# The Genesis of Thea Astley's *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow*

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My purpose in this essay, which extends a project commenced a decade ago (Taylor 2009), is to analyse the sources of Thea Astley's *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow*, including but going beyond the list provided in the author's 'Acknowledgments.' In truth, Astley's achievement in *Multiple Effects* as in her other fiction far surpasses the sum of contributions that she derived from earlier writings. The mostly forgotten books that she lists as '[i]mpulses' and her bequest to the Fryer Library of her newspaper sources and hand-written notes suggest that she may have welcomed a study of this novel's genesis.

The essay begins with an overview of the place of *Multiple Effects* in Astley's oeuvre and the literary and political contexts for Astley's increasing engagement with the history of Aboriginal dispossession. It then turns in detail to the novel itself and offers an excavation of the sources that inform its historical narrative. In doing this I hope to demonstrate something about Astley's creative process: the extent and detail of her research, the ways in which her novel creatively reworks this archive, and some of the effects of that on the kind of history that Astley tells.

Following the publication in 1994 of *Coda*, intended as the title indicates to be Astley's last novel, the Keating Labor government awarded her a five-year Creative Fellowship of $325,000. Thus encouraged, after 'one year of musing and two years of writing' (Sayer 18) at Cambewarra on the NSW south coast, Astley published *Multiple Effects* in August 1996. The novel fictionalises events in the history of the northern archipelago whose main island was known by its inhabitants as 'Doebin,' but which Captain Cook christened the 'Palm Isles' when he sailed past on 6 June 1770.[1]

## Race Matters in Astley's *Oeuvre*: The Literary and Political Contexts

The blindness and failings, together with the less common altruism and strengths, of white Australians were the focus of Astley's writing throughout her career. However, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in the context of widespread social changes associated with feminism and the Aboriginal rights movement, her fiction became more closely focused on racism and sexism as political issues. Neither of these topics is approached politically in her early novels, *Girl with a Monkey* (1958), *A Descant for Gossips* (1960), *The Well Dressed Explorer* (1962), *The Slow Natives* (1965) or *The Acolyte* (1972).[2] Indeed, *The Slow Natives* evinces racial myopia in a scene where the distraught white teenager Keith Leverson identifies himself with 'the black stuff' crushed between the elephant's toes in the epigram from which Astley's title is taken (9). Similarly, in *A Boatload of Home Folk* (1968), about a sestet of white people trapped by a cyclone in a fictionalised Vanuatu, only the black teenager, Johnny Terope, who cynically exploits their weaknesses, is denied hope for redemption. Most disturbingly, in her unpublished novel *Thurlow's Answer* (1968–69), Astley's earliest extant Aboriginal character, Joe Tilpa, leads a busload of Queensland tourists in tormenting Charles Smallways, a harmless retired public servant. The novel links Tilpa's malice to his race-based sense of inferiority, an attribution that towards the end tends to soften the reader's condemnation.[3] Nevertheless, between finishing *Thurlow's Answer* and beginning *A Kindness Cup* 'from the

end of '72' (UQ, Fryer Library 97/11), i.e. over the three years when she was writing and publishing *The Acolyte*, Astley awoke to the oppression of Australia's first peoples as a subject that she could, and perhaps should, pursue.

Appended to the earliest of four surviving drafts of *A Kindness Cup*, Astley's hand-written note attributes the Aboriginal theme to an experience of place:

> This section is the very first sketch. A kind of preliminary. The idea had been tossing round for a couple of years ever since I bought a beach shack at Ball Bay (nth. of Mackay). Every time I drove down to the shack I had to take a turn at The Leap. The ideas were scattered—as you can see from these first pieces.[4]

Although her 'Acknowledgments' in *A Kindness Cup* affirm that 'this cautionary fable makes no claim to being a historical work,' Astley's investigation of the crime at The Leap [formerly 'Blackgin's Leap'] predated by more than fifteen years corroboration by historians Nikki Tareha and Clive Moore.[5] Moreover the tone and phraseology of the novel's interleaved inquiry scenes are drawn from the 1861 Native Police Force Report to the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in which witnesses detail with staggering self-possession atrocities committed by the Police in more southerly parts of Queensland.

Astley's musings and research for *A Kindness Cup* were probably initiated and were certainly encouraged by the ideological shift that resulted in the 1962 Commonwealth Electoral Act granting all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the right to vote; in the referendum held five years later, an overwhelming 'yes' vote first included them in the census and gave the Commonwealth mentorship over the states in Indigenous affairs. As Susan Sheridan argues, in the 1950s and 1960s historians had been primarily interested in 'convicts and settlers, subjects which were compatible with popular understandings of heroic pioneers,' and even younger writers 'gave little space to Aboriginal history in the general books published to cater to the growth in Australian history courses' (Sheridan 2016, 8). This changed in 1968, when Professor W. E. H. Stanner's Boyer lectures, *After the Dreaming*, inspired a spate of historical research aimed at breaking the 'Great Australian Silence' on black-white interactions. Revelations by this research, much of which was Queensland-based, have continued to plead for compensation and racial parity into the 2020s. The initial outpouring included Henry Reynolds's *The Other Side of the Frontier* (1981), which like all his subsequent publications was inspired by a late-1960s visit to Palm Island (*Why Weren't We Told?* 5); C. D. Rowley's *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society* (1970); *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland* by Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin (1975); Lyndall Ryan's *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (1981); Noel Loos's *Aboriginal–European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier 1861–1897* (1982); and Richard Broome's *Aboriginal Australians* (1984).[6]

These shifts in Australian history-writing match the shifts in Astley's oeuvre, which likewise became increasingly interested in relationships between settlers and Indigenous people and the moral complexities of Australia's colonial history. *A Kindness Cup* was Astley's first attempt to write directly about colonial violence and Aboriginal dispossession. Even so, Ellen Smith finds Astley's treatment of this subject in *A Kindness Cup* to be 'profoundly different' from that of contemporaneous revisionist historians, especially around questions of truth and justice. In particular Astley's novel seems unsure that knowledge about past wrongs—'the politics of exposure'—can prevent a continuation of 'violence, inequality and injustice' (Smith 2–3). I agree with this, and would suggest further that Astley's subsequent writings on

racial themes are all infused with a similar despair. Apart from occasional stirrings of Catholic hope, in each case the exposure of a tragedy comes without redemption.

For example, Indigenous suffering remains unexpiated and unredeemed in 'A Northern Belle' (*Hunting the Wild Pineapple* 1979, 88–94). In *It's Raining in Mango* (1987) four generations of Mumblers are persecuted as savagely as the Cooktowns are in *Multiple Effects* (1996). In *Inventing the Weather* (1992), an enclave of dissident nuns struggles to contain the results of exclusion, poverty and disease. In 'Trumped' Benny Shoforth's story uncovers the white hypocrisy buried in a mixed-race family history but, as in *A Kindness Cup*, to no avail (*Drylands* 1999, 195–96). Astley's second Vanuatuan novel *Beachmasters* (1985) abandoned the stereotyped depiction of Islanders that she had written into *Boatload*. In fact, beginning with *A Kindness Cup*, every book that Astley published deplores, if only in passing, the effects of colonisation on the Pacific's Indigenous peoples.[7]

Her indignation and despondency were unaffected by political changes that occurred during the drafting of *Multiple Effects*. These included the Mabo decision of 3 June 1992 that replaced *terra nullius* with pre-existing native title as an Australian legal principle; Paul Keating's plea for racial justice in his Redfern speech of 10 December 1992; the United Nations' proclamation of 1993 as the 'Year of Indigenous Peoples'; and the opening in 1995 of the inquiry that led two years later to the tabling of the *Bringing Them Home Report*.

Accordingly, *Multiple Effects* maintains Astley's broad pessimism about Australia's ability to deal adequately with past and present injustices inflicted on its Indigenous peoples. The first event that the novel fictionalises is the cyclone, considered the worst ever to hit a populated area of Queensland, that struck the Innisfail-Babinda region on 10 March 1918 (State Library of Queensland). Aboriginal survivors held at the Hull River Mission [now Mission Beach] were transported to islands in the Doebin group, which thereafter became a dumping ground for black so-called 'trouble-makers' from all over Queensland. Secondly, *Multiple Effects* fictionalises the rampage by Robert Curry, Doebin's founding superintendent (Watson 36–75; Taylor, 'This Fiction' 37–41). Following the death of his wife in the previous November, on 2 February 1930 Curry's alcoholism and mental instability escalated to a crisis during which he shot the Doebin doctor and his wife and set the fire that killed his own two children and destroyed many settlement buildings. Doebin's white residents sheltered in limbo for two nights and a day, until Peter Prior, an Islander internee, ended Curry's rampage with a single shot. The third event fictionalised in *Multiple Effects* is the 1957 strike by Doebin's black residents against restrictions and abuses that had escalated under Roy Bartlam, superintendent from 1953 to 1965 (Watson 102–20). The quelling of the strike by mainland police, and the banishment of the strike leaders and their families to mainland reserves form the climax to Astley's novel.

Astley's doubts about the achievability of fair reparations for Aboriginal and Islander peoples were vindicated when, in 2000, under the auspices of the first Howard government, Keith Windschuttle published an article in *Quadrant* that triggered a backlash against 'Black Armband' truths, in what became known as the 'History Wars.' Usually dated 1996–2007 (Sheridan, 'Historical Novels' 10; Macintyre 77–83), the History Wars are sometimes said to be still ongoing (Tony Taylor 2016).[8] They certainly contributed to the forcefulness of the racial issue in Astley's writing from 1996 to 1999.

In its close engagement with historical sources *Multiple Effects* has more in common with *A Kindness Cup* than any of the other novels in Astley's oeuvre. It is to the sources of *Multiple Effects* that I now turn.

