The Sheep's Face: Figuration, Empathy, Ethics

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The word 'species' is etymologically related to looking. Although its primary biological definition is that of beings that can interbreed, species can refer to things of like kind: this relates to the term's Latin derivation, *specere*, meaning to look. Describing how things look and conveying this appearance to others (whether in writing, or in relaying a memory) typically involves the use of metaphor. This article reads a number of Australian texts in terms of interspecies relations between humans and sheep, and considers the use of metaphor—and metonymy—and the place of ethics in this relation, with a particular emphasis on the face of both human and sheep: how sheep and humans look, in both senses of the word.

The image of the sheep in Australia—and in particular the metonym of the sheep's back—is historically identified with the economy. In a lecture from 1993 on industry protection, titled *Getting Off the Sheep's Back*, the economist Ross Garnaut refers to this figure in plural terms. He writes: 'Australia was "on the sheep's back" in the sense of depending heavily on the wool industry for its prosperity. From the 1890s . . . Australia was on the sheep's back in a second sense. Australia imposed costs on the export industries through protection and increasing layers of inefficiency in the rest of the economy.' Garnaut stretches this figure even further in arguing that, due to 'the costs to Australia of other countries' trade restrictions . . . the whole world is on the sheep's back' (4).

This image of the world on the sheep's back is not about strength, however, but about weakness. Garnaut writes, 'For most of this century [i.e. the 20th] the sheep's back was able to carry the load without collapse, if not discomfort' (9), adding, 'The ending of the reserve price scheme has removed a free ride for competitors' (10). According to Garnaut, the sheep's load was a problem: 'Australia has been getting off the sheep's back . . . the sheep could not carry the old load' (5). If we read Garnaut's further use of metaphor as being derived from wool it gets even more tortuous: he implies that the sheep—as metonym for the wool industry—metaphorically protects itself through tariff protection, and from 'layers of inefficiency.' Australians, then, protect themselves both with and from wool: 'insulat[ing] community welfare from the vagaries of the wool market' (4).

In his role as climate change advisor to the Rudd and Gillard governments, Garnaut turned from the metaphorical to the literal with his reported suggestion that sheep (and cattle) be replaced with kangaroos as a way of reducing carbon emissions (as kangaroos emit less methane than sheep and cattle). He proposed cutting sheep numbers by 36 million and increasing kangaroo numbers from 34 to 240 million. Inevitably, the farmers (as reported by the newspapers) turned to (punning) metaphor in their unimpressed responses. An article in the *Age* on 1 October 2008 ran with the heading, 'We'll skip the kangaroo suggestion farmers say' (Gray). Another article saying much the same thing but retitled—and de-authored—'A few roos loose in Garnaut's top paddock,' was published in *The Land* the following day. In a later scholarly article on nationalistic aspects of meat eating in Australia, Adrian Peace wrote that criticism of Garnaut appeared to be related to his distance from the land: 'it was noteworthy that any weakness perceived in Garnaut's argument was connected with his ivory tower status, his remoteness from the grassroots.' Although his argument was less metaphorical than his criticism of industry

protection, it was nevertheless seen as fanciful. As one commentator, quoted by Peace, wrote: 'If this is the best analysis Garnaut can come up with in relation to kangaroos, what does it say about the veracity of the rest of his modelling? Take away the fetish for numbers and it's stuffed.'

According to the Big Merino website under the heading 'Merino Facts,' the Goulburn statue is the 'biggest Merino in the world: standing 15.2 meters in height and weighing in at 97 tonne.' Yet it is not so big it doesn't need to rely on another imported myth: it is modelled on an actual ram known as 'Rambo,' presumably named after Sylvester Stallone's character, an American Vietnam War veteran and anti-hero who gets to win the war (Olson and Roberts 246). (The second Rambo film, and the first to be titled Rambo—*Rambo: First Blood II*—opened in 1985, the same year as the Big Merino.) Rambo is an apt name for this representative of the history of the (three types of) Australian Merino, a sheep reinvented through cross-breeding from a Spanish strain that went on to becOme the incredible success story of the wool industry in Australia. The site goes on to explain that while sheep arrived on the first fleet in 1788, none of them survived to breed. The first Merinos arrived in 1804; the first export was in 1807. However, the site's anodyne tale of British settlement, with a sub-plot involving sheep from Europe, North America and New Zealand, says nothing of Aboriginal people, and enforces the notion of *terra nullius*: contact never happened. Perceiving this textual Indigenous erasure transforms the specific story of the Merino in the Goulburn area from a bland one of pioneer success to a disturbing one of horror. An extract from the website, on the 'History of Wool' page, under the subheading of 'GOULBURN DISTRICT,' reads:

