

Archipelagic space and the uncertain future of national literatures

ELIZABETH MCMAHON

University of New South Wales

There is no world any more, only islands.

(Derrida 9)

Over production, waste and maldistribution, the principal evils of the Western economic ‘system’ afflict every aspect of its culture. Literature, like everything else, is dominated by the growth myth: the health of a culture is assumed to be determined by its consumable products.

Dorothy Green (‘Writer, Reader, Critic’)

This essay joins in the discussion about the future of national literatures in the shifting formations of globalisation.¹ Specifically, I want to interrogate what we mean by the future when we speak of literature and, specifically, of Australian or New Zealand literature. On both sides of the Tasman numerous scholars have recently turned their attention to questions about *national literature*, emphasising the volatility of each independent term and of their inter-relationship within the politics of modernity including Europe’s colonisation of both countries. Interventions in this debate have been staged across a broad spectrum of perspectives: Australian and New Zealand Studies; Indigenous Studies; Gender Studies; Postcolonial, Transnational and Diaspora Studies; Critical Regionalism; and Knowledge Studies. These discourses challenge the category *national literature* and characterize the historical moment as postnational and postliterary.

Although Dorothy Green was such a champion of Australian Literature and directly involved in the documentation of its distinctive traditions and characteristics, I don’t believe she would have been troubled by these debates. For she was also a great advocate of expanding accepted understandings of nation and literature. In ‘The Place of Literature in Society’ (1973), for instance, she attributes particular reading pleasures, usually perceived as the products of literary texts, to a range of discourses from philosophy to the natural sciences (Green 149). In this work she also addresses global issues of book production and consumption to highlight disparities based on the disparate distribution of global capital.

Another aspect of her global perspective relates to her humanist aesthetic and ethics, with which she concludes ‘The Place of Literature in Society’:

To put it in a nutshell literature, either spoken or written, is humanity thinking aloud—communicating its experience of all that is, holding a great continuous conversation throughout the ages and across the world. (16)

For Green, here, what is universal to ‘humanity’ are the oral and written practices of conceptual and perceptual creativity. Importantly, she does not limit the diversity of such practices according to a Western value system, which is to say the products of ‘humanity thinking aloud’ are not calibrated by relative merit. Further, her idealist vision simultaneously collapses time and space while insisting on their specificities and distinctions. In all of these observations Green’s views are continuous with those that occupy us today at this postnational, postliterary moment. Indeed, this continuity is instructive for the ways it reminds us how Australian literature has long

been located and read betwixt nationalist and universalist criteria (Indyk 1986). The history of New Zealand literary criticism exhibits similar traversals and tensions between cultural nationalism and the 'universal' values of art.² Winston Rhodes, who taught the first courses on New Zealand literature, informally in the 1930s and officially from 1951, was a champion of local literature while also a staunch Socialist and a Leavisite keenly focused on global systems of value in economics, politics and aesthetics (Barrowman 2012). In his study of 1930s literary nationalism in New Zealand, Stuart Murray notes the irony, familiar to Australians also, that New Zealand writers looked abroad for models by which to write their distinctiveness (13). We can now see that both moments of settler cultural nationalism (1890s in Australia, 1930s in New Zealand) are also inseparable from global imperialism and nationalism against which each sought to define itself. In his detailed account of the history of New Zealand literary cultures, *The Long Forgetting*, Patrick Evans stresses the need to contextualise the localised rehearsals of these debates within the now long and global history of modernity. He compares this contemporary approach with that of the 1930s nationalists. He writes:

... it is especially important for New Zealanders to avoid the error of their cultural nationalists of sixty years ago, who, as we will see in this book, believed that theirs was a special moment, somehow outside and above history. Rather than seeing the years since about 1990 as similar, involving the irruption into our little world of something special called, in this case, 'globalisation,' I tend (along with others) increasingly to see that period as simply a recent stage in the unfolding of a much larger pattern, and as part of a much longer process. (1-2)

The rush to characterise 'moments' in their newness and before they disappear can produce the snapshot, a synchronic image which readily morphs into a fetishised object, somehow marvellously self-produced and contained. However—and as Evans' argument ironically shows—the ways in which both Australia and New Zealand have collectively and respectively rehearsed the anxieties between national and international structures, precisely because of their excesses and deprivations, may in fact equip them with resources and frameworks necessary to contribute meaningfully to the problems around constructions of national literatures at this juncture in globalised modernity.

The stress on continuities does not discount the specific terms of the current debates, which have their own specific conditions and in which the matter lies. In Australian literature the current debate was initiated by Leigh Dale in the 1999 issue of *Australian Literary Studies* in both her editorial and the essays she commissioned from David Carter and Gillian Whitlock, all of whom questioned the ongoing utility of the category of nation in literary studies (Dale; Carter; Whitlock). All three cite Susan Sheridan's Introduction to *Faultlines*, published four years earlier, as a key text that called for a rethinking of national literary boundaries, especially in relation to their delimitation of gendered writing and reading (Sheridan). In the 2000s Robert Dixon, David Carter and Ken Gelder have all produced numerous studies at a time when, as Dixon notes, Australian Literary Studies has become tired of the 'national paradigm' on which it was founded (Dixon, 'Boundary Work' 35). From the panoramic gazes of Knowledge Studies, and the specific interventions of Franco Moretti, David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova and Wai Chi Dimock, Dixon, Carter and Gelder have framed debates for the future of national and literary studies, including their shifting location and status within institutional structures and publishing economies. In summary, these studies have directed us to key concerns of the literary field, from

the politics of the production and consumption of ‘literature,’ including the literary reader, and the impossibility of quarantining literature as the product of only one place and time.

The ensuing discussion takes up some of these issues around the shifting spatialities and temporalities of the present as a way of thinking through what we might mean by the future when we speak of literature and, specifically, Australian or New Zealand literature. My lens for this inquiry is the topology and tropology of the island, which as Gillian Beer notes has become, in very specific ways since World War II, a means of mapping both self and world. It was only at this time, she argues, that Donne’s famous statement, ‘no man is an island,’ became well known and used—a kind of instant ‘cliché’ (43). Lying almost dormant since publication in 1624, the waiting-cliché was unearthed as a figure of the modernist monad, as epitomized by D. H. Lawrence’s satirical depiction of Compton Mackenzie in his fable ‘The Man Who Loved Islands’ (1929) or in J. G. Ballard’s *Concrete Island* (1974). Of this period, also, Derrida writes, in his reading of Paul Celan’s 1967 poem ‘*Grosse, Glühende Wölbung*’ (‘Vast Glowing Vault’): ‘There is no world any more, only islands’ (Derrida, 9). Derrida’s claim, made in the wake of the Holocaust and his belief in the fascist potential of all collectives, adamantly rejects the ‘imagined communities’ of nations.

