Serial Representations of Indigenous Peoples and Settler Belonging in *The Queenslander*

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This article examines serial representations of Indigenous peoples in colonial periodical fiction to explore settler anxieties around colonisation and the fragile nature of settler belonging.[1] It builds upon periodical scholar Elizabeth Sheehan's articulation of seriality's "role as a technique of repetition that helps to produce and reproduce subjects and groups" to consider the extent to which the serial (re)production of representations of Indigenous peoples in colonial texts works both to support and unsettle settler colonial subject formations and identities (31). Focusing mainly on the 1880 Christmas Supplement of the *Queenslander*, this study explores how two interdependent modes of seriality—continuity and subject formation—can be productively traced within a single issue of a periodical (Sheehan 35, 37). Empire-building is always an ongoing "unfinished business" (Burton), and by reading across the contents of a periodical we can draw attention to the fragility of many of these settler representations, even as these publications seek to reinforce settler belonging and justify colonisation and Indigenous peoples' dispossession.

Although these texts are unmistakeably settler colonial in authorship and construction, we can still seek to read them with an "active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion" (Vizenor 1) by highlighting incidents in specific stories and serials where Indigenous peoples' presence offers potential "challenges to the categories of belonging through which settler societies reproduce white privilege" (Lester and Laidlaw 11). Valuable work has already been undertaken in this field in an Australian context by scholars such as Larissa Behrendt (2016), Liz Conor (2016), and Jonathan Dunk (2017), though, as Dunk reminds us, "the terms and structures of Australian literature are intricately uninterested [in analysing Indigenous culture] . . . according to its own constitutive principles, [as] the solidity and presence of Australian literature as a concept and an institution depend upon its ability to contain Aboriginal presence within its terms" (6). The material conditions structuring the production and circulation of the *Queenslander* ensures a high degree of continuity in settler representations of Indigenous peoples despite outward appearances of difference between narratives. The following close readings of individual stories and serials therefore explore the strategies settler periodical fiction utilised to sublimate and "contain" Indigenous presence while simultaneously noting where such containment fails or is unsettled by the fragile nature of settler fantasies around colonisation.

By focusing on the serial patterns at play across the form of the supplement as a whole, we can pay attention to representative strategies deployed in both the short fiction and its serials (which continue into later issues), tracing parallels and contradictions in representations of Indigenous peoples and settlers within the same periodical issue. However, as periodical scholars we must remain cognisant that at the time of publication readers of these materials were unlikely to approach these texts in the same manner that we do today. Very few readers would have read a seasonal supplement from cover to cover in one sitting. Their readings were more likely built upon "rhythm[s] of attention and inattention, slow comprehension and rapid skipping ahead, [with] build-ups and discharges of affect" (Dames 7). The "operations of affect" (Dillane 10) at work in these texts will be discussed in this study to consider how they work to reinforce or undermine narratives of settler belonging for these texts' colonial

readership, with particular attention paid to the role of settler sorrow and "sympathy" for the plight of Indigenous peoples in this era.

While reading these fictional texts closely for their formal and thematic continuities and discontinuities, attention will also be paid to the material conditions structuring the production and circulation of these narratives to settler readers. The *Queenslander* (1866–1939) was a "family and pastoral" periodical that served as the weekly companion publication to Queensland's earliest newspaper, the *Brisbane Courier* (originally founded as the *Moreton Bay Courier* in 1846 and continuing today as the *Courier-Mail*) (*Australian and New Zealand Press Directory* 116). The *Queenslander* was founded in 1866 by T. B. Stephens, a lawyer who purchased the *Moreton Bay Courier* in 1859 (Tiffin 173). According to Chris Tiffin, Stephens intended the *Queenslander* to act as a "less polemical paper" than the *Courier* so that it "would appeal to and speak for all sections of the colony" (173). When first announced in the *Courier*, the *Queenslander*'s prospectus promised to provide "interesting reading of a literary character" and "admit nothing of a doubtful character . . . in order to render the paper welcome as a family newspaper" (*Brisbane Courier*, 3 Feb 1866, 1). The "golden years" of its publication began when the *Courier* and *Queenslander* were sold at public auction in late 1873, with the new Managing Director, Gresley Lukin, transforming the publication from a "twelve-page broadsheet to a thirty-two page, folded and sewn tabloid with an engraved masthead and an expanded number of regular columns" (Tiffin 174). The *Courier* and the Brisbane *Daily Mail* merged to form the *Courier-Mail* after the two publications were acquired by the Murdoch family during the Depression, with the *Queenslander* ceasing publication in 1939 (176).