> The areas surrounding Goulburn are ideally suited to sheep with our relatively mild climate and vast areas of natural grasslands. William Faithful arrived on the Goulburn plains to establish Springfield in the winter of 1828. In the 1820s, the Goulburn District was on the edge of pastoral settlement. The same year Faithful took up Springfield, Governor Darling noted the great promise of the Australian wool industry in the following statement made to Right Honorable W Huskisson, 10 April 1828:

> *The unlimited extent of ungranted land, the abundance and goodness of the natural grasses, and the favourable nature of the climate for the production of wool, added to the comparatively higher proportion of labour and expense essential to the cultivation of the soil, have a* [sic] *naturally attracted a great majority of the capital and intelligence in the colony to grazing.* [italics in original]

As Judith Wright wrote to Les Murray, ironically quoting 'an early colonial dispatch': the land was clearly 'intended by Providence as a sheep-run' (Cooke 39).

There is nothing in this obfuscating history to indicate the violence involved in dispossession: that of, for example, the poisoning of flour for local Aboriginal people. In a note to her poem, 'Poison Cake, Benalla,' which begins, 'I am the forgetter of landscapes / and poison cakes in the valleys,' Amanda Johnson quotes from the 1841 diary of James Dredge, who was, as she records, 'Assistant to the Port Phillip Protectorate for Aborigines for the Goulburn District.' Dredge writes, '"such was the prejudice and ill will existing among many settlers towards the blacks . . . [that] many of the aborigines had been destroyed by them with 'sweet damper'"' (67, 79). The trace of this history on the Big Merino website is in the apparently innocuous comment that 'the Goulburn District was on the edge of pastoral settlement' and the

qualification of land as 'ungranted': ungranted, that is, by the Crown. In the knowledge of what settlement means then, the 'majority of the capital and intelligence in the colony' would seem to include the intelligence (in a war sense) required for defeating and dispersing (a euphemism for Indigenous genocide, [Godwin, 113]) the local people. The Merino, aka Rambo, won.

The Big Merino is not just a statue: it is an ideological 'complex,' including a Gift Shop and Lookout. In 2007 it was moved by truck from its original site:

> As the Goulburn bypass took effect . . . [t]he city expanded and a new development at the southern end meant that the Big Merino previously the first stop off the southern exit from the expressway was now stranded in no mans [*sic*] land. On the 26th May 2007 this grand structure moved 800 metres towards the southern exit to greener pastures.

The meaning 'complex' of the two clichéd metaphors used here—'no man's land' and 'greener pastures'—implies a network of associations related to humans, sheep, objects, land and sight. The phrase 'no man's land' recalls that of *terra nullius*, which, it could be said, comes to mean land that humans have been removed from and replaced with sheep. Yet it also has a particular settler inflection. Robert Kenny uses the term quite differently, describing 'the streets of Melbourne' as 'no-man's-land' for Aboriginal people, evoking the sense of there being no land there, no place for these people to be or to be welcomed to (38).

In the use above, it means replaced by a big concrete sheep, yet it also carries resonances of Kenny's use. In its original position, the Big Merino still had the advantage of providing a lookout over the land, but was not itself seen by people driving past. It was unable to function, either as symbol or moneymaker. The metaphor of 'greener pastures' has a number of implications in this scenario. Greener pastures is ironic in the literal sense. As can be readily seen on Google Images, the Big Merino in its current site is surrounded by a border of green plants, but not by grass or pasture. Greener pastures refers, then, not just to the possibility of the sheep literally earning its keep, through obtaining the green of money, but of being where there were people, cars, activity. Its position provides the green of being seen, as much as the green of seeing. Yet the phrase also reflects some irony: having moved only 800 metres, it is perhaps closer, as a figure, to the envy of more prosperous towns—or times—of 'grass being greener on the other side.' In a review of Chris Flynn's *The Glass Kingdom*, Tony Birch refers to monuments such as the Big Merino as 'exercises in pathetic gigantism, attempts to revive struggling communities that we often witness when travelling through economically depressed towns the world over' (n.p.).