The literary cartography I propose here overlays the alienation of this ‘no world’ with the ‘no-place’ of island utopias as they are mobilised in archipelagic chains. This alternative model of spatial relationality and dynamism differs from conventional global traffic. It is a cartography derived from islands: from their history, fictions, and their theorists. This project is at least partly utopian in a strictly generic sense; that is, in its implication in the reading practices and politics of utopian texts. However, I will endeavour to flout the siren’s lure of the island and the raft of promises it suggests, which as every island despot shows, includes a perfect alignment of identity and space—a simultaneous and reflexive mastery of self and world. The ensuing discussion maps a range of topological and tropological inter-relations around islands including the contradictory temporalities of origin and futurity, the strictness yet permeability of island borders, the singularity and totality of an island yet its archipelagic connections, and the multiple ways islands are themselves inscribed in/as literature. To this end the essay will chart the shared concerns of islands and national literatures and then move to their enactment in two recent Australian novels: Andrew McGahan’s *Wonders of a Godless World* and Alexis Wright’s *Carpentaria*. Ultimately, this essay proposes a utopian reading of these novels, according to Louis Marin’s directive to attend to the structural operations of utopian fiction rather than accept or reject the putative site of ideality. Simon During recently wrote that ‘the problem is not imagining a better society the problem is realising it’ (*Against Democracy*, 4); one productive site of inquiry proposed by this essay is the labour of literary invention and publication in the cultural field in which resistance is made meaningful. While it is not an answer, it does problematise During’s distinction between imaginary and real domains. Island writing is often a site of such thoughtful labour, where conundrums of the present and future are played out both in terms of activism and resistance, and of the conceptual, imaginative unravelling of figure, ideology and ground. Fredric Jameson has made the connection between utopian island fiction and this capacity when he observes that ‘Utopia has always been a political issue, an unusual destiny for a literary form particularly subject to historical events’ (Jameson *Archaeologies* 1). Not all Western island fiction is utopian, of course, but as a kind of meta-figure that confounds

the domains of representation, materiality and history, the island may also be a site where representational labour produces direct effects in the broader cultural context.

I will begin with origins, which are at the heart of the ASAL 2012 conference ‘The Colonies’; a rubric that directs attention to prenatal formations and connections between what are now Australia and New Zealand, which have been, in many ways, considerably weaker since both became nations (Denoon 2003). In historical terms ‘the colonies’ most immediately refers to spaces after European invasion and settlement and before the attainment of nationhood: before 1901 in Australia and 1907 in New Zealand. In this understanding the colony is a chronotope of the pre-modern, of emergence. Significantly, however, and in part-contradiction to the colony’s invocation of newness, is its simultaneous cancellation of origin. For the colony is not a first beginning but a new beginning, an offshoot whose origins are elsewhere. In settler cultures these origins are a moveable feast as new colonies seek to obscure both the earlier inhabitants they wish to displace and the mother country from which they came. In the literature of Australian settler culture, we are repeatedly directed to identify with origins from ancient Greece, Ur, and, in Furphy, to pre-Celtic Ireland rather than acknowledge the historical reality of either the precedence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or the links to Britain. Origins are insistently invoked, for they are deemed necessary to claims of cultural attainment and continuity within modernity, but their specificities are obscured from view, lost in prehistory and myth.

Akin to the sliding temporality of colonies around the issue of originality, islands, too, appear to be figures of origin—the Garden of Eden was commonly depicted as an island in medieval maps—but eventually reveal themselves to be a form of secondary origin. In his essay on ‘Desert Islands’ Deleuze observes that the island is the site not of a beginning but of a new beginning. This new beginning, he argues, starts from an egg, like the oval shape of an island in the imagination, rather than from two parents (Deleuze 13). We can see this perverse progeniture rehearsed in literal terms in the recent novel by M. L. Stedman, *The Light Between Oceans* (2012). Set on an imaginary island off Western Australia, a sadly-childless couple rescue a sole-surviving baby from a boat and elect to raise the child as their own without searching for her family or notifying authorities. In a replay of the women before Solomon in the bible, the novel propels toward the crisis in which natural maternity is pitted against an assumed—or what we might term an *island*—form of maternity. Alongside this feminine problematic of re-generation, the novel charts a masculine narrative of post-war recuperation or re-birth, which is enabled by the island. In multiple ways, the island is a site where the self can be re-generated and where re-generation is, itself, man-made.

As a figure of new beginnings the island is a perfect site for a colony, a site where, in the Western mind at least, cultural replacement is easily naturalised, as occurred continuously in the European colonisation of the New World, and in the fetishisation of islands as tourist resorts in our own time. The new beginning promised by the island colony is a world made to scale, easy to govern/control and offering psychic containment and order, a mini-totality, a site of ideal reification. In the conventional binary of land and sea, the island’s borders are an absolute boundary, ensuring its insularity, understood in both personal or political terms, and signify a kind of ‘natural sovereignty’ for both the isolated monad and the political unit. In ‘Sovereignty and Statehood: The Representation of Islands on Portolan Charts and the Construction of the Territorial State,’ cultural geographer Philip Steinberg identifies the provenance of our habitual

naturalisation of the alignment between geographical and political perimeters and the role of islands in conceptualising statehood. When discussing the national borders of Britain and Ireland, he writes that students routinely argue for Northern Ireland's natural connection to the Republic because they form one island. In a progressive slippage, the island presents as a 'natural' political unit formed by its natural borders: *ergo*, the sovereign state is natural and the island comes to figure the 'natural' political unit of the sovereign state. Indeed, there are only a handful of islands in the world where there is more than one political unit: Haiti and the Dominican Republic; Ireland; Papua New Guinea and West Papua; Borneo, Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia; Timor; Cyprus; Tierra del Fuego. Most of these are also sites of ongoing conflict.

The association of islands as discrete units of governance extends beyond the current understanding of the *island* as land surrounded by water. In the first chapter of her history of Sydney, *The Colony*, Grace Karskens refers to the new settlements in New South Wales as islands. She writes that until the 1820s, the Europeans, who were a maritime people, used the rivers as the primary mode of transport and that their settlements were either coastal or 'virtual islands.' Islands—whether surrounded by sea or land—are also figures of colonies, of new settlements, as Prospero's island in *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe* clearly show.

The boundedness of the island, especially when viewed from above or afar, complete to the eye, emphasises the perception of the island as a trinket, a fetishised space, a figure of the sovereign nation state in modernity. In his theorisation of State fetishism, Michael Taussig deploys Marx's theory of the fetish to read Emile Durkheim's relationship to 'the State.' For Taussig, Durkheim performs an intoxicated awe at the idea of the State, produced by the aura of its sacralisation, which blinds him—and all proper subjects—to the labour by which it by which it has been constructed. While it is, in actuality, constructed by the interplay of discourse, it appears as a whole and organic figure.

