

Emotion and Narratives of Heartland: Kim Scott's *Benang* and Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*

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The iconography of heartland can be found in those terms describing or celebrating Australia's wilderness and outback (Gill 51). Heartland serves as a mythologised place whose centrality can only be abstractly realised, for heartland—at least in Australian terms—exists at the edge of our more concrete experience of country. Economic value is often at the root of any contest over heartland. But as the imagined land at the heart of this vast continent, Australian conceptions of outback and wilderness might also be linked to more personal feelings of where one's heart (metaphorically) belongs, adding further layers of investment in those beliefs that sustain or motivate the subject's sense of authority over, or rights to, land identified by such iconography. These are themes that persist in many Australian novels. Yet any novel that engages the iconography of heartland risks inciting a false narrative of Australia's vast empty spaces, for in somewhat understated terms we might say that '[t]he notion of the settler carving out their place and a place for settler society in the wilderness [...] is deeply problematic given the past and present presence of indigenous people' (Gill 48).

In this essay, I will be using Kim Scott's *Benang: From the Heart* (1999) and Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (1997) to discuss narrative and emotions, or the role of emotion in motivating narrative events and the role of narrative in conveying and stirring emotion in the reader. Heartland functions in these novels in broadly abstract terms that enable the envisagement of heartland as both metaphorically the place that has one's heart and the wilderness or outback of Australia. Heartland also serves as a contested site, either implicitly or explicitly, for each of these novels represent, thematically, a search for heartland in the sense of finding one's place and establishing a connection with the land in terms of cultural and historical belonging. Whereas *Benang* addresses the assumption of an empty heartland and interrogates this ironically with instances of indigenous invisibility to white eyes (Scott 83-85), *Maggs* overlooks questions of Indigenous presence entirely in its story of a freed convict's 'passionate identification with the England which expelled him [and which] leads him to deny the freedom he finds in Australia: "I am not of that race...the Australian race...I am an Englishman"' (Hassall). Maggs' identification of an Australian race seems ambiguous, but he is clearly not referring to Indigenous Australians. Rather, he means those Englishmen who now identify as Australian. Although Maggs eventually returns to Australia and finally *settles* in the domestic sense, the novel explores his anguished attempts to regain and sustain a connection with the land of his birth. In doing so, it positions Australia as a vast unknowable land at the outer reaches of the empire, thus rendering the nation as a whole, wilderness. Yet the persisting belief in the emptiness of the Australian outback obscures the presence of Indigenous peoples, and *Jack Maggs* achieves its obfuscation simply enough, as demonstrated by the term, 'Australian race,' in that the term refers to Englishmen gone 'native,' rather than native Australians, and 'native' in the sense of having given up their native land, England, for a substitute, the colony.

A narrative that situates Australia in these terms sits comfortably with the more conventional histories of settlement. The belief in Australia as an empty land is so entangled with mythologising accounts of Australian settlement that even knowledge to the contrary cannot

kill it. It seems we are capable of believing one thing and knowing another—at least in terms of the uses to which heartland iconography are put to use (see Gill for examples of these terms in political discourses on pastoralism and farming). Any novel that seeks to contest such a widespread belief thus risks alienating mainstream readers. But narrative does have the capacity to overcome entrenched belief systems through what we might call second-order emotions. These are emotions that are realised through a process of reasoning. Their intellectual nature makes them doubly effective, for they represent the realisation of narrative structure in the form of emotion as a micro-narrative that motives the overarching narrative and constitutes its closure. Thus the larger narrative is encapsulated in the smaller ‘narrative’ of emotion that fills the privileged subject positions of the novel.

