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Romancing Theft

Abstract:

This article examines the legacy of Romanticism on Australian settlement, using analysis of early colonial narrative to investigate how a public hungry for writing of all genres and schooled for centuries by the adventure tales of white heroes – 'free of the complexities of relations with white women' as Patrick Brantlinger notes – came to authorise the theft of Aboriginal land and the violation of her people. Through the close analysis of an account by one of Victoria's first settlers, Joseph Tice Gellibrand, this work seeks to unveil how word and action often belie one another in colonial narratives, acting to legitimate what was in fact unlawful through what Michel Foucault refers to as a 'hazardous play of dominations' (1981: 52). Drawing on Marxist and post-colonial analysis of the Romantic era and its 'prevailing anxiety with difference and otherness' (Saree Makdisi, 2009: 36), I examine how ideas about race and sovereignty were normalised through the expedient use of writing, and in doing so, demonstrate how, in Victoria, the written word has everything to do with authority, property and ownership. I conclude that it is through creative writing that we can help to bring about social change: through work that seeks, as Jen Webb states, 'to make things visible', to 'provide a platform' (2015: 61) from which to unsettle notions of settlement and sovereignty.

Biographical Note:

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Keywords

Creative Writing – Creative Practice Research – White Sovereignty – Unsettlement.

The birth of white Australia occurred simultaneously with the rapid expansion of publishing and the subsequent popularisation of adventure tales, 'rescue' operas and narratives that promoted hierarchies of race. This legacy of British Romanticism, with its prevailing anxieties about difference and otherness is profound. With more than 150 million people brought under the control of the British empire between 1772 and 1830 alone, the extraordinary boom in print culture meant that vast swathes of information were disseminated about the colonial experience as British merchants, traders, sailors, travellers, poets, novelists and librettists recorded their versions of events (Makdisi, 2009: 36-39).

In the Australian state of Victoria the power of writing to exert influence over public opinion is evidenced by the fact that '…most Aboriginal historiography is still all about whites' as historian Janet McCalman (2006: 217) asserts. This point becomes strikingly clear on close examination of the letters, diaries and petitions to government by Victoria's pioneers:

> [C]ertain tribes on the road to and in the neighbourhood of Port Phillip have lately assumed a hostile attitude towards the settlers and have committed many murders and other outrages upon them … the natives, unrestrained by moral principles and placing little or no value on human life, have been stimulated by their natural cupidity and ferocity on perpetrating … outrages … (Phillip G. King et al. to Gipps, 8 June 1838, qtd in Boyce 2011: 166).

Using the space of the page to record narratives that legitimised the invasion of Port Phillip, the state's 'founders' chronicle tales of savagery and brutality that effectively *Orientalise* the 'Aboriginal other' – as Edward Said defines the process – by 'making statements about it, authorising views over it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it' (1979: 3). Creating 'History' with their texts, accounts such as these propagated a denial of Aboriginal experience. This practice was so pervasive that it continues to impact the Australia of today – despite damning evidence about how this authority was won.

Today's creative writer, however, can use the power that Victoria's colonisers exploited and through the act of writing, support a 'new imperial history' by employing post-colonial analysis of early contact accounts (Boucher and Russell, 2015: 1). As will be demonstrated, it is possible for the writer to wrench open the narrative occlusions at the heart of colonisation, to illuminate how the theft of Aboriginal country (and voice) was authorised and, further, to demonstrate how white sovereignty relies on aversion towards difference to legitimise its claims.

Like his friends and acquaintances in Van Diemen's Land and Sydney, Victoria's first surveyor, the lawyer Joseph Tice Gellibrand, legitimised his dominion over land and peoples through the creation of a journal that 'racialised constructions of rationality, civility, knowledge, authority and violence' (Carey 2009: xiii). An entry from February 13th 1836 reveals the settler's ease with commanding authority over Aboriginal people after a Wurundjeri woman was accosted by a shepherd and his dogs at a waterhole (see Thomas F Bride 1898/1969: 28). The record suggests the woman was beaten, before being bound and taken to a hut where at least one man raped her while the others watched. Tied to a post and held prisoner overnight she only managed to escape the next day. Yet for Gellibrand (who was, significantly, also the former Attorney General of van Diemen's Land), the most noteworthy aspect of the incident was what was done to the woman on her return to her people where her husband, allegedly, hit her across the head. In fact, some three quarters of the report is taken up with ethnocentric remarks

about Aboriginal people generally, enacting precisely the late 18th century Orientalism that Saree Makdisi (2009) explains helped inform Romanticism.