Kate Livett uses Taussig's theory in her analysis of Gertrude Stein's idea of America, which Stein aurified from Paris—from afar and as if from above.³ It is the *idea* of America Stein loves. In *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937) she imagines the nation from an aerial view, as if looking down on the map of the United States with all the state boundaries clear and defined (Livett). This capacity to see as a whole is, for Stein, part of the thrill of the modern, as has been identified in theoretical discourse by Michel de Certeau and Louis Marin. Marin stresses the modern quality of this perspective when he notes that that the bird's eye view was 'a position that cartographical fictions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries never dared to show their readers' (Marin 'Frontiers' 397). This modern perspective is reliant on distance and awe and diminishes with proximity and contact. This fetishism relies on distance—which Benjamin also describes as a fundamental characteristic of the aura—and the subject can never reach the state, partly because it is an abstract concept and also because it relies on distance.

Aura and distance are properties of the island, as seen from afar, and appearing as *always* afar. Islands are often cast as 'jewels' (McMahon 2001, 115-116) and when they have the shine of the fetish the subject is prevented from "reaching"/ "attaining" or "possessing" the fetishized object for this reason of distance. In the case of the fetishized State, it is the Sociologist himself, Durkheim, who, Taussig argues, despite his explicit project of critical analysis, is unable to even discuss the details of the composition of the State, because of this

metaphorical 'distance' that is an inherent part of its aura as a fetishized object-idea. To be cast upon, and dwell within, the island is to exist at a re-oriented level of partial coastline, sea and immediate area of ground. It is to lose the distance that allows for coherence of the island as a closed monad, an aurified fetish object. The experience of living on the fetish object, of being *in* the island, is immersed labour. Indeed, to exist on an island that maintained its impermeability as a fetish would be to perish—unless one can afford the displaced labour of island resorts.⁴ This labour and its narrativisation attest to Robert Stoller's much-quoted observation that the fetish is a story masquerading as an object (Stoller 155). The story and the labour mobilise the island into time, as Crusoe's diary makes clear. Crusoe begins with the fantasy of the island of self, but the narrative must necessarily be the labour of the production of this island-self, and effects, therefore, the de-fetishisation of both ego and island.

Islands also show us the economy between aurified and non-aurified space in that they are simultaneously the most fetishised and the most discarded of sites. Once favoured in the Age of Discovery as perfect sites for colonies, small islands have been left behind in the continental power of late modernity (Gillis 124; McMahon 2012). They are part of capitalism's collateral damage: facing inundation from rising oceans, economically disadvantaged, decreasing in population, and yet fulfilling the role Althusser identified as capitalism's illusion of escape—the island resort as the imaginary outside of its economic structures. In the terms of fetishism, their '(arbitrary) exchange value' is reduced to zero and they have become another of the disposable objects of capitalism.

Utopian and archipelagic operations defetishize the island/State. A great deal of commentary now exists that responds to fantasies of the island trinket or possession. Radical challenges to the Western view of islands have been posed by islanders themselves; closest to home Tongan writer and theorist Epeli Hau'ofa's articulation of Oceania as the sea of islands denies the boundedness of the single island (1993). Similarly to their significance in the field of postcolonial theory, Caribbean writers have provided the most sustained riposte to the ideas and practice of islands as reified totalised units: Jamaica Kincaid's excoriating essay *A Small Place* details the effects of Antigua's plight as a post-colonial holiday resort.⁵ Cuban writer and theorist Benítez Rojo's formulation of 'the repeating island,' derived from Chaos theory, offers a model of connection and separation between the Caribbean islands (1996); Barbadean poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite's theory of 'tidalectics' disavows the binary of land and water in favour of tidal and cyclical flows between them (2004); in essays and poetry St Lucian Nobel laureate Derek Walcott interweaves material and figurative archipelagos (1992); and Martinican Édouard Glissant calls for the archipelago's model of interconnected relation for the Caribbean and for monolithic continents alike (1997). All of these island theorists argue for archipelagic relationality to replace the stolid monadism of the island. This archipelagian understanding simultaneously admits and denies the limitation of borders as a means of challenging what has been perceived as the natural circumscription of islandness.

This admission/denial of separation is not ambivalence as, say, with Bhabha's theorisation of postcolonial operations. It is, rather, a capacity to hold contradiction in a way that neutralizes both terms of the binary—a utopian manoeuvre. So, too, the simultaneity of denial and admission, definitive of Freud's sexual fetishism, is connected to the island's capacity to figure

and overlay ‘no place’ (utopia) and ‘no world’ (Derrida) to present us with a future space that is both there and not there.

We know that utopias and dystopias are usually islands that switch between positive and negative images. But island utopias with their absolute borders and clunky clichés of perfection or their inverse exploration of the nightmare other are not fetishised spaces. In utopian fiction the island first presents as a fetish object defined by its immobility, for it seems locked in its reflexive oscillations and unable to enter time to effect change. So, too, its absolute boundaries accentuate the illusion of graspable materiality. However, its apparent stasis in fact masks relentless process. According to Marin and explicated by Jameson, the utopian text performs an act of neutralisation, achieved by the positive and negative visions (utopia or dystopia) cancelling each other out. In this process, the reader not only compares utopian and dystopian projections but must also consider the negative elements within the supposedly positive alternative and vice versa. The simple binary is thus doubled as a chiasmus, with the reader directed to consider and dismiss not two but four alternative visions in a complex grid of separate and shared qualities. This double cancellation acts as a double negative to disallow reification. In its place, the reader must constantly shift between possibilities, none of which are acceptable but which cannot be wholly discarded, and which direct the reader to assess the merits of each possibility against their own historical circumstance. The reader is suspended in an endless process of labour and reasoning, and the future/alternative society can never consolidate into a totalised projection. Rather, each permutation is measured against the others and against the historical facticity of the reader’s world. This method distorts and reassembles existing realities and the systems of history and society and is, accordingly a *rebirth*, not an originary site as had first been promised by the bounded island setting. Hence the island, as the site of second beginnings, weaves together the topography and tropology of the utopian form.

The new beginning of the island, colony, utopia, like the world Prospero constructs on his island of exile, is thus a cultural rather than natural form of origin, non-natural, unnatural or supernatural, it is a perverse and marvellous form of generation—as we see in the new creatures created in Wells’s *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896). As an unnatural origin, it is also a figure of writing itself. The inter-connections between island colonies, origin and writing are perhaps most evident in their constellation in the new literary genres of modernity. In her study of the foundations of early modern Iberian literature, *Archipelagoes* (2011), Simone Pinet shows how the Iberian adaptations of British Arthurian legends replace the forest with the island as the site of adventure (experience). She identifies the ways the *isolario*—a pictorial and literary cartographic genre of islands—comes to underpin the structure of Spanish *Amadís* (1508) and then, in turn, Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1605 and 1615), considered the first modern novel. In so doing she offers a compelling argument for the presence of islands and archipelagic constellations in the formation of modern literature. In the Anglophone tradition, More’s island *Utopia* (1516), the first utopian text is, according to Jameson, ‘one of those rare works that, whatever its precursors, inaugurates a whole genre’ and which appears, as Marin declares, ‘at the very dawn of our modernity.’ Iconically, Defoe’s narrative of the island castaway, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), is accorded the status of the first realist novel and Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726, 1735) is the prototype for science fiction.

