praed 14-15), as Anne writes in her letter to her mother. The framing of marriage as work, and as economic trade, obviously taps into a commonplace feminist critique of marriage. The class disparity between Anne, later discovered to be a baroness, and her “brutally unkind” (142) “bullock-driver” (8) husband enables their relationship to be read within contemporary “rigid notions about the way conflict was expressed differently in the marriages of different classes” (Hammerton 3). The overtly physical domination used by Elias Bedo was associated with lower-class marriages and masculinity, and contrasts with the middle-class ideal of the companionate marriage that presumably Anne and Eric will achieve. For all the idyllic qualities associated with the companionate marriage, however, it is not always interpreted as an entirely positive concept. Ruth Vanita argues that the

idea of companionate marriage, seen by some feminist historians as liberatory for women, may equally be read as involving the institutionalisation of compulsory heterosexuality in a more definite form and the persecution or downgrading of other alternatives, including celibacy, same-sex eroticism, and friendship. (28-29)

This downgrading of alternatives is mirrored in the narrative shutdown at the conclusion of *Fugitive Anne*. The epilogue of the novel seems to contradict much of the previous feminist re-interpretation, as it positions Eric as the central authoritative figure, with Anne on the sidelines. The epilogue also comments on the meta-textual world that the story inhabits, referring to “London daily papers,” lectures at Albert Hall, a forthcoming scientific work “With Cannibals and Acans in Unknown Australia” as well as having references to the story itself “imagined in fiction,” with “a fresh flavour of romance to the exciting story” (427-28). In this reduced mode, Anne, with her mother and sister, becomes part of a list of celebrities secondary to “the lecturer” Eric, while Keorah is signified by a list of relics – “the great opal worn by the Acan High Priestess” (428) – mute objects that are only able to speak through the colonial structures of the exhibit and the lecture. At this point, the text seems to have capitulated to the standard gender politics of the lost race story, in which “while women were the proper reward for a job well done, they had no business adventuring or governing an empire” (Hanson 519-20).

The abrupt summary of the epilogue disrupts the previous narrative rhythm of the novel: repetitious, delayed, sidetracked. This sudden ending may reflect the circumstances under which the novel was written, as Praed was ill during the writing, at one point pausing for six weeks. She was also under financial pressure:

“the book brought in a very fair sum of much needed money in days of adversity” (Clarke 176). Alternatively, given the sudden change in tone and the almost overstated degree of conformity to hegemonic ideologies, this ending could be seen as parodying the standard lost race story, and highlighting the prior unruliness of the novel. Yet prior to its abruptly heteronormative conclusion, *Fugitive Anne* contains multiple and diverse models of sexuality, in which same-sex female desire plays an important role.

Terry Castle argues that lesbian fiction is “likely to stand in a satirical, inverted or parodic relationship to more famous novels of the past – which is to say that it will exhibit an ambition to displace the so-called canonical works that have preceded it” (90). *Fugitive Anne* reworks crucial aspects of the lost race model epitomised by Rider Haggard’s intensely popular *She*. Against the seeming ubiquity of Haggard’s narrative pattern, Praed disrupts male homosociality and heterosexuality to create a space for the articulation of alternative female sexualities. While it can be argued that “all stories comprise within themselves the ghosts of the alternative stories they are trying to suppress” (Sinfield 37), the representation of alternative forms of sexuality plays a specific and important role. Lisa Moore describes a trajectory within the early modern period in which sexuality plays a key role in the creation of modern Western subjectivity and identity:

The process traced [. . .] is the emergence not only of notions of sexually aberrant racial and national Others but also of a properly “white” (a ubiquitously unmarked term) and “English” (a term insistently and proudly marked) sexuality that depended on the virtue of the bourgeois woman for its moral purity. (4)

This process continues from the early modern period through the Victorian era, with an ongoing interplay between Otherness and sexuality. Moore notes further that this process works by “recognizing and identifying otherwise unspeakable sexual improprieties, improprieties that must nevertheless be represented in the text in order to mark the limits of bourgeois feminine sexuality” (5). Moore’s reminder that “proper sexualities” depend on the boundaries drawn by an improper form suggests that even where those proper sexualities are prominent, and narratively vindicated, within a text, traces or subtexts of other sexualities will remain.