British officials were increasingly concerned with knowledge of the 'other' for the purpose of imperial administration and Orientalism, described by Makdisi as 'instrumental, purposeful and expedient', was used across Britain's rapidly expanding empire (2009: 39). As the Governor-General of Bengal, Warren Hastings, wrote in the introduction to the first English translation of the Bhagavad Gita in 1785:

> Every accumulation of knowledge, and especially such as is obtained by social Communication over whom we exercise a dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state… (Makdisi 2009: 40).

Using the words of Satadru Sen for my own purpose here, Gellibrand's entry embodied '…not so much a conversation about [the rape of an Aboriginal woman by white men] as it was about the legitimacy of the interventionist state' (quoted in Stephens 2009: 182). In focusing his response on the mores of the clan rather than the rape, Gellibrand enacts precisely the dominion Hastings refers to: legitimising his role in the conquest of Aboriginal lands through an expedient - albeit farcical - enactment of British values and law.

Gellibrand's account is laden with the weight of responsibility incumbent upon him as an (unofficial) representative of the British Empire in Port Phillip. Tim Fulford and Peter Kitson note:

> …the Romantic period is a watershed in colonial history, witnessing a move from a protectionist colonial system, based upon mercantilist economic principles, to a free-trade empire with a political and moral agenda, proverbially described, after Kipling's poem, as 'the white man's burden' (2005: 3).

At all times, front and centre in his narrative, Gellibrand's script carefully balances the delicate manoeuvring demanded by the situation in order to legitimate not only his own authority but the authority of British values in Port Phillip. The tactic he uses to achieve this is to cast himself in the title role as hero. As Patrick Brantlinger indicates, 'the "benighted" regions of the world, occupied by mere natives, offer brilliantly charismatic realms of adventure for white heroes, usually free of the complexities of relations with white women' (1988: 12).

In recording how he shoulders his share of the 'white man's burden', Gellibrand contributes to a vast body of imperial documents that validate colonisation whilst remaining adroitly reserved about the economic imperative of his mission and the usurpation of traditional rights it entailed:

> I learnt with much concern that an Act of aggression had been committed upon one of the women which required my immediate attention. Without waiting to refresh myself or refit I proceeded to
>
> the Native Huts and ordered the persons implicated to be brought down (Bride 1969: 28).

Like a judge, ordering people 'brought down', Gellibrand highlights his role in a tale that bears remarkable resemblance to a Gothic novel or 'rescue' opera, with its unlawful imprisonment of a victim of tyranny released after heroic exertions by the valiant white male. Contra to his personal well-being, as he lets us know, Gellibrand rushes to the scene whereupon he:

> found a young woman … lying on the ground … and suffering
> from a violent contusion on the back part of her head
> which I understood had been inflicted upon her by her
> husband (Bride: 28).

Worse still:

> It appeared that she was one of three wives (28).

As writers appreciate, structure is crucial to the strength of an argument: the strong start that sets the agenda for what is to come, and the weight afforded one thread over another. It is for these reasons that Gellibrand's journal entry is so indicative of the influence of Romanticism. As Martin Ross explains, it was the Romantics who would 'teach the English to universalize the experience of 'I'… to organize the universe by celebrating the universal validity of parochial English values' (quoted in Fulford & Kitson 2005: 8).

Each line in Gellibrand's account makes this claim to universalised subjectivity plain. As a lawyer, and in his role as Attorney General, Gellibrand has been trained to compose and deliver compelling arguments that support Britain's imperial objectives, and the tool that was most useful to the arsenal of colonisation was 'othering', a 'process of alienation and epistemic violence (often a prelude to material force) whereby an exclusionary distinction is made between the white westerner and the colonized subject' (Fulford and Kitson 2005: 9). Thus, his account of the rape fundamentally plays down the physical and psychological trauma suffered by the woman at the hands of her white assailants because to allow discussion of the impact of white violence on Aboriginal people would be to create space for interrogation of the very act of colonisation. Gellibrand uses the alleged head wound to estrange the reader from the practice of Aboriginal sovereignty. He 'others' the woman and her clan in order to invalidate the law that had operated for millennia in that place and supplants a system of governance akin to British law: the very system that had itself declared the settlement of Port Phillip illegal.