These texts are, of course, explicitly linked to the European Age of Discovery, for island stories, while often elaborately fanciful, are grounded in the facticity of the real. In Western conception at least, islands are sites where distinctions between topological and tropological domains are collapsed. Pinet claims that literature and cartography are not only usefully considered in parallel but are structurally inter-related and that the ‘overlaps are not mere coincidences, but historically specific strategies that can be traced back to structural concerns’ (xii). I have discussed elsewhere the coincidence of John Donne’s pronouncement that ‘no man is an island’ in 1623 being the same year the British claimed their first island colony in the Caribbean; literal and metaphorical cartographies are poised in balanced or spellbound reflexivity (McMahon ‘Continental,’ 126). As neither the real nor the metaphoric domain has primacy, the two are in constant and perplexing contest, without primacy or origin.⁶

Pinet also demonstrates the increasing capacity of islands to figure abstract and interior states of being. The increasing metaphorisation of the island across this period, its gradual shift from material denotation to its role in representing more abstract states, is another way that islands and archipelagos are at the heart of modernity’s literary structures (Pinet xxxiv–v). More recent instances of the textual deployment the island/archipelago structuration from the Australian and New Zealand archives include the ‘hemispheres’ of Christina Stead’s *For Love Alone* (1944): the first part of the novel is titled ‘the Island Continent,’ the second is ‘Port of Registry, London.’ So, too, James K. Baxter’s description of his poems as ‘part of a subconscious corpus of personal myth, like an island above the sea, but joined underwater to other islands’ (Baxter 6) connects island topography, creativity and interiority. Indeed Baxter’s archipelagic metaphor presages Brathwaite’s famous description of the connections of the Caribbean archipelago, ‘the unity is submarine,’ which Glissant uses, in turn, as one of the two epigraphs for his archipelagic vision in *Poetics of Relation* (Brathwaite 64; Glissant). In contrast to these archipelagic structures is the insular isolation invoked and rehearsed throughout A.D. Hope’s first collection of poems, *The Wandering Islands* (1955), or the first volume of Janet Frame’s autobiography, *To the Is-land* (1982), which maps the origins of her complex interiority and an inherent isolation growing up on New Zealand’s South Island. The deep connection between islands and writing for Frame is highlighted by her ongoing engagement with *The Tempest* and her identification with Prospero. In *An Angel at My Table*, she writes: ‘I had absorbed the spirit of *The Tempest*. Even Prospero in his book-lined cell had suffered shipwreck and selfwreck; his island was unreachable except through storm’ (cited in Caney 152).

This same constellation of concerns—origins, literature, colonies, nations and islands—also underpins many accounts of disciplinary futures, specifically with regard to literary studies and as these are inflected by the mark of nation. Accounts of the state of the discipline and its future often provide a gloss of its origins; some refer to the disciplinary legacy from classical rhetoric and philosophy, but more commonly, the focus is the origins of literary studies and English studies in modernity and their institutionalization in the academy. Most of us are familiar with the story set out by D. J. Palmer in *The Rise of English Studies* (1965): the rise of the novel and the bourgeois reader in the eighteenth century; the sacralised role accorded literature in an increasing secular society; the study of literature in the Mechanics Institutes and Working Men’s colleges in the nineteenth century; its establishment in the universities after World War I; the practices of close reading and so on. So, too, numerous critical perspectives have exposed the implication of literary studies in the construction of the modern subject (During ‘Transports’;

and *Against Democracy*; Eagleton 17-53) including the modern colonial subject, and postcolonial analysis identified the connection between the institutionalisation and analysis of 'English' literature and the imperial project (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2-4).

The initiation of Australian Literary Studies was simultaneously an endemic part of the 'rise of English' and a reaction against it. Accordingly, its historical account is both continuous and discontinuous with the broader narrative. Joyce Eyre's introduction of a full course on Australian Literature into the English curriculum at the University of Tasmania in 1947, which she ran for three years until her death in 1950, is generally accepted as the first such initiative⁷ (Spaulding). The first continuing program was the establishment of the Chair at the University of Sydney in 1962 as a result of a public campaign (Dixon 17). The proliferation of courses and programs dedicated to Australian literature in the 1970s and the establishment of our own illustrious association (ASAL) were coincident with the renaissance of Australian publishing and the film industry, the feminist recuperation of writing by women and the attendant redirection to less canonical genres, and the establishment of state literary awards.⁸

There are some parallels with the institutionalisation of New Zealand literature in New Zealand universities. According to Evans, New Zealand literary cultural nationalism can be historicized around *The Phoenix* (a figure of supernatural rebirth), a small four-issue Auckland University College student journal published 1932-1933, whose contributors, with Frank Sargeson, went on to dominate New Zealand literature until the 1970s. The first courses on New Zealand literature, offered by Winston Rhodes in the 1930s at what is now Canterbury University, were part of a program of 'voluntary lectures,' which meant they were off-syllabus and without examination. Rhodes also co-established the radical journal of politics and literature, *Tomorrow*, (a title of Marxist utopianism), which was shut down by the Labour Government in 1940 (Barrowman *Popular*, 40-43).

Evans dates the institutionalisation of New Zealand cultural nationalism to the period of the first Labour government (1935-1949), which initiated Centennial celebrations (1940-1941) and in 1947 established the State Literary Fund and the National Orchestra. In this year also the first issue of the literary journal *Landfall* (1947-) was published. Evans calls this period the 'new dawn' for the second wave of New Zealand cultural nationalists, including Baxter and Frame, and it marks the moment when discussion of New Zealand literature moved from newspapers to the universities. Rhodes's courses became part of university syllabus in 1951.

In addition to Rhodes's legacy to New Zealand literature and literary studies, he is remarkable for the current discussion as a compelling figure of trans-Tasman literary studies. An Australian, educated at Melbourne University, he remained an avid reader of Australian literature. This is not a common practice. As Lydia Wevers remarked in her 2009 Dorothy Green lecture:

I am a New Zealand reader of Australian literature. That makes me just about a category of one. The reverse category, an Australian reader of New Zealand literature, is also a rare beast though perhaps there is a breeding pair in existence. (1)⁹

While seemingly resolute in their mutual disregard, the histories of cultural nationalism and the institutionalisation of their national literatures are remarkably similar. Indeed, the insularity of

the nationalist project and the binary dynamic of nation and globe was only partly dismantled by formations such as Commonwealth literature and postcolonial studies, as each nation seemed to prefer far-flung comparisons rather than those of the region: hence the proliferation of comparisons of either Australia or New Zealand with Canada and South Africa. There are evident benefits to these distant connections which map the dimensions of Anglophone postcolonial modernity. However, distance also enables each modern nation to preserve its discrete boundaries in ways that might be challenged by proximity.¹⁰