The *Queenslander*'s Christmas Supplement was designed to be less immediately ephemeral than regular weekly instalments of the publication and contained significantly more fiction and poetry than a normal issue. This presumably helped to attract the occasional reader who might be swayed to purchase the periodical in the festive period for its extra entertainment value, or those seeking an advertisement-free collection of fiction and poetry that could be retained and returned to. Close examination of fiction supplements can provide valuable insight into the role of seriality as a form of proliferation (Levay), as the sheer abundance and density of fictional content in contrast to an average issue of the *Queenslander* has the potential to amplify many of the thematic and narrative trends of the broader publication. Although the supplement offers a large amount of short fiction, it also acts as a springboard for two new serials which will be considered in their entirety for their representations of Indigenous-settler relations, as well as for the strategies deployed in these opening instalments to build anticipation and retain more occasional readers.

Unsurprisingly, in most of the stories in the *Queenslander*'s Christmas supplement Indigenous characters are either absent entirely or only appear in supporting roles, their presence largely serving "to assist, and thereby to justify, the colonial mission" (Bode 177). Some of the most stereotypical representations of "tame" Indigenous peoples appear in the serial "Our Bush Parson" by "A Bush Naturalist" (25 Dec 1880–15 Jan 1881), which begins its first instalment in the supplement.[2] The main action of the narrative focuses on Ulolo station, and the attempts made by the region's new parson, John Calley, to return to the station following the great flooding of the Darling River to reunite with his love interest. Although reference is briefly made to earlier incidents of frontier violence between settlers and Indigenous peoples, these clashes are deliberately distanced from the serial's present. Indeed, this first instalment ends with the parson's first Christmas service in Ulolo's woolshed where the station's Indigenous workers are drawn with childlike wonder to witness the "whitefellow corrobboree" (25 Dec 1880, 14), to ensure alignment with the larger festive themes of the supplement as a whole.

The serial's opening chapters emphasise the sense of community and relative stability that has built up around Ulolo station—an atmosphere that the arrival of their new parson only

extends and cements. These preliminary chapters help build up the reader's investment in the potential romance between Calley and Addie, and although readers are forewarned of impending peril by the serial's full title—"Our Bush Parson and the Great Flood of the Darling River"—the narrative predominantly conveys an idyllic representation of successful settlement. In an example of that "strange layering of Aboriginal connection, European colonization, and Aboriginal naming that often occurs in Australia" (Bode 178), Ulolo station's own naming is even revealed to stem from the Indigenous community's "liquid word" for a nearby lake (25 Dec 1880, 13). Repeated reference is made to the active presence of Indigenous labourers both at Ulolo and its surrounding stations throughout the narrative, underlining their vital role in the success of early colonial stations and other bush industries, though without any acknowledgement or exploration of the unfree conditions Indigenous peoples often worked in.