According to Sebastian Conrad and Marion Strange, governance '…refers to processes and structures of regulation and rule that … are not exclusively based on hierarchically organized government action, but instead involve … modes of action by private, semiprivate, and public actors' (quoted in Risse 2011: 41). In lieu of British parliamentary sanction then, the Port Phillip Association employed knowledge of the procedures of governance to authorise invasion.

The extraordinary crafting of this report becomes most evident here. Gellibrand's account exudes the humility, temperance and innate justice of the primary actor as compared to the barbarity of Aboriginal people, as will be further explored below. More insidious, however, is the manner in which the report demonstrates the Port Phillip Association's knowledge of British parliamentary sentiment, pre-figuring the Select Committee on Aborigines conclusion, in 1837, that the British Empire existed 'for some higher purpose than commercial prosperity and military renown,' but was called 'to carry civilization and humanity, peace and good government, and, above all, the knowledge of our true God, to the uttermost ends of the earth' (Boyce 2011: 36).

In foregrounding the 'otherness' of the Wurundjeri, Gellibrand is thus able to side-step questions about why white shepherds were at large in Aboriginal country committing

crimes such as rape. It is not until line fourteen (in the forty-five devoted to the incident) that we find even a mention of the perpetrator of the assault:

> …this woman was proceeding towards the Settlement to see her mother and fell in with one of the Shepherds (Bride 1969: 28).

It is at this point that the white wig of the law court comes into full view. In selecting the phrase 'fell in' to describe the woman's meeting with the attacker, Gellibrand immediately renders her complicit, selecting a phrase that suggests acquiescence and poor judgment to render her actions, in walking her country, suspect. In fact, the entire assault by the shepherd, thirty-one words out of five hundred odd, is portrayed as if almost innocuous:

> …who laid hold of her, brought her to the hut tied her hands behind her, and kept her there all night, and either that night or the next morning abused her person... (29).

The act of rape and the injuries the woman endured receive far less scrutiny than the 'native jealousies' that Gellibrand proceeds to describe. With a masterful sleight-of-hand he heightens the drama by alluding to the possibility of the woman's death at the hands of her clan, rendering this the most noteworthy aspect of the case:

> …The Natives are particularly jealous respecting their women and they consider any intercourse of this kind as a contamination, and in every case punish the women, frequently even to death (29).

Gellibrand gives no indication as to how he obtained this information, nor does he give any insight into whether he is referring specifically to the customs of the Wurundjeri, or whether he is drawing on his knowledge of Tasmania's Aboriginal people, or indeed his knowledge of other colonised peoples to inform his beliefs. Instead he subjects all 'Natives' to a process of estrangement from whites in which he both homogenises and demonises Aboriginal people in order to construct 'imaginary borderlines… on the bases of imputed savagery…' (Fulford and Kitson 2005: 9).

What provokes me most, as a writer, is the mantle of chivalry Gellibrand adorns himself with and the way this acts to position the woman as a chattel in the sport of conquest. Prepared for his imperial destiny, the rape of the woman enables him to make good the face of public policy in Port Phillip, inaugurating him in the yet-to-be-tamed settlement as the voice of reason, the sanctioned space of British law that comes riding in on horseback to save the day before dashing off to a ship. We can imagine him, cape thrown over his shoulder (sword in hand?), ready to stand against the perils of a violent, unsettled world; the point of order in a storm:

> The Natives men women and children assembled around me. I explained to them through Buckley our determination in every instance to punish the white man and to protect the Natives to the utmost of our power… (Bride 1969: 29).

Gellibran is known for his intellect (he was one of the most significant 'brains' behind Batman's 'treaty'), his gentlemanly manner, his spirit of scientific enquiry and his social conscience and thus epitomises the Romantic figure, riding out across the unmapped territory of Port Phillip to bring his edifying light to unruly times. Pitted against the 'savagery' of natives, the brutish shepherd and the untamed wilderness, he writes himself – and is written thus – as the civilising and ordering influence upon a yet to be tamed outpost, and as a bastion of the best qualities of humankind.