These two novels are, in many respects, very different; and yet they might be connected on a thematic level, as I have suggested. In *Jack Maggs*, the titular character is styled as the ‘real-life’ inspiration for the character of Magwitch in Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations*. Maggs is seeking to reconnect with the young man Henry Phipps (styled as the ‘real-life’ inspiration for Pip). As in Dickens’s novel, Maggs has secretly supported Phipps throughout his childhood and into manhood. He has returned to England at risk to his life and his freedom, in order to make himself known to his beneficiary and to see the fruits of his labour. We have the narrative of a man seeking to re-establish his relevance to and within the society from which he has been expelled. In seeking redemption through reconnection and validation of his efforts in the figure of Henry Phipps, Jack Maggs might be said to be striving to establish a new relevance and influence, albeit exerted from the position of exile, and we might presume that he seeks to remit that expulsion. *Benang*, with similar motivations in terms of relevance and connection, describes the narrator Harley Scat’s search for people, culture, and heartland in order to comprehend a metaphorical expulsion/exile from society in broad and various terms and the related loss of connection with family and people brought about by a eugenically driven diaspora. The narrator in *Benang* describes himself as an almost weightless being that floats and drifts above his people (which include Indigenous and colonising peoples). As well as serving as a metaphor that usefully integrates the position of the narrator in the act of relating in terms of telling and also enabling him to actively relate himself to the events at hand, Harley’s disconnection with his people, family, culture, and society is signalled by his free-floating, which is anchored through song and storytelling. Indeed, although Harley floats comfortably within a manageable sphere above his uncles whenever he sings or he or they recount experiences, he comes closest to earth (and closest to becoming grounded) when he writes.

Jack Maggs is admittedly a curious choice here because it is set in London, rather than Australia: ‘Australia is present in the novel only as the convict’s trauma to be called up by hypnosis: a hot, hellish country governed by inhuman punishments’ (Meinig 57). The setting of the novel is significant, however, because England is symbolically the mother country, and that symbolic territory is the land for which the banished Maggs longs. Further, ‘*Jack Maggs* is set in a city, or rather in the metropolis’ and the ‘Greek word combines the elements “mother” and “city” [...], which allows Fredric Jameson to use the term “metropolitan” as a synonym for “the imperial nation-state as such”’ (Meinig 58). London thus stands for England as the imperial authority in this narrative. Maggs’ assertion, ‘I am not of that race...the Australian race...I am an Englishman,’ is significant for what it negates—that Maggs is not indigenous to Australia. He nonetheless occupies a subaltern status because he comes from the colonies: his Englishness has been modified in some sense through his transportation to the colony. This sense of modification is evident in Maggs’s condition as someone out of place (although uncannily in the right place at the right time) as emphasised by his gigantic stature.

Ross Chambers argues (in respect to a different Carey character and novel) that 'the male monster is treated as a phobic object.' Observing that 'the function of the phobia is to *suppress the attraction* that exists in the homosocial plot between men (the male creator and the male creature) by making the artificial male an object of repulsion,' Chambers argues that it is the *return* of the repressed that makes such monsters uncanny (Chambers 30, italics original). In immediate terms, the repressed person of Maggs becomes a monstrous encounter to be avoided by Phipps, who spends most of the novel evading his benefactor; but Maggs is also arguably the repressed figure of the convict who returns to London even more monstrous and threatening to the social order than he seemed at transportation. Although it is also possible to see (in respect to Maggs's patronage) the monstrous and uncanny at work within the creation of Phipps as an English-gentleman, it is Maggs as the returning felon who is outwardly depicted as monstrous in form and in the violence of his manner.

Given that he represents the return of the repressed in a national sense, it is not surprising that Maggs's felonious presence in England goes unnoticed by the law, which sent him out of sight and mind in the first place. After all, it is Britain's imperial authority that enables Maggs's expulsion, and that authority is unlikely to institute systems responsive to the return of those subjects whose existence it refuses to countenance. If he is visible at all, it is as a tool of misdirection—and thus that he goes unnoticed—for Maggs's return from the colony distracts the reader from Indigenous Australians, just as it also implicitly represents the imperialist nation's distraction of attention from a figure so banished from narratives of colonial Australia as to go entirely unmentioned. Carey's novel identifies the victim of colonial rule as the transported felon. In doing this, the repressed figure of the Indigenous Australian is substituted by the convict, enabling a deeper repression of the already silenced subject of colonial rule.

Chambers relates the uncanny in Carey to the repression of homosexual desire, and we can see evidence of this connection at work in Scott's novel in the form of Ern Scat's sexual abuse of his grandson, Harley, who is also the product of his amateur program of eugenics. But if it is true to say that '[i]t is the *denial* of this uncanny return, in the case of male monsters, that transforms the uncanniness of the queer into the creepiness of something that is alleged [...] to be preternatural ("beyond" the natural, "out in front" of the natural) and, as such, tinged with evil: monstrous' (Chambers 30-31, italics in original), then we might see creepiness functioning in the homosocially driven repression by which colonialism engenders a new 'species' in the form of the (white) colonial. Hence Maggs's gigantic stature pitches him as a Frankenstein's monster—the product of an imperialist penal experiment—whereas Harley's whiteness (rather than his Aboriginal ancestry) is what renders him strange: he is literally the colonial subject 'artificially' created through an engineered miscegenation. Interestingly, both these novel's substitute white men for the figure of the Indigenous subaltern under colonialism: but whereas *Maggs* elides the deeper level of subordination and repression to privilege the victimhood relating to Maggs's own position in the colony, *Benang* attacks the colonialist attempts to erase all trace of the repressed indigenous peoples. It achieves this explicitly through the narrative of Harley as the first white man born of Aboriginal 'stock'.