Two poems that draw on notions of Christian community also deal with being face to face with sheep. Geoffrey Dutton's 'Twelve Sheep' alludes to the apostles of Christ, and of being stared at—stared into reflection by—'the insolent Judas stare' of one of the twelve. The poem's narrator, faced with actual sheep, then thinks of the metaphorical relation between followers of Jesus and sheep, and of Jesus as shepherd. Questioning the romanticisation of this image, he thinks further of derogatory comparisons of murderers, rapists and lovers as beasts; the poem itself concludes with the sheep in apparent prayer (n.p.). David Campbell's 'The Miracle of Mullion Hill' features a straying parishioner named Hanrahan who returns to the 'flock' (43–46). Although this poem can be read as a conservative (if comic) tale, the manner of his return is complicated. We are introduced to the character of Hanrahan through his priest, Father Pat, who prays to be '. . . [r]id . . . of Hanrahan ,/ The parish wood-and-water man / Or else return him to the fold' (43). He remonstrates with Hanrahan, exclaiming 'may the Holy Ghost /

Descend upon you, armed with light' (44). Hanrahan rings the bells to summon 'the pious and the just / To Mass' (43–44). The bells are themselves compared to sheep that 'skip . . . like rams across the valleys . . . Leading the faithful up the aisle' (44). Hanrahan himself (not yet pious, just or faithful), evades Mass to go felling trees on nearby Mullion Hill. When he stops chopping for a moment, he hears a bell and the sounds of Mass in the bush and goes to investigate. The bells lead him on: not up the aisle just yet, but ultimately. What he has heard is a lyrebird's appropriation of the church sounds for his own courting (45). Without apparently discovering the lyrebird's part, Hanrahan comes face to face with a shaggy ram, lit up by the sun:

> He had a grave, a noble head;
> And from a precipice he looked down
> Majestically. The early sun
> Leaping from that moment from the east,
> Gilded the shoulders of the beast
> And set with jewels his horned crown
> And so he gazed at Hanrahan—
> Who falling down upon his face,
> Cried, 'Heavenly Father, send me grace!' (45–46)

Following this vision, Hanrahan does indeed become pious, just and faithful. He realises himself as a neighbour (Levinas 8, 10), as social. Although he may seem to have been 'fallen' in Christian terms, in the terms of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche he now 'falls' back into society. In concluding a discussion on the 'Wild Man,' Hayden White sums up these thinkers' positions:

> And although each sees the fall as producing a uniquely human form of oppression, they all see it as an *ultimately* providential contribution to the construction of that whole humanity which it is history's purpose to realize. In short, for them man had to *transcend* his inherent primitive wildness—which is both a relationship and a state—in order to win his kingdom . . . And this process and alienation are seen by all of them to result in the creation of a false consciousness, or self-alienation, necessary to the myth that a fragment of mankind might incarnate the *essence* of all humanity. (180)

To read this description as it applies to Hanrahan (literally and neatly) is to speculate on Campbell's ironic presentation of the false consciousness of Christianity, as well as his ironic use of sheep: ironic in that his use doesn't conform to the established conventions of sheep as Christian symbols or entities: not the innocent Lamb that is Christ, nor, for example, the ram sacrificed by Abraham in the wilderness (although the latter is an Old Testament story and therefore not exclusively Christian). Here, the ram in the wilderness has power over the man: it is the wild man that is sacrificed, rather than the wild ram. That the ram is identified with the bush is in itself ironic, as is the apparent agency of the assemblage of lyrebird-bush-ram against that of the straying man: sending Hanrahan back where he belongs, and extracting a vow to God to chop no more trees. As White writes:

> To be sure, expressions such as 'Wild Man' and 'Noble Savage' are metaphors; and insofar as they were once taken literally, they can be regarded simply as errors, mistakes, or fallacies . . . Metaphors are crucially necessary when a culture or social group encounters phenomena that either elude or run foul of normal expectations or quotidian experiences. (184)

White's image of the group is an anxious one, needing to explain non-conformity. Conformity and lack of autonomy, or individual thought, are qualities associated with metaphorical sheep, an association still current on social media. To give a (random) example, MiA@Maria Miaow tweeted a protest in this regard on October 12, 2014: 'PLEASE stop using ANiMALS when describing HUMANS it's OLD #SHEEP r NOT mindless stupid followers ONLY ppl CHOOSE that.' This criticism also occurs in Dutton's poem. Stared at by the sheep, the poem's narrator says that we evade the murderer's stare and our own implication in the murderer's human acts by labelling the murderer (or any other criminal) an animal.

