The Blind Puppeteer

The Australia Indonesia Communications Relationship in the Postmodern Context

Thesis presented by Jeff Lewis as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Communications, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents who, like many others, were forced by economic circumstances to leave school at an early age.

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Statement of Originality

Unless otherwise acknowledged, the text of this thesis is entirely original. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree in any other institution. The thesis has been completed within the prescribed time allocation.

Signed: 

[Signature]
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Synopsis

Australia's communications relationship with Indonesia is of particular significance for each nation's regional and international aspirations. The current reappraisal of Australia's relationship with the South East Asian region generally and Indonesia in particular necessarily involves the re-assessment and re-orientation of national identity. A number of recent analyses of Australia's identity in relation to the region have argued that Australia and Australians have adopted the Orientalist attitudes of imperialist European nations, especially those of Britain. In particular these analyses are critical of imperialist processes which equate cultural 'difference' with inferiority, using this equation to justify control, exploitation and oppression. Accordingly, Australia's 'image' of itself in relation to Asia — both in the historical and current fields — combines white superracist attitudes with economic and military exploitation. These analyses attempt to deconstruct Australian Orientalism by pointing to its ideological and critical deficiencies, most particularly as it is produced through literary, filmic, news and advertising texts. This form of deconstruction or 'De-Orientalism' fails to account fully for the complex interrelationships which function to form culture and meaning. Specifically, De-Orientalism, in criticizing homogeneic Orientalist formations tend to reinstate the cultural 'distance' and 'difference' which separate Australia and its Asian neighbourhood.

In the realm of the political economy similar views prevail. In particular, liberal and neo-Marxist analyses tend to parallel this De-Orientalism — including the distinction between the self of the West as norm and the East as alien other — with subaltern or core-periphery models. In these conceits the core (metropolis, centre, north) is the dominant and residual imperialist dominion which uses its military, economic and linguistic power to dominate and exploit the weaker nations and peoples of the world. As with De-Orientalism, these models of the international political economy tend to see macro capitalist processes as subsuming national, cultural and ethnic independence. Capitalism exploits the cheap labour and weaker circumstances of the peripheral peoples. In the process, 'difference' and distance are swamped by the all-absorbing power of First World capitalism. Where it is discussed in relation to the South East Asian region, Australia tends to be simply affiliated with the core.

Both De-Orientalism and the core-periphery models seem to embrace 'difference' as a positive political value. However, this approach seriously
distorts the contemporary inclination toward global integration. Poststructuralist theoretical interests (and the postmodernist inheritance) provide an alternative approach to transcultural communication by acknowledging its complexity and the primacy of language-discourse in cultural formation. Identity is more complex than De-Orientalist cultural conceit acknowledges, especially as it is practised by Australian analysts. Australian images of Indonesia are conceived through images of Australia itself: the two are necessarily and inevitably connected. The concept of transculturalism indicates the interdependence, fluidity and precariousness of personal and national identity. The issue of language (discourse and image) as the mediator of all reality cannot be separated from discussions of identity and culture.

The global political economy is also more complex than the core-periphery models permit. The global postmodern context is drawing nations and cultures into greater and more rapid communicative transactions and greater levels of interdependence. Australia and Indonesia cannot be regarded as singular political constructs with the one dominating the other. New economic programs are producing more complex power transactions at both the macro and individual levels. The fictional and news texts analysed in this study demonstrate the fluidity and interdependence of transcultural identity, and the instability of power, particularly as it functions at the level of the individual body.

Several fictional texts — Christopher Koch's novel and Peter Weir's film *The Year of Living Dangerously*, Blanche d'Alpuget's *Monkeys in the Dark*, Glenda Adams' *Games of the Strong*, Tony Maniaty's *The Children must Dance*, Eric Willmot's *Below the Line* — have the political context of Indonesia as central to their themes. In analyzing these texts, the current study is concerned with the effects of internationalism — especially the surveillance of nations, cultures and individuals through media, diplomatic, political and aesthetic processes — on the Australia Indonesia relationship. This study rejects the De-Orientalist analytical model which tends to treat these texts as exercises in Australian adventurism and Western political hubris. Rather, the study examines the broader political processes of Indonesia's New Order Revolution (and East Timorese invasion in *The Children must Dance*) in relation to — first, Australia and Indonesia's participation in the global processes of capital, surveillance and international order; and secondly, in relation to the personal crises of the Australian visitors. Through the analysis of these texts the study claims that Indonesia and Australia are not always
distinct political entities. Subjective re-orientation produces a wide range of responses and communicative formations. Domination and resistance may function through distinct political and personal alliances which defy national, ethnic and cultural divisions.

These flows and counterflows are also identifiable in Australian news texts and in the discourse of business. Attempts in the media to transcend difficulties and tensions between Australia and Indonesia have been generally directed by a new form of economic pragmatism. While Edward Said has been extremely critical of the utilitarianism of J. S. Mill's nineteenth century Britain, particularly as it reinforces imperial rule over India, the new utilitarianism that is directing international globalization has been less carefully scrutinised; it is this new utilitarianism, with its emphasis on personal pleasure and choice, which is informing much of the discourse that urges a greater regional participation for Australia. Again this new utilitarianism — driven by Australia's declining economic fortunes and the impelling and absorptive force of international capital — is an ideal which seeks equal participation beyond simple East West oppositional divisions. Nevertheless, trade between Australia and Indonesia, particularly as it is experienced at the personal or bodily levels of pleasure and profit, also involves a multitude of complex and even contradictory transactions. The power of the New Order regime and the practices of capitalist exchange are scrutinized in the ABC Embassy program, the Barnes-Birrell novel Water from the Moon, Dewi Anggraeni's novel The Root of all Evil, Dennis O'Rourke's 'fictional-documentary' The Good Woman of Bangkok and John Duigan's film Far East. A number of these texts also depict Australian expatriates' involvement in the trade of human bodily pleasure; again the precariousness of subjectivity and the uncertainties of political alignment and Orientalism generally are explored. The study of these texts necessarily involves reference to a number of the ideological issues raised in Chapters One and Two, most especially as they relate to feminism and the postmodern celebration of pleasure and individual choice.

The third group of fictional texts is located in Bali. Continuing from the previous two chapters' discussion of politics and the transaction of the economic body, Chapter Five explores the use of Bali in recent fiction and film as the site for Australians' bodily and spiritual pleasure. The ideology and ethics of tourism is central to all of these texts. A distinction is generally delineated between ethical or cultural tourism and mass tourism; a parallel distinction is also made between the feminine and the patriarchal in the deployment of the sexual body and in tourist activities generally. The current
study again locates a number of paradoxes and contradictions in these texts and in the ideology of tourism more broadly. Simple separations and celebrations of difference fail to comprehend fully the complexities of communicative transaction and the interactive status of Australians and Indonesians. Power cannot be simply described as being vested in the Australian as Western visitor over the Balinese as Oriental (Other) host.

Conceits which describe Australia and Australians as quasi or neo Western imperialists are, in conclusion, quite inadequate. A reading of the film and literary archive in the postmodern global context shows that Australians are not exclusionists who carry racist assumptions about the superiority of themselves and their heritage. The cultural politics of De-Orientalism or 'ethnic pluralism' too often reproduces the monophonia and essentialism it claims to overthrow. As it produces images of South East Asia, inevitably producing images of itself, the Australian imaginary is replete with contradiction, gaps, flows and counterflows. Our task is to elucidate those tasks in relation to contemporary culture. The experience of transculturalism should not be reduced to ideological formulae, but needs to be understood as further destabilizing the processes which form discourse, power and culture.
Introduction

Australia's relationship with South East Asia is becoming a major focus for cultural, political and economic discussion. Speculations on identity, republicanism, multiculturalism, immigration, security, trade, indeed speculations over the broadest dimensions of national destiny, appear in recent times to have been augmented through an increasing awareness and consideration of our regional connections. The conviction that Australia should, or could, pursue a destiny independent of new regional and global connections is being seriously reviewed. Accordingly, this review constitutes a major departure for the nation's conception of itself and its place in the world. The old imaginings which assured Australia's prosperity as an isolated or self-determining European enclave in a 'teeming', 'mysterious' and somewhat 'chaotic' Asian context are being challenged as the nation attempts to re-define itself in a radically altered global field. It is through these re-considerations of culture, geography and economy that the current study also derives its inspiration and direction.

As Simon During (1992) notes, however, a reappraisal of Australia's relationship with Asia in the current cultural field cannot be isolated from the need for a more general and complete review of the nation's heritage and historical archive. In reviewing the past and in redefining national selfhood through new critical and ideological positions, a contemporary culture must necessarily re-write its own history, re-constitute and re-connect events, re-draw historical characters. The current study, which examines the particular communications relationship between Australia and Indonesia, is being offered as part of this general review. However, the main focus of this work will be concentrated within the recent past, the contemporary field in which the revision itself is taking place and where the new histories, the new speculations, are being framed. As we shall see shortly, this whole area of cultural studies — especially those cross or trans-cultural studies which locate Australia in the Asian region — is very much in its infancy; theories, methods and heuristic foci remain seminal and largely incomplete. For this reason, and because I feel some dissatisfaction with the direction and conclusions of a number of writers already working in the area, my own study will proceed from a somewhat altered set of assumptions. In particular, I have found it necessary to revise and review the theoretical substance of transcultural analysis in order to develop a more complete understanding of Australia's communicative relationship with Indonesia.
The rationale for such a study might perhaps appear self-evident. Australia's relationship with one of its nearest and most populace neighbours has often been strained by uncertainty, suspicion, neglect, and erstwhile hostility, all of which might seem as intransigent as those putative cultural and political 'differences' which many commentators identify as fundamental to East West relations. On the other hand, there have been times when the relationship has appeared friendly, mutually supportive and confluent, both as it is conducted through major institutional structures like the media, government institutions and commercial ventures, as well as through an infinite range of interpersonal and individual contacts. In either case, the significance of the relationship could not be overstated. As the nations of the world and their cultures become drawn into greater communicative contiguity, and in particular as regional ties become more critical for security, commerce and the production of consumable pleasure, Australia and Indonesia will and must attempt to redefine themselves, not as intransigent categories of West and East, but in relation to each other, their propinquity and the broader global context. Too often, commentators have concerned themselves with limited fields of reference in an attempt to account for difficulties in the bi-lateral political or historical relationship. While producing formulations that might be simply accessible, such commentaries tend to pay less than adequate attention to the multiplying and, at times, contradictory forces that are functioning in the postmodern field. Indeed, such studies\(^1\) nearly always proceed from the assumption of difference, isolating the two nations and their cultures from the phalanx of forces which may be functioning beyond the borders of each dominion. By assuming difference and by producing conclusions which reiterate or reconstitute difference, these studies have tended to paranthesize the two nations as separate and intransigent entities. As we shall see, such separationism tends to be accompanied by either fearful prognoses about the destiny of Australian nationhood or, as often, celebratory applause for the cultural and ideological integrity of the Asiatic as different.

\(^1\) Together, these studies would, as John Docker (1991) suggests, constitute something of an emerging orthodoxy in cultural and transcultural analysis. In particular, Bronowski (1992), Gunew (1990, 1993), Bulbeck (1992), Hamilton (1990), Mares (1993a, 1993b), Shaw (1992), During (1987, 1992a), Milne (1993) and Gehmann (1993) have tended to absorb British and American theories on Orientalism, postcolonialism and difference. In particular, the work of Edward Said (esp. 1978, 1993), which aims to 'deconstruct' the Orientalist images of the East as they are produced by Western hegemony and imperialism, appears to have been adopted somewhat uncritically by the Australian cultural commentators.
One of the major aims of this study is to demonstrate the significance of the global cultural context in influencing and producing communication outcomes for Australia and Indonesia. In achieving this end, the study would hope to produce a more complete analysis of the relationship, to broaden and enhance understanding, and, ultimately, to facilitate a more productive communion which is sensible to similarities and divergence, and which functions with a greater degree of respect. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the confluence of the Australia-Indonesia relationship by elucidating the discourse through which the relationship is mediated. It is through the discourse, particularly that which is sourced in Australia, that our meanings are made and our knowledge produced. The current study will support a new discourse, a new mode of understanding and a new facility for the construction of more respectful and more complete communicative exchanges.

This objective, however, does not implicate the study in the ideological program of government, business, popular or academic interests. On the contrary, an analysis of this kind would hope to elucidate these interests in the context of what Stuart Hall (1991b) calls the global postmodern, without necessarily advocating one political or sectional position over another. In elucidating the numerous, complex and continuously evolving processes that effect and constitute transcultural communication, this study, nevertheless, would hope to make some worthwhile contribution to the speculations on Australia's future, most particularly its regional, cultural and politico-economic orientations.

While Australia's integration with the South East Asian region might appear to have become somewhat aphoristic, significant disagreement about the nature and efficacy of this integration remains. Owen Harris (1993), following Samuel Huntington's theory of civilizational division, has argued that Australia's essentially Western culture precludes it from regional integration and participation. The critical political question, according to Harris, is no longer 'which side are you on?' but 'who are you?' The answer to this latter question, as the outcome of cultural identity, will always ensure Australia's

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2 Huntington argues that the world can be divided into seven politically and historically distinct civilizations: European, North American, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Latin American, Slavic-Orthodox, African. Membership of these civilizations essentially determines identity and therefore political allegiance. The privileged position of the West is under threat and the result, according to Huntington, will be a more politically and militarily precarious world. See Samuel Huntington, 'The clash of civilizations,' *Foreign Affairs*, Summer, 1992-3.
marginalization in the South East Asian region. In exposing the intransigence of the Euro-Australian identity, Harris contends that difference is the most potent of all contemporary political tools:

When we look around, what we see increasingly — in the Balkans, along the southern rim of Russia, in India, in the Middle-East — is evidence that the clash of civilizations is indeed setting the agenda of the post-Cold War era. When confronted with airy proposals about 'making Australia part of Asia', Australians would do well to ponder that evidence (Harris, 1993: 19).

On the other hand, there are many commentators who would advocate the dissolution of nationhood and what we might call macro cultural allegiances in favour of more particularized 'competing ethnic voices' (Gunew, 1990). Such views would advocate the supersession of any sense of national consciousness or 'nationalism' by a multiculturalism whose internal diversity — and moral approbation of that diversity — would strengthen its collective, regional and even global conjunctures. Castles et al (1990) and Garnaut (1989), in particular, have argued that Australia's culture as well as its international commercial competitiveness would be significantly enhanced by the Asianification of its people. These views have been endorsed by Stuart Harris (1993) who argues further that Australia's immigration policies have been a major element of its general foreign policy program.

Both sides of this argument, and the many variations which surround it, need to be referred more directly to the specific issues of context, both cultural and economic. Consequently, the first section of this study examines the Australia-Asia/Indonesia relationship in general theoretical terms. My aim, once again, is to elucidate the multiplying complexities which function to produce communication; the critical and ideological implications of these processes will be measured in relation to conceptions of cultural difference and identity, and the new global political economy. While the two heuristic fields are integrated in function, they will be separated in order to focus attention on specific areas of interest. Chapter One will explore the notion of Australian Orientalism, most particularly those theories and practical analyses which see Australia's identity as determined by its perceptions and configurations of its region. Chapter Two will look more closely at the political and economic implications of the global postmodern by which Australia and Indonesia are being drawn more closely together through the
facility of international capitalism. The concept of postmodernism is central to these discussions, both as an historical context for the communicative exchanges and as a theoretical facility by which the complex of interactions and meanings may be understood. The two chapters of Section One will attempt to synthesize these complexities through an elucidation of poststructuralist and postmodernist theoretic.3

In the course of Section One the concept of transculturalism will also be clarified. My preference for this concept over others such as internationalism or interculturalism resides in its capacity to represent propinquity and process. As will become clear through the development of my arguments, the notion of trans- (in motion, process) and culturalism (system of meanings) is fundamental to the critical and methodological strategies that are deployed in this study. Most particularly, transculturalism expresses more completely the processes of interaction whereby the partners in a communicative exchange must re-define and realign themselves according to the meanings that are being produced. The new theories of language and discourse which describe the dissolution of the subject-object dichotomy also implicate the subject in the production of meaning. Chapter One, in particular, in examining conceptions of identity and cross-national attitudes, proposes the surrender of more rhizomatic conceptions of subjectivity for a theoretical perspective which acknowledges the 'unfixing' of subjectivity in new modes of transcultural communication.

Paradoxically, the greater integration of the world's nations, ethnic groups, cultures and individuals, facilitated by new technologies and new modes of community, has been accompanied by new theories and ideologies of separation and individuation. The concept of transculturalism, in utilizing new theories of subjectivity, also recognizes that culture itself is dynamic and mutable. Systems of meaning, which are always carried by individuals, are never entirely fixed, closed or stable, but may be open to negotiation and new influences. Consequently, communication between individuals of different cultural sources will produces new modes of communion or 'community'; this

3 While my use of these terms will be elaborated in considerable detail throughout Chapters One and Two, it is worth making some initial comments about my preferences. In particular, I will be interested in that area of postmodernist theory which arises out of the poststructuralist theoretical perspective and its interest in the mediatory powers of language and discourse. While other definitions of postmodernism will be acknowledged, my own use of the term — most particularly as it is compressed with its theoretical source as postmodernist/poststructuralist — is more closely related to the deployment of the term by Lyotard (1984a, 1984b, 1988), Baudrillard (1985), Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987). More specifically, I am following the example of Mark Poster whose analysis of poststructuralism and global information processes (1991) also compresses the concept of postmodernism with its theoretical predecessor.
new community, however, is also mutable and subject to change in time and space. While it is not a fully elaborated theory of inter-cultural communicative exchange, the concept of transculturalism attempts to express this paradox of union and separation, difference and similarity, the universal and the particular. Transculturalism embraces, that is, cultural contiguity and cultural process as immanent to this new mode of communicative transaction in the context of the global postmodern.

In developing the concept of transculturalism, Section One will analyze a number of those Enlightenment derived theories — including the international division of labour and mode of regulation theories — which concern themselves most directly with international economic and power inequities. However, the greater proportion of the section explores the critical and ideological efficacy of those theories which have absorbed the poststructuralist prioritization of language and culture for the analysis of international relations. Among these theories are those which study fictional and news media texts in order to explain the strategies of culture in producing images or representations of the 'self' in relation to the 'other' — the familiar, home culture in relation to the alien. As already indicated, a number of these sorts of studies tend to assume a fundamental cultural distinction or separatism which is also imputed on the general cultural perspective of the First World text: these studies often see the Western First World media or fictional text as producing a 'false' difference by prioritizing itself and its perspective over and above the alien culture. Even further, these studies might actually reverse the priority. by celebrating an Asian or non-Western integrity and difference over the false Western perceptions. Difference, therefore, becomes an ideological agency, part of a new social rhetoric. These analysts endorse and even promote cultural difference, while disavowing what they regard as ideologically dubious distinctions which support racist, jingoistic or xenophobic Eurocentricism. Thus, sometimes crudely following Lacan's translation of Freud, these analysts argue that the familiar, home culture reproduces itself and its identity by reflecting 'difference' against the alien culture. Most often the cultural analyst locates in the fictional and media texts a critical and ideological deficiency by which an essentially super-racist, Eurocentric and xenophobic Australian identity will confirm itself by the production of Asiatic and 'Orientalist' negative stereotypes. Such appalling stereotypes continue to be deployed, according to the proponents of this view, in order also to enhance some economic and political advantage for the Western First World nations.
While this thesis has been most cogently and powerfully developed through the analysis of European Imperialism, most notably in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), a number of cultural commentators have identified clear parallels in the Australian scene. Sneja Gunew (1990), Sylvie Shaw (1992), Alison Bronowski (1992) and Peter Mares (1993) see the continued revivification of the negative Oriental stereotype as a significant impediment to the development of effective and consonant relations between Australia and its neighbours, including Indonesia. Mares, for example, the producer of ABC Radio's Asia-Pacific program, has recently examined a number of texts which represent Australians in contact with Asia; of the Mr Wong American Express advertisement, Mares writes —

The disquieting sub-text of this narrative is that it is ultimately the fate of the white travellers which matters and that Asia is there to be overcome, to be shaped to their needs and purposes.

Of course this sub-text is not just a feature of advertising but of so many narratives which place Australians or Westerners in Asia. A white character is at the centre of the story, with Asians forming a convenient backdrop, being called forward whenever necessary to be quaint, threatening, erotic, or . . . to be killed or saved. All this serves to confirm the rationality, virulence (*sic*) and power of the lead character who is a heroic representative of Western culture in the foreign space of Asia (Mares, 1993: 37).

The limitations of Mares' approach — and the many others like it — reside in his understanding of cultural contiguity and the configurations of subjectivity. Such cultural commentaries tend to view culture and cultural exchange as fixed in separation and difference. They tend to begin from the same rhizomatic position as the putative Orientalists they criticize. In varying ways, 'difference' tends to become ossified as an heuristic and celebratory political category; respect for and elucidation of difference becomes the primary motivation in their analysis. Indeed, in their unflinching disapprobation of the home culture and celebration of ethnic separationism, \(^4\)

\(^4\) While these limitations will be explored fully in the following chapters, it is worth noting that Mares' reading is based largely on the critical and ideological paradigm of postcolonialism, especially as it has been pioneered through the works of Edward Said. Yet, even in this reading of the Mr Wong American Express advertisement, an ad which has been often cited as re-producing pejorative Orientalist stereotypes, there are some obvious difficulties. Notably, the Mr Wong character is the actual hero of the
all but the most incisive of these cultural commentaries tend either to parenthesize or entirely ignore the more complex details of transculturalism. It is a major objective of this study to elucidate these complexities particularly in reference to those fictional and media texts which represent the Australia-Asia/Indonesia communicative context.

Thus, while following similar strategies in textual analysis, the current study will proceed from a somewhat different set of ideological and critical assumptions. In concentrating on the dynamic interactions and precarious negotiations that produce meanings and culture, this analytical approach aims to be more sensitive to counterflows and contradictions — change as much as stasis, formulation as much as resistance, complexity as much as synthesis. Thus, while commentators like Said (especially 1993) might acknowledge the hybrid and mutable nature of culture and meaning formation, the current study would wish to draw such postulation into the foreground of its theoretical considerations. In order to elucidate these points and in obedience to the poststructuralist precepts, especially Foucault's notion of theory/practice, the study will weave the theoretical elaborations of Section One with more direct analysis of a number Australian texts which represent Australia and Indonesia in communication.

It is perhaps also necessary to clarify my use of several key concepts in this study. By 'language' I will be referring to all meanings or sign systems. To this extent I will be following the example of structuralist and poststructuralist theories of discourse. Therefore, lingual systems, language and discourse will be used interchangeably and will not refer only to verbal signifying systems, though of course these systems will be extremely important for the current study. Secondly, the term 'ideology' will be used in the general sense of political belief system. Such 'beliefs' may not be articulated as doctrine or dogma, but may function through discourse as an identifiable political perspective.\(^5\) I am aware that the term has been applied in a variety of ways

\(^5\) I am resisting an overly specific definition here largely because ideology is indeed often unspecified in human action and discourse. My primary interest in the use of this term is to facilitate the textual attitude toward power and politics. This attitude may be
most particularly through Althusser's adaptation of Marx — though in
general I would prefer a less specialized definition. I also distinguish between
critical and ideological processes in language and meaning formation and in
hermeneutics. While I would generally accept the interconnectedness and
ubiquity of power and knowledge, as established by Nietzsche and developed
through Foucault, the distinction facilitates heuristic emphasis and order.
Throughout Section One the further development and deployment of these
concepts in relation to other key terms — poststructuralism, postmodernism
and transculturalism — is designed to satisfy the fundamental theoretical
objectives and heuristic strategies of the study.

Section Two of this study will explore more directly a range of texts which
together constitute a contemporary archive of the Australia Indonesia
relationship. My concern here is to elucidate the relationship as it is produced
from an Australian cultural perspective through a range of texts. Some
further discussion on the selection of texts may be productive. First, it should
be noted immediately that these texts both explore relationships between
Australia and Indonesia, and exist as part of the general archive of that
communication. In other words, specific texts will produce configurations of
individuals interacting with each other and with their spatial and cultural
environment; whether this configuration is artistic, journalistic or quasi-
scientific (social research, business reports etc), it will necessarily be produced
in language. This approach opens the analysis as something of an heuristic
paradox: the texts are both about the communications relationship, and are

expressed in various ways — through individual characters, irony, tone, metaphor and
so on. Texts may also carry more or less complex and contradictory ideological
presentations. Some texts like C. J. Koch's The Year of Living Dangerously presents a
range of ideological perspectives through its deployment of character. Others like
Blanche d'Alpuget's Monkeys in the Dark tend to be more uniform in their ideological
perspective. Moreover, I would include — as the writings of Nietzsche, Foucault and
feminism have described — the 'personal' as a dominion of politics and ideology. One
of the primary objectives of the current study is to examine the way power and ideology
function through the discourse of texts. This objective, however, does not preclude
other heuristic foci which may add to our understanding of the Australia Indonesia
communications relationship.

While the implications of this perspective are more fully explicated below, it is worth
noting in passing that Australian culture is no longer — if it ever was — an
homogeneous formation in the contemporary field. The cultural fluidity represented in
the concept of transculturalism also applies to the Australian culture itself. This is not
just a result of multiculturalism or diversified immigration sources, but a function of
cultural and social dynamism. This national perspective is really a conglomerate of a
wide range of complex and often contradictory views and configurations. As will be
argued in Section One, the cultural perspective should not be simply traduced as a
simplistic conception of xenophobic or superracist European self. The perspective is
more fluid and diverse than this description permits.
the relationship. Meanings are produced at every moment and through
semantic specificities — in description, character, events, contact, trope.
However, when considered at the level of textual system (textual
morphology), the discourse and its meanings become subject to wider
intertextual and cultural contextual connections and systems. The text and its
specificities will produce lingual, cultural and ideological formations which
open them to semiotic analysis in particular. This paradox is not easily
resolved and will be considered more fully in the course of this study.
However, I would argue from the outset that an analysis of texts and the
textual production of meaning should somehow mediate between the
hermeneutic demands of lingual specificity and semiotic interests in cultural
and ideological formations. My aim in this study, and in the process of textual
analysis in particular, is to produce an analysis that acknowledges the
specificities and individuality of a text, but which relates that text to broader
cultural, discursive and ideological systems.  

Secondly, it should be noted that this study does not aim to produce a
general survey of recent texts exploring the Australia Indonesia
communications relationship. Rather, it is the ways in which Australians
imagine and configure themselves and Indonesians in relation to one another
that is of primary interest to this study. As the concept of transculturalism
intimates, this perspective is a multiple formation. Australians imagine
themselves and their nation, Indonesians and Indonesia, from an unfixed and
unstable position; contiguity, contact and communicative exchange tend to
unsettle a perspective which is already irregular and subject to the
counterflow of specificity and system. Again, in locating texts in broader
heuristic fields of reference, in identifying patterns that constitute similarities
and dissimilarities, I would hope that my description of this 'perspective',
through some sort of analytical synthesis, would not unnecessarily reify or
suppress the integrity of the individual text. Moreover, I would wish to
emphasize that my analysis does not proceed from a fundamental assumption
of rhizomatic 'difference' which acts as 'the great divide', to borrow Huysen's
(1986a) phrase, separating the two nation states and their people. On the

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7 This theoretical paradox is also reproduced in broader fields of analysis, especially
poststructuralist/postmodernist commentary where text or discourse becomes identified
with the social or cultural. Derrida's concept of 'writing' and Foucault's notion of
'theory/practice' largely dissolve the old Enlightenment notion of object-subject
division. Semioticians like Roland Barthes and a host of American literary scholars
including Paul de Man have adapted this same theoretical perspective for literary and
textual analysis. Section One of this study looks closely at the difficulties of applying
discourse theory to textual analysis.
contrary, transculturalism with its acknowledgement of contiguity and subjective instability would identify patterns of assimilation and 'dissimulation' in global affairs. The Australian imaginary and the perspective it produces is anything but fixed; it is wide-ranging, irregular and unstable, overlapping, conjunctive and disjunctive.  

Nevertheless, I would hope to reach beyond the limited range of textual subjects analyzed by commentators like Edward Said (1978, 1993) and Alison Bronowski (1992) whose studies of Orientalism explicitly and implicitly dismiss the heuristic and aesthetic efficacy of popular texts. favouring the more élite, canonical arts, Bronowski, in particular, is scornful of many contemporary popular texts for their unthinking reproduction of the negative Orientalist stereotype. Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously*, Bronowski argues, is a mere love story offering no significant insights into the realities of Indonesia (ABC Radio interview, March 25, 1992). Like her mentor, Edward Said, Bronowski considers cinema and television fiction to be restricted by financial as well as artistic considerations, being forced to produce a more popular and 'acceptable' version of Asia and the Oriental. She rails against the repetition of stereotypes and the use of Asia as a background to Australian-white adventurism: 'If young Australians growing up in the 1970s and 1980s drew their images more from film and television than ever before, they would grow up with views of Asia as the Adventure Zone that reinforced some of the old stereotypes' (Bronowski, 1992: 170). Thus, whites remain as central figures in the 'alien' Orient, and indigenous Asians function merely as the passive 'extras' — attendant lords 'to swell a progress, start a scene or two', to borrow Eliot's phrase.

Bronowski's view, of course, is informed by her ideological commitment to the deconstruction of Orientalism; yet such a strategy tends to distort the calibre, content and cognitive possibilities of the archive. An analysis of popular texts would produce a more complete and evenly representative archive. Moreover, the judgement of semiologists like Umberto Eco (1986) and Roland Barthes (1972b, 1984), elaborated in Australia by Turner (1985), Fiske (1989c), Morris (1988), Hodge and Kress (1988), would attach a political

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8 An analysis of texts sourced in Indonesia is beyond the scope of the current study, though such a study would reveal a perspective that is equally irregular and unfixed, one which is not distinguished by a great divide, but which often overlaps, challenges, dissolves, constitutes and struggles in consonance and disjuncture with its Australian counterpart. My own reading of a number of Indonesian texts dealing with the Australia-Indonesia communications relationship indicates that these texts also need to be analysed in reference to the global postmodern and the complexities advanced by the poststructuralist theoretical conception.
dimension to this separation of high and popular art. According to semiology, the elucidation of culture and its meanings can only be accomplished through the analysis of popular texts. Indeed, distinction between popular and high art is regarded with deep suspicion since the putative 'high' art is a political category produced by the intellectual bourgeoisie for reading within its fellowship; the élite status of the group is confirmed by the discourse only it can understand. The paradox noted by many commentators is that liberal progressivist and humanist principles, espoused through orthodoxies of the Academy and pursued by writers like Alison Bronowski, are restrictive and class-based, inevitably excluding the thinking and interests of the popular, the non-intellectual, the television viewer and commercial film goer. It may be that a concentration on the high arts — which in a number of cases is accompanied by a repudiation of national stereotypes like the celebrated 'bushie' and the pejoratively configured Oriental — are manifestations of a more general political superiority. It is hoped that the inclusion of more popular and commercial texts in the current study will broaden our understanding of the Australia Indonesia communications relationship as it further helps to elucidate these sorts of critical and ideological issues.

The third matter relating to selection of texts refers more generally to the actual settings of the texts themselves. Again, a number of cultural commentators have complained about the generalization of Asia or even South East Asia as a cultural category. While this issue will be taken up more fully in subsequent chapters, it has some relevance for the current discussion. Specifically, a number of the texts, like the ABC's Embassy and John Duigan's Far East, deploy a more or less generic Asian location to tell their story. I have included these texts in my more specific discussion of Indonesia since they produce meanings that are more generally associable with that national context. Indeed, this study, while concentrating on Indonesia and Australia, will at relevant moments in the discussion move beyond the borders of these nations to elucidate the global and regional implications of their specific bilateral communication. Those commentators who consistently criticize texts which imagine or represent 'Asia' as a single or generic category fail to

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9 Umberto Eco's parable is instructive: 'Once upon a time there were the mass media, and they were wicked of course, and there was a guilty party. Then there were the various voices that accused the criminals. And Art (ah, what luck) offered alternatives for those who were not the prisoners of the mass media. Well, it's all over. We have to start again from the beginning, asking one another what's going on' (Eco, 1986: 150). It should be said, nonetheless, that I do not necessarily favour the Orientalist stereotype, or any other artistic stereotype. Rather, I would insist on the need to 'know' these linguistic formations and understand them in relation to culture.
comprehend fully the aesthetic and intellectual processes which contribute to the reconstitution of 'actual' space as discourse and as text.\textsuperscript{10} Indeed, considered specifically, Indonesia itself is a discursive aggregate of infinite constituent parts; it is also a constituent part of other categories and cultural flows. Thus, the bilateral relationship between Australia and Indonesia can only be elaborated fully in relation to broader fields of reference — theoretically, culturally and spatially. Consequently, this study will refer to the implications of generic South East Asia, Asia, the West, the First World, Europe or the globe, according to the demands of the current discussion.\textsuperscript{11} To this extent a number of texts set in the region but which have direct relevance for the discussion — for example, Blanche d'Alpuget's \textit{Turtle Beach} (1980), Robert Drewe's \textit{A Cry from the Jungle Bar} (1978), Dennis O'Rourke's \textit{The Good Woman of Bangkok} (1992) and Geoffery Wright's \textit{Romper Stomper} (1992) — will be analysed in relation to Australia's imagination of itself, Indonesia and the South East Asia region generally.

The fourth issue relating to textual selection is also concerned with the arrangement and structure of the discussion. Specifically, I have chosen texts which deal with or in some way represent themes common to academic, governmental and popular discussion. This concern also informs the relative emphasis placed on certain issues and ideas with which the texts themselves deal. While certainly I have wanted to locate and explore a range of issues and perspectives, this objective is balanced by more practical considerations of scope and an equally compelling interest in producing a study that is valuable to the current national discussions. Moreover, Section Two is organized according to a subtle, though hopefully forceful, rhetorical pattern. In accordance with my own theoretical borrowings from poststructuralism —

\textsuperscript{10} All maps, of course, are discourse. To insist that one map — national, geographical, cultural etc. — is the correct and only point of reference is dubious. Claims by commentators like Mares, Shaw, Bronowski and others that the specific national context with identifiable geographic and cultural icons should constitute the only valid artistic or heuristic category to the exclusion of regional or generic categories cannot be sustained.

\textsuperscript{11} Mares (1993a, 1993b), Bronowski (1992), Shaw (1992) and Gehnnan (1993) all make much of this 'genericizing' of Asia though none explores theoretically the implications of their comments. Richard Gehnnan, for example, points out that none of the countries in the region has an indigenous word for 'Asia.' Gehnnan assumes, therefore, that the peoples of the region do not think of themselves as Asian. Of course categorical descriptions only become relevant when the context demands. Regional considerations demand regional descriptions. Concepts like 'Asia' or 'South East Asia' etc. are enlisted in formations like ASEAN and APEC or 'the Asian Games. Moreover, Gehnnan also misunderstands the hybrid nature of language and the way a word like 'Asia' has been adopted into indigenous languages in the region.
from Michel Foucault in particular — each chapter of Section Two will be organized around a substantial postmodernist theme. This strategy will facilitate the development and elaboration of an informing theoretical perspective and the context in which the texts are sited. However, in acknowledgement of the individual text’s integrity, I would also want to insist that these syntheses are only partial closures and do not constitute the analyzed text itself. Indeed, a number of the texts and their themes will be referred to, or partially analysed, in more than one chapter. It is hoped that this strategy will help avoid excessive reification while still producing a cogent and accessible argument.

Thus, to conclude this brief introduction it is perhaps worth summarizing the pattern and import of the argument which follows.—

1. I would restate the significance of the Australia Indonesia communications relationship and the need to review the whole of the cultural archive. In the scope of the current study this review will focus on what may be variously called the contemporary field, the recent past, or the period of postmodernity.12

2. The study concerns itself with the linguistic mediation of the Australia Indonesia relationship. When examined carefully, these textual mediations reveal themselves as a complex of often contradictory, multiple formations which require equally complex analytical strategies for their elucidation.

3. Such strategies also implicate the study in new approaches and conceptualizations, new modes of cognition and definition, most particularly in relation to the production and interpretation of meanings and cultures.

4. Therefore the study seeks to go beyond those recent studies which, in attempting to reconcile complexity with more monadic ideological and heuristic formations, have produced a somewhat limited cultural and transcultural analysis. In particular it is argued that such studies fail to account for the richness and complexity of text, cultural hybridity and transcultural interaction, specifically in the context of Australia Indonesia communication in the global postmodern.

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12 This so-called era of postmodernity is dated in various ways according to various theoretical and historical perspectives. I have no desire to enter the debate, though some general comments on the definition and relevance of postmodernity are offered in the following chapters. The vast majority of texts closely analysed in this study have been produced during the 1980s and 1990s. Only two — C. J. Koch’s The Year of Living Dangerously (1978) and Albert Falzon’s film Morning of the Earth (1972) — were produced earlier.
5. Since conventional modernist analytical systems prove inadequate, it is necessary to apply newer postmodernist derived analytical interests and systems. In fact, the postmodern interest in the individual body provides a useful vehicle and organizational paradigm for the analysis of recent texts dealing with the Australia Indonesia communications relationship. Thus Foucault's interest and application of the body as a discursive phenomenon proves productive. However, the interest in the individual body should also permit broader fields of reference such that 'the body' as corpus becomes a metaphor for these wider or more systematized considerations.

6. Similarly, while the individual text needs to be considered as an independent functioning entity, it must also be seen as an intertextual phenomenon, part of a broader network of cultural and semiotic indices and processes. The body is equally an independent entity and a community of economic, cultural and linguistic processes. It is the greater sensitivity of poststructuralist and postmodernist analysis to this parallel paradox which renders it more suited to the analysis of unstable cultural and transcultural processes.

6. In the analysis of texts the paradox of the body's social, cultural and economic functioning is thematically centralized. More specifically, Chapter 3 analyzes the body as a political agent, Chapter 4 discusses the body as an economic agent in the processes of global capitalism, and Chapter 5 examines the body as a site of pleasure in Australia Indonesia communication. Together these chapters describe the experience of the postmodern body, particularly through the processes of transcultural communication.

7. This new integration of nation-states, cultures and individuals is creating new discursive and lingual formations, new ways of experiencing the world, new constitutions of difference and similarity. Australian communication with Indonesia cannot be simply identified and defined but must be regarded as processual, dynamic, and unstable. To achieve greater communion with our northern neighbour, Australia must acknowledge fully the re-shaping and re-orientation of the world. Analysts must reject theories which simply describe Australia as part of Europe and which implicate Australia and its discourses in the processes of Euro-American imperialism, colonialism and Orientalism. Analysts must adopt new modes of thinking about, and conceiving of, culture and nationhood. Postmodern processes can only be satisfactorily explained by postmodern theoretical and analytical strategies.
SECTION ONE

Australia and Indonesia: Defining the Context
1 Orientalism and the Australian Identity

It was a world seen through a taxi window, a world I could describe but not understand. Before my journey was over I thought I had seen through the outermost layers of this ancient society. Now I am not so sure. What I saw only suggested the existence of further layers too fine for a visitor to dissect. I think I learned less about the Sumatrans in the end than I did about myself.
— Glenda Adams, 'Letters from Jogja'

I. Australia and the Regional Heritage

There have been a number of significant moments in the communications relationship between Australia and Indonesia. During the sixty to seventy thousand years of human prehistory, for example, the archipelago and the continental mass were connected by phasel glacial bridges which in turn facilitated the waves of human migration into the Sabul continent and the development of a unique and longevitous indigenous 'Asian-Australian' culture. While the archaeological and skeletal records are incomplete, it is clear that there were three distinct biological types of Asian Australian, and at least two distinct cultural and technological phases (Flood, 1989, 1990, Thorne and Raymond, 1989). It appears that the more primitive robust skeletal type may have originally populated the continent from Asia, and co-existed, perhaps even inter-bred, with the more modern gracile skeletal type who may have entered Australia during a later glacial period. There appears to be little certainty on this point, though it is possible that the modern Aborigine, whose jaw and skeletal structure are heavier and more primitive in appearance than the gracile predecessor, may be the outcome of a process of hybridization. ¹

The material record, however, demonstrates more clearly that the glacial phases wrought distinct social and cultural changes, as the land bridges opened the stable communities to new influences and communicative exchanges. The most significant of these changes became obvious after the most recent glacial peak when, by around 4-9,000 BP, the Asian dog or dingo

¹The archaeological evidence is somewhat uncertain and prehistorians are tentative in their conclusions. Clearly, the robust and gracile types existed contemporaneously. Gracile skeletal remains found at Lake Mungo in the south west of New South Wales are the oldest yet dated in Australia (around 30,000 years Before Present) and pre-date the more primitive robust type skeletal remains found at the Kow Swamp region of the Murray Basin (6-9,000 BP). See Flood, 1990, pp. 17-22.
appears in the archaeological record and the paleolithic toolkit becomes radically refined by the introduction of new grinding and sharpening techniques, and new forms of implement specialization. There is little disagreement among prehistorians that, combined with the demands of an altered climate and ecology, the source of these new refinements was external, the result of cultural hybridization. In other words, the prehistory of Australia, with its sustained periods of stability, isolation and gradual development, would be opened, nevertheless, by significant phasel interactions, the sorts of international communications which had already hybridized and altered the face and people of continental Asia and Europe and which, by around 1600 AD, are precipitating the radical transformation of the other great continents of America, and central and southern Africa.

At around the same time, 1600, Asian Australians were receiving regular visits from their Indonesian neighbours, the Macassins, a maritime people whose cultures had already been touched by the flow of central and west Asian civilization. Mulvaney (1989) has demonstrated how the host culture in Australia was changed by the Macassins whose annual expeditions in search of the trepang or sea-slug delicacy were recorded in substantial detail in the rock art and cultural mythology of the Kimberley Aborigines. Steel axes and knives were stenciled (and presumably used) by the local Aborigines and implements such as smoking pipes, dugout canoes and, most significantly, the didgeridoo — itself a modern icon of Aboriginal heritage — were adopted into the indigenous culture.

While such cultural exchanges were clearly limited, requiring only modest cultural adjustments, they nevertheless produced genuine changes to the behaviour and imaginations of the host Aboriginal nations. Such hybridizing effects would be amplified many times by the invasion of the British during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Macassins and the continental Australians were able to communicate without substantial threat to their cultures — and personal subjectivities — because the exchanges appear to have produced mutual economic benefits and because their cultures were flexible enough, the temporal and spatial incursions moderate enough, to absorb the changes and realignments demanded by transcultural contiguity. The misunderstandings or 'non-meanings which would have been an inevitable part of such a complex cultural exchange would have merely dispersed with the Macassins' departure and distance that separated the territories of the two peoples. While we can only speculate, it appears that the positive effects of their visits must have overbalanced the negative; the
Kimberley Aborigines would have accepted their visits as part of the seasonal flow, a matter of ritual, trade and political necessity, neither more nor less than the regular interactions with their continental tribal neighbours.  

Yet while the Macassins came and departed, the Europeans came and remained. Much has been written about the impact of the European invasion on the indigenous people and their culture, though relatively little attention has been paid to the impact of the indigenous culture on the invaders, particularly through the processes of cultural hybridization or what social anthropology is now calling 'indigenization'. What has been neglected until quite recently has been the effects of the Asian cultural and environmental context on the Europeans, particularly the British, as they have been forced to adjust to the new circumstances of their ethnic and cultural status. Indeed, while numerous historians have identified the problematic status and identity of the post-invasion culture, most have explained these uncertainties in relation to the racist hostilities of a transplanted Eurocentricism. Humphrey McQueen (1978), for example, equates the development of Australian nationalism with the powerful British xenophobia toward all things Asiatic; for McQueen, the Australian national identity is steeped in conservative British values, as its nationalism is little more than 'British imperialism intensified by its proximity to Asia' (McQueen, 1978: 2). Similarly, Castles et al (1990), in attempting to synthesize some of the more notorious and pre-eminent accounts of the Australian national identity, have explained the problematic status of the culture as an unfortunate fusion of 'imperial morés' and worker 'egalitarian mythology' in the absence of a significant independence struggle; such a struggle, Castles et al suggest, might have provided the impetus for 'the definition of national character, language, culture and myths' (Castles et al, 1990: 7). Yet the essential fabric of the national mythology as it prevails in post invasion Australia is actually defined by negative and exclusionist factors:

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2 There is considerable evidence that tribal nations had developed sophisticated and ritualised interactions with other (usually neighbouring) tribal nations. It is worth noting that many of these exchanges were developed as gestures of goodwill and peaceful co-existence. Scarce resources were traded to guard against unlawful incursion and to ensure general security. In the lake areas of Western Victoria, for example, numerous tribes would congregate for the annual eel hunting. This scarce delicacy was not only shared between nations but the gathering facilitated important cultural exchanges. It is also worth noting that these nations spoke distinctly different languages though clearly some significant meanings were exchangeable. See Flood (1989 and 1990) and The Australian Heritage Commission (1983), *The Heritage of Victoria*, Methuen, Melbourne.
Australia's identity, therefore, has always been problematic. It has been racist, justifying genocide and exclusionism, and denying the role of non-British migrants. It has been sexist, ignoring the role of women in national development, and justifying their subordinate positions. It has idealized the role of the 'common man' in a situation of growing inequality and increasingly rigid class divisions. It has been misleading in its attempts to create a British/Australian ethnicity while ignoring the divisions in the Australian nation state and its Australian off-shoot (Castles et al, 1990: 9).

As John Docker (1991) indicates, this negative conception of the Australian identity seems to be developing into an academic orthodoxy. Many historians and cultural commentators, especially those influenced by new theories of ethnic plurality and postcolonialism, argue that the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 was as much an expression of racist xenophobia and security paranoia as it was a genuine desire for national unity. The Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act and the Pacific Island Labourers Act (1901), passed in the first parliament to supplant the individual colonies' immigration restriction laws, became cornerstones of the White Australia Policy and the major symbol of Australia's national and international independence.

Sneja Gunew (1990, 1993), who like Castles et al (1990) is a major apologist for multiculturalism and ethnic plurality in Australia, goes even further in her claims about the infamies of the Australian heritage and the need to 're-write the archive' as Simon During (1992) puts it. Gunew sees significant links between the destruction of the indigenous culture, the neocolonialism that produced it, and the historiography which conceives it. Following Said's (1978, 1993) thinking on historical connections and the need to re-examine historical canons, Gunew points out that even 'postcolonialism', whose ideas and methods are establishing themselves as significant elements in this new academic orthodoxy, is an unsatisfactory nomenclature because it implies that the problem is passed: 'There has been a burgeoning of academic courses and conferences dealing belatedly with Australia's legacy of oppression towards its indigenous peoples. In effect, this absolves non-Aboriginal Australians from having to analyse Australian neocolonialism, its internal colonizations, or the many other ways in which power relations operate unequally in this country' (Gunew, 1993: 449).
This sort of historiography and cultural commentary which attempts to challenge what it regards as ideologically unsound descriptions by producing its own oppositional version is modelled, of course, on the Marxist teleology.\(^3\) However, through the influence of Foucault and other poststructuralists, Gunew and others like her have wanted to enhance their teleology through a more sustained interest in discourse and the way language effects the production of knowledge. However, as Michel Foucault, among others, argues in *The Order of Things* (1974) such an approach may endanger the integrity of specific and discontinuous historical elements.\(^4\) As we shall pursue in detail below, Foucault attempts to accommodate this tension between specificity and historical continuity through an elucidation of discourse as the mediatary dimension of all historical data. It is this paradigm which influences the work of Edward Said who, in analyzing imperialist and Orientalist processes in the period of modernity, would hope to reconcile the sometimes contradictory heuristic demands of specificity and continuity. For Said, whose work is clearly influencing the current re-examination of Australia's cultural heritage, there can be no distinguishing the past from the present; the discourse and its material, economic, political exigencies simply merge with one another: 'there is just no way the past can be quarantined from the present. Past and present inform each other; each implies the other, and in the totally ideal sense . . ., each co-exists with the other' (Said, 1993: 2). The present, that is, will impose its heuristic will — its own intellectual and ideological architecture — over the past. However — and this is a criticism that has been powerfully levelled against Marxist teleology — if the totalizing impulse is excessively monodirectional or neglectful of the historical specificity, then the historiography may be deemed to have failed.

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\(^3\) Postmodern pluralism, as we shall discuss below, of course rejects Marxist teleology because of its tendency to produce totalizing descriptions which exclude oppositional diversity. However, those theoretical models of postmodernism which are interested in ideology and resistance often appear to produce similar forms of totalizational descriptions. Very often too they appear to be seeking forms of social villainy in causal and oppositional terms.

\(^4\) Foucault's views are developed in some detail during the course of this study. It is worth noting that many commentators have been puzzled by Foucault's interest in discontinuity, suggesting that his major writings still locate patterns through historical change. Foucault, however, has used the concept of discontinuity as a methodological challenge to those histories which concern themselves with teleology. Foucault, in arguing for an analysis of 'microphysics' as opposed to a structural (especially Marxist) teleology, is directing attention away from the notion of historical destiny and ultimate outcomes. See for a further discussion of Foucault's historiography Poster (1985 and 1989), Cousins and Hussein (1984), Boyne (1990b) and Kritzman (1989)
The balance, of course, is difficult to achieve. Said and the many others who follow his example would hope to retrieve the past from imperialist hegemony, the sort of Eurocentricism or Britishism that has dominated the historical and fictional writings during the era of modernity. Yet in producing a new archive, a new version of the past, present-day historians and cultural commentators might also be overriding specificity to satisfy ideological or heuristic objectives. Such may well be the case in McQueen, Castles et al and Gunew's histories of Australian nationalism and national identity which seem unable to absorb and explain the innumerable details which challenge their consummatory descriptions. Through their critique of the present social field, these analyses, in seeking their explanations in the past, have tended to identify continuities which demonstrate an ideologically disreputable growth to national consciousness in Australia. This strategy does not fully account for the processes of hybridization, cultural interchange and reformulation which, despite the obvious importance of the British heritage in the colonies, nevertheless significantly transformed the new arrivals and their culture into something other than what it was, something 'different' from the European source. McQueen's belief that Australian nationalism and national identity were little more than transplanted European imperialist and xenophobic values seems to neglect the many contrary and contradictory sentiments that were transforming the colonial society.

In particular, it fails to account fully for the strength and efficacy of anti-British and anti-imperial sentiment that many other historians (notably Ward, 1958) and semiotologists (Turner, 1985, Molloy, 1990) have seen as a significant part of national identity. Equally, and perhaps even more significantly, it neglects the interaction between the invaders and the indigenous peoples over whom they swarmed, and, in particular, the transforming and mutating effects of these interactions on the European culture itself. Rather, historians have tended to see the effects of cultural interaction as largely monodirectional. The natives were overwhelmed, mistreated, their culture and their lands appropriated and dissolved. Malthusianism, social Darwinism and imperialism became the intellectual agents of an unjust and savage invasion; the Australian Aborigines are regarded as another of history's victims.

In fact, the cataclysmic decline of the indigenous Asian\(^5\) culture and the death and hybridization of the original inhabitants of the continent did not

\(^5\) I claim broadly that Australia's indigenous settlement and culture were geographically rooted in Asia. This is an archaeological point. Aboriginal Australians arrived from the Asian archipelago and entered the continent
precipitate the occlusion of interaction between the predominant European culture and the 'subordinant' Asian cultural and physical environment. The Europeans themselves were culturally indigenized, some clinging to the traditions of the European (especially ruling class) heritage, others more inclined to reject the 'old world' in favour of something new and transforming. In either case, change was inevitable and the complex divisions and differences between the colonialists and the Euro-British source became evident both in terms of social and political formation\(^6\) as well as in general cultural terms. Indeed, despite the continual replenishment of Euro-British influences through immigration, and despite the very obvious installation of many British institutions in the colonies, differences continued to develop and become strengthened during the Federation period and after.

A number of recent commentators have, in fact, identified the growing strength of these changes during the course of the twentieth century in historical events and in the more subtle expressions of national media, art and literature.\(^7\) While the radical, anti-imperialist and utopian idealism that many (e.g. Ward, 1958, Barrett, 1973, Roe, 1971, Turner, 1979) have documented as evidence of a new social, political and psychological order, may need to be understood in relation to other, more conservative political formations (McQueen, 1978, White, 1981), such oppositionalism demonstrates the significance of geographical and cultural distance which had already and inevitably distinguished the former colonies from their English origins. If a clear example of the ambiguity of imperial loyalties were required, then the savage social divisions caused by Billy Hughes' conscription referendum would surely suffice; imperial loyalties could not be assumed but existed as much as contingencies of economic and security interests as by emotional and

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\(^6\) Perhaps even in physiognomy. The so-called currency lads, the first generation of Antipodean born colonialists, were often described as distinctive by European visitors to New South Wales. These descriptions, which identified the lads as tall, strong and tanned, identified merely superficial differences based more on climate and the demands of physical labour. These descriptions are symbolic, however, as they distinguish the first born generation from their heritage in an obvious and locatable manner.

\(^7\) See Graeme Turner's *National Fictions* (1985) and Bruce Molloy's *Before the Interval* (1990) for an analysis of Australian film and literature during the post Federation period. Turner and Molloy locate significant ambivalences and ambiguities in the representation of the Australian character, most particularly in relation to the former colonial master. See also Richard White's *Inventing Australia* (1981) which also attempts to describe and explain the national identity as the outcome of complex and often contradictory claims.
imaginary connections. The Australia of the twentieth century demonstrates this ambivalence continuously, just as it demonstrates an uncertainty about its own social calibre, its self-imagination, its cultural constitution.

Again, while a number of commentators have recognised and written about this uncertainty in relation to Britain and the imperial ambit, fewer have related the ambivalence to the interactive processes that connect Australia to its own Asian heritage and cultural connections with the Asian region. However, when we look more closely at our artistic and literary heritage during the century several works stand out as genuinely perceptive in their understanding and configuration of this ambivalence. Patrick White's *Voss* and *Fringe of Leaves*, Randolph Stow's *Tourmaline* and *To the Islands*, Charles Chauvel's *Jedda* and *Uncivilized*, and paintings by Albert Tucker, Russell Drysdale and Ray Crooke, for example, all represent attempts to understand the significance of the cultural interaction for modern Australia. Indeed, what these and many other cultural works demonstrate is the relationship between Australia's sense of self with its questioning and exploration of the imperial communion and its own cultural constituency, especially its Asian constituency. From the end of the Second World War up to and including the present, this coupling of the two issues seems to have become strengthened as to be, in the current discussion, virtually indivisible.

Thus, in returning our attentions more directly toward the Australia Indonesia connection, we can see that this question is pre-eminent in the development of Australian security and economic policies during this period. The break-up of the great empires during the Second world War and after (Doyle, 1986, Magdoff, 1978) produced its own effects on the psychology and and cultural ordering of the previously colonised peoples of the world. Australia's own ambiguous status as a post-colonised nation, along with an intensification of its already significant sense of economic and military vulnerability, produced in the immediate postwar period some further fracturing in relations between Australia and Britain. Margaret George (1980) argues that this vulnerability and the anti-imperialist sentiments within the union movement and the Australian Labour Party during the postwar period,

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8 Ambiguous, that is, because Australia, like Canada and New Zealand, was comprised largely of free immigrants who vastly outnumbered the antecedents of the indigenous people. While many of these 'new arrivals' and their children challenged the political heritage and imperialism of the old mother country, others remained complicit with it. The nationalism which united the people of Indonesia from colonial servitude was never required in Australia, and so Australia's anti imperialism has never been fully galvanised into a social or nationalist political movement.
inclined Australian foreign policy toward a more radical position in relation to its Asian neighbourhood. In her analysis of the role of Australia in the Indonesian revolution, George points out that the Australian Labour government's own ambitions often contravened the wishes of the British cabinet, as they certainly frustrated the continuing imperialist ambitions of the Hague. The derisive concept of 'Dutch Courage', a reference to the Netherlands' regional capitulations and indebtedness for Australian war support, became a popular focus for cartoonists and columnists in the postwar period. Also at the popular level, Australian waterside workers mounted a concerted campaign against the Dutch, refusing to load Dutch ships bound for Indonesia and, in consonance with official government policy and the decree of the United Nations Security Council, savagely rebuking the Dutch Police Actions against the Indonesian Republicans. For George the popular and official sympathy for the Indonesian independence movement marks a significant moment in Australia's history, one which, nonetheless, is characterized by contradiction and uncertainty:

Although the Labour government's approach to the Dutch-Indonesian dispute was bold and radical as an Australian foreign policy, clearly it was not uniformly or consistently progressive, nor did it constitute a successful adjustment to the changes to Australia's regional, strategic or foreign policy environment. Australia assumed a diplomatic posture towards Indonesia which contained at once realism and idealism, acceptance and intolerance, optimism and insecurity. Historically, Australia had achieved a special relationship with Indonesia, but Australia's ideological isolation continued to inhibit Labour's visualization of the shape and substance of its bilateral relationship with a sovereign power (George, 1980: 187-8).

Such contradictions and incongruities appear to have survived the Independence struggle, tending to dominate more recent descriptions of the

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9 Other historians such as Adrian Vickers (1990a) would dispute this assessment of the Labour government's anti-imperialist inclinations. In his discussion of the influence of Kipling's influence on Australian thinking, Vickers makes a brief reference to Doc Evatt's neocolonialist utterances in the immediate postwar period. George, however, points out that the Labour government and Evatt himself often carried contradictory attitudes and sympathies. The desire to hold a significant place in Asian and Pacific affairs has continued as a major ambition of Australian foreign policy. Whether 'influence' and 'imperialist domination' can mean the same thing also continues as a major issue for debate.
Australia Indonesia international relationship and, more specifically, Australia's attitude and response to its neighbour. While the incorporation of West Papua (West Irian or Irian Jaya) into the Republic was a problematic issue during the civil war, the invasion and annexation of East Timor in 1975-6 caused even greater ripples of official and community anguish in Australia and in other regions of the world. In his account of the events of the period, Gough Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia at the time of the invasion, suggests that the reality of the situation and the demands of international diplomacy could not be fully elucidated because of the hostility of the Australian media. Years after the event, Whitlam tells us, it 'is still most difficult to have an informed or rational discussion on East Timor in Australia because Australian journalists have been embittered by the death of five of their colleagues at Balibo on the 16th of October 1975' (Whitlam, 1980: 765).

This frustration with the Australian press's reporting of Indonesia resonates also through the official policies and postures of subsequent national governments. As attempts are made to forge stronger and more productive relations with Indonesia, Government representatives like Foreign Affairs Minister, Gareth Evans (Evans and Grant, 1991), have exhorted Australian journalists to adopt a more reasonable, informed and sympathetic attitude toward the northern neighbour. Such exhortations have prompted Damien Kingsbury in an article in the Australian Journalism Review to attempt a reconciliation of the demands of government with the requirements of fair and accurate reporting. Government criticism of journalists, Kingsbury notes, derives from a general belief that the reporting is 'insensitive and at times hostile, resulting from a lack of understanding of Indonesian culture' (Kingsbury, 1992: 58). Yet in surveying a number of journalists who have worked in Indonesia, Kingsbury finds that most would agree that this putative lack of understanding is overstated and that the central issue is that Indonesia is directed by a repressive military government hostile to free press. The notable exception to this account is expressed by The Australian's foreign editor, Greg Sheridan, who follows a general editorial line when he claims: 'The political system is part of the culture to the extent that Indonesia has a culture. It might be a diverse culture, a self-contradictory culture, a culture with lots of regional variations, but the people of Indonesia are not unique amongst the people of the world in not having a unified culture and the political system... is part of the broad culture' (quoted in Kingsbury, 1992: 60).

In recent times, the journalism which focuses on human rights abuses (Dili massacre), military expansionism (East Timor, West Papua), endemic corruption
(the Suharto letters) or general social repression (political censorship and 'guided democracy') is being challenged by the journalism which aims to produce more consonant international relations built on trust, understanding and mutual economic advantage. Certainly, the editorial policy of *The Australian* newspaper, magazine articles like Peter Mares' 'Asia and Australia' (1993, see Introduction) and television series like *The Tail of the Tiger* (ABC, 1992) can be viewed as part of a more general revitalization in thinking about, and representation of, Australia and Indonesia. Nevertheless, a significant contradiction exists within the media for which there is no simple resolution: on the one hand the Australian media would insist on the absolute and unassailable virtue of democratic principles, especially those of freedom of speech and universal suffrage; but on the other hand, there is also a liberalism which acknowledges the right to individual self-determination, cultural independence, national sovereignty and the utility of economic advancement. In its reporting of so-called sensitive topics such as the Indonesian elections, the East Timor Gap Treaty or the 'kidnapping' of the Gillespie children in Malaysia, the Australian media has found itself at times morally and ideologically crippled not only by the practicalities of government and management policies but also by anxieties which relate to broader uncertainties about national and regional selfhood. The same ambivalences and contradictions may be identified among the broader Australian community where individuals might feel considerable dissatisfaction with Indonesia’s human rights record — especially the slaying of Australian journalists on East Timor — but who would appreciate the need to enhance trading links with the region, happily directing the wealth such trade provides toward a ten day sojourn on the sunny beaches of Bali.

This ambivalence cannot be explained by claims of separateness and cultural distance; it is not that Australians and their media want to have their 'economic cake' and be able to eat it without the contamination of cultural propinquity. Nor can the desires of journalists and other human rights advocates be simply summarized as superior Western progressive liberalism wishing to impose its cultural will — its ideology — over its less developed and less enlightened neighbours. Rather, these contradictory attitudes are ensigns for a national perspective, an identifiable cultural knowledge: Australia is not and never has been either a geographical or cultural occlusion, but is an open, dynamic and hybrid outcome of a heritage which includes its Asian elements and its relations with its region. Thus, in reviewing Australia’s cultural condition, we should not be asking superficial questions about
whether Australia is or even can be 'part of Asia'; rather, we should be looking to the minutiae and flux, the elements and flows, which constitute a culture and which, in the case of Australia, have created a discourse of nationhood that is steeped in uncertainty and ambiguity.

This peculiar status has been recognised by Gough Whitlam whose well cited 'new nationalism' may be seen as an effort to liberate Australia from the desperation of Euro-directional thinking, the mask that had confounded identity during the period since federation. When Whitlam writes about the East Timor problem and the complex interrelationship that had directed his government's diplomatic policies and actions, there is the pervasive sense that Australia could not occlude itself from the general political life of the region. Australia's status in the region was made all the more precarious by its contradictory impulses to political humanism and regional participation. Whitlam understood during the crisis that no amount of Australian governmental manoeuvring could reconcile the two impulses since 'Australia, although European and Christian in civilization, would not be accepted as a party principal in colonial disputes in the region and would not be supported in such disputes by her great and powerful friends in the northern hemisphere' (Whitlam, 1980:765). More particularly, Whitlam understood that Australia's isolation in the region included its isolation from the other ASEAN countries who continued to vote with Indonesia or abstain in the UN General Assembly on the East Timor issue.

Clearly, these same ambiguities and contradictions are emerging through the current interest in Australia's place in Asia, and most specifically in discussions about Australia's relationship with Indonesia. The regional economic boom from the later 1980s and Australia's apparently commensurate decline have accentuated discussions on regionality, identity and most recently Australia's political status as a constitutional monarchy. Arndt had noted in 1980 that the great opportunities for trade expansion with Indonesia, cited in the 1975 Senate Report on the issue, had not been realised because of the two nations' different social and historical orientations (Arndt, 1980: 751-2). Similarly, Ross Garnaut (1989) has seen Australia's economic destiny as

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10 The same tensions exist in relation to Australia's diplomatic and security excursions in Cambodia and through the development of the APEC conference (1993). While Australia would like to play a major role in the region, its diplomatic efforts continually encounter internal and external suspicions and fears of cultural hubris. This suspicion is articulated most often by Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahatir whose non-attendance at the APEC conference was seized upon by the Australian media as a further example of Australia's own fallibility and non-acceptance within the region.
integrally linked to the region. Garnaut assumes a pre-existing and divisive cultural distance when he argues that Australia should create 'open-door' policies to attract Asian investment and Asian migration, with a distinct re-orientation of the education process in favour of Asia, Asian languages and Asian culture. And the 1993 Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Australia's Relations with Indonesia argues for the enhanced development of productive and consonant relations with one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

While many of these texts, and others which take a utilitarian view of regional integration, sense the significance of culture and history in economic transaction, most continue to assume that culture and identity can be as simply manipulated as production outputs or technology deployment. Equally, they follow the lead of a number of cultural analysts and journalists in assuming that Australia has no genuine Asian heritage and that the national identity may be described without reference to the particularities of such an inheritance. While we might identify a number of contradictions arising from and between these texts, their authors themselves tend to deflect or even neutralize uncertainties about culture or identity through somewhat scant and superficial reference to Australia's British heritage and the disengagement of the imperial connection. Indeed, even the analyses of recent fictional texts which explore Australia's relationship with Indonesia and Asia more generally, fail to grasp fully the implications and contradictions which arise from their discourse and which the fictional texts most cogently represent.

My aim in presenting this brief historical overview of the Australia Asia/Indonesia relationship, has been to elucidate some of the more conventional assumptions about Australia's identity and cultural status in relation to its region, and to establish some contrary perspectives. In Glenda Adams' story 'Letters from Jogja' the narrator-protagonist discovers in her transcultural experiences in Indonesia that the act of speech uncovers as much about the speaker and her speech as it does about the focus of her interest. Language, that is, becomes the central issue for the discovery and location of self; such conclusions are central to the analysis of national identity which we are currently pursuing. As indicated in the Introduction, the experience of transculturalism brings communicators together in language, and demands, inevitably, the realignment of self. While more shall be said of this process below, my aim here is merely to introduce the idea that communication itself draws participants together and that this propinquity creates its own instability for identity, especially in cross-cultural
communications. It is the function of language to hold the communications within its borders, to facilitate the 'crisis', the tension and the possibility of reconciliation for identity. As Glenda Adams' story illustrates, it is only through language — or more broadly discourse — that the world and knowledge may be mediated or communicated. Transcultural communications demonstrates more acutely perhaps than intracultural communications that the self as it exists in language is both precarious and incomplete.

In fact, these 'layers of meaning' Adams' narrator uncovers in language approximate in a sense to what Foucault (1972, 1974) calls the 'archaeology of knowledge' and more broadly to the general poststructuralist conceptualization of history. Jacques Derrida in following Nietzsche and Heidegger, has treated history as the province of language, where 'writing' — ecriture — is tantamount to all assumed reality. In Of Grammatology, for example, Derrida installs the concept of writing as the approximation of everything; 'writing' replaces language as the central concept in Derrida's scheme in order —

...to designate not only the physical gestures of literal pictographic or ideographic inscription, but also the totality of what makes it possible and also, beyond the signifying face, the signified face itself. And thus we say 'writing' for all that gives rise to an inscription in general . . . the entire field covered by the cybernetic program will be the field of writing (Derrida, 1974: 9).

The influence of this seemingly benign proclamation has been immense, and a number of recent cultural and historical analyses have tried to absorb at least some aspects of the poststructuralist primacy of language over materiality as an heuristic focus. Adrian Vickers (1990), for example, in his elucidation of Balinese history has wanted to explain that 'Bali' itself is a created concept, a fusion of external (including Western) and internal (Balinese and Jakartan) attitudes, policies, perceptions and linguistic productions. Vickers states in his introduction to Bali: A Created Paradise that 'Ultimately there is no single "real" Bali. When the packaging is unwrapped, we are left with something of a Pandora's box of political struggle, individual glory and suffering, optimism and frustration, in short both a nightmare and a "day-dream of a summer's afternoon" ' (Vickers, 1990b: 7, sic). Similarly, Alison Bronowski, in her book The Yellow Lady: Australian Impressions of Asia (1992), produces a montage of literary, artistic and popular images of Asians and Asian culture. In both
cases, these texts have wanted to demonstrate the significance of language (in the broad sense of all systematic representation) in producing the 'reality' of culture. However, and again this point will be more fully elaborated below, neither of these texts, nor the rising number of other studies in the area (e.g. Woolcott, 1992, Coenewan, 1992, Tiffen, 1990, Shaw, 1992, Chua, 1992, 1993, Mares, 1993), is able to embrace fully the implications of the poststructuralist precept, preferring, it would seem, an attachment to critical and ideological forms that retain the subjugation of language by material reality.

As we shall see, these texts, in fact, derive their heuristic force more from Edward Said's (1978, 1986b, 1993) translation of poststructural theory as a means of dissolving Western Orientalism, than from their own internal theoretical efficacy. While Said's influence and the theoretical conventions of Orientalist deconstruction will be outlined in detail later in this chapter, it is worth noting that this approach — like McQueen, Gunew and Castle et al's — is also quite explicitly political in its orientation. Indeed, cultural and cross-cultural analysis is characterized by a commitment to a new politics which, as we have already noted, emphasizes cultural difference and the linguistic formations that produce that difference as foci for critical and ideological analysis. Most specifically, many cultural analysts locate in European — and Australo-European — nationalism and superracism a political and cultural hegemony that is supported through both economic and linguistic structures. The Western 'identity' is therefore forged through well established, even institutionalized, conventions of superiority. McQueen, Gunew and Castle et al's revilement of the Australian nationalism and identity as 'transplanted' British imperialism and racist xenophobia is constructed around these fundamental ideological and critical conceits.

In analyzing transcultural communications in the context of the global postmodern, we might find some difficulty with the breadth and all embracing nature of these conclusions. While culture as a concept has become more prominent in recent discussion and the role of contradiction in cultural analysis seems to be taking us beyond some of the more consummatory descriptions of Australian national consciousness and identity, our histories still seem to lack the theoretical or methodological convictions that would facilitate a more complete understanding of our Asian heritage. My aim here has been to draw attention to the significance of transcultural propinquity and cultural hybridization as historical issues, and to prepare the way for a more elaborate explanation of my application of poststructuralist theory for the study of Australia Indonesia communications. The remainder of this chapter is
dedicated to a more complete analysis of the method of Orientalist
deconstruction, particularly as it relates to the Australian identity. Chapter
Two will place this analysis of transcultural communications into the
postmodern global context. While here I am more concerned to explore the
cultural implications of identity — especially in relation to notions of cultural
difference — Chapter Two will look more closely at the interaction between
cultural configurations and the global political economy. Through each of
these chapters the concept of transculturalism — communications between
two more or less distinct cultures — will be more fully explored. Most
particularly, the transcultural interaction between Australia and Indonesia will
be elaborated through the context of what Stuart Hall (1991b) calls the global
postmodern. Together these chapters will establish and define those concepts
necessary for a more direct analysis of fictional and media texts which
represent the communications relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

II. Orientalism in Australia

While a systematic study of Australia's cultural relationship with Asia has been
a long time coming, the concept of 'Orientalism' appears to have established
itself in recent times as a favoured point of departure, both for general
Asiologia and specific postcolonial analysis. It is perhaps a commonplace of
the poststructuralist influence that linguistic configurations like 'the Orient'
should inspire the critical vitriol of deconstruction. Alison Bronowski's recent
and widely read examination of Australian impressions of Asia, The Yellow
Lady, is vehement in its account of Australia's colonial re-adaptation of the
European stereotype. In their unique position as Europeans in the Asia-Pacific
region, Australians

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11 The first department of Oriental studies was established in Australia as early as 1918
at Sydney University. The style of scholarship, however, was more concerned with the
classical history and cultural foundations of China and Japan, paying little attention to
contemporary issues and international relations. At Melbourne University in the
following year long term Australian resident but Japanese born, Moshi Inagaki,
initiated a fee paying non-degree course in Japanese language. Yet as John Legge has
described (Legge, 1990) a systematic and thoroughgoing academic approach to Asia
remained patchy until after the Second World War when Asian studies courses began to
appear firstly at the Canberra University College (now ANU) in 1944, and at the
Universities of Tasmania and Western Australia in 1945. Significantly, this increasing
academic interest in the region occurred contemporaneously with an equally burgeoning
interest in Australian history and broader aspects of Australian cultural studies.
if they so decided ... could jettison the European imperial practice of exploiting colonised people. They could reject Orientalism: the European vision of all Eastern peoples as exotic, remote, inferior, and subject to the political, military, economic, cultural and sexual dominance of the West (Bronowski, 1992: 2).

Following McQueen's disparagement of Australian nationalism as 'British imperialism intensified by its proximity to Asia' (McQueen, 1978: 2), Bronowski conceives of a colonial and postcolonial Australian society steeped in ignorance and fear. The Oriental stereotype informs popular and official attitudes, national identity, aesthetic and cultural representations of itself and its Asian neighbours. This national failure may be simply explained:

To say that most settler Australians did not welcome Asians as neighbours is an understatement. Their European education gave them little preparation for dealing with the region. They were hostile to anyone who shared their territorial ambitions. They feared Asia's teeming millions might take the empty land from them as easily as they had taken it from the Aborigines. They were protective of their gold, of their jobs and of their working conditions, and of 'their' women, and again it was Asians who were assumed to want them. Fear, ignorance, and bigotry fermented hostility (Bronowski, 1992: 3).

Following McQueen and others, Bronowski seems to assume that European social structures and the attitudes which support them could be simply transferred to the colonial context, that self-validating attitudes of British racial, national and cultural supremacy could be re-modelled and re instituted in Australia. As we shall see below this historical transfer theory necessarily overrides a range of significant differences that actually separated the two spatial and cultural dominions.

The intention here is not to discount entirely Bronowski's assessment of the Australian colonial culture, but to clarify its absolutist and teleological tone. Bronowski's assessment of the Australian character as vicariously imperialist, and predominantly xenophobic and racist, subsumes many of the complexities

12 McQueen has recently revised his assessment of Australian nationalism, observing significant changes in Australian attitudes to multiculturalism and Australia's (especially economic) relationship with Asia.
of the contemporary social condition; her conclusions, however, accord with the general view (e.g. Phillips, 1958, Ward, 1958, Yarwood, 1964, McQueen, 1978, Castles et al 1990, Legge, 1990, Vickers, 1990a, Brown, 1990) that Australia was largely a Eurocentric national entity which carried neglectful or negative attitudes toward its own region from the colonial period until quite recently. In particular, Bronowski's use of the ideo-theoretical concept of Orientalism accords with the many other recent analyses of Australian attitudes toward Asia. Like Shaw (1992), Chua (1992, 1993), Gunew (1993), Mares (1993) and Vickers (1990b), Bronowski has noted that Australian image-makers in art, literature, film and television, at least until quite recently, tend to treat South East and North Asia as the Orient or the Far East, a land of mystery, of political, imperial and sexual adventure. In a series of promotional interviews and seminars on *The Yellow Lady* Bronowski makes the significant claim that her book represents the first genuine synthesis of the creative configurations of Asia by Australian artists and writers (Monash University seminar, May 1992, ABC Interview, *Late Night Live*, 2/4/1992). Moving beyond the realm of popular discourse, Bronowski claims that even those highly regarded creative thinkers who have been strongly influenced by Asia — people as diverse in interest, character and historical context as Tom Roberts, Percy Grainger and Hal Porter — suffered from the sort of imaginative excesses, sexism and racial ignorances that characterize this generic formulation of the Orient: Western Orientalism. The enigmatic Grainger, for example, while absorbing and celebrating the musical influences of the Asian region and dreaming of an Australian based centre for the study of Asia-Pacific music, remains cloyed, according to Bronowski, by the ineluctable prejudices of the general community:

The race hatred Grainger was reflecting, because he shared it, had been present in Australia and the United States for over a century and had caused a sort of 'war within itself' against Chinese in both countries. Like other Australians who thought of themselves as humane, he . . . shared the pseudo scientific belief in a hierarchy of types with his type at the top, which would be weakened by the presence of lower races . . . It was Australia's right, according to the orthodoxy, to study the neighbours' cultures and to offer them aid and education, but they were unfit to live in Australia because they would introduce 'race hatred'. At the time of Grainger's death Australian government representatives were still
advancing this line in South East Asia and expected it to be accepted (Bronowski, 1992: 49).

Grainger's social background and artistic output — eclectic as they might be — cannot save him from the sorts of racist ubiquities that penetrated to the very highest levels of government. It is this same racial politics, according to Bronowski, which also informs the sexual imagery of other 'internationalists' of the same social stock, including painters like Arthur Streeton and Norman Lindsay. Bronowski makes much of the fact that Lindsay had never visited Indonesia, though felt entirely uninhibited in configuring in art the passions and fantasies of The Balinese Dancer or Oriental Woman (1920), a figure not unlike many of Lindsay's other classical and Bacchanalian fantasies, naked, with voluminous thighs and breasts, and obviously transported in a swoon of sexual ecstasy. This hybridization of Lindsay's career-long interest in the redemptive power of classically inspired sexual potency is interpreted as reflecting Lindsay's belief in the hierarchy of racial types and 'European Orientalist assumptions about the inscrutability and moral laxity of Eastern women' (Bronowski, 1992: 51).

Bronowski sees the vast majority of Australian representations of Asia as conforming to this general pattern, with only very few — mostly very recent works by cultural producers who have actually lived and worked in Asia — offering some alternative; among this small group it is primarily the work of women which is uncontaminated by Orientalist inclinations to sexual and patriarchal domination. Indeed, Bronowski argues that the successful nurture of Australia Asia communications depends critically on the successful redefinition of the Australian identity as Antipodean (self) and the Asiatic as Oriental (other) (Bronowski, 1992: 14, 204-5). Europe is the self, the real source of civilization which the Australians share vicariously though, as Antipodean (literally 'opposite foot'), from a great distance. The other is the Orient, the external identity by which the self can be known, felt and nurtured through nostalgic lament and homesickness, through the greater adulation of the greater civilization. Yet for Bronowski this imagined Orient and imagined civilization contrasts starkly with the facts since "The absurdity was that the real Orient was another great source of civilization, closer to them than Europe. And in 1901, more than 30,000 Chinese were living side by side with other Australians' (Bronowski, 1992: 14, emphasis added). Australia looks to Britain and Europe for its identity as civilized self and to Asia for reinforcement of this separateness, this closure; Bronowski tells us, however,
that the real Asia within Australia's neighbourhood and borders could have provided Australians with all the 'civilization' their identities and sense of national consciousness they might require.

In these pronouncements, Bronowski accords with a good deal of recent writing on the condition of the postcolonial world in highlighting the significant ideological content of national identity (selfhood and consciousness) and Orientalism, themselves propitious of the forms of Western hegemony and imperialist domination so vigorously attacked by postcolonial theorists. Her preference for a postmodern iconography which parodies conventions of the Oriental stereotype (Bronowski, 1992: 158), her celebration of pro-Eastern or pro-feminine fiction which 'accurately' or 'realistically' represents the Asian context and Asian personalities, and her disavowal of contemporary film and television representations of Asia which serve mass audience predilections for the Orientalist stereotype, distinguish Bronowski's postcolonial political affiliations. To this extent, Bronowski favours an ideology which valorizes political ethnicism or pluralism and sustains a foundational interest in older forms of humanist liberalism within its poststructuralist/postmodernist influences:13 'Artists in any society have an obligation to explore beyond its limits ... it is clear that until Asia occupies a place equal to that of the West in Australian minds, the nation's pursuit of its interests will remain distorted. If Australia's identity and self-image are to change, they must therefore do so in a way that locates Australia in the Asia-Pacific hemisphere' (Bronowski, 1992: 205).

Yet while such exhortations are based so fundamentally on a delineated distance between the 'imagined' identity (self and other) and the 'real' Orient, The Yellow Lady provides few critical or theoretical insights into this distinction. In fact, as with Adrian Vickers' Bali: A Created Paradise, The Yellow Lady seems distinctly shy of its own theoretical implications, and Bronowski herself has attempted to deflect some of the criticisms of her book by denying any ambition to academic or methodological rigour (Monash University Seminar, May 1992). Little wonder, therefore, that reviewers have found the study irritatingly incomplete and analytically erratic, despite its admirable shift in emphasis. Humphrey McQueen, for example, describes the book as 'disorganized', 'confusing, lacking genuine insights, and better suited

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13 See in particular Sections IV and V which discuss the cultural productions of the past two decades. Bronowski's own diplomatic background encourages a particularly sympathetic interest in cultural exchange, favouring writers and artists who have lived in the countries they write about and disavowing those who rely on imaginative reproduction.
to the status of compendium or directory' (ABC Radio, 2/4/1992). And while part of this inconsistency may be explained by the scope of the book and the fact that Bronowski is working in relatively uncharted critical waters, there is a profound sense in which the author is failing to grasp the full meaning of her own analysis, either critically or ideologically. While our discussion so far has pointed to a number of these weaknesses — most particularly in relation to the specific details of the Australian context — it is Bronowski's use of the Orientalist paradigm which is most unconvincing. In borrowing from Said the general method of 'deconstruction'\(^{14}\) of the Orientalist stereotype — the strategy which will be subsequently referred to as De-Orientalism — Bronowski has merely reproduced some of the general theoretical difficulties immanent to Said's seminal writings.\(^{15}\)

Specifically, Bronowski, like Vickers and other recent Asiaologists, relies on Said's (esp. 1978, 1983a, 1986b, 1993) adaptation of the poststructuralist precepts in analyzing the means by which the 'West' has linguistically configured the 'East' or the 'Orient' in relation to itself and its own linguistic system. The central issue for Said relates to the means by which realities are mediated linguistically, and the ways hegemonic ideologies are imposed.

My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage — and even produce — the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. Moreover, so authoritative a position did Orientalism have, that I believe no one writing, thinking or acting on the Orient could

\(^{14}\) In keeping with recent transformations (some would say relativizations) of Derrida's methodology, I am using the term 'deconstruction' to refer to the systematic destabilization of any linguistic formations. In fact, the specific techniques adopted by Said, Bronowski and other postcolonialists in deconstructing Orientalism as a linguistic formation are thrown into question below. It should be emphasized that Said's method is quite distinct from Derrida's original deconstruction method as it is developed especially in *Writing and Difference, Of Grammatology* and *Dissemination*. Derrida questions the referentiality of language beyond itself. Derrida is concerned specifically with what he calls 'the supplement' of meaning where language can only refer to itself and to its own intertextuality.

\(^{15}\) I would wish to emphasize that my discussion of the limitations of De-Orientalism as a system of critical and ideological analysis is not designed to ameliorate the political, socio-economic or cultural impact of colonialism. On the contrary, my aim is to produce a more complete analysis of the postcolonial world which of itself will promote greater understanding of the processes of imperialism which continue to be experienced in the postmodern epoch.
do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism (Said, 1978: 3).

While Said insists that the voice of Orientalism does not speak for the whole of the Orient, he makes clear that Orientalism itself represents a network 'inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion where the peculiar entity "The Orient" is in question' (Said, 1978: 3). Said's project, therefore, is to elucidate the sources and fallibilities of Orientalism in Enlightenment scholarship, and to deconstruct the linguistic formations themselves in order to elucidate their critical and ideological foundations, as much as their implications for late twentieth century thought. Thus, like his mentor, Michel Foucault, Said is concerned with the relationship between knowledge production — and note that Orientalism is not merely the linguistic facility of Imperial administration but a product of the knowledge system which equates with the material system of colonialism itself — and power.

It is this theme which is more fully elaborated in his most recent work *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) where Said suggests that 'the enterprise of empire depends on the idea of having an empire . . . and all kinds of preparations are made for it within a culture; then in turn imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture' (Said, 1993: 10). Indeed, as an ethnic Arab born in Jerusalem and now living and working in the United States, Said is particularly sensitive to the hegemonic impositions of imperial Enlightenment discourse over the Middle East, and his own scholarship is very much influenced by what Foucault succinctly calls 'the history of the present', that is, the processes by which the world becomes modern. Most particularly, Said is concerned to demonstrate how the discursive formations of power/knowledge — to again borrow from Foucault and Nietzsche — becomes identified with the material oppression of the Middle East by contemporary Western powers, especially the United States. Thus, in outlining the general scholarly project of *Orientalism*, Said insists that, 'Positively, I do believe — and in my other books I have tried to show — that enough is being done today in the human sciences to provide the contemporary scholar with insights, methods and ideas that could dispense with racial, ideological, and imperialist stereotypes of the sort provided during the historical ascendancy by Orientalism. . . . If the knowledge of Orientalism has any meaning, it is in being reminded of the seductive degradation of knowledge, of any knowledge, anywhere, at any
time. Now perhaps more than before' (Said, 1978: 328). But while this foreboding may echo some of the more visionary excesses of Foucault's own writings when dealing in the present, Said exceeds his mentor's more restrained epiphany through more detailed and politically specific descriptions of 'the history of the actual' (Foucault, 1984). In fact Said, while applauding what he describes as Foucault's 'imagination of power', nevertheless laments his 'profoundly pessimistic' view of modern society, a view circumscribed by 'a singular lack of interest in the force of effective resistance to it, in choosing particular sites of intensity, choices which . . . always exist and are often successful in impeding, if not actually stopping, the progress of tyrannical power' (Said, 1986a, 151). Thus, while Said's own work on writing and discourse is clearly influenced by French poststructuralism, he finds ultimately that Foucault's microphysics does not satisfy the demands of contemporary liberation, being no more than an 'imagination' of a power that seems 'irresistible and unopposable', and which fails to condemn the banality and irresponsibility of corporate managers by its own elimination 'of classical ideas about ruling classes and dominant interests' (Said 1987, 152).

For all his indebtedness to poststructuralist foundations, Said is dissatisfied with the sorts of theoretical sophistry that precludes political commitment. In congratulating Foucault for his elaboration of the Nietzschean identification of power/knowledge, Said nevertheless demands the completion of its ideological project by transferring it back into the world of human action. It is apparent that for Said, Foucault's theory/practice must also be expressed as practice/theory whereby the identification of the material and the linguistic are expressed through 'resistance' or subversion. As with Barthes' notion of doxa — the naturalization of social orthodoxies and conventions — Said's Orientalism is a discursive orthodoxy which unifies linguistic and material domination, but which can and must be resisted. Significantly, then, Said's project necessitates the theoretical retention of materiality, even though it is the linguistic mediation of reality, discourse, which is the central constituency of Orientalism. Materiality or the 'real' — though unspecified and unexplained — is at times forced out of its theoretical union with discourse in order to subvert the critical and ideological status of Orientalism. In order to subvert or destabilize Orientalism, Said returns to the dichotomous structure of discourse and materiality, treating the latter as though it were not a mediatory function of the former but might exist as independent and self-reflexive. This 'return' to the politics and economics of the 'real' is determined by Said's greater ideological strategy which, as it is also developed in Culture and Imperialism,
concerns itself directly with the material division of territory. Imperialism needs to be understood as a linguistic and cultural process, certainly, but at all times the 'colonization' of territory and the economic advantage of the 'metropolitan centre' lies at the heart of this domination and incorporation: 'For the purpose of this book I have maintained a focus on actual contests over land and the land's people. What I have tried to do is a kind of geographical inquiry into historical experiences, and I have kept in mind the idea that the earth is in effect one world in which empty, virtually uninhabited spaces do not exist' (Said, 1993: 6). Most particularly, Said has been interested in the means by which the First World has been able to appropriate and administer the vast territories of the world, including Middle Asia.

To this extent, Said declares in Orientalism that the Orient is more than an imaginative creation of artists, poets, scholars and government officials: 'the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony' (Said, 1978: 6). Necessarily, Said's analysis of the discourse of Orientalism returns explicitly and implicitly to a 'real' state, a context of place, time and political process. He anticipates, for example, later feminist discussion in his account of Oriental women; Orientalist scholarship, Said discovers, is replete with patriarchal and sexist attitudes, fantasy, misrepresentation, economic exploitation and political repression. This form of social, political and economic domination recalls Gramsci's notion of hegemony, which, for Said, is solidified in the language of superior condition: the language which configures the implacability and completeness of domination through ontologies of cultural and ethnic superiority to the psychological alchemies of identity itself. Thus, the existence of the Orient is never far from what Denys Hay has significantly ascribed 'the idea of Europe' (Hay, 1968), a collective European consciousness distinguishing 'us Europeans' from 'those Orientals'.

Said seems well aware of the theoretical precariousness of his identification of materiality and discourse; in pursuing the identification into the world of economics and political action, Said self-consciously risks a return to the Kantian division. In order to overcome such dangers, Said employs in Orientalism the strategy of linguistic trope, filtering his discussion of spatial and economic domination through and beyond metonymic divisions of geography and cartography. Spatial domination is not merely represented by geography, but geography itself becomes assimilated by the project of culture. The meaning of spatial division is identified by the meaning of cultural as well as economic domination: the material investment by Europe in the 'geography'
of the Orient can never be distinguished from the West's discursive or cultural 'presence' in the East's physical and temporal space. In geographical division, therefore, identity will become the critical factor:

So Orientalism aided and was aided by general cultural pressures that tended to make more rigid the sense of difference between the European and Asiatic parts of the world. My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which circled the Orient's difference with its weakness (Said, 1978: 204).