The figure of Dicky, Calley's "little black satellite" (8 Jan 1881, 41), comes to greater prominence in later instalments of the serial, with "his faithful black friend" (15 Jan 1881, 74) playing a central role in navigating the waterways on the parson's journey back to Ulolo after the flood. Dicky exemplifies many of the traits traditionally associated with the "Man Friday" trope, but, as mentioned elsewhere in my work on Indigenous mobilities, it is only through Calley's deference to Dicky's knowledge of waterfaring and Indigenous "naval architecture" (to help them construct a boat from appropriate local trees) that the author can resolve the serial's central conflict and reunite its central lovers (Galletly 2021). Despite the potentially subversive nature of Dicky's role, the pair's friendship remains heavily inflected by colonial power dynamics of master and servant, with Dicky "faithfully help[ing] his master to overcome the difficulties of the flood" (15 Jan 1881, 73). Characterisations such as Dicky's largely rely upon "roughly drawn [settler] sketches and stereotypes" (Bode 177) and serve to justify the colonial mission by emphasising how the behaviour of exemplary white settlers (such as Calley) could potentially "tame" the more "savage" impulses of Indigenous peoples, capitalising upon their significant local knowledge and skillsets by ensuring their subservience via less overtly violent means.

Nevertheless, in her exploration of colonial violence in periodical short fiction, Rachael Weaver argues that "[f]ar from attempting to veil or suppress colonialism's bloody foundations, the popular short fiction of the nineteenth century was frequently driven to represent them, whether in horror or celebration" (34). Such tendencies are starkly illustrated in the *Queenslander*'s 1880 Christmas supplement in N. Walter Swan's "Joseph Curran's Christmas Ride; A Story of Black and White" (25 Dec 1880, 4–6). This story of Indigenous-settler violence opens with station owner, Hugh Blakely, looking out upon the bush landscape from his parlour window when he spots several shadowed figures with spears approaching. He is soon joined by his station overseer, Joseph Curran, who urges Blakely and his wife to relocate to a nearby station while he and some of the other hands attempt to subdue their approaching attackers. Although Curran is successful in convincing Blakely to flee, the pair engage in an extended heated debate about the necessity of Indigenous-settler violence and Blakely's unwillingness to kill unless in self-defence. The violence of colonial settlement is repeatedly called upon in the narrative with Swan even creating a fictionalised massacre to explain and justify the presence of their nearby attackers: "Are you aware they *are* about? . . . The Goolya massacre has roused them. The whites cannot expect much mercy after that example" (4, emphasis in original). Similarly, at an early stage in the story Curran repurposes a hollow tree previously utilised as a prison by native troopers and nicknamed "The Grotto" to temporarily trap a group of Indigenous warriors inside (4). The excessive and structural violence repeatedly inflicted upon Indigenous communities by settlers is thus reinforced to the reader, and actively defended by the character of Blakely, who is contrasted with the "bitterness and resolve" of Curran whose own family are later revealed to have been killed by an Indigenous raiding party (5).

The character of Blakely in "Joseph Curran" serves as an exemplar of colonial power and the limitations of settler guilt. During his extended argument with Curran over how to respond to the nearby Indigenous community Blakely makes several statements that might, at first glance, seem particularly humanitarian and anti-imperialist:

> Not only have we taken the territory of these people, but we have armed ourselves with weapons against which they are powerless, and from chief to child we shoot them without remorse and without thought of the sin and shame of it, or of the bloody account that is being entered against us. Still worse and more sinful and shameful, we have drilled troops of these unfortunate creatures to kill their own kind. (25 Dec 1880, 4)

Furthering these points, Blakely even admits that "If all under this roof are killed to night, I cannot but think, feeling as I now feel, that it is but the sins of our people and of our rule which are being visited upon us" (5). While seeming to argue that the settlers are getting "what they deserve" for their violent means of ensuring successful settlement, it is notably Curran, the station's overseer, and not Blakely (the station owner) who is left to pay for the sins of colonisation. Swan's narrative thus comes full circle when, at the end of the story, Curran is found with multiple spear wounds, reclining on the same sofa on which Blakely rests at the start of the narrative: "Mr. Blakely found him, with his Christmas Day spent, with a broken spear beside him, and stains upon the floor" (6). Thus, Blakely's earlier statements, while voluble and seemingly sincere, are ultimately found to be as hollow as the tree Curran attempts to trap members of the raiding party within. Such verbose articulations of settler guilt appear in many periodical texts of this era and this article argues that these might more productively be read as "spectacles of settler sorrow" (Simpson "Reconciliation," "Savage"), with closer attention paid to their role as weapons of colonial governance that attempt to temporarily alleviate settler unease and discomfort without offering any concrete solutions or alternatives to the current status quo.