## *Multiple Effects*: Overview of Sources

Six out of Astley's seven named 'impulses' for writing *Multiple Effects* relate to her depiction of black resistance and colonial oppression. *Multiple Effects* takes more from Indigenous sources than any of Astley's other writings on these topics. Her third-person narrator Manny Cooktown describes the forced settlement of Doebin and Curry's rampage and its aftermath on the basis of Peter Prior's oral reminiscences, the timely but unnoticed publication of which in 1993 by the James Cook University History Department undoubtedly reinforced Astley's choice of subject. In *Multiple Effects* Manny's eight italicised sections endorse Aboriginal and Islander memories of Doebin's post-settlement history. Strategically positioned, these sections are a reader's touchstone for truth. A second Aboriginal source, comprising eight interviews published by Bill Rosser under the title *Dreamtime Nightmares*, contributed the mixed-race Cooktown family tree and the image of postcolonial life on Doebin which are sources of potent satire in *Multiple Effects*. Thirdly, in order both to preserve difference and to create poetry, Astley contrived the language of her Aboriginal characters from Aboriginal records later systematised by whites.

While *Multiple Effects* thus gives full *authority* to black memories as the basis for an unconditional endorsement of Aboriginal and Islander responses to oppression, it allots more *space* to nuanced portraits of Doebin's white staff and residents and their earlier and later lives on the north Queensland mainland. The availability of multiple, not always cohesive, white records, and faith in the injunction *to write what you know*, undoubtedly reinforced Astley's choice of Doebin's story as a subject. Probably this advice also contributed to the relative brevity of Indigenous narrative in the novel, in contrast with that focussed on white experience. In *Multiple Effects* the most discerning whites come to understand through danger and suffering the iniquity of the racist ideology in which they were raised, and which was therefore invisible to them. In the two decades since the printing of *Multiple Effects*, many white Australian readers will have joined imaginatively in these same characters' journeys of discovery.

In contrast with her authentic transmission of Prior's and Rosser's stories, Astley freely adapted contemporary newspaper reports of the 1930 Doebin shootings that inspired most of her white characters. Furthermore, like the academic combatants of the 'History Wars,' she endowed her exposure of Aboriginal oppression with detail and passion. Yet Astley drew on a little-known history of the Catholic Church 'as seen from Townsville' more fully than any other source, white or black. This book, *Prologue*, was written by James Cook University lecturer and Catholic priest John Maguire and published in 1990 with the blessing of two Australian bishops. Although a laudatory preface by JCU history professor Brian Dalton rightly claims the book as professional history, its ecclesiastical orientation distinguishes it from other products of what can be called 'the Reynolds school.'[9] Paraphrasing numerous passages, *Multiple Effects* dramatises *Prologue*'s exposure of racist oppression with a solidarity that merges history and literature and simultaneously confirms the uninterrupted Catholic fundamentals of Astley's world view (see Taylor, 'To My Brother' 271–74; and Taylor 2020). A secondary narrative in *Multiple Effects* develops a trenchant satire of romantic fiction through the rivalry between Gerald Morrow and Sanford Rim, inspired by Astley's chance encounter with a 1920s practitioner of the romance genre.

Several versions of Doebin's settlement, the 1930 shootings and the 1957 Doebin strike have been published, and even Joanne Watson's comprehensive history, which broadly endorses Astley's rendering of these events, cannot claim to be definitive.[10] The overlaps and contradictions among the sources on which Astley drew persist among the narrator-focalisers in *Multiple Effects*, where they drive an investigation of the permeable border, changing with perspective and over time, between history and story. The teacher Samuel Vine is the spokesman for this permeability, but his Aboriginal protégé Normie Cooktown testifies to injustices which, if they are to be resisted must first be recognised as real rather than 'Fuckin fiction!' (285). Accordingly, the varying judgments of the novel's commentators on the Brodie tragedy do not carry equal weight, and logic obliges the reader to accept Manny's version of the shooting as well as of his imprisonment, trial and acquittal (135–38). Like his brother Normie's story, Manny's is a 'fiction [that] don't go away' (286).

**Indigenous Autobiography: Peter Prior's *'Straight from the Yudaman's Mouth'***

Ghost-written in conventional English by his daughter Renarta, Peter Prior's memoir records how he ended superintendent Robert Curry's killing and burning spree. In *Multiple Effects* borrowings from Peter Prior's story include Manny's memories of the cyclone and its aftermath, the removal of his family under the 'Dog Act' (Aboriginal Protection Act), and the founding and early development of the Doebin settlement. Peter's account of the Curry rampage feeds into the narrative of *Multiple Effects*. He recalls the explosion that destroyed Curry's house (where his children remained, drugged and tied to the double bed); Curry's shooting of the doctor and his wife; his firing of the buildings; the whites' overnight retreat to the bush; his burning of the settlement launch; and the devastation revealed in the morning. Curry's visit to U-Millie [Fantome] Island with Old Jack Mancook, his encounter with Dr Julian, his threat 'to finish off the rest of his enemies,' and his overnight sleep on Noogoo [Curacao] all find equivalents in *Multiple Effects*. Prior recalls that three blacks were left on the beach to defend the settlement.[11] Prior provides and Astley repeats the defenders' view of Curry's eccentric dress (Prior 20; Astley 51–52, 132). Both record Prior's warning: 'Hey Boss, surrender' (Prior 21; Astley 52, 133, 136). Prior's memory of Curry's words: 'But why did they use you to do their dirty work?' (Prior 21), matches Brodie's: '*Why they use you to do their dirty work, Manny?*' (Astley 137).[12]

Like '*Yudaman's Mouth*,' *Multiple Effects* stresses the whites' cowardice by focusing on the deputy superintendent's words and actions (Prior 22; Astley 135). Finally, Manny's report of the aftermath (Astley 137–38) condenses Peter's memories of his arrest on Doebin, two weeks in the Townsville watch-house, three months in Mount Stuart prison, and his reflection:

> I was feeling very angry with the whiteman's law . . . Why didn't one of those white blokes stand on the beach and face Mr Curry, instead of leaving all the Murries to do their dirty work as usual? (Prior 25)
>
> *He get angry then at havin to fight whiteman's quarrel. Do their dirty work.* (Astley 138).

In sum, *Multiple Effects* is faithful, not only to Peter Prior's version of events, but to the manifest integrity of the memoir, and to the strong, disillusioned character who emerges from its pages.

**Indigenous Oral History: Bill Rosser's *Dreamtime Nightmares***

Comprising interviews with eight Indigenous Queenslanders whose families suffered under the successive remakes of the 'Dog Act,' *Dreamtime Nightmares* contributes few quotes but many facts to *Multiple Effects*. Astley's ending draws special poignancy from the irony attested to by Rosser's informants, that as generations passed, the exiles came more and more to see Doebin as their home (Rosser 133–34, 184; Astley 28–29, 34, 77, 202–03, 213–14, 284, 286). Rosser is also the source of the Cooktown-De Satgé family tree, which provides the novel's ironic backstory (see Appendix 4).

Doebin's medico Quigley seems to read of Oscar De Satgé's 'Leavings' (Aboriginal children) in his *Pages from the Journal of a Queensland Squatter* (*Multiple Effects* 29). The second son of a Viscount, De Satgé was educated at Rugby School, 'a fact which we have ever recollected with pride in our wanderings and work' (*Journal* 7). Quigley satirises this by imagining a return visit by Billy Cooktown, De Satgé's grandson, on old boys' reunion day (29–30). Based on diaries that he kept from 1853 to the early 1900s, De Satgé's tome does not in fact mention his Aboriginal family (or his English wife, son and two daughters). In western Queensland he seems to live without sex in an all-male society, where his interests are exploration, money-making, the squattocracy and Brisbane-based politics. Relishing the 'thorough punishment' of the murderers (153–55), he recounts the massacre of the Wills family, fighting off a night raid by Aboriginal people (158), and the killing of a shepherd, leading, ominously, to a 'dispersal' (171–74). Rosser's interviewee, Oscar's granddaughter Ruby De Satgé, nevertheless uncovers the mixed-race family history (Rosser 1–4, 8, 10, 36–37, 49, 92; epilogue 188–89). In *Multiple Effects* Grandma Rosie Cooktown, who is transported to Doebin with her family in 1918 (2–3), is accordingly De Satgé's abandoned *de facto* and the mother of Manny's 'Dadda,' i.e. Thomas Cooktown (29).[13]

Rosser's interviewees personalise and add detail to oppressive practices on Doebin from 1929 to 1945 which are further addressed by Maguire. Astley follows Rosser in targeting the laws that enabled these practices (Rosser 118, 133, 142, 151, 162, 170; Astley 203, 254). A rigid schedule imposed Friday queuing for rations which had to be earned by women's cleaning and cooking in staff houses. Women were punished by shaved heads, sack dresses and street sweeping (Rosser 13–14,129–30; Astley 28, 86, 204). Girls slept in a locked dormitory despite the danger of fire (Rosser 128–29; Maguire 173–75 [photo 174]; Astley 28, 34, 76, 213–14). Men's tasks of timber felling, house-building and roadbuilding were enforced by 'a summary 21 days' in the lock-up, (Rosser 127, 128, 131–33, 145, 155, 157–58, 160–61; Maguire 173; Astley 23, 55–56, 77, 113–14, 213, 286). '[A] constant round of bells' sectioned time for the whole community (Rosser 132, 149, 164; Maguire 173; Astley 28, 31, 56). References to the chaining of offenders to trees (Rosser 113, 144) may have inspired Willie Omba's handcuffing in *Multiple Effects* (28), while Fred Clay's month-long wait for the director's permission to marry (139–40) is the likely source for Willie's anxiety, caused by the same restriction (Astley 203). Finally, Astley's white characters broaden with comparisons the repeated references in *Dreamtime Nightmares* to Doebin as a legendary 'punishment place.'[14]

*Multiple Effects* also draws on Rosser for anecdotes and characters. He outlines the 'common belief among the early settlers,' again passed on by Quigley, 'that if they had contracted VD they could get a gin, and by having relations with that gin she would get the VD and it would leave the man's body' (Rosser 42; *Multiple Effects* 32). Fred and Iris Clay give examples of Superintendent Bartlam's oppression (138–39, 142–43, 151, 170), while Fred's caricature,

'He was a big red-faced bloke' (143), transmutes into Astley's cameo: 'the public-service red-face' (212). Pop Wesley, a teacher who resists the 'director' and practises kindness (171–72, 204–06), is based on 'Pop' Krause/Crouse, praised by Iris as a dedicated teacher (165, 185; Taylor 2009 42). Finally, complaints in *Dreamtime Nightmares* of well-paid authoritarian matrons who are negligent midwives (Rosser 127, 128, 140, 165–66) may have contributed to Matron Tullman's portrait in *Multiple Effects* (80).