The Orient exists, that is, both within and without the alternative culture: as much as the West itself, the Orient has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that have given it reality in and for the West. The two geographical entities therefore support and to an extent reflect each other (Said, 1978: 3). Through his own linguistic manoeuvring, Said is able to claim that geography — the representation of space — must be known as space itself, and space must be known as geography. Consequently, Said insists, the Orient is more than an idea, but exists as a corresponding reality (1978: 3). It is only through this metaphoric transfiguration of space that Said is able to conceive Orientalism as the identification of cultural and political exertions of power/knowledge, a complex of psychological, sociological and spatial divisions which provide the significant descriptions of the 'idea of the West' as much as the idea of the 'East' —.

Therefore, Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot to hold down the 'Oriental' world. It is rather a distribution of geographical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction . . . but also of a whole series of 'interests' which by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological descriptions, it not only creates, but also maintains . . . It is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in
an uneven exchange with various kinds of power. . . Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is — and does not simply represent — a considerable dimension of modern political intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world (Said, 1978: 12).

Thus, in keeping with the poststructuralist precepts, especially those elaborated by Foucault, Said's analysis flows more towards the cultural and configural ubiquities of power rather than towards its central localities, as would be more common in conventional or Marxist historiography. In examining 'our' world, Said's strategy is to examine the scholarly productions of our world. Said legitimates this strategy not merely as it elaborates the discursive underpinnings of imperialism, but because the discourse of Orientalism is itself inextricably identified with the material and geographico-historical world it configures. For Said, there is no other way of entering and understanding the Orient.

Specifically, Said attempts to de-stabilize the authority of Orientalism by destabilizing the authority of the text and its authorial voice which acts as an alternative 'presence' for the reader and cannot 'instrumentally depend on the Orient, as such' (Said, 1978: 21). It is therefore the author, his configurations of Orientalism and ultimately the intertextual mass that has given status to the stereotype in perpetuity, that Said's analysis attempts to deconstruct. This strategy, however, involving the reinstatement of the author as a focus of critical attention again distances Said from the critical precepts of his mentor, Michel Foucault, who has consistently dismissed the author's 'authority' as a given in social analysis: 'Foucault believes that in general the individual text or author counts for very little; empirically, in the case of Orientalism, (and perhaps in nowhere else) I find this not to be so' (Said, 1978: 23). Indeed, Said's cursory attention to this significant theoretical divergence demonstrates the fallibility of his entire strategy. Foucault argues consistently and without exception against the empirical validity of the author both because it tendentiously claims 'authority' for the author, and because the author cannot be identified with the text nor the system of meanings that produces the cultural integrity of the text. Thus, Foucault's history of sexuality implicates the sexual expression of Sade, not because of the integrity, validity, truth or untruth of the author, but because the expressions themselves are the wrappings of historical insight. Fundamental to the poststructuralist precept is the exile of the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy, the point of origin and the
centralized ordering of power/knowledge; to this extent, Foucault tells us, the author 'is only one of the possible speculations of the subject' (Foucault, 1977b: 138). More generally, Foucault recommends —

What, do you think I would take so much trouble and so much pleasure in writing, do you think that I would keep so persistently to my task, if I were not preparing — with a rather sticky hand — a labyrinth in which I can venture, in which I can move my discourse, opening up underground passages, forcing it to go far from itself, finding overhangs that reduce and deform its itinerary, in which I can lose myself, and appear at last to eyes that I will never have to meet again. I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same. Leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order (Foucault, 1972: 17).

Said, however, sees no real contradiction in his methodological divergence since the author is the central player in the configuration of the Orientalist stereotype, and by definition is implicated in the ideological system of Orientalism. Indeed, the destabilization of the author and his Orientalism might on the surface seem to accord with Foucault's precepts, as it certainly accords with Said's own subversive politics. However, Said's method of authorial destabilization relies significantly on creating divisions between the configuration of the stereotype as elemental to the political and cultural domination of the West over the Orient, and the actual deficiencies and inaccuracies of the stereotype itself. It is at this point that the precarious union of economic and political materiality (geographic colonialism) and the discourse which supports and directs cultural imperialism begins to fracture. Despite his assurances and despite the intelligent elaborateness of his strategy, Said must return to the material-discourse division in order to demonstrate the ideological and critical fallibilities of Orientalism. In the end, Said's authors are destabilized because they are wrong about the East and about themselves in relation to the East: 'There is no way . . . of understanding Lane's currency [as an Orientalist authority] without understanding the peculiar features of his text; this is equally true of Renan, Sacy, Lamartine, Schlegel and a group of other individual writers' (Said, 1978: 23). These authors who contribute to the production and maintenance of Orientalism function as part of the linguistic and political mesh of Imperialism, but their work may be deconstructed because it is essentially false and an inaccurate representation of the countries
and people they have appropriated imaginatively and materially. Said's project is to demonstrate that inaccuracy.

This double-handedness is clearly reflected in the tone of Said's analysis, moving at times easily and at times erratically, from the timbre of critical elaboration to moments of bitterness and ideological vitriol. Most distinctively, Said condemns those Orientalist scholars (in the majority) who could not free themselves from the cultural and spatial perspective of Eurocentrism, and who only imagined the East as a category of reference, a point of secularized interface, or as a tool in the scholarly enterprise of specific 'technologies of power' (Said, 1978" 127). Thus, de Sacy, Renan and later Lane produced a 'science' of legitimated domination enshrined by the aesthetic fantasies of the imperial imaginations; the spiritual and transforming experience of Oriental romanticism, aestheticized by Flaubert, Hugo, Goethe and Byron, for example, proves little more than Orientalist primitivism where one 'returns' to the Orient, is 'released' by the Orient, and where one might 'Fly away, and in the Pure East/Taste the Patriarchs' air', as Goethe expresses it in 'Hegire'. For Said, the scienticism of the nineteenth century — also considered by Foucault in the Order of Things and Jean-Francois Lyotard in The Postmodern Condition — and the pervasive theme of Oriental romanticism are both symptomatic of the paradox of imperial conquest: 'defeat becomes liberation in the redemptive terms of Christian mission to revive a dead world, to quicken in it a sense of its own potential, one which only a European can discern underneath a lifeless and degenerate surface' (Said, 1978: 172). While Said provides little real insight into the character of this paradox, he does cry out against the hubris of Eurocentric romanticism, at least as a political determination, as if the East 'knows nothing' about freedom.16

Said contrasts this pandemic of cultural ignorance with the writings of nineteenth century British writer and traveller Richard Burton whose knowledge of the Orient was intimate and generally lacking in scholarly imperialism. According to Said, Burton's work is distinguished by his authorial

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16 Said's repudiation of romantic idealism introduces an interesting paradox which will be explored in considerable detail throughout the course of this study. Specifically, the idealized or romantic East f may be deployed in fiction as a site of political liberalism, or to reinforce the sorts of stereotypes to which Said is objecting. In some ways the issue is further complicated by the deployment of the East as a site which 'transcends' political division, but which unites all humanity in a confluence of spiritual and sexual pleasure. Said clearly rejects this conceit, arguing that this form of romanticism merely distorts the actual nature of political and imperial appropriation. This issue of particular significance for representations of Bali, the 'created paradise' as Adrian Vickers (1990b) calls it.
experiences as an adventurer; his personal identity was distinctly different from the professional scholar or European aesthete because Burton lived among the people, sharing the immediacy of their life experiences and culture:

All of his vast information about the Orient, which dots every page he wrote, reveals that he knew that the Orient in general and Islam in particular, were systems of information, behaviour, and belief, that to be an Oriental or Muslim was to know certain things in a certain way, and that these were of course subject to history, geography, and the development of a society in circumstances specific to it. Thus, his accounts of travel in the East reveal to us a consciousness aware of these things and able to steer a narrative course through them; no man who did not know Arabic and Islam as well as Burton could have gone as far as he did in actually becoming a pilgrim to Mecca and Medina. So what we read in his prose is the history of a consciousness negotiating its way through an alien culture by virtue of having shaken himself loose of his European origins enough to be able to live as an Oriental (Said, 1978: 195-6).

Said's valorization of Burton, his knowledge, his approach to the problem of writing culture, and the history that his writing ultimately produces, consciously subverts the alternative history of Orientalism. Burton writes the 'true' history of the Orient because it is more accurate in its representation of the Islamic-Arabic culture, and because it is ideologically superior to the scienticism and Romanticism of other post-Enlightenment European writers. Indeed, while Said attempts to screen this conclusion, Burton's writing becomes the unspecified reality against which the whole configural history of Orientalism is measured and ultimately contrasted. Burton's knowledge is immediate, common, essentialist; Orientalism is distant, Eurogenic, filtered through the consciousness of domination, idealism and scientific monadism. Burton's is the shining intelligence, the experience which, for Said, reflects the disabilities and distortions of Orientalism. By extension, the intimacy of Burton's knowledge could only be surpassed by the knowledge of the Oriental him/herself; the Oriental would thus be the only one capable of writing the absolute history of the Orient.

It is clearly this sort of subversion or De-Orientalism which Alison Bronowski has in mind when she too celebrates those creative thinkers who live and work intimately within a culture — those who have substantial
knowledge of the language, religions, myths and customs. Said, however, consistently swerves away from explicating such conclusions because he understands the theoretical dangers of doing so. In particular, Said's identification of materiality with discourse would be directly challenged by any explicit description of a 'truth', a 'reality' that is distinguishable from the discourse that produces it. And yet Said finds himself moving almost ineluctably toward such postulations in distinguishing Burton and his historiography from the other people and the other discursive configurations of Orientalism which distressingly describes an Oriental man 'as first an Oriental and second a man' (Said, 1978: 231).

Inevitably, it is just this radical typing of the Oriental person, his/her space and culture, that most anguishes Said's critical and ideological sensibilities; this anguish is unquestionably the informing inspiration for much of his work. Significantly, he concludes Orientalism with an invocation of general humanist principles, explaining the 'failure' of Orientalism as an apparently inevitable human failing, while making clear that recent attention to the subject provides a measure of hope. Time and again, Said finds himself teetering towards that critical gulf which would catapult his precarious theoretical unity into what he himself acknowledges as the excesses of generality and crude polemic (Said, 1978: 8-9). Yet in the end he is forced to accept that political commitment is the lesser of failings and that De-Orientalism as a strategy necessitates the surrender of theoretical restraint for ideological correctness. In revisiting Orientalism some years after the publication of the original text, Said in fact argues more vigorously that liberation of repressed people depends as much on physical as discursive resistance. Plurality and breadth become their own rallying points; the alternative discourse becomes its own revolution:

[First] none of the works . . . claims to be working on behalf of one audience . . . or for one supervening, over-coming truth . . . allied to Western (or for that matter Eastern) reason, objectivity, science. On the contrary, we note here a plurality of terrains, multiple experiences and different constituencies. Second, these activities and praxes are consciously secular, marginal and oppositional with reference to the mainstream, generally authoritarian systems from which they emanate, and against which they now agitate. Thirdly, they are political and practical in as much as they intend . . . the end of dominating, coercive systems of knowledge (Said, 1986b: 25).
The political value of retaining material reality for the dismantling of stereotyped Orientalism is clearly recognised by Bronowski and other more recent commentators on the Australian scene. Sneja Gunew, for example, has been quite deliberate in surrendering the purity of poststructuralist/postmodernist theoretical precepts. Speaking for many other liberationist academics, particularly those pursuing feminist or postcolonialist sympathies, Gunew explicitly denounces the postmodernist dissolution of the centred subject 'which precludes notions of identity and agency'. She asks, 'How can one argue for political change when there is no concept of material reality or agency?' (Gunew, 1990a: 22). Julie Stephens (1985), in her analysis of representations of Indian women, refers continually to the discrepancies of fact, whereby images of Indian women written in English remain a product of Orientalism. The 'Feminist Fictions' to which Stephens refers are to be de-stabilized by a feminist analysis 'which is about spelling out the necessary conditions for women to be active, autonomous, sovereign subjects, rather than passive objects of someone else's history' (Stephens, 1985: 37).

Emancipation, therefore, is a matter of re-examining the archive and deconstructing the stereotype as in the Said paradigm. For Stuart Hall, a prominent British-West Indian liberationist, the new paradigm is producing its own re-construction of cultural meaning where the Occident fades and the once marginalized 'other' of the Orient becomes the multiple ethnic voice of the postcolonial world: 'The slow contradictory movement from "nationalism" to "ethnicity" as a source of identities is part of a new politics, . . . that immense process of historical relativization that has accompanied the decline of the West' (Hall, 1987: 46).

While certainly there are those theorists like Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Homi Bhabha (1987a) and Gayatri Spivak (1987b, 1992) who concern themselves more with the discursive and psychological factors of postcolonialism, the more radical inheritance of Said's Orientalism insists equally on the material facts of repression, exploitation and emancipation. Said's deconstruction of the 'radical typing' of Orientalism requires an equally radical re-opening of the power/knowledge closure that has produced the Orientalist stereotype and which, in his own estimation and the estimation of others, continues to inform both the cultural and political domination of the Orient and the Middle East in particular. While assuring us that his strategy is concerned to demonstrate the efficacy of power/knowledge as it is dispersed throughout a culture, Said's followers have become equally interested in the
general centralizing influences of control and domination, a centre or core which must be resisted and replaced by ethnic pluralism — and with it, the production of new systems of de-centred geography and more visible ethnic identities. Equally, Said's analysis of Oriental scholarship re-opens the closures of the historical archive itself, reclaiming the fact of history. This reclamation, however, is not necessarily an invocation of Derrida's notion of linguistic supplementarity and the intertextual deferral of meaning, but seeks the deployment of a system of new and ideologically superior meanings which would ultimately produce a more critically accurate description of the Orient and the world at large. Clearly, this is what Simon During has in mind when he — along with Stuart Hall (1987) and numerous other cultural theorists — condemns the 'West' to the status of decline and marginality, arguing that the new history of the world 'requires systematic rereading of the archive, and in particular a reinterpretation of canonical works' (During, 1992a: 350). Said's (1993) recent investigation of of Conrad, Kipling, Dickens, Camus and other canons of the Western literary tradition in *Culture and Imperialism* constitutes just such a re-reading.

A more distinctly poststructuralist view, however, would suggest that the archive itself is both unstable and incomplete, and that the re-evaluation of the archive is in fact a supplement to its meaning, constituting a re-writing of its effect as history. Thus, lacking as it is in theoretical or methodological substance, Alison Bronowski's use of Said absorbs the concept of Orientalism in order to complete the archive of Australian history — a history she regards as distinctly racist, xenophobic and imperialist in intention. Thus, the strategy of De-Orientalism requires the imposition of a current critical and ideological architecture over the past in order to illustrate the deficiencies of historical players and the orthodoxies in practice and language that sustained them. Moreover, in the case of Australia, De-Orientalism, as an historiographical tool, is designed to demonstrate the distance that separates discursive representations of culture, and the actualities of historical life as lived; Bronowski's objective is to use De-Orientalism to show how the ideologies of patriarchal, transposed imperialist Eurocentricism produced false images of our Asian neighbourhood. Indeed, like Said and innumerable others who have used the De-Orientalism tool, Bronowski valorizes those historical representations which 'understand' or 'know' the Orient over those which are produced by intertextual fantasies of sexual, economic or political domination. Said and Bronowski would therefore separate their own analysis from those that fail to understand the immediacy of Oriental culture and the intertextual
system that constitutes inaccurate stereotypes; their own works are
liberationary, free of prejudice, ignorance and contemptuous racist ideology.
Specifically, Bronowski attacks Australian patriarchy and Eurocentricism,
which, as the envelopment of Australian cultural identity, have produced
destructive and ethically deficient attitudes of sexism, security paranoia and
economic as well as superracist parochialism. The history of Australia's
relations with its neighbours, she tells us, is the history of 'lost opportunities'
(Couchman over Australia, ABC Television, 1992). Thus, The Yellow Lady
details an Australian history that colludes with its art and artists to produce a
systematic exclusionism, an Orientalism that apparently permeates all
Australian life from its legislators, its creators of high art to the streets, music
halls, gold-mines and shop floors. Her discussion makes constant reference to
racist stereotyping and to those unspecified facts of history which should
have guided contemporaries to a more accurate and humane understanding of
their neighbours. Indeed, even in the recent and current times, even as
Australia struggles to renegotiate its status in the region and in relation to its
own ethnic identity, Bronowski regrets that the old stereotypes and ignorance
persist in an Australia where Asian immigrants are 'still blamed, as in 1888, for
causing hostility to their presence' (Bronowski, 1992: 204), where
multiculturalism is a term many Australians still hold in 'disrepute'
(Bronowski, 1992: 204), and where knowledge by Australians in the arts who
do 'regard Asian countries as important and interesting is hampered by the
almost total absence, until the mid 1980s, of reference to Asia as a formative
influence by Australian cultural historians' (Bronowski, 1992: 205). And,
according to Bronowski, it is only through the transformation of the old
Australian identity that this new knowledge and the new opportunities
presented by Asia can be adequately accessed.

III. Identity and Transcultural Communications

The uncritical adoption of the De-Orientalism method by many Australian
cultural analysts is problematic, not only because Said's original use of the
concept is theoretically precarious, but because the specific details of
Australian cultural history challenge many of its fundamental descriptions. In
our brief survey of Australian communications with Indonesia we have
already seen how history often functions as contradiction and dispute, and
how particular historical details may be lost through the propensity of
historiography to seek continuities and patterns. In particular, the notion of an
Australian Asian heritage has been dominated by an interest in racism,
Australian neocolonialism, as Sneja Gunew (1993) calls it, and a fundamental historiographical assumption about the separateness of Australia and its Asian neighbourhood. I have already made the somewhat obvious point that the early colonists inherited, and were to a degree transformed by, the neolithic Asian culture and Asian environment; we have also seen that in other ways Australia's cultural constitution and identity have been affected by the contiguity of communications with the Asiatic, both within and outside its national borders. While a full account of the weaknesses of the De-Orientalist method in Australian historiography lies outside the primary historical focus of this study, a few further remarks may serve as a useful summary, leading directly into a more specific analysis of the postmodern formulation of identity as it affects the Australia Indonesia communicative relationship.

Specifically, I would cast serious doubt on the historical transfer theory by which Eurocentric (especially British) identity, psychology and attitudes are regarded as directly transferable to the Australian context. As outlined earlier, communications, especially transcultural communications, requires adjustment and realignment, and it is very clear that global processes produce changes both to the penetrating consciousness and culture as well as to the host. Nineteenth century European imperialism brought radical change to the non-European world, but at the same time the colonial presence was itself markedly altered. The imposition of the British class system in the Australian colonies, for example, was diluted by ascension of non-aristocratic individuals to positions of high social authority and status, and by the new social dignity afforded sub-class criminals and political radicals who held distinctly anti-imperialist and republican sentiments. More subtly, the rigidity of Eurocentric attitudes was forced to account for the unsettling presence of an indigenous Asian people who, despite the best intentions of European civilization, were slaughtered, raped and dispossessed. And finally, the class system had also to accommodate the incorporation of other non-Europeans into the community — Islanders, Indians, Japanese in the north and north-west, Chinese in the south and east — who, by Federation in 1901, numbered in excess of 40,000 people. The global processes which produced this pluralism cannot be separated from the web of changes and interrelationships which were continuing to draw the world together in trade, communion and conflict.

It is thus a small but significant point that Australia, even during the colonial and immediate postcolonial period, was not a facsimile European culture, but was as different in its ethnic and social constitution as it was in its
physical, economic and material environment. Australia was not Europe despite the predominance of European influences. As in other regions of the New World, different social and international relationships were being forged. To this extent, the expressions of racism and xenophobia may be seen as significantly different in generalized areas within the Australian community. In particular, the racism of the upper echelons of the community may be regarded as residual manifestations of a declining aristocracy for whom purity of blood is the central locus of social organization. Both Foucault (1979, 1984) and Anderson (1991) make the point that the pre-Enlightenment oligarchy transferred power and property according to familial lineage and so blood and the ideological predominance of blood became the central force in social discourse. Anderson explicates this point by claiming that official nationalism in Europe was a direct response 'on the part of threatened dynastic and aristocratic groups — upper classes — to popular vernacular nationalism. Colonial racism was a major element in that conception of "Empire" which attempted a world dynastic legitimacy and national community' (Anderson, 1991: 150).

Anderson, in fact, argues that the sort of simple identification of racism and nationalist xenophobia posited by commentators like Bronowski is not justifiable since 'nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations' (Anderson, 1991: 149). In his highly influential work, *Imagined Communities*, Anderson maintains that claims to divinity and the integrity of 'blue' or 'white' blood, 'breeding' and the right to rule all have their source in the aristocracies of Europe rather than through the petty bourgeoisie (Anderson, 1991: 149). While Anderson accepts that some coupling of racism and nationalism certainly occurred throughout the European colonies, the primary reason for this is the privileged and quasi aristocratic position which many of the European bourgeois and petty bourgeois enjoyed in these colonial outposts (Anderson, 1991: 150-1). In Anderson's terms, therefore, the promulgation of racist attitudes in Australia, including the formulation of race based immigration legislation, is itself a coalescence of opposing impulses; Australian racism and nationalism were multi-faceted outcomes of a confused and uncertain socio-cultural compound which ultimately proved the inheritance of nationhood itself.

In the Australian colonies the discourse of racism which Bronowski and others so readily invoke as evidence of pandemic racist xenophobia may be better understood in the specific contemporary circumstances as a complex of social needs and fears. Undoubtedly the sort of aristocratic or neo-aristocratic
ideological sentiments, to which Anderson refers, were commonly expressed in the parliaments of New South Wales and Victoria — though less so in South Australia, a colony with less gold, of less interest to the Chinese and stronger roots in religious, political and ethnic tolerance, and Queensland where the use of indentured non-European labour was favoured by the neo-aristocrats themselves, disinclining them to excessive racial exclusionism. Thus it is the details and specific circumstances of history which best explain the complex processes which produced racist and nationalist formations in Australia.

An examination of the first race based legislation in an Australian colony might best illustrate this point. In his seminal work, *The Asian Image in Australia*, J. V. D'Cruz has sought a more thoroughgoing explanation for the adoption of Chinese immigration restriction in 1858 in the New South Wales colony which had a considerably less significant goldfield and many fewer Chinese immigrants than its Victorian counterpart. The puzzle for D'Cruz was that the overwhelming evidence of the time suggested that the Chinese immigrants posed no real threat to social conditions and that in the findings of the Select Committee of 1858 (as was the case in Victoria) the Chinese were law abiding, community minded, sexually restrained and generally hygienic in their habits, contrasting significantly with the German community against whom no restrictions were imposed (D'Cruz, 1973: 23). D'Cruz reports that the Chinese were generally well regarded by those who had direct contact with them and by the liberal philanthropists of the New South Wales parliament.

True to Anderson's description, it was those Members of the limited suffrage New South Wales parliament with the greatest pretensions to aristocratic elevation, who were most acrimonious in their attacks on the Chinese. D'Cruz concludes that the racism of the times was not endemic, but was 'the result of a spontaneous emotional reaction to a tense and difficult situation', directly related to the insecurities promoted by the Indian Mutiny against the Raj in 1858 (D'Cruz, 1973: 22). D'Cruz's point might seem to support Anderson's reading of aristocratic racism which seems intensified by the threats posed in the nineteenth century by the ferment of middle-class power and the constellation of their own coherent ideologies of utilitarianism, liberalism and nationalism — all of which threatened the aristocracies' position of dominance and privilege. This threat, of course, is further deepened in the colonies by the 'tyranny of distance' and the social dilution of the class itself.

While it is possible that Bronowski, McQueen, Castles et al and others who subscribe to the historical transfer theory might accept the validity of this description of the Australian aristocracy, they would also identify the rise and
significance of racism for the Australian labour movement and middle-class liberalism during and after federation. This phenomenon is evidence, they would argue, of the deep seatedness of racism and its easy communion with nationalism and national consciousness. My aim is not to excuse racism as such, but to accentuate those circumstances which produced this conjuncture of social groups which in many other ways were significantly divided. Yarwood (1964), and Yarwood and Knowling (1982) have demonstrated the importance of the threat posed by importation of cheap Asia-Pacific labour to local wages and working conditions, and to the formulation of union policies; this is especially true for the growing manufacturing sectors of the economy based in the pro-protectionist Victoria. The excessive expression of racial hatred may of course be a common strategy of political persuasion and propaganda. Moreover, the use of the anti-Asian trope in popular vernacular is both sporadic and uneven, combining the elements of nationalist fervour of the federation period with an endemic fear of all non-British territorial expansionism, especially by Japan. The propaganda techniques used by elements of the popular press and in some union and democratic publications may have been learned and adapted from the social élite whose attitudes at the time of federation tended to dominate the news media and the popular education system. 17

More subtly and less well discussed, however, is the possibility that a generalised racial paranoia, if it existed at all, might have been deepened by the condition of social guilt, an outcome of the diaspora and appalling treatment of the indigenous Australians whose peripheralised haunting of the urban and rural centres must equate with the peripheralised haunting of the national consciousness. While a thorough examination of this aspect of Australian consciousness is still to be written,18 it is worth considering that

17 Richard White in *Inventing Australia* (1981) has argued convincingly that Australia's imagery of itself was largely produced through the middle-classes. To this extent, the image of unity, and hence federation — was produced through the interests of the middle-classes. These images, White suggests, became a homophonic representation of wholesomeness, youth and comfortably engaged dual loyalties. Of course this articulation excluded Australia's non-white population, specifically made up of Chinese (about 0.8% of the population) and Aboriginal Australians (1.5-2% of the population). By about 1917, White tells us, the imagery of *The Bulletin*, which had once been so radical, was fully ossified as a conservative and pro-capitalist representation (White, 1981: 124).

18 Professor Bernard Smith raised this point in his Boyer Lectures presented on the ABC in 1980. More recently, the issue of guilt is being raised increasingly in discussions of Australian culture. Some, like Sneja Gunew (1993), claim that the evasion of guilt functions as a prime motivation in Australian historical and contemporary life; others like John Milne (1993) claim that it is guilt over the treatment
Aboriginal Australians themselves hold a unique and often incongruous position in the community of cultural representation. Whether as idealized figures of essentialist nature or cultural Australia, as victims of social irony or savage history, the most significant aspect of the cultural representation of Aboriginal Australians is its mood of discomfort wrought both by its general incongruity and unfamiliarity. In fact, the most distinguishing feature of generalized Australia's communications relationship with its Asian source as much as with its Asian neighbourhood, is this unsettling ghostliness. At least until very recent times, the Aboriginal and the Asiatic more generally are, relatively speaking, absent. This absence can only be partly explained by the predominance of institutionalized and neo-aristocratic conservatism or racism. When the Asiatic does appear, the uncertainties of representation may be as much associated with guilt or bewilderment as with other psychological manifestations. The writing of McQueen, Bronowski, Castles et al and many others who have become interested in Australian racism and xenophobia may be informed, at least in part, by this same dimension of guilt and the wish to distance itself from the disreputable actions and images of the past — an attempt, that is, to overcome the inertia and silence produced by guilt.

Thus, in coming to terms with the communications relationship in which Australia participates with its Asian environment and its Indonesian neighbour in particular, we need to take account of the specific details of history and those innumerable other communicative processes, each exerting influence, each controlling and directing discourse and action. Australia's historical relationship with Asia is not just the litany of missed opportunities expostulated by Bronowski (1992), Jeffers (1988-9) and others because it is also a history of seized opportunities and national evolution. To this extent, Castles et al (1990) are correct when they describe the Australian identity as essentially problematic. If nothing else, Australia's history has been remarkably open. Its continuous absorption of new peoples from overseas has inhibited the sorts of national closures in consciousness and identity which other 'imagined communities' have experienced during the modern era. There have been no binding national struggles, no significant ethnic emancipations, and only one direct threat to its territory — and that from an Asian neighbour. Indeed, consummatory descriptions of the Australian character or the national identity seem to require the radical reification of contextual details; even the more recent interest in Australian representations of itself in film, literature and

of Aborigines in Australia which continues to inhibit national movements into South East Asia.
social life (e.g. Turner, 1986, Fiske, Hodge and Turner, 1987, Molloy, 1990), while paying greater attention to paradox and contradiction, nevertheless requires the suspension of a myriad of specificities in order to produce their 'myths'.

The difficulty, perhaps, resides in the fact that Australia's foundation as an Enlightenment European colony is itself so vaguely explicated and so mixed in orientation. Unlike the United States which has always presumed the superiority of its social, ethical and national program, Australia's cultural growth has been characterized by doubt, imprecise motivation and ambiguity. Australian culture may be regarded as among the more open, receptive and mutable in the world. Its political and cultural dialectic and its continued reliance on migration for social development seem to destabilize continually the capacity for clear historiographic conclusions. Thus, Australia may appear at times to be compassionate, tolerant and socially progressive, while at other times or in other areas of historical convergence, it may seem regressive, militaristic, excessively opportunistic and xenophobic.

In relation to the South East Asian neighbourhood and its own imperial ambitions, this ambiguity could not be more obvious. A number of recent commentators have pointed out that Australia has participated in an extraordinary number of wars with only one of those encounters involving direct territorial threat. While the the Great and Powerful Friends security policy and the residual Imperial connections, especially among the ruling elite in Australia, partially explains the motivation for these military excursions, Bronowski and others regard the nation's own psychological and cultural Orientalism, its own imperial ambitions, as the more potent explanation. The trusteeship of Papua and the incorporation of some small islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans as Australian territories and protectorates, and the well documented policy of regional influence, might on the surface seem to

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19 This work of the Australian cultural myths follows the ideas of structural semiologists like Roland Barthes (esp. 1972b) and social anthropologists like Claude Levi-Strauss (esp. 1968). As these writers have demonstrated, a culture may partially resolve its opposite tendencies through those expressions of myth that might be found in the representations of everyday life. While we might dispute the conclusions drawn by Levi-Strauss and Barthes, especially in the degree to which oppositions are reconciled by myth, their recognition that opposition is a normal function of social-cultural discourse and action echoes and to an extent anticipates the broader poststructuralist point that language itself is constituent of oppositional structures.

20 Nearly all texts on Australia's foreign policy since the Second World War demonstrate the significance of this regional ambition. George (1980), Whitlam (1980) Fox (1980) and Vickers (1990a) discuss the significance of of this policy in relation to Indonesia.
support the conviction that Australia had indeed adopted the imperialism of its European Enlightenment birthright. Yet even here the evidence is weak. By comparison with the United States, Australia's colonial activities are pallid, if not parodic. Moreover, none of the wars in which Australia participated, with the exception perhaps of the Second World War, inspired significant enthusiasm or consensus among Australians. Opposition to imperial and extra-territorial activities has always been strong, even organic, with most Australians remaining largely untouched by the exhortations of conservative militarism.

Thus, we can see that the Orientalism itself cannot be simply transferred to the Australian context; to do so seriously misreads the contradictions which characterize Australian culture. More broadly, however, the critical method of De-Orientalism, in its ideological and critical preference for absolute spheres of reference, tends to reproduce distinguishable spatial and cultural categories of East and West; Australian De-Orientalists merely lump Australia into the category of the West. As we have pointed out, this reproduction of the categories that are being deconstructed confuses the integrity of the critical insights they might offer, particularly as the analysis neglects the significant role of cultural indigenization or hybridization,21 and even more particularly as it is produced by a precarious conjuncture of poststructuralist and Enlightenment-materialist conceptualizations of language and subjectivity. Whether applied in the European-American or Australian contexts, the De-Orientalist method requires the deconstruction of stereotypes by reference to historical actualities which may be either materially evident or filtered through the consciousness of a writer who 'really knows' the Orient. However, despite the assurances of Said, Bronowski and others, this 'real' Orient is never specified, never fully explicated. In Said's case this 'elision' is the result of substantial theoretical awareness, while in Bronowski's it is more the result of methodological convenience. While both Bronowski and Said claim that their analyses will produce as much information about the West (or Australia) as it will about Asia, their findings, in their absolutism and categorical simplicity, seem to reconstruct their own assumptions about the West. Rather than a detailed explanation of identity, which their theory might seem to impune, we are delivered a by-now familiar set of — 'stereotypical' — characteristics.

21 Said himself demonstrates a greater awareness of this aspect of culture in Culture and Imagination (1993) where he argues that national cultures are indeed hybrid and multiple formations. This internal multiplicity, Said suggests, is contradicted by the national culture's desire for separateness, distinction and sovereignty.
What distinguishes Said's approach to the contemporary scene — and what arguably distinguishes him from other forms of poststructuralist/postmodernist analysis — is his attempt to reconcile older and more universal political doctrines with the poststructuralist emphasis on language. The difficulty for theorists of pluralism and generalized systems of political agency and liberation is that Marxist theories, and even liberal progressivist theories, require notions of truth, objectivity, origin and materiality, notions which seem unsustainable when measured against the poststructuralist idea that reality and subjectivity are inevitably mediated or even created by linguistic formations. Once the poststructuralist precept that language is central to the function of knowing is accepted then the liberationist project of modernism, as Jurgen Habermas has described it (Habermas 1984), is cast forever in doubt. Said, however, would like it both ways, declaring the theoretical and methodological efficacy of discourse analysis, while neglecting the theoretical substance of that analysis when it behoves his ideological objectives to do so. As Gunew (1990), among many others, has argued postmodernist emphasis on language tends to subsume the significance of subjectivity and political agency. While Said would wish to reconcile neo-Marxist ideologies of resistance with the poststructuralist project, his final repudiation of modern Oriental scholarship produces an impassable paradox. The Orientalist scholar himself has become the focus of interest as indistinguishable from the Orient itself, 'its characteristic sign for the West'; the Orient exists by virtue of its creator who fails to adequately describe it and therefore himself. But Said's discourse analysis becomes an analysis of an individual within the broader political dominion of life, and it is left to the recent theorist-liberator to describe an Orient which should not exist because it is intellectually and ideologically disreputable. The new theorist-liberator, therefore, produces the Orient he wishes to deconstruct, though, he assures us, the 'real and liberated Orient' lies somewhere in the ashes of his deconstruction.

Said, in fact, produces a system which fractures by the weight of its ambition. Like Fredric Jameson, Terry Eagleton and Jean-Jacques Baudrillard22 who have all attempted, in their various ways, to produce a

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22 The early writings of all these theorists are strongly influenced by Marxist conventions. However, as each has confronted the evidence of poststructuralist analysis, each has been forced to modify his original position. Nowhere is this more evident than in the authorial career of Jean-Jacques Baudrillard whose early work on the political economy of the sign demonstrates a significant modification of the Marxist approach to subjectivity. Baudrillard's later work on advertising and the processes of 'simulacra' demonstrates a complete surrender of Marxist precepts. See Mark Poster's
reconciliation between poststructuralism and those 'classical ideas about ruling classes and dominant interests' (Said 1986a, 152) which Said identifies as absent in Foucault's writing. In fact, Foucault's compression of the Nietzschean pair as power/knowledge is literalized by Said: while for Foucault knowledge and power are necessarily productive of, and therefore identifiable with, the other, Said takes the further step of insisting that knowledge per se is empowering in the strictly political sense. It is significant that Said should claim as a primary influence, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, a collection of interviews in which Foucault outlines far more strident and active political ambitions than in the histories and theoretical writings.\(^{23}\) However, Said is less satisfied with the notion of power/knowledge instability and dispersal and the sort of political evasiveness it issues. Consequently, while Foucault would claim that his books are 'bombs for others to throw', and 'tools for the revolutionary demonstration of the established apparatus' (see Foucault, 1977a: 113-38), Said would wish to create and throw his own bombs beyond the sanctuary of self-reflexive theory and the historical contemplation.

Like Stuart Hall (1991b), Said continues to distance himself from political equivocality,\(^{24}\) most especially as it is manifest in poststructuralist and postmodernist cultural analysis. Such accusations against the poststructuralist theoretical precepts might be more suitably directed toward Jacques Derrida's notions of intertextuality and dissemination, since Foucault at least attempts in his analysis of the post Enlightenment to write a history of the 'actual', a history of the 'present'; Said, along with others strongly influenced by poststructuralist thinking (e.g. Poster, 1985, 1989, 1991), nevertheless finds fault with Foucault's reluctance to analyze more fully and more systematically the field of contemporary culture. Clearly, Said's divergence from the more restrained, abstruse and elusive politics of power/knowledge relates to the broader disavowal of Foucault's general theoretical rejection of 'truth' in

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\(^{23}\) While numerous commentators have been puzzled (Hoy, 1886, Arac, 1888), others outraged (Habermas, 1987, Dews, 1984b) by Foucault's own putative political ambivalences. Some of these ambivalences would evaporate if the interviews were read as separate and distinguishable from the histories and theoretical works. Foucault is much more prepared to offer direct political comments in his interviews where his theoretical position is less under scrutiny.

\(^{24}\) In a recent discussion with Phillip Adams (*Late Night Live*, ABC Radio, April, 1993) Said re-confirmed his commitment to the politics of liberation and in particular to the liberation of Palestine. During the course of the discussion, Said explained how he had been receiving death threats for his opposition to American participation in the Gulf War (1991) and more recently for his public allegiance to Salman Rushdie.
human affairs: according to which — 'Truth is a thing of the world. It is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it produces regular effects of power. Each society has its own regime of truth, its own 'politics' of truth: that is, the type of discourse it accepts and makes function as true' (Foucault, 1980: 131). For Said, this locally produced truth can and must be resisted and displaced by a greater and more sustaining truth, one that can indeed be universalized by its ideological allegiance with principles of humanism and 'older ideas' about power and the ruling classes.

These theoretical and methodological difficulties bear direct relevance to the analysis of the Australia Indonesia communications relationship since a good deal of recent cultural and transcultural analysis in Australia appears to have absorbed the De-Orientalist strategy without reference — or barely acknowledgement of its conceptual precariousness. In fact, notions of difference and identity, both in relation to individual subjects and the nation as a whole, are further complicated by the new conditions of postmodernity. Thus far we have been concerned with the intrinsic weaknesses of the theory and its transferability to the Australian context. Postmodernity as an historical epoch is characterized by the intensification of transculturalism through more elaborate and immediate information and media exchange, greater global economic integration and the massive movement of people around the globe. The inadequacies of the De-Orientalist theory and practice — particularly in the analysis of cultural meanings and identity production — become even more obvious as nations, subjects and cultures are drawn into greater contingencies and interactions. The heuristic and ideological paradox which demands the restoration of absolute categories of West-East, centre-periphery, sameness-difference in order to deconstruct them, as we have seen, relies on the deflection of specificity and contradiction; as we address the complexities postmodern field, it becomes obvious that the De-Orientalism method also must deny the efficacy of cultural propinquity, and the broader, often contradictory, effects of globalism and hybridization. The internationalization of individuals, peoples and their cultures has been so profound as to demand a greater theoretical and analytical scope for the study of human communications since, as Stuart Hall concedes,

[Globalization is] not a process at the end of history. It is working on the terrain of post-modern culture as a global formation, which is an
extremely contradictory space. Within that, we have in entirely new forms which we are only just beginning to understand, ... continuing contradictions of things that are trying to get hold of other things, and things that are trying to escape from their grasp (Hall, 1991a: 39).

The 'continuing contradictions' to which Hall refers, are the modernist themes of domination and subjectivity — class struggle — which are now absorbed into the broader field of postmodernism.

De-Orientalism, therefore, must also be measured against the incremental complexities of global processes, particularly through the theorization of the postmodern context. Specifically, the problem of identity in relation to Australia's communications with Indonesia, and international communications more generally, cannot be fully elucidated without reference to the context of historical postmodernity and the processes of indigenization and hybridization introduced earlier in this chapter. While it is not our concern to produce a fully elaborated theory of the postmodern, the following remarks are designed both to assist in the definition of the Australia Indonesia communications context, and to elucidate more fully the limitations of the De-Orientalist strategy as it is implicated in the complex processes of globalization and in the broader theorizations of the present.


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25 A number of general discussions of the term 'postmodernism' are currently available. They outline its genesis in the 1950s art world, trace its appropriation into literary criticism — notably through the seminal writings of Inhab Hassan — and explain its explosion into common usage during the 1980s. The popularity of the concept has been well discussed by Stephen Connor in his introductory text, Postmodernist Culture, (1988). See also Mike Featherstone (ed.) (1988) Theory Culture and Society: Special Edition on Postmodernism. I would also recommend Postmodernism Screen, the special edition of Screen, (1987, 28, 2) Boyne and Rattansi (ed.s) Postmodernism and Society (1990) and Margaret Rose, The Postmodern and the Postindustrial. (1990)
1992), feminism (Lovibond, 1990) demonstrates the potency of the term for the analysis of the contemporary field as well as its fluidity and adaptability (some would say, flacidity).

Central to many of these discussions, however, is the poststructuralist legacy of political dichotomy which has been variously interpreted as extreme conservatism (Dews 1984a) and radical subversion (Gane, 1989c). Postmodern theories have produced equally ambiguous political effects with some commentators like David Harvey repudiating the postmodernist movement for its reactionary rejection of Marxist and progressivist notions of unequal distribution of space and power (Harvey, 1989), with others like Boyne and Rattansi (1990) acknowledging the significance of postmodernism's political pluralism for the social efficacy of the women's movement, gay and ethnic politics. In either case, Boyne and Rattansi assure us, 'postmodernism is, in the broadest sense, political. Through its entire range, postmodernist discourse presents questions about how social relations should be organised and lived, about the social possibilities of our age, and about the social visions it is desirable to underwrite in the postmodern epoch' (Boyne and Rattansi, 1990: 23-4).

In order to understand these possibilities, however, it is necessary to follow Linda Hutcheon's (1989) example in discriminating between 'postmodernity' and 'postmodernism'. In this regard, postmodernity might best be understood in reference to what Jean-Francois Lyotard has called the postmodern condition (1984a, 1984b), a contemporary 'state of knowledge' distinguished by its rejection of universal and humanist values, the metanarratives of science, monodic homogeneities of thought and action. It may also incorporate aspects of what Fredric Jameson (1984a) has called the 'cultural logic of late capitalism' in which the identifiable structures of capital have given way to new forms of consumerism, 'a new type of social life, a new economic order' (Jameson, 1983: 113). It may include Bell's description of postindustrialism (1974) and the 'end of ideology' (1988) as much as Baudrillard's simulacrum by which the floating signifier deludes its audience, gloats over the body of the 'decreased referent'. Thus pluralism, eclecticism, pastiche, parody, diversity, multiple exigencies of power and consumerism transform or replace the social forms and thinking typical of modernism — humanism, liberalism, fixity, progress, homogeneous political, cultural and social forms.

'Postmodernism' on the other hand — diverging from Hutcheon's original formula somewhat — would incorporate those cultural productions that are distinctly different from 'modernist' or other cultural formations. This
distinction is necessary since even in the era of postmodernity there may exist works of art, philosophical treatises, buildings, even conversations26 that are not characteristically postmodern. That is, they do not contain elements of pastiche, parody, ethnic, spatial or temporal pluralism, or any of the elements that distinguish postmodernity from previous historical phases and which are broadly regarded as the linguistic-aesthetic ingredients of postmodernism; rather, such modes of expression may linger in the modernist excesses of liberal humanism, functionalism (as in architecture), monodism, psychological expressionism, Marxian praxis or other forms of 'meaningful' progressivism. There is of course a paradox here, in that some linguistic or aesthetic expressions occurring in the contemporary field of postmodernity may resist or reject the postmodern influence, clinging to the expressive conventions of modernism (in form and content); yet they too are part of postmodernity, part of the broadening field of eclecticism and pluralist thought, though they are not part of postmodernism itself.

To add further to this complexity, however, even those works which question the efficacy and value of postmodernity have been hybridized by its influence, changed utterly by the demands of its critical, theoretical and ideological power. Thus, Jameson, Bourdieu, Adorno, Eagleton, Harvey, Hall, — even Baudrillard and Lyotard — all of whom have expressed some more or less profound concerns about the social and cultural reign of postmodernity, acknowledge a significant and reciprocal relationship between the condition of postmodernity and the modes of linguistic and aesthetic expression that it bears and by which it is borne. Others like Brian McHale, Andrew Ross, Linda Hutcheon and Simon During would see a more distinctly critical, even subversive role for the artworks of postmodernity. Hutcheon (1989), for example, borrows from Barthes' notion of 'doxa' or 'Voice of Nature' (Barthes, 1977b) which, as the voice of public consensus, is challenged by the 'de-doxifying' impulse of postmodernism: 'Postmodern art cannot but be political at least in the sense that its representations — its images and stories — are anything but natural, however "aestheticized" they may appear to be in their parodic self-reflexivity' (Hutcheon, 1989: 3). Simon During, on the other hand,

26 I include conversations as a significant cultural formation or discourse, largely in respect of Richard Rorty's ideas of postmodern configurations. Rorty argues that conversation constitutes an appropriate system of philosophy, one which eschews the fixity of written discourse. See 'Nineteenth century idealism and twentieth century textualism,' (1981) 'Habermas, Lyotard et la postmodernité' (1984) and Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (1980).
while more tempered in his views, concerns himself with the problem of postmodernity's putative decentredness and subjectdispersal paradoxes:

First, I propose, against Jameson, that postmodernity ought not be conceived as a cultural dominant. Next, I want to urge that it is just as rewarding to construe literary postmodernism as an enemy of postmodernity as it is to consider it as its expression and helpmeet. . . . And third, I take the position that, if there is something that might be called postmodern thought, it too works in ways that cannot be regarded as a mere expression of an underlying postmodernity (During, 1988: 112).

During's resistance to the canon of postmodernity, however, leads him to a position not dissimilar to Said's: a valorization of postcolonial literature which, in embracing the decentredness of postmodernity and deconstructing the 'Occidental myth' (Said's Orientalism), nevertheless re-constructs a powerful ethico-political critique from the ashes of Marxist or liberal humanist teleology. Thus, while postmodernity may have no articulated theory of agency which might transform ideology into action, it functions for many followers of postmodern pluralism — most particularly for those who regard postcolonial theory as a compendium of postmodernism — as a site for an apparently inevitable and de-naturalizing critique.27 In this way, postmodernity is able to absorb the influences of Said's De-Orientalism — its conception of identity and political force — into a generalized theory of pluralist liberationism. It transforms Lyotard's critique of self-validating metanarrative, Derrida's differance, and Lacan's compelling though somewhat cryptic concept of the 'other' as a 'dual entry matrix',28 into a politics of resistance which may be measured in and expressed by notions of identity and individual agency, throwing into critical doubt those fixities of imperial domination, the idea of Europe; the distinction between the Occident and the Orient which confirmed Europe's own identity. This conjunctive political postmodernism — sometimes ascribed more directly as postcolonialism or

27 It should be noted that in a later essay (During, 1992) During finds fault with the theories of postcolonialism, particularly as they are measured against the more compelling influences of globalization.
centre-periphery theory — extends Said's conceit and informs Bronowski's conceptualization of Australians' self-definition and identity which 'determined their view of Asia' (Bronowski, 1992: 5).

Deleuze and Guattari, for example, in examining the relationship between Enlightenment and imperialist centredness, rhizomatic power networks and deterриториailization, have argued for a new plurality of cultural expression and a new status for minority literature (esp. Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 1986 and 1987). Similarly, Sneja Gunew (1990a), like Stuart Hall (1987), Castles et al (1990) and many others, has argued for the supersession of 'nation' as the central and defining characteristic of culture, positing that 'ethnicity constantly searches for voices, not for a definitive stance. It seeks mutual illumination in readings, juxtaposed dialogic texts or utterances that swerve away from the binary structures that have traditionally been the model on which the ground of culture is established' (Gunew, 1990a: 25). Gunew, in fact, argues that conceiving of culture as a series of 'competing ethnic voices' assuages both the political tendency to nationalist and imperialist hegemonies, and the critical exclusionism of metanarrative; in either case, it is therefore not merely a matter of 'telling stories', but of allowing these ethnically determined stories 'to redefine discourses of nationalism and identity' (Gunew, 1990a: 25). Simon During, in concerning himself with the voice of Third World liberation, thus dismisses Francis Cappola's Apocalypse Now for using 'the Orientalist-Vietnam background to re-state the absence of "Other"' (During, 1988: 120).

In formulating these 'postmodern' theories a whole new series of binary structures have replaced the old macro, bourgeois-proletariat, structure of Marxist social theory: self-other, centre-margin (or periphery), identity (or naturalizing)-difference, metropolitan-province, and more recently north-south, and subaltern theories have become attached to more sustaining theories of Orientalism. Acknowledging the contributions of

29 It is worth noting that Said himself adopts the language of the centre (metropolitan)-margin model in Culture and Imperialism (1993).
30 During contrasts the impoverishment of Cappola's film with the political and intellectual efficacy of Salman Rushdie's Shame. As we have seen above, During prefers a critical distance between the concepts of postmodernity and postmodernism, and it is this distance that allows him to describe Apocalypse Now as the 'postmodern as that which knows no Other' (1987: 120). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the strengths and failings of During's analysis in any detail, though a number of the theoretical issues raised in his essay will be considered below.
31 Feminism has also appropriated the concept of 'otherness.' Since Andreas Huyessen (1986b) described women as 'Modernism's other,' the notion has been adapted with considerable efficacy by feminist theories, paralleling earlier concepts of
psychoanalysis to the development of postcolonialism, Said himself writes in his later reconsideration of Orientalism: 'The Orient is not Europe's interlocutor, but its silent Other' (Said, 1986: 215). As we have already noted in passing, however, these notions of 'otherness' or 'difference' have become seriously relativized by liberalational theories, especially those relying on the polemical deconstruction of hegemonic discourses through the invocation of 'truth' or materiality. It is to Sneja Gunew's credit that she recognises the unenforcability of poststructuralist postmodernism by which subjectivity is defined through linguistic mediation rather than through agency. Gunew, in repudiating postmodernism in favour of a material reality that can be enjoyed by the liberated individual, is acknowledging the irreconcilability of the two theoretical and ideological positions. In the elaboration of these highly politicized notions of resistance and agency, difference and otherness become rallying points, fixed positions by which the discourse or actuality of the centre is challenged and overthrown. It is for this reason that many liberation theorists — most particularly those expressed in feminist and postcolonial writings — advocate the maintenance of these fixities, since to surrender the identity of Other or Different is to collapse into what Mary Kelly calls 'the modishness' of postmodernist pluralism which for Kelly is as unproductive as the 'sameness' of modernism' (Kelly, 1987).

Thus, while some theorists of the postmodern era accept the need to jettison poststructuralist influence when it fails to support their own prioritization of 'difference' as a fixed and absolute politico-cultural category, others have attempted to produce a more theoretically complex definition of identity in order to embrace Foucault's conjuncture of discourse and power/knowledge, Derrida's notion of difference and Lacan's description of subjectivity as the dual entry matrix. Specifically, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak have been most responsible for elaborating and transforming the theories of Derrida and Lacan into a rigorous poststructuralist postcolonial analysis. While Said, Bronowski, Gunew and During have preferred a materialist dimension to their political and critical exegesis of otherness and 'competing ethnic voices', Spivak and Bhabha have woven a complex discursive and psychological

the male as the naturalized' participant of public life, and the female as different or marginalised in practice and discourse.

32 Kelly's views are expressed in a special edition of Screen (29, 1, 1987) dedicated to the issue of 'difference' in cultural analysis. Screen is, of course, well known for its allegiance to transformed Lacanian theories on identity, especially as they relate to conceptions of sexual difference. We will return to discuss the use of Lacan in 'Screen Theory' in the specific analysis of sexual representations of Asian men and women (see Chapter Four).
course through the conceptualizations of identity and difference. For Bhabha, the question of identity cannot be reduced to Althusserian notions of 'ideology' or essentialist concepts of Nature, but must be referred to the interdependencies of self and other critically elaborated in poststructuralist theory. The distinguishing characteristic of the postcolonial text is therefore its postmodern inflection whereby 'the problem of identity returns as a persistent questioning of its frame, the space of representation, where the image ... is confronted with its difference, its Other' (Bhabha, 1987: 5). While the image may, of course, be the Orientalist stereotype, the critical factor remains the interdependence of the two identities. To this extent, Bhabha is dissatisfied with the ideological simplification and materialist separation of this struggling interdependencies of Self-Other; Bhabha re-formulates Lacan's 'dual entry matrix' as 'doubling', itself to be understood as —

the partial erasure of the depth perspective of the symbolic sign through the circulation of the signifier which, in its doubling and displacing, permits the sign no reciprocal division of form and content, superstructure and infrastructure. It is only by understanding the ambivalence and the antagonism of the 'desire of the Other' that we can avoid the increasingly facile adoption of the notion of homogenised 'Other', for a celebratory, oppositional politics of 'margins' or 'minorities' (Bhabha, 1987: 7).

The influence of Derrida in this passage is unmistakable. Bhabha makes both figurative and literal reference in his essay to the problem of 'absence', by which the postcolonial writer senses his/her own invisibility or lack of cultural presence. Any question of self infers its own absence, its own otherness: 'What these repeated negations of identity dramatise, in their elision of the seeing eye which must contemplate what is missing or invisible, is the impossibility of claiming an origin for the Self (or Other) within a tradition of representation that conceives of identity as the satisfaction of a totalising, platitudinous object of vision' (Bhabha, 1987: 5). Unlike Said's conceit, however, this dispersal of self and subject is not recoverable through a materialist polemic, but must continuously revise and confront itself as other and as self through the dynamic deferrals of what Derrida has called the non-originary origin of difference, and what Lacan specifies as 'the process of

33 This concept of difference is of course fundamental to Derrida's theories on language and writing. It may be pursued in several texts including Writing and
gap' within which the relation of subject to Other is produced (Lacan, 1977b:206).

In other words, only discourse —writing/ecriture in Derridean terms— facilitates the true liberation of the 'subaltern' since it is in discourse that the prison of subject-object (and hence identity) fixity is located. Bhabha, like Gayatri Spivak, denounces those ideologies that ascribe or proclaim themselves 'marginalized' or fixedly 'other' since this undermines the liberation of subject dispersal by confirming the status of the centre. Rather, Bhabha and Spivak employ a meticulous system of deconstruction or doubling adapted from the poststructuralists and intended to subvert the voyeuristic desire for the fixity of sexual difference and the fetishistic desire for racist stereotypes' (Bhabha, 1987: 7). Bhabha's deconstruction technique does not rely on the re-emergence of material reality and therefore offers some possibilities for the dissolution of all fixities since they can only exist in language and language is subject to deconstruction. The concept of the Centre is never allowed the status of totality or fixity, and Said's paradox, which revitalizes the author as both agent and signifier for the Orient, is rendered superfluous as Bhabha seeks a more complex though more consistent description of identity and change.

In following more closely the poststructuralist precepts and the descriptions of identity offered by Bhabha, we might arrive at a more complete description of cultural communications, particularly as it is conducted in the contemporary, postmodernist field characterized by the influences of globalization and what we have earlier called indigenization. While Bhabha

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34 A parallel assertion made in relation to the Australian De-Orientals' approach to Europe and Britain. The continued emphasis given to the Euro-British heritage tends to bestow upon the 'mother metropolis' a self-fulfilling primacy in the formation of Australia's own sense of identity. The discourse that would dismantle Euro-Britishism in Australia tends paradoxically to restore its centrality in the same way it maintains the marginality of things distinctly or indigenously Australian.

35 There is no doubt that the conclusions of Said on the one hand, and Bhabha and Spivak on the other converge in significant details. Rather, in developing the current analysis of Australian transculturalism, I have found the divergence between these writers instructive, particularly in their respective approaches to theoretical problems.
and Spivak are concerned mostly with the experience of the immigrant self as it is fused and 'de-fused' in the adopted culture, the principles of 'doubling' apply equally to the entrance of Australians into the South East Asian region. To the extent that identity is the outcome of the exchange of meanings, and cannot be rhizomatically sustained over time and space or in the absolutism of truth, political monadism, centredness or subject-object fixity, it must be defined in locations of context through the function of discourse. And so when commentators like Anthony King (1984, 1990), Arjun Appadurai (1990), Immanuel Wallerstein (1991) and Roland Robertson (1991) argue in their own ways against the theories of the homogenization of global culture and (especially American) cultural imperialism, they are conceding that international flow of culture is a process of exchange, a doubling of identity, an unceasing redefinition of the culturally constituted self, an interaction which produces change for the sender and receiver, the producer and consumer, the visitor and the host. Indeed, for Arjun Appadurai, theories of centre, even multiple centres, and of the global homogenization of culture, are seriously deficient because they fail to recognize that 'at least as rapidly as forces from various metropoles are brought into new societies, they tend to become indigenized in one or other ways: 'this is true of music and housing styles, as much as it is true of science and terrorism' (Appadurai, 1990: 295).

While the implications of this process for the economic and spatial dimensions of communications between Australia and Indonesia will be considered more fully in the next chapter, we might again briefly recall the significance of indigenization for the original inhabitants of the Australian continent whose international communications with the Macassan Indonesians resulted in the adoption of the didgeridoo, from about 1600. The music of the Macassins obviously delighted their continental hosts who adapted and translated the machinery of the original instrument to suit their own musicology. It is again a marvellous irony of history that the didgeridoo has become absorbed by the musical lexicon of American Negroes (transformed from 12 bar blues music into modern rock) as it has been transmuted by Australian popular musicians. The hollow timber rod with its original five note scale has thus become a central icon for the indigenous music culture and will be heard in electronic versions in both Aboriginal rock, white rock and Australian classical style music. The didgeridoo, therefore, while representing much of the latent and repressed culture of what is being popularly called Aboriginality, has its roots deep in the culture and civilization of Indonesia.
The point is not that postcolonial theories that rely on a systematic strategy of materialist deconstruction or monadic reworkings of Marxian praxis are bereft of value, but rather that they tend to produce a distorted reading of the archive itself. As Simon During has recently pointed out in his re-appraisal of postcolonial theory, those teleological conceptions of domination through subjugation and consent — Gramsci's hegemony, Althusser's ideology, Adorno and Marcuse's false consciousness — are difficult to reconcile with the history of imperial and post-imperial global processes. What During calls 'internalization' are the multiplying specificities of cultural interaction. These theories of domination:

all imply a stable, overriding social structure that is more or less uncontested by both dominant and subaltern subjects — the sense, for instance, that both sides are citizens of a single state or work within a shared cultural horizon. To put it another way, these concepts do not envisage translation problems between dominant and dominated factions. And consent remains a difficult concept for postcolonial analysis when it, in turn, merges into . . . those processes of 'internalization' of, and identification with, the values and discourses of the invaders (During, 1992: 348).

Echoing the analysis of Stuart Hall (1997, 1991a), During claims that postcolonial peoples themselves, in adopting European systems of liberation, nationalism and modes of identity, may be revitalizing Eurocentric values in new and conjunctive cultural processes; the exact nature of these new formations, however, is difficult to locate and describe because of the fluid, dynamic and interactive nature of culture itself.

This point is also made by Benedict Anderson in his original publication of *Imagined Communities*, where he argues that official nationalism in the colonised worlds of Asia and Africa was modelled directly on the dynastic state of nineteenth century Europe. In revising this argument, however, and adding the chapter, 'Census, Map, Museum' to the 1991 edition, Anderson acknowledges the significance of the indigenous colonial culture to the development and expression of nationalist sentiment and national identity. In particular, Anderson examines influences of Western institutional thinking (census, map and museum) and Western technology (print technology in particular) which were bound and hybridized by the pre-modern culture to produce the boundaries and institutions of the modern state. Anderson traces,
for example, the changes in cartography in Thailand, which became a linguistic expression of new modes of self conception and national consciousness. Though Thailand, of course, was never colonised, these cartographic changes demonstrate most vividly the processes of hybridization and interaction whereby the ideas of the West are transmuted and changed by the indigenous culture, producing complex realignments and re-adjustments within the host's social and cultural formations. Again, what Anderson's work demonstrates is the significance of interaction and exchange in the processes of identity constitution and cultural formation beyond the space of ideological and contextual closure.

There is no doubt that over recent years a number of the more probing of the postcolonial thinkers, including Said himself (1993), have tried to take greater account of these hybridization processes in their theorization of liberation. Yet even Sneja Gunew who acknowledges 'the hybrid histories of the "West" and its cultural institutions' (Gunew, 1993: 457) is unable to pursue this concept genuinely, preferring, it would seem, the retention of fixed and uncompromising theories of resistance-liberation which demand the restoration of the Kantian object-subject dichotomy and the rebuilding of a monadic Western Empire in order to assault it. Such conceits, however and as we have seen, are difficult to sustain when examined in relation to the global postmodern condition. In analyzing the interactive communication between Australia and Indonesia in the current epoch, then, we must develop and apply a methodology that produces a more complete and less distorted reading of the textual archive. Specifically, we must come to terms with the diversity of communicative exchange, the fluidity of consciousness and national-cultural identity, and the status of the text itself which is our only access to the linguistic formation of the real. Postcolonial theories which claim a status beyond the reciprocal productivity of discourse and cultural meaning, and which attempt to separate the compound of power/knowledge through the specific leverage of ideology and liberationism, should be regarded as limited, their truths recognised as partial and unstable closures against the intractable openness of postmodernity. Nowhere is this more obvious than in

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36 Anderson follows the work of Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul who examined the changes in maps of Thailand between 1850 and 1910. Up until the accession of Rama IV in 1851 (of King and I fame) the only Thai maps that existed were the spiritual map representing the Buddhist cosmos, and sectional maps of specific locations. These location maps were vertical as well as horizontal representations, giving pictorial details of significant landmarks. These maps were used to detail military campaigns and guides for local shipping, and represented a significant difference in conceptions of space to that of the modern consciousness.
Australia where, it might be argued, social fluidity, transculturalism and historical openness seem to belie entirely the simple, monodirectional and categorical descriptions of postcolonial De-Orientalism, if not in the past, then certainly in the contemporary field. In order to grasp these complexities, we must adapt and adopt an heuristic style which best accounts for this openness and most particularly the interactive and mutually dependent intensities of transcultural contiguity and the uneven formation of identity.

Foucault's power/knowledge, Derrida's difference, Bhabha's 'doubling', Anderson's conjunctive imaginings — all driven by poststructuralist conceptions of lingual and cultural formation — lead us more closely toward the heuristic mechanisms we require for a fuller understanding of this transcultural communications. Yet the difficulties with the poststructuralist theorization of culture need also to be fully acknowledged. It may be clear, for example, that the poststructuralist emphasis on constituted meanings and textual immanence parallels the critical precepts of American Contextualism (also called New Criticism). In fact it is arguable, and others have pursued this line more fully (Jameson, 1981, de Man, 1979, 1983), that the postmodernist interest in meaning dispersal and particularity owes as much to American Contextualism as it does to French poststructuralism. The Contextualist emphasis on the integration of parts ('the well wrought urn' in Cleanth Brooks' terms), the inseparability of form and content (the 'world's body' of John Crowe Ransom), and the uniqueness and inter-referentiality of meaning (every new poem is a new word in Allen Tate's schema) provide powerful insights into the functioning of individual texts.\(^\text{37}\) Postmodernist cultural analysis continues this conception of the functioning uniqueness of texts, as much as it continues many of its critical difficulties. Thus, the adaptation of theories like those of Bhabha and Spivak on the complex interchange of identity or 'doubling' generates a similar series of critical and ideological difficulties.

\(^{37}\) There are limits to these similarities, of course, most notably those relating to ideological and historical context. New criticism arises from liberal progressivism which, while emphasizing the uniqueness and integrity of the individual text, often presents that meaning in the general 'context' of liberal or humanist possibility. In moving beyond the Leavisite-Hegelian conception of moral transcendence, the New Critics of the fifties and early sixties remained fixed in the modernist conception of high art and social value. In many respects, and this is a point Jameson makes, though somewhat circuitously, New Criticism remains the critical voice of Late Modernism, questioning the validity of universal narratology and morality, but incapable of making that final 'Leap to Faith' elaborated by Kierkegaard in Fear and Trembling. This is to say, the Contextualists never really pursued the implications of their theories; this has been the critical inheritance of poststructuralism and postmodernism.
Andrew Ross's description of the new postmodern politics provides us with an appropriate clue to these difficulties:

No matter how the ethical stakes are divided today, it is clear that we can no longer envisage a grand tug-of-war between Capital and Labour (the old 'war of manoeuvre' in which a gain on one side is necessarily a loss on the other). In addition the emergence of the new social movements and new political subjects has so radically pluralized the agenda of the left that gains for some cannot be universalized as gains for all . . . The result is an agenda appropriate to a modern Gramscian war of positions, a field of coheterogeneous positions and sometimes contradictory discourses, often with no common content and no overall guarantee of a progressive outcome (Ross, 1988: xii).

The title of Ross's text, *Universal Abandon?* indicates not only the interrogative status of this new politics, but also its critical and philosophical foundations; postmodernism dissolves the orthodoxies of Marxian praxis, but threatens an abandonment of all fixity into an ever dispersing deferral of meanings and possibilities.

At the heart of much criticism of poststructuralism and postmodernism is just this putative abandonment of political and liberationary orthodoxies in favour of pluralism and specificity. Spivak, for example, has been criticized for pushing her theory of interdependence and the collusion of the colonized with the colonist, the native with 'its own subject(ed) foundation as other and voiceless' such that the theory duplicates its original silencing: 'while protesting at the obliteration of the native's subject position in the text of imperialism, Spivak is writing out the evidence of native agency recorded in India's 200 year struggle against British conquest and the Raj — discourses to which she scathingly refers as hegemonic, nativistic or reverse ethnocentric narrativizations' (Parry, 1987: 35). While Parry's criticism hinges on a conceptualization of Spivak's abandonment of 'genuine' (i.e. material) historical liberation, it allies her with a broader repudiation of poststructuralist inclination to meaningless particularization of discursive configuration which entails — especially through Derridean scholarship — a suspicion of conventional hermeneutic practice. As we have noted, Said himself seems aware of this tension between Enlightenment (especially Marxian) universalism and poststructuralist (especially Foucauldian) interest in
particularity and context; in Orientalism he confesses his own critical
trepidation in his effort to mediate, if not reconcile fully, the dichotomy:

My two fears are distortion and inaccuracy, or rather the kind of
inaccuracy produced by too dogmatic a generality, or too positivistic a
localized focus. I have tried to deal with three main aspects of my own
contemporary reality which would seem to point the way out of the
methodological or perspectival difficulties I have been discussing,
difficulties that might force one, in the first instance, into writing a coarse
polemic on so unacceptably general a level of description as not to be
worth the effort, or in the second instance, into writing so detailed and
atomistic a series of analyses as to lose all track of the general lines of
force informing the field, giving it its special cogency. How then to
recognize individuality and to reconcile it with its intelligent and by no
means passive or merely dictatorial, general and hegemonic context?
(Said, 1978: 8-9).

Just as the New Critics were criticized for 'producing' as interpretation
literary texts which were irredeemably closed by their own unique and
immanent meanings, postmodernist analysis has been criticised for producing
texts that are so radically open as to defer the possibility of meaning
altogether. If, as Jameson has clearly explained, meaning is the allegorical re-
constitution by a secondary text of a master narrative, then there can be little
doubt that all interpretation is a process of reification whereby the master text
is radically reduced by the action of the interpreter.

What is denounced is therefore a system of allegorical interpretation
in which the data of one narrative line are radically impoverished by
their re-writing according to the paradigm of another narrative,
which are taken as the former's master code or Ur-narrative and
proposed as the ultimate hidden or unconscious meaning of the
first one (Jameson, 1981: 22).

While Jameson's solution to the problem of meaning is to produce a politics of
the unconscious which reinstates the immediacy and validity of the everyday
world, other postmodernists appear to seek a more radical dispersal by
embracing the methodology of Derridean deconstruction. Paul de Man, for
example, while not necessarily subscribing to the postmodern appellation, has
contributed much to the transformation of American literary criticism through his translation of Derrida into a critical methodology. At the centre of this transformation is the equation of differance — absence-presence, identity-difference, etc. — with the deconstructive processes of meaning constitution-meaning dispersal. De Man distinguishes between allegory and irony to demonstrate the destabilizing power of differance: 'Ironic is no longer a trope, but the undoing of the deconstructive allegory of all tropological cognitions, the systematic undoing, in other words, of understanding' (de Man, 1979: 301).

The limitations of this description would be immediately obvious, though for an analysis of Australia's communications relationship with Indonesia some quite specific issues arise. Most particularly, an analysis that consciously destabilizes itself and contends, as Lyotard has pioneered, the subversion of cybernetic analyses appears to limit the possibility of wider spheres of reference. In Derridean analysis we can see clearly the process of intertextual regression where meanings are deferred through the contingencies of other meanings and other texts; yet even Derridean notions of intertextuality and dissemination may be regarded as a system, however open and however self collapsing. Similarly, Foucault's early emphasis on the history of discontinuities, which as a direct challenge to historical systems of Marxist and materialist historical teleology may accord with the deconstructive impetus, was later re-constructed through the methodological demands of historical continuity. In fact Foucault's analysis of prisons (Discipline and Punish) and sexuality (The History of Sexuality) was both systematic in its interpretive/heuristic technique and in its findings. Indeed, while Deleuze and Guattari have tried to work more consistently against the conventions of analytical system by claiming that their A Thousand Pleasures could be started from any page, other theorists of postmodernity — Baudrillard, Jameson, even Lyotard himself — have produced highly systematized descriptions of the postmodern condition, even though the historical epoch itself is characterized by disjuncture and the ineluctable dispersals of subject and meaning.

Paradoxically, then, the cultural fragmentation (Collins, 1989), the universal abandon (Ross, 1988), the floating signifier of simulacra (Baudrillard, 1984b) and the doubling of Bhabha all take place within the systematic complex of global culture and what David Harvey has called the time-space compression (Harvey, 1989). While these theoretical issues will be pursued more fully in the following chapter, it is necessary to establish that every text (including the
'text' of the contemporary social field) need to be understood as a contradiction of open and closed meanings; the text must be understood as an individual formation as well as an element in a broader or collective formation which continuously challenge their own system and structure. Such a contradiction is neither — despite the claims of many critics and theorists to the contrary — unknowable nor inexpressible. While such complexities and paradoxes of poststructuralist/postmodernist theory and method are by now well known, what is important is the recognition that meanings are elusive and multiple impulses which require meticulous and flexible analytical tools for their elucidation.

Thus, De-Orientalism, because of its affiliation with monadic and absolutist structures, tends to produce limited results. In locating the complex and often contradictory meanings and identity formations of the postmodern social field and its texts, our methods need to be sensitive to dispersal, fragmentation, paradox and, most importantly, transcultural contiguity. Identity, like text, needs to be studied as a complex and unfixed formation. This is especially true for the postmodern condition which, in drawing individuals and their separate cultures into greater propinquity, confronts certainty and difference in subtle and extant ways. The global field is itself a contradiction since, with greater integration and greater communicative proximity, cultures and individuals have become more interconnected and mutually influenced. Yet the formation or imagination, as Anderson might describe it, of the global community and the liberation of the subject have been accompanied by other forms of cultural heterogeneity and individualism. The following chapter will examine these issues in greater detail as it attempts to define more specifically the nature of the global integration and the effect of globalism on the particular transcultural communications between Australia and Indonesia.

IV. Dari mana? Transculturalism and Place

My final objective in this chapter is to clarify a number of the contentions and strategies from which this study proceeds. To do this, I would return once again to the short story by Glenda Adams which introduces this discussion. 'Letters from Jogja' surveys a personal history of Indonesia. The story begins when the narrator, a young Australian language student, is living and studying in Jogjakarta during the 1960s. It concludes some twenty-three years later when the narrator returns to Indonesia and on a brief visit to Bali seeks out her former friend from the host family in Jogja. Timi, her old friend, is now running a hotel on the tourist island. The story personalizes the process
of change in the spatial and cultural edifice, and in the way the narrator herself interacts with and understands Indonesia. Throughout the story, the narrator tries to objectify the changes, tries to fix the meanings of the country and its culture through some stabilizing conceits of language. As if to confirm the substance of herself — her self-knowledge, her identity — she strives to know the culture by knowing the language, its nuances and its specificities. Thus, like Richard Burton, the nineteenth century traveller and adventurer lauded by Edward Said, she immerses her student self in the permanences and lifestyle of the ordinary Javanese. In her knowledge, her relative penury, her disciplinary inquisitiveness, and her personal integrity, the narrator feels superior to travel writers like Gregory Dunne,

who came to the country, for a few weeks, months, even years, sat in the Hotel Indonesia (the only 'international' hotel in Indonesia at the time) at the bar or beside the swimming pool with other foreigners — businessmen, diplomats, journalists and the occasional tourist — pronouncing on events taking place beyond the walls of the hotel and, in spite of their material comforts, usually complaining about indolence, inefficiency, unreliability, the drinking water, and even the horses — too small, I heard one visitor say (LJ, 4).

The sense of superiority felt by the narrator and other language students living in Indonesia at the time is balanced, however, by the frustration that knowledge itself brings, a knowledge that informs the learner of how much more there remains to know. For indeed, not only does the cultural and spatial landscape continually change during the twenty-three years between her initial stay and her Bali visit — a period punctuated by language teaching at Sydney University, news networking in New York and a plethora of other unspecified experiences through which the narrator herself evolves and changes — but the intimacies of the Indonesian culture itself continue to resist her.

Indeed, what the story makes clear is that culture and cultural knowledge are the most elusive of categories. As a young student, the narrator discovers that language — the vehicle and producer of culture — evades her perfect knowing, both because of its immense breadth and diversity, and its multiple functioning in the social formations of a culture. Indonesia, she discovers, is not a single category, but a series of waves and weaves, a multiplicity of ethnic types, subtle and extant class distinctions, religious and political
exigencies: while Sukarno's brilliant oratory includes phrases of English, Javanese, French, Latin, Bahasa, it may strategically exclude phrases from Dutch or Chinese when the political context demands; Timi sings in multiple languages, yet her social world is formulated around discursive restraint, suffocating regimes of politeness and exclusionist linguistics; learned writers use their Dutch as a status symbol, while writers emerging from the non-European educated peasant classes feel humiliated by their ignorance of the colonial language; politeness and restraint and the avoidance of 'causing offence' may be foundational cultural traits, but villages may be so intransigently divided that warring factions may not speak to one another for generations.

The significance of this politico-cultural linguistics is clearly revealed in the narrator's personal description of the incorporation of West Papua into the Indonesian Republic.

So hard did I try to blend in and be Javanese that once I spent some of my precious allowance on black hair dye. But the dye came off on the pillow and I had to spend an hour in the bathroom throwing dippers of water over my hair to get it out. At Kaliurang, a little resort in the hills outside of Jogja, I met several chiefs from West New Guinea, which as Irian Barat had just been incorporated into Indonesia. They were wearing suits and shoes possibly for the first time, using knives and forks, unable to speak Indonesian. To me they looked a little glum, and I felt a certain kinship, trying as we all were to learn the customs of this country new to us (LJ, 9).

Adams' trope of identification, subtly woven by its barely stated irony, illustrates both the implacability of knowledge as much as the significance of political fusion. The student girl's ridiculous strain for assimilation is darkly juxtaposed against this powerful personification of territorialism. Equally, this cameo insight into the cultural effects of imperial absorption — the chiefs' obviously clumsy attempts at being Indonesian — also reflects the vicarious nature of European colonial influence, internalization, and hybridization.

Through the progression of the story — employing as it does the technical strategy of interweaving present descriptions of Bali with past descriptions of Jogja — the narrator is trying to reconcile these strident grasping for cultural knowledge with the disappointments and greater wisdom of her maturity. In a sense, her quest to know Indonesia, and consequently herself in relation to
Indonesia, is symbolised in her attempt to find Timi in Bali. Now the world is different. She has observed from a distance the parade of revolution and the accession of the New Order. She has learned of the slaughter and near genocide of Chinese, the repression of liberty, the incarceration of critics and free thinkers, many of whom she had known personally — intellectuals, writers, poets. Yet she also knows of the progress and prosperity that had brought hotels to the beachside, shopping malls to the cities and books to the bookstores. And which, more particularly, had brought tourists, herself included, to the hotel lobbies and beaches of Bali. Thus, the culture with which she had struggled, remains unknown and finally unknowable, trapped as much as transmuted by the closures of time, an unfinished project. The postmodern world absorbs them all. Tourists parade about in bikini briefs and shorty shorts, drinking excessively and sporting T-shirts with slogans like 'No I don't want a fucking bemo, postcard, massage, jiggy-jig' (LJ, 7). Yet the offence that such behaviours may have once caused in Indonesian society seems to have been profoundly muted by the passage of time and by the desensitizing and mutating influences of affluence, utilitarianism and internationalization. The narrator herself is insulted by the Indonesian airport official who calls to her 'Arjuh, Nenek, or 'Hurry it along, Grandmother'. It is not just the edifice of spatial change, then, that leads the mature narrator to observe that 'all kinds of barriers appeared to have been broken down since I had been there as a student' (LJ, 4-5).

Her search for Timi becomes a search for old answers and for the narrator's old self. On numerous occasions throughout the story her efforts at reconciling the old and the transformed culture and self lead her to observe that an exploration of an alien culture produces more knowledge about the explorer than about the culture. Her failure to locate Timi and the distance that continues to grow between herself and the Indonesia with which she has sought intimacy, is ironically dramatized in her beach walk in Bali where, lost in her ruminations, the narrator nearly stands on a topless European woman whose 'skin was the same colour as the sand' (LJ, 13). Unlike the student narrator whose hair dye had run and who had failed her own test of assimilation, the tourist had blended in to the new postmodern Indonesia of global integration. The sunbathing woman is like the new Bali culture; she is the new Bali culture.

In the end, however, there can be no substance for either the sunbather or the ruminating narrator. Pleasure passes. An old fisherman calls out as he might have done twenty-three years before. Timi is not found, and the
strategy of nostalgia and ruminatory exploration, which may have levered open the closures of the past, can neither assuage the effects of change nor force the multiplying specificities of a culture to reveal themselves. Finally, limitations of knowledge — even the knowledge of 'things in their own terms' postulated by the founder of Indonesian department at Sydney University and recalled by the narrator — will prove no more and no less than a linguistic trope. Language, the narrator discovers, is the determining factor, though, like the dialectics that challenge the unchallengeable conclusions of poststructuralism, the hope of something more permanent and substantial lingers in the narrator's consciousness:

Mossman suggests that when we travel we learn more about ourselves than about others. But perhaps even this is not true, and that all we do when we venture forth is reinforce beliefs already held as we continue to impose our own sensibilities on everything we encounter. For Europeans and Australians a beach is for sunbathing, vacations for drinking more beer. Dunne finds only that the English spoken by some Indonesians is quaint and their attempts to please him with western cuisine laughable. And I, not as different from Dunne as I might think, construct a story from my own subjective patterns. And through it all, an Indonesian fisherman continues to greet strangers with, 'Where are you from?' (LJ, 13).

When, amidst the transformed cultural site of Bali, this old fisherman asks Dari mana, 'Where are you from?' he is asking the central question of all transcultural communications. In concluding this chapter and previewing the discussion ahead, I would suggest that this same question be installed as the critical issue for all cultural analysis in the context of global postmodernity. Issues of identity and the cultural configuration of meaning, most particularly as they interact with the new global political economy, cannot be simply resolved through reference to the concept of cultural difference as a closed and self-reflexive critical and ideological category. As Adams' narrator discovers, it is only through an understanding of language and linguistic processes that these issues must be pursued. 'Where are you from?' or more directly 'Who are you?' are questions that are becoming increasingly significant as nations and ethnic groups are being drawn more directly into contact and communications with one another. The implications of these questions and their responses must be understood in relation both to the
context of the new capitalist system and the broader issues being raised through the intellectual pursuits of postmodernism. In the next chapter these issues of identity will be examined in reference to the processes and counterflows of global integration.
2. Australian Cultural Politics and the Global Postmodern

Even if the Enlightenment has been a very important phase in our history and in the development of political technology, I think we have to refer to much more remote processes if we want to understand how we have been trapped in our own history. This was the 'ligne de conduite' of my previous works: analyze the relations between experiences like madness, crime, sexuality, and several technologies of power. What I am working on now is the problem of individuality — or, I should say, self-identity as referred to the problem of 'individualizing power'.

— Michel Foucault (Lecture delivered at Stanford University, 1979)

Know, O friendly generalizer, that there be tall Australians and short Australians . . . faint or fierce, feeble-clinging or deathless strong . . . speculative, rash Australians, also cautious, very wary Australians . . . There is no generic native Australian.

— Rolf Bolderwood, *In Bad Company and Other Stories*

_I. The New Utilitarianism_

In the previous chapter a number of the critical and ideological difficulties arising from a quasi deconstructive approach to Orientalism were investigated. In particular, the theory and methodology of De-Orientalism were shown to be limited tools for the elucidation and analysis of Australia Indonesia communications in the current historical context; these heuristic difficulties are especially evident in relation to the transcultural configuration of subjectivity, identity and global hybridization. The discussion encountered problems with the politicization of transculturalism through theories of economic-military and cultural-social hegemonies. By and large, these theories depend on a retention or unexplicated revival of the Cartesian/Kantian dualisms of object-subject, materiality-discourse, universal-particular. The poststructuralist/postmodernist precept which demands the dissolution of these dichotomies through the prioritization of discourse as the mediation of all knowledge — not repudiating the existence of materiality but denying its heuristic validity beyond discourse — offers an alternative to De-Orientalism. However, this precept, providing as it does a more thorough insight into the complexities and disjunctures of the postmodern epoch, must confront its own limitations, especially in relation to its putative equivocations on power and the systematization of knowledge.
My aim in the current chapter is to go beyond De-Orientalism by addressing more directly the spatial and economic dimensions of Australia Indonesia transcultural communications. The discussion that follows will demonstrate the significance of economics-space as a function of culture and representation, such that the globalization of capital becomes identifiable with its cultural constituency in human action, meaning and subjectivity. While the acknowledgement of this interconnectedness has become something of a commonplace in recent cultural analysis (King, 1991a, Wolff, 1991), my approach will differ significantly, for example, from the work of Immanuel Wallerstein (1991), David Harvey (1989) and others who maintain the pre-eminence of macro-social theories — most particularly the mode of production or regulation theories — in determining cultural processes. That is, rather than prioritize economic factors, in accordance with Marxian praxis, as determinants of culture, or to separate spatiality from its linguistic mediation, I have found it more productive to maintain the interdependence of eco-space and culture in order to elucidate their effects in power and knowledge.¹ The current discussion, therefore, will examine space-economy as a system of representation and meaning exchange. Like verbal or pictographic languages, capital and spatial resources have their material or morphological dimensions, but what really matters for human processes is the meanings they produce, their control on human action, their effects of power/knowledge.

Thus, while issues of security have dominated transcultural contact between Australia and Indonesia in the past, the internationalization of capital as well as the facilitatory processes of globalization are creating new imperatives for increased communion in the pursuit of economic development and the utility of pleasure it represents. Indonesia's rapid economic expansion in the post-Sukarno period (particularly since the liberalization initiatives after 1987), along with a decline in Australia's own economic performance, the realignment of the international trading plutocracy, and the general re-ordering of capitalist processes themselves, have imbued the South East Asian neighbour with a significance reaching

¹ This approach, of course, is established by Edward Said and pursued by a number of other recent cultural analysts, including Stuart Hall. In his latest writings in Culture and Imperialism (Said, 1993) Said describes imperialism as the cultural processes of international and intercultural domination which almost always included the 'colonization' of other lands and peoples by European powers. Thus Said, developing the ideas of his earlier works, sees the cultural-meaning processes as leading economics and politics in the shaping of history.
well beyond its own national boundaries. This significance will be explored more fully in this chapter, most particularly in the context of global postmodernism as well as the lineal exchanges of bi-lateral communications with Australia. Both nations, both cultures, are being drawn beyond the sovereign and imagined closures of national boundaries into the openness, uncertainties and contradictions of the global field. The political implications of this multi-directional relationship will also be scrutinized in relation to the power/knowledge conceit of Michel Foucault. It is hoped that the concluding remarks of the chapter will make some worthwhile contribution to the postmodern theorization of the present, the problem of power and the dissolution of the Kantian dichotomies.

The economic ideas informing recent discourse about Indonesia, — inspired as much by Australia's own faltering as by the rapid evolution of the Indonesia economy into a plausible and attractive site for investment of accumulated international capital — appear almost evangelical in their determination to turn around what John Jeffers has called Australia's 'missed opportunities' in Asia (1988-9). The theme of missed opportunities for Australia in South East Asia, particularly economic opportunities, has long been circulating. The 1975 Senate Standing Committee investigating trade with Indonesia reported that 'The prospects for long term trade between Indonesia and Australia are good, particularly for the export of Australian goods to Indonesia' (Senate Standing Committee, 1975: 4)). Such an encouraging prognosis, however, could not of itself reverse a colonial inheritance which directed each of the neighbours away from the other and more toward older economic partnerships with the global core of Europe and rising Japan. For all its obviousness, economic activity between Australia and Indonesia, at least until quite recently, has remained relatively insignificant. H. W. Arndt reported in 1980, for example, that trade had been largely restricted to Australian export of primary products (wheat in particular) and import of Indonesian oil (Arndt, 1980: 741). Arndt argues that the failure of Australian export of manufacturing equipment, which it was hoped would be required by Indonesia's industrialization, was the result of practical trading difficulties and significant differences in historically constituted spheres of economic and cultural interest during the period of colonial rule: 'Australia and Indonesia had long been parts of different colonial empires, their economies geared to those metropolitan countries' (Arndt,1980: 141).
The dissolution of those empires, along with the catapulting effects of global capitalization, the modernization of East and South East Asia and a commensurate decline in Australia's terms of trade, have accelerated Australia's regional economic realignment and intensified the complex of reconfigurations of itself and its Near North (Ingleson and Walker, 1988, Walker, 1990, Joint Standing Committee, 1993). It is arguable, in this sense, that these new modes of economic globalization are themselves producing new effects of utility or Utilitarianism for Australian commerce, and that this new Utilitarianism is being supported — even produced — through new modes of articulation or discourse. Resonating with the moral and ideological capitalist imperatives expressed in the writings of Bentham and the Mills, this new Utilitarianism appears to be penetrating the structures, institutions and discursive conventions of Australian business and in fact the broader sphere of Australia Indonesia transcultural communications.

We may be reminded of Edward Said's disapprobation of Benthamite Utilitarianism which, 'combined with the legacies of liberalism and evangelicism as philosophies of British rule in the East, stressed the rational importance of a strong executive armed with various legal and penal codes, a system of doctrines on such matters as frontiers and land rents, and everywhere an irreducible supervisory imperial authority' (Said, 1978: 214-5). The administrative assiduousness of Imperial utility to which Said refers is merely a screen for the profound and ambient rationalization of capitalist processes. While Adam Smith explains the mechanics of the new economic system, James and John Stuart Mill, in particular, dignify the process with moral and ideological virtue; use, individualism, liberty and personal pleasure become the 'ends' of economy. Utility, for John Stuart Mill, becomes an effect of moral good: social virtue, individual and social liberty, and representative government are the natural and pragmatic outcomes of the satisfaction of individual happiness or sensate pleasure. That something is of 'use' in producing pleasure determines its ultimate value; morality was thus an inevitable issue of utility, since immorality could lead only to repression and unhappiness. The paradox of individual and collective desires and satisfactions, which might lead to immoral action and by which the precepts of personal utility could be invoked against moral good, would be resolved by the necessities of historical teleology and education:

If the view adopted by the utilitarian philosophy of the nature of the moral sense be correct, this difficulty will always present itself until the
influences which form moral character have taken the same hold of the principle which they have taken of some of the consequences — until, by the improvement of education, the feeling of unity with our fellow-creatures shall be (what it cannot be denied that Christ intended it to be) as deeply rooted in our character, and to our own consciousness as completely a part of our nature, as the horror of crime is in an ordinarily well brought up young person (Mill, 1910: 25). 2

While clearly, the diversifications and intensifications of postmodernity have corrupted the general focus of liberalist (or Marxist) historical teleology, Mill's account of the social and moral benefit of individualism, pleasure and utilitarian value are revitalized in the postmodern discourse of economic pluralism, consumer pleasure and global capitalization (see e.g. Smith, 1988a, 1988b). Like nineteenth century French positivism, Utilitarianism supports an idealized conception of progressive capitalist economics; the notion of a New Utilitarianism might satisfactorily describe the mood of economic evangelicism in Australia's attitude to Asia, arising both with the thrust of globalization processes and the creed of pleasure-seeking individualism.