In "Joseph Curran," the presence of Indigenous figures upon the landscape disrupts the leisurely gaze of Blakely as he looks out upon his station's surroundings. This sight causes Swan's narrative to open with an exclamation in French spoken by "a broad-shouldered Englishman to his English wife one afternoon in a northern district of Queensland" (4), creating an even stronger sense of dissociation for the casual periodical reader. Such techniques are reinforced later in this same short story when we get a sudden shift of perspective from the eponymous Joseph Curran to that of the Indigenous man he has fatally injured in his attempts to "defend" the station from a potential attack. After the aforementioned discussions about the morality of killing Indigenous peoples, Swan's decision to focus in on the final moment of one of those caught in the crossfire of the story's central Indigenous-settler conflict humanises the combatants on both sides of these encounters. As the narrator relates to the reader: "If the trail of the laid grass told of the blackfellow's struggles, there was no one to tell how he died, whether in the repose and tranquil beauty of the place, under the blazing sky, or below the stars; whether battling with maddening thirst or chilled in the heavy dews" (6). The futility of such struggles is thus reinforced in this tale, which ends with the tragic deaths of both its eponymous settler protagonist and several Indigenous warriors, creating space—however briefly—for consideration of the associated costs of successful settlement for the *Queenslander*'s readers.

In the second serial appearing in this same supplement, the tragic framing of the Indigenous population stems less from actively noting "with pain and disgust the way these unfortunate wretches are being treated" ("Joseph Curran," 25 Dec 1880, 4), than through its engagement with the prevalent "extinction discourse" of the era which aimed to classify Indigenous communities as remnants of a dying race (Brantlinger 1). C. H. Barton's "Jack the

Bunyip-killer [sic] (An Extravaganza)" (25 Dec 1880–1 Jan 1881) focuses on the community at Lagoon station and follows a series of strange and unfortunate circumstances that seem to stem from a nearby mountain range, previously only inhabited by the area's Indigenous population. Their expeditions into "the Range" have historically been preceded by ceremonies intended "to propitiate the demon of the lake," but as the serial's narrator relates: "Little by little, however, new and mongrel superstitions supplanted the old . . . and PUYUME, "the misty one," "the cloud compeller," became a vulgar "bunyip," whom each veracious [settler] eyewitness invested with a new shape and more and more discordant attributes" (25 Dec 1880, 15). In "Jack the Bunyip-killer" settlers have therefore not only appropriated land, but traditional Indigenous myths themselves, replacing them with new settler imaginaries and eliding their origins. Notably, as "the bunyip, in some shape or other, became domiciled in or near the lagoon—nobody would tell exactly which—. . . the blacks, once so numerous, gradually disappeared from the neighbourhood" (15). Although this would seem to imply that the region's Indigenous population are easily swayed by superstition, the narrator outlines in detail the ways in which the settler inhabitants of Lagoon station have also proven themselves susceptible to these stories, resulting in significant disruption to the normal business of the station.

Nevertheless, after the mystery of the "bunyip" has been uncovered and fully resolved, the settlers are found to prosper and continue to flourish, while the returning Indigenous community resume their "pilgrimages" out into the ranges "though, alas, in ever diminishing numbers" (1 Jan 1881, 11). Such a decline in the region's Indigenous inhabitants is depicted as an inevitable by-product of settler progress with the narrator even referring to their "ancestral cave" as a "museum of prehistoric lore" inhabited by generations of "provisional humanity" (1 Jan 1881, 11; 25 Dec 1880, 18). Thus, even within this one serial, split over two different issues we can see how seriality serves as a form of proliferation, and as a "technique of repetition" (Sheehan 31) that repeatedly reassures the settler readership of their presence on the land by framing Indigenous presence as "provisional" and unsustainable in these increasingly modernising times.