These potted narratives indicate many points of specific and meaningful connection between Australia and New Zealand's cultural nationalisms, literary histories and institutionalisations, which are yet to be investigated and exploited. Furthermore, this archipelagic perspective may fashion alternative futures in this postnational, postliterary moment in ways that disciplinary and national monadism cannot. For the capacity to date origins within the progress imperatives of modernity, and their inter-implication with outmoded understandings of both cultural nationalism and literary sensibility, steers literary studies—and specifically Australian and New Zealand literary studies—on a trajectory towards a 'natural' completion or redundancy. Rather than displace cultural origins into antiquity or prehistory, as occurs in the narrative of Western colonisation, or onto the authority of divine meaning, as occurs with sacred texts, the secular account of literary studies is clearly defined and accords them both a particular 'worldliness': they are new, secondary man-made beginnings from the outset. Gayatri Spivak identifies a similar disciplinary dilemma in *Death of a Discipline*, in which she recounts the establishment of Area Studies and Comparative Literature in the Cold War period and their subsequent decline and self-questioning after the fall of the Berlin Wall and in the face of the 'rising tide of multiculturalism and cultural studies' (Spivak 1). Spivak has been an supporter of these rising tides but wants also to preserve what she terms 'the best of the old Comparative Literature: the skill of reading closely in the original'; a combination of closeness and distance in crossing languages and the practice of locating texts in and by transnational relationships (6).

Broadening the focus from the category of national literatures to literary studies more broadly highlights the distance—and the irony—between a perception that literary texts ponder eternal verities and the ways the discipline of literary studies is subject to the finite, linear temporality of the modern. Specifically, this teleology is a result of the lockstep of a shared sacralisation, the mutual fetishisation of nation and literature in the secular drive of modernity and its progressivist agendas—a collocation During attempts to disentangle in his most recent study, *Against Democracy*, in which he argues for the value of literary in its capacity to critique democracy, rather than its alignment with it. Significantly—and I think this is where the entanglement becomes a gordian knot—literary scholars are also very aware of this operation, and deploy the particular critical gaze of our discipline onto ourselves, an understanding and critique which is both necessary and productive, and which has direct implications in the *realpolitik* of tertiary education. One important question that emerges from these considerations—framed with a clear investment in the desire to preserve literary studies and Australian and New Zealand studies within that field—is how to continually calibrate that intellectual project against the institutional deployment of our own narrativisation and self-critique while continuing that critique and preserving environments that enable it to continue?

Perhaps they will not continue. Australian/New Zealand scholar Simon During repeatedly portends the end of the literary cultures of modernity from various related perspectives which highlight literature's role in the (now obsolete) drive of social progressivism. He has identified in contemporary culture a realignment of sympathy, mobility or transport and social progressivism—foundational projects of the novel genre—resulting, in his view, in a diminished capacity for sympathy (During 'Transport'). In *Exit Capitalism: Literary Culture, Theory, and Post-Secular Modernity* During analyses how the decline of the socialist ideal and the emergence of endgame capitalism helped to produce both modern theory and cultural studies as academic fields; these latter are, accordingly, born in and of decline. In his studies of secular modernity he has characterised the decline of progressivist politics and momentum as the end of hope (*Against Democracy* 119) and, as literature is so deeply implicated in this trajectory it, too, may be emptied of the futurity of hope. However, for During, the evacuation of hope and its signification of the future does not locate us at 'the sanctioned "end of history" but at something like its opposite. Capitalism without hope, hopeless capitalism, endgame capitalism' (vii). During's observations frame another and fundamental question for the current discussion: Is there any future for literature, cultures of reading, literary analysis in the world of capitalism without hope?

Spivak proposes an alternative futurity. In her view, a disciplinary future that remains motivated by the progressive politics of inclusion and parity needs to acknowledge 'a definitive future anteriority, a "to come"-ness, a "will have happened" quality' (6). Such a future is open but its conceptualisation is necessary to enable practice, planning and innovation in the present. Of course, Spivak's discussion is predicated on an ongoing belief in the possibilities of progressive politics and disciplinary knowledges which During's argument does not countenance.

Jameson identifies a proliferation of utopian visions since the collapse of the Eastern bloc, with which utopia became associated. Writing in 2005, he claims that the utopian form seems to have recovered its vitality as a political slogan and a politically energizing perspective (xii), and that utopianism has been re-vitalised in the face of endgame capitalism.¹¹ He writes:

The Utopians not only offer to conceive of such alternate systems: Utopian form is itself a representational meditation on radical difference, radical otherness, and on the systemic nature of the social totality, to the point where one cannot imagine any fundamental change in our social existence which has not first thrown off Utopian visions like so many sparks from a comet. (xii)

The island theorists listed above have presented a range of alternative systems that present 'radical otherness' as lived and imagined experience, and which are often cast as utopian visions. Their diversity and richness suggests that there are many more such alternatives to be heard from other islanders for their enduring differences, their experience of modernity as its fetish and refuse, their resilience and resistance. How, for instance, do Torres Strait Islanders view the relationship between their islands, between land and sea, between the islands and continental Australia and Papua New Guinea? Not only is the question inherently interesting, it has the potential to be original; if not outside global systems, at least perennially distant. Furthermore, those island critics and activists already widely acknowledged are all literary artists, directing us to literature as a key site where alternative futures continue to be rehearsed. Accordingly, it is to two Australian literary texts, bound up with islands and dilemmas of the future that I now turn.

At least part of the great cultural achievement, the wisdom, of Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria* (2006) is clarified through the lens of utopian form and, significantly, as distinct from the heterotopic space by which Foucault characterises late modernity. In this discussion Foucault identifies colonies and Pacific Island resorts as extreme forms of heterotopic space; that is, space that is discontinuous with daily activities, and which carries the remnants of a pre-modern sacred (Foucault 23-25). In the daily lives of modern subjects we move through a range of these spaces that do not cohere into a whole (Foucault 25). This is not a space that can envisage a future. On the contrary, Foucault characterises heterotopia as an 'eternity of accumulating time,' an illusion in which it seems that the 'entire history of humanity reaching back to its origin were accessible in a sort of immediate knowledge' (23).

The town setting of Carpentaria, Desperance, while isolated and in many ways a discontinuous space, is not heterotopic.¹² For the space coheres for the Indigenous protagonists of the novel, even in the face of radical alienation. This relationship of coherence and alienation has the capacity to contextualise the structures of settler culture and global economics within a much larger and more powerful cosmology. Hence contemporary globalisation, as it played out in this region, is both historicised—the effects of history are to the fore—yet rendered adventitious within deep time and space. In an inversion of scale, the 'global' does not contain but is contained within a much larger whole and is diminished in multiple ways. Further, this other, larger 'whole' is a dynamic topology rather than the reified endpoint of the globe as it conceived in endgame capitalism. Particular incidents in the novel epitomise this inversion. The statue of the Virgin Mary that Angel Phantom remakes in her own image, for instance, may have started out as a remnant of the pre-modern sacred, discarded on a rubbish dump, but Angel's transformation of the statue effects a reclamation of the fetish, from Durkheim's sociological understanding and back to living meaning.