It is this revitalized Utilitarianism which seems to have inspired much of Paul Keating's vaulting Republicanism and his choice of Indonesia as the pre-eminent diplomatic destination of his prime ministership in 1992. Exhortations for Australian commerce to 'do business' in Asia, the increasing pressure on schools to teach Asian languages, the re-direction of arts funding to incorporate Asian tours and the absorption of Asian cultural influences, the incrementing and celebratory incorporation of Asians into the Australian immigration program — all indicate, to a greater or lesser degree, the influences of this New Utilitarianism. Indeed, while the old Utilitarianism disavowed by Said may have been grounded in imperialist views of eco-cultural, if not racial, Eurocentricism, this New Utilitarianism as exalted in the official discourse of business and government, is unashamedly decentring, Asiaphillic and culturally compliant. As with Mill's prediction of the inevitable connection between utility and liberty, the new voice of utility insists that liberty and

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2 Utilitarianism, from which this excerpt is taken was first published as a collection of previously prepared articles in Frazer's Magazine in 1861. It was published in the Everyman Library series in 1910 and continues in print today.
genuine representative government will necessarily issue from the wealth
created by capitalist expansion.\(^3\)

The Australia Indonesia Institute, for example, was established in 1989 by
the Australian Commonwealth Government to 'further the relationship
between the two countries in a variety of fields'. Its discourse is robustly
global, capitalist and Asiaphilic. In its publication *Australia Indonesia: The
Business Relationship* (Williams, 1991), Gavin Williams presents Indonesia as
an economic opportunity by which Australia might increase its already
favourable terms of trade through a more complete and sympathetic approach
to the internationalization of the Indonesian economy. While exports to
Indonesia aggregate $A1329 million in 1990, this accounts for only 5% of
total export value, with only 2.8% of Australian import values coming from
Indonesia (Williams, 1991). According to Williams, Australia is lagging behind
other parts of the world in directing its economic activities into the region
because many Australian businesses 'do not consider seriously Indonesia as a
potential commercial value. Others have been put off by so-called "cultural
differences" and the well publicised failure of some Australian commercial
activities in Indonesia' (Williams, 1991, 9). Indeed, what is notable about the
tone and orientation of Williams' analysis is the general sense of incrementing
stability and well-being that prosperity is bringing both to Indonesia itself and
to those nations that have invested their accumulated capital in the region.
Exhortations for Australian business to seize the bounty that Indonesia
represents culminate in moments of rhetorical urgency, since 'Australian
companies have been slow to take advantage of the business opportunities
available in Indonesia' (Williams, 1991: 9). Other countries have moved more
swiftly as both the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have
poured many billions of dollars into a country that has stable and secure
government, low labour costs and effective private sector investment policies.
Thus, Indonesia has enjoyed rapid growth through high levels of foreign
investment from Japan, East Asia, Taiwan and Singapore where increasing
land and labour costs and currency appreciation has led to high levels of
capital accumulation and the need to invest off shore (Williams, 1991: 4-5).
Williams argues forcefully that Australia's own economic growth and
development would be served through a synchronistic approach to regional
economics: a 'failure to achieve a greater economic and private sector

\(^3\) This view is consistently articulated through a number of organizations, including the
Australia Indonesia Institute. It has also been argued most cogently through the editorial
pages of *The Australian* newspaper as discussed below.
interlinking between the two countries would ensure that this relationship remains unbalanced and short of its full potential' (Williams, 1991: 1).

Williams intensifies this image of Indonesia as a potential El Dorado for Australian commerce by pointing to the northern neighbour's astonishing statistical and social improvements. Along with GDP rising 5-7% over the past few years, stabilization of foreign debt, massive increases in foreign investment and rapid growth in manufacturing development and exports, there have been commensurate improvements in social conditions, including broad expansion in the employment sector, declining rates of population growth, real reductions in poverty and mortality rates, and increases in per capita consumption of food. While Williams acknowledges that certain social difficulties remain — residual poverty and the perception of inequality and that personal wealth has been created through 'powerful political connections' (Williams, 1991: 3) — there is no connection made between the existence of these difficulties and the more general image of economic success. Indeed, the overriding impression created by Williams' discourse is of an Indonesia bursting at the seams with commercial potential and positive social outcomes, an Indonesia that is absorbing and being absorbed by the processes of global utility. Australia's failure to grasp fully these same opportunities indicates a level of cultural and economic ignorance, according to Williams, and a general inexperience in participating in the international market. Indonesia's seemingly endemic unemployment, underemployment, and problems of restricted liberty and political representation will dissolve by the power of utility:

Because of this unfamiliarity, concerns and uncertainty flourish in the Australian business community about allegations of corruption: the impact of regional problems (e.g. Aceh, Irian Jaya and East Timor); and general political and economic stability including, most importantly, the succession [of Suharto] issue. This unfamiliarity can in turn lead to the postponement of investment decisions and ultimately a decision not to pursue business opportunities. Yet these attitudes, with more detailed and sophisticated information and the knowledge that such 'difficulties' are not preventing companies from other countries doing extensive business in Indonesia, are capable of being reversed (Williams, 1991: 10-11).

Underlying Williams' rationalist analysis of the Australia-Indonesia business relationship is an uneasy acknowledgement of the (mostly disruptive)
function of culture which effectively contrasts Australia's timidity with the more 'worldly' approach of other countries. Beyond the pall of difference, however, is the promise of pleasure and the knowledge that anything is possible for those courageous enough to step into the flow of international capital which will necessarily reward those unafraid of its depths and uncharted eddies.

In this way, the utility of Indonesia may subsume, even absorb, configurations which produce quite different effects of power and knowledge. As we have noted in the previous chapter, a significant dialectic exists between the voices of New Utilitarianism, emphasizing collective and individual pleasure through wealth, and those Australian citizens — often journalists and civil libertarians — who describe an Indonesia that is primarily an exigency of its repressive, tyrannical, qua military, government. While Williams euphemistically describes these difficulties as arising from 'an often prickly and difficult political relationship' (Williams, 1991: 9), Damien Kingsbury, in his analysis of Indonesia's official criticism of the Australian media, has argued that Australian journalists do not lack 'cultural understanding' but rather resist the Indonesian government's political agenda (Kingsbury, 1992: 66). Kingsbury's survey of Australian journalists' attitude toward Indonesia makes particular note of recent policy decisions by The Australian newspaper to produce a more 'balanced' view of Indonesia. Specifically, Kingsbury records the same sort of Utilitarian attitudes being expressed by journalists critical of the general media representation of Indonesia: 'Both Dobell and Sheridan also remarked on economic deregulation in Indonesia as helping liberalise the political system, as well as increased trade between Australia and Indonesia, now in excess of $2 billion, as adding "ballast" to the bilateral relationship' (Kingsbury, 1992: 64, sic).

The Australian editorial policy has produced a range of representations of Indonesia that are not necessarily shackled to the conventional representations of Indonesian political repression. In an Indonesia Supplement published in the newspaper in 1992, for example, Florence Chong explores the broader Utilitarian theme of Indonesia's wealth potential, commenting that 'Australian companies are committed to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on expansion of existing plants and new facilities in Indonesia in the next two to three years' (Chong, 1992: 12). And while much of this investment remains tied to the mining and primary products export sector, there have been marked increases in Australian manufacturing and educational services involvement in the Indonesian economy. Foreign Editor Greg Sheridan, cited in Damien
Kingsbury's analysis, also contributed to the supplement. Sheridan takes a decidedly conciliatory view of the Suharto regime which has brought prosperity and stability to Indonesia out of the ashes of Sukarno's chaotic experiment: 'The stability provided by President Suharto during his decades in power has been an essential ingredient of Indonesia's slowly emerging prosperity' (Sheridan, 1992:11). The article continues to explain the necessity for stability, presenting a positive image of Indonesian Islam and an optimistic impression of the burgeoning liberalism of the prospering middle classes:

the trends towards liberalisation and the increasing prosperity of Indonesian society have built up a vigorous civic society which appears to be at least partly independent of the mere grace and favour of the military.

There is for example a lively debate on the role of the military in Indonesian life. It is an article of faith that the Indonesian military will continue its dual role, both in providing for security and assisting development, but its dominance is being slowly wound back (Sheridan, 1992:11).

Thus, utility brings with it the logic of representative government as Mill predicted.

This image of tolerance becomes serendipitous for Susan Kurosawa who explains the continuing importance of Indonesia as a tourist destination, with national carrier Garuda reaping the benefits of a major promotion campaign featuring Australian 'super model' Elle Macpherson. With between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and forty thousand Australian visitors to Indonesia each year (80 per cent of whom visit Bali) the significance of this trade for economic exchange and for the overall development of the communications relationship between Australia and Indonesia could not be overstated. Of all business contact between the two nations, tourism illustrates most directly the contiguity of culture and commerce where transculturalism is experienced at the immediate and interpersonal level, and pleasure is directly and extantly experienced through the transaction. Bali, in particular, is represented aurally, linguistically, imagistically, in popular and aesthetic texts, as one of the world's special places, rich in spiritual, sensual, artistic and hedonistic pleasures. For Australia and for the rest of the globe, the Bali of Walter Spies and Miguel Covarubias has been translated more recently through the hyperbolic descriptions of international leaders like Nehru, for
whom it was 'the morning of the world', anthropologists like Clifford Geertz for whom Bali was a rich enclave of spiritual and ritualized delights, and painters like the Australian Donald Friend, for whom it was a garden of sensual, sexual and essentialist retreat in much the same way Tahiti was for Gaughin.

Postmodern Bali is a polyglot of possibilities compressed through powerful and repetitive images. A number of cultural analysts, especially those influenced by Marxist and neo-Marxist conceptions of space, might argue that Bali, like other Third World tourist zones, has been drawn into the metropolitan web of First World pleasure, developed and exploited by the dominant and affluent industrial core. While conceding that the New Order Indonesian government itself is complicit with the incursion of Western and Japanese capital, such analyses question seriously the value of capitalist integration and utility, regarding the tourist industry at large as a further expansion of Western domination in space and culture; the metropolis escapes its own repressive social formations by absorbing and transforming the space and culture of the provinces into its own sexual, spiritual and aesthetic play. Hence, the peripheral culture becomes absorbed by the cultural core (Wallerstein, 1991, Lipietz, 1986, Harvey, 1989, King, 1990a, 1990b. See also Hall, 1987, 1991a, 1991b., Robertson, 1991). While these and other theories will be discussed more fully below, it is worth noting at this point that an alternative analysis, one which promotes the utility of economic integration, emphasizes the complicitness of Indonesia with the 'West' in developing tourism as an integrative economic and cultural process. That is, the conception of a dominant core and supine periphery is dissolved by the commercial interdependence and mutual economic benefits which issue from these commercial transactions. Thus, Bali exceeds its national boundaries as a discursive formation through the development of a collaborative marketing program which 'creates' Bali as a site of pleasure, an international paradise for all who can pay. To this extent, the Indonesian carrier Garuda, working with an Australian marketing firm, has developed a range of Bali promotion products, including high quality tourist brochures, television advertisements and the Elle Macpherson calendar to which Susan Kurosawa (above) refers. In all cases, the language of the promotion is deliberately sensual and seductive, emphasizing the richness of the Balinese culture and the sexual and spiritual pleasures a journey to Bali would provide.

In *Bali on any Budget* (Garuda, 1993), images of exotic, stepped rice fields, outrigger fishing vessels and peasant farmers are mingled with images of
mythical dance, Hindu temples, indigenous rituals. The 'difference' that these exotic pleasures promise, however, is more subtly merged into the broader narrative of service and 'familiar' pleasure as the brochure introduces images of 'European' tourists being cared for and served by Garuda hostesses. From that point images of comfortable hotels, swimming pools and Europeans at play dominate the occasional interpolation of indigenous scenery. Similarly, the brochure's script mixes the hyperbolic descriptions of 'paradise' with the utility of pleasure that could be found in any tourist promotion discourse. Bali is thus 'an escape from the pressures of the world', it can be 'an adventure, an endless series of surprises', or it's 'a great place to have fun'. The brochure emphasizes a broad international cuisine beyond the indigenous fare and, in deference to the pluralism of its visitors and their taste, it proudly proclaims its diverse and inexpensive shopping, its recreational activities of surfing, paragliding, golf and night clubbing. But such is the diversity of Bali, 'if traditional Balinese nightlife appeals to you, come and watch a Fire Dance. That's hotter than any modern dance could be'. Even the subjectivity of the Balinese themselves is re-created for the consumption of tourism and the tourist. The gods, according to the local myth, created imperfect humans of white and black:

Then the gods achieved perfection. A golden brown people, the Balinese.

Whether or not this is true, one thing is certain. The Balinese are very beautiful, both outside and inside.

Indeed, the people have been described as Bali's greatest asset. There is nowhere in the world that makes its guests more welcome than Bali (BOAB, 3).

The Balinese, then, are not slaves to Western voyeurism, but proud, independent and pleasure-giving hosts. In fact, the imagery of the Bali on any Budget brochure produces diverse effects in power and knowledge; the subjectivity of the viewer and the viewed is finely poised through the utility and flow of international capital and its representation in language. The brochure produces its effects on the viewer by creating the subjectivity of the viewed. According to this utilitarian formulation, the giving of pleasure is processual, determining and being determined by the delicate shifts in power and control. Consequently, this Indonesia — the Indonesia of wealth and pleasure potential, of a unique and seductive culture — becomes a finely balanced discursive commodity. While core-periphery theories locate power in
the desirer, the First World expropriator, the utilitarian would see power as either irrelevant or a matter of simple commercial exchange. It is the desirer who must pay for the pleasure in usable foreign currency, though in return, the desirer will have his or her gratification.

Consequently, just as identity is a contingency of negotiation, culture in the broader sense is transactable: tourism produces culture that is distinctly commodified. More generally, and as we have already noted, international trade cannot be separated from the facilitative processes of communication, a point not missed by Simon During in his analysis of Australia's re-orientation to Asia in the context of globalization (During, 1992a). According to During and numerous other recent commentators this re-orientation into Asia cannot be achieved without the substantial re-formation of thinking and the reappraisal of the canonical and archival texts. Such reappraisals are already in progress for Australian writers and cultural historians, with some like Ingleson (1987), Ingleson and Walker (1988), Walker (1990), Bronowski (1992), Drewe (1986), Tiffin (1984), Bennet (1986), Gelder and Salzman (1989) and Eagle (1987) examining reciprocal influences in the arts, while others like During himself (1987, 1992a), King (1984), Gunew (1990a, 1990b, 1993), Martin (1993) and Bulbeck (1992) take a more global perspective. The Australian Broadcasting Commission's establishment of a South East Asian television output (Darwin 1993) using the Indonesian satellite system, Palopa, and paralleling existing radio broadcast services into the region, further demonstrates the impact of transcultural reappraisal. Indonesia and other parts of the northern neighbourhood will, therefore, become consumers of a specifically tailored Australian culture, one hybridized for friendly and productive international communications. It is precisely this sort of confluent and collaborative exchange which Paul Keating continues to eulogize in official discourse on Indonesia, and which led to the inclusion of (friendly) Indonesia in the Australia-US naval manoeuvres in 1992.

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4 The Indonesian satellite system represents an enormous investment from a Third World nation into the communications technology of the postmodern epoch. It demonstrates very clearly the importance of such infrastructure not only for national development and developmental confidence, but the incongruities of postmodernity itself. While few satellite dishes adorn the roofs of Jakartan houses, there is a firm belief that the spin-offs of such high technology and the general growth of the economy will provide future benefits. Meanwhile most Indonesians live traditional agrarianist lifestyles, their principal communicative systems remaining feudalistic in structure and character. See Mowlana's discussion on this aspect of development and modern communications systems (Mowlana and Wilson, 1990, esp. Ch. 3).
A quite different effect in power and knowledge, however, is produced in the writing of those civil libertarians and journalists concerned with Indonesia's putative official corruption, expansionism and human rights abuses in East Timor, West Irian and Sumatra. Images of a disguised military dictatorship with little concern for individual freedoms of political expression and ethnic self-determination have created considerable disharmonies between the respective governments. They have also led to the development of deep, seemingly trenchant, distrust between the Indonesian government and the Australian media, five of whose number were killed by government troops during the annexation of East Timor in 1975. These continued tensions can be felt in much of the general media's representation of Indonesia, even when journalists might appear on the surface to be striving for a more 'informed and objective' analysis. For example, Greg Sheridan's article in *The Australian* Indonesian Supplement to which we have referred above produces an image of Indonesia which is generally positive in its overall effect. In this configuration of a tolerant and progressive Indonesia, stabilized by a firm and increasingly liberal hand, the Dili massacre is mentioned (and then obliquely) only once; other ethnic instabilities, like the resettlement disturbances in Sumatra and the revolutionary eruptions of West Irian, are avoided altogether. The greatest threat in fact to the stabilizing management of Suharto is largely external in origin, fundamentalist Islam. In a very telling paragraph, Sheridan discloses an even broader context to the threat than he intends:

One of the few worrying signs is the apparently growing strength of Islamic extremism of various kinds. Indonesia has been, at a religious level, perhaps the most tolerant of all Muslim societies. Indonesians tend rather condescendingly to refer to infestations of Islamic fundamentalism as 'the Malaysian problem' (Sheridan, 1992: 11).

In declaring Indonesia 'the most tolerant of all Muslim societies', Sheridan — for all his considered 'objectivity' — is guilty of the same Eurocentric flaw he would hope dismantle since the implication is that Muslim societies are characteristically intolerant and illiberal. Sheridan is not accepting the 'difference' of Islam, but declaring its amelioration and therefore acceptability to Australians and Australian business. In contrasting Indonesia's tolerance to Islamic states like Malaysia, Sheridan seems also to be echoing the same sorts of prejudice and distrust which inspired Bob Hawke's notorious rebuke over
the hanging of two Australians convicted of drug trafficking in Malaysia and more recent media treatment in the Gillespie children's custody battle. Sheridan, in fact, appears to assume that in Indonesia's case at least the irritant of cultural difference can be overcome, ameliorated or subsumed by the economic imperatives of utility. Sheridan's remarks necessarily imply that the more a nation is like Australia, the more reasonable, liberal and humane that society will be.

Equally, the Supplement's tourism article, which refers to the Garuda Elle Macpherson Bali promotion, absorbs and subsumes the considerable consternation and distress caused to members of the Islamic community by the use of nude and semi nude promotional images. In the general tone of pleasure and fun, the writer, Susan Kuroswa, skates across the controversy by allowing Garuda the last word: 'Since the . . . start of the national advertising campaign featuring the body perfect arrival figures to Indonesia have leapt dramatically' (Kuroswa, 1992: 14). The popular women's magazine New Idea carried a similar message in its front cover story, 'Elle's Calendar Anguish', in which alluring photographs of the model were juxtaposed with details of Indonesian offence:

Peter Charwick, who represents Elle in Australia, says the super-model — now on holiday in France with a mystery beau — would be suffering anguish at the thought of offending the Indonesians. 'She loves going to Bali — it's a favourite place of hers. The last thing she would want to do is offend them' (New Idea, September 19, 1992).

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5 Hawke's description of the hangings as 'barbaric' caused considerable diplomatic consternation and offence to Islamic law. Similarly, there remains considerable intransigence over the legal rights of the two parents in the Gillespie children's 'abduction' from Australia. It appears that the Malay father has certain legal rights and obligations according to Islamic law, though in exercising those rights he has transgressed the Australian Family Law Act. The Australian media have broadly assumed the father's guilt in his actions. In an interview on the television current affairs program Sixty Minutes ((16 May, 1993) the Malay father, a Prince, was asked about his polygamy and the possibility of female circumcision for the daughter. The interviewer, Ray Martin, clearly assumed that these practices, permitted by Islamic law, were disreputable and degenerate by Australian standards. The point of his queries was to investigate the degeneracy of the Prince and of Islam. Similarly the well publicised absence of Dr Mahatir from the Australia initiated APEC meeting (1993) and Prime Minister Keating's 'recalcitrant' remarks have been used as a focus of difference and distance by the Australian media.
In both *The Australian* and *New Idea* the aim of the journal is to produce effects of tolerance and transcultural consonance through the collaborative production of wealth and pleasure. Yet, as in the Sheridan article, the consonance relies on the use and overcoming of difference. Difference can in fact be deployed to enhance pleasure and profit. Culture can be commodified and all can benefit. Elle would hate to cause offence. Bali is a favourite place. Difference is manageable, pleasant, attractive. But lurking beyond the gloss of satisfaction and mutual benefit is a more treacherous difference which is reactionary, staid and mildly ridiculous. Like the 'Malaysian problem' the extremely conservative permutation of Islam lurks as something dangerous and unapproachable. The euphemism of Elle's tolerance contrasts with the shadowy spectre of puritanism and anti-progress — forces which oppose pleasure and inhibit profit. And yet all is of value to the marketing machinery of global capital. Commercial success overbeams the illiberality of the intolerant or conservative attitudes of the Indonesian officials. The New World Order of global utility is an order that sweeps up difference and atavism, reproducing it for audiences and markets: the Elle Macpherson controversy, as it is transferred to the publishing houses of Australia, becomes another useful product for sale. Even the extremists of Islam who might object to beauty and liberty cannot escape the touch of the tale. Even they can be transformed into a marketable commodity.

More strident and critical appraisals of economic collaboration, however, produce an Australia that is excessively fawning and capitulative to the interests of a repressive Indonesian military-economic junta. Marxist historian turned media commentator, Humphrey McQueen, has challenged the whole process of global utility and in particular Australia's collaborative approach to the mineral resources in the East Timor Gap. The fallibilities of the Australia Indonesia Gap Treaty, particularly while the United Nations continues to recognize Portugal as the legitimate power in East Timor, are regarded as insurmountable by McQueen since the confluence of transnational interests is a cobbling of illegitimate claims. McQueen discusses the relationship in terms of Indonesian expansionism; however —

Indonesian military ambitions pose less of a threat to Australian interests than the too-clever-by-halfness of our own Foreign Minister. Not that we need worry. As soon as the first dispute arises, Foreign Affairs will spare us from conflict by doing what it does best — giving in to the Jakarta military commercial complex (McQueen, 1993).
McQueen's raillery is inspired by his profound reservations about Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, as well as other features of Indonesian human rights abuses. The 1993 trial of Fretilin resistance leader Xanana Gusmao, only a little more than twelve months after the Dili massacre, has again brought the Timorese question into focus for the Australian media. Mark Baker, foreign editor for *The Age* newspaper, questions the political judgement of the Indonesian government in trying to project an image of sovereign legitimacy and justice against the tide of international condemnation of the massacre and UN rejection of its territorial claim. What is most interesting about Baker's article is its deployment of a sophisticated rhetoric designed to destabilize Indonesian legitimacy claims, without directly assaulting them.

To this extent, Baker queries the Indonesian strategy of a public trial and the expectation that Gusmao will 'go quietly' as much as the world should 'forget one of the bloodiest struggles of the late twentieth century' (Baker, 1993). As if to mollify some of the criticisms of the Australian press, the interrogative style of the article's introductory paragraphs produces an effect that is both subdued and seemingly objective. Yet this objectivity is supported by ideologically driven descriptions designed to direct the reader's sympathies away from the Indonesian perspective. In describing Gusmao's condition as he attends the court in Dili, Baker contrasts the prisoner's responses to cross-examination against the heroic image of 'a man who risked his life over many years against Indonesian control of *his* country' (Baker, 1993, emphasis added). Our sympathies thus engaged, and without reference to the varied and complex sovereignty claims that have driven the civil war in East Timor, Baker goes on to invoke the Red Cross as an authoritative voice in the dispute:

> The Red Cross, which visited Gusmao soon after his arrest, is understood to share the belief of Western diplomats that, rather than responding to abuse, Gusmao has struck a deal to co-operate during the trial, possibly to reduce his punishment and ensure more lenient treatment for some of his detained followers (Baker, 1993).  

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6 Subsequent to Baker's speculations, the court sentenced Gusmao to life imprisonment. During the latter phases of the trial Gusmao's seemingly co-operative persona became less obvious. In particular his defiant outbursts (many of which were followed by retractions and apologies) and the refusal by authorities to allow independent observers to interview Gusmao had led to further speculations about whether or not a deal had been actually struck. At the time of writing, most
The reference to the Red Cross, a highly regarded and 'independent' humanitarian organization, both disguises the intent and lends authority to the otherwise speculative tone of the article. Moreover, in coupling the Red Cross with Western diplomats the information becomes legitimized by reference to the reliable and knowable source, the West rather than the East. Baker plays on these conventions of media authority and cultural expectation to disguise his own belief system and the ideological point he is wishing to make. Stripped of these references, the article remains merely conjecture. The probity of the trial is further queried in relation to the actual charges, the exclusion of international human rights organizations and the 'officially sanctioned' defence counsel himself. Baker concludes that the trial will certainly end with 'a conviction and a long jail term', though Gusmao's internment is unlikely to assuage resistance. The general restraint of Baker's article, deftly leading his audience to a position sympathetic to Fretlin and antagonistic to Indonesia, finally divests the mask of objectivity to applaud the popular resistance and Gusmao's heroism: 'The movement has survived greater setbacks, and remains a small, tightly-knit guerilla army with vast urban support that is unlikely to be wished away by a propaganda trial' (Baker, 1993).

There is nothing particularly extraordinary or surreptitious about Baker's analysis of the Indonesia-East Timor dispute. His views are common to many analysts, academics and general commentators in this country looking from the perspective of a democratic and generally liberal society. However, what is significant is the assumption that this perspective is the only valid perspective, both ideologically and critically. The liberalism which underscores Baker's analysis and which is so hostile toward the repressive Indonesia it represents, relies distinctly on conventions of Enlightenment Western liberalism. Again, one of the central contradictions informing the communications relationship between Australia and Indonesia is the matter of difference and the degree to which difference should and can be tolerated. The liberal perspective promulgated by Baker echoes the survey and analysis of Damien Kingsbury (1992) who concludes that cultural differences are less significant than official political policy in explaining the friction between Australian media and the Indonesian government. Humphrey McQueen's derision of inter-governmental commercial and political complicity is similarly driven by liberalist sympathies, and while McQueen reserves his greater acrimony for Australia's commentators consider the imprisonment, rather than a capital sentence, proof that some sort of deal had been negotiated.
Department of Foreign Affairs, there is no doubt that this is because he expects more from a liberal democracy than a military dictatorship. In McQueen's scheme, Utilitarian international economics are innately fallible and counter democratic; his humanist ideology falls short of tolerating corporate or governmental oppression, even when it is building global bridges; for McQueen it appears that the old Marxian call to international revolution and workers' communion still promises the greatest possibilities for global consciousness.

Such ideological disjuncture is observable in many areas of Australian public and academic life. Tolerance, liberalism, principles of individual freedom and representative government are the inheritance of Western political and legal institutions. Even a liberal Asiaphile like Alison Bronowski (1992) finds that she must avoid rather than confront the implications of this contradiction. In her reading of Australia-Asia relations, Bronowski espouses the virtues of tolerance and transcultural connection, but while she is voluminous in her rebuke of Australia and Australians she has little to say about the repressive and intolerant governments of the South East Asian region. While this reticence may be partly explained by Bronowski's interest in 'the arts', there is a strong sense in her *The Yellow Lady* that the Australian media has treated Indonesian and other unrepresentative governments inaccurately or somewhat unfairly. Peter Mares' article to which we referred in the Introduction of this study is more forthcoming, though equally unwilling to confront the depth of these contradictions. Mares' liberalism guides him to a condemnation of Asian stereotypes in the Australian media and arts, though it seems that the 'stereotyping' of governments, government officials and repressive cultural activities within the region is permissible:

Cultural difference and cultural sensitivity are always important when reporting the affairs of another country . . . There is no excuse for deliberate insults and little excuse for ignorance . . . None of this means that journalists should duck reporting on injustice and the abuse of power, regardless of where it occurs (Mares, 1993: 37).

For Mares' matter of fact approach there is no real contradiction here. It's merely a matter of professionalism. Yet Mares merely skates across the issue, contenting himself with trite and obvious examples of stereotyping while ignoring both the areas of social and cultural communion as well as the very serious rifts that have developed in Australia's relationship with governments
in the region. Such disjuncture, of course, has not escaped the interest and attention of South East Asian leaders themselves who constantly rebuke Australia's patronistic and patriarchal criticisms of human rights abuses and anti-democratic practices. Claiming that their own style of democracy is culturally determined, Mahathir, Suharto, former Singapurian leader, Lee Kuan Yew, along with other ASEAN officials, have been consistent in their disavowal of Australian arrogance and interference in the internal affairs of their respective nations.

Clearly, and as we have already intimated, transcultural discourse of any kind will produce its own effect and its own subjectivity according to the perspective and the negotiated meanings of viewer and viewed. In particular, the power knowledge that is produced in Mark Baker's analysis of the Gusmao trial is designed to destabilize or more directly undermine the power/knowledge base of the Indonesian government. Yet, like ripples in a pool, Baker's discourse moves beyond the original intention to reinforce the power status of the critic over the criticized, reinstating and reproducing the assumption of national superiority. This representation, nevertheless, cannot in turn fully dissolve the other image of power that Indonesia itself represents, one of control and maintenance of its regional sovereignty, and one that maintains its central focus for the discourse of the critic. In this way, Indonesia's power is reinforced and Baker's centralizing assumption of the superiority of liberalist democracy and Western-centricism is compromised because of its intolerance of culturally determined difference, national sovereignty and the rights of self-determination. In other words, the intention of Baker's polemic is itself destabilized by its own immanent linguistic processes — first, because its language cannot find an origin of objectivity upon which to ground his claims since, among other things, the liberalist ideology implodes its own desire for tolerance; and secondly, because his language demands the retrieval of Indonesia's power/knowledge productivity in the very process of destabilizing that power. While the discourse of New Utilitarianism must negotiate precarious meanings through the subjectivity of viewer and viewed, giver and receiver of pleasure, polemical discourse must equally reconcile the meanings of exploiter and exploited, greater and lesser power, liberal and illiberal practices.

Moreover, the polemics of international media cannot self-containedly present itself as the eye and conscience of transcultural communications since its voice is a commodity in the Utilitarian scheme. As we shall see more clearly in the following chapter which explores Christopher Koch and Peter Weir's
versions of *The Year of Living Dangerously*, journalists and their reports cannot be separated ethically, economically or semiotically from the global processes of media surveillance; all is commodity and all is enmeshed, complicit, with the processes of capital it might contend to criticize. In this way, Australia’s New Utilitarianism is an all embracing function of globality, part of the international flow of capital, people, images and texts. As we have noted in our discussion of the Elle Macpherson controversy, marketing might even absorb and utilize the forces that oppose it, if it suits the purposes of capital. The disjunctures produced by the textual and intertextual meanings discussed above are part of a seepage and transformation from centralized, monophonic conceptions of culture toward the more pluralized and less certain expression of the condition of modernity. Thus, Humphrey McQueen’s liberal and resistant discourse adds, however circuitously, to the coffers and power/knowledge of the Murdoch media and fiscal empire in the very act of its destabilization.

### II Globalism and the Compression of Time and Space

In the previous chapter we introduced a number of issues relating to globalization and its implications for subjectivity and identity, and their configuration in communication and culture. A more complete explanation of these processes in relation to the issues raised in the current discussion will lead us some way toward the resolution of difficulties thus far encountered. Recent analyses of the global condition, even those retaining substantial affiliation to Marxist or liberalist ideological historical teleologies or social theory, have acknowledged the distinct and disjunctive qualities of postmodern capitalist processes. Notably, Lash and Urry (1987) have described the erratic flow of capital from nodes of accumulation toward capital vacuums as indicative of the disintegration and disorganization of capitalist processes. Harvey (1989) discerns a capitalist system which, through its compression of time and space as images, has distorted the life experiences of the individual, rendering the world entirely incomprehensible. For Laclau and Mouffe (1985) capitalism is flawed through its incongruous relationship with the processes of identity configuration by which radical pluralism becomes the source of postmodern democracy. And for Mark Poster (1991) the postmodern world is constructed around the capitalist exchange of information which of itself produces new and abstruse forms of subjectivity. The common thread in all these and many other accounts of postmodernity is the notion of experiential compression through the relentless flow of capital.
and the loss of knowing; this is what Fredric Jameson describes as a condition of historical amnesia by which images and the media have fragmented 'time into a series of perpetual presents' (Jameson, 1990: 88), and what Michel Foucault succinctly describes in *The Order of Things* (1974) as 'the death of Man'.

In his transformation and ultimate abandonment of the Marxist critique of capital, Jean Baudrillard has tried to make explicit the connection between the internationalization of capitalist processes and the linguistic exchange of meaning. Initially in *The System of Objects* (1968) Baudrillard adopted the view that consumption and the commodification of the sign were the most fundamental properties of modern capitalism and that the Marxian analytical vernacular which concerned itself with problems of labour and production was no longer suitable for the contemporary field. Using Saussurian and Freudian categories, Baudrillard began to consider the significance of advertising which encodes products through symbols that differentiate them from other products, thus fitting them into a series. When, in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1972) and *The Mirror of Production* (1973) Baudrillard abandons Saussurian categories, he also moves closer toward a more complete embrace of the poststructuralist conceptualization of the world as experienced exclusively through its linguistic formation. More particularly, in the latter work, Baudrillard distances himself from Marxism by making it the focus of his analysis, not as radical social theory, but as a linguistic constitution which, in constructing man as a function of labour, is barely distinguishable from the political economy it supposedly criticizes.\(^7\)

For our purposes, however, it is Baudrillard's analysis of the signifying processes of advertising and 'the simulacrum' which provides the greatest insight into the commodification of images and globalism. In advertising, according to Baudrillard, the images act as pure signifiers with virtually no reference to the signified: The sexual presentation of the female body thus bears no direct relationship with the required action of purchasing a consumer item — an automobile, a holiday in Indonesia. The consumer's ability to make

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\(^7\) Baudrillard's analysis in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* has provided a useful paradigm for other more recent poststructuralist inspired works. My own reading of De-Orientalism and postcolonialism leads me to similar conclusions whereby the analysis, in reconstituting the categories it wishes to deconstruct, often functions toward their restitution. By arguing for the deconstruction of the core and the emancipation of the margin (Centre-periphery, First World-Third World, North-South, metropolis-province) theorists confirm the status of the two categories, producing an unwitting complicity. This point is elaborated throughout the course of this discussion.
logical connections between discourse and material consumption is disabled by what Baudrillard calls 'the floating signifier'. In other words, the subject him/herself is redefined in relation to the imagery of the information. Changes in configuration of wrapping of language alters the way the subject processes signs into meanings, that sensitive point of cultural production. In developing Baudrillard's theories into his own conceptualization of postmodern information exchange, the 'mode of information', Mark Poster argues that it is the shift to electronic media that most significantly alters the 'wrapping' of language and therefore the definitions and meaning constitutions of the subject (Poster, 1991: 11). Along with Jameson and many others, Stuart Hall has seen the significance of the supersession of older communicative forms by the electronic image 'which crosses and re-crosses linguistic frontiers much more rapidly and more easily, and which speaks across languages in a much more immediate way . . . [and which] cannot be limited any longer by national boundaries' (Hall, 1991a: 27).

Thus the mass production of the image both unites and disperses the subject in his or her subjectivity with others and with him/herself. As we have already noted in our discussion of transcultural identity and the theories of Homi Bhabha,8 it is discourse which actually produces the subject; this process is heightened through transcultural communications, electronic information processes and global capitalism. However, Baudrillard's intention is not to produce a neo-Marxist critique of capitalist social control as pursued by Adorno, Schiller, Bourdieu, de Certeau and others9. Indeed, Baudrillard is at odds with the theories of communicative action developed by Jurgen Habermas (1984) by which communication is an intersubjective relativization of meaning. That is to say, Baudrillard's floating signifier disables the effective and objective intersubjective agreement of communicative partners whereby the signifiers produced by each concur in some substantial way with the

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8 See Chapter One. Bhabha uses the theories of Lacan and Derrida to produce his own notion of identity 'doubling,' arguing also that discourse produces the interdependent identity of the subject. This doubling effect is most critically experienced through cultural dissonance produced through migration. My own extension of the concept of doubling in all fields of transcultural communication — most particularly through the presence of Australians in Indonesia — will be worked through Baudrillard's theory of the electronic media and globalism more generally.

9 Schiller (1984) is concerned to demonstrate the means by which capitalist elites control the production and distribution of information. De Certeau (1981), on the other hand, employs a theory of narrative to demonstrate resistance to dominant language codes in daily life, a theme also pursued by Pierre Bourdieu (1990).
signified each reconstructs in receiving information (signifiers) — where the word does not simply have meaning, but is shared by way of enriching the social union of the participants. In Baudrillard's conceptualization of postmodern communicative exchange, on the other hand, this ideality is savaged by the floating signifier which derives its own power precisely from the recontextualization of the advertisement. As with the Roland Barthes of *Mythologies*, Baudrillard synthesizes Lacanian Freudian explanations that commodities generate desire by merging the banal with the fantastic; separated from the context of the referent, sexual desire mingles with material desire in a heightened though dislocated association of sense and economy. Again, Baudrillard is not making the point that advertisements 'manipulate' the unwary consumer, but rather that the advertisement facilitates the formation of new linguistic structures, a new set of meanings that will be specific to the specific advertisement. In this way, the imagistic compression of the beautiful and partially clad Australian woman into an Indonesian context is a peculiar realignment of logic: Elle Macpherson/Bali holiday. As the TV viewer participates in the new communications, there is a significant suspension of reason to permit the creation of this new linguistic structure; the viewer-consumer is thus defined by the communications in which he/she is involved.

Baudrillard's theories on the mode of signification describe the postmodern process of simulation as the expanding field of simulacra. While advertising provides a pertinent example of the new linguistic irruption, Baudrillard sees the whole process of representation — the relationship between the image and reality — as fragmenting, creating not only new languages, but a new reality, a hyperreality, which can no longer be located as the foundation of replication. Paralleling Jorge Luis Borges' court cartographer whose perfect map is designed to supersede the original imperial territory by reproducing its dimensions exactly, 'present-day simulators try to make the real, all the real, coincide with their simulation models' (Baudrillard, 1984: 253). But for Baudrillard, these new simulations create an inevitable 'precession of simulacra' that would even reach beyond Borges' mad cartographer's project of coextensivity:

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10 This summary of Habermas's notion of the 'ideal speech situation' is necessarily reductive. My excuse is that Habermas's theories are of such profound proportions that they require some level of articulation and acknowledgement. I would refer readers to his two volume work *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984). Habermas intended the work to unify Enlightenment values on objectivity and universal meaning with the more recent emphasis on the functions of language and the problematic of meaning constitution.
No more mirror of being and appearances of the real and the concept. No more imaginary co-extensivity; rather, generic miniaturization is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced by miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks, and command models — and with these it can be reproduced an infinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer produced by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal, the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere (Baudrillard, 1984: 254).

In Baudrillard's scheme, the postmodern world is globalized not as an idealized village, as McLuhan anticipated, but as a disjuncture of theorized simulations; the subject is configured by the medium as reality is dissolved by an infinitely reproducible moment.

Thus an analysis of Australia's communications relationship with Indonesia must account for this new context of what Lyotard (1984a) has called the temporary contract in everything and what Italo Calvino (1981) has characterized as the explosion and cessation of time in a new world context. In the same way that Borges' mad cartographer hopes to supersede actual space through simulation, postmodernism theorizes the dissolution of spatial referentiality through the commodification and dissemination of the image. Yet while Adorno, Jameson and others regret this intensification of time and space as the 'perpetual present', others like Charles Jencks see such intensification as providing new possibilities for the representation of space, most notably in the grammatical formation of architecture — the most extant and expensive of spatial representational modes. Jencks, in fact, celebrates the liberation of modernism's functional certitude as a new language of postmodernism, a new 'double coding' of time and space which actually frees the past from itself. It is precisely this emancipation which facilitates new forms of space — i.e. the materiality of the code — which itself becomes a celebration of lateral rather than lineal time. In architecture, Jencks tells us, especially urban or city architecture, the referential or connotative dimensions of representational space can be formatively challenged. Thus, for Jencks, the quality of pastiche that characterizes postmodern designs like those of Ralph Erskine's housing renewal project (Jencks, 1987b: 104-5), James Stirling's extension of the Tate Gallery in London (Jencks, 1987a: 288 et passim) or
Kurokawa's Dai Maru shopping complex in Melbourne (Lewis, 1992) constitutes a new 'classicism' by which a building can again be 'beautiful' as much as functional. (Jencks, 1987a, 1987b). Yet this new spatial aesthetic which celebrates time by lateral reference and propinquity, rather than traducing it as a lineal, modernist and universal teleology, is very much in keeping with the political and ethnic diversification recommended by Andrew Ross (1988) and others.

Kenneth Frampton's (1985) theory of critical regionalism is also designed to eschew the universal grammar of modernist architecture by which cultural and representational space is characterized as sameness and the uncritical replication of building types. For Frampton the distinguishing characteristic of a postmodern architecture is its ability to reconstruct traditional regional values and ethnic designs through new technologies. Not only can a building function as a living museum, it enhances and preserves cultural difference within the urban landscape of postmodern fusion. Thus the language of a particular region is fused with the language of modernism to produce unique and beautiful architectural types. Difference, geography and tradition will always be heard in this dual coding of old and new; the logocentricism, capitalist metropolitanism, functionalism and monophonic voice of modernism that had dominated the world throughout the period of Enlightenment Imperialism is consequently banished though not forgotten since it too is a voice of history. In this way, Charles Jencks contends, the new architectural style of postmodernism produces a new ideology which can be understood as speaking to the 'elite' and the 'man in the street'; this is the necessary ideology of postmodern democracy since both 'groups, often opposed and often using different codes of perception, have to be satisfied' (Jencks, 1987b: 8). This ideology of a fused particularity is most poetically described by Frampton as an architecture of resistance by which a more complete range of semiological senses will interact with the 'meanings' of a building: 'the intensity of light, darkness, heat and cold; the feeling of humidity; the almost palpable presence of masonry as the body senses its own confinement; the momentum of an induced gait and the relative inertia of the body as it traverses the floor; the echoing resonance of our own footfall' (Frampton, 1985: 28).

Frampton and Jencks' aesthetic and democratic pluralism, echoing the polemics of Laclau and Mouffe, Andrew Ross and others, has been attacked from many quarters. Howard Caygill (1990), for example, rejects all notion of a postmodern spatial democracy, arguing that this postmodernism remains critically, politically and aesthetically bound to the elitism and uneven spatial
distribution of the modernism it purportedly replaces. Indeed, Caygill uses Adorno's model of irresolution to demonstrate the incapacity of postmodernism to resolve its contradictory parts. Adorno rejects the inclination of postmodern theory to resolve the Enlightenment dualities —universal-particular, past-present, rich-poor— through the processes of representation. Caygill sees the postmodern aesthetic as an unconvincing ideology forcing the alternatives into a dissonant aesthetic partnership:

'Current postmodern theory and practices succumb to the desire to reconcile the two spheres by resolving their contradictions [and] through the erasure of differences between the profession and the public, and within the public itself' (Caygill, 1990: 285). Thus for Caygill and others working from the neo-Marxist critique the aestheticization and pluralization of space remain fixed by capitalist processes which cannot diminish the pervasive unevenness of its distribution. Globalism and the New Utility would merely illuminate the shifting focus of this unevenness across the world, and the powerful forces that control its distribution.

This dialectic of modernist-postmodernist theorization of space reproduces similar critical questions encountered in the previous chapter's discussion of identity. The neo-Marxist approach to space, in emphasizing its uneven distribution, seeks to re-order the fragmentation it observes in global capitalist processes as much as it resists the valorization of these processes in postmodern theory. Jurgen Habermas' (1983) claim that the project of modernism remains unfulfilled represents a plea for the return of neo-Marxist teleology and a resistance to the reactionary principles of poststructuralist-postmodernist theorization which, Habermas assures us, is a capitulation to the hegemonic powers that control capital and which dominate cultural interaction. At the other extreme, Jencks' valorization of postmodern aesthetic and ideological pluralism purportedly binds modernist democratic ambitions into its system of double coding. While Marxist and neo-Marxists maintain their affiliation to materiality and 'real' social injustice, postmodern theories like those of Jencks translate these hopes into the 'imaginary' space of representation. Pluralism, Jencks and others would argue, absorbs the multiplying voices of the world, creating new forms of synthesis. But it is the synthesis of double coding which facilitates the unitary progress of modernism as it confronts its aesthetic opposite, sending the code into an unceasing flow of dispersal and unity, present and past, same and opposite, here and there, collectivity and individuation. It is not surprising, given the
polarity of these two approaches to space, that the one rejects capitalist processes while the other embraces them.

Between the poles, a number of recent theorists have attempted to explain the globalization phenomenon and its effect on aspects of cultural and economic integration. Central to all of these theories is the recognition that representation, temporal and spatial compression and the rapidity of information exchange are integral parts of the new capitalist process. What is most disputed, however, is the degree to which these processes enhance, distort or destroy cultural participation, individual power and national self-determination; or to put it another way, to what degree globalization affects individual and collective identity, individual and collective pleasure.

David Harvey (1989), for example, attempts to reconcile Lipietz's (1986) mode of regulation theory with poststructuralist-postmodernist precepts on linguistic formation. Harvey combines aspects of Marxist determinism with a conceptualization of Baudrillard's mode of signification to produce a critique of postmodernity's time-space compression which Harvey regards as complicit with the 'erratic and restless flow of capital' around the globe. In The Condition of Postmodernity (1989) Harvey restates his earlier affiliation with the general theory of international division of labour (1982, 1985) which explains globalism as the domination and exploitation of low technology, low skilled, low capital, diffuse cultures of peripheral peoples by the capital-accumulated, plutocratic powers of the core, most particularly sited in the West. In particular, Harvey's approach to globalism echoes the views of another neo-Marxist analyst, Immanuel Wallerstein, who boldly describes the world economy as 'a single division of labour within which are located multiple cultures' (Wallerstein, 1979: 34), and who continues to synthesize the multiple flow of culture into the homogenizing scheme of capitalist integration. For Harvey, however, the poststructuralist analysis provides further evidence of the integration thesis; the postmodern image, compressing time and space into ever more minute and less comprehensible packages, is both controlled by Western image-makers and productive of new systems of global control:

The whole world can watch the Olympic Games, the World Cup, the fall of a dictator, a political summit, a deadly tragedy... while mass tourism, films made in spectacular locations make a whole range of simulated or vicarious experiences of what the world contains available to many
people. The image of spaces and places becomes as open to production and ephemeral use, as any other (Harvey, 1989: 293, Harvey's ellipses).

This intensification of space and time, sweeping up the peoples of the world, demanding the divestiture of old customs, old music, old beliefs and meanings in the homogeneous flow of consumption, necessarily absorbs particularity into the insatiable drives of systematized capital. Simulation itself is therefore a reductive process in which popular culture is the tool of commercialization and the unfettered trend to an homogeneity created by the Core. Harvey's suspicion of mass or popular culture confronts that putative eclecticism which Charles Jencks has described as 'the natural evolution of a culture with choice' (Jencks, 1984: 127). To this extent, Harvey follows Chambers' (1987) account of oppositional and subcultural music by which reggae, Afro-American and Afro-Hispanic music have taken their place in the museum of fixed symbolic structures to form a collage of already experienced fashions, sounds and clothes. And thus, 'a strong sense of the Other, becomes a strong sense of others. A loose hanging together of divergent street cultures in the fragmented spaces of the contemporary city re-emphasizes the contingent and accidental aspects of this otherness in daily life' (Harvey 1989: 301).

This notion of the loss of Difference or Other through the homogenizing processes of international capital recalls Harvey's career interest in the processes of political and economic assimilation. His remarks on the political economy of world urbanization are well known —

What is remarkable is not that urbanism is so different but that it is so similar in all metropolitan centres of the world in spite of significant differences in social policy, cultural tradition, administrative and political arrangements, institutions and laws and so on (Harvey, 1973: 278).

In his enthusiasm for macro systems of political critique, Harvey seeks precisely what he finds: the subsumation of particularities by the overwhelming powers of international capital.

Anthony King's work on urbanization and global processes observes that particularity may continue beyond the discursive consummations of such broadly encompassing theories. Indeed, it has been a hallmark of King's work that he has tried to reconcile more directly the competing claims of macro theories of hegemony with alternative conceptualizations of plurality and individuation. His empirical study of the bungalow as an architectural
formation in world housing during the colonial and postcolonial period has demonstrated the importance of hybridization and re-fabrication in international processes. In his initial analysis (1984) and later re-appraisal (1990a) King traces the absorption of the bungalow form from the peasant outlands of rural Bengal, through its deployment and development by the British Raj, into the leisure-lands of Britain and across the world to places as diverse as California, Australia and Indonesia. It is not just the similarities of the form which distinguish its semiotic or architectural significance, but its adaptability and reformulations in these diverse physical and cultural environments. In each of its national environments, its function, its appearance and its meanings are critically altered through the processes of hybridization. Elsewhere, King argues that Harvey's description, and the division of labour and mode of regulation theories more generally, fail to account for the diversifications within both the core and the periphery. It is arguable, King contends, that there can no longer be said to be a single core at all, 'but rather, many cores exist, not least those located in Asia and Latin America, which are coming out with their own forms of cosmopolitanism' (King, 1990b: 408). Even more broadly, King suggests that these theories of integration and homogenization need to be balanced against alternative discourses, since—

there is a need of detailed empirical studies, both historical and contemporary, of particular local, regional and national case studies that should demonstrate the degree to which local societies or cultures maintain control over and modify their own economy and polity, and hence their own distinctive building and urban forms, in the face of global forces. In short, we need a variety of labels — social, cultural and geographical, as well as those drawn from the vocabulary of political economy (King, 1990a: 99).

In other words, King is urging that the language of macro theories of integration will produce its own specific effects of power/knowledge while another language system will produce different critical and ideological effects. Roland Robertson (1987, 1988, 1990, 1991) in his famous dispute with Immanuel Wallerstein has questioned more directly whether the language of the neo-Marxist sociological critique — the language of ideological totalization, of historical teleology, of Enlightenment dualism — is the most appropriate language for explaining the complex processes of globalization in the postmodern context. While Wallerstein (1991) sees the possibility of global
cultural differences being restored, even incited, as a challenge to the hegemonic incursion of (especially Western) capitalism, Robertson sees the whole field of cultural individuation being broadened through the linguistic constitution of difference itself. In other words, the new language that valorizes cultural difference will produce its own effects of preservation and enhancement. In his essay, 'Globalization and civilizational analysis' (1987), Robertson contrasts the language of world systems theory which synthesizes and subsumes cultural difference into capitalist formations, against the language of globalization which facilitates the conceptualization of a global culture, not as normative or deterministic, but through the processes of thinking about cultural difference within the broad framework of many different global cultures. That is, difference is enhanced because now we have the linguistic mechanism for thinking about difference; the world as a discursive phenomenon will talk about itself from the perspective of its particularities, its constitutional differentials. Robertson assures us that a global culture and global patterns exist (Robertson, 1991: 89-90), but that these cannot be anticipated without reference to national local and individual constituencies.

Both Stuart Hall (1987, 1991a, 1991b) and Arjun Appadurai, in confronting directly the counterflows of difference and homogenization, have attempted to synthesize divergent conceptions of economic and cultural globality. Appadurai (1989, 1990), in particular, attempts to move beyond simplistic notions of homogeneity — or Americanization in the terms of Iyer (1988) and Gans (1985) — through a redeployment of Benedict Anderson's conception of 'imaginary worlds'. Yet while nationhood and nationalism are the imagined communities of modernism, Appadurai's conception of postmodernity produces a range of constituent spaces: 'The new global economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping disjunctive order, which cannot be understood any longer in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple centers and peripheries)' (Appadurai, 1990: 296, Appadurai's parentheses). Through his conception of Lash and Urry's (1987) notion of disorganized capitalism, Appadurai sees globalism as a significant disjuncture between economy, politics and culture. Theories which traduce these complex categories as systematic homogenization or Americanization, fail to comprehend fully the processes of indigenization by which global influences are transformed and changed to reconstitute new specificities for the indigenous or 'receiving' culture: 'this is true of music and housing styles as much as it is true of science and terrorism, spectacles and
constitutions' (Appadurai, 1990: 295). While this point has been well made by commentators like Nicoll (1989), Yoshimoto (1988) and King (1984), Appadurai also challenges the work of Wallerstein and others who fail to account adequately for the disjunctures within the capitalist system itself because of their own ideological commitment to resistance. Appadurai makes the significant point that resistance to the monophonic hegemony of capitalism and cultural domination — the resistance of Islamic fundamentalist state leaders, for example, to the demon America — may be a convenient political deflection of its own oppression and hegemony: 'the simplification of these many forces (and fears) of homogenization can also be exploited by nation states in relation to their own minorities, by posing global commodization [sic] (or capitalism or some other such external enemy) as more "real" than the threat of its own hegemonic strategies' (Appadurai, 1990: 296, second parentheses, Appadurai). Such is also the suspicion raised by Damien Kingsbury (1992) in his account of the Indonesian government's attacks on the Australian media as we have discussed them above.11

For Appadurai, then, globalism as a disjunctive order can best be described through the imagination of linguistic — in this case pictographic — formations. Only a flexible and discursive theory can produce a non-objective analysis of global relations which are 'deeply perspectival constructs, inflected very much by the historical, linguistical and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub-national groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic), and even face-to-face groups such as villages, neighbourhoods and families' (Appadurai, 1990: 286). These linguistic 'scapes' — ethno, techno, media, finan(cial), ideo — are the overlapping categories that transform Anderson's imagined worlds into a more complete representation: 'the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe' (Appadurai, 1990: 296-7).

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11 Kingsbury's survey of a number of Australian journalists raises the distinct possibility that official Indonesian attacks on the Australian media are designed to deflect international concerns about human rights abuses and the repression of minorities, especially in East Timor and West Irian. More specifically, Kingsbury raises the possibility that the so-called Jenkins affair in which corrupt dealings by the Suharto family were exposed in the Australian press — resulting in the cancellation of journalist visa's and the turning away of hundreds of Australian tourists — was a deliberate plan to de-stabilize Suharto from within his own power hierarchy. That is, the Australian media was 'used' to satisfy the political ambitions of Mundani and others in the hierarchy (Kingsbury, 1992: 64).
Appadurai's schema, however, proves too grand in scope and ambition for the dimensions of the essay, particularly in the absence of more foundational theoretical substance. Most particularly, the five imaginary scapes, which he assures us are produced out of disjuncture and which overlap one another, are never fully imagined. Rather, Appadurai's discussion retreats almost inevitably to the safer and more familiar grounds of neo-Marxist materialism, as the categories become a frieze of signification, pointing awkwardly from economy to culture to statehood. In juxtaposing discourse theory with more traditional notions of behaviour and agency, Appadurai breaches the contract of his own theoretical premise. He discusses the fetishism of the consumer as a contiguity of Baudrillard's simulacrum and 'real' social agency. But Appadurai revitalizes the Marxist critique by denying the consumer power in agency, not so much because he/she is being re-defined as a subject, but because advertising produces new images of agency which are the mask of production: 'The images of agency are increasingly distortions of a world of merchandising so subtle that the consumer is helped to believe that he or she is an actor, where in fact he or she is at best a chooser' (Appadurai, 1990: 307). Like Schiller, and others of the Frankfurt School, Appadurai produces a subjectivity that is controlled by tendentious forms hegemony, most particularly and essentially, as it is driven by the state and the state's needs. Indeed, despite the articulated intentions of Appadurai's essay, it is the state which emerges as the ultimate power source which both controls and binds the panorama as a function of globality. The celebrated difference of cultural specificity which produces the power/knowledge effect of globalism is not so much a contingency of individuation, choice and linguistic formation, but of state based imperatives. This is not the interplay of power, state and individual which we find in Foucault's work, but an intensification and centralization of power more akin to the neo-Marxist thinking of the Frankfurt School. In the process of cultural, economic and political absorption and redefinition of global elements, 'the state has become the arbiter of this repatriation of difference' (Appadurai, 1990: 307). That is to say, the state controls the level of openness to global elements (styles, goods, armaments, signs, slogans etc.) which may enter the country as an homogeneously produced entity but which are 'repatriated' or indigenized as a 'heterogeneous dialogue of national sovereignty, free enterprises, fundamentalism etc' (Appadurai, 1990: 307). Globalism, in this sense, appears to have less to do with interactive functions of subjectivity except as it is expressed through the function and imagination of statehood.
A principal weakness of Appadurai's approach resides in his adaptation-transformation of an analytical framework designed specifically to elucidate the development of nationalism and national statehood during the historical phases of the Enlightenment and modernism. As with Annette Hamilton's (1990) use of Benedict Anderson's theories to explain Australia's 'imaginary' representation of Asia, Appadurai's study forces the notion of imagined nationalism to perform epistemological feats which in many ways contravenes the original intention; the phenomenon of Anderson's imagined communities, modern nation states, are actually under serious pressure and are to a degree being re-imagined both in the thinking and political action of postmodernism. Ethnic and cultural pluralism do not necessarily accept the category of nation as given since, as Appadurai himself contends, new forms of subjectivity produce new forms of self-definition and identity. The internationalization of capital, the global flow of information, the expanding horizon of international migration and tourism — all challenge as much as they confirm the borders that separate individuals, human collectivities and their cultures. Indeed, it is a disappointment that beyond Appadurai's analysis of mobile peoples and their absorption and indigenization into adopted nations, his descriptions linger repetitively over generalized accounts of disjuncture and ineffability.

Stuart Hall's work, on the other hand, confronts more directly the precepts of poststructuralism in relation to globalism and the new international economics. Having already seen the world as advancing beyond the rampart of Eurocentricism (Hall 1987), Hall in his more recent essay on globalization and ethnicity (1991a) questions that aspect of critical teleology which envisages the occlusion of particularity by the onward, rationalizing march of capital. It is this relentless progress which —

would not in the end, care whether you were black, green or blue so long as you could sell your labour as a commodity. It would not care whether you were male or female, or a bit of both, provided it could deal with you in terms of the commodification of labour (Hall, 1991a: 29).

The commodification argument, Hall tells us, does not fully account for the character and function of capital which can actually use specificity to its advantage in its ceaseless surveillance and manoeuvring for profit. That is to say, capital can be discriminatory since it has always been able to work in and through both sexual and ethnic divisions of labour in order to achieve the commodification of labour. For Hall this dimension of the commodification of
labour produces contradictory effects in that the perception of a rationalizing on-going capital progress 'has been a very deceptive way of persuading ourselves of the totally integrative and all-absorbent capacities of capital itself' (Hall, 1991a: 29). And it is contradiction, as Marx reminds us in Capital, which produces the dialectic by which capitalism as a whole advances:

It is the contradictions which it has to overcome that produce its own forms of expansion. And that until one can see the nature of that contradictory terrain and precisely how particularity is engaged and how it is woven in, and how it presents its resistance, and how it is partly overcome, and how those overcomings appear again, we will not understand it. That is much closer to how we ought to think about the so-called 'logic of capital' in the advance of globalization itself (Hall, 1991a: 29).

As we can see, Hall's re-interpretation of the Marxist description attempts to explain the restoration of particularity through and by the global functioning of capital. It is not that capital is all-encompassing or all-forming, but that it utilizes specificity in its commodification of labour. Hall explains that religion, which true logic might have dispensed with by the end of the twentieth century, is sustained by discriminatory capital in order to 'accomplish its commodification of social life' (Hall, 1991a: 30). It is also to this end, Hall claims, 'the most advanced forms of modern capital on the global scale are constantly splitting old societies into their advanced and not so advanced sectors' (Hall, 1991a: 30).

Following the post-Fordist, mode of regulation theorems of Lipietz (1986), Soja (1985) and Harvey (1989), Hall contends further that in its advanced forms, capital transforms conceptions of mass production/consumption through more specific utilities into particularized fields of reference. Identity-specific products, lifestyle and niche marketing techniques are wedded to what Hall calls 'just-in-time' advertising to produce a frenetic but ever fragmenting capital sophistication. While Hall concedes that images of the all-encompassing, all-powerful, predominantly masculine elite of the older Fordist modernism still persist, these are being flooded by newer images of leading edge lifestyle which provide ever diversifying cuisines, clothes and decoration choices, transcultural entertainments, and an infinite array of aesthetic and intellectual possibilities. In this 'world contracted thus' to use Donne's phrase —
In one trip around the world, in one weekend, you can see every wonder of the ancient world. You take it in as you go by, all in one, living with difference, wondering at pluralism, this concentrated corporate, over-corporate, over-integrated, over-concentrated, over-condensed form of economic power which lives culturally through difference, and which is constantly teasing itself with the pleasures of the transgressive Other (Hall, 1991a: 31).

While diverging somewhat in their conclusions, Hall’s description of the 'global post-modern' appears as scathing as David Harvey's repudiation of global voyeurism which, Harvey argues, is diluting rather than promoting and working through difference. For Hall the significant difference between old Fordist economics and the new pluralism resides in the quality of deception. The older system promised pleasure only after pain or effort while 'pluralist capitalism' promotes immediate gratification: precipitous, on-going and endless pleasure.

Hall's analysis turns critically on the Marxist dialectic. His suspicion of capitalist motivation, even in its post-Fordist, postmodern guise, is grounded in observations of economic disparity and social distortion. Thus, while he is prepared to concede that the new form of capitalism promises pleasure for all, he recognizes that this promise is selective and discriminatory since the individual who may eat infinite varieties of exotic cuisine is doing so in Manhattan, not Calcutta. Indeed, it is part of the dialectical process of capitalism which facilitates the absorption and at least partial neutralization of contradiction. 'Difference' and the 'Other' might impede the progress so the postmodern global confronts, works in and through the impediment in order to overcome it. Globalization is therefore able to carry its contradictions onward to new horizons, not as an all-encompassing and unitary, logical flow, but through the negotiated space of pluralist embodiment.

Of equal importance, however, is Hall's description of the life and culture which still exists beyond the yoke of capitalist economics, that exists, in other words, 'at the margins'. At this point in his discussion, Hall returns more fully to the conventions of neo-Marxist analysis in treating the 'local' or the 'periphery' as distinctly resistant to the corrupting hand of hegemonic capital. As is common to much of the cultural analysis so far discussed, space — as with identity and difference — becomes a political metaphor, a focus and tool for resistance. It is precisely this sort of resistance that inspired the celebratory
politics of Immanuel Wallerstein (1987, 1991) and Simon During (1992), with the latter disavowing the perception of universal penetration of capital and the simple capitulation of non-Western culture: 'even if the moment of globalization represents a break in modern Eurocentricism, it cannot be read as irreversible. To begin with, the global popular, with its American base and blend of humanism and capitalism, generates opposition. Islam and Hindu fundamentalism, for instance, draw political force in part because they resist the transnational culture of capital' (During, 1992a: 342). Hall's own view is that the self-configuration of marginalized people in art and literature represents a significant expression of power and resistance. There is no doubt that the local and the specific are bound by contradiction to the global postmodern — itself a contradiction — though it may retain its resistance through a trenchant and atavistic grip on identity:

When the movements of the margins are so profoundly threatened by the global forces of postmodernity, they can themselves retreat into their own exclusivist and defensive enclaves. And at that point local ethnicities become as dangerous as national ones. We have seen that happen: the refusal of modernity which takes the form of a return, a rediscovery of identity which constitutes a form of fundamentalism (Hall, 1991a: 36).

National as well as intra-national identities become the site of resistance to the global; and it is in 'identity', Hall tells us, that politics, economics and culture merge.

In a complementary paper to his discussion of global economics, 'Global identities: old and new ethnicities' (1991b), Hall develops his theories on the globalization of culture by reference to Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic conceptualizations of identity, self and other. Echoing the transformation of Lacan in recent feminist film theory and the postcolonial theories of Spivak and Bhabha discussed in Chapter One, Hall comes to acknowledge the significance of language systems in producing a destabilized subjectivity

12 While Hall doesn't specify these references, it is clear that he is particularly indebted to much of the theoretical development pursued in the Screen film journal. This transformation will be discussed at some length in subsequent chapters, but see Aimee Rankin, 'Difference and deference' (1987), Constance Penley, 'A certain refusal of difference: feminism and film theory'; (1984), and Dugald Williamson, 'Language and sexual difference' (1987). Hall discusses and criticizes the Lacanian transference into what he calls 'Screen Theory' in an essay called 'Recent developments in theories of language and ideology: a critical note'. (Hall, 1988).
whereby 'identity is always in the process of formation' (Hall, 1991b: 47). In this cursory reference to Lacan, Hall seems to embrace the notion that subjectivity is always constructed through ambivalence, through splitting, and through the interdependence of the self and the other, by which the other is formulated as much within the subject him./herself as by the external look of the other. Globalization, which intensifies the human experience by intensifying the interaction between cultural others, brings the 'doubling' of language into focus. History is no longer the monophonia of separate and separable 'here' of the self, but must be seen as propinquitous:

The notion that identity . . . could be told as two histories, one over here, one over there, never having spoken to one another, never having anything to do with one another, when translated from the psychoanalytic to the historical terrain, is simply not tenable any longer in an increasingly globalized world (Hall, 1991b:48).

Hall's description, further recalling the analyses of Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987) on rhizomatic power and alternative- minority literature, seems to embrace fully the poststructuralist precept when it describes identity as 'always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation . . . always within representation' (Hall, 1991b). In other words, identity in Hall's schema appears to be a composition of ambivalence by which the silences of the other, the product of desire, and the doubling of discourse are written into an open system of narrative and inevitable transformation.

As we have already noted, these insightful comments seem to return us to many of the conclusions outlined in Chapter One of the current study. However, what distinguishes Hall's work, even at this point in his discussion, is the vaguely haunting tone of regret which these conclusions produce. To this extent, Hall has already introduced his remarks about his own theoretical analysis as being 'merely a detour on the way to things that are more important' (Hall, 1991b: 42), by which he means 'cultural politics'. Moreover, much of his discussion centres around his own experience of black politics in England, recalling the 'struggle' to formulate an identity of political-ethnic resistance during the 1960s and 1970s. While Hall concedes that this phase in the development of black politics is markedly different from the current cultural field by which the intensity of difference has been muted by its absorption into the global postmodern, there remains a distinct nostalgia for a
time when the battle lines and the resistant dimensions of agency were more clearly drawn.

It is not surprising, therefore, that while Hall acknowledges 'the logic of identity, for good or ill, is finished', bringing with it 'a profound historical decentring in terms of social practice' (Hall, 1991b: 43), he finally resists the conclusions drawn by Jacques Derrida in his analysis of difference and difference. Indeed, Hall's hostility toward Derrida concurs with numerous other commentators interested in what Sneja Gunew characterizes as the politics of 'emancipatory movements such as feminism and postcolonialism' (Gunew, 1990: 22). As we have seen in our discussion of Edward Said, there is a point beyond which even those interested in the poststructuralist description of discourse and identity will not proceed where it requires the surrender of polemical commitment to agency, resistance or social change. Hall, like Fredric Jameson (1982), Terry Eagleton (1987b. 1987c), Peter Dews (1984b, 1986) and numerous others, points to the issue of intertextuality and the problem of meaning as producing a theoretic of questionable value. Neither Derrida's own deconstruction strategy, nor its adaptation by American philosophy and literary criticism, assist in the analysis of identity and difference, because, in taking the 'two textual connotations of "defer" and "differ," and lodging it only in the play of difference, Derrida's politics is in that very moment unoccupied' (Hall, 1991b: 50). This infinite deferral of meaning returns us precisely to the more generalised criticisms of poststructuralism articulated through the writings of Jurgen Habermas and others of the Frankfurt School: that the new way of considering the project of modernity capitulates all possibility of reform or resistance to the forces of domination and capital. Hall, equally, resists the embrace of reactionary politics he sees as undermining the critical efficacies of poststructuralism. Again like Said, Hall would hope to produce a form of postmodern analysis that cobbles together the discursive liberations of subjectivity and individuation with a system of political contingency 'beyond mere playfulness' — 'You have to be positioned somewhere in order to speak. Even if you are positioned in order to unposition yourself, even if you want to take it back, you have to come into language to get out of it. There is no other way. That is the paradox of meaning' (Hall, 1991b: 51).

Consequently, Hall appears to accept the possibilities of meaning deferral and the liberation of subjectivity, but his analysis of the global postmodern provides him with an escape into substance and fixity — and meaning — through the production of cultural politics. At the site of political commitment
and resistance, the ethnic or minority voice, the marginalized voice, becomes more than an echo of global postmodernity which, as we have seen, has attempted to incorporate all culture, all difference, into its Utilitarian web. While resisting the centrist impulses of Marxian orthodoxy, Hall has nonetheless adapted the notion of dialectics and historical contradiction to demonstrate the power of capital in overcoming difference by its incorporation. Its not-so-logical and relentless flow through all localities of the globe will not destroy difference but will encourage, develop, deploy and override it for its own utilitarian and pleasure giving purposes. Such capitulant and incorporative formulations of difference, however, meet their opposition in what Hall deliberately doesn't call 'real' difference, but what he does call ethnic or local resistance.

Identity, therefore, may be transformative and open, but it becomes more substantial when it is produced in opposition to the dominant power of the global postmodern, that economic system which distinguishes macro forces of power from micro locations of meaning and possibility. For all his resistance to neo-Marxist formations, Hall's description of this dominant-resistant struggle produces ideological effects which recall teleological dialecticism:

No, there is no general politics . . . But I have a little local politics to tell you about. It may be that all we have, in bringing the politics of the local to bear against the global, is a lot of little local politics (Hall, 1991b: 52).

To demonstrate the efficacy of the minority voice as resistant to hegemonic postmodernity, Hall, as in his essay on global economics (1991a), returns to the alternative voice of literature. Sneja Gunew, whose work on Australian minority ethnic literature has been influenced by Hall's writings, says something similar in her valorization of culture as a 'series of competing ethnic voices' which removes the Anglophonic from its central location in Australian society. Yet, while Gunew argues against the propensity to centralize and therefore reify the resistant power of the voice of the margin — ignoring her own centralizing and representative voice\(^\text{13}\) — Hall at least acknowledges

\(^{13}\text{Gunew's essay, 'Postmodern tensions: reading for multicultural difference' (1990), insists on the resistant status of the margin and multiplicity of the minority ethnic voice. She seems entirely unaware of any contradiction in her own position — a secure and tenured academic, writing in a prestigious and centrally located academic journal — as one voice representing and speaking for the voice of 'the margin' to which she does not belong. This is precisely the sin Gunew consistently accuses others of committing.}\)
the need to be heard and to reach out beyond the permanent occlusions and status of marginality. In concluding his paper, Hall notes:

What we need now, in this position, at this time, is imaginative writing that gives us a sense of the shifts and the difficulties within our society as a whole.

If contemporary writing which emerges from oppressed groups ignores the central concerns and major conflicts of the larger society, and if these are willing simply to accept themselves as marginal or enclave literatures, they will automatically designate themselves as permanently minor, as a sub-genre. They must not allow themselves now to be rendered invisible and marginalized in this way by stepping outside of the maelstrom of contemporary history (Hall, 1991b: 61).

Yet, in moving to the centre, in speaking about and for the whole of society, the voice of the local, the politics and power of the local are inevitably ameliorated through the surrender of their marginality. The literary voice of 'public relations' so bitterly registred by Hall may nevertheless absorb and translate the voice of the margin into the voice of the centre. The very postmodern utility which Hall repudiates may produce marginalized texts into a mass consumer object, through international publication, promotion and sales. The voice of Salman Rushdie, Ralph Elison, Gabriel Garcia Marcquez — all spoken from the perspective of marginality, are all transformed by the incorporative powers of the new global Utilitarianism. Even if resistance from the position of the centre were possible, it is difficult to see how such resistance could avoid the totalizing and more atavistic politics of liberalism or neo-Marxism. It is difficult to see how the marginalized voice could move beyond its immediate perspective of the local without attaching itself to more generalised politics whose vision might reach into the general condition of 'the whole society'. If this were the case, then there could be no avoidance of the self destructive formations of subjective fixity and rhizomatic power that the poststructuralists have so successfully challenged and which Hall himself has celebrated in his theory of cultural politics. The only escape from this sort of theoretical implosion is the conclusions drawn out of poststructuralist-postmodernist analysis. Hall, however, is adamant that such conclusions — necessitating the surrender of political commitment, particularly as it is distinguished in the methodology of Derrida — cannot be tolerated.
Thus, while Hall insists that theory is less important than cultural politics, the cultural politics he produces seems overly stressed by the contradictions of his own theoretical perspective. Not that his task is at all simple. On the contrary, any failings we might detect in Hall’s discussion arise from the desire to account for the considerably complex theoretical conditions he has attempted to resolve. In valorizing the minority ethnic or local as the site of resistance to greater power of international capital and globalization, Hall has set himself the most difficult, perhaps impossible, perhaps irrelevant, task of distinguishing politically efficacious difference, from neutralized difference. Moreover, in claiming to embrace the sort of interdependencies of self and other in the production of identity, Hall returns, in the end, to deny the process by fixing identity firmly in the subjective formation of resistance, and committing himself to that resistance. It is not that subjects do not defy power, but rather that they produce it as much as they defy it. It is true that subjects are produced in discourse and are productive of other forms of subjectivity, but Hall seems to assume that the existence of political resistance as it is represented in literary texts is tantamount to resistance itself. Despite his concurrence with newer theories on identity and language, Hall’s discussion continually returns to the actualities of change and social reform through the production of power affiliations. The new global economics remains the villain, and the literary texts which represent local politics become the agency of change. Hall’s distinction between the ‘international cuisine’ difference that has been absorbed and utilized by international capital, and the ‘genuine’ difference that resists capital at the margins teeters and is finally unsustainable.

More generally, Hall’s account of the global postmodern — postmodern economics or New Utilitarianism — in returning to these centralizing definitions, fails to describe satisfactorily the functioning of power and the interactions which produce both the identity and the pluralism he claims to acknowledge. It fails, for example, to describe the sorts of hegemonic powers that have led to the oppression of peoples within fundamentalist Arabic states, Asian, African, or South American military dictatorships; it doesn’t explain the repression of Palestinians in the Israeli occupied territories; it fails to describe the sorts of savagery perpetrated by minority ethnic or local politics against one another as in the former Yugoslavia; it fails to describe the sorts of international power that may be wielded over individuals like Salman Rushdie for transgressing the generalized voice of the minority Islam; and it fails dismally to account for the multiplicity of interactive power and pleasure exchanges that occur within the global postmodern itself.
III. Elle Macpherson and the Definition of Power

Once again, it is the question of difference and its degrees which emerges as central for our understanding of the New Utilitarianism and globalism generally, and the Australia Indonesia relationship specifically. As we have seen, many of the theories of globalization, particularly in relation to power and economics, have tended to emphasize the tensions between global and local exigencies. With the notable exception of Jean Baudrillard, most of these theorists also tend to view power in Marxist or neo-Marxist terms whereby the global is represented as a more or less centralizing formation controlling the national and ethnic ambitions as well as the individual subjectivity of the localized. While Roland Robertson, Anthony King and Arjun Appadurai all acknowledge the importance of indigenization by which global influences are re-formed at the national or local levels, there remains an overwhelming sense that much of the power immanent to the globalization process remains fixed in wealthy nations, statehood, international corporations, and centralized information nodes; it is this power fixity or structure that is the focus of their analysis While Stuart Hall has seen the importance of language in the formation of subjectivity and the role of capitalism in promoting difference, his discussion nevertheless fails to describe fully these intra-capital formations, preferring to examine other formations of difference which lie outside capital and act to resist its centralizing, though contradictory, power. The primary focus of Hall’s analysis is also the resistant capacities of the marginal power formation to the grand and unmitigating hegemony of capitalism, Althusserian ideology and the global postmodern. Overall, these cultural analysts tend, therefore, to concern themselves with aspects of power as it is invested in structure rather than as it operates through the microphysics of human interaction.

The limitations of these theories for the analysis of transcultural communications may be summarized as follows. First, globalization needs to be understood as a series of interlocking and imprecise processes Even though we can see the historical pre-eminence of Euro-Western cultures and eco-military powers and the resonance of imperialism which postcolonial theorists tend to isolate, the processes of globalism are multi-directional and in a state of continual flux. Multi-national corporations are emerging in the previously colonized states. Joint venture projects and massive re-orientations
in capital and prosperity toward East and South East Asia, Mexico and the
Arab world are producing new and irregular forms of alliance and economic
networking. Industrialization and capital in-flow, as well as extremely high
levels of economic growth. commensurate with declines in the United
Kingdom and the United States, are all producing new effects in capital
alliance and power.

The second significant factor in the globalization process relates more
directly to the ethnic and cultural constituency of nations themselves. Said
(1993) and Appadurai (1990) both make the point that nation states can no
longer — if they ever could — be simply described as homogeneous
formations. Homogenization theories tend to traduce the diversity within
nation states and the fact that culture itself is dynamic and continually
evolving. The flow of capital across the globe and the economic interchanges
that are producing world economic integration are being paralleled in the flow
of people through tourism, guest worker and repatriation programs, business-
trade activities and, of particular relevance for Australia, permanent migration.
Because of these new and more frequent contiguities, cultural and national
alliances, identity itself, can no longer be taken for granted and can no longer
be simply described or represented. Both hosts and new arrivals are shifting,
realigning themselves and their self-definition, absorbing new influences and
producing new forms of cultural knowledge. New affinities are being
produced, new options, new articulations and new modes of description.
Theories which concern themselves overly with structural systems of power
tend to lose sight of individuals and the new language and culture they are
producing.

Thirdly, the pre-eminence of core-periphery models (even those postulating
multiple cores and margins) tends to produce a discourse which is continually
reifying the diversities they would hope to promote. As we have noted in our
discussion of identity, the inclination of De-Orientalism to produce
concentrations of power through its discourse of opposition may in fact
restore power to the central node they would hope to dismantle. In
emphasizing the control and dominance of the Euro-British as the
metropolitan centre in Australia's heritage and as the controlling power in
Australian life, for example, there is a tendency to permit — even enhance this
predominance over the teeming particularities and diversities of the 'local'
culture. Moreover — and a number of the more thoughtful commentators are
aware of this problem (Said, 1993, Spivak, 1987) — there can be a tendency to
replace one form of centricism (globalism, imperialism, capitalist hegemony)
with another (nationalism, fundamentalism, ethnicism, multiculturalism) whereby the latter formation becomes a unitary and intransigent closure that exiles all divergence and diversity. That is to say, the discourse of oppositionalism, especially that which tends toward descriptions of structure and power fixity, can negate its own subversive intentions.

Fourthly, the claim by Stuart Hall, Immanuel Wallerstein, Simon During and others that resistance to the global might exist beyond its dominion is of limited value for the study of transcultural contingencies. Globalization or the new capitalist utility is viewed as overwhelming and absorptive, tending all things toward central, especially First World, control and dilution. While claiming that ethnic or religious specificity might exist beyond the borders of the global postmodern, these theorists tend to neglect the complex relationships of resistance and complicitness which exist within the borders and which produce considerable effects in power/knowledge. We have seen, for example, that the Australian journalists who criticize the Indonesian government for its human rights record are inevitably complicit with the postmodern processes of capital and information exchange. However, in the dynamic complex of the global postmodern, these journalists might still produce arguments and perspectives that can be justified in political and cultural terms. It is necessary and more productive to acknowledge these contradictions and complexes rather than deflect them by reference to macrostructures of power and resistance.

Central to all these difficulties is the notion of power as a fixed exigency of structure. Residual elements of Marxist materialism and historical teleology, Gramsci's hegemony and Althusser's ideology tend to direct the focus of analysis toward notions of dominance and resistance. Yet, while some would see globalism and the New Utilitarianism as diluting 'Difference' by its tendency to support plutocratic capitalist formations, others less sympathetic to neo-Marxist ideology seem more hopeful that the ideals of New Utilitarianism will be fulfilled. In Australia some commentators such as Sneja Gunew (1990a, 1990b, 1993) and Simon During (1987, 1992) tend to belong to the former group, while others — Bronowski (1992), Mares (1993a, 1993b), Castles et al (1990) — would appear to fall into this latter category, emphasizing as they often do the commercial and developmental values of Australia's re-orientation toward Asia. For the Australian De-Orientalists of this latter school, described by sociologist Katharine Betts (1993) as the 'altruistic cosmopolitans', globalism and capitalist integration promise greater and more consonant international relations, greater tolerance and the enhancement of
cultural life within Australia itself. However, while there may be variations in emphasis and in the way hegemonic power structures are defined, both schools of Australian De-Orientalism are confluent in their disavowal of Eurocentricism, and in their celebration of 'difference' as the vanguard of social reform and as the informing discursive trope for the re-writing of the Australian historical and cultural archives. It is at this point that definitions of identity and the political economy converge.

It has been necessary to elucidate these recent studies of globalism and the new capitalist integration — and to relate them to concepts of difference, identity and power — since, in producing new descriptions of the world, they are necessarily producing new discursive versions of Australia and its regional and global communications. This new archive, as we have suggested, is a response to new global elements and processes which are only in the seminal stages of being addressed and understood. In the next section I would want to address more closely those recent fictional texts which themselves explore the communications relationship between Australia and Indonesia with reference to the issues being raised in the current discussion. However, as an alternative to the approach which centralizes structural power and the resistant ideological propensities of 'difference', this textual analysis would hope to ask a broader range of questions about globalism, identity and power, and thereby produce an alternative entry for the archive. It is not, as in the case of the De-Orientalist approach to identity and culture, that the methods and insights of a cultural politics which deal with power as fixed in oppositional structures are entirely without value; rather I am concerned to elucidate a wider range of heuristic possibilities unrestricted by overly rhizomatic notions of 'difference' and opposition. Specifically, my aim in analysing the texts in the following chapters is to produce insights into the microphysical of individual experiences, working from that level of analysis to broader spheres of reference. To this extent, the analysis will concentrate on contradiction and paradox; the functioning of power in transcultural interaction will be examined in relation to multiple tensions, crisis, the ambition of pleasure and, most importantly, the complex formulations of meaning and cultural constitution.

Clearly, I would wish to move the focus of analysis beyond simple structural distinctions; a different analytical series would be necessary for the production of these insights. While a number of cultural commentators — most notably Said himself — have attempted to incorporate aspects of poststructuralist and discourse theory into their critical project, the retention
or pre-eminence of other heuristic and ideological aims and elements have often subsumed the influence. It is for this reason that I would wish to return in the final pages of this chapter to the paradigm of poststructuralism — most particularly through its elucidation of power and subjectivity — in order to prepare some final pathways for the textual analysis that follows. An examination of the Elle Macpherson Bali calendar, to which we have referred several times in the course of the current discussion, might also serve as a productive example of this type of analysis.

The Elle Macpherson Bali calendar (1993) has already been mentioned in relation to the development of utilitarian links between Australia and Indonesia, but if we now apply some aspects of the Baudrillardian analysis, we can see more clearly how the visual and verbal language of the calendar produce their semiological effects. The calendar, designed and developed by Macpherson’s company in conjunction with Garuda Indonesia and American based Day Dream Calendars, has achieved mass circulation and sales in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. As a production of multinational enterprise, it demonstrates very clearly how the new global economics penetrates borders, and uses and collaborates with difference to generate its effects of pleasure for consumer and producer. Pictographically, the exotic location of Bali is designed to provide texture and depth to the fashion imagery, pluralizing otherwise familiar female figures through allusions to Bali’s sensual and serendipitous qualities, configurations which produce the ‘created paradise’ of Adrian Vickers’ (1990b) analysis. In keeping with this new mood of internationalism or transculturalism — the consumption of an infinite variety of cultural cuisines, as Stuart Hall describes it — Bali becomes assimilated into the lexicon of soft porn and fashion poses in order to create original effects for the viewer-consumer. In Baudrillardian terms, this union of the familiar and unfamiliar creates a new lingual system, a new simulacrum, in which the Elle body is transformed into something original as the viewer experiences the new forms of arousal.

What is most clear about the Bali calendar and its allusions to the created paradise is that the images themselves carry very little information that is distinctly Balinese, depending more broadly on the written text and the wider promotion program — including a television special on the ‘making’ of the calendar — to achieve its referential and commercial effects. The floating signifier, which as Baudrillard tells us has no home in reality, defines the subjectivity of the viewer by creating this new signification whereby the Elle Macpherson sexual presence becomes temporarily synthesized with the Bali
presence. In this way, the self-other dichotomy is suspended through the creation of a new union of identity as both the signifying and commercial power of the imagery combine to create an original moment of meaning; the Elle-Bali equation re-directs even those normally R-rated iconographic sexual swoons or anatomical peeps toward social legitimacy and mass sales. This, after all, is Bali: 'I chose Bali for its friendly sensitivity and its spectacularly lavish landscape. I hope that you enjoy these photographs as much as I enjoyed being photographed in this exotic location, Bali' (Back cover comments—Elle Macpherson).

Thus, the images themselves are able to produce effects that synthesize the exotic and the erotic by carefully constituting the subjectivity of the viewer him/herself. As much as Madonna produces strident images of female sexual power through the intensification of high technology, urban contexts and references to Hollywood commercial iconography (Fiske, 1899a, 1899b), the Elle calendar uses its context to texturalize the softness, warmth and informality of tropical island pleasure. The beach is, of course, a central icon with numerous photographs being shot with sea-shore back-drops and contexts. Elle is pictured in a variety of poses and conditions of sexual exposure, often covered in sand, lying in and beside water. The erotica is intensified through the accentuation of romantic or naturalised images. Most particularly, the December 1993 images present Elle in the 'spectacular, but very hot, limestone quarry'. The painted nude figure with messed hair over her face and holding a 'moon tide, gold dress' contrasts with the texture and light of the limestone to produce a peculiar synthesis of moonscape primitivism and sexual futurism. This deliberate union of past and present is configured in other ways, though less dramatically, in the September-October 1992, the March, and the February 1993 images. In all of these photographs nature becomes absorbed into a sort of sexual, exotic romanticism that has become familiar through the paintings of Gaughin and the plethora of Hollywood film images of 'island Paradise', including of course The Winds of Bali. Yet while the focus of Gaughin's paintings was the erotic primitivism of the Tahitian natives, the Elle images are centred on the experiential pleasures being enjoyed by the Anglo-Australian. Water and lush vegetation suggest both separation from the restrictive dimensions of civilization and the liberation of the sensual. Again, however, the images do not remove the woman into a realm of a nature that is threatening or so distanced as to constitute disharmony. The water is calm, the residual clothing is a highly fashioned allusion to the best of international and civilizational commerce and beauty
enhancement, and the vegetation is controlled and cultivated by human hands. Even the beads protecting Elle's modesty and ensuring titillation in the February pose have been produced by a fashion house, Dinosaur Designs; the waterfall, suggestive of purity and natural cleansing, as much as eroticism, is the product of the Nusa Indah Hotel swimming pool.

It is through this synthesis of oppositions that the calendar achieves its effects. Past-present, exotic-familiar, nature-civilization, nude-covered, Indonesia-Australia. For the Althusserian analysts of globalization, the images themselves may present a system of power differentials whereby the First World commercial interests use and exploit the Third World context to its own advantage. Conventional feminism may also view the soft pornography and centralized figure of the woman as further evidence of gender based power differentials whereby the sexual availability of the 'naturalised' Oriental woman has been translated through the context of Elle's photographs. In this sense, the 'exotic location' may be perceived as a metaphor for all female sexuality being paraded for the male's own sexual gratification; the economic power which men still hold over women produces continued effects of exploitation and subjugation. In both cases power is produced by economic differentials as it is vested in some category or body. Stuart Hall's more elaborate understanding of transculturalism would argue further that whatever differences may have existed between the Balinese, as marginal voice, and the absorptive though contradictory power of the global postmodern (represented in the commercial processes of Australo-American transnational enterprise) would be diluted and neutralized through their incorporation into the capitalist process.

The alternative view of power, developed through the writings of Heidegger and Nietzsche through Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard to more recent postmodernist elaborations, concerns itself with process and exchange rather than fixity and systematic investiture. In this sense the notion of exploitation and subjugation becomes problematized since the 'floating signifier' evades rhizomatic descriptions: the temporary synthesis of opposites, producing their new meanings and formulations of subjectivity, facilitates the production of diverse forms of knowledge/power effects as much as they destabilize consummatory descriptions of vested power structure. To this extent Bali and the centralized woman are not singular and immovable categories, but are constituted instabilities threatening, at any point, to split, separate, become something other than what the current description contends. The identification of Elle=Bali struggles to survive beyond the immediacy of
the simulacrum since outside the text it is confronted by an infinite variety of challenges to the meanings it posits. It is not that these configurations have no resonance outside the text, but rather that this resonance must deal with other simulacra: the Bali-Indonesia that is dirty, dangerous, seedy or depraved; the Bali-Indonesia that is illusory, mystical, unsewered, malarial, corrupt or overly Europeanized.

In defining the political and economic relationship between Australia and Indonesia, we must account for this diversity and the configuration of power as multiple, transient and ubiquitous. Discourses on global imperialism, liberal pluralism and utilitarian benefice should not be regarded as final and unassailable truths, but as partial indicators of the general transcultural experience. Postmodernity and the challenges of globalization have produced a new form of transculturalism that cannot be simply understood. Thus, rather than concern ourselves overly with a cultural politics which re-formulates Marxist or liberalist historical teleologies in order to destabilize globalist, hegemonic monophonia, our analysis of power might productively pursue Derrida’s notion of differance where sameness and identity are mutually reflexive, mutually dependent, mutually deferring of the other. It might pursue the 'doubling' of identity as Bhabha explains it, or 'schizophrenia' in the scheme of Deleuze and Guattari, where the subject is defined by and defining of his/her linguistic other, where the signifier floats erratically by the effects of new linguistic formations rather than by the disjuncture of material and ideological circumstance. And most importantly, it might pursue the power/knowledge instabilities which spiral and spread and shrink by new and ever-new mutations of historically and spatially situated contexts.