Outlines in *Dreamtime Nightmares* of the 1957 strike supplemented the version that Astley derived from Maguire's *Prologue*. Fred and Iris emphasise the defiance of strike-leader Alby Geia, Astley's Normie Cooktown, whom Bartlam wanted to deport (Rosser 133–34, 166–67); Iris's memory contributed an analysis of police tactics (Rosser 167, 168; Astley 289, 290); finally, *Multiple Effects* converts Rosser's two lists of strikers—Bill Congoo, Fred Clay, Alby Geia (104), Sonny Sibley, Eric Lamberna, Willie Thaiday (134)—into a refrain that Astley repeats with further variation (286, 288, 292).

Yet perhaps Rosser's book contributed most to the deep debate in *Multiple Effects* over cultural clash and blending. Vine advises Normie to bring his dreamtime certainties into the present in order to survive (283), but Peggy James (Rosser 109–10) upholds the truth that leads Normie to reject this advice (286): Mulkurri is *not* the same as the white man's God. The two cultures cannot be blended, either in mind or spirit or externally. To pretend there is unity or even an overlap would be to lie.

**Indigenous Language Sources**

Listed in Astley's 'Acknowledgments' and based on a wordlist by Aboriginal linguist Norman Baird, Lynette Oates' *Kuku-Yalanji Dictionary* glosses all the words and some of the sentences that Astley quotes in that language. Kuku-Yalangi comprises four dialects spoken 'on the south-eastern coast of Cape York and inland to Chillagoe' (*Dictionary* 1.3, 9.1). In *Multiple Effects* this is the language of the Cooktown family (254).[15] Astley draws repeatedly on the irony of *bullimen*, glossed as 'bosses,' 'policemen' (1.3), and *migaloo*, used as 'a derisory, even contemptuous, term for white Australians' (Reynolds *The Other Side of the Frontier* 36). Mitzi Weber acknowledges Mrs Curthoys's kindness to Doebin blacks by quoting in Kuku-Yalanji, 'I was sick and you visited me' (256; Matthew 25:36; 7.5).[16] Oates's *Dictionary* supplied all the words and some of the sentences for Normie's exile elegy,[17] while *jirrbu-jirrbu*, 'lonely, sad' (10.2), encapsulates the novel's closing mood.

'Acknowledgments' does not mention Manny's words, derived by Astley from the glossary of Wulgurukaba [Munbarah; Manbarra] printed in the missionary Ernest Gribble's *The Problem of the Australian Aboriginal* (148–49).[18] This list, selectively transcribed in Astley's notes, is the only linguistic record of this clan, whose traditional lands include the Doebin group, Dagoombah [Magnetic Island], and the coastal strip on which Townsville is built (Tindale; Pryor 52). Gribble reports that by the early 1930s the Wulgurukaba numbers had 'dwindled down to about a dozen all told' (147).[19] Probably eager to avoid any appearance of pidgin in Manny's language and conversely to underline its difference from the language of the invaders, Astley and her Viking editor Meredith Rose continued to make small changes to Manny's language into the novel's copy-editing stages (UQFL 97/17).

However meticulous the effort and poetic the result, Astley's linguistic adjustments and adoption of Indigenous speaking positions—directly through Manny and indirectly through Normie and others—raise concerns of continuing colonisation through the fictional

appropriation of Indigenous voices. Published in 1993 and spanning Queensland history from the settlement of the Bowen region to World War I, David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon* offers a useful comparison, which demonstrates the pitfalls of choosing not to represent Indigenous voices. Viewed alternately as victims and as aggressors, the wild blacks in Malouf's novel remain mysteriously 'Other.' Always presented at a distance and from the perspectives of settlers, especially that of the castaway Gemmy Fairley, they are allowed no opportunity to speak. Malouf stated in an ABC television interview that he based this decision on his belief that he was ill-qualified and therefore reluctant to adopt an Indigenous subject position (Jones 141). However Jo Jones has recently argued that Gemmy conflates settler and Indigenous identities in such a way as to justify white ownership of Queensland as a new place (Jones 148–49). By contrast, Astley's substantially unaltered representation of colonised experience recorded orally by Peter Prior and by Rosser's interviewees, and her incorporation of Aboriginal-based language records, is a well-intentioned attempt to render Indigenous experience in Indigenous voices.

**White Australian Sources: Newspapers**

Astley stated that her impetus for writing *Multiple Effects* was an article in the *Townsville Bulletin* (Sayer 18). This was probably Tony Raggatt's interview of 12 March 1994 which first drew attention to Peter Prior's version of the Doebin tragedy.[20] Photocopies from the *Brisbane Courier*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Townsville Evening Star* and the *Queenslander* now preserved in Astley's Fryer archive provided her with a cast of characters, as follows:

- Captain Brodie: Mr Robert Henry Curry, superintendent
- Mrs Joan Brodie: Mrs Agnes Curry
- Miss Barbara Brodie (aged 11): Miss Edna Curry (aged 19, *Townsville Bulletin*)
- Davey Brodie (aged 12): Master Robert Curry (aged 11, *Townsville Bulletin*)
- Tom Leggat (Australian): Tom Hoffman, deputy superintendent (Viennese)
- Mrs Leggat (Viennese): Mrs Hoffman (Viennese)
- Dr Thomas Quigley: Dr. Charles R. Maitland-Pattison
- Matron Marcia Tullman, Quigley's mistress, later Vine's wife: Mrs Ethel Pattison/ Nurse Ellen Hazeldine
- Cole: Len Ballard, storekeeper
- Mrs Cole: Mrs Elizabeth Ballard
- Samuel Vine: Eric Davidson, schoolmaster
- Jardine: Joseph Hamilton, launch man
- Danny Tombo: Mad Jack (*Townsville Bulletin*), Jack (*Brisbane Courier*), Jack Mount Cook, old man Mount Cook, old Jack Mancook (Prior 19, 21)[21]
- Dr Jean Paul Clereau: Mr. Albert V. Morcombe, wardsman in charge of U-Millie leprosarium
- 'one of the black boys,' provider of first aid (49): hospital orderly Smith
- 'Two of the blacks set off in a skiff to get help from the mainland' (50): Aboriginal men who sailed to Rollingstone.[22]

The newspapers contain colourful, sometimes contradictory reports of Curry's rampage and the resulting woundings, deaths, funerals, inquests and trials. *Multiple Effects* resists the reporters' racial biases, silences, obfuscation of motives and diligence in matching participants with such romantic paradigms as selfless missionaries and benevolent masters. As Doebin's 'King,' Brodie embodies colonialism's defining contradiction, which is its claim

that appropriation and control benefits those who are dispossessed and enslaved. Genuine to a degree, Brodie's benevolence glosses an implacable will to power. Unstable and an alcoholic like his exemplar Curry, he is a tragic, frightening figure, a creator who, having at last understood the flaws in his island creation, transforms into its 'punitive avenging force' (132). Brodie's characterisation depends on the paradox that colonialism's makers are in truth also its victims, their posturing as hollow as the system that supports them: 'See him stride and glide, swagger stick prancing in his hand as he inspects his kingdom' (122).

Faced with a blood-stained refutation of white Australians' self-definition as civilisers, reporters from the time searched for heroes among their interviewees. The *Townsville Evening Star*'s hospital conversation with Dr Pattison[23] transforms madness, destruction and murder into a paperback adventure, as the doctor and his wife rush to save his life after Curry's bullet has severed one of his carotid arteries.[24] Pattison's allusions to 'bleeding . . . squirting profusely'—the stuff of thrillers—may be a source for the blood metaphors that proliferate as symbols for loss throughout *Multiple Effects*.

Ballard, who like Astley's Cole brutally oversees black labour, was eager to exculpate the white men of responsibility for Curry's death. He told the reporter for the *Courier* that after failing to save Curry's children, Deputy Hoffman returned to protect Mrs Hoffman, who had already fled their burning house. Although Hoffman posted a 'guard' armed with 'a shotgun—he believed it was the doctor's—and a couple of rifles' on the beach, no whites were present when Curry was shot. The danger over, Hoffman led the whites' compassionate response. At the inquest Hoffman unsurprisingly reiterated Ballard's version: 'He had told the native "boys" to rush Curry if they could, but not to let him through. He did not tell them to shoot.'[25] Yet a month after Pattison's interview, both of the papers' pulp-fiction heroes were charged with conspiracy to cause Curry's death.

Astley builds her caustic portraits of Quigley and Leggat on this reversal. A cultured philanderer, Quigley uses poetry and music to seduce the teenage Leonie. Mrs Pattison's real-life fortitude is occluded by the bullying Matron Tullman, Quigley's sexually voracious mistress, and Astley's narration transforms the wounded couple's flight into a cartoon chase (48). Further embroidering the newspaper reports, *Multiple Effects* makes Leggat a shifty-eyed, 'moustache-fondling' (77), 'slimy' (118) martinet, brutal to black labourers and a murderer-by-proxy. After supplying the Doebin police 'boys' with rifles, he orders them, 'Shoot to kill!' (52). Later he is intent on convicting Manny (137). Jardine (82) and Brodie (123) accuse Leggat of wanting to rule the island; Manny sees him as 'runnin scared' (135–36); and Vine knows he is a liar (156). Mrs Curthoys's willingness to swear that Leggat ordered Brodie's killing (52) conflates the testimony of three witnesses at the inquest, two of whom also implicated Pattison.[26] Press coverage of the aftermath was shorter and less graphic. When Pattison and Hoffman were tried for procuring Prior to murder Curry, contrary to racist expectations the court achieved a partial justice by exonerating all three. Hoffman seems to have left Doebin after the shootings. But in *Multiple Effects* an aged Leggat remains. In the last scene he forces the wives and children of the chained strike leaders onto the boat that transports them all into exile (289–90).