Despite the seasonal nature of the supplement, several of the stories included make no direct reference to Christmas, and most of those that do take on a more didactic approach by offering cautionary morality tales for readers to reflect upon, many of which feature tragic endings. Indeed, of all the stories included in the supplement, only "Our Bush Parson" could claim to have a "traditional" happy ending. Two of the other short stories end with their protagonist's untimely death ("Joseph Curran" and "Drift"), while three more result in successful romantic unions (or reunions), but only after some sacrifice has been made in terms of financial success, or via a loss of childish fantasies and an acceptance of the realities necessary to thrive at the time. While at first glance it might seem unusual to feature a violent story such as "Joseph Curran" in a Christmas supplement, such scenes arguably offered more excitement to readers and opportunities for releases of emotional affect that might have encouraged more casual readers to continue reading the *Queenslander* beyond their purchase of this festive supplement issue.

Both Carl Feilberg's "Drift" (25 Dec 1880, 10–12) and the aforementioned "Jack the Bunyip-killer" draw attention to the fragility of settler fantasies, centring on protagonists whose idealised perspectives of the world—largely drawn from their reading of books—negatively impact upon their ability to succeed and achieve their desired goals. In "Drift," the naïve and innocent Nelly attempts to escape the drudgery of her existence working at her family's bush hotel, the Carriers' Arms. Nelly first approaches an Indigenous labourer, Jenny, in the hope that she can escape into the bush with her, though she is swiftly rebuffed by the older woman who rightly fears violent retaliation by the police once the girl is found to be missing (25 Dec 1880, 10). She then turns to Jack, "an old man, with grog-strained face, but a pair of kindly

innocent eyes" who is horrified when she relates her failed attempt to "go away with the blacks" (10). With the benefit of hindsight, Nelly explains to Jack:

> "I don't think it would [do], after all," said Nelly, looking up. "They aren't a bit like the Indians I read about in the books you lent me. There's King Billy now—he isn't like a chief, is he? And he doesn't call me 'flower of the palefaces,' or anything pretty. All he says is, 'Missee Nelly—you give it little bit baccy—me poor fellow.' I don't think it would do." (10)

Although Nelly's initial willingness to "go away" with Jenny's people is revealed to be based upon false expectations stemming from misinformed settler fantasies, the treatment she receives among her fellow settlers is similarly underwhelming, with Nelly's overreliance on these romantic fantasies ultimately resulting in her own tragic death. After rebuffing the well-intentioned advances of a young carrier because she is determined to find her "Prince," the story's heroine finds herself wandering in the bush without food and water after a series of increasingly unfortunate circumstances until her body is found by native troopers. As the narrator explains: "poor Nelly had found what she sought. The Prince has met her at last, and he had taken her home with him" (12).

The eponymous protagonist of "Jack the Bunyip-killer" is described as similarly prone to an "imaginative vein" of thinking that, while first encouraged by childhood inclinations toward "the black-letter legends in the library of the old abbey school," is soon "revived" by his relocation to Australia and "the comparative solitude of the bush" (15). In exploring the origins of the strange noises emanating from the nearby range attributed to the "bunyip," Jack is duped by two criminals who convince him to buy into a fantasy of hidden minerals and untold wealth kept within the caves that were previously only visited by the region's Indigenous community. When Jack stumbles upon one of the criminals in the caves (referred to only as "the recluse" by the narrator to help build suspense and mystery), he falsely represents himself as "S____, of Maungatoto notoriety" (18), making reference to a fictional act of settler violence heavily publicised within the local media. The criminal successfully convinces Jack of his desire to be left alone, asking only for time to escape from the area unnoticed by local authorities in exchange for sole claim to the "treasures" hidden the caves.

The editorial decision to break the serial at the point when Jack decides to delve deeper into the mountain to view these riches appears designed to similarly bring the reader along with Jack by encouraging their own settler fantasies of hidden civilisations and riches. The criminal gestures to Jack to follow him deeper into the cavern, announcing: "You are the first white beside myself who has ever set foot here," commenting that the former inhabitants "little thought, poor devils, what uses their treasure house would be put to at last" (18). This pause in the narrative (the serial's conclusion wasn't published until a week later) creates ample space for readers to consider what wonders awaited their hero, and likely made the serial's final revelation even more shocking upon a first read.