While the cultural theorists discussed above have attempted to move beyond the totalizing influences of Marxist or liberal-humanist categories through elaborating the centre-margin (self-other) dichotomy, their work as we have noted has often tended to reproduce, in more complex topographies, variations of radial mapping whose final effect is to confirm if not re-install the hegemonic status of these centres of power over oppositional structures — the universal over the specific or local or marginal. The Gramscian and Althusserian attachments to the Marxist description, for example, which elucidate hegemonies of social power and the ubiquity of ideological formations, are never able to eschew the structural intentions of power as it is exerted by those who hold it over those who are subjugated by it. Althusser’s ideology, which recognises the representational and imaginary dimensions of the individual's relationship with the actualities of his/her existence, resists an
understanding of the exchangability and instability of power; it prefers to reproduce the individual as the victim of power, rather than a player and producer. It is precisely this notion of centricist or origination that Derrida has jettisoned in his discussions of language and meaning. While Derrida is not speaking directly of central power sources, his description of linguistic foundationalism, which by its own self-description and definition must be regarded as a contradiction, applies to all theoretical systematizations. In *Writing and Difference*, for example, he notes —

Nevertheless, the centre closes off the play which it also opens up and makes possible. As centre, it is the point at which substitution of contents, elements or terms is no longer possible. At the centre, the permutation or the transformation of elements (which may of course be structure) is forbidden. . . . Thus it has always been thought that the centre, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which while governing the structure, escapes structurality (Derrida, 1979: 279).

While Derrida is concerned most specifically with the ontological remnants of structure whereby the 'structurality of structure had to begin to be thought' (Derrida, 1979: 280), the outcome of his analysis is the rupturing of the centre, its (transcendental) presence, by substitution and repetition:

This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a centre or origin, everything became discourse . . . that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and play of signification infinitely (Derrida, 1979: 280).

While Derrida through his method of deconstruction uncovers and elucidates this interminable play of *difference* in the structures of writing — 'the spacing by which elements are related to each other . . . the becoming space of the

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14 Althusser's claim that high art provides a retreat or fictional distance from the ubiquitous ideology of capital informs and anticipates, in some respects, claims by Stuart Hall and others that minority ethnic voices in literature become points of resistance to the incorporative flow of postmodern capital.
spoken claim 15 — Michel Foucault attends more directly to what he calls the 'actual' (Foucault, 1984), the site in which power/knowledge is generated. It would be valuable, therefore, to elaborate more fully some of Foucault's arguments on power which have been introduced in Chapter One.

Considerable debate exists over the effectiveness and integrity of Foucault's theoretical elision of Marxist materialism, and whether or not Foucault himself does not return to the sort of Kantian dualisms he wanted his theory of discourse to overcome. What is most obvious in Foucault's second theoretical phase — incorporating texts like *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, *The Order of Things*, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality Volume One*, 16 — is the strident ambition to demonstrate the inadequacies of materiality and the necessity of examining historically constituted linguistic formations as the site of human action and the processual interaction of power. Indeed, it is precisely through his reformulation of Nietzsche, that Foucault demands the abandonment of the centre or origin which facilitates new forms of power relations not dependent on universal descriptions and historical teleology:

it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together. And for this very reason we must conceive of discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not conceive of a world divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it

16 Foucault's earlier writings, notably *Madness and Civilization* demonstrate clear affiliations with the existentialist project. But just as Derrida was forced to confront his affiliation with Husserlian phenomenology, Foucault came to reject existentialism with pronouncements in *The Order of Things* of the 'death of man' and 'the end of the subject.' It was only in his last works, Volumes 2 and 3 of *The History of Sexuality* and the most incongruous essay 'What is Enlightenment?' where Foucault places himself within a tradition that includes Kant, that Foucault seems to have restored the subject-object dichotomy, reinstating the Enlightenment project. My discussion will focus primarily on that middle phase of his writing. See, however, Mark Poster, *Foucault, Marxism and History* (1984), Poster Critical Theory and Poststructuralism (1989), Mark Cousins and Allthar Hussain *Michel Foucault* (1984), Johnathon Arac, ed., *After Foucault* (1986), David Couzens Hoy, ed., *Michel Foucault: A Critical Reader* (1987).
comprises; with the variants and different effects — according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated — that it implies; and with the shifts and revitalization of identical formulas for identical objectives that it also uses. (Foucault, 1982: 100)

Thus, in his analysis of sexuality (1982), prisons (1979) and the social sciences (1974), Foucault demonstrates that power is never separable from the instance of its expression. Following Nietzsche, he develops this argument further by insisting that power and knowledge are inevitably identifiable with one another since each is productive of the other; it is not simply that knowledge produces power and works its way out from the centre as a universalizing and hegemonic exigency, but rather that power/knowledge exists at all points of the particular. Foucault's attempts to go beyond the Enlightenment opposition, lead him, as it leads Derrida and others, away from the very centralizing postulates of rational theory itself. We have noted in the previous chapter how Edward Said distances himself from Foucault's rejection of the authorial voice which, for the French theorist, becomes all-knowing, all-reason, the ultimate authority in its putative omniscience. Just as Gilles Deleuze insists that theory be 'partial and fragmentary... functional, disposable and unrenewable' (Deleuze, 1977: 205), Foucault argues that authorial reason (logocentricism) should function to undermine its own discursive and self validating power; to this extent he variously describes his own books as 'bombs for others to throw', and 'tools for the revolutionary demonstration of the established apparatus' (Foucault, 1977: 113-38). In fact, as Foucault reminds us throughout this phase of his writings, power can only be produced as a localized 'microphysics' (Foucault, 1979), an outcome which produces and is produced by its own impulses away from the centre. Thus, 'truth' like 'power', can only ever be partial and incomplete, existing in the matter of human action and beyond the isolating closures of theory: 'if it exists at all... truth is a thing of the world. It is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it produces regular effects of power. Each society has its own regime of truth, its own "politics" of truth: that is, the type of discourse it accepts and makes function as true' (Foucault,1980:131).

Discourse, or language in the broader sense of the concept, transgresses the 'thing of the world', the localized immanency of truth, the 'presence' as Derrida calls it, by moving from the particular toward its systematization. Discourse mediates reality, and theory without practice is the most reifying of all
mediations. The cultural analyses which transmit these local or atomized truths into ontological, teleological, radial theories reorganize partiality into broader systems of political doctrine. Whether by politicized identities of otherness or difference, by reference to class, modes of production, or gender domination, the polemics of radial theory serve to invest power in the structure of domination rather than in the processes of human action and interaction. In the Foucaultian scheme, on the other hand, power exists as something more sporadic so analysis must continually sensitize itself to the destabilizing and 'disseminating' impulses that work both toward and against its systematization. What analysis must produce, therefore, is a system of knowledge that recognizes its own impulse to power and centricity. In other words, we must recognize, as Lyotard does, that the production of knowledge is itself an impulse to metanarrative, or self-legitimation, especially when that narrative or discourse aligns itself with the Enlightenment project of 'truth-value' (Lyotard, 1984a). To borrow more fully from Lyotard's report on the state of knowledge, an analysis of power must conquer itself by denying itself the capacity to reconstruct an originary status, a metanarrative truth-value which facilitates thinking what Foucault in his essay, 'The order of discourse', dubs 'the great unthought' (1981b: 67). Lyotard's repudiation of modernist or Newtonian scientific empiricism questions the truth-value of centralizing and self-justifying narratives of both human and material science as ontological descriptions:

Even if we accept that society is a system, complete control over it, which would necessitate an exact definition of its initial state, is impossible because no such definition could ever be effected.

But this limitation only calls into question the practicability of exact knowledge, and the power that would result from it . . . Classical determinism continues to work within the framework of the unreachable—but conceivable—limit of the total knowledge of a system.

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17 This 'unthought' is that dimension of Cartesian-Enlightenment epistemology which asserts that identity is a function of thought (I think therefore I am) and which, as David Couzens Hoy (1988) has argued, demarcates all that is possible in universal description. I would suggest further that Foucault is also referring to the existentialist desire to think the great unthought which Sartre might describe as Being and which Kierkegaard might describe as the 'leap to faith.' See David Couzens Hoy, 'Foucault: modern or postmodern' (1988), especially pp.17-24 where he addresses the issue of 'the great unthought' as elemental to the division of modernism and postmodernism.
Quantum theory and microphysics require a far more radical revision of the idea of a continuous and predictable path. The quest for precision is not limited by cost, but by the very nature of matter. It is not true that uncertainty (lack of control) decreases as accuracy goes up: it goes up as well (Lyotard, 1984a: 56).

These systems to which Lyotard refers tend, of course, to be lineal and three dimensional in nature. Despite the findings of new science — quantum mechanics and chaos theory in particular — these closed cybernetic and empirical descriptions persist in a whole range of heuristic disciplines, especially in the applied sciences of technology, biology and technology.

On closer scrutiny, in fact, we can observe some interesting parallels between the quantum-biological opposition, and the postmodern-cultural debate. Biology (following the Newtonian description of matter and method) tends to treat functioning systems as 'closed' in order to understand the lineal-logical processes of cause and effect. To isolate cause and effect structures, the system needs to be regarded as 'closed' at whatever level; disruptions to the logical operation of the system are regarded as aberrant. Newtonian physics, from whose methodology the biological and social sciences derive, produces similarly patterned systems. Yet as Lyotard contends, the new physics produces new uncertainties for postmodernity.

Like Borges' mad cartographer who can do nothing more than reproduce a territorialized simulation of the empire, fractal theory, the theory of mathematical chaos, can do nothing more than follow the infinitely irregular outline of a coastal land mass, never producing a final and unchangeable mathematical description. Like Jean Baudrillard's reversal of the cause-effect line, quantum physics discovers that the world of sub-atomic particles seems to resist the descriptions since at any point of description, the observed phenomenon alters its behaviour: that is, the phenomenon appears to change because it is being observed. Lyotard sees the multiple mysteries of

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18 Lyotard's work on the nature of knowledge and postmodern science is relevant to our current discussion as it provides significant insights into the character and quality of postmodern thinking. In his later work, *The Differend* (1988), while retreating from some of the more extreme or global sociological claims of *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard extends his interest in contradiction to explore the nature of difference in language and meaning production. The Differend or incompatible difference is defined as 'a case of conflict ... that cannot be resolved for a lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments' (Lyotard, 1988: xi). The language game of *The Postmodern condition*, therefore, is now elaborated as the Differend.

19 I rely on Paul Davies general descriptions of these phenomena. See especially *God and the New Physics* (1983) and *The Cosmic Blueprint* (1989). Davies takes the
quantum mechanics as constitutive of a postmodern science where uncertainty governs empirical knowledge. Postmodern science is concerned with re-theorizing itself and its own 'language games' as it is forced to account for new reality, chaos, unpredictability, incomplete information and pragmatic paradoxes. To this extent, Lyotard tells us, the new physics is creating new forms of knowledge — 'not the known, but the unknown' (Lyotard, 1984a: .60).

We have already noted a number of the criticisms levelled against poststructural and more recent postmodern theorizations of the present. Toward the end of Chapter One we encountered the primary problem as the reciprocal of the totalization critique. That is, poststructuralism's enthusiasm for asystematization, partiality and particularity reduces it as an infinite deferral of meaning and dissemination. If it is to be true to its account of the textual mediation of materiality, then its problem must be that no system is possible, and no meaning can reach beyond the immanence of discourse; as with the Contextualists of American literary criticism, poststructuralism must confront its own implacable and ineffable representations as the ultimate denial of hermeneutic practice.

To this extent, Jurgen Habermas ultimately repudiates Foucault's complex thinking which identifies 'power of contingency . . . with power per se' (Habermas, 1986: 105), producing what Habermas calls 'instructive contradictions' (Habermas, 1986: 107). Habermas goes further in his general disavowal of deconstruction itself which attempts to overcome the putative logocentricism of Western intellectualism: His paradigm of intersubjectivity and communicative action implies its own profound criticism of discursive constitution of the subject:

The famous labour of deconstruction has identifiable consequences only when the paradigm of self-consciousness, of the relation-to-self of a subject knowing and acting in isolation, is replaced by a different one — by the paradigm of mutual understanding, that is, of the intersubjective relationship between individuals who are socialized through communication and reciprocally recognize one another. Only then does the critique of the domineering thought of subject-centred reason emerge in determinate form — namely, as a critique of Western
'logocentricism' which is diagnosed not as an excess but as a deficit of rationality (Habermas, 1987: 310).

Peter Dews, who has been a close reader of Habermas and Theodor Adorno, is more precise in his criticism, locating in Foucault's first volume of The History of Sexuality a disjunction between the theory and practice which confounds Foucault's attempts to resist universal politicizations:

Thus the perpetual spirals of power and pleasure which Foucault detects are matched by the theoretical spirals of his own work, torn — as it is — between the political necessity of some form of naturalism, of an appeal to a general economy of pleasure not based on sexual norms, and an awareness that even the apparatus of sexuality must be grounded on a positive economy of the body and of pleasure.

Once again, the spiralling of Foucault's work between naturalism and non-naturalism is a testimony to his awareness of political and theoretical difficulties . . . . Foucault, in his unwillingness to abandon entirely his critical stance towards power, and his simultaneous suspicion of any normative standpoint, is obliged to cling to an elusive, residual naturalism which he himself realises is untenable . . . (The) emphasis on power as a former and transformer of discourse, in the Foucaultian form, can simply be dismissed as dependent upon a practical metaphysics. However . . . the difficulty does not lie with the concepts of power or desire as such, but rather with the failure to appreciate that the only manner in which these concepts can be employed, without falling into naturalism, is within a normative horizon. (Dews, 1987: 169)

What seems to disappoint Dews and Habermas is Foucault's excursions into the world of action which necessitate a revitalization of ideological systems of analysis of power. And yet while it is true that Derrida has more successfully avoided accusations of theoretical fissure through the deployment of his strategy of textual 'play' and by restricting his analysis to historical texts, Foucault's technique of producing what he calls the history of the present, the history of the actual, connecting his analysis of Enlightenment historicity to the modern and current fields, has produced serious questions over the consistency of his use and deployment of his own theories on power and discourse. These doubts have been compounded both by Foucault's interviews, often invoking more conventional notions of power and
resistance, and the apparent reversal of his theoretical position in the final years of his writing career. For all of that, Foucault strives to produce an analysis that best accounts for the diversity of power in human action, that human moment foregrounded in *The Order of Things*, where, it is to be remembered, power and knowledge are conjoined in discourse —

from the moment the first object is manipulated, the simplest need expressed, the most neutral word emitted, what man is reviving, without knowing it, is all the intermediaries of a time that governs him almost to infinity. Without knowing it, and yet it must be known, in a certain way, since it is by this means that men enter into communication and find themselves in the already constructed network of comprehension. Nevertheless, this knowledge is limited, diagonal, partial, since it is surrounded on all sides by an immense region of shadow in which labour, life and language conceal their truth (and their origin) from those very beings who speak, who exist, and who are at work (Foucault, 1974: 331).

In the same way that Lyotard requires postmodern science to elucidate the unknown as much as the known, and Derrida requires us to pursue the interminable deferral of *differance*, Foucault is demanding the conceptualization of the shadow. Because the origin is obscured within language and because knowledge is inevitably partial, the human moment can never be an absolute investment of truth.

Foucault's work, however, is not an apologia for relativism so much as a warning against ontological or teleological absolutism. Discourse becomes the archaeological site of history and knowledge, and language becomes the sifting tool. Yet language, the poststructuralists have all told us, is both productive and deconstructive, moving simultaneously in multiple directions, toward epistemological systems of truth-value and toward self-referentiality and atomization. Language claims its universal knowledge and fractures in an infinite dissemination of particles and deferrals. For the critics of poststructuralism the use of language as the sifting tool of language impels a spiralling and irresolvable hermeneutic contradiction, creating precisely the sort of critical and ideological vacuum that brings joy to laissez-faire economics and repressive politics, and which produce the greatest excesses of power, domination and human misery.
Yet, while much has been written in defence of poststructuralist theory and politics generally, and on Foucault in particular, it is important to remember that the postmodernist permutation often argues that the liberation of language and subjectivity of themselves provide new systems of political analysis beyond the atavistic and totalizing impulses of neo-Marxist and Enlightenment liberalist social criticism. Mark Poster (1989, 1990), for example, in his own search for a system of social criticism which incorporates the poststructuralist precept, has seen very clearly that discourse analysis must move beyond the centricities of Marxist thought: 'The change from capitalism to late capitalism . . . requires the reconstruction of critical theory, a reconstruction that can unlock the forms of domination inherent in diverse linguistic experiences, reveal the significance of new forms of protest particular to the present conjuncture and imagine the shape of a democratic future that is possible as a transformation of the present situation' (Poster, 1989: 110). It is precisely this pluralization of the political arena which Foucault (1980: 126-30) addresses in his discussion of the 'universal' and the 'specific' intellectual whereby Marxists tend to speak for all of humanity, traducing the multiplicity of diverse needs and ambitions of individuals, social classes and social sub-groups. In particular, the Marxist habit of claiming emancipation for all humanity by the voice of the bourgeoisie and the body of the proletariat has delayed rather than facilitated liberation. The specificity promised by poststructuralist analysis, on the other hand, has encouraged its adaptation by diverse political interests in contemporary society; gay liberation, ethnic minority movements, feminism, environmentalism have all produced new micro-systems of resistance and power exertion that may have very little to do with the overthrow of the ruling classes and even less to do with the re-construction of the mode of production.

The question for a postmodern politics, therefore, will tend to locate not so much on whether capitalism is good or bad, but rather how might its functioning, its multiple formations, its fallibilities and strengths, its utility and its injustices, best be elucidated and best be understood in relation to the functioning of the individual subject. To this extent, the New Utilitarianism, globalization, transculturalism, international economics cannot, as Lyotard tells us, be conceived fully as a single system, but must be always viewed as transitory, partial, reversible, configural, neither more nor less than the language game that forms and informs it. That is, the world of human action as

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it is understood through the texts that produce it and are produced by it, is what Lyotard calls the differend and what Georges Bataille has called an heterology or multiple system of multiple forms, an unceasing flow of particles and formations, of corpuses and multiple corpuses, constituted in and by their context of time and space, functioning for specific purposes, then dissolving back into the multiple deferral, specificity, the shadow of uncertainty. In a sense, to elaborate Bataille's phrase, it is a heteromorphology, constructed of language to produce systems of cross and intra referentiality. Capitalism is not one thing, but many things functioning at various moments, gathering and dispersing, temporarily closed, though, like the quantum particles, reversing their order and producing new possibilities with each new moment and each new observation.

However, poststructural analysis does not, I would argue, produce a merely limpid system of relativism, baulking at its own epistemological shadow. The claim to specificity has been widely challenged by those who see heuristic silence or theoretical inconsistency as its corollary. Rather, poststructuralism provides, as Poster argues, the opportunity for new ways of examining social and cultural exigencies but ones which acknowledge their own fallibility as language. Derrida's play, Baudrillard's mode of signification, Foucault's theory/practice — all acknowledge the temporality of language and the partiality of truth and epistemological closure. The heteromorphology of linguistic systems acknowledges further that all-knowledge and all-power function to produce their own claims to truth-value, but that this truth-value should be studied as a process rather than as atemporal and totalizing fixities. In the textual analyses that follow, I have attempted to demonstrate this multiple formation by examining the intellectual content of the text in its own terms and in relation to the intertextual system I have produced. None of these formations is intended to be consummatory, but function toward the better understanding of the Australia Indonesia communications relationship. Poststructuralism has provided me with the tools necessary to unlock the possibilities and limits of this communications relationship. In deploying its methodological facility and its thematic interest, I am able to elucidate the processes of power/knowledge which determine both the breadth and nature of transcultural interaction. The meanings I expose are not rhizomes of unchangeable content; they are part of the multiple formations, the heteromorphology that produces the human moment in discourse. They are about the struggles, sensations, thoughts, people and actions that are paraded within the text, which constitute the immediacy and individualization of its life,
and contribute to the processes of transcultural exchange between the two nations and their cultures.
SECTION TWO

The Texts
3. Dangerous Living, Surveillance and the Politics of the Body

A problem had been bothering him, D., for some time, a logical problem loosely involving a mirror telescope he had installed in his house in the mountains, an unwieldy thing that he occasionally pointed at a cliff from which he was being observed by people with field glasses, with the effect that, as soon as the people observing him through the field glasses realized that he was observing them through his telescope, they would retreat in a hurry, an empirical confirmation, in short, of the logical conclusion that anything observed requires the presence of an observer, who, if he is observed by what he is observing himself becomes an object of observation.

— Friedrich Dürrenmatt The Assignment or On the Observing of the Observer of the Observers

I. C. J. Koch and the Observing of the Observer

If it is true that the international media represents the voice through which the world communicates, then equally the individual journalists who produce that voice might be regarded as the eyes and mind of global self-consciousness. The 'journalist as witness' has, to this extent, become a prominent trope both through the marketing and promotion of mass media products, and through the development of new formal and figurative aesthetic strategies in twentieth century film and literature. Writers like Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner. Truman Capote, Thomas Wolfe and Norman Mailer have recognised the advantages of the journalist-as-narrator strategy in lending credence, even depth, to the central events and characters of their fiction. Just as Citizen Kane, among many other films of the mid-century, use the voice-over and images of a newsreel to establish narrative credibility, novels by these writers often use journalists as narrators and observers, exploiting the conventions of newspaper veracity and first person perspective trustworthiness to enhance narrative authenticity. This technique has led to the creation of what might be regarded as a sub-genre in twentieth century fiction, the journalist novel.

Postmodernity, however, in augmenting and deconstructing the phenomenal world through the radical intensification of its observations, has brought consciousness into consciousness; the observer is observed as much as observing, the body of the voice of the witness is as much the focus of surveillance as the phenomenal world from which it once claimed distance. World news transforms the phenomenal world — the Olympic Games, the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the routing of Sadam Hussein — into a new
immediacy, a knowable and shareable code of linguistic or imagistic global-speak. The journalist as messenger becomes implicated in the events and language of his or her observation. F., the journalist-observer of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's novel, *The Assignment*, personifies the ultimate ambition of the global-speak through her 'idea of creating a total portrait, namely a portrait of our planet, by combing random scenes into a whole' (Dürrenmatt, 1988, 5). For F. however, the assignment becomes a process of re-scripting her own subjectivity in relation to the observations of others. Like Oedipa Maas in Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* or the Scriptwriter in Mario Vargas Llosa's *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, F. becomes enmeshed in the semiotic web she herself is attempting to unravel. What is most telling about these and other permutations of the journalist-as-witness fictions is their deployment of poststructuralist conceits where the quest for absolute or objective knowledge — a quest which often leads to a form of tragic death in modernist fiction — is superseded by the sorts of self-conscious 'play' or hermeneutic deferral prominent in the writings of Derrida and others.¹ Just as Pynchon's Oedipa uncovers the vast and tendentious network of signs and meaning that constitute world history, the journalists of postmodernism are challenged by the destabilization of referentiality. Umberto Eco's semiotic journeyman, Adso, survives the ordeals of linguistic and sensory privation only to realize that history is little more than a series of linguistic frames which, in 'meaning nothing', constitutes a 'lesser library, a symbol of the greater, vanished one: a library made up of fragments, quotations, unfinished sentences, amputated stumps of books' (Eco, 1984: 500).

Adso's sense of historical loss, of course, articulates Umberto Eco's own theoretical contemplations; the neophyte surrenders his faith for more carnal and sensory pleasures like laughter, but he sacrifices his certainty as the poststructuralist theorist sacrifices fixity. This 'truncated library' is the figurative

¹ One of the interesting differences between the modernist literature of Faulkner, Hemingway, Camus, Dostoyevsky, Conrad and Gide, for example, and the postmodernists I am discussing (also Umberto Eco, Italo Calvino, Russell Hoban, John Barth) is the latter's propensity for sustaining their protagonist in the world of meta-meanings and uncertain futures. Modernist fiction also has a survivor — an Horatio — whose moral integrity and disinterest is juxtaposed with the more glamorous, penetrating and tragic vision of the central figure, the Hamlet. Consider Ishmael and Ahab, Marlow-Kurtz (and Jim), Nick-Gatsby. The tragic appears to have been almost entirely superseded in the later novels which seem to postulate, among many other things, that tragic knowing is as much a delusion as moral knowing, and that really the best we can do in the state of semiotic disorder is to propel ourselves into the confusion, grasping at moments of comedy and despair as though they were one and the same thing. See also Linda Hutcheon (1989), Brian McHale (1987) and Steven Connor (1989) for informative discussions of postmodernist literature.
postmodernity, the hyperreality described by both Eco (1986) and Jean
Baudrillard (1984a), which represents the intensification of the phenomenal
world into the language of the image, the global-speak that the international
media and the journalists themselves have helped create. Time and space are
fragmented, and absolute knowledge has been deconstructed through the
infinite and intricate exchanges and relativizations of the global-speak. The
world eye scans beyond national horizons, time zones and cultural differences
as it produces its immediate effects, its compressed and immediate knowledge
which can be shared by many at any moment. Indeed, while Benedict
Anderson (1991) has seen the technology of the printing press as the primary
agency of national consciousness, uniting individuals and communities in the
imagination of the national bond, so the electronic media has facilitated forms
of awareness and new systems of imagination that may even transcend
national consciousness. For all its critical deficiencies as a theory of
technological determinism, McLuhan's notion of the global community, by
which journalism provides the nodal link producing an international
consciousness, has at least in part been vindicated.

We have seen in Chapter Two that this global community cannot be
regarded as a systematic spatial distribution, but may be regarded more
precisely as an uneven and processual lingual flow. The postmodern journalist
propels the world out-of-delay, producing it for consumption on evening
television, the morning papers and the hourly or half hourly radio update. In
this way, transculturalism can be known, though only through the paradoxical
convergence of experiential immediacy and vicarious configuration. First
world nations seed the globe with information collectors — journalists and
their technology — whose stories must be both accessible and authentic,
present and absent, familiar and exotic. It must be here in the living room, but
have the power of narrative extremity. Consumers must feel safe in their First
Worldness, but threatened, at least momentarily, by the adventure of the
external world's otherness. Thus the new consciousness of the transcultural
produces dissonant effects of the unknown and known, a delicately
contained assemblage of otherwise potentially contradictory meanings. The
challenge for the postmodern journalist is to reconstruct the immediacy and
dangers of the world outside the living room using the tools and material of
familiar language. To achieve this union the journalist must therefore be in the
action, replicating the immediacies he or she experiences for the consumer-
viewer at home. In going on location, the journalist is placing at risk his or her
own body and personal well-being as much as the cultural system of meanings
and knowledge he or she represents. The viewer is made vulnerable vicariously. Transculturalism produces its effects in the theatre of war or famine or revolution. The journalist's struggle for bodily survival becomes figuratively bonded to the struggle for cultural expression. The cultural other has its system of thought, belief and action, and somehow the journalist must reproduce that otherness while maintaining the integrity of his or her own cultural system and identity — the one that is shared by the folks back home.

Australia's ambiguous status as a First World nation of primarily Euro-British heritage in the South East Asian region has complicated these issues even further. The observation, or 'surveillance' as Foucault calls it, of neighbouring countries by Australian journalists has produced and continues to produce considerable tension at official and diplomatic levels. Most particularly, the execution of Australian journalists on East Timor during the 1975 Indonesian invasion, sensitivities over media reports on Indonesian foreign policy, political repression, government sanctioned corruption, Suhartan nepotism, the mass killings in Dili and most recently the trial of Fretlin leader Xanana Gusmao — have often been configured in purely negative terms in the Australian media, serving to heighten distance and difference between the two sovereignties. The complexities of this difference have been discussed in the previous chapter, though it is worth noting once again that the media web which ties Indonesia to the rest of the world is inseparably bonded to the augmenting system of global capital, the governing economic ethos in Indonesia. While Australia and Indonesia struggle with negative and alternative configurations of each other, they are becoming increasingly integrated by this Utilitarian ambition of plenty and pleasure. As we have seen in Chapter Two, the rift between the Indonesian government and the Australian media is not a simple expression of unmitigating cultural separation, but a complex of political and cultural exchange processes. As much as Australian journalists argue against accusations of cultural insensitivity and First World patronism, the Indonesian government is continually representing its politics of strict social and political management as an imperative of cultural autonomy and economic development.

To confound these power contingencies even further, a number of analysts of transculturalism would point to the role of international media as agencies of cultural imperialism. Using Herbert Marcuse's (1982, 1972) work on the rationalizing effect of capitalism on language as a particular point of departure, writers like Evalina Dagnino (1973), Armand Mattelart (1974) and Herbert Schiller (1981) have claimed that the international media extemporizes human
misery by making it palatable for Western consumption. Even more acutely, David Harvey (1982, 1989) has complained that the proprietary ownership of images of the Third World by the media industry of the First World parallels all other forms of uneven spatial distribution in the political economy whereby the poor and suffering of the world are aestheticized, depicted as (mimicking Baudrillard's phrase) 'the mirror of mirrors' — 'then poverty itself moves out of the field of social vision, except as a passive depiction of otherness, alienation and contingency within the human condition' (Harvey, 1989: 336-7). In Harvey's scheme, representations like those of indigence and repression in Indonesia by Australian journalists may be working against their own ideological intentions by relativizing and aestheticizing its phenomenal immediacy. In other words, the journalists may be complicit with the suffering they themselves are observing.

While these types of analysis of globalism, postmodernity and power have already been well scrutinized, it is nevertheless worth recalling what Michel Foucault has to say on the processes of surveillance as we apply these concepts to the profession of global observation. In particular, Foucault confirms for us the perils of surveillance for the individual as watcher and watched in the contemporary field. What Foucault variously calls the 'political technology of the body' and the 'political economy of the body' (1977c: 24-5) is the site of power investiture and power relations. As we have noted in our earlier discussion on power and the New Utilitarianism, Foucault is interested in the instabilities and localized formations of power as 'action in discourse' rather than power as stabilized blocs of domination and resistance. Thus in Discipline and Punish (1977c), Foucault applies Jeremy Bentham's concept of the Panopticon (one who sees all) to describe the physical strictures of the prison and the social mechanisms that define power relations. Surveillance, therefore, is the critical and distinguishing process in modern societies; it is not the expansion of liberal progressivism for the liberation of the proletariat, but the structural redefining of discourses, the pervasive and continual monitoring of daily life, and the cancellation of freedom by the ubiquitous (and we might add collusive) look of the other. In his writings on sexuality and on penal discipline, Foucault contends that it is the 'body which is at issue: the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission ... The body is also involved in the political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceromonies, to emit signs. The political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex, reciprocal
relations' (1977c: 25). But this 'microphysics of power' (Foucault, 1977c: 26) is not so much a category as a strategy, something that is exercised rather than possessed. The Panopticon, like the social body, becomes a metaphor for the ubiquity of individuals seeing individuals and being seen. The discourse or knowledge-power that produces and is produced by the Panopticon cannot be used as a general measure of social or individual freedom, but rather it is a cluster of signs for which there are no external departures:

These 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge, must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations. In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge (Foucault, 1977c: 27-8).

The body, then, becomes the site for power struggle (power-knowledge) in the contemporary world, as it replaces the subject-object dichotomy and class based theories of emancipation. Moreover, when we recall Homi Bhabha's (1987) account of identity 'doubling' which, following Derrida and Lacan, points to the interdependence of the other in constituting the self, we understand that the Panopticon is the essential other which may indeed facilitate the freedom of self-definition while simultaneously imposing the prison of identity closure. That is, the body exists within and through the gaze of the other; it is constituted through self-definition and through reflection on otherness as much as self reflection; it is the site by which all is negotiation. Power is found in action and the body of the individual can never be sufficiently free to separate itself from the struggle and invasion of signifiers, the dependency of identity doubling, the action of surveying and being surveyed by the individual other body, and of constituting and being constituted by new forms of discourse, in new space-time contexts.

Yet as Foucault goes on to explain in *Discipline and Punish* and later in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, the body is not just the site of power-knowledge, but it is the level of its functioning. Consequently, while the physical threat to Australian journalists in Indonesia is most specifically
symbolized in the deaths (body extinction) of the five Australian journalists in East Timor, the psychological, ideological and semiotic precariousness of Australian transcultural reporting in South East Asia can equally and as powerfully be identified in a number of recent Australian journalist novels and films. It is not that these works produce the sorts of stylistic metafiction or self-reflexivity characteristic of the aesthetic category of postmodernism, but that they aesthetically configure the profession of transcultural observation and the microphysics of power currently under discussion. Indeed, while novels like Dürenmatt's *The Assignment*, Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and Llosa's *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* self-consciously exploit the undermining gaps within a single culture's semiotic structure, the broadened field of transculturalism produces an even more obvious fissure in the formations that produce meaning and render the world comprehensible. This theme of disjunctive irruption appears unavoidable in the epoch of postmodernity, and while analysts may dispute whether or not particular texts belong in the sub-genre of a postmodern aesthetic category, there is no doubt that the themes of surveillance and cultural-semiotic disjuncture are central to a range of Australian texts set in Asia. Christopher Koch's (novel, 1978) and Peter Weir's (film, 1981) *The Year of Living Dangerously*, Blanche d'Alpuget's (novel, 1982) and Stephen Wallace's (film, 1992) *Monkeys in the Dark* (1982) and *Turtle Beach*, John Duigan's (1981) *Far East*, the ABC's *Embassy*, Glenda Adams' (1982) *Games of the Strong*, Tony Maniaty's (1984) *The Children must Dance* and the ABC-BBC's (1991) *The Children of the Dragon*. — in all cases the observers (often journalists, sometimes diplomats) are participants in a play of observation, being the surveyors and the surveyed. Very often the journalist observers are forced to reconcile themselves and their cultural knowledge with the 'alien' context of Asia. Their identity as Australians living and working through a different cultural system forces them to adapt and redefine themselves in relation to both their surveillance function and their personal identity. Cultural dissonance is inevitable, though the dramatic intrigue of all these works centres on the processes of knowledge and power

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2 Glenda Adams' novel *Games of the Strong* (1982) is perhaps the notable exception here. This political allegory uses a mythical landscape, with distinct parallels to Indonesia, to tell its story of surveillance and bodily discipline. Adams' interest in language and reflexivity tends the novel toward the postmodernist appellation. I am not particularly interested in the aesthetic category, however, so much as the thematic focus of these texts. My point here is that these films and novels, in examining cross cultural experiences, inevitably draw attention to the 'issue' of communication itself — the theme which postmodern texts reproduce in the constitution or form of their aesthetic.
exchange, of identity doubling, and the uneven and often contradictory mechanisms by which different characters adapt to the dissonance itself.

The political economy of the body may be metaphorically extended to the 'body politic' of organized social forces, but its effects are continually felt at the level of the individual. In Christopher Koch's novel *The Year of Living Dangerously*, in fact in nearly all the politico-journalist texts set in South East Asia, power is inevitably returning to the level of the body to be experienced through the immediacies of disjunctive identity and cultural irruption. While the shock of the transcultural experience produces some effects of alienation and professional frustration for the journalists, as both Helen Tiffin (1982, 1984) and Alison Bronowski (1992) have suggested, it is the re-negotiation and redefinition of the journalists' own identity in relation to Indonesia that is most telling in Koch's novel. What the journalists discover is that the polarities of East and West — that configural system of difference which may have been transported along with other semiotic artefacts from Australia and which may have provided the substance or grounding for self-definition in Indonesia — is found to be seriously wanting. The crisis of 'being' in Indonesia is intensified through the political uncertainties they daily confront. While they retreat to the restorative values of the Wayang Bar — that imagined community of Western identity and selfhood — the journalists cannot avoid the destabilizing experiences that transculturalism necessarily impels. They must interact with it, communicate with it, define and be defined by it. The polarities created through the imagination of consciousness are fused or confused by propinquity. Indonesia cannot exist 'out there', as something to be known and objectified, to be held at a distance, controlled, forced to yield up its secrets; rather, and as all the journalists come to realize, Indonesia — its myths, its people, its sewers, its sexuality, its politics — is experienced at the level of the body, as a function of self, of configuration and surveillance.

The dramatic tensions developed in Koch's *The Year of Living Dangerously* are grounded in the reciprocity of surveillance and the multiple formations of power. The dangers of transculturalism and of producing the global-speak celebrated as 'All information in all places at all times' (Godfrey and Parkhill, 1980: 1), are heightened through the revolutionary and ideological intensities surrounding Sukarno's fall, and the clambering professional and personal ambitions of the journalists themselves. The surveyors become surveyed, redefined by the focus of their observation as the structural fixtures of power and national unity — those forces which had formerly welded the nation out of its colonial pre-consciousness, and which
the Wayang journalists had come to observe — are corroded and fractured by the multiplying and atomistic power-claims that had been contained within its own superstructure, within its imagination. The novel demonstrates very clearly how political movements must traverse the field of the individual body, gather together or disperse the complex formations of domination-resistance in order to produce its effects in power-knowledge. The story of *The Year of Living Dangerously* is by and large an account of these individual intensities set amidst the flux and parry of broader social conflict where the dangers of surveillance become realized in drama.

When Homi Bhabha considers the processes of identity doubling or double entry matrix as Lacan calls it — the production of self through the interdependent gaze of the other — he observes that the immigrant represents a paradoxical presence-absence dichotomy in the new culture, the new social and linguistic order. The migrant, whose colour, speech and clothes set him/her apart from the host culture, is simultaneously conspicuous and invisible: 'What is missing or invisible, is the impossibility of claiming an origin for the Self (or Other) within a tradition of representation that conceives of identity as the satisfaction of a totalising, plenitudinous object of vision' (Bhabha, 1987: 1).

While the journalists of *The Year of Living Dangerously* may be regarded as only temporary residents of Indonesia, their status in the alien culture is no less problematic. The Australians, in particular, are not directly identified with the Dutch colonists or the American 'imperialists', but they are 'conspicuous', as much as they are 'made invisible' by their own alienation and difference. Their gathering together at the Wayang Club becomes a form of collective consciousness, an effort to produce for one another the imagined community by which the distance between the self and the other could be reconciled or banished to the Jakartan heat outside their doors. The Wayang Club becomes the dominion of unitary identity, normality, Western materiality, objective functionalism, order, pleasure and peace beyond the gaze of the cultural and political other, most poignantly symbolized in the surveillance of the Indonesian secret police, the BPI.

Indeed, as if to re-establish their independence from the disjunctive (dis)order of Jakarta, the members of the Wayang Club have even imagined a ruler for their imagined dominion, King Wally O'Sullivan, whose secret predilection for young Indonesian boys seems, through its irony, to heighten the aesthetic focus on his status as the ruler of the First World enclave. Wally personifies for the Wayang community European generosity, humour and good sense in the resolution of disputes. Amid the bleakness of their professional frustration, the
calumnies of political and social tension, the general mood of dissonance and cultural incongruity, Wally's corpulent self-confidence seems to stand like a pillar of democratic and institutional stability. His kingship becomes a form of historical and social nostalgia, even home-sickness, as well as a confirmation that the tasks they are all performing are professionally and culturally validated.

Yet the imagined accession of their monarch can only be as substantial as the body that carries it; Wally's life beyond the Wayang walls and the dominion of Euro-Australian resistance is profoundly challenged by the gaze of the alien culture and people among whom Wally secretly desires to be. Wally's predilection for young Indonesian boys must be kept from the Indonesian authorities who would regale his immorality, and equally from the compatriots of the Wayang Club whose faith in their king and their 'nation-culture' would be entirely shattered by the disclosure. Wally, therefore, lives constantly with the stress of surveillance and the fear of detection. He feels that only the narrator journalist Cook — whose name translates as Koch in German — would truly sympathize with his plight:

'You understand, Cookie,' he said in one of our late night confession sessions at the round bar. 'You're so marvellously tolerant, dear boy. But you know, I'm living on the edge of a volcano. The Indos would love to get something on me — I irritate them so often with my articles. It's all so bloody cloak and dagger here . . . I'm frightened every time I bring them to my room. You never know who's watching in the Hotel — and the Indo newspapers are always running articles on the white man's vice den here . . . I've got used to having boys in South East Asia, Cookie. The funny thing is, I never allowed myself at home. I only half admitted it to myself. You come here and they're available, and they're almost like a new sex.— so smooth and brown, like plastic.' He pursed his lips and gave a single snort of laughter at his own vulgarity. 'Somehow with another race it doesn't seem so wrong. I felt like André Gide discovering the beautiful Arab boys — you've read the journals? South East Asia— the Australian queers' (VLD, 60-1).

For Wally the new culture liberates his body by liberating his sexuality. He is able to discover and ultimately redefine that secret self and secret desire, which he had never allowed himself in Australia, simply because 'the boys are available' in South East Asia. Yet in liberating himself, in creating the new
possibilities, he is also being redefined by the culture around him. His pleasure is intensified, but so is his fear. He evades scrutiny, he believes, though at all points he is being lampooned by the other secret world of the BPI. When Cookie tells him that the hotel rooms are 'bugged', Wally reacts by stepping further from the shores of his national selfhood by 'taking a bungalow'. While the others of the Wayang are mystified by the move and by Wally's contention that his 'new home' is Indonesia, Cookie remains sceptically cognizant of the Wayang king's motives for adopting the 'new Javanese life' (YLD, 103). Wally's belief that his safety would be more assured through an even deeper immersion into the host culture and the carnal joys it provides for him, of course, proves apocryphal. Yet even as Cookie watches the subjects of the Wayang Club gather at Wally's house-warming, he understands the power of dissonance: 'If this was Wally's imagined home, he had no home in this world' (YLD, 103). Thus, Wally is forced to contend with his figurative homelessness, his cultural diaspora, as he is betrayed to the Wayang community by Billy Kwan and 'dethroned' by those powers that had admitted him into the culture in the first place: Billy exposes the king's sexuality to his subjects though already Wally is under deportation orders from the BPI.

The implications of Wally's banishment from the two communities of the Wayang and Indonesia may be more fully understood as the exile of his body from the contexts of surveillance, power and pleasure. Through the events of Wally's expulsion, Koch is demonstrating the inextricability of these power and pleasure. Billy Kwan likens Wally's sexual gratifications to the excesses of Sukarno's deployment of power over the people. Wally, we are forced to recognise, has been able to exercise his own power — facilitated through the function of global media and First World utilitarianism, and through Wally's personal deployment of wealth — to acquire the boys' bodies and his own pleasure. For Billy, who is suspicious of all power that is not managed or restrained through strict ethical and ideological codes, Wally's sexual acquisitions are made possible only by virtue of these uneven distributions of power. Accordingly, Wally's incidental though morally putrid exploitation is analogous to the greater depravity of Sukarno who, in more spectacular proportions, 'uses the people for his pleasure' (YLD, 217). The body, therefore, is the field of pleasure-power experience as much as it is the focus and perpetrator of surveillance.

Koch seems to intensify this point through his use of a first person narrator who is the 'master eye' or master surveyor of the novel but yet who seems strangely to avoid the gaze of the other by his 'disembodiment' as narrator. He
sees and describes the physical presence of others, but we are never able to visualize Cookie himself. He is confidant not only to Wally's homo-pedophilia, he is also privy to Hamilton's secret passions, Kevin Condon's 'hopeless addiction' to the indigent women who bathe in the filthy waters of the old Dutch canals, and to Billy Kwan's own sexuo-voyeuristic intimacies with Jill. Cookie's moral tolerance, his ability to 'understand' as Wally calls it, makes him the perfect vehicle to transmit the lives, feelings and thoughts of others. Like Joseph Conrad's Marlow who 'hates and detests a lie' though who breaches his own code by lying to Kurtz's 'Intended', Cookie appears entirely honest, entirely candid, though sufficiently flexible to be trusted by both his fellow citizens of the Wayang and by the reader. Cookie is the resonant moral visionary of literature — the Horatio to Shakespeare's Hamlet, the Ishmael to Melville's Ahab, the Nick to Fitzgerald's Gatsby, the Shreve to Faulkner's Quentin Compson.

In this sense Cookie is the ideal panopticon. He is 'unobserved' and in this sense 'amorphic' or without body; Koch allows us no view of his physical appearance and it is as though Cookie lacks the sort of bodily functions that drive and incite the other characters in the novel which in itself appears to reinforce the restrained and tolerant attitudes the narrator represents. While the other members of the Wayang Club invest themselves bodily — through sex, ideology, morality or power — in the new culture, Cookie expresses little more than his own discomforts, his own sense of dissonance and confusion. He intimates something of his sexual interests when contemplating Billy's nude photographs of Jill, Hamilton's passions, and Jill's promiscuity, but at all times there is a certain neutrality about his comments. He is more amused than disgusted by Condon's voyeurism, and while he won't accompany Sloane and Curtis on the jaunts to the 'cemetery' he is in no way appalled by their gratifications. In fact, if anything, he appears a little mawkish and a little protective of all his friends and their follies; none more so than with Billy Kwan for whom Cookie rarely expresses any greater emotion than 'embarrassment' and affection.

And indeed, just as Cookie will not follow Sloane and Curtis to the cemetery to achieve sexual gratification, he will not follow Hamilton to Central Java to achieve professional glory, nor Billy to the depths of social involvement to achieve moral-political martyrdom. Cookie takes no risks, protecting his life and well-being — the body we never see — by fleeing Jakarta as soon as his general sense of cultural or personal discomfort approximates actual danger. His survival is the survival of the panopticon; he
takes Billy’s files and all that he has seen and heard, and transforms them into public information, into global-speak, the language of the international media. In fact, Cookie might be regarded as having no ideology at all, no sexuality, no body, whereby his function as the narrative panopticon seems to identify him with the language he is using: that is, Cookie seems to be installed by Koch as the self-reflexive symbol for language itself. In this way Cookie, as the central sensitor of the text, the fabric of its ‘doing’, becomes that ineluctable presence which is paradoxically also an absence, that shadow which necessarily follows the light which is cast by others’ deeds.

In the metaphor of the shadow, Koch in fact finds his ideal vehicle for articulating the deeper mysteries of life as they are explored in The Year of Living Dangerously. We cannot escape the shadow as much as we cannot escape the light. The irony of the Wayang Club resides not merely in their king’s seduction and transformation by the flesh of the other, it is also that their trusted sensitor, Cookie, is the betrayer of their secrets, the panopticon from which they believed themselves safe within the Club’s dominion. The inadequacy of the Wayang as an imagined community is suggested even in the name which refers to the central Indonesian art form of the shadow play. The shadow of the Right and the Left are locked in perpetual battle which, like the light and the dark themselves, can never be mitigated or resolved. The Wayang members would hope to maintain their distance from the community beyond the walls, retain their cultural sensibilities through dialectical resolution. The shadow, however, taunts them by its ubiquity, and even Cookie, who comes to represent the eyes and voice of language, who is himself committed to the promise of cultural retreat, to order and security, to the restitution of meaning, cannot escape the power of the shadow, the division that separates the light from the dark. His language, like himself, struggles to form its permanency, as even language is limited by its own evanescence and reliance on its configural formations and imaginations; even language is undermined by its hermeneutic disorders, its figurative insufficiencies, its referential corruptness, the gaps in its own foundation.

In this way Cookie, though resisting the fallibilities of desire, action, commitment and ideology, remains fallible as he remains within the mesh of language itself. He tries to de-stabilize the mysteries and myths that confront him in Indonesia by destabilizing dissonance itself. His heuristics, his hermeneutics, reach only as far as his attempts to rationalize his experiences — including his transculturalism — through language. Once again, Cookie is very much like the Marlow of Heart of Darkness, who comes to the Congo in
the train of Western utility, but who is confronted to the depths of his being both by the intensity of cultural difference, and the potency of its human similarity. Morals are those 'pretty rags that would fly off at the first good shake', Marlow tells us, and all you have when you are so thoroughly confronted is your 'work' and your own 'true self'. When Cookie is confronted by the equally implacable mysteries and madnesses of Jakarta, he too fears that they will overwhelm him; his retreat to the rationalizing and ordering powers of language cannot entirely eschew that challenge, most particularly as it is personified in Billy Kwan, his 'alter-panopticon' of the Wayang. Whatever Cookie cannot comprehend, he reduces to the category of the insane: 'I suppose Billy was mad. Perhaps, too, he was altered by Jakarta's general derangement' (YLD, 238).

However, in his efforts to rationalize this madness, to reconstruct his tale, Cookie senses his own vulnerabilities as 'a thing of paper', a 'living cartoon'. 'That is, even language can be self-collapsing in a place which 'always seemed to promise some weird revelation; but it was never quite seen. It was round the corner, in the next kampong, out in Central Java, perhaps: but never found' (YLD, 97). So Cookie's quest to see, to know, becomes a cartoon, or a parody of itself, because it can only lead back to itself and to the site of its own uncertainty' Cookie wants to see and know, but his rational organization of that knowledge relies, of course, on Billy Kwan, whose own surveillance, mystifications and changeability seem only to compound further either its resistance or its ineffability. Indeed, while Cookie strives to systematize his view of Indonesia, Billy revitalizes the old myths as a source of knowledge, challenging that rationalist opposition of East and West by which the Wayang Club members had defined their retreat and salved their identity: 'It's the old Hindu kingdoms that are most real here. And it's like all colonies — like Australia: because Java's one removed from the cultural source, there's a slackening — something missing. Even the air gets slack. A country of secondhand' (YLD, 97).

It is once again this cultural contiguity — this similarity and closeness — identified by and existing within the character and body of Billy Kwan, that continually assaults and invades the Wayang journalists generally, and Cookie in particular. For Billy transculturalism is not a piece of postmodern sophistry, but a radical corporealization of his parents' biological and cultural miscegenation. Koch is again trying to emphasize the significance of the body in human dealings through his parallel of the Holy Trinity; in this case the three forms of the body are the bodylessness or ghostliness of Cookie, the
sensory humanness of Guy Hamilton (any 'guy', any person), and the spirit-rich though misformed body of Billy himself. Billy's confused identity, like the floating signifier of Baudrillard's scheme, moves erratically from point to point, postulating new explanations and new connections between his physical deformity and the transcultural biology of his body. On the one hand, he will prioritize his maternal Europeanness and his affiliation with European mythology, culture and learning; while on the other hand, Billy, the Australian-Chinese, will denounce Eurocentric rationalism. In an extraordinary montage of cultural and mythological fragments, Billy explains his condition to the rationalist sceptic Cookie:

Ah yes — well. Western medical science is delightfully vague. For some reason it can't explain, the long bones of the limbs of achondroplastics are stunted in the womb . . . But I believe an older theory, Cookie — that there was once a dwarf race to which we're throwbacks. You can still see vestiges of it in Europe, running in a belt from Bavaria to Wales and Ireland. Muscular little men who mined precious metals — you remember your fairy tales. The Celts said we lived underground. Brownies — little people who were there before the Celts and Saxons came and who put the dark strain in the Celts. They're my true ancestors, Cookie. I didn't get my dwarfism from my Chinese father. I pretty certainly inherited it from my Irish-descended mother (YLD, 95).

While Billy is at his most positive in this passage, the pervasive and negative dimensions of his transculturalism inevitably emerges. Bryan Turner (1984, 1991) has argued that the general ambiguity of human subjectivity derives from the essential fact that the individual 'both has a body and is a body'. This ambiguity is evident in Billy's efforts to explain himself and his body: he will identify himself with other dwarfs and through the dwarf heritage by reference to the collective 'we', while on other occasions he will refer to 'the race' and 'dwarfism' as the inanimate 'it'. Billy's transcultural subject-splitting, as Bhabha calls it, is therefore intensified by his dwarfism, which in turn is complicated by his sexual ambiguity. In identifying with the mother and rejecting the father, Billy is fulfilling his Freud-Lacanian Oedipal destiny, as well as participating in racial selection. These bodily, racial and sexual
confusions are most especially obvious in Billy's relationships with Jill and Ibu.\textsuperscript{3}

Billy conceives of himself as the descendant of a fairy tale, though the mysteries of the tale are never fully explicated since, as Cookie observes, Billy's ambivalences multiply over one another in an unceasing trajectory of change (\textit{YLD}, 96). Billy describes himself as a 'Christian radical' (\textit{YLD}, 98), quotes from Luke and Tolstoy (\textit{YLD}, 21), describes Kipling as a formative text in his life (\textit{YLD}, 37), doesn't speak Chinese (\textit{YLD}, 10), and insists, at least superficially, on his essential Europeanness. With no sense of self-irony, he distinguishes himself from the generalized Indonesian whom he describes as singularly different from himself 'as a Westerner': 'He's a good Muslim, that little bloke—he believes that without God, men get crazy with pride and go bad. He's quiet. He doesn't want to confront anyone. Most Indos are quiet people—they hate loud, aggressive bastards. They call them \textit{kasar}—coarse. That's why we Westerners put them off with our back slapping. We're \textit{kasar}' (\textit{YLD}, 81). Yet Billy, of course, is anything but coarse, and this mystifying identification with his European inheritance confounds Cookie's attempts to rationalize Billy's 'real' self. Yet if Cookie finds Billy's self-ascribed Europeanness puzzling, he finds the duplicitous and purposeless repudiation of his empathetic Asianess much more so. It is clear, for example, that Billy speaks Bahasa Indonesian though he tells Hamilton he cannot (\textit{YLD},71). He swears that he is not a member of the PKI though he maintains substantial connexions with Jakarta's poor and with high officials of the Communist Party itself. He not only becomes involved directly with the life and poverty of Ibu and her child, he also creates a secret and elaborate photographic record of Jakarta's kampong people (\textit{YLD}, 81). And above all this, Billy's adoration of Sukarno in the early and middle phases of the novel is derived from an equally powerful identification with the people of Indonesia. He steals Wally O' Sullivan's \textit{Pujji} to demonstrate his likeness to the great leader and to the Muslim faithful (\textit{YLD}, 104). This adulation is expressed in its most extreme form in the trajectory of Billy's own romantic, moral and intellectual hubris:

'I support Sukarno . . . Remember what he said about revolution? 'I'm crazed, I'm obsessed with the romanticism of revolution . . . \textit{Betjak} boys,'
you're my brothers—we were born together in flames of revolution."

He smiled almost tenderly. 'That's not a Marxist talking, it's a mystic,' he said.

'And a good Muslim at that. I believe in the man who spoke those words. He moves me . . . I could have been him' (YLD, 98-9).

Billy distances himself from Tolstoy who is not sufficiently romantic to believe he can solve the poverty of St Petersburg, though he is sufficiently classical to rationalize it through despair. Billy's Europeanness is fashioned, rather, through the sort of Oriental mysticisms that had inspired Coleridge and Goethe. For Billy an immersion in the culture and sensations of the East cannot be achieved in superficial sexual gratification, the 'kasar' he detests in the lugubriousness of the Wayang Club. Rather, in distancing himself from the other subjects of the Club, Billy seeks his imagined community — his communion — in the spiritualism of the mythic. In this way his identification with the Hindu tales of Arjuna and the dwarf Semar ritualizes his sensory immersion in the life and world of Indonesia. Thus, the sensory experience of Indonesia is possible for Billy only as it is elevated through the symbolic; his sensory union with Ibu and her child is managed through his sense of spiritual union. Above all other things, it is this 'marriage' that marks Billy's surrender of any claim to pure Europeanness. His 'Western' heritage becomes irrevocably unfixed by the symbolic marriage and the absorption of the Hindu-Indonesian deities into Billy's personal pantheon. In a significant sense, Billy's embrace of the Indonesian family and rituals parallels Wally O'Sullivan's sexual immersions and the 'taking of a bungalow'.

Significantly, however, Billy's marriage to Ibu is symbolic only and, despite Ibu's professional facility, does not involve sexual union. The contrast between Billy's imagined family and Hamilton's actual, sexualized family, again highlights the incongruities of Billy's body and character. Through his restless search for identity and foundation, Billy gazes upon others, records their actions and anticipates their feelings, all in the hope of being gazed upon himself, being recognized. Even as he attempts to influence the individual and collective destiny of those whom he observes, Billy is longing to live through them vicariously and somehow or other substantiate himself in their actions. Cookie observes as much when he couples Billy's 'madness' with that of Jakarta itself. His description of Billy's 'double face' (YLD, 99) — his ambiguousness — echoes an earlier allusion to the 'double face' of Indonesia (YLD, 69). Yet while this identification of Indonesia's duplicity with Billy's erratic and 'bewildering change of allegiance' (YLD, 96) reflects as much on
Cookie’s rationalist enterprise as on Billy’s own tortured character, there remains an overwhelming sense that Billy cannot reconcile himself with the world he wishes to influence, the world in which he would like to be a presence. His inability to produce that substantiated self in a community that capitulates to his wishes by knowing him, serves merely to widen the fractures that already exist in his identity. Even in his surveys, his imaginings, his discourse, Billy’s efforts at self synthesis remain troubled. His sexual ambiguity —expressed through his vicarious ‘enjoyment’ of Jill through Hamilton and his symbolic union with Ibu — demonstrates his inability to reach beyond the multiplying complexities of himself. Billy becomes trapped by this inability as his moral and intellectual sensibilities contort themselves in naive and often brutal condemnations of sexual union that is not gilded by romantic idealism. It is just this fallibility which produces his misreading of Hamilton, and which, Cookie believes, provides the clue to much of the complexity of his character: In considering Billy’s nude study on women, Cookie observes:

Billy was as ambivalent about women as he was about religion. On the whole, he was idealistic about the opposite sex, and this attitude, I think, was paramount. He worshipped, he said, ‘the mystery in women’— and I am quoting from a dossier on the mythological history of the Divine Female entitled Durgea. But in another, more clinical dossier, simply entitled Women— in which nude photographs appear of orphaned-looking Sydney delinquents—he appears to aim at nothing less than a complete atlas of the female body, classifying women physiologically into twenty-five body types (YLD, 130).

While assuring us that these photos in no way constitute pornography, Cookie nevertheless reads them as the form of sterile innocence with which ‘a child looks up a woman’s skirts’, indicators of Billy's 'dark side, the outcome of his lonely deprivation' (YLD, 130). Yet it is also an attempt by Billy to configure the teeming sensations, desires and confusions that pervade his being into some rational form: to place in the material of language the interior of his identity, to give it corporeality, exteriorality, shape. Billy would deflect invisibility or alienation by contending himself in his photographic art. Yet while Cookie in many respects shares the same ambition, Billy’s striving to produce rational systems of expression is challenged more completely by the contradictions of his own character. As his dossiers on dwarfs indicate, Billy would attempt to synthesize all human experience, whether by myth or
reason, into a category of knowable and external forms by which he is the
central and informing intelligence, the eye and the author. By configuring
others, Billy appears to believe that he can configure himself, finally and
substantively.

Nowhere in the novel is this desire for complete knowledge through
surveillance and configuration more evident than in Billy's relationship with
Guy Hamilton. Billy senses in Guy a like spirit, a sympathy, a soul distressed
by its own doubling. Despite their obvious physical contrasts, there is an
immediate sense of affinity which Cookie observes: 'I had been struck by the
notion that there was some elusive physical likeness by this utterly unlike pair
... I saw that Hamilton's sleepy lidded eyes were exactly the same pale pea
green as Kwan's. Moreover, since his eyebrows and lank hair were black, his
appearance had the same dark-light contrast' (YLD, 10). It is this similarity
which Billy himself reiterates when observing the two's more profound
cultural and spiritual affinity. They are both 'hybrids', he tells Hamilton —

'You and I make a good team because we complement eachother... We
even look alike... You're a hybrid, old man, and so am I. It shows in our
physical appearance. Scot ancestry makes you a mixture of Anglo-Saxon
and Celt. I'm a mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Chinese. But I think it runs a
little deeper than that. I'm unable to be Australian because of my
Chineseness. You're unable to be Australian because of your
Englishness. Or is it the other way round?' (YLD, 83).

Ironically, it is Hamilton's rejection of this notion that confirms its accuracy. 'I
am English' (YLD, 83), he insists in a flat repudiation of his Australian-colonial
inheritance. As the novel develops, these similarities between Billy and
Hamilton — like the comparison between the East and the West more
generally — prove as resonant as their differences. While Hamilton's high
standard of work satisfies Billy's high expectations, their union and friendship
is confirmed more substantially through Hamilton's love affair with Jill and the
fathering of her baby. It is this symbolic and vicarious satisfaction, strangely
paralleling his own 'imagined marriage' with Ibu, which seems to intensify
Billy's affections for Hamilton. Even more powerfully, Billy appears to project
himself through Hamilton — as indeed he does through Sukarno — as a form
of self synthesis and liberation. The poem by Po Chu-I which Billy gives to
Hamilton and which Hamilton produces at the moment of Billy's death, is an
expression of affection, even identification, through the experiences of others;
through his love for Hamilton, Billy is able to restore, if only temporarily, that paternal line of Chineseness he has otherwise claimed to deny. This precarious restoration of paternity, and hence sexual potency, provides for Billy some relief from the savagery of his subject-splitting, yet it can only ever be temporary for it is 'imagined' and outside his own body. Hamilton is not so much an alter-ego for Billy as has been claimed elsewhere (Tiffin, 1982) so much as an ephemeral synthesis of the doubling that Billy cannot resolve or control within himself.

Consequently, while Hamilton's actions over the PKI gun shipment and Jill's pregnancy may be morally contentious, Billy's revocation of the friendship would seem inevitable, given the instability of Billy's own sense of self and the ineluctability of his personal contradictions. We see, though Billy apparently does not, Hamilton's resistance to the Russian agent, and, more particularly, the powerful effect that the Wayang shadow drama has on him — not so much in extinguishing his sexual and personal conflagrations but in demonstrating their inevitability and their manageability. To a much greater extent than Billy, Hamilton is able to come to terms with his fears and contradictory impulses because he is able to comprehend them as functions of an interminable battle. Billy, symbolically, fails to see Hamilton's reconciliation with Jill because he has already condemned Hamilton to the eternal flames of sexual iniquity — the very thing Billy so suspects and detests in himself and in the world around him. Yet, even further, Billy's surveillance, mixed with this strange and paradoxical moral-political hubris, propels him beyond the touch of all humanity. His desire for knowledge and authorship outreaches Cookie's more ghostly synthesis to become a form of deification in itself. Like the tragic heroes of Sophocles or Euripides, Billy is overwhelmed by pride, by what Nietzsche calls the will to power, as he casts his identity skyward in a final and all-embracing strain for vision and completeness. His 'playing god' (YLD, 150), as Hamilton describes it, becomes the ultimate trajectory of his imagination, his ascent and his 'fall'.

The revocation of his friendship with Hamilton is part of Billy's failure to consolidate himself and his identity in relation to the world. Ibu's child dies, the vicarious pleasures enjoyed of Jill through Hamilton, the multiplying poverty of Indonesia, Sukarno's putative social and political 'degeneration', can no longer be reconciled through Billy's new 'identification' with Indonesia. Thus he is cast back into the agonies of subject-splitting from which he has never really escaped, though now he is irredeemably compelled to reject that version of himself that had been written through Sukarno,
Hamilton and all the subjects of the Wayang Club. His betrayal of Wally O' Sullivan is, as we have already noted, part of the final disintegration of the imagined Western enclave and all that it represents for Billy. Yet it is also Indonesia that is disintegrating, and Billy's 'madness' as Cookie calls it, his 'playing god', is the discovery or re-discovery of his complete aloneness in the world, an aloneness which can only be expressed through the simple and ultimately ineffective gesture of the banner, the words, he hangs from the hotel window. The irony of his failure, even the failure of Sukarno to see the rebuke, is commensurate with the failure of all authorship to produce immutable effects, and recalls again Baudrillard's death of the signifier and Foucault's death of man/death of the author. Billy's bodily mortality is anticipated through his authorial death: the puppets are smashed, the dossiers madly disarrayed. His climactic denunciation of Hamilton is the uneasy cry of a delusory apotheosis and an equally value-less self destruction. He tells Hamilton that he has informed Jill of Hamilton's treachery, echoing a Scriptural pronouncement when he says, 'I gave her to you. I took her back' (*YLD*, 235). But it is his final outburst that most demonstrates the depth of his despair and disappointment:

'All this because I banked everything on you. You seemed to think that I just got you leads for stories... Stories? Is that what this is about? What's a bloody journalist, really? Nothing but a Peeping Tom. You slow idiot: I put you on course; I made you see things; I gave you the woman I loved, who loved you; who's carrying your child; she needed all your understanding, all your constancy.' His voice rose to a flat shout. 'I *created you*' (*YLD*, 237).

But it is with these words that Billy runs away and Hamilton does not give chase. At this point in the novel Billy has already banished himself from the Wayang Club, and thus the company of his fellow journalists and countrymen, by exposing Wally O' Sullivan's secret identity. Billy's vitriol, especially his denunciation of journalists as Peeping Toms, is unquestionably ironic since it is his own surveillance which produces the text and fabric of Cookie's tale. If he has created Hamilton, he has created himself. The observer is never neutral and Kwan 'who has banked everything' on Hamilton must 'bank everything' on some new action. If he is exchanging his observations for direct political action, it makes no difference to the outcome of his repudiation: he is destroyed by the 'other' observers, the PBI.
Hamilton is more fortunate because he is less extreme. His own identity is cast into crisis — like Billy's and all the other 'Western' journalists — by his presence in Indonesia. He is indeed the Peeping Tom of Billy's despair, but he acts in collusion with other powers, other observers. He colludes with the objects of his knowledge and re-traces himself through the context of his observation. Indeed, he is living dangerously not simply because of the powers that surround him, but because of the powers that struggle across his own body. While attempting to position himself and his identity through national expression — 'I am English'— he nevertheless becomes torn, like Billy, between the struggling cultural parts. On the one hand he cherishes and nurtures his Britishness with its promise of security, stability, structure, conservatism and power; on the other hand he is excited and 'emancipated' by other forms of social and cultural dispersal, liberalism, and the sort of postcolonialism represented by Australia (personified in Kwan) and even Indonesia (personified in Kurmar).

For Hamilton, and in relation to the symbology of the novel overall, the extremes of each become constellations of light and darkness, order and chaos. This struggle is represented figuratively in his attractions to Jill, and to Vera Chostikov, the Russian attaché-spy. Against the background of the Hindu shadow play where the Wayang of the Right and the Wayang of the Left are locked in perpetual battle, colluding in each other's existence, Guy struggles within the powers of light (Jill) and darkness (Vera), trying to resolve his own emotions and contradictory desires. Yet while Billy forces himself to reach toward some ultimate resolution of these contending powers, Hamilton is forced to acknowledge their inevitability. In choosing Jill over Vera, light over darkness, the British over the revolutionary, order over chaos, Hamilton does not, as we have noted, extinguish the alternatives, but merely defers their effects. Thus, while each character is forced, by the crisis of transculturalism, to confront the contending forces of Right and Left, it is Billy's attempt to interrupt their dialectical tension — their interdependence — which causes his death. Hamilton 'sees' the immensity of their power and for that his sight is partially sacrificed. Indeed, while Hamilton's blindness is an ironic demonstration of the excesses of his professional ambition as the all-seeing Peeping Tom of international journalism, it is also a symbol of the other half, the darkness and chaos that balances the world of Left and Right into which he, like Oedipus and Gloucester, has gazed.

Helen Tiffin's description of The Year of Living Dangerously as an attempt by Koch to 'convey cultural information to Western audiences', most
particularly the 'separate approaches to aesthetics and metaphysics of the Indonesian and Australian minds' (Tiffin, 1984: 477-8), is only partly adequate. What is more significant in the novel is the degree to which the Western journalists are forced to re-define themselves in relation to the transcultural experience, and how the political and cultural forces of globalism are compressing the East and West into more propinquitous and less distinguishable positions in relation to each other. This compression, of course, is personified in the Australian journalists for whom the East is not east at all but slightly west of north; this personification is most evident, as we have noted, in the Australian-Chinese body of journalist Billy Kwan. Sukarno himself has expressed an affinity with the Australian union movement which had refused to load Dutch cargo in solidarity with Indonesia's anti-colonial revolution\(^4\) (\textit{YLD}, 25-6), and Billy Kwan refers to the postcolonial bond which unites and renders similar the experiences of the two nations (\textit{YLD}, 97). It is precisely this knowledge of transcultural contiguity and the fallibility of national consciousness and grounded national identity which Hamilton takes with him from Indonesia. While Jill and Britain are his choices, the greater knowledge of this balance of sight and blindness, light and dark — the propinquity of his own sighted and unsighted eyes — awakens Hamilton to a greater understanding that his place in the world and his 'selfhood' must remain dubious. He can live in Europe, as he tells Jill, 'only if I can belong there' (\textit{YLD}, 295). But on this point there is no certainty, and Hamilton, with his good eye, 'watches the cabin crew with calm wistfulness. Their Europe would never be his. He would always be a temporary resident: in the end, the other hemisphere would claim him' (\textit{YLD}, 295). This is not the hemisphere of one nation, however, and the full meaning of the contemplation and prescience must be measured against the experience of his relationship with Billy, Australia and Indonesia.

Just as the choice of Jill, light and order does not extinguish their alternatives, Hamilton's choice of Britain cannot extinguish the complex of experiences, cultural and identity hybridities that transact across his body. Like Wally, Curtis and Kev Condon who have capitulated to the sensory pleasures of Indonesia as they are drawn out of their Western citadels, Hamilton too, in interacting with the East, becomes irrevocably changed by it. Indonesia is not 'out there' but is drawn in and personalized. Hamilton's friendships with Billy Kwan and his Indonesian assistant, undercover PKI

\(^4\) See Chapter One. For an historical account of the period see Margaret George, \textit{Australia and the Indonesian Rebellion} (1980).
agent, Kurmar, deepens and renders intimate his transculturalism. His initial
desire for professional indemnity against the complications of Indonesian
politics — 'I'm just here to report the news' (YL, 26), he tells Sukarno —
parallels his evasion of Billy's questions on the problems of Indonesia's squalor
and poverty. This initial aloofness, however, is not like Cookie's phlegmatic
rationalism, and quickly dissolves when Hamilton exposes himself to the
dangers of his deeper desires.

In fact, it is Hamilton's own enthusiasm for knowledge and vision which,
even before the final confrontation between the PKI and the reactionary
forces of the New Order, had drawn him into the heat of the nation's tensions.
Hamilton is forced to realize that knowledge — the surveillance and
comprehension of Indonesia and its politics — demands the risk of cultural
immersion. This point is metaphorically dramatized during his attempt to film-
view PKI demonstrators who turn against the 'imperialist'; ironically it is the
Indonesian PKI agent, Kurmar, who appeases the mob and saves both
Hamilton and Billy Kwan from probable death (YL, 76-7). The symbolism of
his salvation — saved from Indonesia by Indonesia — anticipates his spiritual
salvation later in the novel. Yet the paradoxes surrounding Kurmar
demonstrate very clearly that Indonesia is neither 'out there' for Hamilton, nor
can it be regarded as any absolute or unitary cultural condition. Just like
Hamilton and Kwan — indeed just like Australia — neither Kurmar nor
Indonesia could be regarded as any one thing. Kurmar is duplicitous. Hamilton
is shocked to discover that he is well educated and speaks Russian fluently.
Equally, he is disturbed by the mysterious intensity of Kurmar's own
ambivalence toward him, and his efforts to articulate their cultural and
ideological intransigence. Kurmar has saved Hamilton's life, certainly, but
during their 'holiday' in Bogor, Kurmar questions him unceasingly on matters
of justice, international politics and racial diaspora. After insisting that he and
Hamilton, and their respective races and cultures, are 'very different', Kurmar
asks Hamilton accusingly: 'Perhaps you think . . . that there is little hope for
Indonesia—not just Jakarta' (YL, 167). And yet in his attempts to intensify
these differences, Kurmar elicits a response that dissolves them into a simple
gesture of bonded and common humanity:

'We Indonesians do not seem to be running things very well,' he said.
'Everywhere there is corruption. I will tell you something. My father is
dead and I live with my uncle and aunt. My uncle runs a small shop—he
sells batik cloth. But he can never get ahead, because every week he must pay money to the military. This is not right, is it, boss?'

'No, it's certainly not'.

'He and my aunt are now in great trouble—the payments have increased and they cannot afford them. They have many bills and may lose the shop.'

'That's bloody terrible.' Hamilton grew indignant. 'Look, I'd like to help. Maybe I could make your uncle a loan... I'd be glad to do it.'

Kurmar stared at him. 'That's very good of you boss. But I did not tell you in order to get money. This is not the way we should manage—by handouts.' He looked distressed. 'I tell you this to show you our problems' (YLD, 168).

Hamilton's indignation is a distinct movement away from the purity of his claim that he is only here to report the news. His gesture, indeed his very presence in Indonesia, implicate him in the object of his observation. Kurmar, equally, is affected by the presence of the Australian newsman. His hostility to Billy Kwan's 'theories' may substantiate his anti-imperialist attitudes, but when it comes to ultimate action, Kurmar chooses the simple humanity of friendship even above the powerful Marxist and PKI ideologies. In taking the money from Hamilton, though it shames him to 'play the beggar', Kurmar reciprocates the gesture of friendship and humanity; Kurmar's affection for Hamilton in some respects compromises the ideological exhortations to 'difference' and hostility. As much as Hamilton is drawn closer to Indonesia away from his claims to cultural separation, Kurmar is drawn closer to the imperialist enemy away from his own invocations of cultural-political difference. Differences, of course, remain, but the common bond of humanity is further emphasized when Kurmar returns to Hamilton with his own life in jeopardy and the PKI revolution in retreat. Now Kurmar acts for Hamilton's eyes, reporting on the outcome of the rebellion, and trying once more to explain the condition of his own being. The impact of the passage, however, has less to do with the political and ideological intensities of the Right-Left Wayang, than it has to do with the delicate touches of fate that so subtly distinguish human beings:

'Tell me something, boss. Am I a stupid man?'

'No, Kurmar, you're damn good. I'm glad I had you working for me.'
'Thank you. Then why should I live like a poor man all my life, when stupid people in your county live well?' The low voice came as close to being passionate as Javanese restraint allowed . . .

'There's a packet of Yank cigarettes on the table, Kurmar. Light two of them, will you, and give one to me.'
A match was struck; a cigarette was placed against his lips.
'Still the good cigarettes, boss.'
'Water from the moon, Kurmar.'
'Water from the moon, boss . . . You have not answered my question.'
'I didn't because I can't.'

'You are honest. At least one can say that. Perhaps that is why I like you, although you are reactionary' (YLD, 289).

The emotional flow of the passage is not designed either to extinguish or promote difference, but to acknowledge its cadence, its inevitability. The two men share the Yank cigarettes, but on the question of armed revolution, the two are profoundly opposed. Kurmar's presence is not merely a piece of local colour, a background to the main performances of the novel, as Alison Bronowski (1992) might suggest, but a profound and fundamental weave in the novel's general tapestry of transcultural interaction. Koch is not an indigenous Indonesian writing about the New Order revolution, but an Australian and world citizen trying to comprehend the complexities of human identity and communication within the new global processes of surveillance. Just as Kurmar and Hamilton reach the limits of human communion — their common ground — in this passage, Koch through his alter ego, Cookie, reaches the limits of human understanding and communicability. All the Westerners are changed to a greater or lesser degree by the transcultural experience and by the object of their surveillance. In the end, Koch offers us no ultimate and all-encompassing resolution to the issues of his own surveillance; and even Cookie's rationalist perspective is threatened by its own uncertainties. To this extent, Kurmar's final remarks are among the most resonant in the novel: 'Mr Billy Kwan was right . . . that Westerners do not have many answers any more' (YLD, 289).

II. Peter Weir's Old and New Identities

In filming The Year of Living Dangerously, Peter Weir is forced to narrow the narrative and verbal complexity of Koch's novel in order to produce the more sensory visual effect of his aesthetic. The film retains significant elements of
the original text — the compelling political drama, the character contradictions of Billy Kwan and his relationship with Guy Hamilton, the 'doubling' effects of transcultural identity, the ambient and lyrical exoticism of South East Asia, and of course the interaction between and surveillance of the body. Yet these thematic foci are necessarily reduced, and to an extent simplified, by the imperatives of the interpretation and visualization of the original text. In conforming to the aesthetic and economic requirements of the popular art form in what Walter Benjamin has notorised as 'the age of mechanical reproduction', Weir's translation shifts some of the subtle balances in the verbal text to produce the film's drama and aesthetic unity.

This shift is most immediately obvious in the removal of Cookie as the first person narrator. The text is no longer to be synthesized through the rationalizing lingual formations of the all-seeing Cookie whose reason, equanimity and tolerance have functioned as the significant beacon, constitutive of the shadow and light symbology, for Koch's fiction. Nowhere is this absence more obvious than in the representation of the Wayang Club which appears more strained and more dissolute than in the Koch text. What is being emphasized in Weir's film is the personal ambition and the ethical discordance of the Wayang journalists. The generative affection and sense of inevitable loss which Cookie's narrative produces is seriously blunted by Weir's greater concentration on the sexual and exploitative dimensions of the Wayangers' behaviour. What is even more obvious than in the verbal text, is the shadowy and seedy lifestyle of the Westerners; their world is not the icon of cultural and media hegemony, but of sexual and personal degeneracy produced or permitted by their transculturalism. They are presented continually in Bacchanalian and lugubrious interiors, shadows and colours of redness and heat. Indeed, they become for the film the brooding heat of sexual danger and sexual animism: red, the colour of the East, is assimilated with the West by these images and by the suggestion of cultural and sexual miscegenation.

The removal of Cookie's narrative personality and the shifts in thematic balance effected by visual translation do not, however, produce a mere 'love

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5 Walter Benjamin's famous essay, 'The Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' argues that film and other electronic tests constitute a new form of art that is infinitely reproducible. This marks a new era in human history, for it is the first time that the 'masses' have been included in the aesthetics of culture. While Benjamin sees this historical moment as constituting a new shift in the relationship between the art object and the viewer, it has also been suggested that the moment marks a new form of capitalist social control of the masses. See Benjamin (1970), Marcuse (1962, 1972) and Adorno (1972, 1982).
story', as has sometimes been suggested. Nevertheless, the film's more general 'imaginative and visual power', as Koch himself describes it, has tended to celebrate the scenic and sensory above the rational and orderly, again shifting the balance somewhat from the verbal text. Whereas Cookie's narrative attempts to organize the chaotic and contradictory sources of its information, reflecting the function of the verbal news reporter, the film moves more toward the imagistic or impressionistic representation of the world, relying more directly on the visual reproduction of the phenomenal world as the central communicative formation. Of course this centralization of the image is an inevitable outcome of filmic translation, though in Weir's The Year of Living Dangerously the intensification of the sensory tends to produce, once again, the sort of romanticism that is recognizable in a number of Weir's other films. Most particularly, it is this romanticism which characterizes the reorganization of the aesthetic content, producing greater thematic interest in the love affair between Jill and Guy Hamilton, and in the formation of the Billy Kwan character.

Cookie's exile, therefore, leaves both a technical-narrative as well as thematic vacuum. The rational, tolerant and liberal presence by which Koch could illuminate and reflect the events and the other characters of the novel is replaced to some extent by the visualizing 'eye' of the camera and — at least in the early phase of the film — the overlaid voice of Billy Kwan. This substitution, while succeeding in part in reproducing the sense of surveillance, nevertheless lacks the synthesizing humanity of Cookie's lingual system. Moreover, if it is true that film creates its own level of discord or fragmentation by its juxtaposition of images that could not possibly be absorbed or perceived by the subjects it represents — that is, if film is indeed the medium of postmodern temporal-spatial compression as Adorno (1982), Deleuze (1985), Jameson (1988) and many other theorists have claimed — then the narrative synthesis provided by Cookie is inevitably destabilized by the film

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6 Alison Bronowski in an interview on ABC Radio, Late Night Live, 1992.
7 Christopher Koch in a letter to Cinema Papers. Recorded also by David Stratton (1990: 167) in his account of the Weir-Koch dispute. Koch was invited by Peter Weir to write the script, but it was decided that the submission was too 'literary' and too dense, especially in its retention of much of the mythical substance of the novel. The film was eventually scripted by Peter Weir and David Williamson who also collaborated in scripting Gallipoli, Weir's earlier film. Screenplay credits include C. J. Koch.
8 For example, in Picnic at Hanging Rock Weir idealizes the relationships and the sensory experiences of the girls. His visualization of youth, precipitous sexuality and nature is achieved through the use of Heidelberg style images and colour tones. The Year of Living Dangerously uses vivid colours and broad panoramas to enhance its romantic qualities.
translation itself. Weir clearly has the sort of narrative fragmentation in mind since not only is the synthesizing narrative voice of Cookie banished, but the erstwhile use of Billy's narrative and dossier voice draws attention to the narrative process itself. When the camera-as-eye takes over the narrative function, it too becomes identified with the self-reflexive surveillance system. When the film begins we see Hamilton's body and hear Billy's voice from the dossier. However, within these first moments of the film and the appearance of Billy's own body on screen, it is clear that Billy is not only 'watching' but being watched. This technique sustains the general sense of narrative fragmentation and time-space compression by creating uncertainties of narrative presence.

This fragmented perspective is further accentuated by the temporal condition of the perpetual present. Koch only occasionally allows his narrative to move into present tense, preferring mostly to create a sense of historical distance through the past perspective of his narrator. Cookie is writing from a later moment. He has already left Jakarta with his life and eyesight in fact, burdened only by the disharmonies of Billy's dossiers and the organizing imperatives of his reason and his memory. Weir, however, even in the moments of first person narrative, produces the effect of continuous time. The narrative reveals itself moment by moment, and the characters are trapped by the moment and the inevitable flux of change. Again, the effect of immediacy and image juxtaposition is to create further instability and a greater reliance on the sensory above the synthesizing or rationalizing power of narrative history.

The gaze, therefore and as Lacan tells us, becomes the central organizing factor in the flux of human responses; quite specifically, the reciprocity of the gaze — of surveillance and visualization — becomes the major thematic distinction of Weir's film, constituting a sort of metanarrative whereby the global eye of international journalism and Billy's specific function as professional photographer-cameraman become visualized by the visualizing of Weir's camera.9 Weir establishes Hamilton and Billy Kwan's friendship and professional relationship by distinguishing their individual dominions as complementary, at least as far as Billy is concerned: 'We make a great team, old

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9 Of course we would need to distinguish Weir's film from the more adventurous experiments with self-reflexivity or metanarrative often associated with the avant garde of high modernism. Nevertheless, the strategy of self-reflection has influenced current film makers as different as Spielberg, Truffaut, Woody Allen and Peter Greenaway. Its significance can also be seen in Jocelyn Moorhouse's Proof, whose central figure is a blind photographer.
man; you for the words, me for the pictures'. Weir is thus occluding the lingual Europeanness that lingers in Koch's novel. This occlusion strengthens the romantic and sensory dimensions of Billy's character, producing a more child-like perspective, largely less complicated by sexual intensity than Koch's original dwarf. The visualization of Billy as asexual seems more consonant with Keats' romantic naiveties where love is 'happy, happy' and 'still to be enjoyed'; Koch's dwarf, however, has more of the romanticism of William Blake with its pervading threat of gloom, intensity and disorder.10

Weir, in fact, plots this child affinity quite deliberately through his presentations of Billy. The film begins with the sound of children laughing and the images of the shadow puppet, Right and Left in perpetual tension. This backdrop to the introductory credits is juxtaposed with Billy writing at his dossier, and the entry on, entrance of, Guy Hamilton. Children are also significant in the scenes of the kampongs' squalor, in Billy's photographic chronicles of Jakarta, and, most significantly, in Billy's relationship with Ibu. The funeral ritual, precipitous of Billy's despair, is among the most powerful in the film, juxtaposing the naked infant body with Billy's own child-like form and personal horror. Moreover, as Hamilton becomes more absorbed and affected by the poverty of Indonesia, it is the 'starving children' of Lombok who are centralized in his reports. Weir uses the reports to demonstrate the absorption of Hamilton into Billy's vision of Indonesia. Hamilton not only 'sees' Jill's beauty, he sees the moral and physical degeneration of Indonesia's people, the condition he'd previously told Billy Kwan 'nobody wants to hear about'. Ultimately, so substantial is Hamilton's absorption into Billy's vision, that even Jill finds the report on Lombok excessive, if not 'melodramatic':

**GUY:** What did you think was melodramatic about it?

**JILL:** I did offend you didn't I? . . . I was there for two months in Lombok. I just thought there was one reference too many to children with gob [protruding?] ribcages and bulbous eyes.

**GUY:** Well you were there. The ribcages and the eyes were the real thing, eh.

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10 W. B. Yeats has said of Keats that he is reminiscent of the child with his nose pressed against the window of a sweets shop. While it is true that Keats' poetry does reach considerable heights of intensity and aesthetic quality, the spoken voice is never anything else but youthful in its enthusiasm for life and pleasure. The voice of 'On a Grecian Urn' from which the quoted lines are taken, is one of the most exhilarating in all romantic poetry; yet it contrasts with the mood of sinister intent that pervades Blake's 'Tyger, Tyger' or 'London.'
Weir's presentation of Billy and Indonesia through images of children is not merely a variation on the Orientalist stereotype — a region of irrational sensibility, — nor is he producing a simplistic ideology of centre-margin where the Western journalists represent some form of cultural and intellectual hegemony amid the child-like naïveté of the East. Rather, Weir is configuring a more complex interrelationship where Guy, in particular, is brought to some level of vision through processes of communication. 'Perhaps you don't see,' Billy responds when in the film Hamilton denies Billy's dwarfdom. As in the novel, however, Hamilton is drawn toward a greater capacity for understanding, empathy and 'vision' through his relationship with Billy and Asia more generally. Once again, Hamilton's transactions with the East are designed to show how polarized preconceptions fail, and how the child-like positivity of Kwan can produce its own effects of transcendent or pure knowledge. Like the romantic poets, Weir sees some aspects of this liberation from the rational and linguistic dialectic of oppositions, as inherent to the condition of childhood. The contradictions of Billy's body are amplified through his symbolic representation of a contradictory Asia, and the contradictions of childhood itself. As if revealing the epiphanal essence of his personal history to a privileged and empathetic listener his narrative voice overlays the first scene in which he and Hamilton are strolling through the poverty afflicted streets of Jakarta: 'Most of us become children again as we enter the slums of Asia. I watched you [Hamilton] walk back into childhood, with all its opposite intensities, laughter and misery, the crazy and the grim, toy-town and the city of fear'. The scenic imagery supports the words by juxtaposing the play of children with the entrance of a heavily armed Indonesian youth. The scene concludes with Hamilton being abused by a number of adult males who mistake him for an Englishman or an American.

This issue of postcolonial politics and the affinity between postcolonial identities, in fact, survives the translation from Koch's novel, and, if anything, appears strengthened by the shedding of Koch's verbal complexities. We are immediately confronted by the anti-colonialist slogan 'Crush British Imperialism' when Hamilton arrives at the Jakarta airport; the early kampong scenes are threaded by postcolonial allusions and a general mood of hostility. Moreover, the Wayang Club is featured as an enclave of strangely ineffectual, even degenerate, Westernism; its members are presented as dissolute and desperate, rather than threatening in any way to the political potency of postcolonial nationalism. The scene at the palace illustrates the journalists' lack
of genuine power in the performance of their global surveillance function and, more particularly, in dealing with Sukarno, the 'talent', the focus of their heuristic task. Even Hamilton in his earlier dealings with Indonesia is pictured as an alien, supplicating himself to those who 'know' what he desires to know. This power differential is symbolized through his dealings with Sydney, his reliance on Billy Kwan for 'contacts', and the pervasive power of the assistant, Kurnar, who (as in the novel) literally and figuratively controls and manages Guy's bodily safety in Jakarta. On his first visit to the palace, it is Kurnar who tells Hamilton to remove his sunglasses in order to present his vulnerability to the palace guards who 'can tell an assassin by his eyes'. Only when Hamilton is able to acknowledge his own postcolonial affinities — symbolized by his relationship with both Billy and Kurnar — is he able to feel successful as well as liberated in the Asian context. Weir confirms this affinity as much as the validity of postcoloniality by changing Hamilton's cultural duality from English-Australian, as in Koch's novel, to American-Australian. This switch enhances his status as a person of the New World by distancing his connection with the European colonialist order.

While this subtle change in ethnicity may be regarded as a ploy to engage greater market interest in the US, it parallels a more significant divergence from the original novel. Specifically, it demonstrates a very clear effort by the filmmakers to distance their central character and his representative culture from the imperialistic and bombastic rigidities of Britain. The parallels with Weir-Williamson's earlier film, Gallipoli (1981), are interesting, since in that film, too, the apparent alliance of Australia and Britain against an enemy of the East, Turkey, is fractured by deeper colonial antagonisms. In Weir's The Year of Living Dangerously, Ralph Henderson becomes the personification of that same British colonial imperiousness that the lads of the first AIF ridicule and resent. Henderson is translated from the novel as a virtual caricature (some would say stereotype), a bombastic old British fart whose narrative and ideological function is to be lampooned as he is measured against the good-humoured brashness of Guy Hamilton. At the poolside meeting with Hamilton, Jill and Billy, Henderson is presented as a far more inflexible and fastidious character than in Koch's version; his demands for a gin and tonic without ice — not 'with ice' as the Americans have it — is designed as a comic foil for Hamilton and Jill's sexual interest:

COLONEL: What's this?
WAITER: Gin and tonic, sir.
COLONEL: This is gin and tonic with ice.
WAITER: Gin tonic always with ice, sir.
COLONEL: Gin tonic does not always have ice. [Close-up of Jill] Americans always have ice. I'm not an American. Get it—
GUY: It's all right I'll take it.