Newspaper coverage of Curry's rampage included photos and vividly described the suspense, terror, rain,[27] blood and fire that Astley's novel transforms into sombre poetry. Curry's boasts to Ballard[28] and Hoffman of having killed the doctor and matron are reassigned to Brodie, while Curry's reply in the *Brisbane Courier*[29] to Hoffman's accusation that he has burned his children survives in *Multiple Effects* as a desperate rationalisation.[30] Curry's Hamlet-like

ending: '. . . he said he had nothing to say at all,'[31] also finds an equivalent in the novel: 'The superintendent died that afternoon, his lips refusing reasons' (53).

Astley adapts with equal freedom news reports of other witnesses to the Doebin disaster. No Aboriginal voice is heard in the reports, but Manny's cohorts Billy Cooktown and Willie Omba resurface through *Multiple Effects* in cameos that justify their accumulating resentment. The papers mention Mrs Curry's death in November,[32] but Astley develops Joan Brodie as a substantial character—a martyr to her obsessive husband and a kindly maternal figure, whose haemorrhaging during the island's first Mass identifies her with the crucified Christ. The newspapers merely allude to Hamilton,[33] but Jardine is fully drawn as a bully who skulks in the boatshed during the crisis. *Multiple Effects* embroiders reports in the *Brisbane Courier*[34] and the *Evening Star*[35] of Curry's visits to U-Millie and Noogoo as Brodie's encounters, tense and not devoid of humour, with Danny Tombo and Dr Clereau (126–30).

Astley therefore created a dark poetry from the setting, people and events that she retrieved from news reports of the Doebin disaster. She produced irony from the reversals in the papers' depictions of Pattison and Hoffman and developed mere names into the complex humans, Vine and Jardine. She raised Mrs Curry as a saintly foil to her husband and downgraded the heroic Mrs Pattison as Matron Tullman, whose characterisation may be indebted to memories in Rosser of white Doebin midwives. In the papers Curry is downplayed as a shocking but inexplicable mystery, but Astley's Brodie is a complex, comprehensible and tragically conflicted figure.

**White Australian Histories: Henry Reynolds's *With the White People* and John Maguire's *Prologue***

As stated above, *Multiple Effects*, like other Astley novels, draws broadly on post-1968 historians' exposure of colonial and postcolonial views of Indigenous men and women as pseudo-children in need of reshaping in conformity with British–Australian cultural and religious norms, or alternately as a needed pool of unpaid or poorly paid labour. I have however found only two such histories from which Astley specifically borrows.

The first is Henry Reynolds's *With the White People* (1990), an illustrated study of Indigenous peoples' contribution to the exploration and settlement of Australia from 1830 to 1914. This book documents the crucial part that Aboriginal and Islander peoples played in these events, as 'guides, linguists and diplomats' (41), police trackers and troopers (41–84), pearl divers, seamen, shepherds, gardeners, blacksmiths (194), stockmen and stockwomen (204), as companions to isolated men and women, and as prostitutes, mistresses, midwives, nursemaids, cooks, housemaids, washerwomen (204–27) and temporary substitutes for dead or missing children (176–80). Reynolds also reports an 1882 child-rape by *bêche-de-mer* fishermen in Cooktown: 'Before the ships sailed a young girl of nine or ten years old was paraded through the main street by one of the captains and taken to the local hotel to be "busted"' (224). *Multiple Effects* personalises the last-named atrocity by identifying the victim as Nellie, Manny Cooktown's paternal grandmother, and meticulously tracing its consequences for the racially mixed family history (167–68; see 'Indigenous Oral History' above and Appendix 4).

In contrast with her extensive reshaping of the news reports, Astley merely sharpened the critique of Doebin events that she found in her major white source, Fr John Maguire's *Prologue*. The climactic strike narrative in *Multiple Effects* adopts facts and reproduces the

sequence that Astley found in *Prologue*, but she again imbues her rewriting with personal factors. In addition, Maguire's book was the basis for a dozen Astley characters not mentioned in other sources.[36]

The 'impulse' behind Mrs Curthoys, Leonie and Claire was Maguire's statement that the Butler Vale boarding house was 'run by a Mrs Curzon and her two daughters' (91–92). Astley's description of the house and surrounds (12–13) elaborates a summary in *Prologue*.[37] On taking possession the Church at once expelled the Protestant missionaries Merle Cantle and Kathleen Simmons (93), in *Multiple Effects* portrayed by Annie Starck and Mitzi Weber (14). Maguire's source was Cantle's memoir, *Jewels of Fine Gold*, which Astley too may have read. If so, *Multiple Effects* is true to the missionaries' Bible-based spirituality, courage, acceptance of poverty and care for Doebin's people, especially the children. After resigning from the Anglican Missionary Council in Sydney that funded their work, Cantle and Simmons joked that 'our Palm Island church was Anglo-Baptist-Brethren' (38–39). Yet they accepted their era's consensus that regimentation on missions was beneficial for Aboriginal peoples. In *Multiple Effects* Starck and Weber's practical love earns Mrs Curthoys's admiration (37), but they outstrip their originals by arranging for Doebin refugees to live and work on the mainland (253–56).[38]

*Prologue* was also Astley's main source for the nuns and priests in *Multiple Effects*. Father Donellan summarises Maguire's anecdote of the first nuns to arrive in Townsville (*Prologue* 17; *Multiple Effects* 224). Together with the 'tall nun's' obituary in the *Townsville Bulletin*, Maguire's sketch of Sister Paule Duford's care for U-Millie's children probably inspired Astley's cameo of the indomitable Sister Cornelius (222–25; Taylor 2009, 58–59). References in *Prologue* to priests who suffered 'nervous breakdowns' on U-Millie (141) and Doebin (173) may also have been the catalyst, made urgent by Astley's fears for her dying brother, for her narrative of Father Paddy Cullen's suicide (220–22, 225–27; Taylor 2019, 270). Lastly, Astley's portrait of Donellan elides *Prologue*'s record of sectarian hostility by merging the stories of an Anglican and three Catholic priests, all of whom resisted their era's exploitation of Aboriginal people.

Marked by conflicts with bureaucrats and popularity with residents, the Anglican Canon Ernest Gribble's ministry on Doebin from 1930 to 1957 finds a match in Donellan's decades of care (206). Gribble's dispatch of promising students to All Souls school in Charters Towers (Maguire 141) may have inspired Normie Cooktown's education in the Taws. Moreover Gribble was a trusted supporter of the 1957 strikers.[39] Secondly, Astley based Donellan's first Doebin Mass on Dr Kelly's:

> The first recorded Mass on Palm Island was celebrated by Dr Kelly in 1924 on a table in the school-room, with six-year-old Robbie Curry using his authority as the Protestant son of the superintendent to explain the Mass in whispers to the small round-eyed faces crowded round the table. (Maguire 91)

In *Multiple Effects* Davey Brodie, by contrast a student at 'a *Brothers* boarding school,' officiates as altar boy (24, my italics). Resident intermittently from 1947 to 1973, generous Tony Donovan discovered 'his life's work' on Doebin.[40] Astley's main prototype for Donellan however was Father Paddy Moloney, whose first mission in October 1930 alerted him to the Church's neglect (Maguire 87). Astley's account of Donellan's welcome on his second visit imbues Moloney's account of *his* second visit in July 1931 with the memory of tragedy (see Appendix 1).

Astley shapes the priestly adventures documented by Maguire into a pilgrim's progress as Donellan exchanges 'the unbloodied whiteness' of the alb worn at Doebin's first Mass (26) for practical service to northern Australia's Indigenous people. A second verbatim quote from Moloney expresses the esteem Donellan learned during his island 'purgatory': 'Day by day I grow more fond of the blacks. The children are the last word in all that is attractive. The women and men are Nature's ladies and gentlemen' (*Townsville Catholic Herald*, qtd. Maguire 94; *Multiple Effects* 199; see also 210). From Misses Weber and Starck, over whose dismissal he 'dithered' (26) but whom he later befriended (208), Donellan learns the truth of Mrs Curthoys's challenge: 'we are all on the same road' (27; 210); and he embraces the holiness of the secular Mass—'the kindliness of the godhead discovered in a cup of tea and a stale biscuit offered with simplicity in a broken-down hut' (210). Donellan's kindness leads him to confront, in the manner of Gribble, the tyrannical superintendents who succeeded Brodie (201). Indeed, Astley's first (hand-written) draft of *Multiple Effects* allocates Gribble's role in the strike to Donellan. Later drafts reallocate it to Matthew Vine.[41]

While equivalents in *Multiple Effects* for *Prologue*'s nuns and priests mostly invite respect, Brimstone and the bishop are Astley's inventions for satirising ambitious clergy and promoting a feminist theme. Tinker pins to her wardrobe a photo printed in *Prologue* of 'natives,' among them Willie Thaiday, carrying the *sedia gestatoria*[42] of Archbishop Kelly on his visit to bless the new Doebin convent (Maguire 97; Astley 271). This image, which contains no women, epitomises racism and patriarchy in church and state.