In fact, the second instalment of this serial significantly subverts both Jack's and the readers" expectations, as the narrative of a "long-looked-for clue to the secret of the mountain" (18) proves to be entirely fictionalised. The true identities of the figures Jack encounters within the caves of the Range are revealed via the visiting Sergeant Doolittle, who interjects upon hearing of Jack's recent adventures to explain that "I am sorry to have to spoil a sensational story, but they are simply two arrant scamps—old clients of mine—and guilty of nothing worse than a mania for defrauding the revenue by supply certain bush shanties—ay, and town shanties too—with home-brewed whisky" (1 Jan 1881, 11). Through this revelation, both Jack and the reader are forced to reset their expectations of the nature of the serial's "happy ending" and the narrative's generic conventions as a whole. Rather than an adventurous tale of settler prosperity

and mateship, the serial becomes an almost cautionary tale (though with far less tragic results than Feilberg's "Drift") of the dangers of buying too easily into aspirational settler bush fantasies.

The only prominent Indigenous character in the serial is the "ancient" figure of Combo, who stays behind at the station. Despite the fact that amongst his people "he was king, priest, prophet, doctor, and all—concentrated all rank and learning in his own ugly person," on the station "he is a poor drudge, whom every station hand orders about at will" (25 Dec 1880, 16). Combo is repeatedly depicted as particularly fearful and cowardly (a common trope of this era) and is only forced into accompanying Jack into the mountains via threats of "the remoter terrors of the Dovedale lock-up" (16). In "Drift," the Indigenous character of Jenny functions as one of the few sympathetic figures in Feilberg's tale of settler dereliction, though she refuses to help Nelly for fear her mother will call upon the police who "plenty shoot blackfellow" (10). Jenny instead offers "a feasible method of revenge" that will enable Nelly to escape her circumstances by suggesting she shoot her own mother, with the narrator explaining that "as far as her [Jenny's] experience went, the dominant white race might adopt [this method] with impunity" (10). While this narrative aside largely serves to reinforce the differences in personal morality between these two women, it nevertheless justifies the viewpoint of Jenny herself via her own experiences of settler violence against her people, and further illustrates the naïveté of the central character of "Drift" and her unsuitability to thrive in the harsh realities of life out in the bush. In both of these stories, Indigenous characters are depicted as justified in their fear of the white settler structures of justice and law enforcement. This aligns with larger debates taking place within the pages of the *Queenslander* in this same year around the role and abuses of the native police, which Feilberg himself actively helped to stimulate via his anonymous series of editorials entitled "The Way We Civilize" (Reynolds *Whispering*, *Whispering Revisited*)—though it should be noted that Feilberg was removed from his editorship of the *Queenslander* due to the controversy these pieces caused in late 1880 (Ørsted-Jensen).

Although Combo initially appears as little more than a "roughly drawn sketc[h]" of selfishness and cowardice in "Jack the Bunyip-killer" (Bode 178), he nevertheless plays a vital role in the serial's central narrative. At several points he acts as a "sable Mercury" (25 Dec 1880, 15), delivering messages between Lagoon station and the nearby settlement of Dovedale, and even helping the "recluse" in the mountain stay "informed of all that goes on" in the nearby settlements (1 Jan 1881, 9). The recluse reveals that he has been able to keep Combo at "arm's length" due to his fear of the recluse's Māori companion's "medicine." The recluse's Māori partner is initially introduced to the reader as his "usual housekeeper," reinforcing his apparent subservience, yet as the recluse relates: "To be sure, he is only a Maori, but, Maori though he be, Ruatéra is worth fifty-thousand of your so-called respectable white-men" (9). Here the character of the recluse is again playing upon the romantic fantasies of both Jack and, by extension, the serial reader, portraying the Māori figure as seemingly superior in his standing as another form of "witch-doctor" among his people. Ruatéra is revealed to "kno[w] a thing or two in working charms," thus enabling him to "gammo[n]" Combo and keep him from entering the caves where the two are currently residing through the use of "an *atúa* or bogy, [made] out of an old tree root, with a hideous mask like the idols in *wahi tapu* of his country" (9, emphasis in original). Māori terms are used here to give an air of "authenticity" to the narrative the recluse is weaving for Jack, adding to his "sensational story" that is ultimately revealed to be false. Thus, although Combo is initially depicted as foolish for falling for the tricks of these criminals, Jack himself (and perhaps the reader too) is ultimately guilty of falling for these same tales.