The visual narrative of the scene is designed to show Jill's incipient interest in the good-natured Australian (-American), contrasting the youthful body and beauty of the New Worlder with the still-strong but fading body and culture of the British imperialist. There is nothing subtle about Weir-Williamson's intent here. Earlier in the same scene the stiffness of British stoicism is consciously satirized:

COLONEL: We're at the Ambassador's residence since the local lads tore down our embassy.
GUY: I hear they really tore the place apart.
COLONEL: Yes, they seemed to have a lot of fun. It was all rather droll.
JILL: Oh god, it was anything but droll.
GUY: Didn't some clown keep playing the bagpipes the whole time?
JILL: [With slight laugh] That was Ralph.
COLONEL: [Flatly, after pause] It helped the morale.

And later, at the British Embassy ball — itself a strange and dissonant microcosm of British order and civility amid the seething poverty and political tensions of Jakarta — when Guy finally steals Jill away, the Colonel is featured in his military uniform and kilt playing the 'Scottish Soldier' on the bagpipes. Hamilton liberates Jill's sexual body from the stifling strictures of Britishness, symbolically repudiating all order as they defy the curfew and crash through the road-block; this act of defiance represents the ultimate break as the actual life and body of the two 'escapees' are physically threatened when the military fire upon them in their flight.

Thus, in Weir's film the love affair between Hamilton and Jill expresses the romantic liberation of the body and spirit, and the cultural-political liberation of individuals and nations. The love affair takes place in Indonesia, which is significant in itself, but it also takes place at the expense of the residual British imperialism represented by Henderson and the embassy. Hamilton's transformed American-Australian parentage and heritage produce a far more extant ideograph of Australia reacting against its colonial Britishism than is
apparent in the novel. Mel Gibson's portrayal emphasizes the familiar Australian 'type' — handsome, athletic, good-natured, egalitarian, free-spirited and disrespectful of rigid authority. His apolitical nature reflects a more general distrust of intellectualism and other superior attitudes. Gibson's Hamilton relies more directly on the immanent integrity of truth and 'the true self' to overcome adversity and expose the sorts of power rigidities and despotic tendencies represented by the Colonel and social strictures of undemocratic political formations like militarism and excessive social control.

In this way Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* deploys the familiar strategy of Australia-British oppositionalism to achieve its aesthetic and ideological effects. It echoes similar structures and stereotyped characterizations in *Gallipoli, Crocodile Dundee, Bazza, Breaker Morant,* the *Body Line* television series, and may even be detected in the recent *Strictly Ballroom* where Scot, the young dancer, defies the Euro-British derived rigidities and social conventions of the ballroom championship un order to achieve success in his own terms. Graeme Turner (1989) argues in fact that this form of postcolonial oppositionalism may be detected in many forms of transgressive television nationalism, including the longevitous *Hey, Hey, It's Saturday,* which Turner sees as a deliberate adaptation and ironization of the American host show by the postcolonial and 'diffident' Australian voice.11 Similarly, Bruce Molloy (1990) sees mid-period Australian films by Cinesound, Chauvel and Ealing as producing the same sorts of dialectical structures where the voice of the colonial heritage is transformed in the new context, constituting structural-semiotic syntheses of the Australia Britain opposition. Following Barthes and Levi-Strauss in particular, Molloy acknowledges the peculiar status of the postcolonial nation in both absorbing and opposing its colonial, institutionalized and cultural meanings to produce its own system of self representation. The Australian identity has been determined, Molloy argues, by 'the conflicting polls' of Euro-British history and Asian geography, the sorts of contradictions from which myths are born (Molloy, 1990: 3-5).

Both Turner's notion of transgression and Molloy's adaptation of Barthes and Levi-Strauss produce an aesthetic system in which the opposition becomes synthesized as identity, myth and ultimately ideology. Molloy, for

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11 Turner claims that popular Australian live television programs from *In Melbourne Tonight to Perfect Match* exhibit the same sorts of opposition to American cultural hegemony. This opposition is subtile laced with the language of the dominant external culture, though 'spoken with an audible and distinctive accent' (Turner, 1989: 25).
example, follows Siegfried Kracauer's foundational discussion of the
Hollywood depiction of the British type:

Any nation, it appears, sees any other people in a perspective determined
by its experience of them; and, of course, its cinema features character
traits of them which are an integral part of this experience. Since nations,
like individuals, tend to build on their early impressions, the mass of
Americans, among them swarms of Irish immigrants, took it for granted
that the typical British, is essentially a caste-proud snob. On the one side,
they condemned British snobbishness for offending their sense of
equality; on the other hand, they imitated it (Kracauer, 1949: 63).

It is this contradiction of imitation and opposition which Molloy sees as
informing those early Australian films and which produces the mythology of
national type. Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously*, in deploying this
'stereotyped' opposition and characterization, would, according to Molloy's
analytical system, conform to the same sort of cultural imperative: the old
British structures are opposed and ultimately displaced by the brash and
egalitarian spirit of the postcolonial transgressive. Gibson's Hamilton wins Jill's
affections away from the Colonel and, as importantly, away from the
institutionalized structures of colonialism represented by Jill's preparedness to
supply 'classified' information about the PKI arms shipment.

While Molloy and others' semiotic analyses into the nature of Australian
postcoloniality provides some useful insights into the broader power-
ideological structures that organize cultural systems and meanings — most
particularly the interdependencies of oppositional structures\(^\text{12}\) — there is
often insufficient recognition of the more atomistic and disseminative
influences of power/knowledge in disrupting these broader structures.
Specifically, Weir's film, while reproducing elements of the familiar opposition
and characterizations of Australian postcoloniality, is forced to account for the
cultural complexities produced through its presentation and employment of
the Asian context. To this extent, Hamilton's opposition to (and
interdependence with) the Colonel's Britishism is inscribed with the general

\(^\text{12}\) Clearly, semiotic analysis is of immense value. My reservation about analyses like
Molloy's and Turner's relates more directly to the foundational systems developed by
Barthes, Levi-Strauss and others. That is, by arguing that societies and cultures
'overcome' or 'resolve' contradiction through the production of myths and language
structures, semiology tends to pay less than adequate attention to irresolution and
particularity. This, of course, has been the complaint of the poststructuralist movement.
Indonesian antagonism to European imperialism; in both the dramatic and symbolic development of the film Hamilton is drawn more deeply into the indigenous culture, being forced to re-define himself in relation to these transcultural communicative propinquities. Thus, while the scenes depicting Hamilton and the Colonel configure the reflected self-other opposition of familiar Australian postcoloniality, other scenes add to the character complexity by producing additional or even alternative versions of the self-other formation. This is not necessarily an aesthetic inconsistency, but an acknowledgement in the film that the oppositional structure itself is necessarily compromised by the context of its presentation: the stereotype must be redefined by the particularities of the context. Yet it is not so much that Hamilton is forging a new alliance with the postcolonial Indonesia — this is not the point of Indonesia's own political tensions and complexities — but rather that identity and the power/knowledge that accompanies its formation are confounded in the very process of formation.

After all, Jill too is British. Her disaffection with Britishism and the colonial heritage can only be partial since she is returning 'home', despite the liberation Hamilton's love affair, his body, offers and eventually provides. In fact, the affair is as much an escape, if only an imagined escape, from the otherwise ineluctable web of power and surveillance which her function at the Embassy impels. If she is the 'spook' or spy Hamilton suggests, then her liberation may be a moment of transcendence, the sort of ethereal transcendence assured her by Billy Kwan and symbolized by the flight from the Embassy ball (Ralph's kilt) and the crashing through of the Indonesian military road block. The 'escape', therefore, is apolitical in as much as it exceeds both British and postcolonial (Indonesian) military formations; bodily pleasure disperses the power formations in which Jill herself has been enmeshed and with which she must remain, if less so, connected. In the end, as the tensions in Jakarta rise and erupt, Jill and Hamilton realise that they cannot escape the implications of power since both are 'embodied' by it. Hamilton uses the information that Jill has supplied to further his ambitions, and to deepen his experience of Indonesia and of Indonesia's power dispute. At the climax of the film these power structures — including the sorts of postcolonial divisions we might have identified as separating Hamilton and the Colonel — disintegrate altogether, leaving a peculiar void, a scene of abject uncertainty and dispersal. Amid the flux, Billy dies and Hamilton and Jill are momentarily united by the death; at this point Henderson becomes shadowy as the opposition between him and Hamilton also collapses into the power vacuum and disorder.
This re-contextualization of the Australia-British opposition into Asia produces, therefore, some interesting effects. The oppositional formation and power dialectic is, in the end, collapsed by the transculturalism that compounds it. As in the novel, Hamilton is redefined by his experience of Indonesia and it is precisely this redefinition which ultimately de-stabilizes the stereotype as unsustainable — even as a partial formation — in the system of new relationships and new meanings. While the film concludes somewhat ambiguously anyway, giving us no real idea of Jill's whereabouts or intentions, we are nevertheless aware that her relationship with Hamilton represents some new form of Australia-British alliance, one that accounts for global shifts in power and knowledge. Billy, the Asian-Australian, not only records and defines the love affair between Hamilton and Jill, in a sense, certainly in his own mind, he actually creates it. In other words, at the metaphoric and literal levels, Asia creates the love affair and the new British Australia alliance. As much as Indonesia facilitates the affair, Billy's martyrdom, expressing his new rejection of Sukarno, becomes mortally inscribed on the relationship as death in life, his body for their pleasure. Thus while we may see the reiteration of the postcolonial aesthetic conventions in Weir's film, it is considerably ruptured by new lingual formations of identity, power and meaning.

The Weir-Williamson script seems aware of these new formations, destabilizing them in the very process of their repetition. A critical distance is established by punctuating the Australia-British opposition with contrary attitudes. It is Jill herself who is crucially aware of this point, refusing to accept Hamilton's stereotyping of any 'national characteristic'. When he questions her about her previous lover, a French journalist, Jill repudiates Hamilton's simplistic description:

GUY: They're an arrogant lot.
JILL: Who?
GUY: The French.
Jill: [Laughing] I think they're absolutely charming. [Both laughing]

On another occasion Guy criticizes the British for their superiority, referring specifically to the Colonel's gin and tonic incident; Billy also rejects the generalization of national types by saying 'Jillie's not like that'. Guy finds this to be true when in his courting he is able to mimic the Colonel and Jill shares in the humour of his irony. On still another occasion, when Billy presents Hamilton with his invitation to the British Ambassador's Ball, not only are
stereotypes debunked, but Billy seems to question the whole process of creating national typologies:

**BILLY:** Are you going to this?
**GUY:** Not likely.
**BILLY:** You might learn something.
**GUY:** I doubt it. The British don't let much slip.
**BILLY:** Oh yes they do. You just have to listen harder.

What Billy is saying here, is that national typologies are merely systems of analysis and are not of themselves complete descriptions. If we are to 'listen harder' or 'read more carefully' we will see that within the system there are other formations, other ways of knowing the details which might elucidate the character. In other words, the systems produce their singular or unitary effects, but they are incomplete. Billy's own response to this incompleteness, of course, is to watch more carefully and record all that is surveyed. He is the eye of the camera that sees through a form of spatial and temporal transcendence. By being 'out of the world' physically, Billy creates a perspective — like the child — that is alert to detail, minutiae, moral specificity.

Homi Bhabha (1986), in his discussion of postcolonial imitation of its former master's system of representation, argues that mimicry impels its own slippage, as 'the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which appropriates the Other as it visualizes power' (Bhabha, 1986: 199). For Australia this appropriated 'Other' can no longer be articulated as the colonial master nor the distant Oriental, but is the formulation of new and propinquitous identities. Slippage for the Australian aesthetic is complicated by these new and nearby Others, each of whom is arranged by affilitations and oppositions, fluxes rather than fixities of power. Living Dangerously is not merely the vulnerability of the individual to major power formations, it is more the imperatives of new forms of global exchange, cultural and subjective floatation; the subject and the subject's formation 'slips' by the imperatives of identity definition, power transaction and the erratic flow of transculturality. We cannot rely on the self-definition supplied through the reflection, imitation-opposition, and synthesis of the old colonial master, for there are new interventions, relationships and contingencies in the global process which are absorbing cultures, their perspectives, and their constituency of subjects and definitions. Weir-Williamson discovered in the writing and making of *The Year of Living Dangerously* that the oppositional
formations which had served their aesthetic in Gallipoli could not be sustained in the very different context of South East Asia. In turning away from the colonialist experience and the direct relationship with Britain, Weir-Williamson have been forced to account for an entirely new set of relationships and orientations. The unsatisfactory conclusion of the film may well reflect the confusions experienced by the journalists themselves as they too have been forced to reconcile old and new identities.

III. Monkeys on a Mission: Blanche d'Alpuget's Sexual Politic

During the latter years of Sukarno's rule, Australia's official attitudes toward Indonesia were affected by the regime's strengthening ties with China and reciprocal estrangement from the West. Communist activity and general social volatilities in Vietnam, along with increasing territorial tensions between Indonesia and Malaysia, where Australia maintained a strong military and diplomatic presence in the wake of British colonial influence, created further instabilities in the region. The conservative government in Australia felt particularly piqued by the Left leanings of the Sukarno government and the destabilizing effects his foreign policies were producing in the region. With the fall of Sukarno and the escalation of the American war in Vietnam, the diplomatic stresses between Australia and Indonesia eased, and a more collaborative inter-governmental relationship was installed. The Cold War fears that Indonesia would constitute another of the falling dominoes were replaced by an enthusiasm for the Right Wing policies of the new government. General Suharto's New Order routed the communists and all other permutations of social-political disorder, slaughtering PKI members and Sukarnoists alike in one of the blackest purges of modern history. The ruthlessness of the purge and the unflinching conviction with which it was waged were justified as imperatives of the return to social order, economic prosperity, and the realization of the objectives of Pancasila, the basis of the 1949 national constitution. Without the iron hand of the New Order, it was claimed, the modernization of the Indonesian state could never be achieved.

Blanche d'Alpuget who, like Koch, has worked as a journalist in the region, appears in a sense to be writing a postscript to the cataclysm which concludes The Year of Living Dangerously. Published two years after Koch's novel and dealing with the period immediately following the New Order revolution, Monkeys in the Dark (1980) surveys a cultural and social terrain that bears some resemblance to Koch's Jakarta, though these similarities are overwhelmed by a deepened mood of fear and the more complete panopticon
of the New Order; the danger of social and political dissolution is realised in an even more formidable incarnation of observation, control and conformity. In particular, d'Alpuget is concerned with the forms of social and political danger which the New Order program — its totalitarian system of surveillance and discipline — has imposed over the people of the archipelago. Indeed, d'Alpuget's novel assumes a voice that is largely monophonic in its repudiation of the New Order military revolution. *Monkeys in the Dark* echoes the sort of liberalist ideology that has informed much of the Australian media's account of Indonesia since the fall of Sukarno and the imposition of strict and institutionalized mechanisms of social and political control — those mechanisms which contributed to the deaths of five Australian journalists in East Timor, and the expulsion and continued denunciation of others.

As in her later South East Asian novel, *Turtle Beach*, d'Alpuget is interested in the tensions that accompany Indonesia's integration into the global processes of capital, particularly as control becomes more centralized and individuals are forced to struggle within and around the encompassing vision of the state's political panopticon. The dramatic and symbolic development of *Monkeys in the Dark* traces these tensions as they are represented by the opposition between the state New Order and those irradiating points of resistance, especially expressed through transcultural romanticism and the qualities and condition of the feminine. It is this seemingly implacable progress toward centralized forms of control which appears as the primary motivation for all male action in *Monkeys in the Dark*. Power will produce for men the discipline of human control, social order, and the rewards of fleshly gratification. As Sutrisno, the conduit of New Order capitalism, explains to Alex when confronted by a student demonstration: 'The Crowd! What does the crowd know? Sukarno taught them to live on beautiful words, on ideas. On air. The New Order will fill their bellies with rice and they will forget him' (*MD*, 55).

The utilitarianism represented by Sutrisno in the novel is also articulated by Anthony Sinclair in his defence both of his own diplomatic 'mission' and the broader activities of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. When Alex, the representative of romanticism and the feminine, questions Australia's role in Indonesia, her cousin-once lover and superior at the Embassy can 'barely be bothered' pointing out the importance of regional stability for Australia's military and economic security:
'If things go bad here we've got to know what they might do,' he said. 'If they were to close the Sunda Straits and the Malacca Straits, for example, the arse would fall out of our trade with Asia. Do you get that small point, Alex? ... You and I wouldn't have as much money to spend, because our shares wouldn't be worth as much, because the merchant banking business would be depressed. Don't think I'm merely patriotic in doing my job, sweetheart. I'm keeping an eye on the family business as well. Yours and mine ...'

'If anything, that makes it more disgusting,' she replied sullenly, which made Sinclaire realise he had won the argument. Like most women, she had never learned debating skills, and the ease with which Sinclaire could defeat her in words never ceased to surprise him (MD, 105-6).

As in most of the scenes featuring the cousins, d'Alpuget's irony betrays Sinclaire's manipulation, as well as the political chauvinism of masculo-capitalist politics. In this particular passage d'Alpuget directs our sympathies toward Alex, most especially as she attempts to reconcile the tension between personal ideals, and the pragmatics of capitalism and international diplomacy. More generally, however, d'Alpuget is consciously implicating the utility and insidiousness of Anthony's moral and personal manipulations in the broader program of gender politics and power. Sinclaire is drawn as priggish, superior and manipulating; Alex fails to defeat the adversary-confidante because as a woman she has suffered the social deprivation of having never 'learned debating'.

Nearly all the males in the novel, in fact, are corrupted by desires for sexual and material domination; d'Alpuget creates a mood of general ideological contempt by drawing the males as avaricious, devious, lascivious, even ridiculous. Materialism, rationalism and militarism seem indivisibly woven into the mesh of male sexuality and social motivations. Thus, in ingratiating his own commercial and political advantage, Sutrisno tries to redefine Alex's sexual subjectivity for the pleasure of General Djaya. Again, d'Alpuget's irony is perspicuous in its hostility toward men and male materialism:

'Western women are sex mad, you know ... they fall in love and don't care about presents.'

General Djaya found this latter part of the explanation more to his taste: he did not care to think of ladies he might like as being ruled by
animal forces, but rather that they had the intuition, the desire, to submit
to a man as a man had the desire to submit to God.

'They are very romantic,' General Djaya said (MD, 118).

Submission to God and the hierarchical structures of (masculine) divinity
contrast with the impracticality of Western females' romanticism. Not even the
Indonesian Generals' wives can constitute an alternative to these authoritarian
and rationalist structures since they are both subjugant to, and gratified by,
their husbands' power and wealth. These women are neither 'sex mad' nor
sexually romantic, and as sexless affiliates of patriarchy they gleefully invoke
political and Divine wrath against the opponents of modernization and
progress: 'God will crush them' ((MD, 110). In d'Alpuget's ideological scheme,
these women have been corrupted — their womanliness destroyed — by the
masculine.

The sexual neutrality of the Generals' wives is more particularly symbolised,
of course, in Sutrisno himself, whose castration is designed to represent the
extreme condition of dehumanized materiality. Sutrisno as the capitalist
conduit has been castrated for transgressing the ideology of sexual loyalty
and human compassion represented by the Independence revolution
generally and Maruli in particular. In defiling his revolutionary leader's wife
and choosing the punishment of castration above the more honourable
alternative of death, Sutrisno affirms self-interest above self-denial and
collectivity. The hatred he bears for Maruli, who knows his secret, and for
Sukarno, whom he once loved 'more than any other human being' (MD, 118),
is designed to demonstrate the completeness of his 'loss of love' for all
humanity, the purity of his personal depravity and his transmutation into the
very object of his desire: capitalist wealth. Sutrisno, that is, becomes
metaphorically inanimate as he is commodified. His sexual loss equates with
his more general loss of morality and humanity, as his entire functioning
appears devoid of any substantial human feeling whatsoever. He deals with
people as though they were objects, switching allegiance and negotiating
paths with the sole purpose of augmenting his personal wealth and power.
Yet it is precisely this moral neutrality, this ability to work with all peoples of
all nations, which makes Sutrisno the perfect global conduit; he is sanctioned
by the New Order because modern capitalism can tolerate no cultural, ethical
or national boundaries. As Sinclaire explains to Alex:
Trisno is a kind of licensed go-between. He tells the West what a good job the New Order is doing, how effectively they made nonsense of the Domino Theory, and gets paid, by his side, for doing so. Not straight cash, of course. That would be crass, un-Javanese. He gets an import licence here, a mining concession there . . . But Trisno is smart enough to be ripping it off all round; the Yanks pay him, and probably the Brits. Not straight either, but favours. So he stays, or claims he stays, his own man (MD, 43).

As his 'own man', however, Sutrisno exists outside the realm of men. Alex, describes him as a 'creep' (MD, 110), as making her feel 'physically ill' and 'the worst person I've ever met' (MD, 55). She may experience some modicum of compassion over Sutrisno's castration, but she ultimately and wholly rejects the pragmatic brutality of his attitudes. When finally Eileen Wan achieves her revenge on Sutrisno and his grand scheme collapses in on itself, d'Alpuget is highlighting the limitations of this kind of de-humanized economic obsession. Nevertheless, it is not that Sutrisno is defeated by the forces of human compassion and moral virtue but rather that he falls victim to his own imprudence amid the general pandemic of human despair. Eileen Wan's victory is lamentably vacuous as it is achieved at the expense of her own body, her own life. Trisno survives the assassination attempt, while his companions' and Eileen's lives are forfeited; this survival is achieved only by virtue of his good fortune and the 'strength' or durability of his body. If the forces of utility and international capitalism are indeed inexorable, as Sutrisno's survival might suggest, then Alex's celebration of Eileen's 'victory', by which Sutrisno would be commercially ostracized (castrated) by the Chinese community and the New Order, seems profoundly hollow: 'she must be shrieking with joy, now, wherever Chinese go after honourable deaths' (MD, 154). It is difficult to imagine that a man who has survived the ravages of castration, incarceration, two revolutions and an attempted assassination, and who still retains enormous personal resources, would readily succumb to this putative victory. If nothing else, Sutrisno is alive, whereas Eileen is dead.

The homilitic tone of d'Alpuget's novel does not claim, however, that Indonesia represents a distinctive or separate ideological entity. On the

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13 It is something of a problem in the novel that Sutrisno should be characterized in such 'masculine terms.' This characterization, of course, suits d'Alpuget's symbology, though it lacks some general biological conviction since castration would have deprived Sutrisno of testosterone, the male hormone which affects muscle formation.
contrary, *Monkeys in the Dark*, like her later novel, *Turtle Beach*, demonstrates the transcultural ubiquity of power and corruption, and the exploitative functioning of male sexuality. While Sutrisno's sexual neutrality represents the extreme condition of human commodification, the transcultural sexual immersions of the Australian Embassy males are represented as equally de-humanizing. Like the journalists of the Wayang Club, the Embassy men use their greater power and wealth to 'buy' sexual gratification that is immediate and without personal implication. D'Alpuget's disapproval is unmistakable as she vulgarizes the sexual exploits of Sinclare who is 'shagging everything . . . that moves in Djakarta' (*MD*, 6) and who, like General Djaya, likes to keep his sexual entourage grateful and disciplined by giving them presents. When, after intercourse, he is hurrying a sexual companion out of his house, he mollifies her resentment with a gift:

'You're a bastard,' Jodie said.
'And you've got a lovely cunt.'
'You swine.'

Sinclare sat up and got out of bed. 'I want to give you a present,' he said. He kept a drawer full of emergency presents, and stood for a moment studying the selection, then pulled out a Dior scarf. It was rather too expensive for the relationship, but he was in a hurry and the brilliant green would look pleasing on her. He flicked open the scarf and tied it around her hips. 'Wow,' he said. Jodie smiled uncertainly.

'You want to see me again?'
'Of course. I'm mad about you' (*MD*, 137).

Similarly, David, the Vice-Consul at the Embassy, uses his superior wealth and power to purchase and control the sexuality of his servant to whom he 'slips a length now and then' (*MD*, 71). He is relatively unabashed in sacking her, however, when the girl feeds him a love potion of menstrual blood in the hope of securing matrimony. Yet by far the sharpest of d'Alpuget's satiric quills is directed at Thornton Ashby whose homosexual adventures with Indonesian youths are presented as a form of personal and social degeneracy. Ashby is constantly shown to be inept in his work, in his professional-political manoeuvres against Sinclare, in his marriage and parenthood, and most particularly in his dealings with Alex. Despite these general ineptitudes, Thornton, like Wally O' Sullivan and the numerous characters of Inez Baranay's novel, *The Edge of Bali*, appears strangely liberated by the *anomie*
provided by his new cultural surroundings. He 'comes out of the closet', becoming 'indifferent to observation', because the observation itself emancipates his sexual subjectivity. Transculturalism liberates him because he is 'known' as something different from what he is known at home by his wife. As Sinclarle explains to Alex as Thornton unasks himself, literally and symbolically: 'Of course, he's pretty safe with this crowd. He makes sure Julie meets no-one but the Americans and the Brits, and there are none of them here tonight' (MD, 147). Subjectivity, however, is both liberating and precarious, and Thornton is further unmasked by Julie's unexpected arrival at the masquerade party. Her 'terrible howl' — like Lear's howl, Camus' call to the universal and guiding god or Kurtz's 'The horror' — is the result of fear and knowledge, as much as it is precipitous of a colder form of silence. This silence is represented by their departure from Jakarta (their absence from the novel) which may be understood as an attempt to restore identity, order and meaning to their lives; the silence-absence also represents the dimension of change which the transcultural crisis has brought upon them.

Like Koch and Weir, d'Alpuget configures subjectivity as volatile and contingent, vulnerable to the effects of cultural contiguity: transcultural exchange and the redefinition of identity are inevitable effects of the new global context. In this sense, d'Alpuget would contend, the ethics and ideology of resistance are as much a phenomenon of transculturalism as a response to domination and discipline. That is, while the practices and ideology of the New Order are produced in collaboration with its transcultural partners — represented in this novel by the Australian Embassy — resistance may also be produced through transcultural affiliations. This is precisely the case with the Alex-Maruli partnership which is formed as an opposition to the New Order-Australian Embassy power formation. D'Alpuget's aim is to demonstrate the commonality or 'communion' that binds humans across culture, and that social action and ideology are culturally influenced, though not necessarily culturally determined. Affiliations across culture may be positive, or negative.

Alex, in particular, as the central female in the drama, seeks a finer tone, a more complete sensation in her personal relationships, something beyond the immediate and superficial gratifications of material or sexual hedonism. She is

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14 Anomie is the term coined by Emile Durkheim and adapted by the American sociologist Robert K. Merton. Merton uses the term to describe the sense of normlessness which he regards as prevailing in modern societies. Chapter Five of this study examines this putative normlessness in relation to the Bali experience.
the ideological sensitor questioning the validity of commodifying power, surveillance and conformity represented by the New Order and its affiliate, the Australian Embassy. And while these qualities make her vulnerable to the rationalist manipulations of men like Anthony Sinclaire, she is fully sexual, romantic and motivated by humanist principles. She 'dreams' of sexual and emotional transcendence which would transport love and lovers beyond the eye of political surveillance, the grasp of poverty, and the iniquities and dangers of social control. Alex's dream of bodily utopia, however, is consistently challenged by its dialectic alternative, bodily danger. In Orwellian tones, her imagination produces a paradisical Indonesia, softened by the sumptuousness of her desire and the amplitudes of romanticism:

The islands blurred into one, as the day of escape had melted into a floating vision of coral and gorgeous fish, driving out the tensions of the city. But already the city was drawing her back; there was a kind of magic in that flat, hot sprawl. At times she saw faces so beautiful that her heart lurched. She thought of the bird-like calls of street vendors, the smiles people caressed her with, the coloured mounds of fruit on the pavements, the flowers that strangers in the street gave her, and how they said when she thanked them, 'You speak Indonesian!' and 'Please come to my house' (MD, 12).

In representing the dialectic of these delights as an 'outrage', d'Alpuget's moral-political scheme most often juxtaposes the sexual romantic aspirations of the individual body, against the pervasive threat of the New Order panopticon. Alex's utopianism is destabilised by reference to the viciousness of the New Order revolution. While Billy Kwan is outraged by Indonesia's poverty in the late days of the Sukarno presidency, in Alex's contemplations, poverty seems incidental to the more pervasive threat of violence; unsettling the image of utopian beauty, Alex also sees 'the beggar children, the soldiers with their stupid, brutal faces' (MD, 12). As her thoughts deepen, the image of welcome she had so happily imagined becomes tinged with a more insidious intent, as she wonders how any of the families she visits have escaped the scrutiny and destructiveness of the coup. The New Order is really a new regime of corruption and deceit by which even those decent and welcoming families become tainted by their survival: 'What treachery had saved them?' (MD, 12).
Extraordinarily, it has only taken six weeks, as Alex tells the Vice Consul, for her to 'sort this place out' (MD, 22). She has learned enough to be frightened and is continually expressing concerns over her safety and security in the streets and at her house. Her burgeoning relationship with Maruli serves to deepen her fears, while the intensity of their sex and the passion he excites in her paradoxically strengthen her resolve to confront those fears. The dialectic of hope and fear invades her body and being:

The confidence Alex had felt that morning and that had sustained her during the afternoon at work disappeared as the car cleared her lighted driveway. Nothing was visible in the blacked-out streets, and the night was jittery with noises: the street vendors' calls sounded like the barking of animals; there was an outbreak of dinging on a warning bell as a betjak swerved past them and once, from the direction of Freedom Square, a cough of gunfire. Some people said, the blackouts were deliberate, that the city's lights were turned off by the New Order, as an inconvenience to conspirators (MD, 20).

As she conceives it here, Alex's feelings for Maruli constitute a form of benign conspiracy, though the confidence her affair provides is continually challenged by the fear produced under the eye of the New Order. It is only the intensity of her desires which deflects, though never entirely expunges, these fears. It is not so much that she wants to be a real political activist or 'conspirator', but that Alex would like to transcend politics, surveillance and intrigue altogether through the purities of her passion, the power of her body:

'Before you were frightened of me. Now I will tell you clearly. I am still politically active. I am an enemy to the New Order, and therefore to your government. You don't care? Think.'

'I don't care.' She was barely listening to him but was staring at his lips, which were dark, purplish brown, evertting outwards. Her hand reached out of its own accord and her fingers brushed his mouth. She was startled as she watched herself doing it, but there was a touch of triumph in the wantonness of the actions — an intense female instinct had been satisfied: she had actively chosen him, moved by a subconscious force (MD, 28-9).
In thus 'choosing' Maruli, Alex appears to believe that she is choosing only the man and not the politics or the political action. Her transculturalism, she believes, is non-political because it repudiates the validity of political distinction. She does not care about the New Order nor the Australian government, and is prepared to use her diplomatic immunity to further her sexual adventurism and her pleasure. She uses the diplomatic car, 'which would be safe' (MD, 47) and without cost (MD, 49), to transport the pair to Bandung. This trip to Bandung, in fact, assumes a spiritual value for Alex, both in its confirmation of the romantic intensity of her carnal and emotional pleasure, and also as a physical separation from the surveillance and discipline of the Embassy and Anthony in particular. Her experience in the mineral spring bath of the Dragon Room, as the 'height of sensual luxury', is also the high point of the novel's romanticism. Again the world is softened in a pervading mood of sexual euphoria:

She was still dazed by the time they had dried themselves and had reached the end of the corridor. Mats and cushions were laid out there on the verandah which overlooked a lily pond starred with pink and white blooms. In the distance, sunlight glinted on other ponds and fish farms. There was no breeze and no sound, the nenuphar and palms stood as still as if they were painted. Alex stared out, her mind empty (MD, 82-3).

This postorgasmic afterglow produces a mood of well-being, natural and emotional union; d'Alpuget consciously contrasts this sense of human profundities with the superficialities of the other diplomats' sexual activities. There is no commodification of sex in Alex and Maruli's relationship, and d'Alpuget is certainly prioritizing its value and permanence over other sexual encounters described in the novel. Moreover, Maruli himself is meant to represent a sexual maleness that is not corrupted by avarice, duplicity or the desire for dominance in the relationship. This idealized sexual and emotional relationship couples the feminine as pure and instinctual, entirely without malice. Maruli, as stereotyping Javanese harmoniousness somewhat, will not invoke violence against the red-necked Australian who insults the pair at a hotel bar because 'it is not our way' (MD, 60). He is a sensitive and highly revered poet and intellectual who, in a Christ-like way, walks among the poor without fear and in genuine communion (MD, 16). When they make love it is 'slow and delicious' and without modesty; his sensitivity and sexual prowess
produce the perfect effect of spiritual and sensual connexion — 'I have prayed in your arms' (*MD*, 45), Maruli tells Alex after their love-making.

This idealized male is ideologically sanctioned by d'Alpuget who nevertheless contends his inevitable loss. Indeed, the idealization of the relationship, signified by Alex's pregnancy and the 'nuptial' gift Maruli makes of the heirloom necklace, is never able to eschew its dialectic alternative, the calumnies of power and social division, despite Alex's most optimistic ambitions. In fact, Alex's desire to transcend political involvement and the implications of power, while ideologically sanctioned, is also represented as illusory and naive. While Alex would redefine herself, Maruli feels unable to free himself from his own national and political aspirations. Maruli is actually shocked by Alex's national and cultural neutrality, contemplating regretfully when she explains her acquisition of the Embassy car for their journey to Bandung, 'how little she loved her country' (*MD*, 49). And even during the euphoria of their postorgasm at the Dragon Room, while Alex is experiencing a genuine sense of spiritual, sexual and natural union, Maruli drifts back to the politics that divide them:

He turned only when Alex lent over to touch his hand; his eyes, she saw, were filled with tears.

'Very poor country,' he said.

She felt jealousy as sharp as if he were yearning for another mistress (*MD*, 83).

He will not stay with her in the Dragon Room and returns to Bandung to face the complex of political tensions which he, like Kurmar in *The Year of Living Dangerously*, has helped to create. Alex is shocked when she sees him confront and strike the duplicitous youth, Usman. While he doesn't confide as much to Alex, this is the moment when Maruli himself realizes that his sexual pleasure could never fully release him from the panopticon of the New Order nor from his own political commitments. Indeed, while d'Alpuget appears to endorse the ideological validity of Alex's romanticism and the idealized relationship with Maruli, she offers little hope that they can survive the ravages of the broader political-social context. Maruli never surrenders his Sukarnoist affiliations and seems throughout the entire novel to be capitulative, even fatalistic; when he realizes that Sukarno will not order a countermove, he is resigned — 'then we must wait to be arrested and interrogated' (*MD*, 84).
Clearly, Alex has only a meagre understanding of the intrigue that surrounds her and the contradictions that beset her own desires and actions. While Maruli finds her willingness to pilfer from her own country puzzling and vaguely offensive, there is a more general sense in which Alex's political-ideological repudiations are effects merely of her sensory spontaneity, that her transcultural liberalism is entirely self-centred, driven by nothing more than the desire for carnal and personal gratification. Her own self-delusion or conscious duplicity is evinced in her willingness to use her national immunity to keep herself safe; in fact, she happily deploys her privilege and diplomatic immunity to take the pair to Bandung and the Dragon Room. Moreover, Alex's willingness to protect Maruli and the precious black pamphlets (which denounce Australia as a 'neo-colonial power') falls well short of genuine political commitment. If she were to embrace Maruli's 'cause' and not just his body, Alex knows very well that she would be sacrificing the purity of her sexual transcendence as well as its spiritual purity. Her love, her sensory union, is to be greater than the dialectic of masculine politics; her sexual-spiritual liberation would be greater than the liberation of material Marxism or Sukarnoism. Maruli remains fixed in the political game, but Alex can neither confirm nor share in his commitment. She cannot deny the power of her own 'female instincts' which had chosen Maruli in the first place and which she would pursue to the ends of her gratification.

Moreover, Alex is herself vaguely aware that a commitment to any anti-Australian ideology would be hypocritical since she enjoys the privilege of its security and wealth. It is, after all, the auspices of the Embassy — her cousin, Anthony, in particular — which had brought her to Indonesia and facilitated the relationship with Maruli and the intense pleasures it has brought her. As we have seen, Alex has no answer to Anthony's argument that the cousins' personal wealth has been determined by the security of the Malacca and Sunda Straits, and the existence of a stable and friendly Indonesian government. So Maruli's anti-Westernism — which, as Sukarno's minister, had caused him to ban all foreign films and books (MD, 58) — has a contradictory ring to it, especially in relation to his willingness to take refuge with an apolitical Western woman, living in the West, surviving on wages paid by a Western university, within the security provided by a Western governments. Like Mario Puigh's insurgent in The Kiss of the Spider Woman, Maruli's sexual liaison with an essentially reactionary bourgeois woman, compromises the intensity and integrity of the political claim which, despite her lover's martyrdom, Alex is never able to understand or truly value.
D’Alpuget comes to realise these contradictions more fully in *Turtle Beach* where the central female character, Judith, suffers both political and sexual alienation. Alex, at least, gets to enjoy Maruli, though she is no less unfixed by her transcultural experiences. As Anthony is to point out near the end of *Monkeys in the Dark*, Alex’s relationship with Maruli serves only to distance her further from the broader social fabric which has sustained her. She dips into Indonesia and turns her back on Australia, but her ‘liberation’ also impels her into a cultural ‘no-man’s land’ where cultural and moral meanings are wrenches apart and hope itself must end in despair and disappointment. After Maruli’s arrest, everything looks bleak. Her attempts to see him are blocked by powers she cannot see but which continue to observe her. The romanticism that had possessed her dissolves as the ugliness and intimidation of Jakarta, indeed of all humanity, become ineluctable. The ubiquity of this threat becomes obvious once more as the torments inflicted on a maimed horse by a group of Jakartan children assume symbolic proportions: the tormenting children and the suffering horse represent the commonest and cruelest of human behaviours. When Alex attempts to stop the torment by striking the main perpetrator across the face, the children, like Lilliputians, turn on her:

The children had separated for a moment from surprise, but they quickly collected their wits. Several grabbed at Alex’s shoulder. Others were jumping up behind her back, snatching at the rings in her earlobes. They were squealing with excitement as they grabbed at her clothes. Alex could see nothing but the burning sky and the child’s face brimming with fury. He held his cheek where she had slapped him. In the distance there was the horse’s head, blurred. The child’s eyes were narrowed and his mouth set. His nose twitched, and then he spat at her. The saliva and phlegm landed on her skirt (*MD*, 169).

In what constitutes a genuine political and cultural intervention, Alex is rejected by the indigenous society; her irrefutably hostile actions are met with equal anger. In objecting to the morality of the children’s behaviour — a morality that is culturally as much as humanly determined — Alex is acting in much the same way as any alien critic. Like the Australian journalists who repudiate the Suharto regime’s political repressions and transgression of global standards of human rights, Alex in striking the child is also striking at the ideologically sanctioned brutality of the New Order. The horse becomes Maruli, and the children, his gaolers. And while her actions lack the sophistry
of political doctrine, motivated only by emotional repugnance, her violence is itself an expression of brute power. This exertion of power over a child, symbol of innocence, is met by the defilement of expectoration and bodily assault, further intensifying the fallibility of Alex's romanticism. The beauty and idealization of apolitical love collapses by the indignity of her own and the children's brutishness. As with her sexual or sensory actions, Alex's political actions are fallible because they are impetuous and unthinking.

The ironical intentions of the scene are underlined further in that it is Anthony, the invisible puppeteer, who saves Alex from the children. We are aware throughout the novel, though Alex seems not to be, that Anthony has been manipulating her; the coup de grace of this control is represented, of course, in the incarceration and withdrawal of Maruli, the source of Alex's pleasure. Anthony, as the political consort of the New Order panopticon, has been surveying Maruli through his transcultural alliance with the paid agent, Usman. Anthony commodifies Usman in the same way he commodifies his sexual companions; indeed, it is one of the neat ironies of the novel that Usman is forced to play the part of a sexual consort in order to camouflage the pair's political affiliation. It is only in finally recognising the breadth and depth of these transcultural formations that Maruli understands he is beaten since 'if even foreign spies knew how to search out intelligence about the underground, how much more did their own spies know?' (MD, 86). It is, in fact, Anthony's surveillance of Maruli which finally reinstates Alex to his personal system of control and discipline. When he saves her from the children, he is also saving her from the possibility of genuine independence. Her romanticism already collapsed, her own transcultural affiliations dissolved, there remains only her old allegiance to Anthony whom, unlike Maruli, she has not consciously 'chosen', but who has for his own purposes chosen her. With the collapse of her love, Alex knows that there is nothing else for her. Her actions against the children were unconsidered, spontaneous and dangerous. And when she lashes out against Anthony himself, she knows she has already lost, her subjectivity is released to the vicissitudes and vacuities of cultural space:

'I may be mad, Anthony, but I hope I'm not brutalised by this place the way you seem to be. Two years ago you'd have done something yourself for that poor, wretched creature. It's a disgrace, and you're a disgrace . . . '
He looked at her coolly. 'Local rules, sweetheart. I live by local rules. You, however, are trying to stand in no-man's-land. You've rejected the foreign community, and now you're rejecting the Indonesian.'

'They're both vile.'

'These are vile times.' He brushed her cheek with his fingers. 'You're better off back in the clan. You understand it, and it understands you' (MD, 170).

With the failure of her romanticism and the intelligence report on Maruli's political motivation for his sexual affair with the 'Western woman', Alex comes to believe that she has, in fact, nowhere else to go. The kiss which Anthony places on her lips at the close of the novel reaffirms his control. He has had Maruli's child surreptitiously removed from her body — echoing the removal of his own child from her body — and the intelligence report removes Maruli emotionally from her passion.

Again, d'Alpuget's ideological purpose is to demonstrate the insidiousness of brutish, especially male, power. Anthony's manipulation, we are told, has less to do with his actual sexual requirement, but is more like Sutrisno's dehumanized materialism. While the New Order marches across the socio-scape, crushing its opponents in the name of progress and collective utility, d'Alpuget is concerned to elucidate the microphysical sources of its power: individuals struggling for supremacy and control over other individuals. D'Alpuget's ideology, however, as it is invested in the protagonist, offers little relief from the dangers and disciplinary effects of the panopticon, either collectively through political action, or individually through personal transcendence. In other words, neither Maruli's moral politicism nor Alex's moral essentialism can assuage the brute and augmenting power of the New Order. Ridiculous, manipulative, destructive and morally degenerate as they are, the characters outside the Alex-Maruli relationship succeed where the protagonists fail. D'Alpuget offers us an alternative, but it is one that is destined to failure. In the end, the apoliticism of romantic action cannot deter the impulses to domination; d'Alpuget's final view is essentially misanthropic and despairing, where moral and political decency are crushed by their dialectic opposites. The global progress of international capitalism, while facilitating new forms of human experiences and the promise of pleasure, also brings the greater iniquity of global surveillance and control.

Thus it is Anthony, the pragmatist, the strangely serendipitous though brutalized and brutalizing manipulator, who emerges as the final victor in the
novel. He succeeds professionally and personally, removing Maruli and drawing Alex 'back into the clan'. While Koch-Weir produce a form of moral and spiritual hope at the conclusion of The Year of Living Dangerously, some sense in which the transcultural realignments and redefinitions have provided some greater knowledge, some greater understanding of the world (for all its high cost), d'Alpuget leaves us only with little more than the vision of loss and its inevitability. Anthony's transculturalism is little more than a generalised indifference in which personal knowledge and personal power produce effects in personal gratification. He understands and often repeats that the Indonesians are 'bright guys' (MD, 43), and there is no sense in which he shares some of the racist ignorance of others in the Embassy. He adapts and adjusts to his new cultural orientations, and the new demands of globality. But Anthony is also the supreme utilitarian. Power, like knowledge, is essential to personal pleasure. In this sense, his victory reflects the implacability of material globalism though, like Sutrisno's survival, it is a victory without positive and general human reverberation. As with Eliot's Hollow Men, Anthony is the ensign and personification of modernization. In d'Alpuget's scheme neither sensual love nor spiritual morality can resist the social and economic imperatives of pragmatism. The danger of the Indonesian streets is the external product of a dangerous and calculating human heart:

Sinclaire glanced at his watch. He had only a few hours left now and he wondered, as he had often wondered over the past few weeks, if he still loved Alex. He thought he probably did not. But she was essential to him. It was a kind of love, he supposed. In time, when she trusted him again, his soul might go out to hers, unguarded. (MD, 165).

Anthony's success is the success of a superficial and commodified body. Capital has absorbed and transformed the masculine into something that is only capable of calculation, love by installments and by the progress of reason.

IV. Complex Allegory and the New Order Strategy

While Blanche d'Alpuget has wanted to produce a clear and unambiguous artistic critique of the Indonesian New Order regime, she is careful not to inscribe her criticisms with ethnic, cultural or even national essentialism. The degeneracy and brutality of the New Order social, political and economic pragmatism is explained in terms of personal, especially masculine, exertions of
power, sexual and material excess. This degeneracy is as significant among the males of the Australian Embassy, as it is among the generals of the New Order. Indeed, the only really positive male we see in the novel is a Javanese who is freed of the materialist and sexual vulgarities of Western kasa — a poet, an intellectual, a freedom fighter, a sensitive and attentive lover.

Glenda Adams' vision of the Indonesian New Order is considerably more complex than d'Alpuget's. In transforming the Indonesian context into an Orwellian style mythoscape — the Complex — in order to create her political allegory, Adams aims to broaden the scope of her aesthetic interests and commentary. As with d'Alpuget's novel, the central character in Games of the Strong (1982) is a young female, and again the power, surveillance and disciplinary repressions of a totalitarian regime are measured against the personal desires and romanticism of the protagonist. However, where d'Alpuget appears to endorse Alex's romantic ambitions, though accepting their inevitable collapse beneath the power of centralizing male brutishness, Adams is far more elusive in her account of romanticism generally, and in the project of her protagonist specifically. Moreover, Adams does not share d'Alpuget's ideological interest in the idealization of the sexual-spiritual, the feminine, and the exotic-sensitive male. In fact, Adams' use of the mythic landscape appears to disincline her to simple or idealized separations between East and West; her novel takes a more exploratory attitude to the whole notion of cultural and ethnic difference.

Culture, the process of meaning formation and change, therefore becomes centralized as a theme in Adams' text. While all the major characters of Games of the Strong are citizens of the Complex controlled nation-state, the decontextualized landscape facilitates — even demands — reference to all national, ethnic and cultural formations, beyond the Indonesian setting from which the novel has clearly been drawn. Such interests also focus Adams' aesthetic on the functioning and deployment of language in culture, and in particular the means by which political structures control and discipline their citizens through the manipulation of language. As Edward Said’s (1978, 1985, 1993) work on the complementarity of language and power suggests,

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15 Adams, it may be argued, has successfully avoided offending the New Order government and the Indonesian people more generally through her decontextualization of the setting. However, it is far more likely that Adams' reason for employing this technique has more to do with its aesthetic facility, rather than its diplomatic convenience. The geographical landscape as well as the social and political ambience of the novel's setting have clear parallels in Indonesia (Pollard, 1993: 28). We also know that Adams was a language student in Indonesia during the later years of the Sukarno presidency.
institutions of control interact both deliberately and incidentally with other cultural phenomena to achieve their domination. In Adams' novel the 'Complex', as the social, political and cultural centre (or origin) of the sovereign territory, represents both the conglomerate political institution of power and the complex of linguistic processes which support and sustain it; language is clearly the conduit and substance of what Benedict Anderson (1991) has described as the 'imagined community' of nationhood or national consciousness.

Nevertheless, Adams' novel also explores the means by which language may also function against these centralizing processes. The Complex is challenged because its attempts to be all encompassing and all absorbing cannot fully assuage or neutralize the counterflows to disparity and atomization. Language may allow the movement toward centralizing and uniform meaning, but it also facilitates opposition and resistance. In Games of the Strong the resisters are challenging the political domination of the Complex and, as importantly, its monphonic lingual and cultural voice. However, atomization cannot be restrained, and just as the orthodoxies of liberalist and neo-Marxist resistance have been unsettled by the insights of poststructuralism, the challenge posed by resisters in Adams' novel is never complete and uniform: it is always subject to the same irradiating inclinations of language. That is, the resisters are forced to struggle with their own individual needs, identity and system of meanings as they attempt to overthrow the Complex. Such is the 'complexity' of their social field that they can never even be sure of the identity of any of their comrades. As Nella, the narrator, comes to realize in her contemplations over another resister — 'I do not know anymore whether he is a resister or a spy. I hardly know what I am myself, what I am hiding from whom' (GS, 41). This uncertainty is not merely the outcome of a clandestine and barely observable world, but rather it reflects Adams' own interest in the subtle disorders of language, the dissemination and differance of Derrida's conception. Adams' interest in language and the processes of cultural formation and change lead to the creation of a world that is built on uncertainty and incompleteness, a world of illusions, self-doubts and self-imploding, multiple ironies.

It is these ironies which continue to work through and around the central character-narrator, Nella, a young woman whose own interest in the multiplicity of language and cultural knowledge seems to impede her propensity for genuine political action. Like the author, Nella is a language specialist who at the beginning of the novel is a particularly flaccid resister.
Nella's main interest in resisting seems to have something to do with her identity as a Mountainer, an ethnic minority group which has been overcome and absorbed by the Complex. In particular, Nella is suspicious that the Complex has conducted a clandestine execution of her parents who were themselves 'minor resisters'. Nella seeks the knowledge of her parents death as part of the 'fixing' or confirmation of her own identity. In the regime of the Complex, however, all origin, even the origin of the individual, is truncated as it is absorbed and transferred into the new cultural form. In the world of illusion which manipulates and alters history, Nella is forced to create herself and her parents through the play and games of the imagination:

I am a resister because I think the Complex disposed of my mother and father . . . I like to believe that my mother and father escaped and may be on the Mountain, although the Complex has declared them dead in a car accident, and there are two graves marked with their names in the Complex cemetery. You would think if they were alive they would try to make contact with me, but they could be afraid to come out of hiding. I have nothing much to remember them by — really only a scarf, which I love, that was my mother's. It is blue and green like the sea, or blue and green like the mountains and sky (GS, 3-4).

Nella's political faith is thus thinly forged. She is characterized as sickly and lonely, almost gullible in her relationships with others. She falls in love with Lak, the orthodox Complexer son of her apparently orthodox foster family. In acknowledging her love for Lak, Nella's ideological resistance falters. Like d'Alpuget's Alex, Nella finds the tensions and political intrigues of her opposition almost unbearable as she contemplates her escape to the spiritual retreats of the Mountain: 'I am glad that I am going because I am fed up with everything. I am fed up with resisting, with being lonely, with loving someone I cannot have, though it will hurt to renounce Lak and stay alone on the Mountain' (GS, 7). As she prepares to leave the Complex with the other resisters in her group, Nella is forced, therefore, to account for herself and her life. She confronts the fantasies which have produced her resistance; through the constellation of her cultural source and the spiritual possibilities offered by The Sacred Journey Nella hopes to purify herself and intensify her own political knowledge. Resistance might thus assume a more propitious and complete meaning, a sense of purpose and value:
I told him [Lak] about my father's father, who gave me a copy of The Sacred Journey when I was a child. I have wanted to climb the Mountain and look into its living volcano ever since I read the stories in that book, and I need to belong somewhere (BS, 5).

Nella hopes to find that realm of resistance and purity in the land of the Reckneds on the Mountain. The epiphany, however, does not eventuate, and Nella's Empedoclean dalliance with death and the great core of the volcano proves vacuous: 'They had told me nothing. I had learned nothing. I was exhausted from the experience' (GS, 33). Worse, the Reckneds (Rednecks) of the Mountain, over whom Nella has effused with 'I love them all', and with whom she has strained to identify, prove to be a dilution of the ancestral lineage she has imagined. Nella is forced to recognise that her straining for identity is no more than 'an illusion of belonging that I am trying to create' (GS, 26). Thus, it is an illusion because the language and the customs are particularized and hostile to Nella's penetration, and paradoxically because the greatest ambition of the Mountaineers themselves is to be included in the bounty and knowledge of the Complex — 'The movies, the clothes, the food, the parties' (GS, 30). As Stuart Hall (1991a, 1991b) has himself observed, in the global flow of capital, difference can only be sustained when it resists the absorptive powers of material pleasure. Nella's cousins' patriotism to the Complex and their enthusiasm for anthems like 'Crush the Resisters' demonstrate the ability of utilitarianism to use and deploy difference for its own ends.16 It is this knowledge combined with her own spiritual deflation which eventually lead Nella to declare that she will surrender politics and ambitious spiritualism for the greater sanctity of love: 'I will give up resisting. I will leave my group. I will tell Lak I love him. I will become a real Complexer. Perhaps that is what I learned from the volcano' (BS, 34).

Nella's return to the Complex, however, is presented through another series of ironies The family whom she has regarded as orthodox Complexers holding her within the closest reign of surveillance and moral-political discipline, turn out to be resisters. Their arrest and the flight of the beloved Lak reignites Nella's own ideological commitments. It is this personalizing of the Complex's 'corruptness' (GS, 50) which inspires her duplicitous game playing.

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16 Nella herself suspects that her success and promotion within the Information Ministry is associated more with the fact that she is a woman and a Mountainer than with pure ability. Her very public succession to high ranks in the Ministry would make excellent propaganda for the Complex's putative social program and nationalist agenda.
Extraordinarily, it is the belief that Nella herself is a true Complexer and that she had informed on the family which establishes her credentials with the Complex authorities and leads to her series of promotions within the Information Ministry's hierarchy. Or again, that is how it seems, for as we discover later in the novel the patronage of Wils, the head of the Information bureau, has been critical in his mentor's accession. Adams withholds crucial information about Wils' own resistance activities and about his sexual designs on Nella. It is only after the couple's concupiscence that Nella's suspicion of Wils becomes a source of genuine terror. She has been deflected from Lak, her greater sexual and romantic focus, by a man who is politically powerful within the Complex and whose clandestine resistance may be another duplicity, a pragmatism which brings its own rewards in fleshly pleasure. Nella consoles her 'infidelities' to Lak and the resistance cause with claims that when she made love to Wils 'it was Lak I was touching and talking to' (GS, 91). Yet the sexual unlocking facilitated by the love affair with Wils proves more potent and more immediate than any of the spiritual, intellectual or ideological releases that reunion with Lak or even language might promise: 'For the first time in years I was not thinking what next, what does this really mean' (GS, 91).

Adams is careful to plot this pervasive deficiency in Nella's character. Like Hamlet who also 'thinks on't too much', Nella is depicted as a prevaricator who vacillates between flaccid or even impotent rumination and genuine action. She falls on her feet and is swept along by the actions of others. We are never sure whether she is easily deceived or simply falls victim, like everyone else and despite her putative intelligence, to the ubiquities of lingual and ideological disorder. In either case her final repudiation of Wils is exceptional for its certitude. After enjoying the liberation of the body, freed momentarily of surveillance, Nella returns to thought and doubt, finally dismissing Wils's devotions for a belief in his corruptness. Sexual vengeance becomes Nella's new project:

It dawned on me that this man, this man with the strong hands and gentle voice who had been telling me that he loved me, was threatening me. He could have me arrested. It seems I have to be hit on the head before I believe that there are failing looks... I felt Wils' thigh next to mine. I could tell he was wanting to touch me. I had intoxicated him, won him, unintentionally, but I had enjoyed my effect. He was totally wrapped up in me. And I, despite my saying that I did not worry about
what happened next, was worried about what would happen to Wils back in the Complex. I did not fear for my own safety . . . My affair with Wils had made me stronger and confident and light-hearted and happy, while Wils had been getting more and more lovesick and incapacitated. I could tell he was in agony beside me because he could not grab me right there (GS, 93-4).

Nella's repudiation of Wils and her return to Lak, the central focus of her sexuality and politics, of course, prove to be mistaken. It is Wils who has been the genuine resister and Lak, in secret commission with Serena, Nella's nemesis, who has informed on the family. Moreover, it is Wils, and the barely acknowledged liberation facilitated by his body, who also holds the truth about Nella's parents. As Nella's mother's lover — the source of the argument and ensuing accident which kills Nella's parents — Wils carries the image of the mother's life and beauty with him. Unlike the ethnic and cultural community which Nella 'imagines' in the Mountain village — the community which has no hesitation in betraying her to the Complex authorities — Wils provides the real and the carnal lineage Nella so desperately seeks. It is Wils, in fact, who proves to be her true lover, her genealogy and the source of her 'true' origin-identity.

There is no doubt that Adams wishes to present a dire and threatening image of the totalitarian state. The attempt by the Complex to absorb and transform all ethnic, lingual and individual difference is designed as a universal political message. However, Adams is also careful to insist that the Complex is indeed a complex of individuals, and that power always functions at the level of the subject. Resistance is configured as a personal enterprise, but individuals themselves are subject to their own internal doubts and fallibilities. Identity can be manipulated. Culture can be formed and re-formed according to the needs of individuals. In *Games of the Strong* the state is configured as a utilitarian conglomerate promising, and to a degree providing material pleasures over the cost of individual freedom. Indeed, the Complex — like the Indonesian New Order in d'Alpuget's *Monkeys in the Dark* — accords with the all embracing form of what Stuart Hall (1991a) has called the global Post-Modern. However, unlike Hall, Adams does not offer us some excessively idealized form of 'difference' as the essential political constituent of resistance. Rather, resistance is an uneven and irregular personalized act, formed within the boundaries of the dominant, at times indistinguishable, even complicit, with the hegemonies of the dominant order. The real weakness of the
Complex comes from the fabric of its own corruptness and its own determination to subdue and absorb all human conceits and imaginings. Nella’s resistance — like that of Wils and the poet Barm, in fact all the characters who genuinely resist — is bumbling and uncertain. Extraordinarily, there is no sense of unity and collective power in the resistance because it all happens at the level of individual inspiration. Even when it sits before her, Nella has considerable trouble distinguishing real resistance from the illusory. Spiritualism and ethnic collaboration remain apocryphal. Sexual union liberates her and gives her confidence and pleasure. But in all cases, the resistance is sporadic and ‘microphysical’, destabilized by its own improbability and by the ironies through which Adams herself imagines it. It is this very instability, the uncertainty of the resistance and resisters which prove the greatest weapon against the Complex, since it is the necessary foundational material of all culture, all politics and power. By its own nature, culture denies monophonia because it is always a contingency of the individual and individuation.

At the centre of this instability is the self-reflexivity, and the mediatory and operational uncertainties of language itself. Nella is a language expert, a linguist, an information worker. She uses her position to challenge the absorptive and controlling function of the Information Ministry, most particularly the means by which the Complex is attempting to impose unity on the territories by the overlay of a uniform and reductive language. To this end Nella attempts to destabilize the language of the Complex — a series of ever-shrinking and anagramatic structures — by doing her own private writing and withholding it from public knowledge and scrutiny. She translates literally the report on GASTRO, and celebrates the resistance poetry and fiction of Barm. Yet, as Barm assures her, security and utility tend to repress active writing, while injustice tends to inspire its own resistance. The language of the complex and the conformity it aims to impose cannot succeed because they run counter to the inevitability of imagination and expression of individualism, itself erratic and unpredictable. As Barm tells Nella: ‘If they ever gaol me again, they should not let me have pencil and paper. In gaol you can’t look out so you look in. And they should never release me. It is too invigorating’ (GS, 65). But more than this, Barm tells us, collectivity, even the decent collectivity of a free and liberal bourgeoisie, cannot satisfactorily ‘salve’ writers’ imaginations since they must ultimately ‘use their strength to change the path of their own thinking’ (GS, 68). In other words, change itself is unavoidable and the act of expression is and must be as indeterminate as language itself. It is a collision of
opposites, a necessary instability. This is the lesson which Nella finally understands when she assassinates her lover Lak and remains alone and determined to endure at the close of the novel.

As if to underline this message, Adams uses her own language and irony to create distrust in the reader. To this end the names of people have been applied as ensigns to their character or ironic deflection: Wils (will to power), Serena (not serene), Lak (sexual absence, lack of moral and political decency), Nella (Nulla-nothing) and so on. Equally, anagrams like GASTRO (Games of the Strong-bowel disorder) underline this language play as they also remove the reader from the interiority of the aesthetic. Even the title of the novel which refers to the cultural and sporting activities sponsored by the Complex for national unity and international self-promotion is complicated by multiple references: it is clearly an ironic deflation of the Complex and might well posit Nella as the truly 'strong', but it also recalls Wittgenstein and the possibility that all human action is ultimately produced through 'language games'. The author's ironic and linguistic play, the constant destabilization of characters and ideology, and the promotion of the illusory as the central symbol in the novel, would all suggest that Adams herself is the strongest of all the players in her drama.

Little doubt, Adams wishes to illustrate the infamy of despotic regimes in general and the New Order Indonesian government in particular. However, her general understanding of lingual and social processes assure her that such political and ideological failings are not culture specific. It is the actual set of historical circumstances that have led to the formation of the totalitarian and repressive regime in Indonesia, and that all human groups may fall victim to excesses of this kind. As an Australian writing about the political circumstances of a neighbouring country, Adams has certainly saved herself the bother of contextual verisimilitude, and more acutely the accusation of Australo-Western cultural and political hubris. 'See everything in its own terms' (GS, 12), she offers in both Games of the Strong and 'Letters from Jogja' (see Chapter One), though this tolerant and admirable sentiment is never adequately vindicated in the drama and thematic interests of her fiction. Individualism is a significant element in language and culture, but eventually the counterflows toward a shareable and collective system of meanings will emerge. Adams cannot contend an atomistic existence beyond all communicative possibility, though the desperate truth of Games of the Strong is that union and communion are besieged by contradiction and uncertainty. With the faithful Wils and the treacherous Lak both dead at the end of the
novel — by Nella's hand — it is clear that hope itself is parenthesized and indeterminacy becomes ascendant in action and aesthetics.

Allegorical settings are also deployed in Eric Willmot's *Below the Line* (1991) and Tony Maniaty's *The Children must Dance* (1984). Wilmott's tale, set in the early twenty-first century, tells of an invasion by an expansionist Indonesia into the northern lands of Australia. The new province called South Irian becomes the site for national insurgency as the Australians attempt to win back their forfeited territory North of the Line. This adversarial image of warfare, nationalism and intrigue, echoing other political adventurer novels like Roland Perry's *Blood is a Stranger* (1988),\[17\] uses its allegory to articulate considerable uncertainties about the international relationship and Australia's own ambivalences about imperialism and colonialism. Interestingly, Wilmott's reversal of the De-Orientalist conception of a neo-colonialist and hegemonic Australia, expresses precisely those broader self-doubts and postcolonial propensities identified by semiotologists like Graeme Turner, Robert Hodge and John Fiske; uncertainty, as we have noted, occupies a significant space in the Australian national imaginary. In this sense, Wilmott's novel is not merely an expression of the historical 'yellow peril' security paranoia (Pollard, 1992), but expresses that more general and widely held ambivalence about colonial expansionism, and the nation's own independence and identity.

Indonesian expansionism and issues of identity and political nationalism are also significant for Tony Maniaty's *The Children must Dance*. Here, as in *Games of the Strong*, the Indonesian setting is re-configured, though the landscape, culture and political setting of East Timor are unmistakable. While again avoiding direct offence to the diplomatic sensibilities of Indonesia, Maniaty's re-configuration appears to have little to do with the Indonesian annexation of the former Portuguese colony. Rather, the novel is more concerned with the internal scramblings and divisions of the island state — the Fragas (Fretlin) controlled Republic of Inhumas — using its allegory to express broader issues of power, and personal and national identity. The novel traces the explorations and contemplations of the protagonist, Nick Ranse, over his uncle-guardian, Sam Goddard, who has recently been shot dead on Inhumas. This exploration, however, becomes a search for self-understanding.

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17 Perry's novel is a popular thriller. A father's search for his son's killers leads to the uncovering of a clandestine international network dealing in nuclear armaments. The novel is set in Sydney, Indonesia and Kampuchea (Cambodia).
and self-definition; Nick seeks an essentialism which will override personal uncertainty, as it defines the cultural and socio-political processes which motivate human action.

To this extent, the internal and external worlds investigated and occupied by Ranse are equally shady and imprecise. Ranse's own subjectivity is unstable — he is an orphan, migrant, expatriate Australian living in Bangkok without any sense of purpose or home. He wonders about the validity of the death of his uncle who has, in a sense, always been greater and more substantial than life itself:

_is he really dead? Or am I asking only to prove I'm alive and — if not quite the person I was yesterday, or the day before in Bangkok — still able to produce a human child, the one adequate reason for going on. It could happen yet._ As such there were no generations in 1962, and they were both — Ranse the teenage orphan, and Goddard pacing the worn carpet divorced and childless — a bit lost. They were more tribesmen then, looking for a tribe to belong to (CMD, 36).

Goddard ('hard god'), however, even as fellow tribesman, occupies a more lofty and unassailable position in the caste than the disciple. The genealogy is dubious, as indeed is their relationship, and Nick finds himself, as Dylan Thomas expresses it in 'Do not go gently', cursed and blessed by the uncle's 'fierce tears'. As such, the two become contestants in the same spiritual, as well as genealogical, space. Goddard is the emissary of light and humanity, reason, and reasoned thoughtfulness; Ranse (rancid?) is shrouded in an uncertain light, a self-assigned darkness which penetrates to the depths of his thinking. As he considers his uncle's death, Ranse recalls Goddard's own summation of their different tribal aspects:

_and Nicholas there's always the future to consider: even at your age. I mean, don't go groping down the dark alley-ways of life. I know you were always one for darkness. I sought the light but you got the darkness in there early, and it won't let go (CMD, 129)._ 

In absorbing the darkness, however, Nick Ranse also hopes to transcend it; as if by a contrary Romantic impulse, Nick hopes for a finer and more exquisite experience of innocence and purity of vision. As he grapples with his sense of self and his identity in the flux and chaos of a society suffering the same
collective stresses as himself, Ranse's thoughts and observations turn constantly toward children — not only as the procreative power of life and hope but as the symbols of a purity under siege. Thus, the 'children must dance'. As the crisis on Inhumas erupts into warfare and Ranse himself is caught up in the tragedy, the symbolic and actual presence of children becomes the stabilizing intensity for his own disturbed mind:

... the children are everywhere tonight. Ranse can't recall seeing children like this anywhere. Are these the children of chiefs, the new orphans of the king? Well will they end up, now that their school is burning down? They are extraordinarily beautiful, swaying under the lanterns that catch the insects and flutter their limbs, just like the wings of trapped moths. The children must dance, must dance (CMD, 171-2).

Ranse too drifts into a psychological dance as he attempts to clarify and ground himself in some more permanent and lasting image than the death that has overtaken his uncle and which through the eruption of warfare, threatens them all.

In focusing on the experiences of one particularly destabilized individual in his account of the East Timor postcolonial crisis, Tony Maniaty is trying to demonstrate the precariousness of all human enterprise, most particularly through the interchange and exertion of power. To this extent, The Children must Dance generally avoids simple polemicism in its report on the events preceding the Indonesian annexation of East Timor. For the most part, in fact, Maniaty appears to endorse the sort of cynical humanism represented by Aggett, the former Vietnam correspondent, who has come to Inhumas 'for safety' (CMD, 16), who claims of the island and its social-political tensions 'nothing is what it seems' (CMD, 50). Maniaty contrasts this residual humanist cynicism of Aggett with the unrestrained apoliticism of the American journalists whose craving for action on Inhumas ('There's nothing as dead as last month's revolution' CMD, 70), might well incite a conflict, as it had done in Vietnam. (CMD, 70). It is this Catch-22 scenario which leads Nick to contemplate: 'What could be done with people like that ... Theirs was no reality' (CMD, 64).

Like the 'unreality' of Cookie's Jakarta or the lingual evasiveness of Nella's Complex, Ranse's querying of the American journalists' reality centralizes once again this issue of truth as a function of discursive mediation. Everyone's truth-value and reality are merely versions of one another; moral and political
integrity are continually destabilized as Maniaty casts doubt over all power formations and all determinations of right and wrong behaviours. Everything is negotiable. We read, for example, in a familiar postcolonial swep't, that the former colonial masters, the Portuguese, were themselves reprehensible as administrators: 'The rulers of colonial Viseu had created a shore at which they could relax, dream and fornicate in peace. Reminded of home too, but able to do things that home would never allow: here the levers of church, commerce and rule were diverted to other places' (CMD, 112). Their power is dismantled by nationalist enterprises, but as Inhumas dissolves into chaos, the colonial imagination remains potent as people like Mrs Mendonça recall the stability, security and spirit of the old political form: 'There are always revolutions going on. It was better when the Portuguese were in charge . . . , there was a spirit here' (CMD, 198).

These 'revolutions' are the continuing struggles for ascendancy and control, not just between the Fragas and the Livres, but within the power formations themselves. The lack of reality or substance uncovered by Ranse and to which Aggett continually refers is at least in part the outcome of continually shifting allegiances and uncertain ideologies in the culture and politics of Inhumas. President Calvao, a former priest turned nationalist revolutionary, concedes as much when he explains to Ranse that, despite his public articulations: 'I am no more a Marxist . . . than the Bishop is. And he is many stupid things, but never that' (CMD, 78). Nevertheless, Calvao has willingly used his 'faith', the Church and his Marxist oratory to wrest power from the colonialists and the opposing national factions. Similarly, the National Day, which da Cuhna, the Information Minister, assures Nick represents the solidarity and common purpose of the people, proves little more than a parody of genuine sovereignty and unity. The soldiers in Sergeant e Sousa's command are a group of orphaned boys whose plurality comes to symbolize not the synthesis of cultural parts, but the implausibility of political-military cohesion itself:

. . . there was the slouch hat of Sergeant Oscar e Sousa, gathering his motley tribe of warriors before the President's stand. With aquiline noses and frizzy hair and shiny flesh, the orphans were an untraceable blend (CMD, 65).
This is e Sousa's crack corps, orphaned by factional tribal-like fighting, and assembled out of the wilderness to defend an ideology that has neither meaning nor relevance to them.

In fact, the very source of the warfare is dubious. E Sousa, who has been drawn out of retirement to train these hybrid orphans, is ultimately incarcerated by the Fragas War Minister because the Sergeant and his troops have failed to defend adequately the Minister's former school and because, as e Sousa himself puts it, he is neither a committed Fragas nor a committed Livre. It is this image of the betrayed e Sousa which leads Nick to query the validity of the war in the first place and the connection between politics and the personal: 'It had started as a private war and quickly turned into a public battle; but in the sergeant Ranse detected the beginning again of a very private fight' (CMD, 194). The squabbling warfare thus is a 'time for settling old scores' (CMD, 166). The ideological landscape shifts about with the passages of power and, 'as Teppy Zervos tells Ranse, no-one knows how many sides there are since 'Every two days they change sides' (CMD, 103), leaving none of the 'elemental purity, only confusion and disorder' (CMD, 130). Thus, Fragas itself is a doubtful political formation because its ideology and purpose are founded on personal interests and are thus subject to the whimsies and irrationalities of personal desire and personal emotions. As Ranse and Aggett move among the villagers who have been conscripted into a war they don't necessarily want, Ranse is left wondering about the whole nature of the conflict:

... they weren't happier at all. The policies of Fragas were aimed at these people, but they were moving in quite different and random directions, and he wondered how it would all come together politically' (CMD, 137).

Ranse himself would like to bring it all together in some meaningful way, but in much the same way as his own personal shiftings and psychological disorder, the politics of Inhumas evades consolidation: 'He wanted to see things the way they were; but things kept changing. And the people of Inhumas tumbled their own happy way to ruin' (CMD, 209).

Ranse's ultimate confirmation of the 'ideal' of Fragas politics, — expressed through his affiliation with Aggett and retreat to the mountains — remains unsatisfactory as it fails to advance the amoebic condition of Ranse's mind and emotions. If the conclusion of the novel is a resolution at all, it is thin.
Ranse chooses Fragas and the humanistic cynicism of Aggett over, we are led to assume, the more complete nihilism of death. Similarly, the novel concludes with a turgid and imprecise vision of political action generally, and revolutionary nationalism in particular. Maniaty's point appears to be that all human enterprise, including the specifics of interpersonal relationships and their greater formation in culture and ideology, are superficially grounded. Humans wash about in an uncertain cultural space, seizing almost at random upon values and political ideals; ego and self-aggrandisement appear to be the only significant motivations. The 'confusion and disorder' of revolution and counter-revolution appear certain to continue, though we have been made aware by the calendar and contextual references that the Indonesian invasion is imminent.

While Maniaty's version of Inhumas-East Timor is consistent with a number of historical accounts, including Gough Whitlam's (see Chapter One), it is at variance, to some extent, with many of the popular images of a united, independent island-nation struggling under the banner of Fretlin (Fragas-freedom) against the oppressive military regime of expansionist Indonesia. It is this latter image that has proliferated in Australian media reports since the annexation. In our discussion of the trial of Xanana Gusmao, the former Fretlin leader, we have commented on the continued projection by the Australian media of a tyrannical Indonesia in East Timor. Maniaty, however, has carefully plotted out the details of the Indonesian annexation, though he makes clear reference to the fact that these internal struggles are a private matter, senseless and without meaning, but conducted by a distinctly non-Asian, polyglot people. Maniaty also makes clear that the 'global eye' of international journalism is itself a mild perversity, an interference which may serve the Western appetite for action and bloodletting, but which may also be used by the indigenous power-players to advance their own particular political causes.

The other very significant (and postmodernist inspired) point that Maniaty is making in this novel is that language is the fundamental element in all truth production. In this sense the novel advances the contemplations and bewilderments of the journalists in The Year of Living Dangerously, and the Embassy staff in Monkeys in the Dark. Internationalism endangers the taken-for-grantedness of Western cultural and ideological foundations, and while all of these characters — most especially Cookie, Billy, Alex and Ranse — would hope to restore something of themselves, their certitudes and identities through the operation and primacy of language, the very nature of the medium resists their aspirations. However, while Cookie remains rooted in a
form of durable and phlegmatic moral optimism, and while Weir offers us a form of transcultural sexual heroism and d'Alpuget a heroine-ism, Maniaty gives us little more than a form of amoebic political lethargy which can find no substantial way through its lingual and cultural containments.

The challenge posed by transculturalism to ethics and ideology is a significant theme in many of the texts examined in this study. The following chapter looks more closely at this theme in relation to the impact of commerce and the international trade of the body.
4 The Global Barter: Transactions in the Body

The several Benthamite codes of law, in fact, recognise that some men seek their pleasures at the expense of others and that this sort of pleasure must be curbed. Bentham's chief influence on the laws of nations was to shift the capitalists from the moral theme of justice to the expedient themes of personal welfare and public utility.

—Ronald Conway, The Great Australian Stupor

1. Corruption from the Moon and Ambassadors of Pleasure

In the previous chapter the phenomenon we have called the 'global eye' or international media surveillance was seen to have been a functioning partner of the new world economy. However, the international surveillance — most especially perpetrated by the First World news agencies — could actually function to criticize and oppose the utilitarian processes and politics of individual nations and cultures. Koch-Weir's The Year of Living Dangerously, Blanche d'Alpuget's Turtle Beach and John Duigan's Far East all demonstrate the processes by which First World journalists survey alien South East Asian cultures to produce critical descriptions for Australian audiences. Yet, as we have also noted in the first section of this study, these texts not only present character-journalists producing texts about South East Asia, they are themselves configurations of the region, producing their own ideological effects in relation to — though of course not necessarily in concert with — the configurations they contain. To this extent, Koch, Weir, d'Alpuget and Duigan are engaged in the process of surveillance just as much as the characters they create. Beyond the fiction, the fictional texts produce criticisms of the alien culture and their governments in much the same way, though in more complex proportions, as the 'real life' Australian journalists who have so notoriously distressed the governments and citizens of neighbouring nations. The tensions that exist between South East Asian governments and Australian film-makers, writers and especially journalists, are largely grounded in these surveys which consciously or unconsciously attempt to discipline or control the social-political activities of the alien governments. As we have discussed in Chapter Two, alien governments insist on their rights of self-determination as much as Australian fictionalists and
news commentators insist on their right to criticize and discipline political repression wherever it occurs.

As well as global journalism, other systems of First World surveillance of Third World neighbours have been explored by Australian fictionalists. Robert Drewe's *A Cry from the Jungle Bar*, for example, describes the mechanism of First World aid programs which also constitute sanctioned methods of global intervention and control over the policies and determinations of poorer countries. Diplomatic processes, according to d'Alpuget's *Monkeys in the Dark and Turtle Beach*, are barely camouflaged agencies of surveillance and discipline attempting to install policies consonant with the wishes and well-being of the First World. In the case of *Monkeys in the Dark*, in particular, the Australian Embassy is represented as participating directly in the surveillance and disciplinary activities of the New Order regime, ingratiating its own national self-interest as much as promoting the general Indonesian program of modernization and integration into the global economy, the world of the New Utilitarianism. In this case, there is a distance created between the moral and ideological validity of the Australian government as complicit with the Suharto New Order political repressions, and the broader sphere of human decency and civil-individual rights. In the same way as Humphrey McQueen (1993) has attempted to 'discipline' the Australian government's management of its affairs in Indonesia, especially over the East Timor Gap Treaty (see Chapter Two), d'Alpuget wishes to elucidate the ideological depravities of First World diplomacy as it consorts with Third World political and civil repression.

Conventional Marxist and postcolonial theories of hegemony would represent the absorption of the Third World into the centralizing formations of the First World economy as dubious in itself. However, the theories of international media and cultural imperialism that have been offered by Marcuse, Schiller, Adorno and others have concerned themselves more with what is going into the Third World rather than what is coming out. Such theories would see the integration of the Third World into the political economy of the First World as a systematized process of domination and exploitation, producing the general effect of the amelioration of social and cultural difference. The less severe forms of liberalism (Utilitarianism), on the other hand, would consider the progress of Indonesia and other ASEAN states into the world economy as both ideologically beneficial to the citizens of the region, as well as beneficial to the security and economic interests of Australia. In this sense, the liberalization of the economies of South East Asia should be
accompanied by greater political and civil freedoms for the citizens; according to this version of ideological liberalism, the role of the First World media and civil rights organizations is to assist the indigenous peoples of the region achieve these greater freedoms. And indeed, if we were to recall once again the proclamation by John Stuart Mill that the principles of utility demand the correlative rise of liberalism with free trade capitalism, then in the global context the surveillance and discipline of repressive governments appear little more than a imperatives of economic integration and increasing prosperity in the ASEAN region.\(^1\)

Mill's principles, however, do not allow for the polemic of postmodernism which identifies the dangers of excessive integration by which collective and individual difference could be subsumed by powerful ideological architectures. This is precisely Simon During's (1992) point when he alerts his readers to the paradox of Islamic resistance to American style political and cultural institutions; democracy and liberal utilitarianism in fact may prove anti-democratic as it incites the extremism and self-protecting instincts of specificity. This is precisely why postcolonial theorists writing from the perspective of the Third World have often expressed hostility toward those well-meaning liberals of the First World who attempt to impose their own 'alien' ideological systems over the struggles and self-determinations of the indigenous culture and its people. Edward Said (1978, 1886b, 1993), as we have noted in Chapter One, accuses the liberalisms of nineteenth century Europe of appropriating the Middle East for their own political-economic and cultural purposes. According to Said, European liberals, like Goethe or T. E. Lawrence, created either a source of romantic naturalism out of the Orient, or alternatively presumed to liberate it from ignorance and repression — as if the Muslim world had no concept and no understanding of freedom. Even feminism, which has been among the most powerful of recent political formations in the West, has been savaged by Third World women for presuming to liberate them from the oppressions of indigenous cultural systems of patriarchy. Chilla Bulbeck, for example, in defending the right of First World women to participate in the debate about masculine hegemony in alien cultures, has nevertheless been forced to acknowledge the validity of objections to this intervention:

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\(^1\) Our discussion in Chapter Two pointed to Mill's argument that pleasure, the ultimate reward of utility, could not be achieved without true individual freedom. Such freedom would be the accomplishment of education and political democracy.
At the Copenhagen conference held during the U.N. Decade for Women, for example, Western women attacked the Muslim practice of infibulation. But women of the ex-colonized nations claim that some of these practices serve useful purposes for women. An example is polygamy, which allows one wife to work while the other takes care of the children, and in some cases can lead to intense erotic attachments between co-wives ((Bulbeck, 1992: 328).

Thus, governments and their citizens in the ASEAN states have criticised Australian journalists, writers and film-makers for their 'lack of sensitivity' in representing their nations, people and cultures. It may seem somewhat ironic that a good deal of this critical vehemence has been directed toward one particular television series, ABC's Embassy, in which the ideologies of liberalism and international harmony are so aesthetically conspicuous. The two series of Embassy depict the transcultural experiences of an Australian embassy staff in a mythical Third World, tropical nation called Ragaan. While the filming has been conducted in Fiji, Melbourne and Queensland, the narrative and imagery of the individual episodes of Embassy make continual references to the agrarian and indigent condition of the Third World economy, the political configurations of the military government, and to the social differences of Islam. Parallels with Malaysia and Indonesia are quite unmistakable, and expressions of offence have been delivered from both nations over the series.

The program-makers have used the propinquity of the Australian and Ragaani cultures to facilitate aesthetic tensions within the embassy and between the two political-social dominions. What is most significant about the second series, however, is the deployment of a female ambassador as a means of intensifying the sense of transcultural difference, which itself drives or colours much of the program's drama. The liberation and accession of women in Australia to posts of power and authority is designed to highlight the social depravities of gender domination and traditional masculine systems of power. Moreover, the program takes a decidedly positivistic view of social change and modernization. Sympathy is consistently directed toward the familiar characters of the embassy whose own personal struggles and dramas become inscribed on the imaginations and affections of the audience. More particularly, the second series promotes a kind of transcultural optimism, as the head of the Ragaani government, General Mahmoud, softens to the possibilities of social and political reform. The differences that have divided
the Ragaani political community and the Australian Embassy staff are symbolically ameliorated through subtle but distinct sexual allusions; Mahmoud's increasing democratic affiliation with the Australians' perspective is tied to the suggestion of romantic affiliation with the Ambassador. Unlike d'Alpuget's Embassy, the TV Embassy is humane and compassionate, promulgating unassailable virtues of social democracy, modernization, and global integration and utility.

The ABC Embassy, while still exploring a number of the surveillance activities of international diplomacy, tends to pursue the same sorts of ideological and disciplinary effects as other areas of the Australian news media. While news journalists often try to discipline foreign governments by their criticisms, Embassy has idealized the impact of its own liberalist ideology, configuring Ragaan as a nation 'learning its lesson' of civil and political development as it moves toward greater freedom and democracy. Taking this ideological perspective for granted, Embassy explicates the fallibilities of non-democratic processes, agrarianism, and the repression and exclusion of women from public life. The introductory images of the show emphasize this repression by juxtaposing images of veiled Muslim women with the passport of the Australian female Ambassador. The use of resonant and dramatic minor key chords in the introductory score strengthens the mysteriousness of the alien culture and its destabilizing effects on human harmony.2 Even in the final two episodes of the second series (1992) which are intended to demonstrate a dramatic and compelling move toward social democracy and the liberation of women, emancipation is threatened by indentured Ragaani corruption and a cultural heritage of illiberality. In offering 'extremely generous' terms for the establishment of an oil refinery in Ragaan and in pledging 'long term' support of the Australian government (presumably in security or aid commitments), the Ambassador mentions Australia's concomitant interest in the establishment of a liberal democracy in Ragaan. To

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2 The use of major and minor keys in television music has been discussed by Theo van Leeuwen in his article 'Changed times, changed tunes: music and the ideology of the news'(1989). Van Leeuwen argues that the change in the introductory score of the ABC television news from the Majestic Fanfare, which was written in a major key, to a new signature tune, Best Endeavours, which is written in a minor key, represents a distinct shift in social and ideological national formations. The minor key tends to be less formal and unitary, as it is more emotional and moodish. The minor key employed in the Embassy signature is meant to represent the same sorts of ideological and social ascriptions for Ragaan. This mysteriousness is also supported by the use of unfamiliar instrumentations.
this, Mahmoud confirms his wish to become a 'rightful leader' of the people and not just a dictator. Nevertheless —

Democracy is a new word in Ragaan. My people must first learn to say it before they can expect to reap its rewards.

The tensions that follow in the episode ('Bloodletting') are centred around the constraining power of governmental corruption and the cultural traditions of privilege. Despite these hindrances, however, the episode is resolved in favour of the modernization and democratic principles represented by Australia.

In the final episode in the series reactionary forces rally against General Mahmoud who has now become a true democrat. The undercurrent romance between Mahmoud and the Ambassador becomes more symbolically extant as the two collaborate to install a modern capitalist democracy. The unhappiness Mahmoud's assassination causes the Ambassador, like the threat it causes to democracy, is overturned by the accession of a new (and true) democrat into the highest post of government. The final scene of the series confirms the Ambassador's success; her victory is captured in the self-satisfied expression which itself derives from the pleasure of seeing a woman at the head of the Ragaani state and hearing her first proclamation — the political emancipation of women.

The coupling of economic progress with democratic liberalism which Embassy explores thematically and promotes as a textual ideology becomes more obviously problematic when placed in the broader context of postmodernity. On the one hand, the series seems to be promoting the integration of the Third World into the global economy, bringing significant rewards in individual pleasure and political liberation, though on the other hand it is also accepting the necessities of social loss and the divestiture of tradition and cultural difference. Moreover, the series continually represents these differences as consolidated privilege and culturally institutionalized repression. The program would thus incorporate the sorts of exhortation to economic integration expressed by the Australian government, the Australia-Indonesia Institute and the editorial policy of The Australian newspaper, but it also insists that modernization must be accompanied by liberalization. In other words, Embassy pursues the same sorts of surveillance and disciplinary objectives as those outlined by human rights organizations like Asia-Watch, and those journalists cited in Damien Kingsbury's (1992) article on tensions between the Australian media and the Indonesian government (see Chapter
Two). It would imagine a South East Asian State that is liberated from its traditions of patriarchy, civil and political repression, and militarism.

These contradictory ideological effects are further complicated by the program's presentation of national typologies. It is not that Ragaan is necessarily corrupt and culturally degenerate, but that a good deal of the nepotism and political deviousness represented in the program is dramatically linked to cultural traditions. While the show has been accused of creating, or re-creating, racial and cultural stereotypes, a more considered reading recognises that the show is really depicting a culture experiencing the dialectics of historical change. Yet even in recognizing this image of historical teleology, in which traditions of privilege and illiberality are being challenged by the liberalizing powers of modernization, a number of commentators, the Malaysian government among them, have identified a general insensitivity to cultural difference in the program, and a more insidious promulgation of the Orientalist stereotype. In particular, commentators like Alison Bronowski (1992) and Peter Mares (1993), in keeping with their broader estimations of Australian fictions set in Asia, see the program as generalizing the Asiatic as much as it produces a form of self-satisfied patriarchy, even jingoism, in the Australian characters. What seems to most offend these commentators is the ideological purity of the Australian Embassy staff who, unlike d'Alpuget's diplomats in Indonesia and Malaysia who are complicit with the corruption and repressions of their host governments, are depicted as agents of social, cultural and political improvement. As Peter Mares puts it:

This smacks of a colonial mentality, one which sees Asia as the 'orient', a region of scenic rice fields, mountain ranges and peasants on the one hand; bustling, dirty, confusing, congested cities on the other where the clothing, the speech, and habitations of the Asians are interchangeable as long as the essential atmosphere of Asia can be presented. Promoting this image of a mythical place called Asia was in my view the main sin of the well-intentioned ABC-TV drama series *Embassy* (Mares, 1993: 35).

Such readings, however, fail to account fully for the contradictions noted in our earlier discussions. In particular, the program's attempt to link democratic liberalism with social improvement and subjective liberation — especially the liberation of women — is designed to eschew accusations of patriarchy. The program makers of the second series have consciously attempted to destabilize accusations of patriarchy and Orientalist stereotyping by installing
a woman as the head of the Embassy and concluding the series with the accession of a female leader in Ragaan itself. Thus, subjectivity is not an absolute and simply defined condition; it is opened by the program's own ideological explorations. Moreover, De-Orientalist repudiation of the program tends to assume a monophonic and separationist, even jingoistic, perspective which, in examining the actual actions and interactions of the program, we would have to regard as overstated. Certainly there is a level of nationalism and Australo-centricism expressed in the program, but all the Embassy personnel are presented as fallible in some way, even the Ambassador. Further, the Embassy staff, as the representation of Australia and ideological correctness, cannot exist as a separate collectivity but must interact and adjust to their cultural environment. To this extent, their Australianness is continually challenged and ultimately compromised by the range of alliances and intimacies they experience with Ragaani nationals — most significantly symbolized through the romantic interest of Katherine and Mahmoud.