Reading Campbell's poem in White's terms quoted above, we can see that Hanrahan's metaphorisation by Father Pat as 'the cross I bear' is a weaker one than the implicit metaphor of the 'wild man' constructed by the poem, however ironically. The lyrebird literally enacts metaphor by transferring the sound of the Mass to Mullion Hill: praise of God becomes praise of 'his bright-eyed lyre-hen.' The ram appears, assembled like a metaphor: he is described metaphorically as 'noble' and 'majestic,' with 'Gilded . . . shoulders' and 'jewels [on] his horned crown' but he is not being depicted quite as the vision of God he appears to Hanrahan. The language conforms rather, to the language of royalty, suggesting that the ram is the king of the bush. The poem's layered use of metaphor recalls Vico's remark that 'every metaphor is a fable in brief.' We might infer, then, that a shift in metaphor indicates a new fable. As White writes, using Vico's example of perceiving thunder as the anger of nature: 'the naming of the thunder [as anger] creates implicitly what Vico calls an imaginative class concept (*genere fantastico*), which can in turn serve as the subject of other attributes of the natural world similarly awesome in aspect' (205). In 'Miracle at Mullion Hill' the awesome aspect is that of the ram. The 'miracle' of the title literally refers to Hanrahan's reformation, yet it seems also to allude to the miraculous assemblage of the ram as God, and also the miraculous sound event of the Mass in the bush. Campbell's use of the lyrebird behind the scenes suggests a knowing drama. But who knows? Not Hanrahan or Father Pat; instead, the narrator knows, and tips off the reader. The ignorant ram gazes at Hanrahan but not at himself: he presumably does not see himself as God, any more than the lyrebird thinks of itself as a Eucharist bell or congregation. The gazing constitutes an event, without either human or sheep really seeing each other.

Campbell's orchestration of Hanrahan's reformation answers Father Pat's prayer, putting himself as poet in the role of God. (The narrator is not in this role—although it could be said that Campbell is narrating—since he describes what happens, but does not arrange for the things to happen.) This God-like role of making things happen enacts what Stephen Owen refers to as the Christian emphasis in Western poetics on imitating God, rather than conforming to the ways of nature (106). Susan Stewart, in a discussion of Caedmon's seventh century hymn, also refers to the creation of the earth 'out of nothingness and darkness' as God's *poiesis* (150).

Although in different modes, both Campbell's and Dutton's poems present a human character or narrator whose encounter with a sheep causes them to reflect on or change their own situation or attitude. Two Indigenous texts reflect empathically on the situation of the sheep themselves: Miriny-Mirinymarra Jingkiri's song (translated from the Pilbara language of Ngarla) 'Wariyarranya Nyurranga Ngurra Pungkarriya' / 'Wariyarranya Is Not Your Country Any Longer,' and Paddy Roe in a passage from *Reading the Country*. Jingkiri addresses the sheep in the lines, 'it's not your country any longer' and 'You are headed for your graveyard' (the sheep are being taken to Port Hedland to be slaughtered, 44–45). As in 'Waltzing Matilda' the sheep are referred to in the second person (though in this case it is plural). Uncannily, 'You are headed for your graveyard' translates, via Ngarla, into the swagman's remark to the sheep, 'You'll come a' waltzing Matilda with me.' The phrasing of the title 'Wariyarranya Is Not Your

Country Any Longer' ascribes a (lost) belonging to country for the non-Indigenous animal. A similar generosity can be seen in a passage from Paddy Roe regarding a waterhole:

> Me an' my old people used to go before—
> you know—
> 'Ooh poorfella sheep all dead'—
> you know?—
> too dry country can't get—
> dry—
> too dry—
> sheep can't eat you know—
>
> 'Ooh' my oldfella say, 'Oh'—
> 'No matter, *yunmi* go get rain—
> look 'round try—
> see if we can get some rain for—
> make a bit of grass for sheep'—
> (Laugh) —
> too many dying everywhere—
> lil' lil' lambs kicking hungry (Laugh)—
> big sheep too— (Benterrrak 83; *yunmi*: you 'n' me)

Roe goes on to relate (to co-authors Krim Benterrak and Stephen Muecke: his words are a transcript) how he and his uncle danced and sang down rain into the sheep paddock (83–86). His empathic term 'poorfella' equates sheep with humanity and his Aboriginal English presents a figurative complex distinct from that used by Campbell, Dutton, and Baynton (below), not to mention Garnaut. Immediately preceding the quote above, he has referred to grass growing from the waterhole as hair growing from the *nilababa* (Ngiyina word for earhole) of the rainbow snake. This is a different order, a non-Christian order, its figurative discourse operating out of both Aboriginal mythology and magic: or as Alexis Wright might say, Aboriginal realism. But this would suggest, in turn, the fictionality of Roe's discourse (Ravenscroft 64).