Damien Barlow has called for critics to look beyond heteronormative readings of Praed’s work, suggesting that failing to do so ignores both the presence of same-sex desire within Praed’s writing and in Praed’s own life, given her long-term relationship with Nancy Howard. *Fugitive Anne* can, in fact, be seen as a collaborative effort between Rosa Praed and her partner, Howard. Barlow notes that Howard is the author of the poems in the novel (348), while Rosa herself, writing to her half-sister Ruth Murray-Prior in 1917, attributed the Red Men (Acans) and the “end part” to Nancy (Clarke 176). At the level of construction, the text is marked by

lesbian companionship and desire. Though establishing queer readings of Praed's texts may be challenging, as Rick Incorvati says, "questions about the nature of sexuality and its history can become exasperating in their inevitable indeterminacy, but their relevance remains incontestable and their consequences profound" (180). Despite the difficulties of demarcating sexuality, and the problems in retrospectively applying contemporary definitions, the discourses of sexuality that circulated in the nineteenth century offer an insight into the histories and the conceptual frameworks that structure understandings and experiences of sexuality.

Marylynne Diggs observes that "romantic friendship, although certainly a part of nineteenth-century discourse, was neither the only nor the dominant signification for exclusive or erotic relations between women" (337). She lists other forms of signification, "'freakish friendship', contradictory nature, and monstrous hybridity" (337) that circulated in that period. While these different formulations for female homoeroticism were available simultaneously in the late nineteenth century, the sites in which those formulations were published would also influence how they were understood:

Intense, lifelong attachments between women were often described by novelists, poets, and philosophers as definitionally chaste and virtuous, yet in low-culture sources such as pornography and newspapers, non-literary ones such as legal manuscripts and satiric pamphlets, and private records such as diaries, the lively spectre of a freakishly sexualised connection between women haunted representations of female friendship. (Moore 75-76)

The potentially multiple (and even contradictory) readings of sexuality produced from the representation of the same subject, female friendship, alerts us to processes that produce narrative understanding of sexuality, involving both genres and active readers.

Praed's involvement in the theosophical movement offers one framework for understanding homoerotic relationships. While *Fugitive Anne* does not explicitly utilise a theosophical framework, as Praed's occult novels do, it does deploy constructions of spirituality. To a large degree, however, spirituality is used as a pragmatic tool for survival in Anne's claims to divinity among the Aboriginal tribes and the Acans. The song "Ave Maria" by Gounod, repeatedly performed by Anne throughout the novel, establishes her divine origins at crucial moments in the plot, showing an ecumenical flexibility by substituting the name of the local deity for "Maria." The choice of "Ave Maria" could be seen as referring to the connection between Mariology and "homoerotically inclined men and women" in nineteenth-century British culture (Vanita 19), as well as forming one part of the representation of religious practice as feminised in *Fugitive Anne* (along with the High Priestesses and the cloistered community of virgin priestesses in Aca, directly echoing a

nunnery). Reina Lewis argues for a sexualised understanding of the convent in nineteenth-century popular culture: “[f]or the convent, like the harem, was often seen by its opponents as archaic, self-contained, tyrannous and tempting. Above all it was seen as essentially sexual, a subject of prurient fascination and dread” (107).

Praed’s utilisation of music to ambivalently negotiate patriarchal structures continues with Anne singing “Che faro senza Euridice,” “the most heart-thrilling wail of bereavement which ever musician penned or songstress breathed” (Praed 24) from Gluck’s opera *Orfeo ed Euridice*. While this lament for lost love haunts Eric during Anne’s escape from the ship, seemingly naturalised within the heterosexual romance, the gender and sexual identities attached to the song are unstable. The part of Orfeo was written for, and originally sung by a castrato, but in Berlioz’s 1859 revival it was sung by a woman. Elizabeth Wood argues that the “opera’s conventional meaning is both emphasised and subverted by the lesbian context a travesty Orfeo represents: her embodiment of a desire between women [. . .] makes visible the experience of lesbian invisibility as it gives voice to forbidden desire” (29). More broadly, Praed’s use of music that evokes multiple understandings of desire suggests the ways in which texts resonate variously with their audience in creating diverse interpretations.