[Angel] had torn herself away from the statue of Mary, which she had now repainted in the colour of her own likeness. She had examined pictures in children's prayer books and after considering every detail of what needed to be done, she believed she knew how to restore the statue. Every bit of her time and attention had been given in its reconstruction, which had now departed from that of its familiar image to one who watches over and cares for the claypan people of the Gulf country. Improvisation with Norm's fish colours and textures resulted in a brightly coloured statue of an Aboriginal woman who lived by the sea. (38)

The meaning Angel creates through her labour is impure and worldly; it has been to Rome and back again. Angel's reclamation is both an instance and a reversal of the ways aurified and domestic objects are re-located in ready-made arts practice. Angel re-locates the Christian icon of the church into her own house. She does not deny the sacred so much as re-constitute its significance within her own life and in her own image. This significance is both ironic and genuine: it is most obviously a clear comment on the foreignness of Christianity. Moreover, Angel's recognition of the talismanic power of the statue is as an emblem of the power of the people who possessed it, power and 'luck' she wants for herself and her people, highlighting the unacknowledged nexus between religion and power in colonisation. However, Angel's act of remaking this statue is also unironic by dint of her imaginative labour and in her capacity to re-use and re-fashion the detritus of history.

Carpentaria is formally dystopian in many ways including the operations of allegory and the reference to actual historical events. It also constructs a dialectic between the two dominant ways of living; both are positive according to certain criteria, just as both are negative. The circumstances in which the Pricklebush mob live is shameful in many ways but the shame belongs to the perpetrators. The circumstances of the white settler culture is more affluent—which is also shameful according to different criteria. This opposition between two different worlds, both real and allegorical, and the presence of positive and negative elements in each constructs the four possibilities Marin identifies as those the reader must grapple with in utopian texts. In *Carpentaria* and *Wonders of a Godless World*, the negotiation of staged oppositions is bound up with questions of resistance and surrender; to the earth, to profound otherness, to global corporate greed, and to the best and worst of oneself. *Carpentaria* resists surrender to the mining company and the progress narrative of capitalism but surrenders to the Rainbow Serpent. *Wonders of a Godless World* examines the refusal to surrender to the earth in death, and the surrendering of self to wonder and to manipulation.

In *Carpentaria*, the dialectical grid is cancelled out in a textual overdetermination of erasure. Significantly these erasures are of different orders. The extended conclusion of the novel includes two major cataclysms, the first is brought about by culture—the explosion of the mine set up over land and threatening to poison the land. As a man-made, progressivist venture this conclusion is linear, and its endpoint is the refusal of exit capitalism. As it was made by man it is destroyed by man. The other cataclysm does not signify finality but the destruction that is part of the cycle: a force of Nature, a cyclone brought about by the Rainbow Serpent that destroys the settlements of Desperance and sunders the people of the town and its surrounds. It is this splitting of Nature and Culture into two conclusions that enables a vision of the future. The sequence of these two conclusions is also telling: the temporality of mining is excised before the temporality of the cycle is played out. The novel ends with Will Phantom attempting to navigate a way home while eking out survival on the floating island of rubbish, and his lover, Hope, setting off to find him. Between Will and Hope the conclusion moves across land and water, in process, between geography and history, and on the way to a new beginning. The reader is hopeful for a future that is yet to be imagined. As the rubbish shows us, this renewal is not an original birth but a re-birth, hence it takes place on an island.¹³ Like Angel's statue it is worldly and signals the perfidy of the present. The period of waiting with which the reader is left is also a period of labour: a time of searching and of being lost that requires the retracing of land and water. The future is not an image or a treatise or a litany of descriptions but the relentless labour posed by the novel itself.

In numerous ways Andrew McGahan's *Wonders of a Godless World* (2009), (hereafter referred to as *Wonders*), reads like the underbelly of *Carpentaria*. It, too, culminates in a natural cataclysm, recalling During's assertion that the only riposte to capitalism may be endemic natural catastrophe (*Exit* 125). Like *Carpentaria*, the link between cataclysm and endpoint in *Wonders* is split between the temporality of the cycle and a linear trajectory, though *Wonders* refracts the vision of *Carpentaria* into a kind of nightmare, so that the cycle is a kind of ongoing death rather than life. *Wonders* won the 2009 Aurealis Award for best science fiction novel, a genre that is new for McGahan. Geordie Williamson notes that McGahan's range across genres is part of his 'effort of finding a fresh approach, in terms of genre and style, to best fit a

particular social or political moment.’ Hence, for McGahan, the current ‘social and political moment’ fits with science fiction, a genre located in ‘that place beyond all history (or after its end) which we call Utopia’ (Jameson ‘Politics’ 35).

Wonders is set on a tropical island, subject to volcanic eruptions, in a hospital, particularly the back section of the hospital which houses the mentally ill and includes a newcomer, the comatose ‘foreigner’ who is given a special room in the old furnace of the crematorium. The novel’s telescoping view charts the island topography from the aerial bird’s eye to the inner core of the island and this hellish furnace. The house of fire is a fitting home for the foreigner, a Mephistopheles figure who charms, thrills and corrupts the world around him. In an interview McGahan said he wanted to experiment with writing without characters at all, deploying only the interplay of the earth and the elements, but could not make that idea work well (Case). His compromise is a cast of archetypal figures: angel, orphan, virgin, foreigner, devil, the duke, the witch, but the main focalising subject, the orphan, has limited capacity to understand many situations, though she is keenly attuned to the earth. The novel includes sublime scenes of the earth and space drawing on accounts of scientific discoveries and extraordinary events (Rooney 2012). The novel is also a study in the refusal of closure, for the foreigner has died five times already but is continually reborn by his rage at the processes of the earth, specifically, at the volcano that caused his original death. In this way the novel deploys the island’s figurative role as a site of re-birth, but here re-birth is an endless and nightmarish aberration. In the end the orphan decides that she cannot kill the foreigner, as she perhaps should, so decides she will contain him, and traps him in a tube under the volcano. The orphan then decides that she must die to free herself of him. The island remains latent/pregnant of the foreigner who waits to be reborn. This subterranean burial site is one point on the vertical axis of *Wonders*, which moves from the deep underground to the heavens. This vertical axis is, itself, a break from the horizontal perspective that defines modernity and maps its progress narratives (Pinet xvii). *Wonders* offers a cosmology which, while decidedly secular, refuses the ideology of laterality and linearity, including the limitations of realism. *Carpentaria* also maps vertical as well as horizontal axes, as Laura Joseph has discussed (Joseph ‘Opening’), with the subterranean mining disrupting the related categories of Nature and the cosmological worldview, which ultimately comprehends the ‘global.’

At the end of Wright’s novel we are at sea with Will and his searching voyage to return home and we are also with Hope waiting for his arrival. This shared condition moves across land and water in ways similar to Epli Hau’ofa’s challenge to the land/sea binary in his discussion of Oceania as sea of islands. So, too, the novel (dis)locates us in a manner akin to Lyotard’s formulation of the *differend*, the theory of negotiating between irreconcilable differences in the fractured terrain of postmodernity. In a section titled ‘The Archipelago,’ Lyotard figures this process as a mariner who moves between islands taking one story to another and mediating difference but who has no ground of his own by which to fix a single trajectory or viewpoint (131). It is an endless process and an endless labour.