Metaphor relies on a different epistemology to that enunciated by Roe, requiring a different set of cultural assumptions. It asks us to see what is there via the image of something that is not there. In speech or poetry, as in memory, neither may actually be there: the reader or listener is asked to imagine this relation. Roe is not literally seeing the sheep, but remembering the scene, and asking Muecke and Benterrak to imagine it. I cannot determine how literally the grass can be said to be the rainbow snake's ear hair or whether there might be an element of joke in this description: it sounds like it. But if the snake is real, why would it have actual grass growing from its ear? Other uses of metaphoric language in the quote above dramatise a scenario calling for magic. The use of 'all,' as in 'all dead,' is apparently hyperbole since there are 'lambs kicking hungry' and, in any case, why make rain if they were all dead? The use of 'get' as in *getting rain*, and 'make' as in *making grass*, are, in Western terms, metaphors. They are not literally going to get the rain, nor are they making the grass. Yet they are getting the rain to come. The metaphorical is situated differently in the context of Indigenous discourse and— while recognising that the discursive situation quoted above is not a Nyigina one, but rather an explication to two non-Nyigina people—as a record it also serves an 'ethical or pedagogical function' for those that are not present, for example, younger Nyigina readers (Gelder 499). Nevertheless, in terms of the scene as presented in *Reading the Country*, we might recall White's formulation above. Roe is speaking a memory—in the place of that memory—but he

is also using a second language, English, in order to communicate to Muecke and Benterrak what are, presumably, 'phenomena that elude . . . [their] normal expectations or quotidian experiences.' The Ngarla songs appear to come from the quotidian context of stock-work, yet Jingkiri also draws on the magical order in his song 'Wariyarranya Is Not Your Country Any Longer,' suggesting that the sheep are to be killed because of a curse by the stock and station agent (45).

In an article titled 'Moving Coffins: Temporalising the "settled" space of the 1840s,' and published in a book titled *Off the Sheep's Back: New Humanities*, Katrina Schlunke writes of sheep being watched by a shepherd from a viewing box, 'like the panopticon, [where] the viewer is unseen but here the watched are disciplining the watcher into a relationship of worker' (94). Here, the sheep have turned the shepherd into a sheep through their conceptual gaze: conceptual in that they are not looking at—cannot see—the shepherd and may have turned their backs to the box. This puts the sheep themselves into the metaphorical role of shepherd. Both species—human and sheep—are speculatively put into fluid relation through the act of watching. This simple colonial technology of the viewing box creates an early example of Guy Debord's spectacle, if this flux could be said to be 'social.' Here also are the 'flows' and 'structures' of Alfred North Whitehead, as paraphrased by P.J. Rey and George Ritzer (258). They quote from Whitehead's *Process and Reason:*

> Ideals fashion themselves round these two notions, permanence and flux. In the inescapable flux, there is something that abides; in the overwhelming permanence there is something that escapes into flux. Permanence can be snatched only out of flux; and the passing moment can find its adequate intensity only by its submission to permanence.

Extending their argument by drawing on Georg Simmel, they assert that humans are 'flow-creators' (259). The abiding Big Merino and the flow of consumers (and wool) provides a vulgar demonstration of this model in terms of the sheep industry around Goulburn. The lookout provides a view for humans through the non-seeing sheep's eyes. Although presumably the visitor can see neighbouring properties, how neighbourly is it to see from that height over fences, hidden within a giant sheep? Yet again, how neighbourly is it to have that much land? Another (colonial) cultural icon dramatises the clash of neighbouring forces around the body of a sheep: Banjo Paterson's 'Waltzing Matilda' (67–69). There the face of the sheep is hidden in the tucker bag, yet its body still speaks to the squatter and the troopers; the swagman refuses to face them and escapes by dying. As the song goes 'his ghost may be heard;' but what abides here, authority or resistance to authority? Or perhaps just the memory of colonial confrontations.