The repression of Harley's Aboriginality initially keeps him grounded, but his whiteness, as the product of home-spun eugenics, makes him artificial and metaphorically inhuman, as suggested by his acts of levitation which undoubtedly make him uncanny. Harley's emasculated condition further positions him within this uncanny framework of repression as he is rendered symbolically effeminate and thus 'available' to his grandfather's incestuous yet mock miscegenation. Although the novel is troubling in terms of how it positions individuals like Harley, who cannot help the circumstances of his genesis, Harley is, in

Chambers' terms, the scapegoat of this narrative of the repressed; but, I would argue, the scapegoating of Harley allows Scott directly to challenge any obfuscation of subordination and repression. By telling the story through Harley's subject position, which is a position that has been situated within a broader cultural narrative that determines aboriginality to be 'regressive,' the eugenicist (rather than his creation) becomes tainted with creepiness and Aboriginality surfaces unsullied by the repressor's alienating strategies. That is, although it has been repressed in historical and cultural terms, Scott's narrative strategy means that the Indigenous is not made monstrous, rather the charge of monstrosity is levelled at the Frankenstein-like creator of the child of mixed race. Aboriginality escapes the construction of monstrosity because when Harley's behaviour and attitude present in terms that are morally reprehensible, it is 'Ern's words [that] have fashioned Harley's thinking,' which is itself racist; Harley overcomes 'the confines of racist discourse,' however, by 'join[ing] a different social body'—'his Nyoongar family'—and thereby 'moves beyond racist, colonial power dynamics both by exposing racism and by participating in alternative forms of sociability and storytelling' (Slater "Monstrous (Textual) Bodies"). In contrast, Carey's third-person narrative makes Maggs the monster, and although it redirects the charge of moral monstrosity to other figures in this novel, *Maggs* does not achieve the same outcome. Jack Maggs remains a disturbing figure and his 'happy ending' in the colony of New South Wales sounds a disturbing note: Maggs is a creature of the Empire and his monstrous figure is reminiscent of those urbane jokes made at the expense of outback regions where everything (including the flies and mosquitoes) is bigger and better.

Emotion and Narrative

If Carey's vision of the 'Australian race' is wryly mocking, Scott's is disturbingly revealing. We might laugh at the suggestion that Australians are a race apart from others—bigger and better in the ironic sense of the joke; but the depiction of race in a narrative of miscegenation, rather than transportation, is far more demanding in terms of the emotional charge that it lays.

Emotion, Patrick Hogan argues, is a necessary element of speech—feelings supply the motivation for speaking. As well as providing thematic feelings and motivations that unite characters and narrative, 'operat[ing] to organize character actions and relations in narrative, [and making] thematic roles [...] inseparable from emotion', emotion supplies a reason for narrative: we need to care about the outcomes it gestures towards (Hogan 74). In the case of historical fiction, narrative emotion would seem to be a particularly practical strategy for political change. As Rei Terada observes, 'If it is granted that fictions inflame true emotions, [then this] is usually explained by the thesis that fictional predicaments recall actual ones.' But, as she continues (discussing Derrida's approach in *Speech and Phenomena* and *Of Grammatology*), this 'suggest[s] that we feel not to the extent that experience seems immediate, but to the extent that it doesn't; not to the extent that other people's experiences remind us of our own, but to the extent that our own seem like someone else's' (22). This suggests that narrative enables a potentially sympathetic internal staging of event. It supplies the passage through which one might move from being in the emotion to perceiving the emotion in a context (64). This entails taking a rhetorically objective stance toward a subjective response, and this position—though problematic and potentially self-serving—introduces the possibility of construing the point of view in new terms. Novels like *Benang* and *Jack Maggs* enable the negotiation of complex feelings that might not otherwise be explored or fully understood. The potential for opposition to the subject positions privileged in *Benang*, in particular, is considerable, given that only a minority of Australians identify as Aboriginal. Yet Scott's novel also has the potential to change minds.