Astley's version of the Doebin strike stands out among her many borrowings from Maguire (Astley 282–91; Maguire 175–77).[43] Both writers stress education's contribution to the awakening of black resistance. Both mention the Pilbara strike (1946–49) as inspiration. *Prologue* names the Doebin superintendent as Roy Bartlam. Astley suppresses the 'director's' name and changes those of the strikers: Fred Doolan becomes Willie Omba; Wilfrid Oba becomes Hector Fourmile; and Albie Geia becomes Normie Cooktown. Maguire quotes an interviewee's list of grievances. Astley dramatises the grievances through Willie Omba's filthy conditions of imprisonment (202). *Multiple Effects* reduces Maguire's exposition of the gambling charge against the strikers to: 'Gambling was forbidden. / A tactical presumption of gambling.' Astley deepens Albie's statement of pride in himself and contempt for his enemy: Maguire: 'We were born here; you weren't'; Astley: '"I'm an island man,"[44] [Normie] said to the director. "What are you?"' And Astley's last section imbues Maguire's sequential summary of the strike with drama and poetry: the eight equivalent passages are documented in Appendix 2.

Finally, Maguire's summary of the lull and arrests, which itself draws on Willie Thaiday's *Under the Act* (35–37) and oral Aboriginal accounts, is the basis for the moving climax of *Multiple Effects*, in which Astley transfers Willie's protest to Normie Cooktown:

> Meanwhile the administration held out until popular momentum behind the strike began to flag. In the early hours one morning doors of houses were broken down; seven men named by Bartlam as ringleaders were arrested. Handcuffed and in leg-irons they were dragged through the street to the shore. On the boat taking him to jail Willie Thaiday, with his wife and children about him, stood up and began to sing an Islander song, an expression of his pride and freedom, he continued all the way to the mainland. (Maguire 176; see Astley 296)

**British Romance: Arthur Greening and John W. Frings**

Astley bequeathed to Fryer a photocopied extract from *Octave Six* of Compton Mackenzie's *My Life and Times* (82), the book that heads her list of 'impulses' for *Multiple Effects*. The extract consists of a letter posted from Townsville in November 1925 noting the convalescence on Culgarool [Brisk Island] of Arthur Greening, London publisher of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and other popular and not-so-popular romances. Greening himself was the author of *The Curse of Kali: A Tale of the Thugs in India*. In 1925 he shared Culgarool for several months with John Frings, 'late of W. H. Smith & Son' (Close 50; Wilkinson 195, 235–37). Without mentioning Greening, Frings narrated his sojourn in magazine articles later collected under the title, *My Island of Dreams*.[45] Beneath the Mackenzie photocopy Astley wrote: 'This extract was seminal for the section on the publisher in M.E. of Rainshadow.' After summarising her research on Frings and Greening,[46] she added: '[T]here I had an author (crummy!) & a publisher. Ergo . . . How could I resist?'

As part of a satiric exposé of popular fiction and its 'self-adulating' authors (66), *Multiple Effects* conveys Astley's judgment through Frings's surrogate, Sanford Rim, whose 'fatuous' romances have made him rich (64). Jardine's recollection of 'beachcomber' Rim's stay on Culgarool summarises Chapters 1 to 3 of Frings's book.[47] Throughout his north Queensland adventure Frings' plan was to write novels (*Island* 7–8; Wilkinson 232–37), but unlike Greening he seems never to have published a work of fiction. The literary aspirations of Astley's two exemplars therefore intermesh in Rim.[48]

Tragedy mingles with inconsistencies in Frings's book. Seeking renewal following their son's death on the Western Front (Wilkinson 229–30), he and his wife and their two daughters arrived in Townsville, 'the uttermost ends of the earth' (*Island* 7), on 24 June 1920. After exploring options for a 'Robinson Crusoe adventure' (*Island* 16) while staying on Coonanglebah [Dunk Island] as Banfield's guest, the family landed on Culgarool with supplies and building materials on 17 August. From here Frings, as Jardine claims of Rim, was 'always shooting off'—to Doebin, Coonanglebah and Townsville. Yet Frings repeatedly describes his dream island in purple passages, one of which Astley condenses into a poetic satire, with topographical and botanical detail, of the tropical mystique. Both passages are printed in Appendix 3.

Water found in a tea-tree swamp, where his friend Robert Curry advises Frings to dig, turns out to be salt (26–27). Astley identifies the barren well with 'the heart of the island . . . Symbols persisted' (88). Other wells laboriously dug by 'natives' hired from the Doebin reserve yield no better results (97; Astley 89). Frings, his family and their many visitors therefore had to rely on rainwater collected in a barrel, as described in *Multiple Effects* (88). *Multiple Effects* retains the 'sweet potato vines and ground nuts which obstinately refused to grow' (88; Frings 52) and the vigorous insect life (89; Frings 82–83), but collapses Frings's obsessive gathering, grilling and scoffing of oysters to middens of shells near his abandoned hut (77–78; *Multiple Effects* 88).

The name Gerald Morrow, Astley's equivalent for Greening-as-publisher, evokes postponement. Consumed by fury at Rim, who has seduced his wife, Morrow resolves to compete with him for fame and money, but is held back by respect for literature, the primary value of which, he believes, is to make people *think* (64). In *Tristram Shandy*, a book that accompanies him everywhere, he finds 'the delicacy of mania that could extract magic from banality' (66). Above all, he admires the originality of Sterne's novel, which repudiates

models as totally as it defies imitations—in other words, it is the antithesis of *My Island of Dreams*.

Avoiding commitment and even conversation, Morrow drifts through London, New York, Los Angeles and Brisbane. In Townsville he applies unqualified for a handyman's job on Doebin. When conflicts on the island escalate to violence, he escapes again, ironically in the dinghy that Rim abandoned.[49] Watching the Doebin fires from Rim's derelict camp on Culgarool, he rules out returning to help—'"A craven's plea"—he was "running away again"' (90). Yet Morrow's row to Dagoombah (240) ironically transmutes into the romance he cannot bring himself to write, as he becomes the proxy-narrator of a real-life adventure. Instead of participating in a 'story' (61, 72, 90, 94), '[h]e had experienced the real thing' (99).[50]

As Morrow rows, Tristram and Uncle Toby 'paddle for their lives in the belly of the boat' (92, 97)—symbols for the literary aspiration that he is renouncing (89, 92). Later Sterne's classic transforms into a platform for a new realism when Morrow sketches Mrs Curthoys on the blank page reserved for the Widow Wadman. This attraction, and a new job as Sugarville's [Townsville's] 'voice of the North' denote a deepening in Morrow's self-knowledge and self-acceptance.

**Conclusion**

Possibly with a view to averting any demand for compensation, Astley's 'Acknowledgments' follows the model of *A Kindness Cup* by affirming that 'All characters are fictional.' This literal truth sidesteps *Multiple Effects*' dependency on sources, which is most obvious in respect of its exceptionally large cast. An abundance of Indigenous memory flows into Manny Cooktown, his family and forebears; most participants in the Curry crisis adapt character sketches and/or names provided by newspapers; *Prologue* inspired Mrs Curthoys, Leonie, Clare and Father Paddy Cullen; Father Donellan and Matthew Vine are composites of real-life Anglican and Catholic clergymen also chronicled in *Prologue*; of those Astley characters with significant roles, only Annette Quigley, Marie Laroche, Father Brimstone, the bishop, the feminist rebel Tinker, and Leonie's murderous suitor are fictions, created *ex nihilo*.

*Multiple Effects* declined to ride the wave of optimism about racial justice that swept through Australia in the mid-1990s. Astley's differential treatment of her sources nevertheless demonstrates unequivocally both where her sympathies lay and where her hope for justice and restoration began and ended. In fictionalising the 1930 Doebin catastrophe she freely reimagined characters and events, radically challenging the assumptions that she found in the news reports. Her novel's solidarity with Aboriginal resilience and resistance derives from her consultation, firstly of Indigenous writings (Prior, Rosser, Thaiday), secondly of missionaries' reports (Gribble, Cantle), thirdly of Aboriginal language guides (Baird, Oates, Gribble), and fourthly of revelations by white historians, notably Henry Reynolds. Chance reading of a letter by a minor London publisher led to the creation of Morrow and Rim. Finally, John Maguire's little-known and in many respects atypical history mediated the Catholic core of Astley's ethics, inspired major characters, and supplied events, sequencing and words for the novel's climax.

I speculate above on why *Multiple Effects* takes more from sources than any other Astley novel. Settings, events, characters, and much of what they say derive from writings by others. Consideration nevertheless reveals the freedom, even the idiosyncrasy, of Astley's choices as

she wove a unique creation from these mostly forgotten sources. Mundane reporting in newspapers, memoirs and histories transmutes to poetry in *Multiple Effects*. Contradictions and *non sequiturs* in the novel's criss-crossing narratives reflect the processes of human understanding, the most obvious features of which are uncertainty and risk: no one can truly claim to have written the last word.