'Face,' and also 'neighbour,' are key philosophical terms for Emmanuel Levinas, who writes: 'it is as a neighbour that a human is accessible—as a face' (8), adding that 'the neighbour is the being par excellence' (10). Yet for Levinas the face is a notional concept, in that it can be transferred to other body parts, including the back (9). Although he claims that 'The manifestation of a face is the first disclosure' and 'Speaking is before anything else' (53), he is not necessarily being literal: body parts other than the face can speak. Therefore, although the face functions metonymically, standing in for the body of the neighbour, other body parts participate in a synechdochic flux.

In an article titled 'The Face of a Dog: Levinasian Ethics and Human/Dog Co-evolution,' Karalyn Kendall cites an interview with Levinas where he is asked whether 'it is necessary to

possess the possibility of speech to be a "face" in the ethical sense.' Levinas replies, 'I cannot say at what moment you have the right to be called "face." The human face is completely different, and only afterwards do we discover the face of an animal' (188). Kendall notes that Judith Butler alludes to Levinas in her book *Precarious Life*, writing that 'To respond to the face, to understand its meaning, means to be awake to what is precarious in another life, or, rather, the precariousness of life itself . . . an understanding of the precariousness of the Other' (189). Butler in fact reads Levinas as saying 'that the "face" of what he calls the "Other" makes an ethical demand . . . and yet we cannot know what demand it makes' (131). But she goes on to quote Levinas: 'the face is the other who asks me not to let him die alone' (131). Elsewhere, Levinas writes, 'To be in relation with the other (*autrui*) face to face is to be unable to kill' (9). The settler poisoning of Aboriginals is a killing that avoids facing; the killing of the swagman in 'Waltzing Matilda' is more ambiguous.

In Baynton's stories 'Squeaker's Mate' and 'Scrammy 'And' from *Bush Studies*, there is a human responsible for a human other's death: one who fails to face their victim. They avoid, in Levinas's words, the 'face [that] says . . . you shall not kill.' Levinas adds, 'In the relation to the face I am exposed as a usurper of the place of the other' (an apt formulation in the context of both Baynton's stories), noting further that, 'in ethics, the other's right to exist has primacy over my own' (Butler 132). Both stories include a dog who fulfills the demand of accompanying the dying into death; and in both it is the dog who behaves ethically in Levinas's terms. Significantly, it is the dogs that look at—and are looked at by—everyone. The stories might also be defined in terms of ideals, of interplay between narrative flow and structures of plot and character. Changing relational structures of species are manoeuvred through the deployment of metaphor, dialogue, and narration, making Baynton, then, a 'flow-creator.' Although they participate in a Western order of metaphor, the stories, in their implied care for sheep, are closer to the texts of Jingkiri and Roe than of Paterson, Dutton, Campbell or Garnaut.

In 'Squeaker's Mate,' the 'mate' is a woman, Mary, whose back is broken by a falling branch (55). Squeaker, her partner, goes into town leaving Mary and her dog some food, which 'gave out the first day, though that was nothing to her compared with the bleat of the penned sheep, for it was summer and droughty, and her dog could not unpen them' (60). When Squeaker returns two days later with a hangover, the narrator establishes a correspondence between the woman and the sheep: 'The sheep waited till next day, so did she' (61). Some time later Squeaker sells the woman's sheep to the butchers without mentioning it to her. Baynton writes, 'Their "Baa-baas" to her were cries for help; many had been pets' (62). Squeaker cannot face his mate—and can easily avoid doing so as she cannot move—and neither can the woman see her sheep, but only hear their voices. Later in the story we learn, through a casual reference, that there are 'remaining sheep' (66). These sheep conveniently give the dog a task at the story's climax; all further relations between Mary and sheep are figurative.

When she is first injured, Squeaker gives Mary her own pipe to smoke:

> He thrust it into her hand that dropped helplessly across her chest. The lighted stick, falling between her bare arm and the dress, slowly roasted the flesh and smouldered the clothes . . .
> He told her that her dress was on fire. She took no heed. He put it out, and looked at the burnt arm, then with intentness at her.
> Her eyes were turned unblinkingly to the heavens . . . (56)

It is only after she is burnt that he looks at her face; she does not—and perhaps physically cannot—return his gaze. This burning incident echoes in a later scene. Squeaker is apparently trying to put Mary in a good mood in order to move her to the new hut he has built, and to install the new woman he has met in town:

> . . . he said this hut is too cold, and that she would never get well in it. She did not feel cold, but, submitting to his mood, allowed him to make a fire that would roast a sheep. He took off his hat, and, fanning himself, said he was roastin', wasn't she? She was. (62)

Pressure has turned to threat here, and the earlier incident contradicts any hyperbole regarding roasting: he encourages Mary to move into the new hut by cooking her. Baynton writes, 'He stood to say this where she could not see him' (62). In several instances, then, Squeaker treats Mary as a sheep; he burns her twice: once by carelessly not looking and then deliberately, but again without looking at her. In an article about *Bush Studies,* Susan Barrett refers to Baynton's depiction of 'sheep as a metonym for women and passive suffering,' arguing that while this figuration has been read as clichéd, the representation of sheep in the stories as a whole is more ambiguous than this (5–6). Although earlier I asserted that sheep function as a metonym for the wool industry and the sheep's back is a metonym for the economy more generally, Barrett's reading is in keeping with the Kenneth Burke's view that metonymy is reductive (White 73): how can 'women and passive suffering' be reduced to sheep? The specific instance of Squeaker's treatment of Mary quoted above is more metaphorical than metonymic: asserting a comparison, through the not-quite-figure of 'roastin'. Squeaker may be roasting her like a sheep, but there is no indication that he aims to eat her; this is metaphor's 'difference in a similarity' (White 72). Leigh Dale makes a more general claim in writing of Baynton's 'aligning of women and animals': her choice of verb suggesting solidarity as much as brutalisation (374).

By building a new hut and bringing a new mate, Squeaker turns himself into a neighbour, but his behaviour is not neighbourly. He threatens to set fire to Mary's hut (63) and is rarely able to face the woman whose name we learn only at the story's conclusion. Mary's position is ambiguous; although it sometimes corresponds to that of a sheep, she still has some established force that Squeaker feels obliged to negotiate with. As Laurie Hergenhan writes in his study of Baynton: 'I do not see the first mate [Mary] as passive but as the decisive actor and pivot' (n.p.). The story explicitly contradicts the equation of woman=sheep=passive. At the climax of the story Baynton has Mary shake off her position as a sheep for that of a 'tigress' (70–71). This is her apotheosis: transcending what appeared to be the available species positions, she demonstrates perhaps not so much her own agency, but that of Baynton's narration. Now it is the other woman who is in the position of the sheep. Squeaker has gone into town and this woman is thirsty, but too afraid (thanks to Squeaker's tall tales) to brave the snakes between the hut and the creek. She is, then, in the situation of the penned sheep earlier, of having to wait for Squeaker's return in order to drink. Mary has half a billy of tea which the woman wants. When she finally becomes desperate enough, she goes into the hut and reaches for it, only to be grasped by the tigress, Mary, who virtually burns the woman's sheep face:

> Her lips had drawn back from her teeth, and her breath almost scorched the face that she held so close for the staring eyes to gloat over. Her exultation was so great she could only gloat and gasp, and hold with a tension that had stopped the victim's circulation.

> As a wounded, robbed tigress might hold and look, she held and looked. (70)

This shift in species identity is not the 'becoming-animal' of Kafka, where metaphor is killed off (Deleuze and Guattari 22); it can, however, be read as the flux theorised by Whitehead. In a sense, the sheep and dog are both permanent structures, albeit metaphorically so in the case of the sheep; and, despite his frequent disappearances, so is the metaphorical mouse, Squeaker. He suddenly appears and beats Mary with a pole till she lets go of the other woman. Mary's dog (who has been rounding up the sheep) returns and bites him. '"Call 'im orf,' Mary"' he says. '"Sool 'im on t' 'er"' (71). By using 'sool' in reference to the other woman, Squeaker affirms her as a sheep. It is only now that he appears to face Mary, in order to indicate the other woman who has moved beyond sight. But he also seems to have killed his mate: 'with stony face the woman lay motionless.' In Whitehead's terms, Mary, the 'ideal' mate, snatches the permanence of death through the flow of metaphor from sheep to tigress to stone.