I want to explore the possibility that the success of narrative in stimulating empathy comes from the relation that narrative bears to emotion, where emotion is a kind of proto-narrative that possibly accounts for the structure and range of narratives themselves (Miall 338), and that our familiarity with emotions as micro-narratives results in the motivation of narrative. That is, the resolution of events occurs in terms of feeling rather than other forms of closure, since other forms of closure represent literal endings as, quite simply, the cessation of events whereas emotion achieves its end by being felt or translated in empathetic terms and in ways that endure beyond the formality of the fictive event that ends the narrative. This might be characterised in simple terms as the way in which narratives are thought-provoking: they initiate a decision-making process that potentially results in attitudinal changes; these changes are initiated by empathic identification with those subject positions privileged in the text.

Suzanne Keen tells us that research shows that, 'readers' perception of a text's fictionality plays a role in subsequent empathic response'; it achieves this 'by releasing readers from the obligations of self-protection through skepticism and suspicion' (Keen 220). Fiction, in other words, has the ability to move us to consider positions we might otherwise turn from and '[t]his ability of literature to move even those who are usually resistant to emotion may mean that literary narratives could provide a method for circumventing a person's natural defences' (Mar *et al* 830). Although one might be equally concerned about the uses to which such manipulations might be put, it nonetheless suggests that emotional engagement with literature results in outcomes over and above the changes to thinking and opinion that result from gaining new information. Our felt responses, it would seem, determine how we think about the characters and the issues addressed in a literary work and these thoughts—because they will be linked to personal experience where these are similar to narrative events—have the potential to initiate an empathic response to the events and alter a person's attitudes to the those social issues represented by the thematic material.

In other words, narrative emotion enables a sidestepping of what theorists call empathic aversion. We tend to hold aversion to the emotions of others when our empathetic response produces feelings of distress. Empathetic distress is a secondary cognitive emotion caused by experiencing empathy that is reflexively self-focused, rather than other-directed (Keen 208). This might mean, for example, feelings of shame, complicity, or guilt, all of which will likely cause the subject's aversion to the emotion encountered in the other. Importantly, experiencing aversion to the emotional narrative of a literary work does not necessarily mean that the reader will experience the urge to react to those feelings. Jeanne Deslandes argues that emotional responses to fiction are highly ritualised and that, although there are exceptions, 'the mainstream reaction [...] is [...] a learned passivity' (Deslandes 356). Instead of acting, we experience secondary emotions that are reflective responses to primary emotions like fear. And it is, as Deslandes argues, precisely the cognitive nature of secondary emotions that make them 'vulnerable to cultural influences' (357). Deslandes views 'emotion as a mode of understanding' (338), noting that '[e]motion is a spontaneous reaction beyond voluntary control' and that '[a]ll emotions are autonomous responses to stimuli,' but that '[s]econdary emotions are a subsequent emotional reaction to primary emotions. At first they are spontaneous,' she tells us: 'Yet salience does not lead to a reflex reaction but brings the issue to the will, which decides whether to react actively or passively' (353-54). In other words, secondary emotions like those experienced through reading, are thought provoking; they 'initiate a decision-making process' (351).

Novels integrate different cultural perspectives on the kinds of events they describe—whether these events are based on historical circumstances or not—and in doing so they offer scope for initiating and provoking in readers an understanding of the diverse positions available in

relation to such events through a distanced emotional response to those events. They introduce what Charles Sanders Peirce might call the virtual elements¹ driving and deriving from the fictive emotions of the text: thus, and consistent with Terada's reading of Derrida, the passivity of reading stems from the virtual nature of the experience. If it is the case that 'a story only makes sense because of the emotions it generates,' the emotions generated are of a special quality: they are what we might call virtually determined rather than actuated by events. And this means in effect that we are less likely to experience aversion through distress in response to empathy stirred by reading fiction (Vermeule 244). This is because fiction enables a focus on others in a way that might not be achievable in other narratives, although narrative in any form would seem to be particularly suited to establishing empathy. As Deslandes argues, 'the chief characteristic of narrative emotion pertains to the fact that it is an emotion felt for the sake of someone, or something, else: a virtual other. Narrative emotion is an emotion by proxy' (Deslandes 336). To place this in different theoretical terms, as Terada writes in summary of Derrida and extending the theory to all emotion *per se* rather than merely secondary emotion, 'if one [...] accept[s] th[e] duality,' of affect and emotion, 'then our emotions emerge only through the acts of interpretation and identification by means of which we feel *for others*' (Terada 21).