After the criminals' subterfuge is revealed at the serial's close, Combo finds his status further elevated, becoming "the recognised diplomatic channel of communication between the tribe and the alien powers at Lagoon Station, a post that he continued to fill with great

acceptance by others and profit to himself" (11). Much like the figure of Dicky in "Our Bush Parson," Combo is able to prove his ongoing value to the settlers (albeit, again, in a predominantly subservient position), ensuring his own ongoing prosperity, though the declining fate of his own people seemingly remains a foregone conclusion, reinforcing the extinction discourse of the era. Such narratives offer reassurance to readers that even the most misguided of settlers could ultimately prosper and find their place in this new homeland, even if they never stumbled across hidden riches in this new land like many of the heroes they'd previously read about in similar novels and publications.

Conclusions

In his introduction to the first edition of *This Whispering in Our Hearts* (1998), Henry Reynolds argues: "Settler solidarity was not just comforting. It seemed necessary for survival" (xvi). Indeed, even within this single fiction supplement we can trace a degree of anxiety and "necessity" to the representational tropes utilised by multiple settler authors to help reinforce and justify the dispossession of Indigenous communities from their lands and sovereignty. Serial processes of continuity and subject formation are utilised across these texts to repeatedly reassure the settler readership of the *Queenslander* regarding their presence on the land by reinforcing the dominant "extinction discourse" of the era, which argued that "savagery was vanishing of its own accord from the world of progress and light" (Brantlinger 3).

Nevertheless, through a deliberate focus on Indigenous presence and a closer examination of the structures and discourses of power at work in these same fictional texts, the fragility of many of these settler identities is also revealed. These narratives' willingness to openly illustrate and explore the structural and systemic violence imposed upon Indigenous peoples is striking, especially in the context of a seasonal holiday supplement. Such findings align with Weaver's comments on the "openness" with which short fiction texts of this era represented the violence of colonial settlement with "an almost overwhelming directness and intensity" (33). This said, most of these texts still ultimately work to reinforce feelings of settler belonging, with their depictions of Indigenous–settler violence and tragic endings largely serving to build up and release reader affect rather than actively advocate for any change to the status quo. Such findings align with the publisher's intentions for the *Queenslander* to serve as a "less polemical" publication than the *Courier*.

It is for this reason that the settler periodical fiction under discussion here (and arguably settler periodical fiction more generally) can be more productively interrogated for its role in circulating fictional "spectacles of settler sorrow" (Simpson "Reconciliation," "Savage") than it can for more humanitarian or subversive intentions. Analyses centred upon the functions and limitations of settler affect could enable deeper examination of the potential role such fiction played as a weapon of colonial governance that aided in temporarily alleviating feelings of settler unease and discomfort among these periodicals' readerships. In tracing representations of Indigenous peoples within the frame of larger discussions within periodical studies around seriality, we are also reminded that this process "occurs constantly and dynamically, its effects appearing "temporary and revocable," always open to new interpretations and developments while still somehow establishing a baseline narrative or set of concepts" by which settler readers could recognise themselves within the pages of the *Queenslander* (Levay x).

Notes

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[2] The first instalments of "Our Bush Parson" and "Jack the Bunyip-killer" both appeared in the *Queenslander*'s Christmas Supplement, but succeeding instalments appear in the standard edition of the periodical.

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