In the story 'Scrammy 'And,' an old man and his dog Waterloo wait for the return of his employer. The man watches the road and the sheep appear to empathise with him: 'Loyally they stood . . . In their eyes glistened luminous tears materialized from an atmosphere of sighs' (73). In his impatience, the man argues with his dog; but when 'an undemonstrative ewe and demonstrative lamb [comes] in,' he turns his invective on the ewe (76). It is the third time he has had to poddy a lamb for her, the ewe apparently unable to give milk herself. '"Jes' look at me"' he says, 'showing his lamb-bitten fingers. "Wantin' ter get blood outer a stone!"' Baynton narrates the speech of the man, but also offers a perspective from the ewe's face: 'He had nothing further to say to the ewe, but from the expression of her eyes she still had an open mind towards him' (77).

The story's main plot is to do with Scrammy, a former farmhand, and the old man's fear that Scrammy will return to rob him. His fear is well-founded: Scrammy has indeed returned with this goal in mind. Sheep are implicated in Scrammy's plan; his intention is to unpen them and allow them to be worried by the dingoes, thereby distracting the dog from protecting the old man (84). The narration shows there is no empathy between the sheep and Scrammy: 'They rushed from him and huddled together, leaving him . . . exposed.' At first his plan fails to work: the sheep refuse to leave the pen. Eventually, however, 'they rushed through in an impatient struggling crowd, each fearing to be the last with this invader' (85). Waterloo intends to protect them: he sends 'an assurance of help to the importunate ewe and lamb . . . yet despite the eager light in his intelligent face, his master and mate did not ask him any questions as to the cause of these calling sheep' (86). The old man is both 'master and mate' to the dog and therefore his priority, but unknown to him the man has suddenly died; later on, the dog is referred to as the sheep's master (91).

Due to the biting of the dog and his failure to perceive that the old man is dead, Scrammy abandons his plan to break into the hut. The ewe and lamb go in, but (echoing 'Squeaker's Mate') the dog won't let them drink from the billy reserved for the old man:

> Next day [the narration continues] the ewe and lamb came again. The lamb bunted several irresponsive objects—never its dam's udder—baaing listlessly. Though the first day the ewe had looked at the bunk, and baaed, she was wiser now, though sheep are slow to learn . . . Adroitly the ewe led the way to the creek, and the lamb followed. From the bank the lamb looked at her vacantly, and without interest descended. The ewe bent and drank sparingly, meaningly. The lamb sniffed the water, and, unsatisfied, complained. The hut was hidden, but it turned that way.

> Again the ewe leisurely drank. This time the lamb's lips touched the water, but did not drink. Into its mouth raised to bleat a few drops fell. Hastily the mother's head went to the water. She did not drink, but the lamb did. (92)

This passage demonstrates the agency and autonomy of the sheep, and therefore the possibilities of structuring the narrative through the figure of this species. It is about learning through looking, from the ewe's looking at the bunk to the teaching of the lamb to drink. It is about the ewe's, and her lamb's, eyes and mouth—the sheep's faces—not their backs. The gaze clearly functions and is not blind: face speaks to face. The final scene of the ewe and her lamb is also about flow and permanence, using the most literal means to demonstrate that the need for drinkable water abides, as does motherhood. This last is clinched, but also unsettled, by the story's conclusion where the employer returns with his wife and new baby and—leaving his wife, not wanting her to see—is faced with the dog, 'with reproach in his wild eyes' (92). Again face speaks to face: but what the dog's reproach implies is ambiguous. Not only has the employer left the dog's master to die, the dog has starved due to its ethical practice of caring for another. The final qualifier of 'wild' further suggests that he is no longer in a neighbourly relation with the man—that perhaps he can no longer focus, or see him.

The history of sheep in Australia is a history of use, whether of wool, meat, or of sheep as a rhetorical figure. Yet as examples from Jingkiri, Roe and Baynton show, that use does not obviate a practice of affection, empathy, or ethics. There is a further correspondence in Roe and Baynton in that both refer to the necessity of drinking, of the earth's provision of water, for sheep survival. Although this provision may implicate the human (in Roe through a rain dance, in Baynton through allowing access), it is not something that the human can provide alone. The economic metonym of 'the sheep's back' obscures this relation with the land, yet when read alongside poems by Dutton and Campbell it also seems to parody the human's idea of its close and knowledgeable relation to sheep. In the context of colonisation, ethics is not as simple as reading a sheep's face, or acknowledging the land. An inability to face responsibility for theft is enshrined in 'Waltzing Matilda,' where water, ironically, means death. The flipside is the fatuous propaganda of the Big Merino, where sheep grazing is presented as destiny, as a promise fulfilled. If this is a face speaking, it is the face of Colony, and not an ethical face.

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