Benang and *Jack Maggs* are thought provoking in many ways, but I want to address the anxiety that they relate concerning place—of being out of place. Each constructs characters that deal with this anxiety by attempting to re-establish connections with place and the people integral to that place. Further, although the places in these novels are real in geographical terms and this is relevant to the narrative in each instance—in *Jack Maggs* it is London, in *Benang* it is the coastal region in and around what is now known as Albany in WA—these designated places also have symbolic value. Importantly, it is the connection to the place's symbolic value that, in emotional terms, is lost through expulsion and sought through various modes of retrieval. This symbolic value, I argue, amounts in these novels to a construal of the lost place as heartland or cultural home. As an experience known by many Australians, narratives about the loss of one's spiritual or cultural home become particularly resonant. Thus the theme of heartland and its loss potentially stimulates in the reader of these narratives the (secondary) emotion of longing. And it is on these terms that we come to appreciate the positions of characters like Maggs and Harley. As well as introducing readers to new emotional experiences and liberating them from skepticism, fictional narrative enables the development of complex emotional situations such as we encounter in these two novels. And it is in this respect that narrative emotion has the capacity to change our responses to others by enabling identification with those other positions. If we accept David Miall's findings, this is because '[e]motion can be recalibrated,' it can be 'evoked during conditions that are unfamiliar or unusual for that emotion' (Miall 335). As Miall explains, 'the literary texts we read evoke emotion in us, enabling us to match fictional or poetic situations to episodes in our previous lives, although this most likely occurs unconsciously—we often do not know why we weep during reading, or feel pleasure at a particular moment' (339).

The recalibration of emotion in the form of narrative empathy as 'emotion by proxy'—an experience that derives from the virtual world of the novel—is largely possible because narrative gives embodiment to experience in speech through its use of metaphors. These are metaphors that enable the interactive event of reading and the enactment of virtual feelings, responses, bodies, events and settings. Metaphors of embodiment enable feeling by proxy. Whereas once 'emotion was regarded as arising only when cognitive functioning broke down [...] an enactive view [...] actively promote[s] the creation of an environment in which [emotions] can flourish or generate appropriate self-enhancing conditions' (334). This has

consequences for understanding narrative in terms of the role of emotion in creating the worlds, subjects, and events that constitute it, where 'each point of ambiguity' invites reader engagement and interaction² and 'represents a nexus of affective possibilities, a set of conditions for a structured, and structuring, development of feelings in which one feeling may conflict with another or augment another, or one feeling may contextualize another' (Miall 334). Thus, narrative emotion, I want to argue, both motivates the narrative and enables the transformation (in conceptual terms) of metaphoric feeling into (a mimetically) 'concrete' event. The concretisation of emotion as event supplies experiences with which the reader might relate in virtual terms.

In the immediate sense of the term, emotion in narrative is situated within narrative as an internal characterological event; in other words, emotion is the interiority of the event of personhood itself—the motivating initiator of those performances within narrative that form the primary instances or elements identified as those actions crucial to the plot. Emotion gives the virtual its life and its liveliness. It does this by reproducing the widespread belief of body–mind duality that structures language and discourse (even when those discourses discount that belief). Interiority is an essential element in the meaning–making process and the conception of emotion as internal to bodily form is evident of the ways in which we distinguish affect and emotion. In lay terms, affects are of the body whereas emotions derive from the person as part of their personal experience—emotion supplies a reason for that experience, and such reasoning often conflates feeling and affect as a unified response that operates causally: emotion causes affect. Terada and other theorists (Brian Massumi, for example) might suggest otherwise—that what we call emotion is actually a reasoning process initiated to explain an affective event. Nonetheless, this generalised perception of affect and emotion bears upon critical discourses in that it enables a theorising of affect along the lines Ruth Leys describes in the work of Massumi, even though Massumi strives to unsettle this narrative of causation in terms of its directionality: 'The "meaning" and "intensity" (or affect) systems are said by Massumi to resonate or interfere with one another in various ways, but to the system of intensity belong all the attributes [...] of the nonsemantic, the nonlinear, the autonomous, the vital, the singular, the new, the anomalous, the indeterminate, the unpredictable, and the disruption of fixed or "conventional" meanings' (Leys 352-53). In these terms, affect is non-semantic; and in being non-semantic it is effectively isolated to its bodily involvement: hence, it becomes *eventful* as intensity—a kind of concentrated bodily experience.