There is a dualism at work in Gellibrand's account, however, which can be defined as 'a site of opposing strategies' (in Hoeveler and Davies Cordova 2006: 13); a 'hazardous play of dominations' that seeks to create a coherent position amidst rapid social,

historical and cultural transformation (2006: 13). 'In every society' Foucault reminds us, 'the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a … number of procedures' (Foucault 1981: 52).

Gellibrand will 'punish the white man' but first he must gently chide the clans, admonishing that:

> …we were not allowed to beat them as they had the woman, but would send them to their own country to be punished (Bride 1969: 29).

Turning, finally, to remonstrate with the perpetrators of the assault, Gellibrand highlights the civility of his actions compared to what the Wurundjeri *might* have done: he has saved them as well, through recourse to British modes of governance:

> I then explained to the two men the wickedness of their conduct and how justly they would be punished if the Natives had inflicted an injury upon them and gave orders that as soon as fresh Shepherds could be obtained they should be removed from the Settlement under the terms of their Indentures (Bride 1969: 29).

Like other 'first settlers' Gellibrand *makes* 'History' with his writing: he 'controls, selects, organises and redistributes' information about events at Victorian settlement and in this way, defines himself as the hero of the hour whilst simultaneously validating the superiority of the British approach, how *right* it is; an unquestionable fact. And, as Paul Gillen notes '[a]gainst the permanency of writing, speaking appears ephemeral' (1988: 190). We do not hear directly from the victim of the assault or her clan, and thus the only word we can rely upon is Gellibrand's.

In this way, white males writing themselves as central characters and their own way of being as inherently 'right' became and remain, I suggest, the gatekeepers of Australian society, informing our understanding of whom, what, where and when things of import happen and from what perspective we will view them. National histories highlighting tales of heroic settlers, triumphant explorers and rugged bushmen obfuscate the realities of Aboriginal experience since invasion–narratives continue to be defended by both the individual and the state; regardless of the significant minority agitating for change. In contrast, my reading of accounts such as this shares with Fulford and Kitson a Marxist perspective of colonialism, recognising it as 'the conquest and direct control of other people's lands', a historic phase in the larger process of imperialism, or 'the globalization of the capitalist mode of production' (2005: 8).

Knowledge acquired about the 'other' during the colonisation of Victoria – including the type of racist caricature shared by Victoria's first Governor, Charles Joseph La Trobe, who described Aboriginal Victorians as more akin to Opossums than humans – fed directly into a growing cult of Social Darwinist theories about natural selection and 'survival of the fittest', all of which helped to validate the devastating impact of colonisation on the Kulin nations. As the discourse implied, it was not the impact of British colonial practices, but the instability of the race, that caused the decimation of Victoria's Aboriginal peoples.

The popularisation of such ideological structures led to a widespread colonialist belief in proleptic elegy, in which the demise of a race is prophesised and elegised before it even happens; as in the 'Literature of Extinction' described by A.L. McCann (2006). Here the literature of the new colony – works published in the mid-nineteenth century such as 'Victoria; or, Past and Present' and the essays of Henry Giles Turner – 'trivialises the transformation [settlement] represents, and this trivialisation acts as a form of misdirection in which the brute power of colonialism is rendered utterly matter-

of-fact' (49-50). As is evidenced from Gellibrand's report, this trivialisation was a crucial strategy in legitimising colonial accounts.

Gellibrand's genial tone, his grandfatherly pronouncement of the 'proper' way to behave as the woman – naked, one assumes, in high summer and less than one year after first contact – stands battered and bleeding before him further acts to undermine and invalidate Aboriginal sovereignty. By composing his report in this way, Gellibrand trivialises the brutality of the attack by the shepherd/s on the young woman, while simultaneously misdirecting the reader's attention away from the actions of the illegally sanctioned white men to the problematic morality of her clan. Every action is an act of infantilisation – before Gellibrand takes from his neck what could only be, after the length of his ride in the preceding days, a sweat-stained and grimy (red) silk handkerchief and ties it around her throat. This, he deduces, 'delighted her exceedingly':

> …I then endeavoured to make the poor woman understand how much I commiserated with her situation and I tied round her neck a red silk handkerchief, which delighted her exceedingly. I then proceeded to the hut, and dressed myself settled my accounts at Port Phillip … and we all went to the Captain's Boat to the mouth of the River and reached the [ship *Caledonia*] about six o clock (Bride 1969: 29).