At various times, the program depicts the Australians as supporting social change in Ragaan — the liberation of women, free speech, democratic elections, the organization of labour and improvements in living standards — yet the program itself often uses the issue of transcultural 'involvement' to precipitate tension and action. Like Weir's Guy Hamilton, the Embassy staff often lament that they are only in Ragaan to 'do a job' and that they 'can't get involved' in internal affairs. However, also like Hamilton, they find that they must get involved if they are to exist, if they are to communicate and interact with the cultural environment; at the simplest level, transcultural fiction exists for and because of that involvement. Even when the issue is not specifically vocalised, there remains a pervasive sense that the Australians exist in a state of perpetual siege, never being absolutely sure of the demarcations of their Australianness. The alliances between the Australians and particular Ragaani nationals serves only to compound these uncertainties, and while the show definitely prefers to resolve these tensions in favour of the 'ideological Australia', there are sufficient tensions within the Embassy community itself to demonstrate the ephemerality and partial nature of those resolutions.

Moreover, the mythical status of Regan tends further to destabilize those descriptions which see Embassy as a unitary Orientalist formation. Accusations of Asiatic generalisation which reify specific cultures and create false impressions and false knowledge in the minds of Australian audiences, seem to be based on a somewhat simplistic understanding of fiction generally and film-TV in particular. While it is certainly true that The Year of Living
Dangerously (Philippines and Sydney), Far East (Macau), and Embassy (Fiji, Melbourne and Queensland) were all shot in locations other than the ones they depict, their imagery is not designed to produce travelogue, documentary or verismilitudinous effects generally; each of these films has been constrained by political and economic factors as well as aesthetic contingencies. The use of a mythical location in Embassy in particular, like Glenda Adams’ mythoscope in Games of the Strong, is deliberately generic, designed to liberate the fiction from the demands of referential specificity. In so doing, the program-makers have hoped to facilitate a more expanded exploration of issues and problems of transculturalism, especially in relation to the very considerable sensitivities of Islamic and Western interaction.

Moreover, as a television drama which demands the perpetuity of its main characters and which is driven by moral and ideological tension rather than tragic consequence, Embassy’s use of the mythical dominion also permits a character portrayal somewhat freed of the demands of rigid verisimilitude. As if in acknowledgement of this freedom, the opening signature images of the show, which present the Embassy staff passports, nominate Katherine’s birth date as February 29 — this birth date seems as unlikely as the character and make up of the Embassy as well as the mythical nation of Ragaan itself.

Nevertheless, the location of the Embassy in Asia is unmistakable. The ideological connexion between economic and political liberalism and its scrutiny of plutocratic and corrupt eco-political formations constitute significant interests and themes in the show. It may seem paradoxical that this greater integration of the ASEAN economies into the global capitalist system has been accompanied by closer and more varied forms of international media surveillance. The scrutiny of fiction, already noted in our discussion of Embassy and the political texts in the previous chapter, has its parallel, of course, in the Australian news media. Amid the quite spectacular news events like the Jenkins affair and the Dili massacre, there is a steady portrayal of Indonesia and the other ASEAN states as exclusivist, sometimes corrupt and culturally oblique.3 Scrutiny of Indonesian business practices, in particular, has produced images of the nation as being ‘difficult not merely because of the web of cultural intricacies that forestall commercial collaborations, but because of the complicated system of patronage which demands the controlling involvement of a, usually military, financial patrician in all international transactions’.4

3 See also Kingsbury, 1992: 64.
4 Australia-Indonesia Institute discussion. (Video, 1992)
With this image of unfamiliar or dubious commercial practices, is also the image of commercial prosperity and opportunity. In Chapter Two we referred to reports by Gavin Williams (1991) and *The Australian* newspaper (1992) on the potential of Indonesia for Australian business. At the first video conference conducted under the auspices of the Australia-Indonesia Institute, Phillip Santon, for example, outlined the experiences of Australian food manufacturer, Meadow Lea, in establishing a joint venture with a major Indonesian partner. The ease with which the company was able to enter into the joint venture and the commercial success which has ensued have been offered as a model by the Institute:

We discovered from the outset that they [the Indonesian partners] were able to access top people very quickly. That they were willing to listen. They had developed concepts very similar to our own for the development of the domestic market. They quickly showed us that they were successful operators. They obviously knew the Indonesian way of doing things. They were adopting sophisticated management techniques. They were already linked to other successful international companies. And most importantly for us, they wanted to progress quickly in our field of business (Phillip Santon, General Manager, Meadow-Lea).

The overall picture that emerges from the conference and from the Williams Report which it launched was one of harmonious collaboration by which both Australia and Indonesia were able to overcome differences to produce mutual commercial benefits. Greater understanding and cultural enhancement flowed from, rather than hindered, the commercial processes.

The Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia’s Relations with Indonesia* (1993), confirms this commercial consonance, celebrating the formation of bodies such as the Australia-Indonesia Ministerial Forum (November 1992) and their Working Group which met for the first time in April-May 1993. This body, like the Joint Committee’s Report itself and the articulations of the Australia-Indonesia Institute, enhances the language of mutual benefit and commercial advantage.

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5 The Joint Committee recommends an even greater role for the Working Group in the development of bi-lateral agreements on ‘trade (including services), intellectual property, investment and industry collaboration’ (Joint Standing Committee, 1993: 191).
Indeed, even as the Committee records its evidence on the 'difficulties' of doing business in Indonesia — most particularly in relation to business practices that are 'foreign' to Australian commerce and commercial law — it re-shapes the negative implications of the language in order to preserve consonance. For the sake of advantage and the Utilitarian creed of international capital, it is the Australians who must adapt and work through the 'difference' in order to achieve success:

Referring to the way business is done, Mr Gane of Asia Link Consulting said it was very clear that the overall price for the product included amounts to be distributed as rewards for the assistance provided in getting the contract. Professor Mencek agreed that Australian business people were not altogether used to including commissions in their prices (Joint Standing Committee, 1993: 193).

These commissions or 'rewards' are sanitised in the language of commercial practice and the overriding logic of capital integration. The Joint Committee's Report barely lingers on the issue of bribes and high-connection kickbacks, recommending euphemistically that Australia offers some 'assistance' in the re-structuring of Indonesia's commercial laws and a greater dissemination of 'information' on Indonesian business opportunities.

Yet it is precisely this tension between utilitarian reward and commercial duplicity which is explored in Rory Barnes and James Birrell's novel, *Water from the Moon* (1989). In depicting the tribulations of an Australian survey company attempting to do business in Indonesia, this novel contrasts significantly with the descriptions of commercial exchange described by Phillip Santon at the Australia-Indonesia conference. *Water from the Moon* presents a far more critical scrutiny of the Indonesian political process and the integration of economies more generally into the global capitalist web than many of the proponents of the New Utilitarianism would be prepared to concede. The vision of economic and political practices offered in the novel would accord more fully to Lash and Urry's (1987) description of the disorganization of international capital. The New Order program of economic internationalization and modernization described in *Monkeys in the Dark* — and elaborated by the 1985 economic reforms in Indonesia⁶ — appear to

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⁶ It was during the mid 1980s that Indonesian policy makers decided to further integrate Indonesia into the world economy through a rigorous program of
have produced the sort of corrupt plutocracy most feared by Maruli in d'Alpuget's novel. The commodification of the body and the treatment of human beings as little more than units on a ledger or configurations of economic potential produce more insidious effects of power and domination.

In Barnes-Birrell's novel the panopticon of the New Order is localized through the functioning of business. Bodies are moved and exchanged. They are surveyed, disciplined, and when necessary, destroyed. Yet the body is also the site of pleasure, and while pleasure remains the central human motivation in Water from the Moon, the primary tension in the novel arises from the degree to which the pursuit of this pleasure may legitimately transgress other motivations, especially moral and ideological motivations. It is not that Water from the Moon offers any significant alternative to the pragmatism and utilitarianism of capitalist processes; it is rather that the novel's protagonist, John Cooper, sees capitalism and liberalism as necessary contingencies of the other. Tyrannical power which has no restraint and which entirely contravenes the Millsian notion of liberal democracy and freedom, actually transgresses the best intentions of capitalism itself: it transgresses the simple moral decency of business ethics. As in Kurmar's water from the moon in The Year of Living Dangerously — the impossibility of social reform and a good life for all Indonesians — John Cooper's impossibility is the triumph of moral and ethical probity over the unseen forces that thwart his business. Cooper, of course, is no communist, and like his opponents in the novel he too wishes to achieve personal prosperity. However, he is not prepared to surrender himself entirely to the processes of human commodification which seem to shadow his project and so seriously threaten his personal subjectivity.

Cooper is part of the new world geography, travelling from Australia to Indonesia to conduct business, to achieve goals, to produce wealth. He is a transculturalist doing his work and plying his profession across the globe. Like the journalists of The Year of Living Dangerously, Turtle Beach and Far East, like the professional public servants of Embassy, Monkeys in the Dark, and A Cry from the Jungle Bar, Cooper is a citizen of the global postmodern who moves across and between cultures, a single unit in the generality, the aggregation, of globality. Yet, unlike the other protagonists we have thus far discussed, Cooper is a hard-nosed wealth creator, whose success and failure are determined by his own ability to create and exploit new commercial opportunities. As a small businessman, however, Cooper is even more

deregulation. The flow of capital and development, largely funded through the World Bank, is a significant aspect of the Barnes-Birrell novel.
vulnerable to the sometimes erratic power of commercial processes than those who have the security and support of a large multinational organization. So when Cooper risks himself in the international flow of capital and business he is forced — even more than Hamilton, Alex, Katherine or Cullen — to realign and redefine his subjectivity because it is more critically suspended away from its cultural source, the sort of collective social network which would help maintain its Australiansness.

Indeed, the picture that Barnes-Birrell draw of Cooper's character is of an incomplete person who is being constantly dis-located by his professional and personal pursuits and by the identity demands of transculturalism itself. Cooper is driven by these commercial ambitions which, he seems to hope, will complete his sense of self. Barnes-Birrell continually present this sense of incompleteness as the primary motivation in Cooper's life. Like his principal ally in the novel, the lesbian technocrat, Sam Konig, Cooper does not see himself as a moral crusader, but merely as a human being who is inspired by egotism and a respect for personal achievement. Both Konig and Cooper retain some sense of humanistic values, but these have been tainted by the effects of commerce and the experiences of power:

Cooper was fifty-two, a little overweight and in no doubt that what drove him was his own ego, although it had driven him in a number of different directions in his lifetime. You could draft the changes. He had once been God's anointed in the battle to humanise Australian architecture. Which had left him with the vision of a mallet. You made your stand. Demonstrated some sensitivity to the fact that people actually lived and worked in the built environment, and thump, you were back down in the cracks in the ground. After a few more such thumps, you decided to try things overseas, you go in for Development with a capital D (WFM, 44).

But even in the crusades of Development, Cooper finds that his own cynicism is deepened by the cynicism of others who 'had failed to make it at home' and 'not making it, had seen their way clear to give the Third World the benefit of their experience' (WFM, 44).

Cooper's only way out of this cycle of cynicism — 'even being cynical about yourself' — is to build 'fair dinkum buildings and plan fair dinkum towns in the first place' (WFM, 44). Thus, Indonesia is the site of action, the place where Cooper is able to 'ply his trade, to make a quid, to design new
townships for the teeming masses of Java in the jungles and swamps of Sumatra' (WFM, 42). It is not the holy land of moral crusade, as it is for Billy Kwan, but a place where the 'fair dinkum' might be located and created, where a project of value might be realized against the incertitude of dislocation and transculturalism. Cooper's quest, therefore, is bound by a form of moral pragmatism where the fundamentals of truth and genuineness — the fair dinkum— are to confront and challenge all manifestations of dubiousness, cynicism and commercial incoherence:

The Jakarta Government wanted new townships, the World Bank would pay for them, and he was reasonably skilled in designing them. The teeming masses of Java would be grateful, or maybe they wouldn't. Cooper had no way of telling what the masses wanted, he didn't know any of the masses, he didn't speak their languages, nor they his. God knows, it was hard enough trying to work out what went on in the minds of middle-class professionals like Ali and Liem without confusing the issue with blind speculation about peasants so desperate for land that they'd allow themselves to be packed into some old Hercules and carried off to a clearing in Sumatra and given a year's supply of rice and told to get on with it (WFM, 42).

Cooper's tone of professional distance, like Hamilton's or Cullen's, is compromised by the residual humanist principles and the incompleteness of the ego that drives him. He expresses his desire to build the fair dinkum houses for the peasants of Java, but he is forced to acknowledge that his sense of a common humanity is, and will continue to be, mediated by the confusions, the cultural and social distances, that separate them. Though he would like to think that he is doing some good in the world, providing some relief for the indigent Javanese, he must nevertheless recognise that he can never fully share their experience of things; cynicism again intervenes as Cooper contents himself with the knowledge that at least he is doing something that pleases the Indonesian government, the World Bank and himself.

Even when he meets with his old university friend, George Fisher, at the World Bank, Cooper's humanist pleas are tinged with this same ambivalence, this same recognition that his personal perspective and knowledge of the world could barely approximate to the perspective of those whom he would wish to aid. His own utilitarian gratifications, the privilege and power afforded
him by his national and professional position, contrast significantly with the life experiences of the peasants for whom he can feel only sympathy rather than genuine empathy. As he sits with Fisher in the symbolic heart of First World financial power and capitalist luxury, eating rich food and drinking expensive wine, he is struck by the absurdity of it all, the abstruse complexity of the postmodern world. Fisher's greater cynicism arrests him, reawakening not only the residual humanism, but his sense of professional logic. The 'reality' Fisher invokes and represents is barely comprehensible to Cooper: 'Well, reality isn’t on course in Jakarta. Not the way I see reality. The money that flows out of this organization is going everywhere except the places it’s supposed to go' (WFM, 142).

What appears to distress Cooper is the collapse of reason in financial exchange processes and the ultimate goal of producing some tangible thing at the other end. He is prepared to accept that some level of graft or patronage payment — 'corruption' in more euphemistic terms — is inevitable in Third World dealings, but he seems less able to accept the depth to which these disruptions to normal commercial processes should extend. Fisher, on the other hand, attempts to placate his old school friend's distress by assuring him that these 'uncertainties' are commonplace, part of the general miasma of international finance. Meanings slip away in such a world. There is only the personal gratification of pleasure and power, according to Fisher, since the world and its meanings dissolve beyond the central sanctity of the Bank, his own office, his own desk:

'It's a goddamned jungle out there, Jack.' And he waved his arm towards the plateglass window behind which Washington faded away into the midday winter gloom . . . 'It's not just Washington, Jack. It's the whole goddamned world. Everything outside this building. Everything outside this room. — it's unreal. The only reality is the paper that crosses this desk . . . And the numbers that come up on this [computer] screen' (WFM, 141-2).

Fisher thus reduces the powers of meaning configuration to the production of a simple rationalist language: a few figures on a page or computer screen that are as ephemeral as life itself. The chaos of struggling forces, people, meanings, the relentless penetration and expansion of global capital, are all reduced to the manageable ledger of the computer screen. For Fisher it is only in the
discourse of science that meaning becomes accessible and the referential world beyond his window fades into the general wash of human uncertainty.

Cooper, however, continues to resist the cycle of cynicism both by the residual humanism which remains vaguely offended by injustice, untruth and social waste, and also by his desire to construct some palpable and material form out of the ashes of Fisher's chaos. While suspecting that his old friend's account of the world and of referentiality may well be true, and having surrendered, to some degree, to the constraints of architectural pragmatism — the architecture Charles Jencks (1987a, 1987b) dismisses as modernist functionalism — Cooper also understands that completion of his self is only possible through the completion of his construction project. It is not that he is endorsing the commodification of the body principle, but that he is accepting the necessities of the materiality of capitalist economics. It appears that his buildings have little more than function to recommend them. They are produced by the demands of modernization, and while they are eclectic and transcultural by context, they seem to be entirely lacking in aesthetic inspiration. Cooper designs his buildings according to the precepts of the New Order. Bodies are indeed commodified by the New Order—surveyed, demographed, epitomized as data, and re-located in space. But for Cooper the task is to create something more human and humane, something that would make the whole system function effectively, rationally, comfortably. In other words, Cooper is forced to conciliate between the demands of modernist capital functionalism, and his personal desire to overcome the limitations of that materiality.

In a sense, Cooper's challenge is not unlike the challenge of postmodern architecture, described by Charles Jencks, through which the human is re-introduced to functionalist materiality. Nevertheless, it is also true that critics of Jencks' version of postmodernism would claim that such reconciliations are at best peripheral and at worst impossible. As we have seen in Chapter Two, such views would claim that so-called postmodernist architecture merely makes concessions to the general demeanour of modernism, and that space formations constructed out of social differentials of power can only hope to aestheticize or disguise their essential ideological information. Cooper, however, has no pretensions to design excellence and the scope of his aesthetic ambitions has already capitulated to the demands of Third World economic development. He is a postmodernist primarily as an outcome of his transculturalism, an Australo-European architect applying the technology and design wisdom of the West to produce buildings for the East. It is only this
glimmering of humanist morality — paradoxically annexed by his 'ego' or uncompleted self— which saves him from the greater depths of capitulative pragmatism that surround him.

While considerable debate continues over whether postmodernism supports or challenges capitalist commodification of the human, Cooper's own interests are focused on the degree to which humanism in architecture is possible at all. Cooper's own thinking rarely reaches beyond the immediacies of his function; rather, he holds unalteringly to the 'fair dinkum', the knowable uncomplicated by lofty or lowly human sophistry. He accepts, though disapproves of the dark power exerted by Husani, and is prepared to pay the bribe to Sutrisno. Unlike Fisher, Dyer and Kev Culley, however, Cooper cannot accept the dissolution of those semantic-moral barriers which distinguish pragmatism from corruption. Cooper clings tenaciously to the original project because it is his way of constituting himself and constituting meaning for himself. Even when it is clear that the 'real' purpose of the project is to facilitate international logging rather than intra-national transmigration, Cooper will not budge. Thus, when Dyer tells Don Cole that neither Sam Konig nor Cooper 'knows the score' (WFM, 103), he is speaking more about their moral and ideological awareness, their unpreparedness to surrender fully to the imperatives of pragmatism and commodification, than their actual knowledge of Husani's commercial intentions.

Even those who are sympathetic to Cooper-Konig's objectives are forced to question the project's value in the face of Husani's opposition and overwhelming power. The 'ego' and moral imperatives which drive the pair beyond common sense and into the dominion of personal danger is linked to Cooper-Konig's transcultural First World freedom. In this way, the incompleteness of self becomes an 'advantage', a liberation that others do not share. Emerald, Ali Yowono's wife, a Sumatran and relative ally of Cooper's, explains as much when she points out to Sam Konig, 'what you must realise is that you can always get on a plane and fly away and never come back. One day soon you will. But we live here' (WFM, 126). Neither Cooper nor Sam Konig can 'change anything' according to Emerald, but both have another sanctuary, another self into which they can retreat. She and Ali have no such luxury but must continue to exist in the Indonesian culture and amidst the

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7 Much of the debate about the ideological efficacy of postmodernism and poststructuralism is linked to this very question. We have discussed some of the implications of the issue in Chapter Two. The ideological implications of postmodernism will be further explored in the Conclusion.
meanings they can do little to shift. As Stuart Hall has consistently argued in his analysis of transnational pluralism, it is the First world that enjoys the heterogeneity of cultural choice, not the indigent and oppressed of the Third World. Cooper and Sam Konig are confounded by the resistance of the Third World to their own standards of business practice and their own expectations, but this frustration seems morally diminished — even in the light of the attacks on their personal safety — when compared to the greater cultural incarceration of Yowono and Emerald.

Barnes-Birrell, however, are not suggesting, as the makers of Embassy often seem to suggest, that the ASEAN world has some freehold on corruption. Indeed, while the depth and extent of these dubious commercial and political practices in Indonesia seem to surprise the world weary John Cooper, he appears even more bemused by the Australian connection. Not surprisingly, Barnes-Birrell use the Queensland Trade Commission and the highly elitist, plutocratic, dominion of the Melbourne Club to demonstrate the extension of corruption into Australia and internationally. Global integration and the commodification of the body, bringing their rewards in personal and collective pleasure, will inevitably be accompanied by the formation of powerful and invasive commercial sub-structures which produce their own systems of surveillance and their own opportunities for 'unfair' commercial practice. The underhand dealings of his project partner, Kev Culley, and the unofficial patronages offered by Trade Commissioner, Pierkarski, demonstrate that the sanctuary of his beloved and 'fair dinkum' Australia is only relatively immune from the dangers of clandestine commercial processes. While Emerald Yowono is correct when she says that Cooper and Konig have alternative sites for their enterprise and their self constitution, the reach of capitalism and the insidiousness of corruption suggest a greater fluidity in their cultural experiences and for their identity than Emerald either understands or is prepared to concede. Cooper himself is forced to acknowledge the ubiquity of these commercial and political sub-systems. As in d'Alpuget's Monkeys in the Dark and Turtle Beach, these transcultural alliances produce new effects in global capitalism:

John Cooper thought, well, bugger me, right outside our back door. He was no stranger to these sorts of conversations, they were routine in some of the places he had operated in, but this was novel, this was the Australian version (WFM, 14).
In effect, Cooper is again being forced to confront the world of dislocated values and meanings described by Fisher and experienced through his own cycle of cynicism. While he tries to overcome these contradictions and systematic pragmatism-corruption by maintaining his professional integrity, Cooper is thwarted at every turn. Fisher's irrational and chaotic world beyond the rational language of digitization is further configured in the divisions, tensions and switching loyalties of the people at the Sumatran survey camp. Barnes-Birrell's description of Sam Konig's experiences in the survey camp are designed to highlight the disorderly tendencies of human social processes. Like Burgess's or William Golding's essentialized descriptions of human society, the survey camp exhibits many of the worst features of human interaction and power formations as individuals seek personal gratifications through challenge, allegiance and eventually separation and violence.

Sam Konig herself demonstrates the peculiar, even disjunctive, flux of loyalties in the subtle exchange of power. While she is Cooper's ally in resisting the dominance of the tendentious powers of Husani and Sutrisno, her reasons for doing so are not as straightforward as Cooper's. While she appears to have some sympathy for Cooper's quest for the 'fair dinkum' town in the 'fair dinkum' project, she is certainly not concerned with the exposure of corruption. As she says ironically in the midst of her continued resistance to the exhortations of the controlling powers, 'I'm not exactly bleeding to death over corruption in Jakarta' (WFM, 87). What seems a more significant motivating force for Sam is her self-image as transgressive and resistant to hegemonic power formations. Sam seems to delight in her transgressive character as she militates against those who would marginalize her — especially those perpetrators of patriarchy and sexist oppression who would defeat her by linguistic as well as professional repudiation. She is 'tough and inflexible' (WFM, 86) in defying Husani's power, both because she is the legitimate professional authority in the survey camp, and because these powers reveal themselves — and are personified — through the personal antagonisms of the masculine. Like d'Alpuget's generals and Embassy staff, the males of the survey camp are configured as generally derelict, lascivious and entirely lacking in any moral or ideological integrity other than that which arises from assumptions about their own privileged maleness. It is these power formations that Sam challenges directly in her actions, and indirectly through her sexual orientation. Not only is she strictly lesbian, she smokes cigars, can drink heavily and in one memorable encounter with Kev Culley, demonstrates
a propensity for violence. In attempting to dominate Sam in their dispute over the contract, Kev tries to reduce Sam to a generic linguistic typology:

'It's the World Bank that's paying for this rort, not some sheikh with petro-dollars pouring out of his ears. You can't wiggle your hips at the World Bank.'

'Kev . . . ' said Cooper.

'One more fucking crack like that from you Culley,' Sam said very coldly, 'and I'll knock your brains out' (WFM, 55).

What appears to aggravate and motivate Sam is her general disdain firstly for the traditions of male patriarchy personified in men like Culley, Gerry Dyer, Husani and the patrons of the Melbourne Club, and secondly for great professional incompetencies that these sorts of social behaviours and power abuses have wrought on the landscape around her. While Cooper shares Sam's dismay at professional incompetence, he also recognises that her desire to succeed beyond the pitiable failures of these men may be motivated by the pleasure of defeating their lingual-power formations through the exertion of her own greater power. Thus Cooper wondered about what really 'makes her tick, and suspected it had something to do with power for power's sake' (WFM, 45).

In this sense, Sam, like d'Alpuget's Judith in Turtle Beach, becomes as much a pragmatist-utilitarian as those whom she opposes. And indeed, also like d'Alpuget's Judith and Alex in Monkeys in the Dark, who seem willing to deploy the power of their status and sexuality to achieve cultural penetration and sexual pleasure, Sam deploys her body and power to acquire pleasure from her working subordinate, Sulastri. While the authors of Water from the Moon make it clear that Sulastri is a pragmatist utilizing her body and sexuality in order to share in Sam's power and in the material comforts of her other (male) suitors, it is also clear that Sam is entirely uninhibited in the deployment of her greater power for the acquisition of sexual pleasure. First World feminism and the social policies of Equal Opportunity might regard Sam's actions as sexual harassment in the workplace and a form of First World sexual exploitation. Yet true to her general view of individualism and personal gratification, Sam would not be concerned about such sensitivities; even Sulastri's flitting from suitor to suitor in order to enhance her chances of marriage, migration and ultimate material happiness does not particularly affect Sam. While feminism has appropriated the wisdom of Jane Austen on
pragmatic marriage, lesbianism and the opportunities of transcultural marriage and migration have complicated the ideological paradigm. Sam herself understands the freedom and pleasures that power can deliver. She is not opposed to the utility of power, but is rather opposed to the wielding of power over her personally. She enjoys Sulastrī's body but cannot concern herself with the secretary's globalist utilitarian ambitions. Sam has deployed her power to achieve sexual and cultural convergence with Sulastrī, though of course permanence and long term commitment are never considered. Sam, like Cooper, is a professional transculturalist, travelling the world to sell her labour and skills to the highest bidder. She cannot dispute Sulastrī's right to do the same thing, and readily accepts the ephemerality of the world condition. Certainly she enjoys moments of romantic intensity with Sulastrī but these fade as quickly as they are experienced, or as quickly as they are imagined. The power and ubiquity of politics and pragmatism reach into their most intimate moments, as they have done for Alex and Maruli, Guy Hamilton and Jill. Indeed, at the moment of Sam's and Sulastrī's strongest union, the political and social chaos of the development program, which had led to older, equally impure and unsuccessful development projects, intervenes. They observe a bridge which had been placed at the most vulnerable and ill-considered position on the Bengkulu River. Their shared sympathies and understandings can never entirely erase those same differences in culture and destiny which Emerald Yowono had identified:

The people who made a profit on this bridge never had to repay the money, Sulastrī said. Sam Konig looked at her secretary and said, I think you understand the nature of development here as well as I do.

Better maybe, Sulastrī said, I live here.

Let's go down to the sea, Konig said (WFM, 106).

As they walk together along the sand, as the romantic imagery of the exotic location embraces them and appears to bring the two women from the two cultural spheres together, difference again intervenes, dissolving the scene into a spiralling and ironic comedy of dreams. Romanticism fails because it cannot resist the cycle of cynicism and the inevitability of separation through the divergence of their separate subjectivities and the power differential that forms them. Thus, the delightful image of the children on the beach and the majesty of the fishing boat's defiance of the incoming surf are deliberately dissolved by the image of an old woman defecating by the water's edge:
The figure, that of a woman of fifty, maybe sixty, walked barefoot to the hard wet sand washed by the surf, lifted her skirt and squatted, the waves swirling around her ankles and dashing away (WFM, 108).

Thus, in the same way that Kev Condon's idyllic view of Jakartan canals and the young bare-breasted girls in The Year of Living Dangerously is compromised by the uncoiling of their turds, the pleasure communion of Sam's and Sulastri's bodies is forced to confront its own limits. The body is serendipity and sewer; the scene concludes with the dissolving of the romantic ideal. The body politic of pragmatism convenes over the ephemeralities of pleasure; but pleasure like waste must eventually be purged.

There is no sense, in fact, that sensual love or transcendent romanticism is any match for pragmatism and utility, since pleasure itself is implicated in the general flow of capital and power. Sam accepts the power differentials that separate her own status and capacity for choice over Sulastri's. She does not contend an eternal romance as resistance to Husani's commodification of the body because Sam herself plays in the same field; it is just that she happens to be playing with Cooper against the patriarchal incompetencies she despises. Even Cooper's invocation of his family life seems strangely shadowy in the novel. Like the 'fair dinkum buildings' he would like to construct, the family values — his marriage and his general resistance to sexual betrayal — constitute a sort of ideological sanctuary which, while vulnerable to the demands of pragmatism, world travel and business commitments, seems purer and more substantial than the national identity he shares with Culley, Don Cole and others. Unlike Robert Drew's Cullen in A Cry from the Jungle Bar, Cooper can ignore the girls in the Asian clubs and bars because he is imbued by less fantastic ambitions. If he seems a little phlegmatic, it is because he wishes to simplify his existence — do his job and do it well, then return to his sanctuary:

Cooper watched the girls dancing, the smoothness of their movements broken and shattered by the strobes, and noted their absorption with each other, and concluded that they were probably the girls from the shuttered Lone Star here on a busman's holiday, although god knows you'd think they'd welcome the rest. And he absently answered a question from the madam of the place, if that's who she was, about his wife and children back in Queensland, and thought, what the fuck am I
doing here anyway? But he meant Indonesia, South East Asia, the whole world, not the particular bar (WFM, 42).

His answer is simply that he is doing what he does, plying his trade. Cooper, as much as Sam and Sulastri, indeed as much as any of the transnational businessmen, including Husani himself, is an agent of the new capitalism, a body, an economic unit. He plies his trade, he travels the world, he performs precisely the sort of export business encouraged by Prime Minister Keating and the visionaries of Australian commerce. Thus, while he 'thinks of his wife and kids', Cooper nevertheless acts only to satisfy their material pleasures. This coupling of sexual business with Cooper’s own transcultural utilitarianism demonstrates the propinquity of the activities. Each is a body in space; all are performing their own particular skill, selling their bodies to the highest bidder.

In this way, Barnes-Birrell produce a novel that contends that all bodies are economic units. Cooper’s defiance of the Husani project can survive only as long as he performs some useful function; as his resistance continues, he is deprived of money, his own project falters and dissolves and he is forced back to the sanctuary of home and family, no longer required by the commercial interests that had put him to use. At the extreme level, his defiance actually causes bodily danger. Sam is attacked in Sumatra, and there is a direct attempt on Sam and Cooper in Jakarta. Hal, Cooper’s business partner who had also defied the clandestine power of Husani and the logging project, had not been so fortunate; his funeral at the beginning of the novel is intended to demonstrate the inevitability of capitalist power and the implacability of its corrupt and controlling touch. When the body is not required, it is released or destroyed, like human waste or bridges that serve no purpose.

*Water from the Moon* — the Javanese aphorism for anything impossible — demonstrates the irresistibility of capitalism and economic progress over all human and moral concerns. Cooper’s survival is a survival outside capitalism. He is 'broke' and back in Queensland. The irony of Kev Culley’s failure does not demonstrate the success of good over evil, human morality over the forces of human commodification — rather, it is like the survival-failure of Sutrisno in *Monkeys in the Dark*, whereby pragmatism and dehumanized processes of capitalist exchange will be limited by the nature of their ambitions. Human beings are not logical and unfeeling units, but are unpredictable, emotional and inclined to contradiction and disorder. Rationalism — even the rationalism of pragmatic politics and commerce — is subject to erratic interventions. Sam and John Cooper escape with their lives, but little else.
Culley also loses on the deal and in the end we are left with little more than a sense of ironic satisfaction. Suharto's New Order rewards those who play along with the system, and distances those who will not. The simple morality of Embassy which recommends the social and political benefits of economic liberalization is overturned by this more general view that capitalism makes commodities of us all. And as commodities we may enjoy some degree of freedom in choice, travel and transcultural experience, but we will be forced to accept new forms of restriction on our humanity, even as we reap the benefits of our pleasure.

II. Transcultural Migration: The Root of All Evil?

For all its puritanical overtones, Ronald Conway's (1971) description of Australia as having learned the utilities of economic exploitation and spiritual-moral repudiation may seem strangely prophetic in the context of postmodernity. With the ascendancy of north-east Asia (Garnaut, 1989) the emergence of the South East Asian tigers, and the relative withdrawal of Europe as an export focus, Australia is increasingly turning toward its regional neighbours in the hope of reversing the decline of our commercial pleasures. Concomitantly, the tradition of supporting economic growth through high levels of immigration from Europe has also been forced to alter course. The broadening of ethnic sources to include Asia in the immigration program is based on pragmatism, a more pluralistic humanist ideology, and a more commercially oriented desire to create positive impressions and forge significant economic links within the South East Asian region (Castles et al, 1990, Betts, 1988, Collins, 1992, Jupp, 1992, 1993, Warhurst, 1993).

In the broader sphere, ethnographers like Arjun Appadurai (1989, 1990) have seen the integration and penetration of global economic processes as producing new forms of human movement across the world: 'tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree' (Appadurai, 1990: 297). This international flow of human bodies — which produces and is produced by uneven distribution of capital, ethnic diaspora, warfare, labour needs and the like (Birrell, 1992) — is of particular significance in a global economy.

8 See Kobala (1993) and Warhurst (1993). Kabala points out that, with emigration from Europe in decline, Australian policy makers have been forced to broaden migrant sources. Other socially driven ideologies have worked to supplement and support pragmatism.
where the human fertility of the wealthiest nations continues to be lower than replacement levels, and where fertility in poorer, generally postcolonial countries, tends to be excessively high. These low fertility rates in First World nations have been brought about by new forms of subjective liberation, especially the liberation of women; in the pursuit of personal pleasure women, in particular, have been able to deploy contraceptive technologies and new styles of social relationships in order to 'free themselves' from the burden of child-rearing. In her assessment of the Australian economy and the requirements of growth, Helen Hughes, for example, has seen significant links between global economics, the liberation of women in the First World, and the ideology of international humanism:

Australia's population, and hence migration flows, are key variables for economic policy. We have to face up to questions of population size and this means migration. High birthrates are not likely to be acceptable to women seeking a full life for themselves and their children. Apart from being much costlier than immigration, such a strategy would in any case take a long time to be effective. An overcrowded world would not view a high birthrate in Australia benignly (Hughes, 1985: 51).  

Clearly, as fertility declines in the developed world, the market and labour constituencies which support the ideology of the New Utilitarianism in those countries will be threatened, creating new opportunities for the importation of people, especially those whose skills might bolster the host nation's economy. For Australia, which has had the highest immigration rate of all the OECD

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9 I would find much to dispute in Hughes' account of the Australian economy and the requirements of population growth. In recent years, the scope of the population discussion has broadened considerably in Australia. While many economists still support Hughes' conventional link between population increase and economic growth, environmentalists and a number of researchers and economists are beginning to question the value of such high levels of population growth in Australia. The most recent report of the Bureau for Immigration Research (1992-3), for example, has concluded that the negative effects of population demand in terms of Australia's terms of trade and infrastructure stress seem to be cancelling out the advantages. Professor Roger Short's paper submitted to the Population Issues Committee (1992) questions the validity of high levels of population growth for all high consumption, First World nations. Bob Birrell (1992) has long opposed the high immigration policy on social and environmental grounds, particularly during the 1990s recession. Significantly, Australian governments and oppositions have taken a largely bi-partisan approach to high levels of immigration, overriding significant public misgivings (The Age, 1991, November 4). During the 1990s recession, immigration levels have dropped from their very high levels during the 1980s. See also Joske (1989) and Argy (1990) who also oppose high levels of immigration. See also Jupp (1993) and Warhurst (1993) who examine the differences between growth lobbyists and environmentalists.
countries, the post-war ambition of enhanced security and economic growth through high population increase has been transformed into a generalised ideology of immigration growth and cultural pluralism. James Jupp (1992, 1993) has traced the development of Australian immigration, and argues that the current phase may be described as a constellation of economic, political-bureaucratic, internationalist and humanist interests.

In this sense, the policy of multiculturalism, while initially designed to articulate the cultural diversity of immigrant sources in Australia, has become transformed as the ideological compendium of the cultural economy, propitious of the politics and pleasures of diversity. Despite its obvious potency in cultural discussion, Zubrzycki (1987), Putnis (1989), Castles et al. (1990), Collins (1992) and the Population Issues Committee (1992), among many others, have recognised the serious disagreements over the term's definition and deployment in social policy. Peter Putnis, in tracing the use of the term in the Brisbane Courier Mail between 1984 and 1988, has concluded that 'it is often associated with the polemics of unity and division, cohesion and fragmentation, tolerance and racism, violence and universal brotherhood, deceit and intelligence' (Putnis, 1989: 163). Jack Collins (1992) has seen the incorporation of the term into official government policy and its repudiation by sections of the political Right, as indicative of more generalized political uncertainties in Australia. In this sense, Geoffrey Blainey's denunciation of multiculturalism as the ideological domination of nationhood by pluralized and de-nationalized immigration concurs with the analytical

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10 The term was originally used in Australia by former Labour Government Immigration Minister Al Grassby in his paper, 'A multi-cultural society for the future' (Immigration Reference Paper, AGPS, 1978). According to Shergold and Gobbo (1989) the term was absorbed as official government policy during the 1980s to centralize the term as a political and cultural entity.
11 Geoffrey Blainey's views in All for Australia (1984) have been well canvassed. It is worth reminding ourselves, however, that Blainey, along with other conservatives, has considerable misgivings about the decline of the nation state and the national imaginary. Notions of internal cultural diversity, Blainey argues, are a threat to social cohesion. Both ethnic lobbyists and less conservative commentators have dubbed Blainey's remarks 'racist.' Blainey, however, has been careful to concentrate on the notions of 'difference' and cohesion, scrupulously avoiding any comments that may be interpreted as racial vilification. Jupp (1992, 1993) has pointed to the complexity of the issue of immigration for party politics, and the distinction between conservative and liberalist views on immigration more generally. See also various points of discussion in Jupp and Kôbala, ed.s, The Politics of Immigration (1993).
conclusions, though not the political or cultural effects, of what Castles et al (1990) celebrate as 'a nation without nationalism'.

Public support for the concept has, therefore, been driven by both economic and cultural concerns. The recent report by the Population Issues Committee, _Population Issues and Australia's Future: Environment, Economy and Society_ — in its expanded version in 1992 with the titular addendum, 'A Non Adversarial Report' — claims that multiculturalism aims to enrich Australia's cultural base and international commercial advantage through a greater diversification of immigrants and cultural sources. While the Report equivocates somewhat on the general economic benefits of immigration in purely quantitative terms (PIC, 1991: 19), it maintains that immigration has a far more positive effect on an economy when it imports skills and capital. Moreover, the Report recommends the maintenance of Australia's refugee program as compliance with ethical obligations and as demonstration of Australia's international participation. In its quantitative analysis, however, the Report also paused sufficiently to endorse the general recommendations of the National Agenda for a Multi-cultural Australia (PIC, 1991: 84) which, according to Castles et al, is 'currently the dominant discourse in the attempt to define the nation, and is likely to remain so for some time' (Castles et al, 1990: 13).

This general endorsement of heterogeneity and diversification leads the proponents of multiculturalism to declaim the economic and cultural advantages of internationalism generally, and Australia's participation in the global play of capital and people in particular. While we have already discussed at some length (Chapter Two) a number of the putative critical and ideological fallibilities of this new form of capitalist integration (Harvey, 1989, Robertson, 1990, 1991, Hall, 1991a, 1991b. see also Birrell, 1992), it is worth recalling Stuart Hall's suspicion of the 'global postmodern' and the pluralization of First World culture. Hall argues that international capitalism, propelled by crisis, has developed the ability to expand, overcome and

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12 Castles et al write of the transcendence of national identity by a new system of cultural analysis. For these authors multiculturalism is the celebration of pluralism within a nation and as an international system of union:

Multiculturalism . . . does not need to define the nation and to draw boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. By celebrating diversity within the nation, it reaffirms, even if only in a perfunctory way, the need for a national cohesion which is more than that of the face-to-face community and less than that of all humanity. The step beyond multiculturalism is the transcending of national identity, the denial of its necessity, the recognition that through the crisis of modernity, we are now all in the same boat — economically, ecologically and politically. Human identity must become transnational (Castles et al, 1990: 13).
incorporate difference into the general 'commodification of social life' (Hall, 1991a: 30). The pleasures wrought by postmodernity for the individuals of the First World represent a new exotica:

To be at the leading edge of modern capitalism is to eat fifteen different cuisines in one week, not to eat one. It is no longer important to have boiled beef and carrots and Yorkshire pudding every Sunday. Who needs that? Because if you are just jetting in from Tokyo, via Harare, you come in loaded not with 'how everything is the same', but how wonderful it is that everything is different' (Hall, 1991a: 31).

Hall's observation that this new exotica and the pleasures it brings are not to be 'enjoyed in Calcutta' indicates some greater disillusion with the progress and fallibility of capitalism itself. However, for the proponents of cultural pluralism, a multicultural social system provides its own political solutions that are integrated with, rather than opposed to, capitalist economics. The Population Issues Committee argues that immigration itself constitutes a force for social justice and international obligation, alleviating population pressures for overcrowded nations, providing new opportunities for migrants — refugees among them — and facilitating greater international environment through foreign aid. The PIC Report articulates the view that multiculturalism and a non-discriminatory migration policy augments the potentialities 'for greater human brotherhood' (PIC, 1991: 93).

In her analysis of the discourse of immigration, Katharine Betts (1988, 1993) argues that economic interest groups who favour high levels of immigration into Australia are supported by 'ethnic' lobbyists who deploy the ideology and language of 'altruistic cosmopolitanism' which 'may or may not describe their private motives' (Betts, 1993: 222). Following Alvin Gouldner's (1979) descriptions of the 'new class' — the powerful social formation of middle-class educated professionals — Betts maintains that current discussion on immigration is dominated by the interests of this new social elite which itself endorses the ideology of altruistic cosmopolitanism. Again, like Stuart Hall's international cuisine argument, Betts sees the

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13 Betts is interested in the deployment of discourse as a political and ideological strategy in the polemics of immigration. She is therefore less concerned with the 'real' motives of these lobbyists which may ultimately be unknowable. This article discusses the means by which the language of immigration is controlled and deployed by the new social class.
cosmopolitanism and altruism of this group as being intrinsic to the self-definition of its constituent members:

The perspective offered by altruists and cosmopolitans, with its themes of internationalism, cosmopolitanism, exotic foods and customs, and its imagery based on compassion for the world's poor, is more attractive than perspectives based on economic or ecological data] providing an intriguing blend of urbane sophistication and low-cost benevolence. The development of this way of looking at immigration has coincided with rapid growth in the numbers of new-class professionals . . . They have used it [the ideology of cosmopolitanism and altruism] to shape an identity based on a clear distinction between people of insight, discernment and cosmopolitan understanding, and the narrow parochialism of their parents' generation (Betts, 1993: 225).

This internationalism, with its ideology of cosmopolitan altruism, is proving a significant factor in determining the cultural character of Australia itself and its relationships with the South East Asian region generally. Immigration has changed the cultural constitution of Australia and the discourse which has brought about these changes is also reflecting the complexities of transcultural human exchange. In particular, this greater diversification, the augmentation of the exotic cuisine, has been made most obvious through the incorporation of Asians into the migration program from the late 1970s. Broadening the base of Australia's colonial Chinese population, the new Asian migrants have come from a wide pool, including the ASEAN states. Clearly, the incorporation of the new wave Asian migrant into the Australian culture also contributes to what Ross Garnaut (1989) and Stephen Castles et al (1990) have called the bridge to Asia. Distinctly, this bridge is built with common foundations, and the presence of the new Australian Asian has demanded new forms of social orientation and new systems of cultural representation. Australian identity both at the individual and collective levels has had to alter and adjust, re-configure itself from within as much as from without.

The principal focus of the current study has been directed toward the ways in which Australians and their identity have been forced to realign themselves through the demands of transculturalism, most particularly within the context of the 'alien' space of Indonesia. While we have discussed above the means by which the body is commodified in relation to the general processes of
commerce and politics, we can also see similar processes at work in the
exchange of migratory bodies within the 'host' nation. Media representa-
tion of the migrant experience — news and magazine features, film, literature and
visual art — have often concentrated on the social disharmonies caused by
migration, particularly the racism of the host and the personal dissonances of
the migrant. These disharmonies, however, do not occlude the broader and
more complex realignments shared by both host and migrant at the individual
and collective levels. What Lacan calls identity splitting and Bhabha
translates as 'doubling' (see Chapter One) can be located in much of the
fictional and news representations of the migrant experience.

Thus, while Sneja Gunew (1989), in her introduction to an anthology of
migrant writing in Australia, might claim a radical status for the marginal, ethnic
voice in multicultural Australia, there is an equally forceful sense in which the
host is also experiencing significant threat and significant ideological and
subjective readjustment. We can see, for example, in Geoffrey Wright's
Romper Stomper (1992) that Asian immigration represents a form of social
invasion for the young skinheads. Responding at the most immediate and
emotional levels, the skinheads see the Asians as depriving them of social
pleasure and social opportunity, of expropriating their resources and their
national identity. More broadly, of course, the skinheads sense that the
presence of the Asians represents social, political and cultural power over
which they themselves have no control. In Katharine Betts' terms, the Asian
migrants also represent the discourse of the professional elite whose altruistic
cosmopolitanism endorses the class's own power and adds further to the
skinheads' sense of alienation and territorial loss. While Wright directs our
sympathies toward the immigrants who become the focus of the skinhead
gang's violence, it is equally clear that the youths are acting as political agents
against forces they can neither clearly see nor entirely comprehend and
control — other than through the immediacies of violence. The youths reject
the pleasures of multiculturalism and global economics because they sense it
has rejected them. Theirs is a radical political force built on ignorance and fear,
and focused against those who are agents or commodities of global processes
— and the ideology of altruistic cosmopolitanism.\footnote{It is perhaps worth noting that a number of the members of the educated
professional class objected to the screening of the film, arguing that unsophisticated
audiences would not understand the subtle moral message of the film. The depiction of
violence of this kind, it was argued in the newspapers at the time, might actually
endorse racial hatred. Such objections would represent an extreme case of what
Katharine Betts (1993) has characterized as the discursive exclusivity of the altruistic}
Cosmopolitanism and the pleasures of transcultural migration are also the principal themes in Dewi Anggraeni's novel *The Root of all Evil* (1987). However, Anggraeni, herself a migrant writer originally from Indonesia, depicts a far more harmonious transcultural relocation than is presented in *Romper Stomper*. This is partly because the central character, Komala, an Indonesian migrant, is educated, bourgeois, and married to an Australian medical physician. In a sense, Komala is the paradigmatic representative of the altruistic cosmopolitan ideology and the new social class which has supported her and into which she marries in Australia. Neither Komala nor her husband suffer from the sorts of economic privations featured in *Romper Stomper*, and both are thoroughly imbued with the values and ideology of capitalist economics; their marriage represents the fulfilment of the transcultural ideal which valorizes individual choice, transnational alliance and the exotic cuisine described by Stuart Hall. The couple are configured as mutually respectful, complementary and positive. This economic security and transcultural harmony are personified in their two children. In fact, while moments of intercultural marital dissonance remain, these are generally depicted as amusements rather than irritations, delightful memories rather than communicative obstacles.

The drama of the novel, however, revolves around the disruption of this pleasant bourgeois life when Komala returns to her native Indonesia to tend her dying father. The adjustments and realignments she has undergone through her marriage and life in Australia are challenged through the 're-splitting' of her subjectivity. While many migrant texts — including *Romper Stomper* — rely on negative images of the Australian culture and people for their aesthetic action, the dramatic tension of *The Root of All Evil* is produced through the hostilities of the old culture and the expectations and attitudes of its people. The cosmopolitan ideology to which Komala has now been wedded, literally and metaphorically, is destabilized by the parochialism, not of Australians, but of Jakartans. The body which has been exchanged in the transcultural process of migration is returned to its source; Komala is forced to account for herself and her new ways of thinking and behaving which have issued from the original transaction. Yet, just as she had to adjust to the new context of Australia, she is forced to recognise that she is no longer the same person who left Jakarta for Australia, and that she must adjust again to the new-old demands of the Indonesian context.

* cosmopolitans where all alternative views are labelled as racist and discarded as narrow and morally-ideologically derelict (Betts, 1993: 224-5).
As she flies off to Jakarta, Komala immediately senses this unfolding disjuncture in her life. She feels uncomfortably wistful, suspended between the home and family of Australia and the familiar environment of Indonesia: 'I felt alone and displaced' (*RAE*, 5). This mood of displacement, one commonly recorded in migrant discourse, is to return continually in Komala's nostalgia, a mixed mood of longing for her Australian home and family, and for the past she has left and tried to re-discover in Jakarta. 'I did not belong in this house' (*RAE*, 26) she laments as she looks around at the changes in the Jakartan social milieu generally and her parents' household in particular; the sensation of loss only increases her longing for her home in Australia. The old personable Jakarta has succumbed to the utility of modernization and the burgeoning middle-class dwellings of the 'International Style', multi-storeyed concrete apartments which adorn the widened streets:

I had yearned for the old Jalan Jambu Monyet then, when people had strolled casually on the dirt footpath, where the boys had stopped on their pushbikes to chat with Burham and me, where the horsecarts had clip-clopped past often leaving a trail of horse dung, and the oxcarts moved lazily along, the riders swaying on the boxlike carriages. I had resented the smell of exhaust fumes replacing the stench of animal faeces (*RAE*, 20).

What disturbs Komala is the loss of observable social and cultural difference. In Stuart Hall's terms, Komala's privilege and power as an Australian citizen have been purchased at the expense of real and discernible difference. Her assimilation into Australian society has diluted difference, but now, returning to Jakarta, it is that old difference which Komala seeks. Komala is the 'altruistic cosmopolitan' of the Australian First World (Betts, 1993), a progenitor of interesting cuisine and customs, but she is shocked by the modernization and dilution of Jakarta itself, its transformation into an indistinct, international city. In many ways, Komala's observations at this point in the novel might seem to echo the concerns of geographers like Lipietz (1986) and Harvey (1989, see Chapter Two) who have seen the absorption of the Third World city into the global economy as ameliorating cultural difference through the demands of economic modernism, replication and conformity. In either case, Komala is being forced to recognise that these

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*Harvey echoes Stuart Hall's concerns about the dilution of difference by the processes of modern capitalism and internationalism generally. Komala's own middle-
external changes to the beloved Jakarta of her youth threaten her precisely because she too has changed, she too has been modernised. Her yearning for difference is like the yearning of the Australian proponents of the exotic cuisine: she would have wanted the preservation of the old ways, the old 'cuisine', which provide both stability and pleasure. The economic and social decline of her own family household, which seems to intensify Komala's distress and her experience of identity crisis or 'doubling', localizes and mirrors the broader social transformations she is forced to confront and acknowledge.

Like the migrant Missing Person discussed in Bhabha's theory (1987), Komala feels entirely disoriented as she negotiates the complex cultural web that unites her and distances her from a household already in flux, already undergoing its own distressing but seemingly inevitable changes. Komala's adopted Christianity, for example, ironically precipitated by her attendance at a Jakartan Christian school, has become essentialized through her transcultural adjustments to a life and marriage in Australia. Indeed, her new country and culture facilitate, unify and focus the inner experiences which, Komala tells us, have always been part of some latent spiritual inclination: 'I was a Christian at heart' (RAE, 33) she confides, and it is these Christian values, combined with a vague Australian egalitarianism, which ultimately distinguish Komala from the attitudes and behaviours of the rest of the household in Jakarta. Christian mythology and democratic liberalism are used, for example, to dissuade the household from their poor treatment of a resentful domestic servant. Yet even here, Komala feels trapped between her Indonesian heritage and her new knowledge and ideologies:

Though I was annoyed by the way Thalia talked to the servant, I had not been prepared to see the retaliation from the servant . . . I did not know what my true attitude was. When I had finally left Indonesia to live in Australia I had learned to accept the relatively egalitarian concepts which prevail in Australian society, and had often looked back uncomfortably on the way we treated our servants, and at the discrepancies between the place we allowed them and the place that they actually held in our lives (RAE, 70).

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class Australian internationalism accords, as we have noted above, with the dilute cosmopolitanism endorsed by the new social class. Betts (1988) makes much of this cosmopolitanism in her discussion of the 'tastes' and ideology of the educated middle classes in Australia.
Komala's homily to Thalia is tinged with a hubris which broadens the sphere of her own ambivalence. There is certainly a resonant egalitarianism, enhanced if not learned through her experiences in Australia. However, this liberalist inclination marries somewhat uncomfortably with the tone of superiority which Komala may have also brought from Australia. Strangely, it is this same unflagging faith in the values of liberalism and equality, combined with the equally unproblematic belief that such principles can readily translate to the political and cultural experiences of the ASEAN states which has caused such significant offence to the governments and peoples of the region. Komala's liberalism and the arrogance with which it is deployed in the new-old household, however, are further complicated by social attitudes which may derive more directly from Indonesia and her previous social position in Jakarta.

It is this combination of attitudes, principles and circumstances which encourage Komala to question a whole range of social relationships in her former home. The disastrous outcome of Komala's interference and imposition of values alien to the household, parallel her involvement in Tati and Hamdani's difficulties. In both cases Komala is inspired to act 'because her sense of justice has been offended' (RAE, 95). In fact, like Peter Reeves in Far East or Alex in Monkeys in the Dark, Komala attempts to act against the 'conventional thinking of the society' (RAE, 91) because she is attempting to alter those conventions by producing a more sympathetic approach to justice — especially for women — and because she is trying to reconcile her own incompleteness and confusion about her identity and position in the old-new Indonesia. Consequently, at the level of the body she is invoking her own power as imbued by the essentialist Christian values and by the modernist ideologies of liberalism and feminism. Her concern for the servant girls and for Tati — indeed for all the women employed in the service of the body — is marked by Christian sympathy and First World feminist ideology: 'For a girl to be single, alone and unemployed was to be totally vulnerable' (RAE, 72).

This sympathy for the girls who sell their bodies in the trade of domestic servitude or sexual hospitality in Jakarta is used by Anggraeni to elucidate further the theme of bodily commodification. In confronting the social fallibilities of domestic and sexual servitude, Komala is also being forced to acknowledge her own commodification as an agent of transcultural migration. She too has been transformed, though she attempts to recover herself from the disorienting effects of migration and modernization by becoming more intimately involved in the life of the sex worker, Tati. Consequently, as the
novel develops Komala becomes less distressed by the dissonance she experiences in returning to Jakarta, as she adopts the identity of the social reformer. Contravening the 'old ways' which have been destabilized by the processes of modernization anyway, Komala presumes to imbue the physical and economic changes she has observed with commensurate ideological 'improvement'. The liberation of the individual, which has accompanied modernization in the First World generally, Australia in particular, appears not to have accompanied the processes of international integration. Once again, Komala is behaving like the civil rights organizations and journalists of Australia who invoke Millsian democratic principles against the government and plutocracy of Indonesia. In Komala's case, it is the repression and mistreatment of vulnerable girls which most inspires and distresses her. The idea that these girls — as distraction for the husbands who must support and care for wives and families — should represent the 'root of all evil' in the minds of the Jakarta wives (RAE, 65), is a grave offence to Komala; it becomes the centralizing symbol for her political agency and action.

In fact, while she, like John Cooper, may wish to pursue these reforms as a matter of personal or identity reconciliation as much as general social improvement, Komala's scheme proves as fruitless as Tati's original ambitions. Her attempt to change what she regards as an iniquitous social system, one which allows rich and powerful men 'to get away with murder' and women to humiliate themselves in acts of sexual ingratiation, is greeted with insurmountable resistance. As in Alex's attempts to transcend repressive politics and John Cooper's attempts to rationalize a distorted commercial system, Komala discovers that these social and political processes are virtually impregnable. She, after all, is no longer an Indonesian, but is an Indonesian-Australian, a transculturalist who has no long-term commitment to living in Jakarta but can — again like John Cooper — 'fly out at any time'. As Tati's co-workers tell Komala, she is imposing her sense of justice from the relative security of her Australianness; Komala can do as she wishes, but will always have another home, another sanctuary and another identity into which she can retreat.

Komala's relative security — in fact her whole transformed outlook — may have been disturbed by her return to Indonesia, but it is to her Australianness that she turns when confronted by these crises. When considering her father's relative penury and illness, Komala discloses her naïvete and her arrogance when she notes: 'Papa would have been entitled to support in Australia' (RAE, 82) while in Indonesia he must suffer like other innocent people. Moreover,
when considering the crimes of Tati's assailants, Komala observes with some
disgust that Baldy and his wife would have been forced to take responsibility
for their actions in Australia. In fact, the threats posed by Indonesia and its less
palpable processes of justice, while destabilizing Komala's personal moral and
ideological system during her stay in Indonesia, also force her to reflect on the
value and pleasure her migration has brought her. Her body and subjectivity
have been liberated, but the bodies of the Indonesians — at least those who
are not rich and powerful — seem more vulnerable and insecure than she had
noticed before her migration. The car accident victims she sees on her arrival
in Jakarta, the dispensability of the sex workers and even the beggars who
line the streets, distressing the sensibilities of one particularly unsympathetic
waiter 'who was not far removed from dispensability himself' (RAE, 62) — are
all symbols in Komala's thinking of an inferior state and culture.

Nevertheless through these efforts to reform the fallibilities she observes in
the wider community and in her family in particular, Komala, in invoking her
own personal liberation, becomes guilty not merely of cultural transposition,
but also personal imperiousness and personal betrayal. In attempting to
remove the distress of cultural dissonance and identity destabilization caused
by her return and especially the imminent death of her father, Komala becomes
'more Australian' through the expression of the 'liberation' transcultural
migration has originally provided. She would, therefore, exercise her choice.
She would achieve justice for Tati, restore dignity to her father, and achieve
sexual and cultural gratification through the deployment of her own body. In
this way, Komala's sexual union with Hammy is not merely an attempt to
recover her lost youth, her forgone pleasure, it is the ultimate expression of her
liberation, the ideological determination of her freedom. She is choosing the
'exotic cuisine', the cosmopolitanism, of Hammy's body, at least in part, because
it is sexually and culturally different from her own new Australian body —
because it is the source of a new transcultural pleasure.

As a political gesture, however, the sexual engagement of Hammy's
(transcultural) body is both ideologically and psychologically complex.
Certainly, Komala uses Hammy's body in order to access those pleasures
which the social environment of her youth had denied her, and to that extent
she enjoys some moral and political victory over those laws and social players
who had denied her; she thus retrieves something of the past for which she
has yearned since her arrival in Jakarta. Moreover, her sexual deployment and
self-assertion, in transgressing the current iniquities perpetrated by the women
of Jakarta against other women, also constitute a significant moral and
political assault against the anti-female conceits such as 'the root of all evil' (I doubt that a pun is intended). These victories, these positive actions, however, are achieved through an equally dubious transgression of her own marital, familial and national fidelities. As is the case with all choice, Komala's decision to betray her husband is bound by other, more complex associations. Her desire and her infidelity surprises her as much as her father's own marital betrayal. In any case, her father's death, Tati's flight and the intensity of her sexual appetite, shock her out of her superiority, forcing her to recognise that even her liberation is limited, and that she too is vulnerable to the processes and power of the body, just like the characters in her fiction. As she tells Hamdani:

'It's my stupidity! I thought I understood the suffering of the downtrodden women in this country. I thought I was enlightening people on the plight of others. Serves me right for being so smug! ... What arrogance! No, Hamdani! I think I've learned a thing or two! I did not know any more whether I was being earnest or sarcastic. And I didn't care! (RAE, 137).

Once again, the Root of All Evil demonstrates the vulnerability of the subject within the context of transcultural propinquity. Komala has been transformed by her experiences in Australia, and while the effects of this subject-identity splitting have been somewhat healed by time, her father's death and the excursion to Jakarta return her to a state of crisis. Komala is forced to reconcile this complex of often contradictory cultural forces. Like Baudrillard's floating signifier, she moves across space trying to secure herself in some meaningful and ethical social action. Her confusion is deepened by the changes in the old world ways. Indonesia is not as she remembered it, but has, like her own identity, been transformed by the powers of modernisation and capital. She is once again transformed by the new Indonesia which embraces her and demands altered orientation. When she engages in sexual pleasure with Hammy she is losing as much of herself as she is gaining or regaining. She deploys her body to attain pleasure and foundation, but is forced to reconcile the immediacies of her action with the longer term gratifications of her marriage, her family and her commitment to Australia and her Australian identity.

Komala finds that she cannot avoid the consequences of her migration and the identity splitting it has caused. She has deployed her body as a unit of
cultural and transnational exchange, and has tried to reconcile the division by invoking her Australianness, her liberation, over the modern though ideologically fallible Indonesia. Her superior 'position' proves as fallible as her body, and she succumbs to her physical desires and to the splitting that has paradoxically liberated and incarcerated her. Thus, as ideology and moral superiority fail her, Komala is compelled once more to see herself as a commodity of transcultural exchange. While she has scorned and pitted girls like Tati who have deployed their bodies as sexual objects for material gratification, Komala deploys her own body for pleasures that are equally transitory. With the shock of her father's death and her own sexual disloyalty, she seeks redemption in her Australianness and the restoration of her husband and children. She returns — like Cooper, like Alex, like Guy Hamilton, and as the prostitutes of Jakarta had predicted — to her sanctuary. Like Tati, Komala is a sexual subject. Yet while Tati is blinded and irredeemably shamed by her sexual deployment, Komala is able to escape to Australia to salve her wounded moral self. Multiculturalism and the altruistic cosmopolitanism, which imbue the economic transaction of the migratory body with ideological dignity, seem unable to reconcile its celebration of choice, liberation and hence power with the powerlessness of others.

III. Heroes, Heroines and Harlots

As we have already noted, a good deal of what is written about representations of Asia by Australian news media, film and literature focuses on the limited and often 'stereotypical' depiction of indigenous Asians. Alison Bronowski's (1992) complaint that films like Peter Weir's The Year of Living Dangerously use Asians and the Asian context as mere background to Euro-Australian adventurism is echoed by Chua Siew Keng (1992, 1993) in her analyses of Australian films and the production of textual and audience subjectivities. Acknowledging the influence of Edward Said in her analysis of a number of early Australian films as well as those we are considering in the current study, Chua admonishes the 'orientalist constructions of Asians . . . which through textual, narrative strategies and audio-visual cues contributed to a sense of Asia being an inscrutable and dangerous Orient' 9 (Chua, 1993: 28). Equally, Chua argues that 'Asian subjectivities as constituent of
Australian identities are screened out' of these films (Chua, 1993: 28). Sylvie Shaw (1992) argues a similar point in her analysis of recent Australian films set in Asia. While rebuking film-makers for 'painting all of Asia with one brush' (Shaw, 1992: 35) by shooting specified national contexts in other locations, Shaw is equally distressed by those films and TV series which 'tend to be more about our search for identity and say more about Australia than they do about Asia' (Shaw, 1992: 37). Our discussions in this study have already demonstrated that questions of identity and subjectivity are essential to all forms of discourse and representation; the context of transcultural postmodernism makes such questions unavoidable. However, Shaw's analysis, in repudiating negative, hostile or 'stereotypical' images of Asia, also challenges those Australian feature films which use exotic locations as a form of subjunctively Oriental eroticism:

The mysteries of Asia tug at the primitive heart strings. Tropical beaches, magical cultures, exotic landscapes, sexual encounters — an escape from our everyday lives. But in many of our films, the exotic also becomes the erotic. As Freda Freiberg suggests, the heroes go troppo and awaken the 'hidden native in their lives.' . . . They unleash the repressed sexuality of the suburbs and after a whirlwind holiday romance or flirtation with spirituality, they return to their families and their mundane existence (Shaw, 1992: 37).

While Shaw-Freiberg's paraphrase may have some resonance in the plot of films like Phil Noyce's *Echoes of Paradise* (1988) and may even be vaguely detectable in Anggraeni's novel *Root of All Evil*, its excessive formulism provides little insight into the sexual relationships between Australians and their near neighbours. Shaw's disavowal of identity as a legitimate thematic and semiological focus and her warnings that we should 'beware the token Asian, particularly the stereotyped version' (Shaw, 1992: 37) indicate a more
general ideological commitment to the ethnic self-representation, and the
formulation of positive and attractive ethnic types. ¹⁷

Moreover, Shaw's comments also signpost those ideological concerns of
feminists and postcolonialists who would see the sexual stereotyping of the
Orient as intrinsic to the West's general system of material and discursive
domination of the East. Edward Said's account of Orientalism and gender has
become the foundation of much of the analysis of sexual transculturalism:

Orientalism itself, furthermore, was an exclusively male province; like so
many professional guilds during the modern period, it viewed itself and
its subject matter with sexist blinkers. This is especially true in the writing
of travelers and novelists; women are usually the creatures of male
power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less
stupid, and above all they are willing (Said, 1978: 207).

For analysts influenced by postcolonial and feminist liberational ideologies,
the replication of such images in the minds of Western men and through the
imaging of recent film and literature serves to reinforce regressive and
patriarchal systems of cultural and sexual domination. Indeed, a number of
critics have argued that the representation of any systematic form of violence,
exploitation or domination becomes complicit with the object of its
representation; as we have noted, much of the critical disparagement of
Geoffrey Wright's Romper Stomper seized precisely on this point, arguing that
the film 'glamorized' or tacitly sanctioned violence for those audiences who
identified with the racist gangs.

More broadly, however, both Dennis O'Rourke's (1992) documentary
description of Thai prostitution and John Duigan's fictional representation of
an Australo-Asian sex bar in Far East (1982) have been severely criticised for
their depictions of Asia and of the sex trade in particular. In fact, virtually all
the texts thus far discussed in this study feature, more or less prominently, the
trade of the sexual body. And in virtually all cases and with varying levels of
authorial-directorial disapproval, it is the Western male who is the primary

¹⁷ I have no wish to dispute this desire. However, I would challenge the claim that a
positive image should necessarily be any less stereotypical than a negative one. While
Shaw never explicitly claims as much, she seems to be suggesting that films like Aya
(Solrun Hoas, 1990) and Children of the Dragon (ABC, BBC, Xanadu, 1991) present
noticeably less stereotypical Asian characters than The Year of Living Dangerously or
Far East. The former couple she praises and the latter she dismisses. Such analyses
would be highly problematical.
purchaser of the sexualised Asian body. There is Curtis' cemetery in *The Year of Living Dangerously*, Cullen's sexual adventurism in *A Cry from the Jungle Bar*, the bars and sex clubs of *Water from the Moon*, the exploitative behaviours of the powerful males in *Monkeys in the Dark* and *Turtle Beach*, and the vicious escort trade in *The Root of All Evil*. Certainly there are homosexual variations on the theme of sexual trade (Wally O' Sullivan), and occasional suggestions that women of the First World might also deploy their greater power to achieve sexual gratification (Alex, Judith, and Sam Konig), but by and large it is the heterosexual Euro-Australian males who are depicted as achieving their immediate sexual gratifications through the exchange of money for a 'willing' Asian body.

As these texts indicate, the massive increase in transnational human movement around the globe, precipitated by commerce, information development, migration and tourism, has extended the field of sexual trade beyond national boundaries. Feminists have followed Said's repudiation of Western patriarchal hegemony by denouncing the sex trade as yet another permutation of masculine power-fantasy through which female bodies are commodified in commercial processes. Now the men of the rich Western countries use their greater wealth to control the sexuality of women from poorer countries. Thus the poorer nation itself is exploited and disciplined as feminine, while the white male imposes his will across the whole of the globe; the source of this power differential, Chilla Bulbeck informs us, may be found in colonial practices.

The project of locating women of colour (all women) as gendered subjects marked by their race has required a rewriting of colonial history to take account of the general nature of rule and subordination... It is now widely accepted that colonialism constructed white masculinity as normative, and in the process, both sexualized and racialized the colonized people. The dominated men were often considered effeminate, but also potent, because they lacked the rational control of their sexual urges that white, middle-class men claimed for themselves. White middle-class women luckily did not have an appetite to transcend. The dominated females, like their menfolk, were constructed as licentious and depraved, and therefore could be treated as the sexual property of white men (Bulbeck, 1992: 325).
Yet in documenting the globalist permutations of these forms of sexual exploitation, films like O'Rourke's *The Good Woman of Bangkok* and Duigan's *Far East* appear to have been as offensive to feminist sensibilities as the sexual trade itself. Bulbeck's disavowal of hegemonic white male attitudes and practices, most noticeably as they are manifest in the flesh tours and nightclubs of South East Asia, would appear to render impossible the installation of any aesthetic, critical or ideological distance between these white typologies and their sexual-political heritage. In other words, it appears that a white novelist or film-maker cannot comment on the infamy of white exploitation because they are necessarily bound to it and by it.

Certainly, the critical response by a number of feminists to O'Rourke's documentary film\(^{18}\) was extremely hostile. The film, which depicts the life of one particular prostitute in a Bangkok nightclub, was intended to elucidate the exploitative nature of the trade, the unhappiness of the prostitutes, and the personal and ideological inadequacies of the male customers. O'Rourke's confession in the leader notes that he had gone to Bangkok initially to salve his own personal distresses and gratify his own sexual needs by taking a prostitute was seized upon by many of the feminist critics as evidence of the director's complicity with the sexual trade and the hegemonic practices the film supposedly reveals. The notes read —

The film maker was forty-three when his marriage ended. He was trying to understand how love could be so banal and so profound. He came to Bangkok, the mecca of Western men with fantasies of exotic sex and love without pain. He would meet a Thai prostitute and make a film about that.

{Visual interpolation}

He seemed to be no different from the other 5000 men who crowd the bars every night. It was three in the morning when she finished dancing and sat with him. She said that her name was Aoi . . . that it meant sugar-

\(^{18}\) *The Good Woman of Bangkok* had a short cinema release in 1992 and was shown later that year on ABC television. While the film is based in Bangkok a number of its themes can be more generally applied to the South East Asian region and Australia's relationship with Indonesia in particular. I intend, therefore, to discuss the documentary, as well as John Duigan's *Far East* in some detail. Duigan's film, while based in The Philippines, was shot in Macao. There is only one verbal reference to The Philippines in the film and only a few other allusions that might locate it in a particular South East Asian country. Part of Duigan's strategy is to universalize his themes of exploitation and power relationships. By not specifying his location, he is able to achieve these more universal references.
cane or sweet. The pimp came over and said 'Only 500 baht or 20 dollars . . . Keep her until the afternoon, do anything you like . . . OK?' He paid and was her customer. She became the subject of his film.

This complicity detected by the feminist critics is further reinforced by O'Rourke's filmic lyricism which he deploys through his images of the Bangkok night life. The introductory scenes of the night club which feature Aoi and other performers, naked and dancing in slow motion, intensify the eroticism which, according to the feminists, O'Rourke should have been working against. The generally attractive and exhilarating images of the Bangkok clubs and street-life create a more pervasive mood of Bacchanalian pleasure failing to expose fully the hideousness of Aoi's life and treatment. Moreover, as his detractors conclude, the commercial exchange of Aoi's body — like the one in which O'Rourke himself is involved — parallels the visual exploitation which O'Rourke commits in the production of his so-called fiction film.

ABC radio's The Coming Out Show devoted an entire program (26 March 1992) to a feminist critique of The Good Woman of Bangkok. What was particularly offensive to the discussion panel who had viewed the film was its benign portrayal of the male customers. While some of the young men were presented as undoubtedly salacious, they were often portrayed as merely 'good-time boys', with whom the girls were merely having fun. However, one of the most conspicuous interviews of the film was conducted with a particularly enthusiastic American male whose hyperbole was depicted through ironic and comic tones. The Coming Out Show highlighted this interview for special attention:

CUSTOMER: I'd just like to make a comparison with American women. I tell ya, American women are bitches compared with these women. You don't want to deal with American women. These women (indicates to the naked Thai dancers) are top of the line. Their bodies are the best, their minds have the right attitude. You can't beat the attitude of these girls. There's no girl in the world that'll give you a shower, give you a blow job, fuck your brains out, then fold your clothes with a smile on her face.

The irony of O'Rourke's presentation, however, is not appreciated by the panel. Indeed, the producers of The Coming Out Show remove the textual
irony altogether by placing the excerpt between two statements from Asian women who describe their personal sense of vulnerability to 'white men'. In removing the irony of the excerpt, the producers reinforce the general panel belief that O'Rourke is endorsing the behaviour of his male customer. The segment is immediately followed by a Euro-Australian feminist's epitome of the processes of white Orientalist exploitation of Asian women: The feminist refers to O'Rourke's own defence of the film as exposing the fallibilities of male sexuality:

**FEMINIST:** O'Rourke also claimed that prostitution was a metaphor for all relations between men and women. I actually didn't think that's what the film said. I think the film just said all women are prostitutes. It plays with the very familiar theme in the nineteenth century in Australia of juxtaposing, or holding up the nineteenth century Pacific Island woman against the bourgeois white woman, arguing that the Pacific Island woman — there were a lot of travellers to this region—is natural woman, sexual, giving of their sexual favours. Against white middle class woman who was civilized and therefore corrupted as woman; not as human being, but as woman. And that was the same message: if you were a real woman, you were a prostitute.

According to the discussion panel, Aoi's own declarations against her male customers — 'I hate all men' — along with the exposure of her personal tribulations, do not negate the more subtle re-exploitation the film itself commits. Her beauty and sexuality are continually visualised, and the male customers, even the worst of them, are never clearly damned by the film's ideology. One young male customer even claims sympathy for the girls and the economic imperatives of the trade. And O'Rourke's own putative sympathy, which involved the gift of money and a farm so Aoi could leave the trade, is regarded by the feminists as another act of white male control and domination. In fact, the panel argues that the film's political position accords more generally with the Althusserian conceit, endorsing the hegemonic social structures of sexual patriarchy. Male sexual pleasure is insidiously woven not

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19 O'Rourke, in his defence of the film and his actions, has pointed out that Aoi's mother 'forced' her back into prostitution in the hope of getting more large gifts from sympathetic males. There is a question of matriarchal interference here which echoes Gabriel Garcia Marquez's interesting tale of 'Innocent Erindira,' Erindira is forced into prostitution by her 'wicked grandmother' who becomes immensely wealthy by the grand-daughter's profession.
merely as a sub-text, but as the very fabric and essence of the film and its conception: voyeurism, exploitation, economic and social power, expand the general theme of female victimization and sexual imperialism into the Asian Third World.

This judgement of O'Rourke's film is consonant with the more general feminist dissatisfaction with the film as a medium of female spectacle. In her highly influential essay 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema' (1984), Laura Mulvey speaks for a distinctly polemical school of feminism when she identifies a gender dichotomy in classic cinema where 'the man looks and the woman is to-be-looked-at'. Mulvey applies the methodology of psychoanalysis to explain this 'structural-narrative division by the ideology of the patriarchal order' (Mulvey, 1084: 372). Through identification with the active male character (phallocentricism), the spectator is privileged both as the observer of the spectacle of the passive female figure, and also as the controller and power source of the events on the screen and, vicariously, the female figure herself:

Going far beyond highlighting the woman's to-be-looked-at-ness, cinema builds the way she is to be looked at into the spectacle itself . . .
[Cinematic] codes create a gaze, a world, and an object, thereby creating an illusion cut to the measure of desire (Mulvey, 1984: 372).

While the polemicism evident in Mulvey's essay is part of a more substantial convention in feminist film theory, the issue of phallocentric pleasure in cinema is further complicated, according to Permlde Dhillon Kashyap, by Europe's voyeuristic attitude toward the cultural 'Other', the Asian — 'The effect of distorted images has been to deny Asian three-dimensionality in a reduction to "types," for white society's voyeuristic gaze' (Dhillon-Kashyap, 1988: 124). Clearly, this is precisely what Sylvie Shaw (1992), Chua Siew Keng (1992, 1993) and Alison Bronowski (1992) have in mind in their repudiation of Australian masculo cinematic representation of Asian typologies, especially of Asian women.

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20 Mulvey goes a little further in her psychoanalysis, however, by contending that pleasure may be compromised by danger, castration threat and 'unpleasure. The female 'look' produces contradictions which permeate the premise of the narrative itself: 'the female image as a castration threat constantly endangers the unity of the diegesis and burst through the world of illusion as an intrusive, static, one-dimensional fetish' (Mulvey, 1984: 373).
As we have seen in our initial investigation of Orientalism, such polemicist analyses of Asian imagery in textual production locate themselves as much in material liberation as in discursive deconstruction. Like Sneja Gunew (1990) who celebrates a transnational multiculturalism as the formation of 'competing ethnic voices' in a material and liberatory 'reality', Jacqueline Rose disputes those, especially semiological, theories of cinema that would ameliorate difference by the valorization of signifying systems: 'What is central here is that cinema appears as an apparatus which tries to close itself off as a system, but that there is always a certain refusal of difference of any troubling of the system, an attempt to run away from that moment of difference, and to bind it back into the logic of perfection in the film system itself' (Rose, 1980: 24). In other words, Rose is critical of semiology which re-organizes or redefines difference — especially female difference — into its heuristic system.

This concept of 'female difference'21 is quite complex, however, and has brought feminism itself into a state of internal theoretical crisis which parallels broader ideological debates on the validity of agency and subjectivity itself. Specifically, while a certain ideological convention has been constructed around the psychoanalytical methods pioneered by Mulvey and others, particularly in the film theory developed through the Screen journal,22 there has often been considerable lack of clarity in discussions about the polemical value of 'difference' and to what degree the 'other' is a separable and identifiable category of subjectivity. Bhabha (1987), for example, in his own repudiation of the simplistic categorization of the 'different' as an oppositional political constitution, suggests that this separation neglects the interdependency of self-other through declaring the independence of the marginal and oppositional individual or collective formation. Equally, Dugald Williamson (1987) and Stuart Hall (1988) have noted that even those theories which argue the complex association of self-other in psychoanalytic theory often fail to elucidate fully the relationship between political agency and representational self-reflexivity, between configuration and ideology, between Lacanian notions of subjectivity and cinematic realism. Hall, whose own appreciation and understanding of poststructuralist-derived theories is

21 It is worth pursuing this issue briefly as many of its implications have direct relevance for our discussion of transcultural patriarchy and the commercial deployment of the sexual body, most particularly as it refers to recent De-Orientalist film analysis.
considerable, despite his residual Marxist sympathies, finds the universalism of Screen Theory finally undermined by its own ambitions:

In its present all-embracing form 'screen theory' refuses to countenance any propositions about discourse or ideology which are not reducible to, and explicable by, the Lacanian theory of 'the subject'. Thus it claims to explain how 'the subject' is positioned in relation to patriarchal ideology-in-general. But it cannot explain the permanent differences between different patriarchal ideologies in different social formations at different times. Even less can it explain how patriarchal ideologies may be broken, interrupted or contravened: since, according to the theory, 'the subject' cannot help but enter the 'symbolic' under the patriarchal sign, since it is this, in imposing the 'Law of Culture' (the 'Law of the Symbolic') establishes the rule of differences on which language itself is founded (Hall, 1988: 161).

Like Williamson, Hall queries the translation of Lacanian theory into an ideology of patriarchal oppositionalism and systematic film analysis. As in his analysis of Derrida (1991b) and in keeping with his own broader ideological perspective, Hall would question the capacity of any poststructuralist derived theory to offer substantial directions for social reform.

Other feminists would share Hall's doubts, seeing the poststructuralist and psychoanalytic version of gender politics as fraught with critical and ideological dangers. In turning away from complex and simple celebrations of political difference, Sabina Lovibond, along with many other feminists, argues against the unnecessary sophistry of postmodernist conceptions of power and materiality, preferring to retain the Enlightenment investitures of social agency and liberation. Most specifically, Lovibond rejects the postmodernist emphasis on subjectivity which celebrates the sort of individuality and choice, especially as it is expressed through facile commercialism, fashion and personal pleasure. For Lovibond this individualism represents a 'compromised' feminism. In her essay 'Feminism and postmodernism' (1990) Lovibond argues that feminism arose out of the liberationary project of modernism and, while the postmodern emphasis on choice and cultural production needs to be embraced, there should be no ultimate break from the foundations of Enlightenment material emancipation in favour of the 'anti rationalist mood of the times' (Lovibond, 1990: 176). Lovibond challenges, in fact, those feminist proponents of fashion who consider the 'look' of a female (i.e. female as
spectacle for visual pleasure) as either ideologically neutral or an expression of female 'choice':

In all these texts the idea of pleasure is prominent — either our own or . . . the pleasure we give others (thereby justifying our own existence, and presumably, gaining something of the narcissistic satisfaction traditionally allowed to women). The word 'pleasure', at all events, is apt to be brought out with a flourish as if it clinched the case for seeing progressive or creative possibilities in something previously viewed with suspicion. The suggestion is that feminists have harmed their cause, they have put people off, by their gratuitous asceticism about make-up, frilly knickers and the like (Lovibond, 1990: 177).

Lovibond's resistance to the claims of postmodern 'choice' are based on the fundamental belief in separate systems of power-hegemony whereby the masculine continues to dominate the feminine as a separate and distinct political division. It is this kind of 'old fashioned' feminism which informs much of the interest in, and repudiation of, films like Dennis O'Rourke's The Good Woman of Bangkok.

Yet Lovibond's defence of Enlightenment feminism against the marauding celebrations of postmodernist individuality signifies a more profound ideological division within the feminist project itself. The power of postmodern theories on discourse and subjectivity has been especially critical of feminism's ability — or right — to speak for all women as an homogeneous political entity rather than an heterogeneous collection of individuals and subgroups. Jacqueline Rose's relatively simple celebration of the political category of female difference, Gunew's (1990) universal liberation through competing ethnic voices, Bulbeck's (1992) configuration of all women as 'women of colour', and Lovibond's own raillery against the feminism of fashion are all responses to the new challenge of postmodern heterogeneity with its emphasis on ephemerality and the discursive constitution of difference. In her introduction to the Screen special issue on feminism and cinema, 'Discourse and its discontents' (1987), Mandy Merck points to the range of complex divisions associated with the theoretical construction of difference; woman as

23 It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the relationship between feminism and postmodernism in any detail. See Meaghan Morris's The Pirate's Fiancée: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism (1988) which explores a number of the major (male) postmodern theories in relation to feminist discourse. See also special issue of Screen 'Difference and its discontents.'
oppositional may be regarded variously as affirming a subjugant status, potent self expression, or 'a basis of shared ideas against the modish pluralism of postmodernism'. This diversification of the feminist project, however, is challenged by the tradition of liberation, according to Lovibond since 'universalizing' of Enlightenment feminism is the necessary mode of attack against the universalizing subjugation of women (Lovibond, 1990:178-9).

Nevertheless, questions of pluralism, pleasure and individual choice have confounded the evolution of feminist theory. Even in the sexual trade of the body a new voice of feminine liberation is being heard, challenging the older conceptions of sexual liberation. As conventional feminism resists the implications of a postmodernism which celebrates choice and diversity above all things, other women are beginning to argue that true liberation is ultimately and in any context the exercise of individuality, including the choice of fashion and sexual deployment.24 This tension between the pluralism of individual choice and the universalizing impulses of feminism parallels the complex tensions that have irrupted other liberationary — especially neo-Marxist and liberal democratic — theories.

Such tensions, in fact, are textualized dramatically through the ideologies of pleasure and the pragmatics of everyday survival in John Duigan's Far East. While Far East is set in The Philippines, there is a sense in which the film's location is 'unspecified' in order to represent more generally the issues associated with Third World sexual trade, and power and control. In fact, in its somewhat sympathetic depiction of sexual traders, Far East would appear to risk the sorts of ideological contempt that has been levelled against The Good Woman of Bangkok. While more clearly fictionalized than O'Rourke's film, the story of an Aussie nightclub keeper trading in the pleasure of the flesh represents a serious romanticization of what the De-Orientalist critics would regard as classical sexual and cultural hegemony. In fact, in its transfiguration of Casablanca, Duigan's film effects a strange cross-contextualization of the West-East dichotomy. The title would seem to reinforce the conceit of

24 This debate over sexual deployment and sexual identity for women has become evident in academic and public discussions on pornography and sexual play more generally. Popular feminist commentators like Betina Arndt and Beatrice Faust have each defended pornography and sexual play more generally in various articles appearing in The Australian newspaper. According to Faust, for example, pornography plays an important part in human sexuality, and its universal condemnation by certain feminist thinking runs counter to broader issues of sexual deployment and pleasure (Faust, 1993: 15). Debate over 'date rape' and 'backlash feminism' in Australia and the U.S. has parallel implications, and appears to be constituting a quite fundamental challenge for feminist thinking.
distance and difference, though the action of the film produces a series of cultural propinquitities and identity realignments that would deny the Orientalist nomenclature. If anything, the film implodes its own aesthetic strategy somewhat by trying on the one hand to be like the Hollywood classic through its textual allusions, while on the other hand moving distinctly away from the referential restrictions in keeping with Duigan's more current social and filmic interests. Thus, the romanticization of the nightclub life and the exotic-erotic milieu of South East Asia is challenged by broader political tensions. The hedonism and romanticism emblemized in the character of Keefe — most especially through his relationships with a former dancer-prostitute Asian woman and a former nightclub singer French woman — are destabilized by the brutalities of the external political events and environment.

Central to the film is the question of exploitation and power. In the commerce of the body Morgan Keefe's Koala Club provides entertainment through the spectacle of the female figure. The clients are primarily Australian male tourists interspersed with Australian and indigenous male businessmen. The conventions of Australian material and sexual hedonism (cf. Conway, 1971, Fiske et al, 1987), along with its pub culture, are woven into the cultural ambience of South East Asia. The Koala Club functions as a hybrid cultural phenomenon, part of the wider globalist and capitalist integrations of business and tourism. While Keefe's tourist business is depicted as morally and ideologically ambiguous, Duigan deliberately ameliorates these implications by emphasizing that Keefe himself is not a brothel keeper or pimp in the strict sense: his girls perform in spangled bikinis for the 'gaze' of the male patrons, but they engage in escort and prostitution according to their own wishes. Keefe insists to Jo Reeves, herself a former nightclub singer in French controlled Saigon, that the girls 'work' according to their own desires and needs. 'Beats starving' Keefe tells her. Jo, however, despite her worldliness and undeniably sensual potency, feels considerable discomfort over her ex-lover's commercial activities:

JO: Christ this is a dive.
KEEFE: It's what they want. . . .
JO: Last night you seemed quite proud talking to that German woman as though this place was a brothel.
KEEFE: Well, that's how she wants to see it 'cause her old man gets a drink here.
JO: And a girl?
KEEFE: That's up to him.
JO: Does the girl get a choice?
KEEFE: [Emphatically] Sure.

Thus for Jo, who is no prude and who will happily pursue the inclinations of her own bodily desires for pleasure even if it means deceiving her husband, the political crusader-journalist Peter Reeves, the central issue is 'choice'.

It is this issue of choice to which the film continually refers in the complex of tensions and social alignments it presents. Duigan is careful, for example, to present the moral and ideological precariousness of Keefe's business through the perspective of choice, suggesting, it would seem, that relationships of power—at whatever level of social organization—are critically dependent on the freedom of the individual. Specifically, this question of freedom is personalized through the introduction early in the film of Julia, the 'new girl' from the provinces. Julia finds herself compelled to work in the Koala Club because of her economic circumstances, but Duigan gives the impression that she, at least to some degree, has a level of choice in her actions. While she is to become the focus of the lascivious interest of D'Cruz, the government official who has significant connections with the local military, Julia becomes the symbol of innocence for the film through which Keefe's own moral and ideological decency is expressed. This innocence, articulated through Julia's awkward dancing and resistance to male sexual approaches, is juxtaposed against the more worldly and self-interested political and sexual pragmatism which pervades the film's landscape. Commercial and political pragmatism is represented on the one hand in the more benign cultural incursions of the Koala Club, which at least produces genuine friendships and treats its workers with respect; on the other hand pragmatism is also represented by the more insidious and exploitative incursions of the 'multinational' firms which pay subsistence wages, deny the rights of organized labour and contravene individual freedoms. Julia, like Peter Reeves and the local female agitator Rosalia Constanza (the constant rose), functions as an almost allegorical contrast to these social and political formations, a sort of moral purity amid the decadence of desire, hedonism and commercial dehumanization.