In literature, if not in science, affect represents the bare description of bodily behaviour—facial expressions, stances, physical reactions like blushing—whereas emotion performs as the interpretive and motivating element of the narrative: it supplies a reason for the affective response and both motivates the physical representation of emotion as affect and the subsequent actions and behaviours across the narrative. Emotion produces affects, in other words. But in narrative, the relation of causation is constructed in a specific way. And this is where the idea of affect as a non-semantic response is useful to me here, although I make no endorsement of that position outside the theorisation of narrative. Affect is given as a form that is otherwise empty of meaning (content) but it is conventionally made meaningful by

emotion, which becomes the content (thought) that drives the affective (bodily) response. Narratives of emotion are thus delimited according to thematic content and then according to that content's effect upon form. Form is then abstracted to refer to the events that carry the thematic material of emotion, and not merely limited to sentient forms considered capable of emotion. Event stands in the same relation to emotion as affect, in other words. This suggests that event performs as a formal entity of narrative that serves to convey meaning. And the meaning it invariably conveys is formulated through emotion.

Why might this be significant? Recall the empathetic response of self-focused distress. If fiction enables the reader to bypass any self-protective measures, then it makes room for the reader to contemplate what they would otherwise reject out of feelings of distress. Novels enable their readers to bypass any empathic distress and aversion they might experience in response to a particular emotionally charged event. Events such as colonisation and settlement, murder, theft, diaspora, genocide, eugenics, rape, and policies of miscegenation, fall into this category. But I can sidestep any distress I might feel as the descendent and/or beneficiary of such protagonists because as a reader I am invited to occupy a subject position that is substantially different from the one I actually occupy in relation to the event. Although a descendent of colonisers, *Benang* enables me to engage empathically with the novel's thematic content (of longing for re-connection with heartland) because my second-order emotions are formed through the lens of aboriginality. And this enables a process of reflection whereby my opinion on a given issue (colonial settlement) might be reconsidered in light of the new position adopted in reading the novel.

Point of view is important because we employ emotion in attributing value to the material world and this comes down to simple questions of orientation: how we find ourselves in relation to a given object, place or event. Keen sees narrative situation (which includes point of view and perspective) as an important mediator of narrative empathy (Keen 216). The world is ordered in specific contexts relative to our point of view, and our point of view is both literal and metaphoric: we engage the perceptual and the deontic elements generated by the metaphor of heartland. We are concerned about what we perceive to be happening and what we think ought to take place and our concern is a concern informed by emotion. The rhetorical condition of emotion (as the interiority of a particular [concrete] point of view) supplies the unity of motive that becomes the end toward which narrative makes: thematic material (longing, for example) produces material events (re-connection or failed attempts at re-connection). The reader is able to appreciate this longing, and experience (second-order) joy or sorrow according to how the thematic material is realised in formal terms: their emotional response thereby informs their judgment on the issue, leading perhaps to a change of mind. The effectiveness of changing one's mind is nonetheless constrained by the convention of passivity. The energetic engagement that a reader has with a text will not necessarily be reproduced outside the act of reading. Yet it is significant in terms of influencing how we think about the events deployed in narratives.

In these novels, feelings of longing and emotions of anger and sadness motivate the protagonists to seek ways to dispel their negative influence. Locating the cause of feelings of