# Appendix 1: Welcoming the Priest

**From Maguire's *Prologue*: Father Moloney's Arrival**

'The superintendent was away and the lady in charge of the guest house was also away. I could see nothing for it but to try my hand at batching. So I borrowed a bed, mattress and pillow, bought two blankets, a pound of tea, some sugar, some canned meat, and a tin opener. Thus equipped I engaged a blackfellow to row me from the main settlement to the so-called boarding house two miles distant. It was quite dark, I could not see where we were going, but I left myself in the hands of the hefty Black Aussie cleverly wielding the oars. As I drew near the dining-room, I could see many lanterns waving to and fro on the beach. I soon realised that these were so many beacon-lights of welcome. When the boat was still far from the shore quite a number of black-fellows rushed out, knee-deep in the water to welcome me . . . when my scanty goods were safely landed a kindly voice said: 'Father, you must be starving. Come along to my camp, the missus has something for you.' In five minutes' time I found myself dining with dark people, rejoicing in the name of Mr and Mrs Madigan . . .' (*Townsville Catholic News* 3/40; qtd Maguire 93–94)

**From *Multiple Effects*: Father Donovan's Arrival**

*When he arrived on Doebin on his second visit a year later, he found the boarding house empty and no replacement for that efficient Mrs Curthoys. Disaster left its stain, its ghosts. He borrowed blankets and pillow and some cans of food and emerged, not quite guiltily, from the larder to find lanterns waving in the dark along the beach and moving steadily up through the shrub as welcome.*

*He couldn't believe they remembered him from his visit there the year before when he had offered that first Mass, a Mass of portent sketched in blood, a presage of catastrophe. But Moses Thursday rushed forward, his face cracked into a grin, the lamp swinging from dark to light to dark.*

*'You hungry?' Moses asked. 'You get tucker long our camp, eh? My missus she cook bush pigeon.'* (Astley 199–200)

# Appendix 2: The 1957 Strike

**A.**

**From Maguire's *Prologue***

Brought before the superintendent, Fred Doolan spoke up for the group: they were not going to gaol because there was no evidence of wrongdoing. Accused of getting cocky, Doolan was immediately ordered off the island; his pregnant wife with the rest of the family to follow later. A few days after this incident another Aborigine, Wilfred Oba, was arrested. Again Bartlam resorted to the tactic of ordering one of their spokesmen, Albie Geia, to leave the island, claiming he had received a telegram from the director in Brisbane ordering the expulsion. Unlike Fred Doolan, Albie Geia refused to go: "We were born here; you weren't." Some reports say Geia escaped from detention. His own account is that he merely walked out of the superintendent's office refusing to go to gaol. (Maguire 176)

**From *Multiple Effects***
*Willie Omba, given the gift of rhetoric before the director, became heated in his denials. He was ordered off the island along with his pregnant wife and the rest of his family. Three days later, Hector Fourmile was arrested. Then their spokesman, Normie Cooktown, was ordered to leave. Normie refused. 'I'm an island man,' he said to the director. 'What are you?' He walked out of the office, refusing to go to gaol and even the black police boys refused to arrest him.* (Astley 286)

**B.**
**From Maguire's *Prologue***
You make me scrub official homes and hospital for nothing. If we refuse to Island Dance for you, you put us in gaol . . . If we take a girl up the mountain we get 21 days gaol immediately; you try to stop us populating; you want us to die out. (Quoted Maguire 176)

**From *Multiple Effects***
*'We scrub their houses,' Normie Cooktown complained to Matthew Vine in his capacity as legal adviser for their grievance, 'for nothing. The men won't do island dance for the tourists and they get put in the lockup. If they go up the mountain with their girls, they get twenty-one days. The girls get their heads shaved and have to wear bags. Did these buggers learn from the Nazis?'* (Astley 287)

**C.**
**From Maguire's *Prologue***
The regular cargo boat was due from the mainland the next day; the Aborigines decided to go on strike. (Maguire 176)

**From *Multiple Effects***
*A week after the arrest of Hector Fourmile a regular supply barge was due in.* (Astley 287)

**D.**
**From Maguire's *Prologue***
Meat destined for the Aborigines' own use was brought ashore as were any goods intended for the hospital, the Old People's Home, the dormitories, the missionaries and the doctors and nurses—these latter 'because they are very important people to us.' Goods that belonged to the administrative staff were left unloaded; any bottles of alcohol found on the boat were broken and thrown overboard. (Maguire 176)

**From *Multiple Effects***
*Matthew strolled down to the cove and found Normie's workers busy unloading food supplies only, meat for their families, the hospitals, the dormitories, the doctors and nurses. They left the rest of the cargo untouched and any bottles of alcohol they smashed or threw into the indifferent waters.* (Astley 287)

**E.**
**From Maguire's *Prologue***
For the next few days life on the island came to a standstill. (Maguire 176)

**From *Multiple Effects***
*Inertia spread. / For days a standstill*. (Astley 288)

**F.**
**From Maguire's *Prologue***
A dozen white police arrived by special launch to guard the superintendent and the homes of white staff, as blacks walked the streets previously banned to them. (Maguire 176)

**From *Multiple Effects***
*And all of them, all of them, men, women and children, encouraged by Normie Cooktown, sauntered openly along Coconut Avenue, stopping to chat or simply sit in places barred to them. / At last, after a week of frantic pleas from the director to the mainland, a posse of white police was brought over by launch to guard the homes of whites peering fearfully through shutters as blacks strode the streets.* (Astley 288)

**G.**
**From Maguire's *Prologue***
During the next five days the superintendent was kept in touch with developments through informers. (Maguire 176)

**From *Multiple Effects***
*There were spies. There were whistle-blowers.* (Astley 290)

**H.**
**From Maguire's *Prologue***
The Aborigines expected the Director of Aboriginal Affairs would come from Brisbane to hear their complaints. They waited in vain. (Maguire 176)

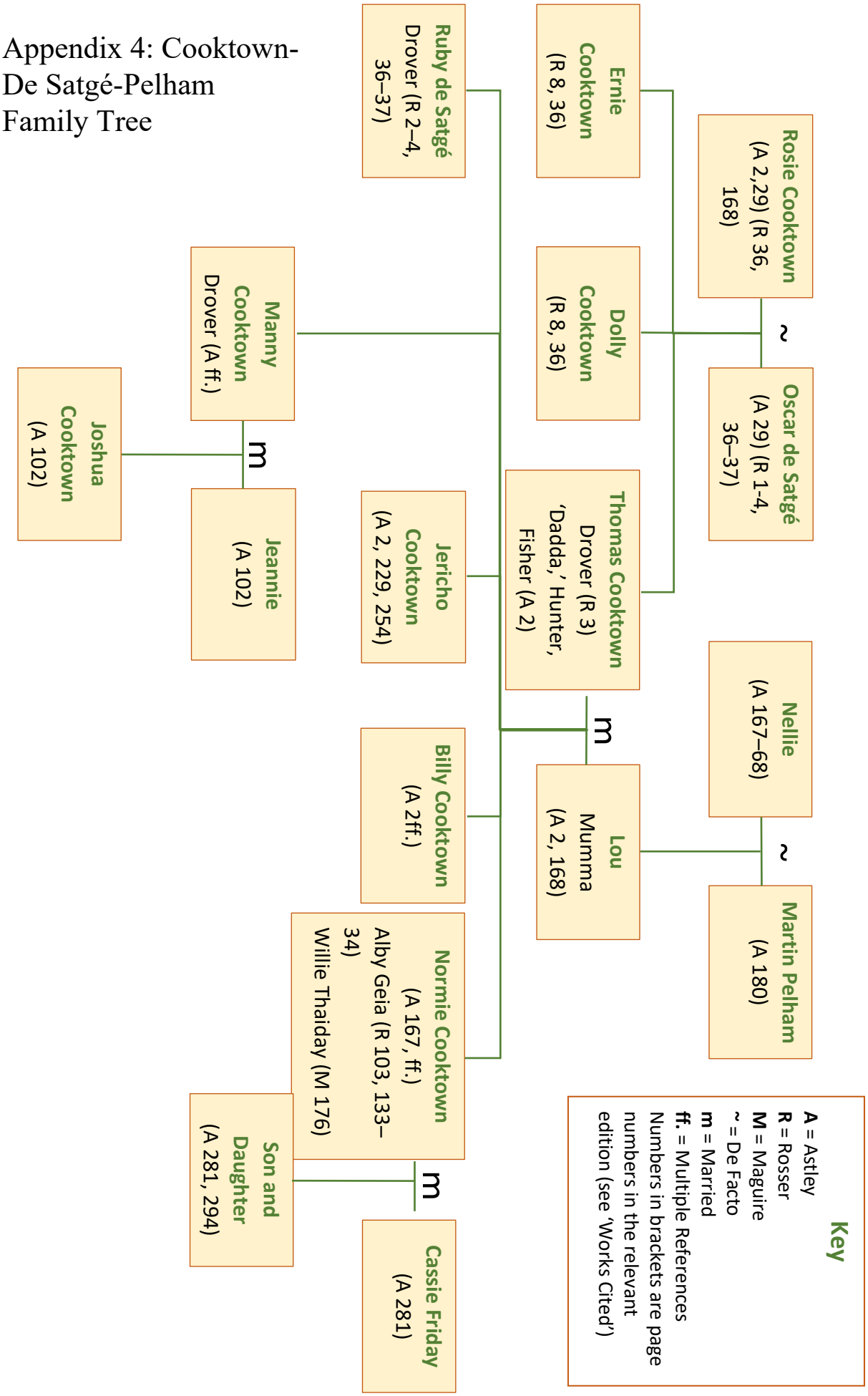
**From *Multiple Effects***
*No gubbamin man came to discuss islander complaints.* (Astley 290)

## Appendix 3: Morrow and Rim

**From Frings's *My Island of Dreams***
It was a magnificent midwinter July day, with a shade temperature of about eighty degrees. The sun, high the heavens, made dazzling play with the wavelets, stirred by a light south-easterly breeze, and the brilliancy and the depth of the blue of the sea had to be seen to be believed. Here and there patches of white sand under the deep water gave an emerald sheen to the blue. Closer inshore was the living reef of coral, with its myriad colourings, tempering the blue sea to purples and browns, and fringing the water's edge was the blazing white of the coral and coral sands of the islands, broken into by the luxuriant tropical vegetation, which forced its way right to the water's edge. (Frings 12–13)

**From *Multiple Effects***
*That same day, a small landfall. Two hills linked by palm groves. A coral beach and sand-spit at the northern end and granite sea-worn cliffs to the south. Rainforest scrub choked with pandanus and wild banana and lit by the dim candles of orchids. In the heart of the island a tea-tree swamp. Symbols persisted.* (Astley 87–88)

# Appendix 4: Cooktown-De Satgé-Pelham Family Tree



## NOTES

[1] The island's inhabitants now celebrate their unique identity with the name Bwgcolman: 'many tribes—one people.' 'The Bwgcolman are the people who have lived and died on Palm Island, and whose ancestors were deported there from all over Queensland, following its inception as a penitentiary' (Watson 19).

[2] See Sheridan 2003, 267–69, qtd. Lever 15–16; and Lamb 212.