While the story, on the surface, appears to conform to a romantic heteronormative format, the underlying presence of same-sex desire seems to occasionally disrupt the narrative. Initially, sexual relationships are framed in two ways: the “bonds of wedlock” that tie Anne to an abusive husband in a marriage entered into to gain resources to help her ailing mother, and the relationship with Eric, which mixes chivalry and mateship in constructing a bond that cannot be legally recognised and therefore cannot be sexually consummated. Yet there are moments in the story where this heterosexual narrative fails to remain coherent. The convergence of incident and framed meaning, created by popular cultural interpretive practices, disrupts the heterosexual narrative. This incoherence of a heterosexual narrative, and the availability of a queer reading, can be demonstrated in a detailed examination of one incident in *Fugitive Anne*:

With one knee on the ground, the Dane bent his head and kissed the hand that had decked him. This courtesy, so common in Europe, was quite unknown among the Acans, as it is among many so-called savage nations to-day. Its effect upon Keorah was sudden and unexpected. As Hansen’s lips pressed her skin, he instantly felt the nerve-thrill that ran through her. The blood rushed to her face; her wild nature was set aflame. With difficulty she commanded herself. Looking up, he saw the blush, and his eyes met hers. Again he was affected by their odd fascination. (273)

At this point in the narrative, the codified and performative aspects of sexuality are emphasised, along with embodied response. While this particular passage conforms to structures of heterosexuality, the text provides an alternative perspective, literally through Anne's point of view:

Anne, throned in lonely state, had seen Hansen kiss Keorah's hand, and now watched the pair as they conversed in obvious enjoyment of each other's society. At the sight of that kiss, a sharp pain had pierced Anne. It was not caused by envy or by wounded pride. She shrank from analysing the feeling; she only knew it was pain. (275)

The meanings, and sexual tension, generated by this hand-kissing gesture are insistently overdetermined by this passage. Yet while Anne's reaction might easily be read in terms of heterosexual attraction and jealousy, the refusal to place her response within this conventional narrative suggests an alternative reading. To take Anne's feeling as described, as neither envy nor pride, requires some other explanation, an explanation that could include same-sex desire and resistance to the replication of the structures of Western masculine heterosexual desire.

This three-way construction of the same event is reminiscent of Eve Sedgwick's figuration of male homosocial desire triangulated through an intermediary female figure. Castle elaborates on Sedgwick's idea to apply it to female homosocial or homoerotic desire:

[T]he male-female-male erotic triangle remains stable only as long as its single female term is unrelated to any other female term. Once two female terms are conjoined in space, however, an alternative structure comes into being, a female-male-female triangle, in which one of the male terms from the original triangle now occupies the "in between" or subjugated position of the mediator. (Castle 73)

This description of a female-male-female triangle perfectly describes this passage from *Fugitive Anne*. The introduction of a female protagonist to the lost race romance unsettles the male homosocial triangulation of the standard lost race romance through the insertion of another "female term." Using Castle's figurations allows the centrality of the heterosexuality to be replaced by female homosociality when examining the interweaving of relationships between Anne, Eric and Keorah in the novel.

Further, the situation described in this passage mimics one of the best known pieces of writing by Sappho, Fragment 31, which opens with "He seems to me the peer of gods, that man who sits and faces you, close by you [. . .]," and continues to

describe the pain felt by the female narrator while watching the man and desired woman as being “at the point of death” (Spraggs 55). Vanita argues that Fragment 31, with its depiction of same-sex female desire, was relatively well known in Victorian Britain. Sappho, through both her writing and personal reputation, provided a crucial model for the construction of same-sex female desire (see Vanita 41-50).

Later that night, the incident described previously is revisited, when Anne indicates she will brush her own hair, rather than letting Semaara, one of the other priestesses, do it:

Semaara, interpreting this as a dismissal, was about to follow her sister nuns, performing the ceremonious Acan obeisance. But a freakish impulse seized her. She laughed like a child who wants to show off a new trick. Returning, she kneeled before Anne, took the High Priestess’ hand and kissed it, reproducing Hansen’s air and gestures as he had kissed the hand of Keorah. The manner of the girl, her mischievous laugh, and the significant gleam in her eyes, suggested to Anne that she might then and there take another lesson from Semaara in the Acan language. (291)

In this passage, the kiss’s overdetermined meaning is transferred to Semaara’s actions. In this account of the second kiss the description is restricted to surface signs – reading the body at an outer level, rather than actually accounting for the feelings, both physical and emotional, of the participants, unlike the initial kiss passage. The gaps left by this restricted description leave space for an alternative reading of female homoerotic desire. However, the idea of imitation, combined with the use of the term “child,” acts to devalue Semaara’s actions. The passage also racialises the meaning of the hand-kissing gesture, in that it has significance when done by a white man which is lost when performed by non-white Others. An earlier passing comment described Kombo off chasing “Red Mary” (an Acan woman), “[. . .] and, taking example by his master, he was to the best of his ability paying court to the maid” (276), confirming the secondary status given to non-white imitations of codes of sexuality.