Will’s floating island is image that draws on the island both as the detritus of global capitalism and the site of utopian praxis, of rebirth and worldly knowledge and labour. Further, the island’s mobility and its abjection prohibit its fetishisation as an achievable possession or jewel. McGahan’s novel concludes with an overdetermined stasis and immobility, even if the novel has

treated us with visions splendid of the ecological sublime. Both novels leave us suspended, waiting for both the monstrous and the marvellous futures of ourselves and our world and returning us to the present by which these futures may be achieved.

Such futural visions apply also to the disciplinary futures of literary studies and national literatures. They direct us back to the necessity of the ongoing negotiations around disciplinary borders, shifting connections, specific local histories and material realities. These will never be stable, at least they will not be if they are living. This necessity applies to the study of national literatures in particular ways, and especially to postcolonial and minority literatures. Our capacity to date the origins of modern literary cultures and our cultural nationalisms may have fetishised these bordered categories but it also determines a particular mobility and a capacity for new beginnings. As indicated by the brief discussion of Wright and McGahan's work above, we need to attend to and have confidence in our writers and see how they might imagine the future for us—not as a reified object but as a terrain for our thought and energy. We also need to remain attuned to the ways radical otherness presents itself, for the imaginative and ethical charge of this work also directs us to listen to people who are not at the centre of globalised knowledges—however that centre is constructed: more may be possible and is also urgently needed in the waters of the Gulf country than in imagined centres of thought and experience. Finally, the specific wisdom of these texts pertains to confusing and clarifying the fields of surrender and resistance around continuity and discontinuity, endgames and futures. If the de-fetishising process around literatures leads to the dispersal of fetishised disciplines, alternative communities will be reborn. Whether we trust institutions, increasingly swept up in mainstream global economies, to take charge of this process is quite another story. We need to ensure that the discipline's capacity for self-critique and change itself has a future. Finally, and locally, as I hope this essay begins to indicate, there are many more possibilities for archipelagic exchange between the Island Continent and the Shaky Isles that could proceed from such a dispersed and open cartography.

Works Cited

Ashcroft, Bill and G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin (1989). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

Barrowman, Rachel. *A Popular Vision: The Arts and the Left in New Zealand, 1930-1950*. Wellington: Victoria U P, 1991.

---. 'Rhodes, Harold Winston.' In *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 30-Oct-2012
<http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/4r13/rhodes-harold-winston>.

Baxter, James K. *The Bone Chanter: Unpublished Poems 1945-1972*. Ed. John Edward Weir. Oxford and New York: Oxford U P, 1976.

Beer, Gillian. 'The Making of a Cliché: No Man is an Island.' *European Journal of English Studies* 1.1 (1997): 33-47.

Benítez Rojo, Antonio. *The Repeating Island: the Caribbean and the Postmodern*

Perspective. Durham: Duke U P, 1996.

Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. 'Caribbean Culture: Two Paradigms.' *Missile and Capsule*. Ed. Jurgen Martini. Bremen: Universitat Bremen, 1983. 9-54.

---. *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean*. Mona: Savacou Publications, 1974.

Caney, Diane. 'Janet Frame and *The Tempest*.' *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 11 (1993): 152-171.

Carter, David. 'Good Readers and Good Citizens: Literature, Media and the Nation.' *Australian Literary Studies* 19.2 (1999): 136-151.

Case, Jo. Interview with Andrew McGahan at Readings Bookshop. 1 October 2009. <http://www.readings.com.au/interview/andrew-mcgahan>.

Clay, Diskin. 'The Islands of the *Odyssey*.' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37.1 (2007): 141-161.

Dale, Leigh. 'New Directions: Introduction.' *Australian Literary Studies* 19.2 (1999): 131-135.

Deleuze, Gilles. 'Bartleby, or The Formula.' *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A Greco. Minneapolis: Minnesota U P, 1997. 68-90.

---. *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 2004.

Denoon, Donald. 'Re-Membering Australasia: A Repressed Memory.' *Australian Historical Studies* 34:122 (2003): 290-304.

Derrida, Jacques. 'Second Session, December 18, 2002.' In *The Beast and the Sovereign Volume II*. Trans. Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2009. 31-62.

Dixon, Robert. 'Boundary Work: Australian Literary Studies in the Field of Knowledge Production.' *JASAL* 3 (2004): 27-44.

---. 'Internationalizing Australian Studies: The Year's Work in Non-Fiction 2004-2005.' *Westerly* 50 (2005): 123-138.

---. 'Australian Literature – International Contexts.' *Southerly* 67.1-2 (2007): 15-27.

---. 'Cosmopolitanism and Australian Studies.' *Australian Studies* 19.2 (2007): 95-112.

---. 'Introduction to the 2009 Blaiklock Memorial Lecture.' *Southerly* 69.2 (2009): 17-18.

---. and Brigid Rooney. *Scenes of Reading: Is Australian Literature a World Literature?* Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013.

Eagleton, Terry. 'The Rise of English.' *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983. 17-53.

During, Simon. 'Transports of the Imagination: Some Relations Between Globalisation and Literature.' *Arena Journal* 20 (2002-2003): 123-129.

---. *Against Democracy: Literary Experiences in the Era of Emancipation*. New York: Fordham U P, 2012.

Ellis, Markman. '“The Cane-land isles”: Commerce and Empire in late Eighteenth-century Georgic and Pastoral Poetry.' *Islands in History and Representation*. Eds. Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith. London: Routledge, 2003. 43-62.

Foucault, Michel. 'Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias.' *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986): 22-27.

Furphy, Joseph. (1903). *The Annotated Such is Life*. Melbourne: Oxford U P, 1991.

Gelder, Ken. 'Proximate Reading: Australian Literature in Transnational Reading Frameworks.' *JASAL* 10.1 (2010). <http://www.nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/jasal/article/view/1535/2082>

---. 'English, Autonomy, and the Republic of Letters.' *Australian Humanities Review* 47 (2009). <http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-November-2009/gelder.html>

Giesecke, Annette Lucia. 'Mapping Utopia: Homer's Politics and the Birth of the Polis.' *College Literature* 34.2 (2007): 194-214.

Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997.
Green, Dorothy. *The Writer, the Reader and the Critic in a Monoculture*. Townsville: James Cook U of North Queensland, 1986.

Hall, Demelza. 'The Isle of Refuse in Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria*: Reconstituting Heterotopic Space.' *Southerly* 72.3 (2013). <http://southerlyjournal.com.au/long-paddock/72-3-islands-and-archipelagos/demelza-hall/>

Hau'ofa, Epeli. 'Our Sea of Islands.' *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*. Eds. E. Waddell., V. Naidu, & E. Hau'ofa. Suva: The University of the South Pacific, 1993. 2–16.