[3] UQ Fryer Library 97/20; Recalling his Aboriginal childhood in 'outback dust,' Tilpa opens a roof-light in the bus: 'Gotta breathe mate.' (88–89). His sense of inferiority erupts when a barman discriminates against women and 'boongs' in the tour group: '"Christ," he was yelling, "can't you see it's me? Me, me, me? A bit brown around the edges. But it's not what you think. I want to spare your lousy feelings. It's dago blood you'd call it. But it came out funny. Cop the whites of those eyes. Streaky? Brown? It's all over me see. My gullet's different from your white ones. I pee different. Deep chocolate. I stink, don't I mate?" He rammed his face into the barman's' (118–19). The novel's final judgement on Tilpa, by Laurie the tour guide, nevertheless acknowledges the deep mystery of his connection to the land: 'Was Tilpa the real trouble-maker or not . . . But Tilpa was alone with Tilpa. She looked down the table. His ancient facial structure, out of place in this razmataz, contained memories of plain stretch outside, landscape tougher than the sun that bit it into paddy melon holes and claypans. Beyond ceiling to floor drapes and wood veneer, the mine stacks were the only trees growing out of the slag heaps. He was like that—untreed, unshadowed' (175).

[4] Her attendance as a twenty-year-old at Judith Wright's reading of her poem, 'Nigger's Leap, New England,' on a similar atrocity (Lamb 56), and the 1972 revival of Charles Chauvel's 1955 film, *Jedda*, in which the young protagonist and her abductor leap from a cliff to their deaths, may have confirmed Astley's choice of subject. The Fryer Library holds Astley's 'very first sketch' for *A Kindness Cup*, entitled 'Come Home, People,' three subsequent redrafts, and a collection of rewritten pages (UQFL 97/11–15). Her notes testify to an arduous composition: 'I guess you can call this draft two. At this stage I've been working on it 6 months & want to cut my throat.' (Folder 12); 'This is just about the final pre-draft for typing. Even then I kept making changes. And I wanted to change the edited final. Oh the hell of it!' (Folder 13). Astley again refers to the importance of place in her development of Aboriginal oppression as a theme in her lecture, 'Writing in North Queensland' (*LiNQ* 9:1 1981: 5). During her 1973–74 study leave Thea and Jack bought a house in Kuranda, which became their home after Thea retired from university teaching in November 1979. Karen Lamb (227) documents Astley's empathy with the Aboriginal people living near Kuranda.

[5] 'There seems no doubt that a massacre occurred at The Leap in 1867 and that the survivor was a female Aborigine, probably about two or three years old' (Moore 68). To its discredit, the tourist industry has consistently sought to exploit The Leap's grim history:
<https://www.news.com.au/national/queensland/news/tourism-fail-i-took-the-leap-sign-installed-on-site-where-woman-leapt-to-her-death/news-story/8dd0255b53d124ad9b1068e934abef75>. 'Gin's Leap' near Boggabri NSW, commemorates yet another similar event: <https://www.aussietowns.com.au/town/boggabri-nsw>.

[6]The frontispiece to *It's Raining in Mango* quotes an Aboriginal song, Oenpelli region, from Broome's book (14). Books about Aboriginal dispossession published after Astley had stopped writing fiction continued to focus on northern Australia, e.g. Timothy Bottoms, *Djabugay Country: An Aboriginal History of Tropical North Queensland* (Crow's Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999); Henry Reynolds, *North of Capricorn* (Crow's Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2003); Tony Roberts, *Frontier Justice: A History of the Gulf Country to 1900* (St Lucia: UQP, 2005); Gordon Reid, *'That Unhappy Race'*: *Queensland and the Aboriginal Problem 1838–1901* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2006); Jonathan Richards, *The Secret War: A True History of Queensland's Native Police* (St Lucia: UQP, 2008).

[7] See the sufferings of Rosie and her son in *An Item from the Late News* (St Lucia: UQP, 1982: 20, 24); Belle's references to the Hornet Bank massacre, 'where for once the native owners of the land turned the table on white invaders' in *Reaching Tin River* (Melbourne: Minerva 1990: 135, 146); the bus group's comments on the Laura galleries in *The Genteel Poverty Bus Company* (*Vanishing Points*. Melbourne: Viking, 1993: 26–31); and the satiric depiction of Honiara colonists in *Coda* (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1994: 31–32).

[8] See Robert Manne's documentation of the beginning and course of the 'History Wars' (Manne 1–13).

[9]Theses and books published by former JCU History staff include (among many others): Anne Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness* (JCU History Department, 1977); Kett Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair* (St Lucia: UQP, 1978); Peter Bell. *Timber and Iron: Houses in North Queensland Mining Settlements, 1861–1920* (St Lucia: UQP, 1984; Peter Bell, *Alas It Seems Cruel: The Mount Mulligan Coal Mine Disaster of 1921* (1996; Brisbane: Boolarong Press, 2013); Paul Turnbull, *Science, Museums and Collecting the Indigenous Dead in Colonial Australia* (South Yarra, Victoria: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[10] Watson's emotional connection with Bwgcolman is evident throughout her book—see 23; her bibliography does not list *'Straight from the Yudaman's Mouth,'* Maguire's *Prologue*, or *Multiple Effects*.

[11] According to Peter Prior, he and Clive Beckett confronted Curry together while Ellison Obah hid in a tree. In *Multiple Effects* Billy Cooktown joins Willie Omba in the mango trees while Manny steps forward to confront Curry alone (136). Confusion over Prior's companions on the beach began with the first reporting. The *Townsville Daily Bulletin* of 5 February 1930 contains a photo of 'The natives who were posted on the beach and fired at Curry: Left to right, Clive Beckett, Jimmy Harvey, Caesar and Peter Prior' (5).

[12] Curry's rebuke, 'You had to get my own boys to kill me' (*Multiple Effects* 133), comes from Maguire's *Prologue* (91).

[13] UQFL 97/15: The last pages of both the orange and the red-and-black exercise books contain Astley's schematisings of the Cooktown-De Satgé family tree.

[14] Rosser 81, 89, 98, 104–05, 120, 133, 157–58; Astley: 'island penal colony' (22), 'Alcatraz' (212), 'Nazi concentration camps' (253–55, 287).

[15]<https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/discover/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultures-and-stories/languages/queensland/indigenous-languages-map>. 6 February 2020. Online resources for Kuku-Yalangi have expanded since the *Dictionary* was published, and the Mossman State School now provides weekly lessons in that language (Archibald-Binge, Ella and Rhett Wyman, '"The Kids Soak It Up": How Aboriginal Language Transformed a School.' *Brisbane Times* 1 March 2020): <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/the-kids-soak-it-up-how-aboriginal-language-transformed-a-school-20200227-p544u9.html>. 7 March 2020.

[16] Maguire (141) records the same quote as having been applied to the U-Millie lepers.

[17] *Multiple Effects* 295–96; examples are nouns, *murru*: 'shame' (101; *Dictionary* 11.2.6); pronouns, *ngana* 'we' (295; 4.1); verbs, *dungay* 'to go' (295; *Dictionary* 11); adverbs, *kari* 'not' (295; *Dictionary* 12.1.1, *etc*.); and sentences: *Yinya burrir bama-mu*: 'That island is the people's' (3.1, 3.4); *Yinya nganka ngulkurrijin…Yinya nganka nganjay*: 'Those flowers were beautiful . . . Now they are wilted' (6.1, 10.2); *Marri marri marri*: 'Long time' (3.5); *Ngana kari binal*: 'We do not understand' (10.4).

[18] Astley chose the following Munbarah words from the list she transcribed into her orange exercise book (UQFL 97/15): *Marl-gan* 'sky-fire' (lightning); *Cum-oo* 'water'; *Go-ah go-ah go-ah* 'rain'; *we-ra* 'wind'; *dah-loon* 'dilly bag'; *mood-jas* 'wives'; *gun-ba-ra* 'spear' (*Multiple Effects* 1, 3, 101, 111, 131). She probably also took 'Gungganyji' (*Multiple Effects* 1), Manny's name for Kuku-Yalangi, from Gribble. Manny and Brodie summarise Gribble's retelling of the legends of the 'Goonganjie' people of Cape Grafton, including the Aboriginal creation mythology of Goonyah the first black man and of Da-lore, the Good or Great Spirit (Gribble 54–57; *Multiple Effects* 55, 131–32).

[19] Astley began exploring Aboriginal languages concurrently with drafting *Multiple Effects* but seems to have composed Manny's eight short sections only after she had twice written the longer sections narrated by whites. Containing the first half of Astley's hand-written draft, the orange exercise book lists Wulgurukaba words and meanings from Gribble. The red-and-black exercise book completing the draft lists Kuku-Yalanji words with their English equivalents. Astley's earliest surviving typed draft (which pagination shows must be at least a second typed draft) opens with versions of Manny's first three sections and fifth section as an insert. Manny's fourth section, the shooting of Curry, follows as a separate insert (UQFL 97, Box 15). No earlier versions of Manny's story survive in the Fryer archive.

[20] UQFL 97/17, File Headed: Accession 970326, 'Background Research Material for *Multiple Effects of Rainshadow*.' Raggatt's interview may have been among the *Bulletin* cuttings that A/Prof. Elizabeth Perkins of James Cook University posted to Thea in 1994.

[21] Jack Campbell in Watson, who also supplies the names, Mrs *Agnes* Curry and *Smith* (49, 57–58).

[22] The *Brisbane Courier* of 4 February 1930 reported the black sailors as alternately 'two' and 'four.' Watson (58) records the sailors' names as Jimmy Puttaburra, Albie Kyle and Arthur Murdock.

[23] 6 February 1930: 'VICTIMS OF PALM ISLAND AFFAIR RELATE AMAZING MIDNIGHT ATTACK. Doctor's Wounds Testify to Dum-Dum Bullets. NOT YET OUT OF DANGER.'

[24] The *Brisbane Courier*'s version, 5 February 1930, differed in many respects, including the statement that Curry's shot 'just missed' the artery (15–16).