This section of *Fugitive Anne* demonstrates the layering of ideas, codes and discourses of sexuality within the text, the presence of multiple perspectives from which the reader can engage with the text’s narratives of sexuality. These narratives operate in conjunction with constructions of gender and race, and also function within the generic structures of the lost race romance. The lost race romance as an imperial form is deeply concerned with the connections between power and place, the control of land. The representation of land in lost race romances is shaped, to a large extent, by the narratives of sexuality operating within the genre.

The Australian landscape of *Fugitive Anne* is represented ambivalently, alternating between threatening and sheltering. Anne hails herself as “Nature’s child” when rejoicing in her escape from her husband (31), yet the landscape is harsh and inhospitable, its danger culminating in the “Shining Blue Death-Stone” (225) that kills when touched. Melissa Bellanta characterises the lost race landscape as “bizarrely incoherent,” where “arcadian fields jostle volcanoes and buried slaughter-chambers,” its plasticity denoting the modern expectation that the landscape can be vastly altered through technology and industry (Bellanta para. 1). The combination of fantastic landscape elements and realistic connections to the mapped imperial globe act to obscure indigenous claims to land. Lost race stories inscribe Otherness upon the landscape, replacing the original inhabitants with fantasies that speak of and to the masculine colonial condition. Inscribing the landscape with the fantastic presence of the lost race overwrites earlier meanings, though traces may remain. Healy describes how Australian fiction of the 1890s used the concept of Lemuria to provide historical depth to Australian culture that was not seen to be available from Aboriginal sources. Despite the incoherent and fantastic nature of the lost race landscape, and the desire of the genre for “blank spaces” on the map in which to place this landscape, lost race romances inescapably reproduce the imperial drive to explore, map and control land.

The construction of land in lost race stories claims it for a Western imperial system of meaning and ownership, but the space of the lost race is also (re)constructed as a space of legitimate heterosexual desire. Space, obviously, has both real and imaginative aspects, and no fixed meaning. Rather, meaning comes connected to space, stabilised and maintained through repetition. The lost race romance, with its highly formulaic nature and prolific iteration in the late nineteenth century, is one example of creating spatial meaning through repetition. The spatial meanings constructed in the lost race story have sexual dimensions, they are “eroticised topographies – both real and imagined – in which sexual acts and identities are performed and consummated” (Bell and Valentine 1). The imagining of landscape as a female body, commonplace in the history of Western ideas of landscape, takes on a particularly literal position in lost race stories: “Haggard’s map [in *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885)] abstracts the female body as a geometry of sexuality held captive under the technology of imperial form” (McClintock 4). In *Fugitive Anne* many of the spatial tropes that repeat and replicate heteronormativity in the lost race romance are present: the penetration into a hidden place, the final orgasmic obliteration of the lost race in a volcanic explosion. However, by creating spaces of female community and locating the space of the lost race as a site in which female homoerotic discourses can be articulated, *Fugitive Anne* differs from the masculinist heterosexual narrative space of the standard lost race romance.

This paper has suggested that Rosa Praed’s *Fugitive Anne* contests the norms of Otherness within the lost race story, destabilising the self/Other relationships standard to the lost race romance through a female protagonist and female same-sex

desire. Even at moments when homoeroticism is glossed over, or deliberately silenced by the text, it remains beneath the surface. I maintain that a full understanding of *Fugitive Anne* requires the recognition of same-sex female desire as a component of the multiple codes and narratives of sexuality present in the text. The point at which this novel becomes only about heterosexuality is the point at which we readers obliterate the layered diversity of its meanings. Rather, *Fugitive Anne* suggests ruptures in the lost race landscape, through which alternative sexualities may claim a space.

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