frustration and shame in loss through expulsion, the protagonists seek re-connection with their heartlands. *Benang* and *Jack Maggs* construct narrative emotion in respect to a longing for two different heartlands perceived from two very different perspectives: London and the coastal region occupied by the Nyoongar. Both Jack Maggs and Harley Scat are native to these respective places—though the word stirs different associations in each context (largely because it activates in the latter context bigoted notions of cultural and racial superiority which have consequences for how native *being* is interpreted and valued). As a consequence, each character experiences expulsion in a different form—and, I should add, in a manner consistent with the historical events on which these narratives are based. Uprooting the native Londoner entails removing him to the colonies. The heartland remains intact and thus the point of view through which the narrative is given emphasises its primacy. In *Benang*, a competition for heartland generates the strife. Since the white perspective is directed by a longing for the unattainable heartland of Britain, the coloniser must establish himself as native to this new place through a reproduction of culture, society and place. Only then can he resituate his heartland. This entails uprooting the Indigenous people in order that the new and implicitly superior culture might legitimise its ownership of this new heartland. Dispersal (and dispersal in every sense) of the indigenous people is necessary in order to break their connection to heartland. In *Maggs*, the indigenous communities that existed in the colony of New South Wales prior to settlement are effectively dealt with by erasure. In *Benang*, they are given presence and the bureaucratic and social practices that have made their excision from texts like *Maggs* possible are brought to light. Harley's own ethereal expulsion from the earth can be seen as the delayed effect of his ancestor's actual expulsion from a specific place and their metaphorical expulsion in terms of the loss of personal authority brought about by this reconfiguring of native belonging. In Harley's case, rather than actual expulsion, his experience forms as a feeling of exile generated by the denial of authority over land and culture and the removal of personal agency through acts of violation. *Benang* formulates Harley's experience of displacement with far greater complexity than *Jack Maggs* therefore. Just why this might be so is apparent in the nature of Harley's exile, which takes place within the geographical heartland of his people. *Benang* addresses the complexity of being in a place and yet out place at the same time. *Jack Maggs*, because it is about re-envisioning of heartland—a letting go of the old in order to 'discover' the new—is a narrative of turn and return: Maggs returns to his heartland, but must turn from it in order to return to the place he has left, which we might presume to now be his true cultural home.

Identifying emotion in narrative is an important critical tool. Indeed, Patrick Keating suggests that narrative's function is to play a supporting role to the stimulation and engagement of emotion: 'Rather than break the narrative down into unity-producing causes and effects,' he argues, 'we can break it down into emotion-producing components, relating to the success or failure of the protagonists' (Keating 11). Significantly for Keating, narrative is not simply a system for organising relations of cause and effect but an 'emotional system' designed to produce vicarious feelings in the reader. In Keating's words, such a view depends upon a critical approach that 'see[s] narrative as a complex weave of anticipation/culmination structures, including simultaneous, successive, consequential, and nested structures' rather than as a structure comprising 'a linear chain of causes and effects' (13). Locating heartland

is the emotional narrative that unites each narrative in this instance—as much as it links these two novels. It is an internal journey intended to make sense of emotional responses to place—and it meets this need by giving account of these characters' longings for connection and for place in terms that we might empathetically appreciate, even though our personal experience and political stance might be very different from that represented. This is because the concept of culture presumes a bond between a people and its objects—and it anticipates that this bond will be firm and unquestioned.

Because our history around this pursuit of heartland is so violent and cruel, and our attachment to this land complexly drawn, the bonds of heartland are unclear—they have been ruptured, damaged, or poorly established—having been mediated by the violence of colonisation. Whether consciously or not, *Jack Maggs* engages Australian culture's ambivalent attachment to the motherland, its anxiety and guilt about exploiting the new land (and the implicated violation its people, which is repressed in this text); and, significantly, it reconciles these through Maggs's successful return to Australia. *Benang*, which means 'tomorrow' in Nyoongar, is written from the position of that violated people. Its Jack Maggs is named Ernest Soloman Scat—not a convict, but a brutal, self-serving man: a rapist and a paedophile. These novels clearly address different concerns, yet it is telling that a man like Jack Maggs can be sympathetically drawn in a narrative motivated by the emotional confusion of cultural displacement, integration and assimilation that Australian culture represents. If it succeeds it is because it draws on this culture's Anglo-colonial past and on contemporary sympathy for the convict as the petty thief turned criminal through privation and transported in violence to a violent land. Whereas *Jack Maggs* enables a sympathetic reading of convict settlement and longing for homeland, *Benang* successfully mediates indigenous peoples' longing for heartland. But as well as reflecting the positions and points of view of Indigenous Australians and locating the white man's longing for place in eugenics and other brutalities, *Benang* offers the possibility of a wider perspective of heartland as the site for future reconciliation, which we might achieve by turning towards that symbolic territory suggested in this novel's title, *Benang*.

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¹ Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss and A.W. Burks, eds., *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, vol. 7, 8 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931).

² See Marie-Laure Ryan's article on virtuality: Marie-Laure Ryan, "Immersion Vs. Interactivity: Virtual Reality and Literary Theory," *Substance* 89.2 (1999).