The film narrative, in fact, tends to use the pattern of oppositional juxtaposition to develop its themes and propel its drama. Keefe, for example, is contrasted to Peter Reeves, who enters the film as the harbinger of all that is good and decent in the world, exposing and denouncing both the multinationals who exploit the local economy, and the Koala Club in which
Keefe, as he tells Jo, is nothing more than a 'glorified pimp'. Similarly, Jo, the pragmatic sensualist, is contrasted with Rosalia who, like the Marxist and Christian devotions she embraces, is sexually restrained and morally unimpeachable. She lowers her eyes modestly when the Koala Club is mentioned and her diffidence and sensitive intellectualism, her modest dress, her unflinching decency, are further contrasted to Jo's ambivalences, haughtiness, and propensity for display and sexual excess. In some respects the contrast between Jo and Rosalia, parallels the contrast between the new postmodern feminine liberationism and the older, Enlightenment style feminism, particularly as it is inherited through Marxist principles of labour and social justice. Rosalia's sexuality is represented as reserved and controlled. Her body, in contrast to Jo and the dancing girls, is managed through a serendipity of faith rather than the utility of commercial or sexual pleasure. Only in the political commitment of the body as it is symbolized in Rosalia can one escape its internal disorders and its external domination. Yet, as if to recall Foucault's understanding that 'between the state and the individual, sex becomes an issue' (Foucault, 1984: 26), Rosalia's body is sexualized through political violence and violation, not through choice.

It may be that the Enlightenment feminism which damned Dennis O'Rourke's The Good Woman of Bangkok or which deplores the 'modish pluralism of postmodernism' might applaud Rosalia as a woman of action, moral substance and political commitment. At this stage in the film, it may appear that Duigan has produced a didactic narrative which contrasts the amoral hedonisms of Jo and Keefe against the moral and ideological elevations of Rosalia and Peter Reeves. In fact, by dressing Rosalia in drab Western style clothing, Duigan appears to be underlining the universalism of her humanist principles; this also contrasts with the glamorous Asian style dress which the hedonist, Jo, wears into the Koala Club to complete her sexual objectives. Duigan consciously juxtaposes the pleasures of Jo and Keefe's bodies — their lovemaking and immersion in the generative femininity of water — with the tortured bodies of Reeves and Rosalia. Now the realignment of the political bodies seems complete. Keefe and Jo have their pleasure. Reeves and Rosalia have their martyrdom. The great and dominant powers of international capital and of the trade of human bodies is exposed in its most villainous and collusive forms. The Asian face of the villainy is merely a mask for those 'invisible powers' of political internationalism Maruli (Monkeys in the Dark) and Nella (Games of the Strong) have each attempted to expose. Jo and Keefe have their pleasure and also their degeneracy. It is not they, but Reeves and
Rosalia who will transcend the calumny; romantic intensity seems possible, even in the midst of terrible and infamous bodily suffering.

As the film continues, however, this broad bi-polarity collapses as the bodies shift and redefine themselves in relation to other foes and allies. Most notably, the innocence which Keefe has protected and which the Reeves-Rosalia alliance personifies, is sacrificed to D'Cruz's lust in return for the liberation of Reeves-Rosalia. Julia goes with D'Cruz under compulsion as payment for information. The pragmatism deplored by Rosalia and Reeves becomes their salvation. Similarly, Jo retreats from the 'guilt' and moral disorder represented by Keefe. Pleasure is compromised by her more profound alliance with Reeves; 'it wouldn't work' she says, refusing Keefe's overtures for a longer term commitment, just as she had done in Saigon. Instead, Jo returns to the world of complementary opposites which is the contradiction of her life with Reeves — to the cosmos of her marriage which she describes as 'two separate planets'. Keefe himself sacrifices more than his nostalgic innocence when he saves Reeves and Rosalia. As Nane tells him, he 'will have to leave here' by which she means the Koala Club, South East Asia, and the transcultural marriage-alliance with Nane. By saving Reeves he may hope to win Jo, but he also allies himself with Reeves, compromising them both, and their moral and ideological distance. Moreover, when finally he has lost Jo, Keefe protects Rosalia by shooting D'Cruz and the soldiers, and thus does more for her personally (her body) than Reeves himself could achieve.

Rosalia's sex has already been redefined by her torture and rape. Nevertheless, the ultimate threat to her body is dissolved, not by her moral purity and political integrity, but by the morally neutral — perhaps morally corrupt — body of Keefe. Duigan's irony is complex since Keefe's action in protecting Rosalia, after saving Reeves and Jo, seems to partially dissolve his own ideological neutrality as it also partially dissolves the moral purity of Rosalia herself. The contrasts established earlier in the film are inverted and mixed. Moral relativity seems ascendant, as in the end, Rosalia is not martyred to her faith, but saved for its preservation. Nevertheless, Keefe himself is not martyred by the soldiers: he is merely killed. One body is exchanged for another.

To this extent the title of Far East itself appears ironic. Distance is ameliorated by the immediacy of personal sacrifice. Keefe's moment is less an act of heroics, as David Stratton contends (1990: 221), as much as an acknowledgement of exceptional loss. Keefe himself is not the Bogartian romantic idealized in Casablanca, but a good natured and self-mocking
hedonist who encounters an old girl-friend. The Koala Club (Digger's Oasis) has none of the romantic integrity that is emblematized through scenes and songs like 'As time goes by' in the Hollywood classic. In fact, the Koala Club as a cinematic icon seems to accord more with the transgressive postcolonialism identified by semiologists like Bruce Molloy (1990), Graeme Turner (1989) and John Fiske (1987). The allusions to Casablanca might be better seen as a pastiche of reverence and nostalgia, but also of parody and imitative self-inadequacy. The piano to which Jo refers ('Does anyone play that piano?') is never played, and the only music we hear in the Koala Club is a cheap and poorly reproduced Western disco. The exotic beauty of Casablanca has been replaced by scenes of indigence and decay; cultural distance has been replaced by regularly interpolated shots of tourist planes, businessmen, and a gaggle of beer-swilling and excessively spirited Australians. Duigan's point, of course, is that the world is shrinking and that its cultures and spaces are no longer 'far' but near. The bodies of the Australo-Europeans and the Asians are cast together commercially, sexually and politically. The boundaries that separated them and ensured their differences in Casablanca have been dismantled, as new allegiances and new antagonisms emerge, none of which is a contingency of cultural difference or ethnicity alone. Thus the double-code of postmodern textuality becomes the uneasy voice of subjective redefinition. Prostitution and Third World exploitation cannot be simply explained or summarized by Enlightenment Western political incursions, but are problematized by commercial pragmatism and the ideology of pleasure.

Indeed, the conventional feminist discourse on sexual politics often neglects the vagaries and inconsistencies of power as an unstable process, a definition and redefinition of self through interaction and experience. Far East, like the novel and film The Year of Living Dangerously, demonstrates the complexity of power exchange, the fluidity of human relationships and allegiances, the inadequacies of doctrine and the uncertainty of power and knowledge in all dimensions of self-hood. Most particularly, Duigan's film demonstrates the difficulty of reconciling the politics of choice with the politics of domination. Michel Foucault in his discussion of sexuality in the period after the Enlightenment has argued that sex proliferated through the institution of the family, and that the 'age of repression' is merely a discursive illusion. As a source for much postmodernist discussion of sex and the body, Foucault's writing stands in contrast to the feminist-moral progressivist views on sexuality and exploitation:
With this investment of its own sex by a technology of power and knowledge which it had itself invented, the bourgeoisie understood the high political price of the body, sensations, and pleasures, its well-being and survival. Let us not isolate the restrictions, reticences, evasions, or silences... What was formed was a political ordering of life, not through an enslavement of others, but through an affirmation of self... Sex is not that part of the body which the bourgeoisie was forced to disqualify or nullify in order to put those whom it dominated to work. It is that aspect of itself which troubled and preoccupied it more than any other, begged and contained its attention, and which it cultivated with a mixture of fear, curiosity, delight and excitement (Foucault, 1981a: 123-4).

In this poststructuralist conception the body will find its sexual focus in discourse to produce its own effects and pleasures. There is no sexuality that isn't mediated through language, and while the bourgeoisie has created its sexual discourse in science, therapy, religion and health in the Western social order, it has not done so consciously, Foucault insists, in order to repress the sexuality (i.e. the bodies) of others. Prostitution has continued as part of the same incidental function of self-affirmation, where the more powerful deploys its sexuality across classes, risking its own restrictive order while experiencing the pleasures of that threat as much as the pleasures of the deployment. A transcultural deployment of sexuality is even more complex since the dominant group is also risking the general linguistic structures of its culture, and hence the individual's sense of self.

This is precisely the case in *Far East*. The language of rationalist sexuality — middle-class morality, political liberalism — which Foucault describes as *scientia sexualis*, confronts its putatively Eastern opposition *ars erotica*. But it is not that the film validates European sexual domination, the white male's sexual exploitation of the Eastern woman; it is rather that the class which expresses its sexuality is risking its self-definition. In Foucault's understanding of sexual exchange and class experience, the white males constitute a class which becomes vulnerable by its sexual union with the poorer Asian woman, the other class. The men exchange some portion of their identity, take on a new identity, through the exchange of wealth for pleasure. The women also surrender some portion of themselves, their identity as Third World provincial and agricultural farm labourers, in exchange for greater wealth and commodity pleasure. Aoi in *The Good Woman of Bangkok* is distinctly different from her
mother and the provincial family. Her participation in the global trade of bodies, which at the obvious level is exploitative and unjust, nevertheless imbues her with a level of financial and personal independence, a level of choice, beyond the privations and indigence of the provincial lifestyle: 'It's better than starving', Keefe tells us.

To this extent, *Far East* does not provide the sort of liberational didacticism that would please De-Orientalist Enlightenment feminist precepts. Nor indeed, does it provide the sort of positivistic model or typologies that would satisfy the ideologies of multiculturalism, altruistic cosmopolitanism, commercial capitalism and official government policies which exhort more positive links with, and images of, South East Asia. Nevertheless, the deployment of the commercial and sexual body in a new transcultural context will produce its own lingual and ideological effects. The ideology of choice and individual pleasure — which might logically appear as a natural corollary of Enlightenment liberational theories — seems merely to frustrate the objectives of social and political 'freedom' espoused and demanded by positivists and many utilitarians alike when it does not accord with specified commercial or political strictures. Paradoxically, these groups, in producing their ideologies, have themselves reached a point where freedom must be denied, where art, discourse, thinking and morality must conform to their own system on political correctness.

The texts we have examined in this chapter have all focused in varying ways on the transactability of the body and the contradictions which confront individual pleasure. Indonesia and South East Asia more generally have become the new site of bodily deployment and the exercise of choice; in all cases the complex variables that control and liberate the individual and the individual's pleasures have been seen as incomplete, at times invisible and often unpredictable. In the following chapter we shall look at the ways in which one particular region of Indonesia, the island of Bali, has become essentialized as a site of transcultural integration, the propinquitous paradise of sensual and spiritual ecstasy.
5. The Anomie and the Ecstasy: Bali and the Ideology of Pleasure

The faith of a man follows his nature, Arjuna. Man is made of faith: as his faith is so he is. Men of light worship the gods of Light; men of fire worship the gods of power and wealth; men of darkness worship ghosts and spirits of night.

— *The Bhagavad Gita*

I had visualized a rugged, winding trail leading over-hill and down-dale and ultimately reaching the world renowned surf break, Uluwatu. Once there I would paddle out through the cave, my hand knifing the glassy, utterly transparent water covering the colourful, almost fluorescent reef. Taking off on the wave of my choice, the line-up devoid of goons, I would receive tube after tube, each one becoming longer and deeper than the one before it. The vision began to crack when we pulled up beside a giant billboard advertising cigarettes... On the side of the hill facing the break was a row of concession stands while in the water forty surfers battled to drop in on each other's three foot waves.

— Tom Boyle, *Surfer Magazine*

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I. Bali Beach and the Mo(u)rning of the World

In her novel *The Edge of Bali* (1992), Inez Baranay attempts to explain the attraction of Bali for those non-colonialist Europeans who came to the island in the early part of the twentieth century. Unlike the Dutch, these writers, artists, travellers and freedom seekers were not attracted by the promise of material wealth, but had come to learn, contribute and develop personally:

The Europeans who came to Bali in the thirties came as individuals; they were anthropologists and artists leading the way for tourists. The tourists disembarked at Singaraja and were driven south to the hotel in Denpasar where they viewed some dispirited dancing in the heat at noon and bought some hastily contrived souvenirs.

The artists and anthropologists came and they soon left the hotel in Denpasar to go into the villages and live among the people and many of them stayed and built their own houses up in the mountains and out by the sea. The artists and anthropologists of the thirties did all the work that all those who followed could only repeat, confirm or embellish (*EB*, 95).

Baranay's idealized contrast between superficial tourism and genuine spiritual, intellectual and aesthetic transculturalism — a contrast she reiterates in
distinctly ideological terms on ABC Radio's *Books and Writing* program — is a theme common to many of the texts set in Bali. Thus, while tourism has become a massive transnational industry, paralleling the continual and exponential expansion of international capital in the post-war period, Bali seems to occupy a particularly significant position in the development of the global culture of modernity. Even during the period of colonial rule, the Dutch had identified the distinctive qualities of the island which, in resisting Islamic domination, had evolved a unique weave of ancient Vedic and local cultural influences. During the 1920s and 30s the Dutch, realising the great tourist potential of Bali, began to promote the island and its culture to those European, American and even Australian tourists who may have been lured by the 'mysteries of the Orient' more commonly associated with India and particular regions of Japan and China.

Yet the lure of the island also worked for painters like Walter Spies, intellectuals like Miguel Covarrubias, and later anthropologists like Margaret Mead and the influential Clifford Geertz. While the work of these early visitors has been important in dignifying the culture as a source of knowledge and aesthetic-spiritual pleasure, more sensual and immediately accessible images have been produced by writers like Aldous Huxley, who uses Bali as the basis for his utopian novel *Island*, recent painters like Australian Donald Friend, whose tropical motifs glorify the island's (especially homophilic) sensual beauty, and Hollywood films like *Winds of Bali* in which romance and hedonistic pleasures are intensified by the sensuousness of the exotic environment. Following the ousting of the Dutch after World War Two, in fact, Bali's significance, both for international tourism and aesthetic-intellectual appreciation, has been augmented rather than diminished. Sukarno, whose own intellect embraced the European and Asian heritage, regarded Bali as the museum of ancient Indonesian culture. And Nehru, in accompanying the revolutionary president to the island, echoed these sentiments when he described the Island as 'the morning of the world'. The island's selective, though dramatic, development during the New Order period has, in typically pragmatic terms, has expanded the tourist trade to nearly 400,000 visitors a year.¹

¹ Over one quarter of these tourists come from Australia. It is also interesting to note that the vast majority of the total number of tourists are female. In fact Bali has the highest proportion of female visitors of any tourist destination in the world. The significance of these demographics will become evident in later discussions. (Statistics supplied by Garuda International).
Whether it has been the intellectual or aesthetic filtering of European Romanticism into the indigenous Balinese culture, or the more immediate gratifications of exotic bodily pleasures, tropical beaches and all-night entertainments, Bali's lure has produced an immense global industry. Baranay's novel, which will be discussed in detail later in the chapter, returns continually to the theme of cultural assimilation and absorption by the West, and in particular the effects that this massive inflow of mostly Western and mostly Australian tourists is having on the indigenous culture. As we have discussed in Chapter Two this concern about global homogenization through tourism and commercial integration is central to the whole question of the postmodern political economy. It is a question which the Indonesian government itself has been forced to address, not merely because it has implications for the cultural integrity of Bali and the Indonesian nation, but because it has implications for the economic sustainability of the tourist lure itself; should the island lose its unique cultural qualities through the transmogrifications of internationalism — especially the dominant influences of the West — then Indonesia would lose enormous sums of money in the significant form of foreign currency. In his history of Bali, Adrian Vickers notes how this dilemma confronts the Indonesian government's whole approach to tourist policy in Bali:

Under the less flamboyant Suharto regime, Bali has been prominent in economic development planning: tourism is a vital source of foreign exchange, and Bali is the prime tourist destination in Indonesia. In regulating tourism, the Indonesian Government, especially its agencies in Bali, have striven to preserve Balinese culture from what they see as the threat of tourism. Tourism in their eyes brings with it all that is bad about modern life and modernization, but can be a force for good if properly managed (Vickers, 1990: 175).

To this end, the Indonesian government has tried to reduce the numbers of longer staying, lesser paying tourists in favour of short stay high paying tourists by focusing its marketing of Bali in particular ways and by providing development permits for only the more élite styles of accommodation. This strategy, according to Vickers and other intellectuals, misunderstands the connections between wealth and cultural refinement in the modern world: 'Wealth and fame are considered to bring good taste and cultivation in a variety of Indonesian cultural traditions, but internationally there are many examples to prove that this is not the case' (Vickers, 1990: 195). Vickers'
historicism, in fact, would side with the ideological contrasts produced in Baranay's and other recent Australian texts, which valorize the aesthetic-intellectual 'traveller' over the wealthy, though too often insensitive, tourist who seeks mainly to reproduce his or her (usually his) own cultural system in an exotic location.

Many of the Australian fictional texts which represent Bali in some significant way — Nigel and Caron Krauth's novel Sin Can Can (1987), Gerard Lee's Troppo Man (1990), Baranay's The Edge of Bali (1992) and Phil Noyce's film Echoes of Paradise (1987) — deal with this issue of cultural homogenization or appropriation, 'ethical' tourism and the broader issues of global integration. Equally, they are concerned with the problems of individuality in the (post)modern world where the subject is being forced to confront the personal, social and ideological consequences of his/her contemporary life, most particularly in relation to the issues of choice and individual freedom. Postmodernity, while liberating the protagonists from material privation and political restriction — including the restrictions of patriarchy — also releases them into a world of social and cultural uncertainty: from this uncertainty arises the more insidious threat of the condition Robert K. Merton has called 'nomie' or normlessness. Each in its own way, the texts document the voyages of individuals seeking some sort of personal completion through his or her penetration of the Balinese culture. It is this penetration or immersion which distinguishes their experience from the superficialities of the international jet-setters and party-goers who hang about on the beaches or in the nightclubs at Kuta but who never experience the 'real' Bali. This, once again, is the distinction that Baranay's Marla or Gerard Lee's Mathew Walker would draw between themselves as aesthetes and intellectuals, and the surfies and drunkards who care about nothing other than the next alcoholic binge or last night's superficial sexual adventure.

Thus, while the Jakarta texts — Koch-Weir's The Year of Living Dangerously, d'Alpuget's Monkeys in the Dark, Barnes-Birrell's Water From the Moon and even Dewi Anggraeni's The Root of all Evil — imagine Australia and Indonesia as re-negotiating their relationship in terms of the postmodern field of communicative, economic and political global transaction, the Bali texts may seem somewhat paradoxical, even atavistic, in their approach to historical circumstances. While the narratives of the Bali texts are clearly produced through the context of postmodernity, protagonists often hearken to more ancient systems of belief as they confront the instabilities of postmodern subjectivity. Thus, the postmodernity — its global integration,
wealth and technology — which has brought the protagonist to Indonesia-Bali and which produces the subjectivity of the protagonist him/herself is fundamentally challenged by the protagonist's experience of Bali. European Romanticism is filtered and hybridized through Vedic Indonesian culture to produce some sort of personal elevation or liberation which, at least on the surface, would carry the protagonists beyond the simple materiality of the First world postmodernity.

The poverty and injustices outlined in the Jakartan texts are significantly muted in the Bali settings. The First World traveller sees and usually adulates the villager, imbuing him or her with idealized virtue and immanent sensuality. Even the texts of popular or commercial representation — texts like the Elle Macpherson Bali calendar or the tourists pamphlets referred to in Chapter Two — reproduce the utopianism and idealization of both Bali and the transcultural experience. Australians are conceived as accessing and experiencing directly the sensual riches of the indigenous culture. 'Holiday' becomes a metaphor for this new utility of pleasure where the Balinese people, environment and culture are available for personal use and gratification. Elle's nude and semi-nude body becomes the vehicle for imagined pleasure. The indigenous environment in which Elle's body is symbolized through sexual display mediates the sexual experience of Bali for the Australian viewer. And while Baudrillard (1983, 1984a, 1984b) reminds us that these symbols have no substance or foundation in logic, their potency drives the viewer to act commercially, buy the tickets, take the trip. This same strategy is deployed in the tourist brochure which attempts to lure commercial action through the promise of some exquisite sensual experience. The Garuda-Quantas Carefree Holidays brochure etherealizes the journey:

Welcome to Bali and Indonesia known as the 'Island of the Gods'. Bali has unique and magical attraction. Mystery, romance and adventure, an unspoiled paradise with every imaginable facility and service you could desire.

Enjoy Bali's warm and friendly people, the richly fascinating culture with majestic temples, colorful dances and religious festivals (Garuda-Quantas, no pagination).

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2 Popular textualization of Bali has often produced hyperbole's of sexual and romantic imagery. While it is not discussed in detail in this study the Mills and Boon novel Spirit of the Sun (Dorothy Cork, 1973) is an example of this sort of romantic elevation. Inez Baranay's novel The Edge of Bali has a number of similarities to Cork's Mills and Boon, most particularly in its focus on female romantic pleasure.
This familiar hyperbole, in attempting to marry the spiritual-innocent ('unspoiled paradise') with the vacational-commercial ('every imagined facility'), expresses precisely the development objective of the Indonesian government as well as the often unacknowledged hope of the First World tourist.

It is precisely this coming together of opposites which signposts perfectly the central paradox of the Australia-Bali configuration. As we shall explore more fully throughout this chapter, these texts hearken to older forms of Romantic idealism, filtered though and sometimes enjoined with Hindu mysticism; however, the Bali texts are also bound in many ways by the postmodern affliction to the utilitarian equation of pleasure in (commercial) value or usefulness. While the tourist and pictorial texts like the Elle calendar attempt to mute their commercial intentions through adherence to effective marketing principles, the literary and film texts — similarly bound by commercial imperatives of production, distribution and sale — also carry some thematic interest in the issues of wealth-power-knowledge differentials, especially those distinguishing the traveller and the indigenous village people. Most often, the First World visitor is forced to confront and deal with his or her privilege, despite the personal transformation and adulation of the local community. Equally, they are forced to acknowledge that transculturalism itself, and the contiguity of cultural exchange, are facilitated by the 'ethically dubious' First World globalism the protagonist would wish to abjure or reject entirely.

Annette Hamilton's (1990) reading of Australian texts set in South East Asia has tended to reify this contradiction, however, by seeing it as an exercise in cultural appropriation. Hamilton's analysis attempts to broaden the field of First World Orientalism by transforming Benedict Anderson's explanation of nationalism as the 'imagined community' of the modern state. According to Hamilton, the imagined community of Australia has now expropriated specific regions of South East Asia into its own conglomerate cultural consciousness. Specifically, Bali, as part of the web of First World tourist destinations, has become the expropriated property of the Australian cultural imaginary. Hamilton describes the history of this appropriation as part of the general flow of capitalist driven tourism, by which Asia was imaginatively colonized in new forms during the 1960s and 1970s. It was the hippies, children of the secure middle-classes, of the period who 'left their comfortable homes and wandered off in rags all over Asia, looking for some
transcendent meaning to life in the untouched paradises, where they could take their clothes off and imagine they were at one with the simple natives who nonetheless possessed real spiritual truths' (Hamilton, 1990: 25). But, as Hamilton goes on to explain, the more rampant tourism of pure bodily pleasure — in sun, sand and surf — followed the seekers of esoteric truth, bringing considerable sums of money into Third World economies, as well as sky line hotels, specialist work-forces, cultural realignment and the ubiquitous Club Med:

Australians, long inveterate travellers because of their need to return home to mother Britain, were prominent among the tourists and travellers of Asia. As time passed, however, the Asian holiday became a normal part of the young Australian's existence, and the place which claims to occupy the greatest signifying space as quintessential Asia, became Bali. . . Thus Bali has become another state of Australia, valuable precisely because of the presence of an exotic native culture, along with surfing beaches and Australian beer (Hamilton, 1990: 25-6).

Thus in Hamilton's terms, this imaginary colonization of Balinese culture, indeed Asian culture generally, is an act of self-definition by which 'Otherness', in standard Freud-Lacanian terms, is incorporated into the description of Self. The Asian imaginary, Hamilton considers, may embrace, therefore, a search for self-definition, relief from the stresses of ennui, comprehension of the spiritual outside daily Australian life. In her reading of the Asian imaginary, as it is exemplified in two Asian location films, Hamilton sees the recognition of, and retreat from, Asia as inevitable in practical terms and for the sake of genuine self-definition. Separation from the context of Asia represents the true discovery of self: 'the correct space of the re-discovered self is back in Australia, leaving nothing substantial behind' (Hamilton, 1990: 27).

Hamilton's approach, while recognising the significance of identity conjuncture in Lacanian terms is not able to transform those insights beyond the De-Orientalist conventions. Like so many other analysts of the Australia-South East Asia relationship, Hamilton contents herself with the repetition of the ideology which condemns First World interventionism. Accordingly, the

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3 Hamilton examines Phil Noyce's *Echoes of Paradise* and the earlier Hollywood classic *Lady of the Tropics* (Jack Conway, 1939) In particular, Hamilton's reading of Phil Noyce's film seems to accord with general views on Australian Orientalism as it has been identified by Slyvie Shaw in her more discursive analysis of Australian Asian films, 'The Asian screen test' (*Cinema Papers*, 87, 1992).
Australian film *Echoes of Paradise* — discussed in greater detail below — becomes little more than an act of cultural colonization both in terms of its protagonist's actions and as a representational totality. Nationalism persists as an imaginary in which the Self-Australian is more clearly defined by the knowledge of the Asian-Other. However, as we have insisted continually throughout this study, the process of subjective liberation in the postmodern and transcultural experience is less easily explained because it is more complex and more contradictory than Hamilton and others will concede. In fact the transcultural partners, through their communications and experience of each other, are utterly and irrevocably transformed. There can be no returning to the old, separated self. Transculturalism is propinquity, interchange, realignment, adjustment. Even Said's notoriously demonized vehicles of Orientalism — Lane, Goethe, Flaubert, Lawrence — were never able to imagine the Orient without being changed in some fundamental way by it. In confronting the Orient, the West and its individual scholars, writers, adventurers, colonists, were never able to be the same as if the experiences were never effected, but would be forever altered, even if the experiences were not commensurate with Orient's own version of itself.

These issues have already been discussed at some length in Chapter One and more continuously through the course of these textual discussions. However, the pervasiveness of views which seem to conceive of transculturalism merely as a First World enterprise in theft, domination or cultural colonization requires equally persistent repudiation. The hippies, surfers and wealthy tourists, whatever their social, cultural or personal limitations, should not be viewed as impervious to the influences of transculturalism. Certainly, they bring to the island of Bali a network of culturally inscribed knowledge, including preconceptions about Bali and the East, but they will and must be transformed by what they experience at the point of cultural intersection — that is, at the point of communicative transaction. Similarly, global fusion also transforms the indigenous culture. The globalism that has brought these webs of knowledge together may have been mostly facilitated by First World economics, but there can be no absolute sense in which the one partner becomes the cultural or imaginary property of the other, as Hamilton suggests, if for no other reasons than these: first, the subjectivity of the partners themselves can never be fixed within simple borders; and secondly, the transculturalism of postmodern globality has significantly shifted the concept and 'imagination' of nationhood so that the development of the modern nation-state discussed by Anderson is being
transformed by new systems of integration. Concerns about the 'changes' or
damage done to the Balinese culture by its integration into the global
economic system, as much as anything else, demonstrate the inevitability of
mutation through transculturalism. It is naive, if not ideologically irresponsible,
to suggest that the Australian partner in this communicative relationship will
not also experience the mutating effects of transcultural propinquity.

Thus the Balinese beach is never the Australian beach per se, imaginatively
colonised or physically compromised by the hordes of Australian surfboard
riders and sunbathers who swarm across its surface. The beach is defined and
symbolized through the merging of self and other; it is a new creation, a new
system of meanings formed by the interaction of old meanings with the
transcultural propinquities of international tourism. The subjectivity of the
Australian surfer is transformed by the imagination or conception of Bali in
relation to himself or herself; the mediation of the experience by language
makes something new of Bali and of him or herself. But nothing is fixed.
When Tom Boyle, whose comments introduce this chapter, 'imagines' Bali
before he has experienced it directly, he is reproducing the imagination of
others, conceiving of the 'unspoiled paradise', the perfect waves, the
uninhabited and uncorrupted surf. His direct experiences ameliorate the
idealization of the island, but he nevertheless produces some new sense of the
place and some new sense of himself in its conception.

More generally, John Fiske, relying especially on the analytical strategies of
Levi-Strauss and the Barthes of Mythologies, has looked at conceptions of
the beach and what it means for First World cultures like Australia. According
to Fiske, the beach represents an anomalous category in the nature/civilization
binary structure. Fiske sees the beach as the site for subversive human
behaviours, citing an extract from the 'Surfie journal' set in Bali as evidence of
oppositional discourse. The beach, Fiske tells us, is a place where the 'surfies'
may be regarded as a deviant sub-group, defiant of 'control or power as
socially constituted' (Fiske, 1987a: 75). Yet while the 'wave' is the ultimate,
even transcendent experience, the beach remains iconically less extreme, the
sight of 'mundane' pleasures:

The wave is that text of bliss to the surfie, escape from the signified,
potential reentry into nature, consistently shifting, needing rereading for
each loss of subjectivity. It contradicts, defines momentarily, the
ideological subjectivity through which discourses exert their control.
The beach, however, is a text of mundane pleasure, not sacred bliss. It is
laden with signifieds, it controls the desire for freedom and threat of nature by transposing it into the natural. It is pornography rather than eroticism, desire institutionalized, given a social location, subject to the power of the other who produces its signification, its meaning (Fiske, 1987a: 76).

While we are clearly being confronted by the semiotician's seemingly boundless capacity for generalization, Fiske's description, nonetheless, alerts us to the symbolic dimensions of the surf beach in Australian culture. It is precisely this meaning system that has led to the development of the specific film genre, the surf-movie, which merges the categories of documentary and fictional film. Two such movies, Albert Falzon's *Morning of the Earth* (1972) and Steve Fowler's *Indy Express* (1990), demonstrate the significance of Bali for the changing identity of the Australian surfer, particularly in relation to the nature-civilization opposition discussed by Fiske, and to the utopian idealization of Bali more generally. Specifically, Albert Falzon's *Morning of the Earth*, as the first of an unceasing flow of surf films located in Bali, was responsible for bringing the remarkable qualities of coral surfing into the vision of Australian surfboard riders. While surfing had been a sport long enjoyed in Australia, the technological and design changes that occurred during the mid and late 1960s, along with a range of social and cultural developments, had precipitated a massive expansion in the sport's popularity during the 1970s. During this period a range of magazines and newspaper journals had also developed to serve the new sub-group's interests and promote the identity that accompanied the sport. Also accompanying this explosion in popularity was the crowding of the urban surf beaches and the commensurate desire to locate and experience uncluttered quality waves.

Falzon's film, which also emblemizes several Australian and Hawaiian surf 'retreats', complemented a number of the verbal descriptions of Bali that were beginning to appear in publications like *Tracks*, *Breakway* and the colour glossy *Surfing World*. In all cases, the representations of the surf were textured by a sub-cultural consciousness which was at times anti-authoritarian, generational and hedonistic. As with much of the youth culture of the early seventies, the texts often represent specific and in some respects oppositional language and clothing styles, as well as promote liberationist attitudes, particularly in relation to sex, cannabis and music. The influence of the so-called counter-culture revolution, the antecedent of the hippie movement, is unmistakable in *Morning of the Earth* which seems to marry the
spiritual aestheticism of the movement with the physical athleticism of what is essentially an extremely vigorous sport. Indeed, just as Nehru had called Bali the 'morning of the world', Falzon's film title symbolizes the spiritual power of Bali through the bodily extremism of its central figures. The East, Bali in particular, is thus represented as more than cultural or geographic contiguity, but as a sensual and spiritual — if ephemeral — union.

Clearly, *Morning of the Earth* and the surfing sub-culture more generally can be viewed as outcomes of specific Australian interests and socio-cultural influences, but these need to be placed in the broader global and historical contexts. The sort of anti-authoritarianism that was sweeping the Western world from the student revolutions of the late sixties through the anti-Vietnam, anti-modernist polemics of the seventies have their parallels in history. The sorts of drug-induced euphoria, defiance of de-humanizing technology, transcendent insights, the political and spiritual significance of nature and freedom, and even the idealization of the East may be seen in the thinking of Coleridge and Rousseau, Walt Whitman and even Thoreau; the emphasis on individualism and sexual ecstasy may also be seen in the work of Keats, Goethe and Lord Byron. To this extent, the music and imagery of *Morning of the Earth* may be viewed in part as continuing in the tradition of Western sensual romanticism, though it is probably significant that this interest in sense and spiritualism has been filtered through the context of the East. Foucault's distinction between the *sexualis scientica* of the West and the *ars erotica* of the East is irrupted once again by the transcultural propinquity. Falzon's aim, however, is not to expropriate the sensuality of the East — for that would suggest depriving the East of its cultural property — but to share in it by heightening the 'Western' body's experience of pleasure through its embrace of contextually Eastern sensations.

Moreover, the central focus of the sexual body in Falzon's film is not specifically feminine — that passive and sexually available, pre-civilized Oriental woman which the De-Orientalists continually locate in the male 'Western' representations of the East. The sexual body configured in Falzon's text is the 'libational' and classically proportioned Western male himself; the mood, tone and texture of the presentation of the male figure is spiritually refined and physically sensual. The Bali sequence is introduced by a mellifluous flute promenade and the initial surfing shots are usually in slow motion, accentuating the grace as much as the power of the male surfers' athleticism. Falzon uses a number of filters on his camera in order to soften the colour and focus of the early shots, thus intensifying the dream-like or
euphoric qualities of the Bali setting. Specifically, he uses the conceit of 'morning' or life's dawning to embellish the sensual-spiritual union, featuring, in sequence, slow sunrise pans of the Balinese mountains, a brief silhouetted image of an indigenous village woman, then an image of two Australian surfers walking barefoot, wearing sarongs, conical Balinese woven hats and T-shirts, and carrying surf-boards. This last image immediately confronts the viewer with the transcultural and hybridized nature of both the context and the surfers. The scenery of the dry rain shadow rubble of the Uluwatu ('Sea of the Living Dead') headland is stark in comparison to the lush tropical imagery that had preceded it. Their lone walking at sunrise is suggestive of adventure, originality and danger. The initial image of the Uluwatu surf, now in bright sunlight and with the deep blue contrasting with the white of the surf, is also suggestive of power and danger beyond the safety of civilization and human involvement. In their intimidatory power, the images are reminiscent of Wordsworth's description of nature represented in the crags, hills and cloud shapes of the lakeland district in sequences of the 'Prelude'.

As the surfers climb out through the cave and into the water, however, the mood brightens. The sequence depicting the surfers entering the wild breaking surf is profoundly 'libational'; the surfers are silhouetted and the surf before them is filtered in purple and nebulous light. Falzon depicts the figures in slow motion, again heightening the sensuality of their communion, rather than fear or trepidation. Nature and the human are enjoined in some profound and almost ritualised pleasure. Like Keats' 'tender is the night' and 'already with thee', the disruption of the time sequence serves to produce euphoric conceptions where the danger, though real and remaining, seems entranced by its own exigency. The surfers are immersed in it all. Nature, beauty, danger. The surf becomes amorphicized, like a Turner painting, cloud-like and silently exploding across the field of the camera-vision. The next set of images shows the immersion in the soft nebulae itself, still to the 'libational' sounds of flute, and still in slow motion. The young men's grace symbolizes the union of the natural and the human.

In the following sequence, grace, power and union are superseded by a series of ironic and idealized portraiture, scenes which combine the music of drug-induced narcosis with images of conversations between nude Australians and the drug selling Western dressed locals. Marijuana, the drug of the East, is thus being incorporated into the meanings and activities of Australia. The nudity of the Australian men and women is as much an expression of freedom or choice, as an immersion in the natural world
symbolized through the Asiatic pre-civilization. The seriousness of the claim to total freedom is questioned by its own ironical tones. Most specifically, the nude portrait of one of the surfers holding a yo-yo (symbol of play but also of technology and civilization), the long string paralleling his genitalia, is more comic than political. In either case, the beach sequence focuses on bodily pleasure above all other things; the presence of the children and naked women, the play in the shallows, the gentleness and drug-induced euphoria, are all self-conscious elements of what the overdub musical lyrics insist on — 'dreaming is easy'.

Yet, also as in Wordsworth's 'Prelude' or even Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner', those darker powers of nature and of the human heart 'return to plague us'. The spiritualism of Bali, and the spiritual meanings that the Australians in Bali create, are destabilized by the bloody and mortal dangers that the body must confront. The euphoria and play are thus compromised by the dangers that have only previously been intimated in the power of nature's form. Falzon's camera juxtaposes the predominantly male and indigenous activity of cockfighting — a sport becoming popular also with tourists — with the Balinese dressed surfers walking through the lanes and backways of Kuta. The eventual vanquishment, slaughter and butchering of one of the roosters are juxtaposed and interpolated with more frenetic images of surfing run at normal speed. The 'freedom' song accompanying the sequence is no longer expressed through the mellifluous flute as a romantic ideal; rather, freedom is a form of political aggression, action that can only be expressed through the barking and hacking sound of electric guitars and vocal stress. The music is anti-authority and tinged with anger Emblematically, the juxtaposition of these sequences suggests the inevitability of human pain and political liberation through acts of anger. These echoes of Western polemicism are not misplaced in the East, but are integrated through the experience of transculturalism. Like the revolutionary agonies represented in The Year of Living Dangerously, Games of the Strong or Monkeys in the Dark, these images in Morning of the Earth demonstrate that the East and the West can be bonded through the new forms of political expression. Falzon is forced to recognize that idealism has its limitations; euphoria may resolve itself in anger and action; nature and humanity are bound by the same black forces of conflict and power. With the return of the promenade music, some level of catharsis is achieved through the renewal of images of play and bodily pleasure; however, these revitalized sensations cannot expunge the effects of anger and tension the preceding images have produced. Rather, they are recognized as part of the world's
totality. Paradise is not immune to the battles of social and human power; sooner or later even the surfer must return to the beach.

Morning of the Earth is subtitled 'A Fantasy of Surfers living in those Unspoiled Lands' which to an extent accords with Fiske's reading of the nature-civilization opposition. It is the search for the 'unspoiled', that dominion of pleasure uncorrupted by civilization, which less than twenty years later produces another fantasy, Indy Express (Fowler and Gorringe, 1990). Like the first of all surfing movies, The Endless Summer, Indy Express uses the archetypical narrative structure of the journey as a metaphor defining the social experience. Instead of an individual's journey to self-knowledge or apotheosis, however, the Indy voyage becomes a journey toward social knowledge and collective, especially tribal, identity. As in the Pilgrim's Progress, the journeymen of Indy Express are seeking better lands and better times. They retreat from the complexities and corruptions of the modern world to seek personal fulfilment and collective pleasure. However, unlike the surfers of Morning of the Earth who might 'realise' their fantasies in the shores and surf of Bali, the 'professional surfers' of Indy Express discover a Bali that is already transmogrified by modernisation and global integration; the tribe must therefore recede further into the 'natural depths' of the Indonesian archipelago in order to locate their uncrowded and perfect waves.

This later film is much more in the style of the conventional travelogue, applying standard voice over techniques, whimsical adventures and clearly focused surfing sequences and imagery. The euphoric mood of Morning of the Earth has been suspended; nearly all of the surfing sequences of Indy Express are run at normal speed and music is highly canned electric guitar and saxophone without verbal-lyrical accompaniment. The ideological intensity and self-consciousness of the earlier film have been replaced by a much more commercially consonant travel diary. Other than the isolated surfing locations, the images of Indonesia are vaguely sentimental and somewhat ambivalent in tone. The narrative presents the surfers as an anomalous and politically benign category, who are inspired only by their desire for quality, uncrowded waves, the adventure of distance, and the gratifications of (tribal-masculine) friendships. It is not that they have been jettisoned by the postmodern world but that they are seeking some immediate gratifications on a journey that is as temporary as all other journeys and gratifications. There is none of the political oppositionalism of the earlier film, only an unspecified capitulation, and a recognition that any escape can only be erstwhile. Certainly, they are not living the obvious lifestyles of regular work and regular income — the lifestyle
of home — but as a vacation experience, the tour offers something of the anomalousness outlined by Fiske.

Thus, the surfer tribe, along with their 'primitivism' as it is represented on the screen, is not like the world at home, yet nor is it like the village communities they encounter on the journey. Rather, the surfers exist beyond them both. The surfing experience is sensual rather than intellectual, play rather than work, escape rather than commitment. For this reason, there is no analysis of local life, only incidental observations. Third World airports, road and environmental conditions are vaguely disparaged, but only in passing. There is a celebratory reference to one group of indigenous people who are welcoming and who embrace the surfers into the warmth of their 'traditional' lifestyle. After some cameo images of the island of Krakatoa, the film presents the surfers participating in some kind of 'ceremonial' activity: 'Other islands provide a glimpse of the traditions and incredible variety of cultures existing throughout Indonesia. The alien surfers were easily accepted by the indigenous people. Their friendliness and hospitality providing a true experience of their way of life'.

Such immersions, however, remain momentary, and the surfer tribe seems only to have its own members, its own vagueness as a group, to reflect on itself and its sense of identity. They remain an incongruous category which never really penetrates the indigenous culture and enjoys little that is not utterly bewildering. Even on its return to Bali and civilization, the tribe seems to have experienced the world from a distance, skating across the surface of things without the time or capacity for profound interaction. No longer the fantasy of the 'unspoiled paradise' as in Falzon's film, Bali is seen only as an international Mecca, a collision of cultures, merging and re-shaping itself continuously, producing new meanings, new signifieds, which the surfer tribe cannot possibly comprehend. Everything in this Bali world is an accentuation of the First World disorders they have experienced at home. There is no interest in the sexual body of the Oriental woman since everything is sexualized and moving in increasingly rapid phases of change and communication. The bodies on the Kuta beach represent a pot-pourri of ethnic types — European, Asian, American. The bare body is centralized in a rapid flow of sexual imagery, none of it fixed, none of it constituting rationalized order.

In the final sequences of the film, the narrator claims that the tribe, in returning to and merging with this postmodern flux of humanity, loses its
identity; the sequence interpolates surfing images with images of the crowded Kuta beach, most particularly focusing on figures of female beauty and play:

Nowhere is the cultural conflict between traditional and Western society as obvious as on the return to Bali where the boys are once again tourists alongside thousands of other invaders. The bustling beach of Kuta is almost unnerving after the peace and exhilaration experienced in the more remote islands.

The irony of the word 'exhilaration' overlaid on a close-up of a female crotch in hot pink bathers is modestly self deriding. The symbolic return to the female represented by civilization, bringing the flow of sexual desire, is equally pleasurable and intimidating. Bali is no longer the site of retreat, but the site of superficial sexual imaging. Like the Elle Macpherson calendar, the imaging in this final section of Indy Express represents a return to human and social complexity, a return from the wilderness, which is regrettable and necessary. For the tribe of surfers, who have now lost their identity as tribesman, being dispersed among the wider cultural and ethnic constituency, the consolation is inevitably and always the surf — even this urbanized version. In the sequence which concludes with a camera speed up and description of Bali life as 'craziness', the surf is valorized as supremely and ultimately joyous. Finally, the surfers can no longer rely on their tribal identity and the film concludes with their individuation; each surfer is frozen in a dramatic still shot and a caption appears which, for the first time in the film, names them. This naming ritual marks each surfer's re-initiation into the civilization they have temporarily suspended.

Thus, while a number of the texts examined in this study concern themselves with the potentials of pleasure sited specifically in the indigenous Asian body, the two surfing movies discussed above are primarily concerned with the possibility of personal re-alignment facilitated by the context of Indonesia. While Wally O'Sullivan despairs of Jakarta and its degeneracy, finding pleasure in the local youths' beauty and sexual affections, and while Anggraeni's Komala and d'Alpuget's Alex seek their ecstasies in the bodies of the local men, and while Curtis, Sinclaire, Keefe and many other Australian men find their transcultural sexual pleasures in the bodies of local women — the surfers' hedonism is located specifically in surf that is 'unspoiled' by human hordes and the impact of advanced human settlement. While the earlier film, Morning of the Earth, in keeping with the mood of the times, produces an
ideology that in some way aligns itself with the pleasure against the powers of capitalist integration, the latter, *Indy Express*, appears to have surrendered more fully to the demands of postmodern utility. There are no grand claims about the ideological efficacy of surfing, and the narrative seems clearly to accept the ephemerality of all human experiences. Surfing in Bali is now an act of civilizational confirmation. Bali is the node of international tourism; it is not paradise but a mutant social and cultural nexus in which pleasure is the central and unmitigated power. For all its promise, *Indy Express* tells us, Bali is a communion of opposite pleasures; it is as bewildering as any space on the globe.

II. Going Troppo: Gerard Lee’s Ironic Dispensation

In Christopher Koch’s *The Year of Living Dangerously*, Indonesia is variously described as insane, squalid, double-faced, and essentially unlovable. Even the spiritual elevation which Koch locates in Java seems incapable of resisting the multiplying powers of political and social decay. Yet it is significant that much of the irrationality represented in Koch’s novel and reproduced in d’Alpuget’s *Monkeys in the Dark* is part of the hybridization process in which external and internal cultural influences mix and struggle with one another in the nation’s efforts to produce a cohesive and modern political state. *The Root of all Evil* and *Water from the Moon*, in depicting the transformed society of the New Order ascendancy, further demonstrate the disordering impact of modernisation and global integration. In particular, Barnes-Birrell have attempted to show how the world which is surveyed by the international funding organization, the World Bank, is rationalized only through the configuration of a computer ledger sheet; nothing else makes sense. Moreover, as we have discussed in Chapter One, the narrator in Glenda Adams’ story ‘Letters from Jogja’ perceives a radical disjuncture in the modernisation of the Javanese and Balinese people, confronted as they are by the powerful presence of new meanings and new economic and cultural options. This ‘disorder’, Adams points out, is as much a mirror of the uncertainties which have embraced Australia as it is an outcome of the cultural transformations of Indonesia itself.

This anomie or normlessness, which is seeping through the contemporary landscape, may be related, at least in part, to the increasing complexity of social organization, the processes of capitalist economics, and the broader influences of postmodernity itself—multiplying choice, moral-ideological irruption, and the more insidious effects of what Fredric Jameson calls the
permanent condition of historical amnesia or what David Harvey calls the
time-space compression. In either case, the liberation and unfixing of the
subject, as we have seen throughout this study, may produce a sense of
identity dislocation, alienation and perceptual disorder. When the narrator of
the surfing movie *Indy Express* alludes to the 'craziness' of Kuta contrasted
with the salving fixities of the tribal identity in nature, he is acknowledging
the precariousness of social order and identity in the rapidly moving
postmodern world. The paradox, of course, is that global utilitarianism also
provides the means of overcoming these negative effects. The choice, wealth
and power which have brought the European Australians to Bali,
transforming its geographical and cultural landscape, might also provide the
individual with the means of escape.

To this extent, the remarkable similarity between the several recent literary
texts set in Bali may be understood as an attempt to reach beyond the
disordering and negative effects of the cultural intersection in order to
produce a more profound and ideologically sanctified personal experience of
the island — and of themselves. The pervasiveness of the image of Bali as
paradise must, it would appear, have some substance in fact. The protagonists
will reluctantly deploy their power in order to achieve what John Keats had
called the 'negative capability' or the denial of that power through self
negation. In its own way, each of these texts presents the individual in a state
of flux — sexual, emotional, spiritual. The text conceives the Balinese context
as the mystical land, the land of spiritual and sexual renewal, where the
Australian protagonists attempt to shed their personal and cultural
disappointments — their culturally ascribed sense of self — through an
immersion and purification ritual. The parallels are remarkable. In Caron and
Nigel Krauth's *Sin Can Can* Ashlie, a teenage schoolgirl, experiences her first
genuine sexual contact with a Balinese boy around the waters, magic and
mystery of Ubud; Marla in Inez Baranay's *The Edge of Bali* is also revitalized
spiritually and sexually in an affair with an indigenous Balinese, an affair that
also takes her to the bathing rivers near Ubud; and even in Gerard Lee's more
ironic novel, *Troppa Man*, Matt delights in the view of the naked Gabriela in
the same river and possibly the same bathing spot near Ubud.4 In all cases, the

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4 In Phil Noyce's film *Echoes of Paradise* the protagonist falls in love with the
mysteries and sexual potency of a Balinese dancer. The film was originally to be set in
Bali though complications with the Indonesian government prevented the shoot. Noyce
too may have used the Ubud setting for the attainment of his mystical mood. It is also
worth noting that Elle Macpherson's calendar (1992-3) also represents Ubud as a site
of sexual possibility. The April photographs present Elle nude and in bed at Ubud. The
protagonists have discovered something of the life, culture and mysteries of
the island, each spurning the crass and putative exploitations inflicted by mass
tourism, especially as it is manifest in the superficialities of Kuta Beach.

Specifically, Matt in Troppo Man, like his alter-ego, Frank Schmetzer, has
come to Bali almost as a last resort. His own personal journey spurns what he
regards as the brute superficiality of the Kuta surfing scene, particularly as it is
personified in his former student, Pete Burns. For Matt the surfers are only
interested in inflicting their Australo-centric, macho and boorish behaviours
on the spiritually and materially innocent people of Bali. Rather than the
'perfect wave', the immediacies of sexual or narcotic gratification, Matt is
seeking some more elevated and complete experience, the more profound
knowledge of a true cultural-intellectual journeyman. However, Matt's intense
self-centredness and uncompromising seriousness, along with the tensions
they cause, drive much of the novel's comedy and drama. The author uses
simple comic techniques of contrast, exaggeration and irony to betray Matt's
incapacity for genuine self-awareness. It is precisely this fallibility which leads
to Matt's falling victim to the condition of what Burditt, the visiting
semiotician, calls 'Noble Savage Syndrome' (TM, 96).

This Rouseauean allusion clearly distinguishes Matt's overwhelming desire
for cultural immersion and the renewal of an identity — a sense of self — that
has been stressed to near collapse by the discovery of his girlfriend's infidelity
and, perhaps more significantly, by his own unreasonable standards of moral
and ideological purity. In his Bali journey, Matt refuses to accede to those
'tourist behaviours' which lead only to rampant capitalism, the exploitation of
the Balinese culture, and the domination of a Third World country by the
people of the First World centres. In the opening paragraph of the novel this
insistent division between himself as respectful journeyman and the tourists of
Kuta is established: 'Finally he made it onto the beach and saw, with
disappointment and disgust, white bodies covering the sand in every
direction. Tourists' (TM, 1). Kuta is 'pretty bad' (TM, 11), as Matt tells Jacqui, so
he 'escapes' to Ubud. In doing so, he attempts to explain his feelings and
personal ideological integrity to a group of local villagers who had hoped to
sell him some of their wares:

'Turis, hey turis!'

photographs use sexually suggestive poses with a windowed back-ground of natural
bush forms. This is the only 'bedroom' scene in the calendar, further endorsing the
sexual symbology which has been created around Ubud.
He turned back, looking for the one who had called out, but they were all smiling at him.

'Hey, no turis,' he shouted.

'Yar, turis, turis,' a few of them answered.

There was no malice in it, but he felt a sense of rejection. He turned and headed back toward town. He'd show them he was no tourist (TM, 27).

Show them indeed. Matt's unmitigating earnestness wins the affection of the local people and their good humoured indulgence. His efforts to learn traditional Balinese dance are absorbed into the fun of the local children; Matt spurns the children's Michael Jackson dance, but his own efforts at traditional Balinese performance are in return gently mocked by the children. Even Ketut, over whom Matt romanticizes, cannot resist giggling at his efforts, leaving him to retreat 'with as much haste as his dignity would allow' (TM, 96). What Matt seems to misapprehend is his actual position in relation to the Balinese. In Matt's own ideological scheme the Balinese and their culture are being exploited by centrist powers like America and Australia, and in his efforts to avoid committing the same crime, he rejects the sensual pleasures that these putative exploitations bring to the tourist. Despite Nyoman's insistence, he'll have nothing to do with the 'chocolate cake' because it represents precisely those hedonistic indulgences of Western cultural and capitalist imperialism Matt rejects. Plagued by guilt as he is confronted by a poor art vendor, Matt explains to Nyoman why he can't eat the chocolate cake:

'Because I am here having a long holiday in this country, eating chocolate cake, getting served, spending money, wearing different clothes every day. He [the art vendor] must hate me' (TM, 57). But Nyoman, the playboy swindler who ingratiates himself to all vulnerable tourists, including Matt, is nonplussed by this asceticism; echoing an earlier disclaimer from Dewi, Matt's affectionate restauranteur, Nyoman declares: 'Nor, good por you, holiday, clothes, chocolate cake' (TM, 57).

Lee thus establishes an ideological contrast between Matt's desire to shed First World hedonism and utility, and Nyoman's desire to embrace them. Matt seems to overlook this sort of indigenous utilitarianism, as he writes for himself the new role of transcultural neophyte. It is not pleasure he seeks, but knowledge; not sensual immediacy but profound meaning. In a manner that recalls Ronald Conway's Great Australian Stupor, Matt rejects Australia as hedonistic and selfishly utilitarian — that mythical and masked 'Oz' in which
'twenty per cent of people live beneath the poverty line' \( (TM, 79) \), 'Australia is 'not my country' \( (TM, 82) \) he tells Pete as he delights in the alluring challenge of his new country's mysteries and profound cultural departures. Like a genuine neophyte, Matt is dissatisfied with the superficialities of tourist attractions, preferring to scour the details of religious and historical artefacts which must, he believes, eventually surrender up their hidden meanings to the true cultural explorer. But it is precisely this intensity, this determined asceticism, which renders Matt vulnerable to disappointment and to the commercial utilitarianism of Nyoman. Matt's psychological investment in Bali and his unrelenting desire to know its culture, provide Nyoman with the necessary material for the deployment of his own business objectives. Indeed, it is Nyoman above all other characters in the novel who proves most adept at sexual and monetary transaction, whereby the Westerners who 'wish to know Bali' will exchange their bounty of fiscal property for Nyoman's personal attentions. Matt regards the swindler playboy as a truly gifted artist who might teach him something of the ways and secrets of Bali. Matt is 'surprised and impressed' \( (TM, 36) \) by Nyoman's awareness of Western exploitation, noting that Nyoman's delight in Western women is not skiting or womanizing since 'these were women he loved in an innocent way' \( (TM, 36) \). More acutely though, Matt feels a deep sense of awe in the presence of a true Balinese artist. In the process of commercial seduction, Nyoman takes Matt to the Becak dance where all his problems 'fell away' \( (TM, 53) \). In Nyoman's company, the neophyte feels himself to be admitted 'into the secrets of Balinese landscape painting' \( (TM, 54) \). Thus, Nyoman plays the acolyte introducing his pupil to the splendour and mystery of the Hindu temple, the prehensile feet and the cosmic centre:

'Pery important in Bali to hap temple, Matchew, to make oppering to god . . . yar now.' He took Matt's hand and led him through the garden to a narrow flight of stairs cut into an embankment. The sweet smell of flowering shrubs and trees filled the air. Nyoman went ahead. Matt noticed the prehensile feet again, feet that drew an energy from the earth. An energy that transformed into finer and finer qualities as it rose through the body, focusing at the fingertips ready to apply paint to canvas.

At the top Nyoman stopped and turned. He pointed to a view that stretched half way across Bali. Matt stood beside him feeling privileged.

'I see eperyting prom here,' Nyoman said. 'You see Argung?'
Matt knew Argung was the volcano at the centre of Bali. Looking out he saw jungle, sculpted paddies, a line of coconut palms, more fields and in the distance, haze, clouds, and the white-blue sky (TM, 37).

It is this splendid and encompassing view, facilitated by the conman, Nyoman, which ultimately informs Matt's epiphany — 'The Earth is flat . . . Bali is the centre of the Earth. Mt Argung is the centre of Bali' (TM, 126). However, the vision itself proves apocryphal in that it is achieved through the auspices of Matt's own determined intellectualism and the utilitarianism of the false acolyte, rather than sensual or spiritual release. It is for this reason that Matt's fastidious, though somewhat superficial, intellectualism is treated with some irony by the authorial voice. When asked by his former girlfriend, Jacqui, whether he is 'having a good time', Matt responds unselfconsciously: 'Yeah, I've learned a lot' (TM, 45). So it is not through pleasure or a 'good time' but through self-disciplined learning that Matt believes he will decipher and thus enter the culture; he approaches the sacred temples as though they were nothing more than a code to be cracked: 'Matt climbed the hill and wandered through the temples, looking up at the walls, at the statues and through the tunnels, trying to make it mean something' (TM, 42).

His quest, however, is frustrated by the subtle and deceptive nuances of the local culture, and by those impurities of international dilution which Matt's neo-Marxist or liberalist sensibilities reject. Lee is able to create an ironic distance between the reader and Matt by contrasting the unconscious intensity of his moral and political project against the hedonistic and good-humoured decency of Pete Burns and the more sophisticated semiotic-structuralist perspective of the American academic, Burditt. Pete's simple affections, his tolerance and parallel distress at the loss of his girlfriend are designed to undermine artistically the acrimony and self-centredness of Matt's loneliness and despair. Pete's emotional spontaneity, his openness and innate decency make him the perfect foil for Matt's own emotional intensity which, though filtered through a sophisticated ideology, turns more easily to malice and a suspicion of others. Consequently, Matt's belief in the ignominy of the world, his sense of personal rejection, seem to take some perverse pleasure in the suffering of others whom he consistently impugns on ideological grounds. It is for this reason that Matt is both shocked and maliciously delighted to hear 'the surfer crying' (TM, 79). And, as with the dismay and pain he would have caused Jacqui by not returning from Bali as scheduled, Matt takes pleasure in the sound of Pete's distressed voice after Matt has been belted by
Wayne: 'To hear the pain in Pete's voice gave him a surge of pleasure' \((TM, 150)\). Moreover, Matt's continual rebuke of Pete for the latter's insensitivity to the local people and culture is once again an ironic reflection against Matt's own lack of insight, humour and true empathy. Pete's paintings are as jovial and self-mocking as many of the trinkets and services provided to the tourists by the local people. Pete makes a comedy of his 'Walter Spies' allusion \((TM, 88)\) while for Matt, like Schmetzer, the respect and adulation of the aesthetes of the 1930s is a matter of utmost seriousness. However, what both Schmetzer and Matt fail to understand, though Pete does, is that artistic impersonation is a triviality. The author contrasts this triviality with Matt's and Schmetzer's impersonation of their idols — assuming another person's identity — which is more a matter of psychological instability. The dangers of such idolatry are understood by Burditt, who sees the 'Troppo Man' as one who has shed his identity in favour of a fantasy. When Schmetzer gives Matt his copy of Covarrubias, Matt too becomes initiated into the same fraternity of adulants, risking the same psychological dangers.

In fact, it is Burditt who tries to warn Matt against the kind of serious intent that has led to 'Troppo Frank Schmetzer's personal disengagement. The ultimate loss of subjectivity is madness, and Burditt considers that the dangers of 'Noble Savage Syndrome' may claim Matt as they have claimed Frank. Burditt is the common sense voice of ideological postmodernism. He understands the complexities of the modern world and is intent on exposing them through the academic method of structural anthropology and the more generalized voice of personal pragmatism. Burditt appears to have come to terms with the impossibilities of liberalist and neo-Marxist ideological purity, and the inevitability of power differentials. What drives his thinking is an acceptance of his privilege as a First World, middle-class citizen whose choices may be greater than other individuals in the world of action but who does not let these greater choices express themselves as hubris.

In a sense, the ideological dialectic which separates Matt and Burditt parallels the opposition between the older theories of liberation and the newer conceits of postmodernism. Burditt's interest in the oppositional or alternative languages of the postcolonial world demonstrates his intellectual distance from the powerful 'monophonia' of Anglo-Americanism on the one hand, and those neo-Marxist theories which condemn all First World involvement in the Third World East on the other. He is interested in the linguistic impact of tourism on Bali as much as the linguistic tropes of postcolonial Australia. His discussions may have been lifted directly from the textbooks of Graeme
Turner, John Fiske or Robert Hodge: 'These previously colonized countries don't exactly throw off the language of the colonizer, but attack and humiliate and destroy the hegemony of it' (TM, 74). In what appears to be a direct translation of semiotic theory, Burditt's concepts of de-centralized language and transgression, contrast profoundly with Matt's homogenization and Americanization theories whereby Australia and other small nation-cultures are dominated and imperialized as they are flooded by the linguistic tropes of American TV (TM, 74). For Matt, 'Only those who come from imperialist countries . . . were interested in power, imperialism and hegemony. It was a way of salving their guilt' (TM, 75). Burditt's basic conceptualization of the postcolonial, postmodern world leads him to reject theories of opposition when, in a casual conversation, he insists — 'I think what we're talking about here is a decentring process. There are no places on Earth we could call the place. There's no centre any more' (TM, 126). Though for Matt, of course, Bali is the centre, and Burditt's moral and political paradigm is another mutation of American centricism simply inverted to 'salve the guilt'.

It is little wonder, then, that Matt pays no heed to Burditt's warning about excessive contact with, or romanticization of, the Balinese culture: 'It's a different culture, Matt. Stay too long, you lose touch' (TM, 49). But it is more than mere contact that worries Burditt since, as an analyst of language, he understands that the immersion of self in the new language and meanings of a culture will necessarily produce some radical realignment of identity. Safety exists in distance, objectified knowledge and the understanding that 'the soul' is vulnerable to excess. In responding to Matt's vitriol against the exploitation of Bali by Western tourism, Burditt says:

But you know those enclaves, like Sanur and Kuta, may not be so bad. The tourists are contained. They lie on the beach, eat, spend money and then they go away. Like you, Matt, Barb and I don't consider ourselves tourists either, but those of us who want the soul of the country I think are the ones to watch. We come here with a spiritual vacuum and, really we fuck the place over, we suck the spirit out of a place like this. The people get attracted to us, they love us, and when we go, they can't pack up and follow. So sometimes, you know, I think maybe we're the rapists (TM, 29).

With which the conversation turns to Troppo Frank, the man who had 'come to Bali to die . . . to kill myself' (TM, 19) and who has informed Matt that there
were no coincidences and that Matt would 'find all he was looking for in Bali' (*TM*, 24). Matt's idealization of Troppo Frank demonstrates his own naiveté and the precarious state of his mind. For Burditt, Frank is just 'crazy', though for Matt, invoking Levi-Strauss, Schmetzer is a form of cultural bricolage, collecting, celebrating and expressing the iconography and linguistic tropes of 'Germany, Bali, even America' (*TM*, 28). Frank is a man of vision who, in leading Matt to the edge of the rice paddies, is leading him, as he explains, to 'the edge of civilization, looking into the heart of . . . chaos' (*TM*, 24).

Consequently, what distinguishes Matt most significantly from Burditt is his inability to visualize these dangers, as much as his inability to understand the profound depths of his own crisis of subjectivity. Burditt lives in a secure emotional and sexual relationship, and while he distances himself from the tourists of Kuta and Sanur, he will not travel the journey to self dissolution. Matt, on the other hand, seems to have had his own sexual status cast into serious doubt through his relationship with Jacqui. Along with the anomie he experiences in Australia, we also see glimpses of Matt's sexual repressions and fears. It is clear, for example, that Matt has had doubts about his sexual performance even before coming to Bali: 'I didn't give her enough' (*TM*, 86), he tells Pete in accounting for his 'fault' in the collapse of the relationship. And indeed, the strain of these repressions, the forced intellectualism and the peculiar ideological asceticism are evinced in the rapidity with which Matt switches course and emotion. As though struggling against the ultimate trajectory of his psychological crisis, Matt focuses erratically and with breathtaking inconsistency on other individuals who might somehow save him from the fall: Ketut, the dance teacher, Nyoman, Gabriela, and finally Schmetzer himself.

With the young waitress, Ketut, for example, Matt's fantasy centres on her sexual attractiveness and her cultural integrity; she becomes the focus of romantic idealization incommensurate with the substance of their relationship. Ketut is 'beautiful' as Pete enthuses, but for Matt she is the emblem of cultural penetration. After observing her secretly, imagining and fantasizing over her sexual body, Matt finally consummates the desire as an act of communal purity in marriage. But such are the vacillations of his mind and the earnestness of his ideological ambitions, that the fantasy turns in to another excuse for disappointment and self-disgust:

He would become a member of the local kampung, accepted as part of the community. And then when Ketut was a little older and he was more
mellow and in touch with the Balinese way, they'd marry. He saw the ceremony. Dewi giving her blessing, Made, the bridesmaid and Nyoman, the best man. He'd lie with her, have a child with her. She'd give him food, love, she'd smile at him, wait on him, kneel before him. Suddenly she was in all kinds of sexually subservient positions. He'd made a sex slave out of her. He tried to drive these thoughts out of his mind, but they persisted. Like everyone else in Western society he had the disease of power. He wanted domination (TM, 58).

The irony achieved by this excessive purity turning to excessive depravity is underlined within the next few pages when Matt begins his dance lessons and almost immediately falls in love with his instructress, Wayan: 'They stood close together, both facing the same direction. He looked down at the back of her neck where her floral collar folded over. She glanced over her shoulder and in the softest voice explained the movement of her hands, the progression of steps' (TM, 59-60).

Like a true sexual repressive, Matt seems happier with the possibility of sexual contact rather than its realization. Significantly, it is Pete Burns, a modest hedonist with an affectionate devotion to fun and pleasure, who interrupts the lesson and the fantasy of cultural immersion and physical-sensual synchronicity. The name 'Burns' is deployed as an indicator of some symbolic function, though its figurative significance is suggestive rather than allegorical. Matt has dreamed that Pete will immerse him in fire and, while the symbology has Christian and Balinese implications, the fire symbol also alludes to psychological intensities. Pete's spontaneity and apparent sexual liberation seem to threaten Matt's more restrained character; in Jungian terms the fire will both ignite desire and purify corruption. Moreover, the precariousness and vacillation of Matt's subjectivity are complicated further by the repression of his Europeanness. Just as Billy Kwan seems to avoid his Chinese heritage, Matt is trying to shed the cultural sources of his knowledge and sensibilities. When he meets Gabriela, these repressions — the European and the sexual — erupt into an even more intense idealization of the sexual and pleasurable than that which he had experienced with Ketut and Wayan. He does not want to dominate Gabriela, but he hopes merely to immerse himself in the intense pleasure of her Germanic soul and being. Suddenly, in the midst of all his Asiatic fantasies, Matt finds himself entranced by the distant smell of faraway Europe: 'his whole body was atuned to hers. And when a breeze blew across the garden, across her to him, he could smell the
fragrance of her soap, a faint, faraway, European smell' (TM, 114).
Significantly, it is his senses that are excited by Gabriela, and when he sees her
naked, having bathed in the purifying waters of the Ubud river, he 'becomes
like her', naked, entering the water and releasing himself to the fluids of
feminine sexual symbology.

The repression, however, lingers though now it is transmogrified as a kind
of ideological impotence, intensifying the desire without risking gratification.
When Gabriela goes to his bed, the desire becomes exquisite, something more
elevated than satisfaction. Their lovemaking which occurs without
intercourse, like Keats' love 'forever young and still to be enjoyed' in the frieze
of the Grecian Urn, is profoundly idealized and romantic. As a canon of
European sexual hyperbole, desire is never sullied by what John Donne and
other Elizabethans described as the 'death' and loss issued by orgasm. This
contradiction of a desire that has no end fills him with pleasure and misgiving:
'She undid his shirt and played with the hairs on his chest, but he was glad she
went no further' (TM, 129). The world continues to turn outside their bed, but
there is 'a slow upheaval... the cosmos upending' (TM, 129). Inside, however,
even without sexual action, Matt's 'body was slowly coming undone' (TM,
129). And by coming undone, he now wants to accompany Gabriela to
Germany, and he tells her, though admitting they hardly know each other, that
he loves her. Again, Matt seems unable to accept the option of sexual pleasure
that is enhanced by intense romanticizations. It is not sexual immediacy but
emotional and psychological fixity that he seeks, and inevitably such wild
idealizations, which have no foundation in the real nature of their relationship,
collapse under the pressure of Matt's broader distress.

In another sweeping irony, it is Nyoman, the swindler playboy, the man
whom Matt had earlier described as 'not just an artist' but a 'healer, a magician,
a starman' who 'could make a blind man see' (TM, 38), who deprives Matt of
his desire and his augmenting pleasure. By incorporating Gabriela into his
sexual entourage, Nyoman reveals the insufficiencies of Matt's fantasy and
ideological commitment to desire above gratification and genuine interaction.
Not only does Nyoman's dubious commercial dealings and outright
dishonesty contravene the decency and integrity which Matt sees as his
distinguishing characteristics, but his behaviour also transgresses the cultural
integrity Nyoman supposedly represents. Nyoman's greed, his self-interest and
his gigolo behaviours — all of which have been obvious to everyone except
Matt — directly exploit Matt's personal fallibilities as much as they
demonstrate the weaknesses of his perspective and ideology. Matt loses
Gabriela by his own psychological and emotional deficiencies, which are themselves rooted in his inflexible morality and political outlook; it is these characteristics which make him vulnerable to the calculating chicanery of Nyoman and to the seductive possibilities of Frank Schmetzer's ultimate chaos.

In losing Gabriela, Matt himself sets off the series of reactions that culminate in Schmetzer's self-immolation and Matt's own final sexual and personal release. Jung has explained the dream of precognition by citing the example of Artemidorus of Dalda (2nd century A.D) where a man dreams his father is burned to death though shortly it is the dreamer who dies of the 'fires' or high fever (Jung, 1964: 78). The prognostic dimension of dreams discussed by Jung is clearly used by Gerard Lee to unsettle the reader and add to the sense of impending doom. The symbolic union between Matt and Troppo Frank has already been established through Matt's expressed sympathy, his interest in Frank's 'vision', and through the mimicking and interchanges that have taken place. The fire symbology, with its somewhat contradictory allusions to sexual heat, death and purification, is intensified through the Balinese cremation ceremony as genuine ritual and as spectacle for Western tourists. Lee's narrative vacillates — like Matt's emotions — between expectant tragedy and farce. The peril into which Matt is cast is continually alleviated by comic references. His appearance in these final scenes is quite silly. His 'vision' is meagre. He follows Troppo Frank to the 'edge of civilization', but like Lear in Mad Tom's forest hovel, there is something mitigating, something superficially comic, in the curious tinge of madness Matt experiences. The cremation bull teeters like a clown on stilts. The crowd laughs as Schmetzer imitates Matt. The home that will be Matt's spiritual retreat turns out to be Schmetzer's hovel. The ethereal ring of concupiscence he imagines, turns out to be the ring of Schmetzer's immolation. The pre-ordained incendiary is a tourist jet flying low overhead. And the Balinese sex goddess who has teased him back to sexual life — purity by corruption — turns out to be a Javanese whore who won't let Matt express his fondness and gratitude with a kiss.

Matt's return to sanity and identity stability, his return to (or arrival at) social pragmatism and common sense is a parody of sanctity. As with much contemporary comic fiction, the novel's uncertainties are never fully resolved but remain as an invisible echo in the subdued silence of the climax. Nyoman may or may not have achieved another sexual conquest in Gabriela, but in either case, Matt is left in retreat with neither the compensation of sexual affection nor genuine knowledge. Rather, he is sustained by a reasonableness,
a new kind of gentler cynicism, which has been bought at the cost of his ideological and moral purity. The perception that has produced his disgust with Western culture and Western imperialism is subjugated to Pete's hedonism and Burditt's moral relativism. It is not the locals who have been raped by Western cultural imperialism, but Matt himself. It has taken the force and prowess of a Javanese prostitute to relieve Matt's sexual frustration and repression, though clearly the author is wanting to demonstrate the inadequacies of moral judgement. Matt is raped, but it is less an act of exploitation than Nyoman's commercial chicanery. The transaction of the sexual body is utterly confused in the scene with the prostitute, and it would seem that Lee is urging a more tolerant attitude toward sexuality, power and ideology than the one which leads to Schmetzer's death and Matt's psychological castration. The world is constituted on uncertain divisions: life from death, order from chaos, pain from pleasure. Thus, the flame that releases Frank Schmetzer from his psychological agonies, also releases Matt:

Then almost when he least expected it, a roaring furnace of white-hot flame threatened to engulf him. He fought for breath and tried to hold back the contractions. Finally, he could no longer contain it and giving in, he let the fury go. It swept through him, through every fibre of his body, racing along every muscle, heading for the powder keg of his brain. When it reached there, there was a moment of white implosion before his boundaries were scattered in every direction (TM, 176).

III. The Ridiculous to the Sublime: A Feminine Paradise

Gerard Lee's comic apprehension of the new Bali experience in many ways inverts the conventions of stereotyped Orientalism, particularly in relation to its cultural and gender based power differentials. The image of a passive and feminine race, which many commentators have regarded as the essence of Orientalism, has been dispersed by a more complex interchange of pleasure, power and desire. Indeed in many of the Asian based Australian texts discussed in this study the indigenous male characters — d'Alpuget's Kaman and Maruli, the Krauths' Rai, Inez Baranay's Alit — are configured as more sexually potent, assertive and ideologically forceful than their less sensitive and somewhat brutal, occasionally stupid, Australian male counterparts. This new Asian character is not the masculine mirror of the 'colonised' female, as some commentators have suggested, but is part of a complex new social and aesthetic formation in which power exchanges have become problematized
by the sexual and economic liberation of Western women. While there is considerable dispute about this point — particularly given the immense institutional and academic investment in the concept and continuance of feminist liberationism — some commentators would regard the appearance of the 'new woman' as a manifestation of the era of choice or post feminism whereby the conventional division of labour based on a patriarchal system of surveillance, discipline and exclusion of women from the public sphere has been dispersed.

Our discussion in the previous chapter focused on the issue of choice in relation to the deployment of the sexualized body in commercial transactions. In the course of that discussion we noted that some significant division has developed between those feminists who remain unswerving in their loyalty to Enlightenment derived theories of liberation, and those feminists who have aligned themselves with the postmodernist interest in individuality and choice. For the latter group the focus on older structures of gender based power has been replaced by an interest in a more complex play of heterogeneous microstructures, where the individual has greater choice and opportunity for bodily deployment. By way of corroboration, Bryan S. Turner (1984, 1991), in his sociology of the body, has argued that capitalist emphasis on individualism has necessarily dismantled the structural distinctions of patriarchy, bringing new forms of social relationships he calls 'patrism'. According to Turner, patrism is a residual of aggregated 'prejudicial beliefs and practices of men towards women without the systematic backing of law and politics' (Turner, 1984: 155). The de-systematization of the old structures, while remaining as an irritant to women's participation in the public sphere, cannot effectively block or neutralize the facilitating individualism of capitalism which demands the emancipation of women.

Yet even beyond the pall of aggregated patrism, other commentators, especially following the first volume of Foucault's The History of Sexuality, have emphasized the aesthetic and individual power of the body to emancipate itself from conventions and residues of patriarchy. Kroker and Kroker in The Body Invaders: Sexuality and the Postmodern Condition (1988) present a range of discourses emphasizing the qualities of choice and the liberation of the female as victim; even the female body as sexual focus is

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5 Feminism itself has become institutionalized and therefore absorbed as a social convention. Careers in the academy and social policy formation have been structured around female advancement. However, some commentators — Helen Garner among them — have wondered about the saturation of feminist polemics. In recent discussions on the topic, Garner has described the present social era as post-feminist.
continually balanced by presentations of the male as sexual focus. As Kroker and Kroker point out, the female body can no longer be assumed in the way it once was. The body is active and assertive, and the most superficial survey of the art, literature and popular culture of the times indicates clearly that the roles of the female in the First World have been radically altered.  

There is little doubt that those Enlightenment ideologies which identify males as a monophonic political structure, intent on the suppression and domination of women, are being gently mocked in *Tropo Man*, particularly when the ideologies are taken up by male enthusiasts who demonize their own gender and their own sexuality. Matt, we recall, went into a rage of self disgust over his inclinations to sexual domination when fantasizing about Ketut. The humour of the scene does not legitimate sexual domination, but highlights the personal fallibilities of the fantasizer who is utterly incapable of harming anybody except himself. Matt must rely on the force and aggression of a woman in order to experience sexual liberation. Even the notion of patrism which Turner identifies as a pervasive feature of gender relations in the postmodern world is critically questioned by the drama of Gerard Lee's novel. The sexual liaisons depicted by the novel provide little evidence of residual male domination and attitudes which would restrict the females' choices in bodily deployment. On the contrary, both Matt and Pete Burns are jilted by their respective girlfriends; Matt is also jilted by Gabriela who had first chosen him and then chosen someone else. When Nyoman and Cassie get together each is deriving some degree of sexual and transcultural gratification. Nyoman achieves sexual and commercial pleasure. Cassie, whose journey to Bali has been facilitated by her wealth, power and choice, remains entirely in control of her gigolo boyfriend, despite the latter's considerable duplicities. She owns the money, power and sexuality she deploys; and Nyoman wishes to share in it. Moreover, Cassie is sexually liberated, espousing the virtues of Balinese lovers' sensitivity and sexual prowess, both of which, according to Matt at least, turn out to be as baseless as everything else associated with Nyoman.

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6 This disavowal of the structural distinctions of the male and female is symbolized in Beverley Kellie's discussion of trans-sexual pornography, 'The pornographer's double: transgression is the law' in Kroker and Kroker (1988). See also recent Hollywood genre films *Fatal Attraction* and *Thelma and Louise* which reverse the conventions of female as victim, producing new images of male as victim to female aggression. It is not that these films replace the conventions that still persist, but that they add to the archive which represents the contemporary world.
While other texts take the fecund and sensitive Asian male far more seriously than Gerard Lee's *Tropplo Man*, there is in all cases a recognition that the transcultural experience, especially as it is engaged through sexual congress, may provide at least the possibility of bodily as well as intellectual and aesthetic pleasures. Paradoxically, the broadened field of choice which has created the sort of identity tensions, social fragmentations and anomie of the First World lifestyle, may also be deployed in the pursuit of personal liberation and renewal. For the woman of choice, the Asian body represents the opportunity for cultural and sexual adventure. In *Tropplo Man* both the superficial and excessively romanticized engagement of the Asiatic sexual body are warmly ridiculed — though not directly condemned — for either their naivety or political dubiousness. Blanche d'Alpuget is somewhat encouraging in her more romantic depiction of the transcultural love affair between Alex and Maruli; she is less kind to *Turtle Beach's* Judith, who appears rather ridiculous as she taps at Kaman's door in the middle of the night, being denied entry and sexual gratification. Ashlie in Nigel and Caron Krauth's *Sin Can Can* and Inez Baranay's Mara in *The Edge of Bali* are more sympathetically portrayed as their liaisons with indigenous Asian males produce more positive and liberational effects.

In Phil Noyce's film, *Echoes of Paradise* (1987), Maria, a middle-class, suburban Australian mother, is propelled, like Matt, into crisis by the infidelity of her partner. Combined with the profound emotional effect caused by her father's death, the revelation of her husband's extra-marital sexual adventures uninges the solidities of Maria's self-conception as a contented wife and mother. The husband, George, a successful barrister and ALP preselection candidate, is presented in relatively familiar terms; like David Williamson's 'Egoist', Blanche d'Alpuget's own lawyer-ALP aspirant, Richard in *Turtle Beach*, or any number of Henrik Ibsen's patriarchs, George is self-absorbed, a little corpulent in his bourgeois self satisfactions, ambitious and excessively hard working. Maria is initially represented as supportive and maternal, a little unsure of herself though extremely sure of her husband and the familial integrity. When she discovers George's infidelity soon after the death of her father — a discovery precipitated by Paul who is even more obnoxious, lascivious and patriarchal than her husband — Maria feels as though her world has been inverted. In grieving for the loss of her father and her husband, Maria is coupling the loss of the male source of her life, with the male source of her sexual pleasure. In each case it is her body which has been
deprived — her mortality, her sexuality: 'I lost Dad and then I lost you' she tells George when, later in the film, he attempts to reconcile their marriage.

Significantly, Noyce insists on the interdependence of emotions, identity and physicality. Maria's immediate response is to close herself into the toilet and vomit. This expurgation, an ironic reversal of the Aristotelean catharsis principle,\(^7\) anticipates the 'reversion' of her identity and self-concept by the sexual deployment of her body in South East Asia. Again like Matt, Judith, and even Marla in The Edge of Bali, Maria is cast into doubt, unsure of what she is doing and what her life has been and meant. She is assured by her friend, Judy, and later by George himself, that the affair didn't 'mean' anything, though of course the actions produce substantial meaning for Maria herself. What she has thought to be 'real' turns out to be a camouflage. The conventions of filial duty and the security of patriarchal guidance are shattered. Maria refuses to talk to George about the affair in order to confront and resolve the issues, as Judy suggests, but merely fantasizes about the corruption of her gastronomic responsibilities: 'I think I'll just put arsenic in his Corn Flakes'. Like her vomiting, the fantasy articulates her feelings of bodily betrayal. Maria would reverse her previously secure sense of self in her role as household agent — the provider of food and bodily pleasure for her husband — by slaying George in the very midst of his domestic bliss, the artifice he and his political patriarchy had created. Her friend's suggestion is, however, 'more practical' and we might add, more utilitarian: a packaged seven day holiday to the Thai island resort of Phuket.

While Echoes of Paradise was forced by Indonesian government sensitivities to alter its original location from Bali to Phuket\(^8\) (Stratton, 1990), the film retains the central and distinguishing theme of spiritual and sexual vitality. This theme, while generated through the context of Thai, especially Buddhist, spiritualism is more demonstrably explored through the character of

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\(^7\) The famous catharsis was literally the purging of the bowel. The emotional stress caused by her father's death and her husband's infidelity is therefore only partially purged by the reflex, in the same way as the journey to Thailand can only be a partial resolution of her stress. There remains considerable dispute on this point, however. As previously indicated, argument over 'date rape' and the notion of male pressure and the potential 'victimization' of the female through some form of sexual exploitation continues, particularly on American campuses.

\(^8\) The original plan to film in Bali was dropped partly because of the nervousness of producers about Indonesia's unpredictability in dealing with foreign (especially Australian) film-makers. In 1986, we recall, the eruption of the Jenkins Affair had resulted in the expulsion of Australian journalists from Indonesia and the rejection of Australian tourists and business people. Some of the thematic inconsistencies that have been observed by critics really arise from this switch in location which also required some hasty script adjustments.
Raka, the alienated Balinese dancer who becomes the focus of Maria's sexual deployment and spiritual renewal. In a sense, Raka is the personification of the Balinese essence, the same sort of primitive, though paradoxically elevated, qualities that are explored in the other Bali based texts, including the tourist guides and popular advertising imagery. Noyce uses a number of cinematic techniques to contrast the gloominess and uncertainty of Maria's life in Australia against the spiritual and sensual possibilities of Phuket-Bali. In particular, early in the movie Noyce surrounds Maria with brooding and shadowy images. It is winter in Sydney, her father has died, and Noyce's scenes of suburban domestic interiors seem uneasily claustrophobic as they are enclosed continually by long shots of the house in darkness and bad weather. The children's play is destabilized by momentary glimpses of the mother's disengagement, expressions which, in their juxtaposition with the play, seem all the more distressing. Even the view of Western spiritualism, articulated through the father's death and funeral service, is clinical, impersonal and vaguely repressive in its sombre and colourless efficiency. When Maria attends her father's hospital bed, death is depicted as absence of the body, clean sheets and restrained grief. The priest at the funeral service is distant, rational, respectfully discreet — but he misstates the deceased's name because he does not know him. Against all of this, Noyce weaves in a musical theme which moves cyclically down the scale, suggesting the inevitability of doom and despair.

The closure of this sombre and restrained world of Australia is represented in the departure line at Sydney airport where Maria is hustled away, her voice subsumed by the new music of the gamelan. In the next scene the veil is immediately lifted as Maria recalls the fantasies of the East told to her as a child by her father. In unmistakably idealized imagery, Maria recalls —

Dad used to say you could smell the East before you got to it. You could feel it all around you even before the ship came into port. Presents he bought me back from Asia were the most exciting things of my childhood. Like the little set of carved wooden elephants with ivory tusks. I thought they were ivory. I don't know why Mum wouldn't come back here with him. I think she got tired of his romantic stories. I loved them. All those Somerset Maugham characters with mysterious pasts.

The monologue is presented to the backdrop of bright and salubrious images of Thai life and energy, eschewing entirely the Third World indigence viewed
in Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* and Duigan's *Far East*. Yet for Maria, who is being forced to confront the issue of what is real and what is illusory — in relation to her life with George and her life in her father — the 'image of the East is once again a question of belief and feeling. Her mother may have tired of the illusory and romantic, but the young Maria 'loved' her father's romanticism. It is this dialectic which propels much of the film's drama in Phuket and in particular in Maria's relationship with Raka.

The love of, and belief in, the illusory and the romantic becomes emblemized in the film through the presence of children. The love of children and the childish or innocent permeates the whole film, even as Maria becomes more immersed in the erotic-spiritual possibilities of transculturalism. Bryan Turner has made the point that most erotic texts have historically taken the perspective of the male or patriarchal to the exclusion of children (Turner, 1984). However, *Echoes of Paradise*, like a number of other texts set in Bali,9 embraces the spiritual and erotic possibilities of the feminine which itself 'embodies' the presence of children and maternalism more generally. Noyce presents Maria as distinctly maternal. Her thoughts return to the children during her adventures in the East. She writes to them, asks after them, requests them; her thoughts go to them immediately after Judy suggests the trip to Phuket. Even in the scene immediately following her lovemaking with Raka the camera lingers on the photographed images of the children. Maria's maternalism is thus eroticized as she and Raka lull in the postcoital afterglow:

RAKA: What are their names?
MARIA: Julie's the oldest, then Simon, then Tessa
RAKA: They look like you.
MARIA No Simon looks like . . .
RAKA: Maria, they exist because of you. It is good a woman should have children.
MARIA: (Gripping him and a little urgent) Do you want children?
RAKA: Oh yes. Many. (Maria relaxes, reassured) Several hundred I think.
MARIA: I'd have liked more. I love little babies.
RAKA: Then you should have them.

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9 In particular, the surfing movie *Morning of the Earth* deploys the presence of children to intensify the 'natural' and 'native' power of human sexuality. This trope is not unusual in the counterculture texts of the seventies where the natural is celebrated through 'free' style relationships.
Maria: Yes I should. (They kiss)
Raka: Maria, you are so beautiful.
Maria: So are you.

Maria's maternalism is not a constitution of male power and discipline but an exercise of her individuality as fully sexualized woman. In this scene Maria's romanticism represents a powerful convergence of the sexual and the maternal, liberated from patriarchal and cultural determinations. While the liberation and sexual pleasure may have been facilitated by the male, Raka, the masculine and patriarchal are subjugant to the feminine precisely because of this convergence. Raka, who has been represented as a symbolic convergence of the male and female through his dancing, mode of dress, make-up, sympathies and sensibilities, proves himself sexually potent and politically appropriate by his affirmation of maternity and his affection for, and desire to procreate, children.

Maria thus is attempting to reascribe herself as spiritually and sexually liberated women. She does not, however, wish to eradicate entirely the life in Australia since that life is the ultimate source of her maternity. Rather, her romantic experiences are able to incorporate the children through their emblematic presence in her experiences with Raka; consequently the dialectic between the real and the illusory can, at least temporarily, be suspended without being fully resolved. However, beyond the immediacies of her pleasure, Maria is forced to confront the problem of temporality itself. In particular, she will see that romanticism is as ephemeral as the illusion of domestic bliss, and that, which ever way she turns, change and loss are inevitable. Even maternity which she merges symbolically with sexual pleasure in her relationship with Raka, is subject to mutation, Specifically, the 'gone troppo' Mitty, who has also imagistically and erotically emblemed her children from the distance and personal liberations provided by Phuket, has 'not seen her sons in Sydney for years'. Maternity, which had seemed so powerful and irreducible, has been shaded, even destabilized, by Mitty's unswerving pursuit of independence. The more Mitty tries to return to her children — and the complex interactions and commitments this return would entail — the less she seems able to do so. Her inability to return, in fact, seems to invert the independence through a greater loss of control, liberation and ultimately maternity.
In this way the dialectic between the real and the illusory, which moves out of suspension when it is outside the immediacies of sexual union, becomes further complicated. The union between Maria and Raka, while intensely pleasurable and spiritually enervating, can only exist temporarily beyond the complex interrelationships of life. When Maria discovers that Mitty, as well as having children in Australia, has also shared in the transcultural spiritual and sexual union with Raka, she is forced to confront this temporality; union, transcendence and pleasure are now seen more directly as part of the unyielding flow of time. Change confronts the dialectic, and Maria must see herself, her relationship with Raka and her time on Phuket itself as unfixed and ephemeral. In confronting her place in the scheme of life, Maria questions her place in the scheme of Raka's affections and the 'illusion' of Phuket. As in Troppo Man and The Edge of Bali, the question of tourist exploitation becomes central to the protagonist's moral and ideological tensions. Maria needs to understand whether she is — perhaps like Mitty — only interested in expropriating some superficial pleasures from South East Asia, or whether her desires are more substantial:

**MARIA:** I suppose tourists are always asking you questions.
**RAKA:** Some do. Others, they look and take what they can, and go away.
**MARIA:** Do you think I'm like that?
**RAKA:** No, I think you are a little lost, like me, perhaps.
**MARIA:** I find myself here and I can't easily go back. I don't know what I can go back to.
**RAKA:** Perhaps you should let go and the answer might come to you.
**MARIA:** Is that what you did?
**RAKA:** It's what I've been trying to do here.