[25] 'ISLAND TRAGEDY. Curry Desired Revenge. EVIDENCE AT INQUIRY.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 4 March 1930. The Sydney paper baulks at calling black men 'boys,' which was current usage in northern Australia into the 1930s and beyond (see Richards 76–81).

[26] Astley probably based Mrs Curthoys's statement on Elizabeth Ballard's testimony: 'She heard Hoffman say to some boys: "Go and get Mr. Curry and don't let him pass. Either shoot him or spear him." Some of the boys asked how they would get on if they killed Curry. Hoffman replied: "That will be all right. I'll be responsible for that."' Mrs Ballard also heard Hoffman say: 'Look boys, I'll give £1 to the first one who does it.' Ralph Matthews, foreman at the Doebin sawmill, corroborated Mrs Ballard's testimony by stating that he heard Hoffman tell the 'boys' to spread out along the beach, and shoot Curry if he attempted to land . . . He further affirmed that he heard Pattison say to some 'boys': 'Shoot him in the guts, where he shot me.' Jimmy Harvey, a

'half-caste,' supported this. After checking that Harvey could use an automatic pistol, Pattison said: 'If you get anywhere near him try and get him' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 3 May 1930).

[27] *Rainshadow* in Astley's title suggests, not the dictionary denotation '*protected from* rain,' but the poetic connotation '*shadow of* rain.'

[28] 'He said, "Oh I am just watching it. I have shot the matron and the doctor. I fired a flying shot at Hoffman, but missed him, and you had better get into the bush"' (*Brisbane Courier* 5 February 1930); '"Oh, I am just watching it. I have shot the matron and the doctor. I fired a flying shot at Hoffman, but missed him, and you had better get into the bush"' (*Multiple Effects* 50).

[29] '"The — of a doctor is dead: I killed him last night"' (*Townsville Evening Star* 6 February 1930); '"That cunt of a doctor is dead. I've shot him, him and his mistress"' (*Multiple Effects* 123, cf. 128).

[30] *Brisbane Courier*, 5 February 1930: 'It is just as well. I would not like them to grow up and say their father was a murderer'; *Multiple Effects* 124: 'Better, he rationalises, trying to help himself, they're dead than to know their father is a murderer'; the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s report of the inquest made Hoffman's accusation more brutal: 'You know where your children are, up in the cinders?' and also repeated Curry's reply (4 March 1930).

[31] *Brisbane Courier* 5 February 1930.

[32] 'Recently [Curry] suffered the loss of his wife at Townsville.' *Brisbane Courier* 4 February 1930; 'His wife died suddenly in Townsville a few months ago.' *Townsville Evening Star* 5 February 1930.

[33] Watson (56) records that Hamilton acted promptly to rescue two island girls imprisoned behind Curry's burning house, for what purpose one can only speculate.

[34] 'He [Curry] set fire to the large launch *Esmé* which blew up, and with a black boy, named Jack, started off in the smaller launch, *Rita*. He went to Fantome Island where he told Mr. Morcom he had settled the doctor and his wife. He asked for meat and bread and went off in a launch again and anchored off Curoso [*sic*] Island' (*Brisbane Courier* 5 February 1930). *Multiple Effects* retains 'a lump of beef and some bread' (129).

[35] 'Morcom later arrived at the PI hospital and attended to the doctor and matron, and told the remaining whites how Curry had visited him menacingly demanding meat and water, in order that he could camp at Curacao. Morcom said he readily conceded Curry's request for provisions, and immediately he left for Curacao, Morcom set off for the Palm' (*Townsville Evening Star* 6 February 1930).

[36] Neither mainstream newspapers beyond North Queensland nor *Dreamtime Nightmares* are listed in *Prologue*'s bibliography, which acknowledges Rosser's earlier book, *This Is Palm Island* (1978), Willie Thaiday's *Under the Act* (1980), and recorded interviews by Maguire and others with Doebin residents (*Prologue* 384, endnote 108).

[37] '[O]ne main building with a large dining-room, a lounge, a fernery, and a big kitchen; there were four separate sleeping huts, a stable and outhouses, a windmill and an orchard' (Maguire 92).

[38] This would have been a logical extrapolation from *Jewels*, given Cantle's imagining of Aboriginal futures, which (for once) leaves the choice between integration and separation in Aboriginal hands (85). In *Multiple Effects* Simmon's death and Cantle's retirement (281) match the fates of their originals in *Jewels*.

[39] Gribble loaned the Church hall to the 1957 Doebin strikers, and according to Iris Clay 'was the only white person allowed in' (Rosser 166). Watson (80–81) claims that Gribble was 'an authoritarian and a paternalist' but also at times 'a staunch advocate' for Indigenous human rights. Although some aspects of Aboriginal culture, such as attitudes to women and some burial rites, appalled him (*The Problem of the Australian Aboriginal* 22, 38), he regarded 'the full history of our dealings with the aboriginal race,' as characterised 'down to the present time' by 'ill-treatment,' 'injustice and cruelty,' and therefore as 'indeed a black page' (66). Gribble deplores mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples by the legal system, and instances poisonings, chainings, incarcerations, floggings and massacres, including the atrocity at Forrest River (1926), of which he had first-hand knowledge. He writes: 'We owe the aborigines a debt for the country we have taken from them' (112).

[40] Maguire 172, 319; '[T]o the Aborigines he was "a good, good man". Their mutual love and respect grew; after six years on Palm, wherever else in the diocese Tony Donovan worked, it was always to the Aborigines he first turned' (Maguire 173). '[A]t least there was one man in the West [Cloncurry and Mary Kathleen] whose love and respect for the Aborigines was as deep and unfailing as theirs for him' (Maguire 199).

[41] Red-and-black exercise book, 197v; Matthew sometimes still speaks like a priest: '"Don't you dare teach me my job," the director said icily. "Are you promoting immorality as well in your capacity as counsellor?"/ "No. Charity." It was hopeless. "Simply charity."' (287).

[42] In a tradition dating back to the Roman empire and maintained until 1978, each newly enthroned pope was carried on men's shoulders in an ornate *sedia gestatoria* (Italian: 'chair for carrying').

[43] Maguire in turn built his account on recorded interviews with the strikers and other witnesses, and on black and white published histories (384, endnote 108). Astley may also have viewed the film *Protected* (1976), noted in her orange exercise book (UQFL 97/15; see Taylor 2009 46).

[44] Astley probably found the phrase, 'island man'—*burrir-warra*—in the *Kuku-Yalangi Dictionary* (1.1.1). See 'Indigenous Language Sources' above.

[45] Frings first published 'My Island of Dreams: The Adventures of an Amateur Robinson Crusoe' as a three-part serial in *The Wide World Magazine* (London, 1920s).

[46] Astley's hand-written note is as follows: 'Subsequently the research assistant at Nowra Library obtained a book called 'My Island of Dreams' by J. W. Frings,* who apparently settled ^later^ on the same island (as far as I could ascertain!) during the period Robert Currie [*sic*] was still alive & working as superintendent on Palm. Frings, plus wife & daughter, lasted only a few months & returned to T'ville. ^Frings^ separated from wife & daughter, & went off to Charters Towers, then not at the peak of its gold-mining era. This book was on loan from Latrobe ^or Monash^ so I cannot give any affecting references. I'm not sure of the sequence in which Greening & Frings were in the Palm Group. *Frings had dropped in on Banfield on Dunk—Banfield probably advised him to try the Palm Group.'

[47] 'Came to settle on Culgaroo [*sic*]. A stupid bastard. Didn't know a fucking thing about survival. I got tired of having to go over to help him out of his messes but Brodie was always a sucker for these up-themselves Poms. Said he was a writer. The stupid coot had dragged along a wife and kid. They didn't stay long, mate. Anyway, he was always shooting off and leaving them to fend for themselves' (*Multiple Effects* 87).

[48]<https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20181030151229/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/164865/20181031-0041/aussiesappers.wordpress.com/the-men-2/146-frings-edward-hubert-franz/index.html>. 16 February 2020; Wilkinson 195. Frings's *Occult Arts* predated the War. After leaving Culgarool, he built a second dwelling on a friend's property near Ayr. Later he opened a gold mine, 'Double Chance,' at Charters Towers where, 'now that final family arrangements were concluded,' he still planned to write, at this stage 'a mining novel' (203, 205). *Dreams* refers frequently to progress on this work (224, 235), which Frings at last claims to have sold 'remuneratively' (276). *Dreams* ends with Frings's return to Culgarool, expecting soon 'to delve again in Mother Earth for the fortune she usually contrives to conceal so well' (278).

[49] 'When at Townsville I had commissioned my friend to buy me a light rowing flatty, suitable for getting water, and recently the little craft arrived. She is nine feet over all [*sic*], four feet beam, and built of light pine, dressed to three-eighths of an inch. She sits on the water like a duck. Garraway says she "would float in heavy dew." I am by no means fit, but I can lift her by the side ashore, and turn her completely over, without difficulty' (Frings 66; see *Multiple Effects* 87, 90, 93). In Astley's earliest surviving draft of *Multiple Effects*, Morrow beachcombs on Culgarool for about two months (UQFL 97/15, red-and-black exercise book).

[50]Astley's 'impulse' for Morrow's rowing feat may have been Peter Prior's dinghy voyage with a friend in 1922, when he returned to his family on Doebin after two years as an unpaid roustabout at the Arcadia Hotel, Dagoombah (Prior 12–14). If so, the reversals by which Peter Prior's seamanship is contrasted with Morrow's incompetence, and their arduous voyages are in opposite directions, the one towards and the other away from commitment, constitute a significant black/white counterpointing. In a second feat fictionalised in *Multiple Effects*, Manny's younger brother Jericho and a sawmill worker, Jimmy Friday, escape from Doebin in a bark canoe. When their craft disintegrates, they reach the mainland by swimming from island to island. They then trek onwards until they reach their country (255–56).

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