The red handkerchief is not simply a ploy, however, to make the woman smile prettily and bob her thanks. Crucially, the scarf is used by Gellibrand to defuse a moment of hostility: it is the giving of a gift that when received assumes the woman's consent to his judgement, indicating that Gellibrand is advancing into both the physical and psychological territory of the Wurundjeri people. As the anthropologist Phillip Jones explains in *Ochre and Rust: Artefacts and Encounters on Australian Frontiers*:

> Artefacts have played a crucial role, as a medium along which important ideas passed, from colonised to coloniser and back again. … Communication across this zone was often inarticulate or misunderstood, as one culture tried to see into, or past, the other (2007: 246).

In tying the scarf around her throat like one puts a collar around a dog, Gellibrand conveys possession, not only of the woman, who will now be protected by the master, but of the land that was her own, and, significantly, how and what stories will be told about it.

The spirit of almost scientific enquiry with which Gellibrand views the assault is typical of the writing of Empire in relation to native peoples and instigates a phenomenon the French philosopher Michel Serres refers to as 'leveling', effectively acting to eradicate the sensorial realm from affecting the reader in historical accounts (2008: 239). The reader witnesses Gellibrand's sympathy for the woman *and* his swift resolution of the problem. He presides justly. In this manner, the account encourages the reader to look beyond the individual woman and her clan towards the civility and good governance of British settlement. Like those 'settlers' that came before and after, Gellibrand relies on knowledge of, and anxiety about, the other to cement his claim. As a consequence, the authority over difference illustrated so clearly in Gellibrand's journal led directly, in the words of Robin Gilmour, to an assumption that was widely held by the mid-nineteenth century:

> …that history has a design and purpose. So strongly did people believe this that it led them to read into Darwin's essentially directionless theory of evolution a moral progressionism which defied its darker implications.... [There were] several different theories of history but they were nearly all theories of inevitable, progressive

> development (2013: 23).

It is the idea of 'progressive development' that was implicit in the declaration of *Terra Nullius* and which awarded parliamentary sanction to the act of invasion. Gellibrand's carefully orchestrated text enables the reader to *bear witness* to the propriety of British imperialism, to the validity of white settlement. Ostensibly, he puts to right a terrible wrong through recourse to British law, yet at the same time he renders the woman, whose name we never learn, invisible; shifts the lens from the true weight of the assault upon her and its wider implications, to the workings of her culture, their difference and otherness. The reader is coached to see past those destined to lose everything, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations; past the individuals, their trauma and loss, and into Britain's newest territory – and in this way Gellibrand helps institute the precarious belonging that is at the heart of the Australian nation-state.

Brian Massumi writes that meaning 'is not in the genesis of the thing, nor in the thought of that genesis, nor in the words written or spoken of it. It is in the process leading one from the other' (1992: 15). This proved helpful for me when trying to gauge my unease at Gellibrand's report. The apprehension I felt was not to do with the character of the shepherd who captured the woman; nor with the inaction – or otherwise – of the two other men. Gellibrand's superciliousness irritated me, but it was not this either. The meaning lay, I finally appreciated, in Gellibrand's handling of the case: in the implications of a procedure that enabled a figure of British authority to take this episode and render it void in the annals of history, eradicating with extraordinary neatness not only the impact of what was done to the woman but simultaneously and quite masterfully eroding the rights of her people to be understood as agents of authority with a cultural paradigm worthy of respect: keepers of lore and land. The meaning that has been passed down to us from that summer morning in 1836, then, lies in the process utilised by Gellibrand to invalidate those who fall outside his cultural norms. Infantilised by his swift administration, the Wurundjeri who brought the complaint, and the woman herself, have been dealt with and can, thus, be forgotten.

Characters like Gellibrand continue to prevail in traditional Australian history because, as Theodore Adorno argues '[h]istory does not merely touch on language, but takes place in it' (1978: 219). That is, settler-colonialists produced carefully constructed narratives of place with an underlying purpose: to remake the social order of the world they wanted to conquer into a model that served their intent. There is nothing new in this. In 'Yamani Country', Sandra Pannell discusses the work of Liisa Malkki, who:

> …writing of the mythico-historical narratives of Hutu refugees in Tanzania, identifies this narrative process as 'worldmaking' and suggests that 'making' the world through narrative and narration is sometimes an oppositional process concerned with 'remaking' 'the moral order of the world' and 'recasting' identity and history. Malkki not only highlights the constitutive role of narrative in the formation of identities, histories and 'nation-ness', but she also points to how narratives represent 'vital form[s] of social action' (Pannell 2006: 105).