Indyk, Ivor. 'Reading Men Like Signboards: The Egalitarian Semiotic of *Such is Life*.' *Australian Literary Studies* 12.3 (1986): 303-315.

Jameson, Fredric. 'Of Islands and Trenches: Neutralization and the production of Utopian Discourse.' *Diacritics* 7.2 (1977): 1-15.

--- . 'The Politics of Utopia.' *New Left Review* 25 (2004): 35-43.

---. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. New York and London: Verso, 2005.

Joseph, Laura. 'Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of The Place Beyond Nation in *Carpentaria* and *Dreamhunter*.' *JASAL, Special Issue: Australian Literature in a Global World* (2009). <http://www.nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/jasal/article/viewArticle/848>

---. 'Opening the Gates of Hell: Regional Emergences in *Carpentaria* and *Dreamhunter*.' *Southerly* 69.2 (2009): 66-80.

Karskens, Grace. *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2009.

Kirkpatrick, Peter and Robert Dixon (eds.) *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia*. Sydney: Sydney U P, 2012.

Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988.

Livett, Kate. *Subjects, Objects and the Fetishisms of Modernity in the Works of Gertrude Stein*. PhD thesis, University of New South Wales 2006.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *Le Différend: Phrases in Dispute*. Trans. Georges Van Den Abeele. Minneapolis: Minnesota U P, 1998.

Marin, Louis. *Utopics: Spatial Play*. Chicago: Humanities Press Michigan Publishing, 1984.

---. 'Frontiers of Utopia. Past and Present.' *Critical Inquiry* 19.3 (1993): 197-220.

McCutcheon, Sandy. 'Review: *Wonders of a Godless World*.' *Courier Mail*. 3-4 October 2009, 22.

McGahan, Andrew. *Wonders of a Godless World*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2009.

McMahon, Elizabeth. 'Tasmania: Island or Archipelago; Trinket or Chain.' *Changing Geographies: Essays on Australia*. Eds. S. Ballyn, G. Belligio & K. Firth. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2001.113-120.

---. 'Continental Heartlands and Alex Miller's Geosophical Imaginary.' *The Novels of Alex Miller*. Ed. Robert Dixon. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2012. 125-137

Murray, Stuart. *Never a Soul at Home: New Zealand Literary Nationalism and the 1930s*. Wellington: Victoria U P, 1998.

Pinet, Simone. *Archipelagoes: Insular Fictions from Chivalric Romance to the Novel*. Minnesota and London: U of Minnesota P, 2011.

Rooney, Brigid. 'Pathological Geomorphology and the Ecological Sublime: Andrew McGahan's *Wonders of a Godless World*.' *Southerly* 72.3 (2012): 55-77.

Sheridan, Susan. *Along the Faultlines: Sex, Race and Nation in Australian Women's Writing 1880s-1930s*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995.

Spaulding, Ralph. 'Joyce Eyre and Australian Literature at the University of Tasmania.' *Australian Literary Studies*, 23.4 (2008): 463-473.

Stedman, M. L. *The Light Between Oceans*. North Sydney: Random House, 2012.

Stoller, Robert. *Observing the Erotic Imagination*. New Haven Conn.: Yale U P, 1985.

Taussig, Michael. 'Maleficium: State Fetishism.' *The Nervous System*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Walcott, Derek. Nobel Lecture. 7 December 1991.

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1992/walcott-lecture.html.

Whitlock, Gillian. 'Australian Literature: Points for Departure.' *Australian Literary Studies* 19.2 (1999): 152-162.

Williamson, Geordie. 'Fine, but mostly clouded.' *The Australian*. 3 October 2009.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/archive/news/fine-but-mostly-clouded/story-e6frg8no-1225780490492>

Wright, Alexis. *Carpentaria*. Sydney: Giramondo, 2006.

¹ The research for this essay was conducted with the assistance of an ARC Discovery grant. I would also like to thank the editors and the anonymous reviewers for their astute comments and criticisms.

² In addition to the works cited, the discussion of New Zealand in this essay is indebted to personal correspondence and conversations with Dr Daniel Bedgood and Professor Patrick Evans of Canterbury University Christchurch.

³ Kate Livett tells me that *Robinson Crusoe* was one of Stein's favourite books.

⁴ As Derek Walcott writes: 'The Caribbean is not an idyll, not to its natives. They draw their working strength from it organically, like trees, like the sea almond or the spice laurel of the heights. Its peasantry and its fishermen are not there to be loved or even photographed; they are trees who sweat, and whose bark is filmed with salt (Walcott 1992).

⁵ She opens with an ironised version of the bird's eye view: 'If you go to Antigua as a tourist, this is what you will see. If you come by aeroplane, you will land at the V. C Bird international airport. As your plane begins to descend you might say, 'What a beautiful island Antigua is...' (1).

⁶ It is beyond the scope of this paper to compare the relationship between island and episode in the Homeric epic and the literature of the modern period, but there are notable differences. In the context of this essay, it is significant that the Homeric islands do not generally denote origin or possession, though the four enchanted islands visited by Odysseus are all sites of matriarchal threat (Giesecke 200). Giesecke also draws attention to Thomas More's explicit comparison of his own traveller and Odysseus (198). Further contrasts and comparisons can be found in Diskin Clay 'The Islands of the *Odyssey*,' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37.1 (2007): 141-161.

⁷ On the occasion of the 2012 ASAL conference in New Zealand, it is notable that Eyre, a Tasmanian, travelled and worked in New Zealand.

⁸ The Coalition Queensland government dis-established its literary awards shortly after gaining office in 2012, though private sources have re-formed awards independent of government. This is worth noting in the current context given Dorothy Green's commendation of premiers' literary awards in 'Behind the Glittering Prizes' (Green 'Behind,' 177-190).

⁹ I note that Eleanor Catton's *The Luminaries* is currently being read in numerous Australian book clubs at present but that this is a result of the novel being long-listed for the 2013 Booker prize and re-published by Granta (originally published by Victoria University Press), so it does not testify to a direct trans-Tasman exchange.

¹⁰ See Donald Denoon's account of the 'dismembering' of Australasia with the federation of Australia and New Zealand as nation states and the attendant anxieties around regional identity and relationships (Denoon 2003).

¹¹ One such manifestation in the academic context occurred while writing this essay in the form of a new issue of the scholarly publication, *The Fibrecultures Journal*, co-edited by my colleague at UNSW Andrew Murphie. The new issue, a trans-Tasman project, guest-edited by Su Ballard at Otago Polytechnic, Zita Joyce at Canterbury Christchurch and Lizzie Muller at UTS, Sydney, is titled 'Networked Utopias and Speculative Futures.'

¹² For a heterotopic reading of *Carpentaria* see Demelza Hall 'The Isle of Refuse in Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria*: Reconstituting Heterotopic Space.' *Southerly* 72.3 (2013).
<http://southerlyjournal.com.au/long-paddock/72-3-islands-and-archipelagos/demelza-hall/>

¹³ For an extended study of the island of waste see Laura Joseph, 'Dreaming Phantoms.'