Gellibrand is keenly alert to his role in the making of Port Phillip, and more, he is fully cognisant that this requires him to aid in the remaking of 'the moral order of the world' he wants to lay claim to. Thus, Gellibrand uses language as a tool to legitimate his authority over the land and her people, writing himself as an example *par excellence* of the superior moral values of the British.

The print culture that flourished during the Romantic period validated, glorified and individualised the one over the many, and, as Michael Farrell notes, gave rise,

paradoxically, to 'the concept of the voice' (2015: 18). It is Gellibrand's voice – his staunchly moral, scientifically enquiring and reasoned self – that we hear calling across one hundred and eighty years of white settlement in Victoria. His is the universalised 'I' of parochial English values that continues to pervade the Australian psyche. Like so many other 'first settlers' Gellibrand records his movement into Aboriginal territory, recognising full well the 'constitutive role of narrative in the formation of … histories and nation-ness…' and defining with great effect British civility and righteousness while simultaneously and with extraordinary skill, leveling white action.

'No one should be surprised when reality mocks the stated intentions of ambitious people' Don Watson asserts in *Caledonia Australis* (1984: ix), yet numerous well-known, powerful and influential Australians continue to deny the action perpetrated in the name of Empire to authorise the theft of Aboriginal land regardless of movements in contemporary history. Watson maintains that 'monuments honour deeds and end questions' (viii). This statement illustrates precisely how Gellibrand's account operates in traditional Australian history, *monumentalising* his role and the values he represents so that an act of rape – the same act that would undoubtedly have warranted the death of an Aboriginal man or men should a white woman have been raped – is completely whitewashed.

There is an addendum to this incident, written on Gellibrand's return to the Doutta Galla (Melbourne) settlement and dated March 24th. In it, Gellibrand is delighted to note that the woman and her family are still at the camp and that the contusion she suffered is now completely healed. He does not mention the rape; does not inquire as to other injuries, as to her state of mind, whether she is traumatised by having been tied up or suffering from fear of white men. Instead Gellibrand presumes that the woman and her clan are happy at the settlement as they can live there protected by (and in communion with) colonial agents such as himself.

'[T]he myth of imagined community is fundamental to the survival of the nation, but to operate, the myth must displace the exorbitant proliferation of actual subject positions within the state' (Ashcroft 2011: 20). Gellibrand's text writes him as the leader of a scrupulously just community: yet contra to the way the actions of the woman and her clan have been scrutinised, British action remains beyond scrutiny, and above question. There is only one version of this incident in the historical record and it claims to speak for all of the subject positions at all times – and thus this ugly little moment in history is drawn neatly to a close.

Episodes like this occur throughout Australia's colonial history. I have analysed one from the annals of Victoria's past to demonstrate the complexity and extent of the strategies employed in order to legitimate settlement. The ideas that arose out of the Romantic Era were not themselves tools in the arsenal of the British invaders, but it was a period born out of rapid and, for many, disturbing social change and thus its prevailing anxieties represent this. As Henry Reynolds puts it in his introduction to Bill Gammage's great book *The Biggest Estate on Earth*, 'The obsession with Aboriginal backwardness was just too useful to be cast aside…' (Gammage 2011: xxi). The question is, and in the face of contemporary global politics, do we want those same anxieties to define us today?

Lost to the obfuscations of imperial history, literature and language, the incidents explored here can live, then, only if the creative writer gets beneath the leveling Serres warns of: to 'dwell' in 'the glories of our initial sensuous perception of the world' (2008: xiii) so that the writer (and reader) can *feel* what it is to be human, in that

experience, now. Thus, the creative writer holds a unique position in post-colonial Australia. We have the power to probe the levelling of the historical record to create writing that 'provide[s] a platform from which to make things visible' (Webb 2015: 61). Using analysis like this the writer can recreate the voices of those whose acts we were taught not to see, explore the issues we have not understood, to help reveal the dissonance at the heart of our national identity and in this way, render inchoate that which is said to cohere. The effect of the prevailing anxieties of Romanticism on Australia may continue to run deep, but our society is not yet settled.

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