As we have seen with the other Bali texts, the real seeker of wisdom and spiritual knowledge is often distinguished from the superficial hedonist. Maria wants to believe that she is not superficial and that her desires are more profound and respectful. Yet while she would want to be the true transculturalist, and eventually experiences some powerful sense of sexual, spiritual and cultural union, she cannot eschew the implications of dislocation and dissonance.

In many respects the forced re-location of the film serves to deepen the thematic implications of this cultural dissonance. Noyce and the scriptwriters,
Jan Sharp and Anne Brookabank, explain the Balinese dancer's presence in Thailand also as an exercise in personal dislocation. Having been swept up by the interests of Western aestheticisms, Raka becomes distressed by the West's loss of spiritual integrity and belief. He leaves the troupe in Paris where he has been performing 'beautiful but meaningless dances', but his feelings of dissonance and cultural disorder are so intense that he cannot return to Bali. He too is a victim of Western anomie. His alienation from Mitty, like his sense of humiliation at being 'kept' by Terry — himself a cultural, sexual and psychological dissonant — are responses to his disillusion and self doubt. Thus, Raka too is 'floating' which is the way Maria describes herself after deciding to stay on in Phuket. Like the floating signifier, however, they are each forced to reconcile themselves with their lack of foundation. They come to mean something for one another that is temporarily 'real' though that reality is inevitably assaulted by their prior knowledge and the other desires and meanings in their lives.

Thus, for Maria the 'Asia' of her childhood, and the illusions of romanticism and innocence inform the idealization of the mature transcendent experience. Raka is trying to recover the tatsu or dancing spirit; Maria is trying to experience it as liberation from the strictures and failings of the patriarchy that has so severely disappointed and disillusioned her. Raka is surrounded by forest and water imagery and we see him for the first time expressed in the sensuality of Balinese finger dance. The exotic is represented as exciting and sensual, but it is the spiritual condition that most arouses Maria. As mentioned earlier, the lovemaking is interspersed with child allusions, and in the erotic dance that occurs around the same sequence of the film, Raka takes on the persona of the convergent male-female, his gestures, clothes, make-up and seductive poses are all suggestive of the androgynous sexual child, a more profound celebration of the maternal. Similarly, in the Buddhist ceremony in which chant and meditative contact are designed to transport the essential human spirit, Raka's touch becomes the touch of purity and innocence, a catharsis for the pain and grief Maria has suffered, and a distinct contrast to the sombre distance of the Christian funeral. Just as Maruli prays for Alex in their sexual union, Raka becomes a 'prayer' in Maria's arms.

Yet, while Alex remains a victim to the patriarchy that surrounds her, Maria retains and, paradoxically, compromises her liberation through the exercise of her choice. The 'letting go' Raka exhorts leads her both into union with Raka and 'back home to her children'. In either case, Maria is depicted as exerting choice. As the symbolization of innocence and purity, Raka — and hence
Asia-Bali — becomes the focus of that choice, enabling the expression of the liberation in both directions. When Maria finally decides to stay in Phuket, she declares that she has 'finally taken control of her life', even though she is 'not sure' what she will do with it. In the end she realizes that she is indeed, a floating signifier, incarcerated by her liberation. At this point, the dialectic of illusion and reality fades as Maria comes to terms with the evasiveness of foundation. Her experiences with Raka, she must acknowledge, are as illusory as her life with George. After the antagonism of the night at the disco, both she and Raka realise that even the romantic ideal is insubstantial. They had come together by the grace of the time-space compression, the possibilities and pleasures provided by capitalist tourism, and therefore they could not parade themselves as eternally innocent. Their pact of spiritual eroticism is sullied by the facts of their existence: each asks of the other, are you exploiting me? The uncertainty of the response is the acknowledgement that all meanings — and their ideologies — are at least potentially illusory. Maria is white and rich by Third World standards and Raka is sexually and spiritually potent. Mitty and Saleem are at least honest about each other and about the gratification and pleasure the other facilitates. What shocks and distresses Maria most deeply is Mitty's description of Raka and Saleem as 'beautiful' children: 'Sometimes I lie awake at night and I look at that smooth, brown body. I can't believe my luck. The beauty of him makes me want to cry'. It is perhaps some lingering doubt, some residual sense of her own vulnerability, some meagre assault to her maternity, that wounds Maria and forces her to acknowledge the impossibility of purity in genuine adult life. The union itself, the meanings it has created, are deconstructed by the context that has created them.

The title *Echoes of Paradise* is gently ironic alluding to the inevitable hollowness and eventual disappearance of all idealizations. Yet Maria's return to Australia, like Matt's in *Troppa Man*, ought not to be seen as a convenient resolution to the tensions explored in the film, as Annette Hamilton seems to suggest. According to Hamilton, 'Maria returns refreshed and secured, able to deal with her husband and children by what she has appropriated from the Asian experience' (Hamilton, 1990: 31). As we have previously noted, Hamilton, like Sylvie Shaw (1992), has seen the film as an act of textual and personal expropriation where Asia's riches are removed by the cultural imaginary (collective consciousness) of the West. The word 'expropriate' of course suggests the removal of the riches of the East to enhance and enrich the depleted cultural stock of the West. For other commentators like Alison
Bronowski (1992) and Chua Siew Keng (1992, 1993) the film merely reverses the perspective of white males in their sexualization and appropriation of the Eastern female. Recalling Mulvey's (1984) essay on visual pleasure, (see Chapter Four), Chua for example observes that the 'Orient' is now available for the sexual emancipations of the 'white' Western woman:

Only in this discursive/fantastic site can (white) woman have the control and power of the gaze normally denied to them 'at home' in the 'West'. And this is done by 'reducing' Asian men to the (Western) position usually reserved for women. In this hierarchy of looks ethnicity is subordinate to gender (Chua, 1993: 31).

There is, however, a more subtle interplay of power and liberation in Echoes of Paradise than any of these descriptions admit. The film is not easily or conveniently resolved since Maria's return is vexed and somewhat ambiguous. Certainly she is embraced by the children whose bodies she has 'missed so terribly', but the return also is accompanied by a profound loss. The final scene with Raka, depicting a momentary and farewell embrace, might seem to suggest that the pair has discovered what is 'real' in life. The reality they do discover, however, is one that is self-questioning, arbitrary and inevitably evasive. In returning home, Maria, cannot hope to restore the fixity and reliability of the reality she once knew. Rather, she is forced to recognise that this world is no longer feasible, and the marginalization of the father in the home-coming scene is designed to symbolize the marginalization of his patriarchy and the old system of meanings that once held sway in the family. Clearly, the film-makers are offering some significant ideological comment here, but there is no sense in which the scene idealizes the future. The scenes of Sydney are brighter and more optimistic, but like Phuket, this is not paradise. The illusion of domestic happiness will not and cannot be reinstated through the addition of the Eastern knowledge-experience. And it is difficult to know exactly what Annette Hamilton has in mind in her description of Maria as 'refreshed'. Noyce has made it quite clear that the spiritual and romantic experiences are themselves subject to complex and often contradictory human — that is adult human — needs. There are no guarantees that Maria's life with George will be any better than it once was. No guarantee that the pair will be reconciled at all. It is only her 'choice', as the expression of her liberation and power, which seems to offer any cause for optimism, though even here the outcome of its assertion is ambiguous since, in restoring the
children, it denies her sexual and spiritual pleasure with Raka. On close examination the 'appropriation' of Hamilton's scheme is as much a profound loss.

Once again it is this liberation, this choice, which distinguishes Maria as a liberated Western woman of the postmodern age. Maria exerts her choice through the deployment of wealth and her body. However, it is not that she expropriates something from Raka — nor he from her — so much as they are drawn together and discover that their communion cannot be sustained. The transcultural propinquity allows their confluence, but they are forced to realize that all things are subject to mutation. Certainly Raka becomes an emblem in the new system of meanings Maria brings back from Phuket, but he is no less significant for her — and presumably vice-a-versa — than were her children as they were emblemized while she lay in Raka's arms. Reality and illusion are thus indistinguishable. What really matters for Maria is her ability to choose. When, approaching the film's climax, she again recalls her father and his tales of the East, she is not rejecting them as mere romanticizations, as did her mother. Rather, Maria is acknowledging their importance in the deployment of choice — even when that choice is to be 'childish'. Marie tells us that 'Dad didn't really want to live out those dreams of exotic places and grand adventures' because he realized 'you had to decide what's real', that you had to 'dream as well as go into the shadows of the lovely jungle'. In other words, the individual could make his or her own choices about what was real and what was not. But in either case one had to make the most of the experience.

IV. Toward the Edge of Bali

When Maria returns to the bourgeois sanctity of suburban Sydney, she is of course returning to the material pleasures her husband and father, both high achieving males, represent. To this extent Maria is confirming her class status as much as her capacity for choice and power assertion. As Foucault has explained in the first volume of The History of Sexuality, this power to choose, celebratory of the pleasure potential of the body, is a natural form of bourgeois self-expression. It may be that Maria's euphemistic claim that she is 'returning to her children' camouflages the implications of her return in relation to that power and the materialism of her bourgeois life. That is, Maria's bourgeois power which has facilitated her trip to Phuket and the sexual interchange with Raka re-asserts itself in the final scenes of the film as Maria returns to her comfortable house in her comfortable suburb; it is this power
and prestige which has unsettled Raka and incited the conflict which finally leads to the couple's separation.

In many respects, *Echoes of Paradise* functions as a distinctly female fantasy in which the maternal spirit outshines and extinguishes the patriarchy or patrism referred to by Bryan Turner (1984, 1991). Not only does the film make implicit references to the Balinese-Hindu pantheon in which the female and maternal are significant formations, its ideology clearly favours the primacy of the female and her choice in the era of individualism, liberation and global integration. The political postmodernity to which we have often referred in this study is again central to the thematic explorations of the film. Like Judith in *Turtle Beach*, Alex in *Monkeys in the Dark*, Komala in *The Root of All Evil*, and even Sam Konig in *Water from the Moon*, Maria is able to express her liberation and choice-power through the new formations of global transculturalism, and the specific deployment of her body and her social class. Thus in the ideological scheme of these texts, patriarchy and patrism are demolished, if not actually then symbolically, by the greater political integrity of the feminine. Just as we have noted many times in the discussion of the theoretical complexities of postmodernism/poststructuralism, the female and the ethnically marginal are often coupled together as forces opposing the status quo of patriarchal — even patrio-capitalist — domination. For the protagonists mentioned above, however, their political efficacies are further enhanced through their sexual and cultural integration with the often idealized Asian male. This sexual and cultural union is valorized as supremely emancipatory, and culturally, morally and politically unassailable: the positive outcomes of postmodernity.

Nevertheless, as we have also noted, a number of contradictions issue from these politico-aesthetic formations. Most particularly — and again we recall Stuart Hall's (1991b) suspicions of postmodern liberationism — the assertion of choice is primarily part of the First World political system. Certainly Noyce and the scriptwriters have understood this difficulty though, and this is true of all the texts mentioned, his film still insists on the moral and ideological integrity of its protagonist. Maria, Judith, Komala, Alex, Sam — all are presented as morally and ideologically superior, and their perspectives are the principal sensitors and filters for reading or viewing the texts. Nonetheless, the liberation and choice-power enjoyed by the protagonists is in all cases facilitated by their home cultures and, as significantly, by their social class. Maria enjoys the pleasures provided by international First World tourism. She deploys the wealth and choice that her husband and his job represent
while she bitterly complains to him that he 'never has time for her', and is always 'too busy', she will happily share in the bounty that the time-absorbing, bourgeois profession provides. She will continue to dress and eat well. Her children, who are so important to her, will continue to be well tended, well sheltered, well educated. When she returns to the material world, Maria is undoubtedly altered, but she is in no way revoking the power that has been her cultural birthright: quite the contrary.

Inez Baranay's documentary style novel, *The Edge of Bali*, also explores the contradictions of the dominant and powerful female exerting her choices among Third World men. The novel, which is a polyphony detailing the vaguely overlapping experiences of three First World 'visitors' in Bali, also deploys a distinctly feminist ideology which is designed to demonstrate the fallibilities of Australian males and their residual patrism. The parallels between the Marla story and the Maria story, in particular, are quite striking. Like Maria, Marla achieves some sort of sexuo-spiritual revivification through her experience in Bali; she distinguishes herself from the tourists of Kuta and falls for a sensuous, high-caste Balinese dancer called Alit. Like Raka, and even the young prince in Nigel and Caron Krauth's *Sin Can Can*, Alit is distinguished both from the teeming oafishness of Australian men in Bali and in Australia, and the lower caste Balinese countrymen. Like Maruli and Raka, Alit is idealized as a sexual performer, a sensualist and a refined aesthete. However, unlike Maria, Marla is entirely independent and childless, a professional woman who has enjoyed numerous sexual relationships without the fetters of marriage or 'life-long' commitments. *The Edge of Bali* proposes a more complete embrace of an ideology of pleasure which deflects all commitments beyond personal and immediate gratification. Systematized relationships such as marriage or motherhood are regarded as either naive idealizations or hegemonic power formations which contravene the true nature of human desire and individual liberation.

In fact, Baranay offers *The Edge of Bali* as a distinctively postmodern documentary fiction exploring the social and political complexities of the age:

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10 It is worth noting also that the Thailand and the Bali that Noyce's film creates are neither indigent nor suffering. Indeed, the Third World squalor and social repression that have been so significant to the dramatic intensities of texts like *The Year of Living Dangerously, Monkeys in the Dark, A Cry from the Jungle Bar, The Root of All Evil* and even *The Good Woman of Bangkok* are almost entirely missing from the Bali based texts. In Noyce's film Thailand and Bali are sites of pleasure and Third World materialist abundance. Difference remains a significant theme in the film, but these differences are clearly muted by the opulence, cleanliness and hedonism the site represents.
individualism, feminism, postcolonialism, international tourism and capitalist integration are all discussed, proselytized or dramatized in the context of transcultural propinquity. However, through each of the three sections of the novel — Nelson, Marla and Tyler — individual choice, especially the choice of the liberated, middle-class, First World woman, becomes the overriding value in all human propensities. In this sense, it is Marla who functions as the author’s ideological sensitor, against which all other critical and ideological issues must be judged. Through her deployment of tone, irony, character-ideological juxtapositions, and by centralizing her section in the novel, Baranay intensifies our sympathies for Marla; her intellectual, moral and political sensitivities are designed to illuminate all other interactions and all other relationships that take place on the island.

Most particularly, Baranay contrasts Marla’s mature outlook against the romantic idealisms of Nelson, a young woman who has had an affair with a Kuta Beach Balinese hangabout named Miki. Nelson’s affections are represented as naive and superficially romantic, while Marla, who is forty and in control of her life and ideas, is able to enjoy the Balinese dancer in a more substantial and spiritual union. As with Saleem in *Echoes of Paradise* and Nyoman in *Tropico Man*, Miki is in fact characterized as a gigolo, the new breed of Third world Asian male who seems to have been transformed by the transcultural experience, surrendering cultural traditions for the utilities of capitalist integration. Miki deploys his body to acquire sexual gratification and material pleasure. However, he understands that the union with the young Western women is constrained by political and economic practicalities. Consequently, he takes what he can, when he can. Nelson, on the other hand, is represented as the dupe of her own naive yearnings for an idealized, monogamous relationship:

It had been like a beautiful movie. Miki was the greatest looking guy she’d ever seen, the nicest she’d ever known, the one who cared most for her. Knowing him had made a million things clear to her. He was the one who was exactly right for her — who she was, why she was born, what she believed, why she hadn’t really been in love before. When she met him, she was just nineteen. Now she was twenty (*EB*, 4).

According to this romantic hyperbole, Miki ’is everything’ (*EB*, 4), facilitating conviction, belief in life, belief in ‘something wonderful, something transforming and liberating, something she was not able or allowed to imagine’
(EB, 5). Like Matt in *Troppa Man*, Nelson dreams of cultural immersion, living with Miki in the Balinese community, with the beautiful children she has seen in the streets of Kuta: 'She would have children like this. She had eaten food off a cart with Miki' (EB, 7). Her commitment is such that Nelson works seven days a week for a year to pay for her return trip to Bali, but when she comes to claim her bounty, Miki is framed in intimate transaction with another girl; he can't even remember Nelson's name, calling after her, 'You! Girl! Chick!' (EB, 15).

The remainder of the Nelson section describes the young woman's sense of dislocation and aimlessness, moving about the Kuta bars and nightclubs, smoking marijuana, being harassed by oafish Australian men, contemplating the meaninglessness and ephemerality of human relationships. After the disintegration of her dream, Nelson 'didn't know what she was doing in Bali any more' (EB, 26), so she prefers not to think, but to experience purely through her often euphorized senses; her sub-culture of friends is sexually casual, sometimes hardened, and generally despairing of any purposefulness. Staying in Bali or returning to Australia takes on the same sense of inevitability and amoebic inconsequentiality. Even in dialogues on tourism, global capitalism and the exploitation and transformation of the Balinese and their culture — dialogues which thread together the 'bong sessions', casual friendships and nightclub adventures — the possibility of moral or political order is inevitably dissolved by this prevailing mood of normlessness and inconsequentiality. It is as if — and this is the point made by Rodney, the Australian proprietor of the Gone Troppo Bar — the young people of the First World seem unable to do anything more than transfer their sense of alienation and anomic from their home to the conceived world of Bali. Bali itself is being re-written by the invasion of First World sensibilities.

In fact, the moral and ideological integrity of Nelson's behaviour, and the behaviour of others like her, are critically examined through Rodney's conversation with Marla which appears in the Nelson section. Marla's appearance in the section of itself adds to the destabilization of Nelson's perspective and actions. Rodney, who has been in Bali for a long time and who 'knows' the culture intimately, explains to the documentary journalist, Marla, that he is finally leaving the island because he recognizes that there is no end for the continuous flow of internationalization of which he was a part, but by which he also realizes: 'Bali is beautiful but it is not my home or yours' (EB, 34). In his conversation with Marla, anticipating the more serious and contemplative section centred around Marla herself, Rodney explains that
transcultural sexual desire is to be expected, just as it should be expected that the Balinese should 'want what we've got' (EB, 37). Concerns about the exploitation of Third World women by First World men, like those levelled against Dennis O'Rourke's men in The Good Woman of Bangkok, are reversed in Rodney's somewhat understated critique of the young Western women who come to Bali looking for casual sex with the local maledom:

'I was pissed off with one girl staying here, all the guys she went with, all gigolos. "In Australia I can have an Australian guy anytime," she said. "Why should I have one here?" That's what it is. And I'm intrigued by Asian girls, most white men are. So it goes the other way, doesn't it? 'Most of the girls, Australian girls, haven't got a clue. There was an Australian girl waiting for a barman here, she had bought him a motorbike, she wants to buy land with him, she goes to all the clubs with him. She's being used, sucked in. She says, "I know Bali," but if she really wanted to be his girlfriend, she would find out about his religion, his family, the ceremonies. Ninety percent of the girls with Balinese boyfriends don't know' (EB, 37).

This category of used and using Australian females does not, it turns out, include Marla, who does not attempt to 'buy' acceptance but who acknowledges the integrity and value of traditional Balinese culture. As we are to discover, Marla's attitudes and behaviours place her apart from the exploitative or ignorant activities of other Australian females; they places her among the intelligentsia, the ideological and intellectual élite.

Rodney's is the voice of knowing, the voice of authority. Nelson has already been shown to be girlishly romantic and foolishly trusting. Baranay deliberately places her experiences within the context of Rodney's more mature and far-sighted representations. So encompassing and morally trustworthy is Rodney's vision that he can afford the luxury of admitting limits and fallibilities; despite the breadth and intimacy of his knowledge, he must concede that the 'difference' between the two cultures is too great to allow him to adopt Bali as his 'real home'. That is, he knows enough to know the difference: 'It is different here', he insists to Marla (EB, 33). This declaration, of course, accords with the political insistence of those postcolonialists who see difference as the necessary component of political resistance, most particularly those theorists who see the West's definition of itself (home) as facilitated by the definition of the East (other or elsewhere). Baranay appears to affirm the
politics of postcolonialism both through her sympathetic presentation of Rodney and her later elaboration of Marla's own transcultural union, a union which Marla always accepts as partial, ephemeral, ultimately intransigent and defined by mutual respect.

Thus, in Baranay's ideological scheme knowledge will necessarily lead to the recognition and acceptance of this putative, though unclearly defined, difference. This is certainly the message of Rodney's wisdom. Baranay lets us know that we can trust the wisdom and the man because, after all, he has enjoyed numerous and intimate friendships with the Balinese, and was one of only two Westerners on the island to be invited to the former Immigratsi Chief's farewell celebrations. Moreover, Rodney is compassionate as well as insightful, having protected the hapless Nelson from the dangers of sexual exploitation by the oafish Aussies, while being honest enough to admit his own attraction to non-white women. This honesty and integrity culminate in his prognosis which explains quite frankly that 'money' cannot be held back in Bali, and that he himself has been part of the flow which is absorbing cultural difference.

Such self confessed fallibilities, placed in the broader perspective of his cultural knowledge, respect and moral acumen, reassure readers that Rodney can be trusted. The interview which forges some alliance between Rodney and Marla allows the latter to share in the light cast by Rodney's integrity and trustworthiness. In requesting the interview, Maria proves to Rodney that she is no casual tourist for whom he would normally have no time: 'She didn't want to write another "Aussie yobbos wreck island paradise" story' (EB, 33), but wanted 'background'. A genuine affinity is established between the authority of Rodney and Marla's respectful explorations as Rodney attempts to define the essential difference between himself and the Balinese. While it appears that Rodney knows Bali as well as any Westerner could, he cannot share in the ultimate secrets of their magic and spiritualism, both because the true magicians and healers 'kept their secrets to themselves and their magic for their own people' (EB, 34), and because finally he could not believe in them — though he did believe in the power of the mind. Like Soren Kierkegaard, Rodney cannot transcend his modernist condition of doubt in order to make the 'leap to faith'.11 Again, he imbues his own integrity upon Marla because

11 Kierkegaard's writings are characterized by this same regret. In Fear and Trembling, for example, Kierkegaard admits his inability to follow the faith of Abraham who was prepared to sacrifice his son in respect of God's command. Postmodernism appears to
She didn't look young enough, silly enough, or airy fairy enough to be the kind that would go looking for witch doctors, sorcerers or spirit raisers. The kind who were gullible prey for all those who exploited certain westerners' need for hocus-pocus (EB, 34).

Marla, therefore, is not like the Krauths' Sara or Ashlie in Sin Can Can, and nor is she like the silly and naive Nelson who, significantly, is excluded from this more probing passage in her section, this more probing dialogue. While Nelson flails about, pursuing absurdist and exploitative cults like the Herman Hesse group, Marla is configured as a more illuminating and interesting person, not problematized by tonal irony, but depicted as a serious journeyman, an explorer who can resist the temptations of superficial immersion and 'hocus-pocus'. A former organizational consultant, Marla appears to have emerged from the chrysalis of New Age Yuppiedom, though with a profound need for renewal and self-actualization, and the knowledge that change is painful:

Ten years ago she had been seduced by Tony Liorta and a philosophy whose basic corruptness had been hidden by its surface idealism. Be positive, go for it, create material prosperity as a manifestation of your spiritual power. Everything is better than everything else. Trickle down effect, they hoped for. The 'piss on' effect was what happened (EB, 138).

Marla questions love and romanticism; her trip to Bali is focused around the purity of work and personal productivity, though she has surrendered that part of herself which considered money and acquisitiveness to be something lasting or tantamount to spiritual growth. She is not to be duped — 'The idea of paradise was an illusion she did not intend to be deceived by. Knowing as she did, that it was a construct imposed on this place to support false ideologies: colonialism, orientalism, tourism' (EB, 100, sic). And of course, like Maria, Matt, Ashlie and the surfer tribe of Indy Express, Marla would distance herself from the common 'weal' of tourists and mass tourism, by seeking out that site in Bali which would facilitate a more quintessential cultural or spiritual experience. In Ubud, once again, Marla discovers, like Walter Spies, Covarrubias and other visitor aesthetes of the early twentieth century, the

be revitalizing new forms of faith and new versions of the great leap. The prevailing interest in 'New Age' ideas and literature — a hybrid of conventional European spiritualism and Eastern mysticism filtered through capitalist materialism — seems once again to confirm the hybridity of postmodern globalism.
more compelling, authentic and intimate experience of the Balinese and their culture. Despite her disavowal of the paradisical, she exclaims 'But here! But this!' (EB, 100). Her pleasure, as with Rodney's, is not with inertia or assimilation, but with some unspecified and essentialist difference; something that she may express through her Westernism, her work, real work, work with a purpose:

She sat at her table and inhaled the fragrant air, listened to the stillness, watched the garden grow, and thought of all the delightful things she could do, and of the marvel of being inspired with a purpose, a project, a work.

If she knew she were going to die tomorrow, this is where she'd be. If she were to live forever, this is where she'd be (EB, 104).

Yet in this immersion Baranay offers none of the ironic or comic distance with which Gerard Lee treats his protagonist, Matthew Walker, even though they are sitting in almost the exact location with similar ambitions and emotional experiences behind them. Indeed, Baranay consistently encourages us to believe in the accuracy and integrity of Marla's perceptions, since these perceptions are constituted, like Rodney's, on an essentialist formation of difference. The sexual pleasure and cultural-spiritual knowing she derives from the Balinese experience generally, and the high caste dancer Alit in particular, are always mediated by Marla's self-acclaimed objectivism — itself founded on her 'knowledge' of and ideological commitment to difference. As if to make the material of the novel, her protagonist and her protagonist's project more believable, Baranay filters her narrative through the vehicle of Marla's film documentary, a quasi-scientific text which of itself denies artifice and superficial romanticism. That is, it is this textual respect for the 'truth' which enhances rather than diminishes the ideological validity of the 'difference' Marla encounters and attempts to explicate.

Through the character of Marla, Baranay in fact tries to cobble sexual and intellectual independence with a profoundly sensual and spiritual love that is founded neither on the institutionalized sanctions of marriage nor the artificial idealism of romantic union. When Alit asks her why she has never married, Marla tries to deflect the question as inconsequential; he insists, presumably, because her independent status is so alien to his culture: 'When men asked me to marry," she explained (if explained is the right word), 'I never wanted to. I never felt ready, and then I felt I am happy alone. I like to work. I have
many friends also not married. In Australia many people not marry. Although here in Bali it is not usual" (EB, 180). To complement this independence, Baranay also draws Marla as extremely beautiful and sensual, though intellectually formidable. In this way, Baranay attempts to restrain the possibility of even a more profound romanticism — the European as opposed to the Hollywood version — through continued references to Marla's objectivity, worldly knowledge and capacity for self-management. Baranay is possibly aware that her protagonist is at times likely to compare with the protagonists of Mills and Boon — novels like the Bali based Spirit of the Sun (1973) — so she draws Marla as having some recognition of the dangers of sexual-romantic excess. To this extent, Marla dreams of love which will bring her pleasure, but she is always in control of the dream, recognizing that it is nothing more than a pleasurable fantasy:

But the dream was not of lying in bed, dreaming of love, but of love sending her into a dream. It was love: tender, romantic, exciting, soothing. Love of another, loved by another. She was gliding between bright green fields, perhaps on the back of a motorbike, holding fast to the waist of someone who completed a circuit of love. She was warm and wet, she was melting and flowing, it was love as it should be, love as it is dreamed of. The beloved lover was there, was more there than she was there, loved her and knew her and dreamed her too. This is what the dream was, and yet the dream was that she only dreamed of this (EB, 145).

And since it is only dreamed, the sentimentalism is managed and controlled, even as Alit ignites the flame of her desire.

Similar motifs of fire and of the damsel being charioted by her lover on a motorcycle have been used to deepen the sensual and sexual romanticism explored in several other of the Bali texts.\(^\text{12}\) However, Baranay, in deploying these motifs, is nevertheless trying to resist the romantic implications by deploying a sort of meta-narrative which destabilizes the ideological effects of the romanticism. Marla knows such motifs are archetypes of romantic love, but she considers herself safe from the power of illusion because she recognizes illusion for what it is. Therefore, romanticism can only be self-consciously formulated as a meta-dream, a dream of a love that produces the

\(^{12}\) Compare 'Ashlie' in Sin Can Can, Pete Burns in Troppo Man, Alit in Edge of Bali. Also, the motorbike image is used in Echoes, Sin Can Can and Troppo Man.
dream. Even as she watches the potent and beautiful Balinese dancer and feels the stirrings of her desire, Marla retreats to her objectivism in order to dissolve some of the image's power, and, paradoxically perhaps, to assist in its total comprehension and contextualization. That is, Marla steps outside her emotions in order to examine herself and her response: 'She sits in her seat, smitten, enchanted. Part of her is absorbed in the dancer's being, part of her is watching her dive off the edge of the world. My god, my goodness. Uh-oh' (EB, 164). And when she wakes from her dreams that night, she only remembers the 'enchanting dancer', who has 'sat beside her and held her wrists with the fingers of one hand' (EB, 165).

Yet in the fullness of their sexual union, this objectivism is at least momentarily suspended. As in the experiences of Maria in Echoes of Paradise and Alex in Monkeys in the Dark, Marla's love-making with the dancer is sexually and spiritually liberating. It appears that Marla's objectivism cannot resist the fullness of bodily union as the difference to which her intellect continually refers is conditionally deferred by the couple's attraction. Their desires, despite the social and cultural restrictions, bring them together in bodily concupiscence and spiritual ecstasy:

'You look so beautiful,' she said. He was an apparition, he was from the invisible world, the other world.

They ate the fruit he brought her: branches of rambutan, revealing juicy white flesh when you twisted off the hairy coverings, golden red papaya with its clean subtle fragrance; little fat sugar banana.

It was all lovemaking: in bed, in the bathroom, on the verandah, kissing talking fucking sucking sopping massaging burning sandalwood finding words in the dictionary sharing ketek fireflies lightning eating fruit — all a single intimate act.

He took such care to give her pleasure, he made himself a gift to her. It was the kindest thing she had ever known (EB, 195).

The difference which she intellectually conceives and which has been the source of her work and pleasure appears to have been superseded by a new and synchronistic similarity. Now the resistance to romanticism becomes an unfettered embrace of sexual pleasure, symbolized in the fecund fleshiness of the fruit and what Marla elsewhere describes as the 'the single intimate act'. Her repudiation of 'hocus pocus' appears now to have been a repudiation of superficial or unenlightened interdictions. Magic and romanticism appear now
to be a possibility, though in Marla's superior condition, they must be elevated by high thoughts and high ideals; true 'magic' may thus be performed by Alit who, in his own elevated and intense sensuality, can only be described as issuing from 'the invisible world'. Indeed, while Marla's interest in the culturally distinctive behaviour, art and attitudes of the Balinese is maintained through her objectivism and the documentary project, this interest now seems subsumed by the greater immersion into the bodily riches offered by Alit. Marla continues to ask questions about Balinese views on sex, homosexuality, relationships, marriage, the status of women, the transcultural experience of the early aesthetes, tourists and tourism; however her sexual-spiritual union with Alit seems to elevate further her own sense of moral and intellectual superiority, especially in relation to those superficial tourists and their false ideologies she so abjures. Alit makes a gift of himself, but of course this is Marla's own configuration of the experience. The dance is sublimated as quintessentially material, as 'gift'. His Asianness becomes a profit for her ecstasy. She is the juice of romance, the fruit; his body is the material vehicle. Marla takes the gift but she does not believe her moral or ideological integrity has been in any way compromised by her communion, because it is profound and because she is a genuine explorer. Her knowledge and her putative respect for difference keep her from the ignominy of self-interested and superficial tourist exploitation. Certainly, she has compromised distance, but she has done so on the Balinese terms. It is not her Australianess which presides over their union, but Alit's Balinese-ness. She is not naive like Nelson, and Alit is not a superficial and corrupted gigolo like Miki.

Yet again, however, the issue of choice lies at the ideological centre of this communion. Though she attempts to restrict excessive romanticism by containing it within the sexual moment, Baranay must surely realise that her protagonist has slipped into the dream of the dream. Romanticism, like sexual ecstasy passes, and Baranay leads Marla away from excess by reasserting her cultural and intellectual project. In fact, Marla's power and self control — the intellectualism which allows her to choose independently — is re-asserted in the protagonist's return to her rationalist project, her 'work'. There cannot be in this world beyond the sexual ecstasy a serious or long term exchange since, like her filmscript identity Laura, Marla is part of her own culture's system, 'no matter how separate she feels from it' (EB, 201). For this reason Marla is able to reconcile herself with the 'deceit' of Alit's wife, since Marla is merely adapting her own independence and right to choose to the social differences of the host culture. There can be nothing lasting in the relationship. She does
not desire it. She is Australian and Alit is Balinese. It has been her right to choose, but the communion, the similarity, could never be anything else but partial. Despite Marla's great knowledge of the Balinese culture, in the end, she could not possibly 'fathom' the wife's attitude:

Alit's wife, no doubt, had not the freedom to have affairs. That's not my fault, Marla reasoned, what can I do, refuse my own freedom in solidarity? Marla was told that Balinese women were contented with their role. For all she knew, the wife might be every bit as content as she was meant to be. Marla was not the kind of evangelical feminist who enjoined contented women to become angry with their lot (EB, 200).

Especially, we might add, if such exhortation to solidarity compromised the individual's own ability to choose and experience personal pleasure. Marla must then prove to be the sort of feminist whose emphasis on individualism would greatly irritate the Enlightenment style feminists like Sabina Lovibond who, as we have discussed above, would dispute the ultimate validity of choice above the gender politics of collective responsibility.

Baranay permits Marla an easy conscience. She is allowed to assert her personal choice and power above all other things, and there is no real sense that her incursion into the Balinese culture is anything but valid and morally reasonable. Certainly, those feminists less enamoured with the political efficacies of choice and unreserved individualism would find serious fault with these attitudes. In fact, in the broader field of Enlightenment and neo-Marxist social criticism, Marla's participation in the global economics of tourism would constitute, despite her claims to the contrary, a tacit endorsement of the politics of First World privilege. Marla's First World and middle-class status, and the power and wealth that facilitate the assertion of choice, are bought at the price of other people's cultural integrity and economic exploitation. Marla protests her innocence. She is only doing what her privilege permits. It is not her fault that she is wealthy and free, and others are not. She celebrates difference and her sexual escapades are little more than momentary incursions, ecstasies that will remain incomplete and subservient to her (dubious though self-declared) greater task of cultural celebration.

Marla insists that her politics — her true ideology — is more substantial than the conventions of Marxist or feminist solidarity because they acknowledge the pragmatics and inevitability of global integration. Tourism cannot be halted, but it must be conducted through the integrity of and
respect for difference. Thus, in her final ruminations, Marla valorizes the sort of international transculturalism, or that sort of tourism she herself practices and which, as we have seen, is also practised by Burditt and Pete Burns, Maria, Ashlie and the tribe of benevolent surfers who respect the integrity of the host culture and who are immensely grateful for the pleasures indigenous peoples themselves bestow upon their visitors. In the global postmodern, tourism is inevitable, but it must be conducted with sensitivity and respect: 'In the age of tourism, Marla can only practise a version of tourism. Tourism with no roots in colonialism' (EB, 201). Marla’s tourism, she therefore claims, has no association with colonialism. True social villainy is conducted by those tourists who come only to exploit the island and who contribute nothing to the maintenance of cultural difference.

Most particularly, The Edge of Bali associates these exploitative and disrespectful forms of tourism with male hegemony and neo-colonialist forms of exploitative capitalism. On the large scale this is represented by the big hotels and the package tours; on the more immediate level it is perpetrated by the yobbo Australian males who teem across the island seeking only to plunder its superficial pleasures. Vignettes of objectionable males, drinking, harassing and being generally lascivious on their Kuta holiday are woven into the narrative. Male homosexuals like Tim and Carlo are more sympathetically drawn than the football teams and surfers, but they are little more than comic echoes for the more elevated transculturalism of earlier aesthetes like Walter Spies. Even Tyler — who comes to Bali to find an ‘old buddy’ who has been estranged from his young Australian wife, and appears to have become involved in some sort of anti-tourism subversion — is deployed by Baranay to elaborate further her ideological scheme. Tyler is more of a parody of male sexual excess than a sympathetically drawn character study. As in the Nelson section, though more brutally, Baranay uses techniques of satire to humiliate the character; his ‘Bali-belly’ disrupts not only his project of finding his friend, it also renders his body impotent and incapable of pleasure. Baranay underlines this masculine humiliation by configuring Tyler as a standard machismo-masculine sexual stereotype: his sexual incapacity is contrasted with the Marla experience of paradisical sexual-spiritual ecstasy. Only when he awakes one morning to find his penis erect does Tyler feel himself to be saved from the threat of permanent damage and loss of self.

As with Phil Noyce’s Echoes of Paradise, the aim of Baranay’s novel is to demonstrate how deplorably inadequate First World maledom actually is. As much as the footballers and surfies are oafish, Tyler is a victim, weak,
metaphorically castrated, ridiculous. Marla is strong, intelligent, powerful. Bali becomes the site where the First World, middle-class woman might truly realize her self and ply her power to achieve personal gratification. Reservations like Burditt's in *Troppo Man* that such ethical individualism might constitute a greater incursion than that exerted by the superficial touris who is at least restricted geographically and spiritually, have no place in Baranay's scheme. Yet the distinct idealization of the Balinese male and his sexual availability cannot entirely deflect these reservations. While Baranay would resist such conclusions, it is certainly feasible that Marla's utilization of Alit's body is no less an incursion and a transformation of the indigenous Asian culture than the exploitation of the Javanese prostitutes, or the sexual indulgences of younger women like Nelson. As Burditt suspects, it may even represent a more substantial invasion and transformation, despite Marla's claims that the essential political and cultural efficacies of difference remain unaltered.

When Marla denies solidarity with Alit's wife, she is confirming the ideological primacy of personal pleasure. As we have noted, there is little difference in principle between Marla's power/knowledge assertion and those of the male sex clients in Dennis O'Rourke's *The Good Woman of Bangkok*, or John Duigan's *Far East*. Jo Reeves, we remember, is most concerned that the dancing girls at the Koala Club have 'a choice'; and Keefe assures her that they do, and that in the context sex trading 'beats starving'. Alit, of course, is not in such diabolical straits as the provincial girls. Nevertheless, while Marla expresses some tacit disapproval of the males who use the Javanese prostitutes in Bali (*EB*, 38-9), she is equally happy to use her power/knowledge, her choice, and her money to acquire her pleasure and ultimately her sexual gratification. Rodney explains to her that the Australian male guests at his Gone Troppo hotel — 'even the schoolkids' — use the prostitutes 'because everybody else does'. Baranay would, however, distinguish these behaviours from Marla's more bourgeois and intellectually refined attitudes and actions; while Marla treats the people of Bali with respect and honour, the men are 'hooligans with tourist visas and white-superracist fantasies', superficial exploiters who treat Rodney's indigenous staff 'like shit' (*EB*, 38). Rodney's vicarious authorial ideology goes on to contrast these hooligans with Marla and himself, of course, but also with the
'best group of male guests he had ever had in the hotel, a koorie (Australian Aboriginal) dance troupe.\textsuperscript{13}

In fact, the novel promotes a range of virtuous and liberalist ideological positions: anti-racism, cultural and political self-determination, feminism, tolerance to homosexuality, anti-patriarchalism. Such virtues — approximating to the values of altruistic cosmopolitanism described by Katharine Betts (1993)\textsuperscript{14} — are all viewed of course from a decidedly bourgeois perspective. Not only is the lover, Alit, a member of a high caste aristocratic family (the privilege of which Marla never questions or even contemplates) but Marla herself is a well educated, and formerly well paid professional with demonstrably middle-class values and attitudes. Even her retreat to Bali, her rejection of the shallowness of the Yuppie lifestyle, is filtered through bourgeois attitudes to achievement and work. This classism is never drawn into focus, since Marla's own privilege, her education and her wealth, have facilitated her very presence in Indonesia. While she sees the invasion of those First World capitalists who exploit the local people and their culture as reprehensible, she fails to acknowledge genuinely her own complicity with those economic and political powers, retreating (as the Frankfurt Schoolers commonly accuse the poststructuralists of doing) into the generalised approbation of individualism and personal choice. Moreover, Marla's celebration of the high caste Balinese culture implicitly neglects, even denigrates, the lower caste people with whom she has no real contact at all. This classism may also be observed in her repudiation of the yobbo Australian males who in many cases may issue from social groups who do not enjoy Marla's education and material advantages. Classism does not necessarily impinge on the aesthetic or ideological integrity of the novel since all art is sourced from a social and ideological perspective. However, it is necessary to understand that Baranay's documentary is not a disinterested account of the transcultural experience, but is informed by a distinct ideological perspective which is at times quite crudely didactic and often fails to understand fully the contradictions and the implications of that didacticism. Like many other Bali

\textsuperscript{13} Baranay's journalistic history of Bali is at times undermined by poor research. Rodney tells us, for example, that prostitution was not known in Bali before 1987. Certainly from the early 1970s and perhaps even earlier, prostitutes from Java had been following the growth in the tourism and wealth in Bali. By the time of my first visit to Indonesia in 1976, the industry was thriving.
\textsuperscript{14} See Chapter Four and the discussion of the 'new class' in relation to Australian immigration.
texts, *The Edge of Bali* celebrates the female while distinctly querying the validity of other power systems.

Nigel and Caron Krauth's *Sin Can Can* (translated as 'no worries') is another novel which details the transcultural sexual and spiritual experiences of an Australian female. *Sin Can Can*, however, is far gentler, more mixed and more comic in its artistic and ideological explorations. Marketed toward a teenage readership, the novel offers greater possibilities in the pursuit of 'hocus pocus', dukums, black magic and necromancy. Notions of difference and identity re-alignment through sexual awakening and spiritual transcendence are again central to the drama and symbology of the novel. Australian yobbos, surfers and superficial tourists are disparaged in favour of the celebratory transculturalism and sexual interaction of the young Australian schoolgirl, Ashlie, and her Balinese prince boyfriend, Rai. The Krauths are also interested in the sexual mythology of Bali, and most particularly the possibilities of individual awakenings and heightened sensual experience. The novel works through the double setting of an Australian girls boarding school and the exotic milieu of Kuta-Ubud. Ashlie and the other teenage girls who exist at the precipice of sexual activity continually refer to 'going over the wall' — a trope which alludes both to the 'escape' from the suffocating restrictions of boarding school life into the world of individual freedom and choice, and also to the final act of sexual liberation and concupiscence. In both cases, the novel is structured around the 'going over' metaphor whereby the young Ashlie goes to Bali, goes to the border between mortality and immortality, and teeters at the edge of sexual knowing and womanhood. In all cases, Ashlie is caught between the two worlds as the drama of the novel is propelled by the question of her geographical, sexual and spiritual journey. While initially, Ashlie feels no attraction to Bali — 'a filthy weirdo dump' (*SCC*, 53) — she is eventually drawn into the netherworlds of sense and transcendence by Rai, the young Balinese prince, Leather Jacket, the apprentice Dukum, and Sara, the young woman who is both sexually active and 'lost' in her self, most immediately because she has lost the source of her self, her parents.

Sex and death mysticism are conjoined through Ashlie's romantic experiences and also through the character configuration of Sara herself. Like Conrad's Kurtz or Faulkner's Quentin Compson in *Absolom, Absolom*, Sara feels so 'liberated' that she cannot fix herself in life at all. She discovers that there is nothing but her dislocated self to lose and thus pursues the possibility of complete knowledge beyond the sanctity of life and into the essentialness
of death. Yet in contacting her dead parents, Sara experiences a vision which appears vastly more attractive and seductive than Kurtz’s ‘The horror’, though in the end no less devastating. Ashlie, however, is restrained, like Marlow, by her devotion to the more banal and morally gratifying aspects of life. While attracted by the unknown and the fantastic, Ashlie remains suspended by her own doubts and her affiliation with those things Marlow himself had called ‘rivets’, the true self which is invested in the known, the impure, the everyday. She cannot share in the fabulous purity of Sara’s vision which is purchased at the price of complete surrender, both of the cultural sanctity of the West and finally her life as well. While Sara follows her desires beyond the limits of her cultural knowledge and into the new and extreme world of cultural difference, Ashlie goes only to the edge and holds fast to the things she knows. She absorbs those parts of the Balinese culture which intrigue her and give her pleasure, but she will not do as Sara has done: immerse herself completely in the magic and extremity of Bali. She is forced to sacrifice, not only the previous and flailing uncertainties of self, but the body and breath that had been its carriage. The body is sacrificed to knowledge. The Hindu re-birth demands loss of presence, loss of materiality; the tension of good and evil, though elucidated for Sara, remains hidden from the living. Ashlie retreats to the sanctity and security of life and class and cultural distance. Her vision, again like Marlow’s, is undistinguished, grey. She returns to her parents against whom she might reflect her sense of self. But she is, at least, more worldly wise, understanding that ‘to go over the wall’ is a relative action, and that sex, when it happens will be a kind of ‘magic that you can keep’ (SCC, 195) — which of course is not the magic of pure vision, but the magic of carnality and personal pleasure.

As with the other Bali texts, Sin Can Can confirms the validity of sexual gratification. The novel discriminates between cultural populism — yobbos, surfers, superficial descriptions of difference, materialism, exploitation — and the more refined (and bourgeois) transcultural experience. Ashlie, like her parents, distances herself from the tourist mob through her exploration and experience of the authentic Balinese people and their culture. But as with the other texts, this authentic Balinese exists beyond the pall of internationalization. It is an essentialist quality which may be accessed either through the culture and its high caste personifications, or through nature. In both cases, this essentialist culture becomes the privileged knowledge of the learned and sensitive visitor who is willing to deploy his, or more usually her, body as the vehicle of immersion. Once again, it is the middle-class Australian
who is most able 'to afford' the journey: financially, sexually, spiritually. Ashlie, the daughter of a university lecturer who also features in the novel as a somewhat bumbling, but well-intentioned, cultural hedonist, is like a junior version of Marla; an independent, articulate, thoughtful female who enjoys communion with a high caste Balinese. The gift of individualism and sensitivity brings the rewards of personal pleasure. Wealth and power are camouflaged by cultural respect. And the utility of international tourism is disparaged as a form of insensitive commercial vulgarity. As in all the other Bali texts discussed in this chapter, Sin Can Can valorizes sensitive transculturalism which celebrates difference as it condemns the great swill of Australo-European culture. Thus, as money becomes something of an embarrassment in the site of transcultural spiritualism, most of the major characters of the texts play at being poor, at being like the locals, surrendering their Western clothes, adopting local eating habits, immersing themselves in local customs and knowledge. The question, however, remains: do these actions make them any less vulgar and invasive, and less an agent of change and cultural transformation, than the superficial visitors the protagonists so readily condemn?15

Such a question returns us to other issues discussed earlier in this chapter. Most particularly we would need to consider whether or not the new global integration is homogenizing culture, transforming all ethnic and geographical particularities into the singularized postmodern global culture. Marla rejoices in her location of 'difference' and is convinced that she is not interfering excessively with its integrity. Maria finds that the difference that separates Raka and her must remain intransigent. Like Ashlie, she partakes of the cultural difference and then returns to Australia. Matt also returns after discovering that he cannot really immerse himself in the Balinese culture as he would have liked. Those who step over the line to true immersion become lost or devastated: Terry and Mitty in Far East cannot be recovered but float aimlessly on, belonging nowhere; Schmetzer goes mad and finally suicides; Sara absorbs the magical and is redefined and ultimately devastated. In all cases, the Kuta scene is represented as entirely corrupted by Western incursion. The culture appears to have changed irredeemably. Ubud and Mount Argung, the provincial villages, the untrammelled surf locations —

15 This issue has been taken up by Donald Horne in a recent book on ethical tourism, The Intelligent Tourist (1993). Horne argues that tourism is a reasonable and edifying social and global activity when it is conducted in the correct ideological manner. Travel Editor with The Australian newspaper, Susan Kurosawa, criticizes the elitism of Horne's approach (Kurosawa, 1993).
these retain their integrity and their distance, though the threat of global expansion is never far away.

Adrian Vickers (1990), in his history of Bali, has argued categorically that there is no real or authentic Bali, and that there are and can only be representations of mediating versions of the island. While Vickers' work is generally forceful and cogent, particularly when he is documenting the progress of the image of Bali as paradise, there are numerous occasions when he allows the discussion to slip into dichotomous accounts of cultural integrity. Specifically, the culture which interests Vickers is the high culture, the genuine art, which he contrasts, despite his best intentions, against the mass and crass products that are produced for high volume commercial tourism. Indeed, throughout his discussion, Vickers returns inevitably and somewhat unconsciously to the question of authenticity. He dismisses the Indonesian government's misapprehension about refinement in art and culture being equated with financial power in the West, and in the final chapter of his history, there is a distinct celebration of those indigenous aesthetes who most powerfully represent the highest qualities of Balinese art.

Vickers' history, therefore, like the literary and filmic representations of Bali, continues to seek, represent and celebrate the authentic Balinese culture. Again, the bourgeois proprietalism is unmistakable. Little doubt, the new political and ideological accompaniment to the global postmodernism would hope to curb capitalist excess by controlling excessive cultural integration or homogenization; its own pleasures depend on the retention of a 'difference' which is otself produced through an ideologically sanctified public discourse. At the centre of this new politics is the question of transculturalism, most particularly how the complex and increasing communicative-cultural contiguity produces transitions both at the individual and collective levels. The new Bali — indeed the new Indonesia and the new Australia — cannot be separated from these global forces. The final section of this study will attempt to summarize a number of these issues as it examines the trends and future directions of transcultural analysis.
Conclusion

6. After Imperialism: The Transcultural Text

And as we bid farewell to the proletariat we must close the books on a whole epoch of politics, the era of the dialectic and the class struggle. From today's vantage point one can posit the modern period as the age of liberal politics with a socialist opposition. Since the eighteenth century, executive power in Western Europe and North America has been limited by constitutions and representative assemblies. The main challenge to this arrangement came from socialists who argued that qualitative change came from the reorganization of labour... Once the worker can no longer take up a critical pose as dialectical negation, the question arises of the kind of discourse that may properly sustain a critical politics, the kind of self that may act and speak a language of freedom.

— Mark Poster, *The Mode of Information*

I. Cultural Imperialism and the Australian Imaginary

This study began by examining a number of the assumptions informing recent analysis of Australia's communications relationship with Indonesia and the broader South East Asia region. If it is true, as During (1992) and Said (1993) argue, that new thinking on the relationship between the West and the rest of the world will produce a 'rewriting of the archive' and a 'new world map', then it is to be expected that Australia — which throughout modernity has seemed an incongruous presence in the East Asian cartography — must be profoundly affected by these reconfigurations. As we have considered at length, analysts like Bronowski (1992), Mares (1993), Hamilton (1990), Chua (1992, 1993) and Shaw (1992) have wanted to re-write the archive, pointing to the inclination of Australian fictionalists and newsmakers to reproduce mindlessly European Orientalist images and stereotypes. This 'heritage' which had once been an *a priori* fact of national self-expression, according to these commentators, represents a social and cultural deficiency that can no longer be tolerated. Even current writers and film-makers appear to have unselfconsciously absorbed the Orientalist perspectives of the European genealogy, persisting in the reproduction of 'Oriental stereotypes' which tend 'to overlook the cultural specificity of the different Asian nations and ethnic groups within these nations' (Shaw, 1992: 37).

My personal dissatisfaction with the De-Orientalist approach is located in its own tendencies toward a totalizing and somewhat monophonic description of the Australian heritage. Even those commentators like Sneja Gunew (1990a, 1990b, 1993), Simon During (1987, 1882) and Annette Hamilton (1990), whose
work has some level of theoretical substance, produce a version of the Australian cultural heritage which is fundamentally reduced by its own ideological and heuristic confinements. The cobbling together of Enlightenment derived liberational theories with more recent poststructural and feminist oppositional permutations has tended to draw a national imaginary that is morally and ideologically damnable: Australia, it appears, has been ossified and centralized as a Euro-British, imperialist extra-territory which can only be challenged by the voice of the feminine, the diasporic, and ethnically marginalized. Paradoxically, the weaknesses inherent in our national imaginary — the cultural impotence and flailing uncertainties of our identity — might be recovered only through an admission of guilt and through the shameful acknowledgement of a history which is as deplorable in fact, as it is apocryphal in moral or utopian self-aggrandizement.

We have examined at length the problems associated with the De-Orientalist approach to cultural analysis both in theoretical terms and in relation to specific texts. The central difficulty, of course, issues very directly from the poststructural inheritance which, in its embrace of a deconstructive methodology, would jettison heuristic and hermeneutic fixity, the originary centre of Derrida's conceit. While this new knowledge and its methodologies have provided some extraordinary insights into the functioning of language and the production of meaning, they have also been readily absorbed by the cultural politics of liberation which, certainly in Stuart Hall's thinking, marks poststructuralism's entry into the world of action since 'Theory is always a detour on the way to something more important' (Hall, 1991b: 42). However, the fundamental contradictions and paradoxes of the poststructuralist conceit, as we have noted continually in this study, return to plague the apologists of cultural politics as they attempt to produce (or re-produce), often despite their best theoretical intentions, another totalizing monophonia, a description and a politics of singular thinking.

Nowhere is this problem more obvious than in the communicative exchanges of transculturalism where the subjectivities of the one culture are attempting to transact with the subjectivities of another. Without the advantage of lingual or heuristic fixity, transcultural studies must inevitably confront the question of position and perception: how does one culture accurately perceive, conceive, record, represent or reconstruct another culture without reproducing elements of itself as imaginative projection and self-description? The poststructuralist insight tells us, of course, that it cannot since all discourse is subject to deconstruction, contending as much about the speaker as the spoken though
both are fundamentally unstable and inevitably mutable. The essential project of De-Orientalism and other forms of cultural politics is the restoration of order, not merely by the location of deficient ideology in texts and heritage, but through its replacement. The new politics and its ideology would restore order as the universal discourse of 'difference' which, among many other things, is often represented as an ideal of international and local human harmony.

In pursuing the ideological and heuristic difficulties of De-Orientalism and related cultural politics, I have found it valuable in *The Blind Puppeteer* to return more directly to poststructuralism itself — especially Foucault's work — from which a remarkable range and variety of interpretations and adaptations have issued. In particular, I have seen value in Foucault's focus on subjectivity and discourse as the beginning point of heuristic analysis, most especially in the production of power/knowledge. However, I have also wanted to examine the processes of power/knowledge formation as a counterflow whereby individualism and 'difference' are continually challenged by other propensities to collectivity, shared meaning and macro power formations that constitute partial and unstable closures. While still maintaining a focus on the power/knowledge of texts, I have also tried to avoid idealized political formations which would out-speak their own deconstructive implications. To this extent, I have wanted to produce an alternative textual analysis to the familiar and by now conventional De-Orientalist approach which primarily seeks to elucidate deficient ideology. In particular it is Foucault's insight into the functioning and processes of power that has been most valuable in developing a textual analysis which swerves away from the political essentialism — the notion of power as socially or culturally fixed — favoured by the De-Orientalist methodological paradigm. As I have examined the progress of poststructuralism through postmodernism and cultural politicism, I have detected some distinct and often unconscious corrupting of these original insights, most especially through the re-assertion of Marxist and Enlightenment concepts of power as the essential contingency of social structure. While absorbing the poststructuralist interest in the individual and the personal in the experience of power, this new political essentialism tends nevertheless to see the individual as the outcome of dominant and subordinate structure. Power is fixed and the complexity of human relationships becomes reduced by a uni-dimensionality which the poststructuralists — Foucault, Lyotard and Derrida in particular — would have hoped to transcend. To this extent, I have been concerned to elucidate subjective instabilities, and the ideological counterflows and contradictions that are represented within the text; I have also attempted to
link texts (borrowing the Derridean notion of intertextuality) with other formations, most especially the concept of culture and transcultural contiguity. It is this latter notion of proximity which most distinguishes my own theoretical and methodological paradigm from the apologists of cultural difference. That is, difference is regarded as a form of interdependence which is no more and no less forceful than the notion of similarity or propinquity — both difference and propinquity are essential elements of the communications process.

Moreover, as John Docker (1991, 1993) points out and as we have echoed throughout this study, the ascension of this new politics of diversity has tended to subsume the older class based theories of liberation, producing what is essentially a new orthodoxy in politics and social analysis. Class politics — even the global division of labour (Lipietz, 1986, Harvey, 1989) — 'has come back to the pack' (Docker, 1993: 17) as indeed the new orthodoxy now excludes alternative political and heuristic positions (Docker, 1991). In concluding this study, I would wish to offer some final remarks on the nature and direction of cultural and transcultural analysis in relation to the prevailing analytical and ideological paradigms. In particular, I would like to compare Said's most recent expression of the new politics in *Culture and Imperialism* with a number of other theorizations of the postmodern, relating the comparison to Australia's broader regional and global participation. It is this latter group — Laclau and Mouffe's radical democracy, Mark Poster's mode of information, Jean-François Lyotard's 'differend' — which offer the greatest potential for the effective theorization of the contemporary cultural field and for the resolution of the difficulties we have encountered during the course of the current study.

Sneja Gunew's description of contemporary Australia as 'neocolonialist', most particularly in relation to its internal colonization of the indigenous culture and the 'many other ways in which 'power relations operate unequally in this country' (Gunew, 1993: 449), echoes historical accounts like Adrian Vickers' which also configures a neo-imperialist Australia. In his essay 'Kipling goes

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1 Docker argues in his essay 'The temperament of editors and a new multicultural orthodoxy' that only articles consonant with the multicultural perspective and ideology will be admitted into the leading Australian cultural journals. This view is also echoed by Katharine Betts (1993, see Chapter Four) in her sociological analysis of the new powerful class of altruistic cosmopolitans. My own experience indicates that any contravention of the strict orthodoxy of the ideology of difference will not be taken seriously by leading cultural magazines: difference appears to be an unassailable political axiom in contemporary cultural analysis and cannot be challenged even at the most fundamental theoretical level.
south: Australian novels and South East Asia 1895-1945' (1990a), Vickers traces the connections between European representations of India — specifically in Kipling's works — and popular Australian representations of the Malay Islands (the South East Asian archipelago). While Vickers speaks knowledgeably of these popular texts and their 'colonialist' aesthetic, his analysis appears to be driven by an equally forceful interest in more recent historical events, specifically Australia's 'usurpation' of the Dutch and Dutch influence in the postwar East Indies. The regional and national ambitions informing this usurpation — attributed by Rupert Lockwood to the then Foreign Minister 'Doc' Evatt — leads Vickers to retrace the colonialist psychology in Australia, particularly as it is drawn through the fictional representation of a region about which Australians remained largely ignorant. According to Vickers, it was through the novel — Kipling and his Australian imitators — that colonialism was reinforced and the 'normality of bourgeois life in the West, particularly English bourgeois life, was praised' (Vickers, 1990a: 66). In this way the identity of the British bourgeois is absorbed through a process of cultural osmosis into the conceptualizations of region and self by bourgeois Australia: 'Australian writers who followed him [Kipling] incorporated colonialism within their assumptions about the nature of the area they used as a setting, and about the workings of the genre in which they worked' (Vickers, 1990a: 67).

Thus, like Said in Orientalism and later in Culture and Imperialism, Vickers identifies clear links between the policies of domination and the public images of space and culture. Vickers' essay expresses some surprise over Doc Evatt's ultimate rejection of South East Asian colonialism as a valid political strategy for Australia 'given the weight of colonial tradition in looking outside Australia' (Vickers, 1990a: 78). Vickers' personal bemusement over the Labour government's rejection of colonial strategies is clearly linked to his conviction that bourgeois Australia accepted, absorbed and ultimately expressed imperialist sentiments identical to those of the former colonial master. Nicholas Brown takes an even more direct view of international Orientalism in the Australian context. Also acknowledging Said's influence, Brown examines the perspective of Australian intellectuals toward the Asian region. However, the colonialism of Europe and especially Britain which had involved the actual appropriation of territories and the intellectual and aesthetic appropriation of non-Western culture becomes for Australia a reflected glory, a vicarious pleasure by which Australian intellectuals are able to define themselves and their nation. Brown argues that the images of Occident and Orient become colonial more than metropolitan constructions. Moreover —
as Edward Said has argued of the European context, the Australian image was inherently reflexive — although what it reflected of colonial society was not so much the sophisticated patterns of Orientalist discourse, operating across diverse fields from literature to strategy, but a more basic attempt to define the culture and the institutions of a new society in what was seen to be an alien hemisphere (Brown, 1990: 81).

Brown, like others in this selection, sees the transference of European Orientalism as relatively uncomplicated. He produces evidence of these manifestations in the writings of Australian thinkers and cultural commentators between 1820 and 1960. Very much like Said in his project of Oriental elucidation, Brown sees little genuine opposition or alternative to the pandemic of cultural domination that had had its genesis in European imperialism.²

Once again it is the work of Edward Said, most particularly the thesis set out in Orientalism, which lies behind Brown's assessment of the Australian cultural and intellectual imaginary. As we noted in our original discussion of Orientalism, the influence of Said in transferring poststructuralist conceptions for cultural and transcultural analysis is quite immeasurable; even as commentators attempt to locate and describe Australia's position in the new global context, they seem incapable of deviating from Said's powerful description. In his most recent analysis of the East West division, Culture and Imperialism (1993), Said extends his interest in Orientalism through an examination of European literary texts as a facility of cultural and ultimately economic-political domination. Said advances his distinction between colonialism and imperialism in order to demonstrate the subtlety and pervasiveness of European hegemony —

'realism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism' which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory . . . In our time, colonialism has ended; imperialism, as we shall see, lingers where it has always been, in a kind of

² Nevertheless, Brown in considering the growth in interest in Asia between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Vietnam conflict, wonders whether 'something of the political and developmental themes of interwar commentary remains to be recovered in humanities-based Asian studies curricula' (Brown, 1990: 90). Brown's concession to those details not yet uncovered by historiography and cultural interpretation represents something of a fissure in an otherwise homophonic description of Australian Orientalism.
general cultural space, as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices (Said, 1993: 8).

The parallels with Said’s earlier writings will be immediately obvious. However, *Culture and Imperialism* regards the genuine character of modernity as being integrally bound to the cultural formations which both arise out of, and are supported by, imperialism. To this extent, the new disciplines and histories of English studies, comparative literature, cultural studies and anthropology — like the sciences of philology, and archaeology outlined in *Orientalism* — are clearly implicated in the rise of empire, ‘contributing to its methods for maintaining Western ascendency over non-Western natives’ (Said, 1993: 53).

For Said, therefore, imperialism is the determining characteristic of modern Western culture. It is this characteristic which Said would hope to unveil as it is removed from what Lyotard has called the closure of autonomous and self-legitimating narrative. Also following Lyotard’s *Postmodern Condition*, Said, in divesting imperialist processes of their self-legitimacy, would like to place their naked formations back into the realm of struggle, most particularly the revised though on-going struggle between dominant and dominated peoples (Said, 1993: 59). In other words, Said’s project in *Culture and Imperialism* is to extend the claims of *Orientalism* by reconciling the ‘difference between things’ — the infinite variety of human particularities — with the all-powerful and all-embracing reach of imperialism. It is precisely the vastness of imperialism and its ability to contain particularity that renders imperialism virtually indistinguishable from culture:

If I have insisted on integration and connection between the past and the present, between imperializer and imperialized, between culture and imperialism, I have done so not to level or reduce difference, but to convey a more urgent sense of the interdependence between things. So vast and yet so detailed is imperialism as an experience with crucial cultural dimensions, that we must speak of overlapping territories, intertwined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and in the periphery, past as well as present and future; these territories and histories can only be seen from the perspective of the whole of secular human history (Said, 1993: 72).

Said, then, sees imperialism as unavoidable in all cultural interpretation. Indeed, just as imperialism is more than an heuristic device which aids our
understanding of social and economic transaction between unequal partners, the concept of 'empire' must now be understood as 'a point of entry for studying the formation and meaning of Western cultural practices themselves' (Said, 1993: 230). Its power, therefore, not only informs the content and thematic interest of major fictional texts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it also constitutes a significant force in the actual development of textualized fiction as a form of social-political and aesthetic expression. Specifically, the rise and progress of the English novel, Said argues, is intricately connected to the social and cultural practices of imperialism: the two produce, re-produce and are contingent upon each other. Thus, it is the early novelists of the British Empire who produce social descriptions — 'knowable community' in Raymond Williams' terms — of home and abroad, reinforcing the sense of self through carefully and powerfully articulated definitions of other: 'Jane Austen, George Eliot and Mrs Gaskell shaped the idea of England in such a way as to give it identity, presence, ways of reusable articulation' (Said, 1993: 85).

Of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, for example, Said notes that the humanistic spirit of the novel extends only through the immediacies of Austen's own social class; the configuration of the Caribbean and its people appears merely to accept domination and humiliation as a simple matter of social and economic (imperial-mercantile) necessity. Said points out that the successful group which emerges at the close of *Mansfield Park*, as with Austen's other novels, is not defined by blood or inheritance but is determined by diligence and merit. In other words, it is the values of the bourgeoisie and the new capitalist global processes which are to overhaul the privilege of the old ruling classes. Said's concern is that in promoting and confirming bourgeois values and class identity, novels like *Mansfield Park* also exclude those shadowy and unacknowledged folk whose territories and cultures may be stampeded, neglected or marginalized in the progress and 'merit' of empire. It is not, Said claims, that this interpretation of the text discounts all other 'mainstream' interests, but rather that *Mansfield Park*, like all other bourgeois texts of the period, needs to be placed in the global context of the times, most particularly in relation to the expanding social and cultural horizon of imperialism. Thus the diaspora and enslavement of other peoples producing the wealth necessary for Fanny's success, Austen's aesthetic and the comforts of her readership as cultural formations, should not be separated from the works' general artistic value.³ After all, the rise of the

³ Said does not accept the 'rhetoric of blame' apportioned by 'subaltern, minority or disadvantaged voices' which attack Austen's work as a trivial aesthetic exercise within the comfortable living conditions produced by the enslavement of others (Said, 1993:
bourgeoisie, international capitalism, colonialism and imperialism are themselves founded upon the values, attitudes and social structures constructed in Austen's literature.

It is precisely these foundations, Said maintains, which are further elaborated and advanced in the novels of Dickens, Kipling, Conrad and E. M. Forster. What mostly troubles Said about British (and French) society, even as it is expressed in the rich aesthetic products of the times, is the inability of its humanitarian dimensions to inhibit the inhumanity of colonization and international hegemony. Certainly some writers and their texts exhibit greater sympathy and humanity toward the colonized peoples than others — John Stuart Mill 'for all his illiberality about India . . . was more complex and enlightened in his attitudes to the notion of empire than either Carlyle or Ruskin. And the same is true of Conrad and Kipling as artists compared with Buchan and Haggard' (Said, 1993: 197). But by and large these more moderate attitudes remained steeped in the ultimate value and superiority of the home society. Thus, while Said concedes that the novel as a literary form and cultural artefact did not direct people to go out and 'imperialize' —

it is genuinely troubling to see how little Britain's great humanistic ideas, institutions and monuments, which we still celebrate as having the power ahistorically to command our approval, how little they stand in the way of accelerating imperial process. We are entitled to ask how this body of humanistic ideas co-existed so comfortably with imperialism, and why — until the resistance to imperialism in the imperial domain, among Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, developed — there was little significant opposition or deterrence to empire at home (Said, 1993: 97).

The answer to this question, Said continues to insist throughout the book, lies in the simple fact that such intellectual and scientific creeds as Darwinism, Christianity, utilitarianism, idealism, racial theory, legal history, linguistics and the lore of intrepid travellers informed rather than detracted from the social values expressed in the novel and the culture generally, 'affirming the superlative values of white (i.e. English) civilization' (Said, 1993: 121).

W. J. T. Mitchell (1993) in his review of Culture and Imperialism claims that Said's great strength is his ability to identify and elucidate contradictions in the functioning of cultural history. In particular, what impresses Mitchell is Said's

115). Rather, Said claims to be interested in the novel both for its immanent aesthetic value, and also as a social-cultural document.
description of resistance to imperialism that goes well beyond the nationalist tendency to simply replicate and "nativise" forms of imperial domination (Mitchell, 1993: 12). In fact, Mitchell is referring to Said's account of resistance and opposition which of itself represents the sorts of contradictory processes described by Homi Bhabha several years ago as 'mimicry' (Bhabha, 1986). Said utterly dismisses the opposition that have been manifest within the home Western culture itself, citing only Anthony Trollope and Goldwin Smith as genuine — albeit modest — opponents amid the otherwise overwhelming acceptance of empire; even great reformers like Marx seemed little concerned with the lot of the colonized agricultural labourer (Said, 1993: 183) or the colonized peoples at large. Rather, opposition was experienced from within the dominated groups themselves, although resistance became expressed through the structures, institutions and 'mappings' of the dominating culture. In this sense, Said explains, the notion of 'overlapping territories' represents the fundamentally 'disjunct' nature of culture whereby its many sectors 'may be apprehended as working contrapuntally together' (Said, 1993: 234). Said goes on to make the point that the actual style and character of resistance by native peoples to imperial domination — resistance which had continued throughout the whole period of colonization and beyond, though it was most dramatically expressed in the nationalist movements of the mid-twentieth century — was to a degree influenced by the alternate opposition of the imperialists themselves. The means by which metropolitan culture attempted to subvert and manipulate the idiom, characters and structure of native resistance movements demonstrates, Said suggests, the pre-eminence of cultural forces in the processes of domination: culture in fact precedes 'politics, military history or economic process' (Said, 1993: 241). Resistance, therefore, must also arise from culture, and it is this fundamental characteristic of 'overlapping territories' which has facilitated and continues to facilitate the processes of de-colonization and opposition to the continuing project of imperialism:

This is the partial tragedy of resistance, that it must to a certain degree work to recover forms already established or at least influenced or infiltrated by the culture of empire. This is another instance of what I have called overlapping territories: the struggle over Africa in the twentieth century, for example, is over territory already designed and redesigned by explorers from Europe for generations (Said, 1993: 253).
Thus imperialism and resistance will 'struggle over the same terrain, contest the same history' (Said, 1993: 240), dispute, that is, the same overlapping territories of culture. It is for this reason that the great intellectuals and spokesmen of the nationalist movement in the colonized world were educated in Paris or London, and the maps which defined the new borders of the postcolonial world were drawn in Europe and America.

For Said, however, the drawing of the new postcolonial map is merely a stage in the continuing struggle against an imperialism which outlives territorial bondage. As we have noted in our initial discussion of *Orientalism*, Said regards the persistence of metropolitan intervention in the previously colonized world as evidence of the prevalence and continuity of imperialist values and global conceits. In *Culture and Imperialism* Said refers to the Gulf War (1990-91) as the most spectacular example of the prevalence and ubiquity of Western imperialism, specifically the belief that the 'rest of the world' exists always and inevitably as a subordinate utility that must accord with the wishes of the dominant and superior culture. As an active opponent of the American-UN sponsored engagement in the Middle East, and as an active supporter of Palestine, Said himself has been a significant public as well as academic critic of what he regards as on-going Western hegemony, most particularly as it is expressed in official and clandestine American foreign policy.

Said, of course is a highly astute critic who clearly understands the complexities and contradictions inherent to all cultural and political processes. He willingly concedes that he is motivated by his own complex cultural identity as an Arab American and by his desire to improve the social and political condition of the world. In particular, Said recognizes the precariousness of his theoretical position and attempts in *Culture and Imperialism* to achieve an even greater synthesis — and therefore a more forceful argument — than was accomplished in *Orientalism*. Thus the categories of 'culture' and imperialism' are offered as inherently contradictory. Said considers that the sheer breadth of these concepts would be sufficient to achieve his reconciliations, most especially as they facilitate, confirm and synthesize genuine political resistance amid the otherwise infinite and foundationless uncertainties of discourse and culture. For critics like W. J. T. Mitchell the immense ambition of Said's project is fulfilled through his ability to express, deal with and account for the contradictions that ultimately inform and determine culture (Mitchell, 1993: 12).

However, impressive as Said's scholarship may be, the theoretical problems we have identified in *Orientalism* continue to plague the later work. These difficulties are suggested through Said's analysis of and consternation over E.
M. Forster's novel *A Passage to India*. According to Said, Forster attempts to do with the novel form things for which it is not intended — the expression of a landscape that is so vast, culturally, religiously, schismically, historically and socially, as to be virtually incomprehensible. But as if to cobb the novel together for Forster, Said projects a number of his own aesthetic values and apprehensions, suggesting, for example, of Dr Aziz and his nationalism — 'I think Forster is disappointed in him for what only seem his posturings; he cannot connect him to the larger, coherent movement for Indian independence (Said, 1993: 244). As in the case of Michel's bisexual interests in André Gide's *L'Immoraliste*, which Said describes somewhat euphemistically as 'problematic', the novel constituting a 'special case in the imperialist archive',4 Said finds the character of Aziz ultimately confounding. For Said *A Passage to India* remains a confusing novel largely because it refuses to take seriously its own aesthetic — and presumably cultural — implications. To this extent, Said tells us, 'Forster's India is so affectionately personal and so remorselessly metaphysical that his view of Indians as a nation contending for sovereignty with Britain is not politically very serious, or even respectful' (Said, 1993: 246). Said's evidence for these criticisms, however, is decidedly thin. Indeed, what is most telling in this discussion is the considerable discomfort Said himself experiences with, and the negative connotations he attaches to, the concept of the personal. Clearly Said's approximation of the 'personal' in Forster's writing with 'disrespectful' is strained by Said's own profound attachment to liberational ideologies and an analytical paradigm which values political commitment above all else. Forster's writing with its mysticism and deeply personal configurations contravenes Said's deterministic aesthetic. As Stalin felt of Trotsky, Said appears to resent the aesthetic and personal equivocations both of Forster and his putative political voice, Fielding.

Said, in fact, seems to surrender all regard for those complex contradictions and overlapping territories when he is doing close analysis of a text and a narrative voice that is sourced in the Empire. It appears by his reading of Gide and Forster in particular that the only truly valid voice is the voice of revolution or liberation that overrides or neutralizes the personal. Sophisticated theoretical considerations appear unable to restrain Said's vitriol which ultimately catapults his analysis into precisely that 'crude polemic' he has assured us in *Orientalism* he would be at pains to avoid. Thus, from his assault on the personal in *A

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4 Said's discussion of the novel never achieves the sort of penetration we might expect from such an incisive reader and critic. Indeed, Said stumbles across the details of Michel's erotic interests in the Arab boy, finally seizing on the familiar territory of Orientalism as his explanation for the novel's dramatic development (Said, 1993: 232).
Passage to India, Said attaches a peculiar, if not exceptionally strained raillery against the British Viceroy Bulwer-Lytton in 1879 — as if this statement, made from public office some fifty years prior to the publication of A Passage to India, could be vicariously credited to the sentiments and values of Forster's novel. What the interlocution of this statement into the discussion of A Passage to India clearly demonstrates is the propensity of Said's political project to fracture and override his more considered theoretical and critical analyses.

In fact, Said's claim is based precisely on a substantial suspicion, if not repudiation, of the personal per se which, for all his articulated respect for the teachings of Foucault, Said equates with political evasiveness. We have already noted in Chapter One that his admiration for Foucault's analysis of discourse and power is limited by Said's disappointment with the French poststructuralist's putative retreat from political commitment (Said, 1986a). But we might also observe that in his analysis of literature more generally, Said also expresses some dissatisfaction with the personal or the microphysic of the literary text and character; these dissatisfactions in turn refer clearly to some more substantial reservations about the problem of subjectivity in relation to ideology and power. Indeed, despite his continued assurances in Culture and Imperialism that he respects and admires the canonical texts he is addressing, and that he appreciates the value of conventional critical analysis of these texts, Said's own critical approach requires a significant parenthesizing of textual interest and content in order to achieve its heuristic outcomes. Most particularly, it is character and the complexity of character interaction which is excluded from Said's analysis. In order to produce a cultural study in which the fictional text will substantiate his broad historical definitions, Said is forced to 'fix' characters in the general panorama of history, and the processes and operation of imperialism in particular. Thus the personal — and most particularly the unfixing of subjectivity as it has been defined and developed through poststructuralist analysis — with all its contradictions and uncertainties, becomes 'problematic' and destabilizing to the teleological impetus of Said's history.

Thus, while we may not dispute the significance of imperialism as a cultural and historical force determining the shape and nature of the modern world, the primacy and breadth of Said's enclosure might well be queried, particularly as it appears to neutralize or down value other subjectivities and social formations. Feminism, for example, might invoke a similar teleology to explain the global map which has deprived women of property, status and public participation across national, ethnic and imperial boundaries. To this extent, Said's discussion of Jane Austen appears to distort some other, perhaps equally powerful,
ideological tension, one which for the women of the metropolitan centre would be more potent, personal and immediate in its force than the enslavement of Africans in Antigua.

Equally, the monophonia of the modern world — another social cartography experienced most powerfully at the level of the personal and immediate — is significantly challenged through the writings of Gide and Forster. Said's description of these novelists and their sexual and spiritual transcendentals seems limited by the need to demonstrate imperial values of dominance and control. In fact, the subjectivity of Forster and Gide's characters is not so substantially fixed by the patterns of empire. Certainly — and this is true of the sexual spiritual voyagers we have analysed in the Australia Indonesia context — the presence of these characters in the colonial territories is facilitated by the greater economic power of their home colonial power; however, it is equally true that both Michel and Fielding are deeply suspicious of their home cultures and the personal relationships that the modern twentieth century engenders. Both men are seeking more. As with Eliot's Prufrock and the Hollow Men, Michel and Fielding sense the depravity of the modern world, materialism and empire and their effects on the personal and spiritual. Algiers and India facilitate a revitalization, provide new life and vision — affect them utterly and completely, even though they must recognise and accept the limits of their penetration and comprehension of the new world. Thus, it is not merely a matter of alien possession as Said's description of imperialism would suggest, but of a complex of interrelationships, personal exchanges and crises, mutual metamorphosis, and a new version of difference. itself.

More extraordinary, however, is the fact that Said's zeal for the elucidation of imperial and colonial processes and the necessary (he tells us) parenthesis of 'conventional' interpretations leads him away from some quite sound modes of thinking about and understanding modernism and the modern text. It is precisely this dominion of the personal combined with those elements of vastness and incomprehensibility — elements unsuited to the novel form, Said tells us — which appear as the distinguishing characteristics of the twentieth century novel and the era of high modernism. Each in its own way, the canonical works of Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, Joyce, Proust, the Manns, Dostoyevsky and Kafka demonstrate the profound uncertainties of the age. As is well understood, language, social values and meaning, psychological stability and history are all cast into doubt through the advance of modernism and its aesthetics. Thus, when Conrad writes of the ineffability or incomprehensible silence of Africa, he is not merely speaking as a racial or
cultural conqueror; in fact, like Fielding and Michel, he is projecting through Marlow something of his own intense psychological distress, his own intellectual and aesthetic insights. Moreover, also as we well understand, these distresses and insights belong to an epoch and culture which was undergoing serious stresses and mutations. Conrad's thinking and aesthetic projections were personal, and also part of a new and powerful system of comprehension, sensibility and thought, one which queries its own position in the world and the universe. There is no doubt that the text has an historical and cultural-semiotic dimension, but Said's reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as an imperialist (Said, 1993: 198) or 'racist' (Said, 1993: 200) text belies the complexities of the novel and its protagonist-narrator's contradictory perspective of the world. For Said the very fact of Marlow's presence in Africa is sufficient reason to condemn the novel as confirming the British bourgeois enterprise of capital penetration and imperialism. Moreover, by narrating and historicizing Africa's 'strangeness', Said argues, Marlow (and hence Conrad) merely confirms the imperial elevation of the colonizer over the colonized by possessing the latter in discourse, that is the history written by imperial Europe: 'The savages, the wilderness, even the surface folly of popping shells into a vast continent — all these reaccentuate Marlow's need to place the colonies on the imperial map and under the overarching temporality of narratable history, no matter how complicated and circuitous the results' (Said, 1993: 198).

What Said is suggesting then, is that the mere act of narration overrides all other political — especially personal or interpersonal — considerations. Said accepts the conventional understanding of the novel as querying colonialism, but the more significant factor, Said tells us, is the placing of the experience in Africa into narrative discourse. In fact, Marlow and his sense of the 'strangeness' or 'ineffability' of Africa is not overridden because the language and narrative processes of history (and indeed fiction) are themselves under scrutiny in the novel. Morality is unsatisfactory ('pretty rags that would fly off at the first good shake') and civilization — symbolized by the absurdity of the company accountant and by the Thames audience who have 'a policemen on every corner' and who daily 'perform their monkey tricks' — is continually destabilized by Marlow's irony. But more significantly, the complex narrative structure of the novel does not permit certainty; Said seems to neglect the fact that Marlow is not the novel's ultimate narrator at all, but the tale belongs to a shadowy, unnamed, barely acknowledged first person narrator who observes Marlow in relative silence on the Thames river journey. Marlow's narrative status is further undermined by the telling of the notorious lie to Kurtz's
'Intended', in spite of Marlow's claim that 'he hates and detests' a lie. Kurtz is deemed 'not reliable' because he has forsaken civilization. Marlow himself is 'unsound'\(^5\) because he too equivocates over its value, considering quite candidly as he watches the Africans on the riverbank that he too would like to join them for a howl and a dance' if there weren't 'too much to do'. Marlow's language and vision are, by his own admission, dubious. His narrative, his history, are not substantial but are dislodged by his interaction with Africa.

It is these quite significant and well understood issues which Said must parenthesize in order to produce his reading of Heart of Darkness as a confirmation of bourgeois capitalism and imperialism more generally. It is as though Said can separate the text into distinct political categories, as though the novel's historical status may be distinguished clearly and unequivocally from its ideas and its aesthetic content. Curiously, it is as if the ideas and aesthetic content — the atomistic dominion of the personal — have no historical status or connections at all. In fact, what Marlow discovers in Africa — and for that matter what Michel discovers in Algieria and Fielding in India — is the thinness of his own subjectivity, and the thinness of the civilizations and cultures that divide human beings and human societies. Said is astonished by Fielding's ambivalent interactions with India and his friendship with Aziz. He seems relaxed when Fielding finds limits to his friendship with the Indian, though he is less comfortable with Mrs Moore's greater cultural penetration as it is symbolized in the events of the Caves. Both Fielding's inability to have a 'genuine experience of India' and Mrs Moore's more penetrating though barely comprehensible experience are for Said evidence of the novelist's 'helplessness' (Said, 1993: 245); this helplessness is to be condemned politically because it demonstrates Forster's inability either to condemn or condone British colonialism in India. Equally, Conrad's ambiguous metaphoric approximation of the Thames and Congo river journeys, and the 'complete' penetration of Kurtz into nature and the African culture — by which his flesh had 'been consumed' and through which he 'had kicked himself loose of the earth' and was entirely 'alone' with nothing above or below him — are not considered fully by Said's analysis.

In fact Said's discomfort with the representation of cultural penetration by the West and more particularly by Western metropolitan characters has more to

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\(^5\) In a telling interview with the company manager in the Congo, Marlow finds himself rejected along with Kurtz whom he is to retrieve. The manager turns his back on Marlow as 'a partisan of methods for which the time was not yet ripe: I was unsound! Ah! but it was something at least to have a choice of nightmares' (Heart of Darkness, Bantam, New York, 1971. p. 105).
do with his own political project than with the aesthetic integrity of the text. Said may even concede as much, though there would be no concession on the fundamental assertion that the narratization of the colonized people and their territory into the history of the metropolis constitutes and confirms domination; nor would he concede that the equivocation of these characters has contributed in some significant way to opposition to imperialism within the metropolis itself. It appears that Said will not acknowledge the instabilities of narrative that have been written into the twentieth century literary text, its structures and its interests. Even so, in reading Said and other postcolonial analysts, we would be led to ask whether the metropolitan voice — indeed any voice — can speak with validity beyond its own experience or ethnicity. Said's analysis would seem to suggest a negative response since to speak outside that experience would render the voice politically if not aesthetically invalid as it engages the speaker in the act of cultural possession — or imperialism. Said is, of course, aware of this problem as he points on several occasions in the book to the difficulties of the Western artist in representing otherness. However, as is also the case in Orientalism, this difficulty remains unresolved. It is certainly arguable, as we have noted elsewhere in this study, that discourse analysis, which would liberate language from the fixities of the object subject dichotomy, becomes the conduit for a new set of paradoxes and dichotomies. Yet in his attempt to sustain the delicate balance between the 'overlapping territories' of culture, language and politics, Said is forced to breach his own precepts, allowing the precariousness of his theoretical substance to collapse at critical points.

Specifically, in denying the capacity of European writers to narratize 'otherness' with aesthetic or political integrity — a precept designed to strengthen particularity and ethnic essentialism — Said is reproducing the sort of teleological materialism rejected by discourse theory. Said's political commitment to otherness is based on the reproduction and re-formation of a 'reality' that only the marginalized writer can construct with integrity; it is this version of the world, for all Said's sophisticated qualifications, which becomes its ultimate arbiter; the subject becomes fixed in an historical reality that would seem to deny the very precepts on which his analysis is founded. As we have noted, this same theoretical slippage can be detected in Orientalism, and is equally obvious in many other postcolonial analyses influenced by discourse and poststructural theory. While a number of these studies might hope to parenthesize theory for the greater value of political liberation, in Said's case such a parenthesis would impinge critically on his whole argument and
definition of imperialism. In fact, and as we have noted, when it comes to crucial points, the contradictions and processes of overlapping territories will become suspended, if not crystallized, into the overriding political category of difference. Difference, Said finally concludes, must speak for itself.

This view, one too often expressed by many other postcolonial commentators, not only denies the ability of the European voice to speak of otherness, it also takes a somewhat monophonic, even simplistic, attitude toward what actually constitutes difference or otherness. Said tells us that it is the 'tragedy' of nationalist or ethnic liberationism that it must speak through the facility of already established imperialist-European formations, maps and discourses. In other words, difference is a significantly relative concept; yet, this relativity does not extend, it seems, to the European writer. Rather, the relativity of Conrad or Forster is described as an expression of 'confusion' or 'helplessness', lacking political or aesthetic integrity. It appears, in fact, that Said's attention to 'overlapping territories' and to culture as elements working 'contrapuntally together' can be dislodged by more monadic political considerations. It is for this reason, perhaps, that Said's arguments veer away from direct consideration of those significant changes that are affecting the constitution and borders of the global cultural map. Most particularly, Said seems reluctant to consider in detail the new social formations within the formerly colonised world, preferring to concentrate on the neo-Marxist, anti-American manifestations of the Arab world. As Anthony King has pointed out in his introduction to Culture, Globalization and the World System (1991a) there is a lively debate in the Academy over the impact of globalization and cultural transaction on the integrity and specificity of difference. This relativity is neatly summarized in Arjun Appadurai's (1989) observation that 'some differents are more different than other differents'; the whole process of transcultural and global communications, as we have argued throughout the current study, is demanding the re-orientation and re-formation of discourse and difference.

II. Difference, Discontent, Destiny

In the final analysis, Said's postcolonial ethnicism, as it is argued in Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism, proves to be a deterministic ideological system which he imposes over the thinking, aesthetics and action of the past in order to explain his own conception of the contemporary social-political structure of the world. To achieve this description Said has been forced to parenthesize an extraordinary range of historical details; more significantly, he has been forced
to reduce seriously the aesthetic materials with which he is working. His view is thus both essentialist and totalizing, steeped in an unending series of theoretical contradictions. Moreover, the value of his analysis for reading the condition of the global postmodern is seriously limited by his failure to elucidate fully the actual nature of the contemporary field; curiously, the contemporary condition, which after all is the outcome and continuance of imperialism, exists largely as a 'given' in Said's analysis. Said understands that things have changed in the 'metropolis' (his favoured term) yet again his discussion seems continually to swerve away from a direct analysis of the breadth and depth of these changes. Other commentators, Stuart Hall among them, have theorized the complete collapse of European separationism — 'the end of the idea of Europe', as Hall (1987) calls it. In fact, the constitution of the modern First World state or metropolis can no longer be simply described. Social class and ethnic constitution have changed markedly, and it is even more difficult than ever before to make consummate descriptions of the 'culture' and national character of the dominant group. In other words, the voice of the home state is even less monophonic than once it was. Ironically, Said's own voice — for all its claims to ethnic independence, difference and probity — is privileged as it is ultimately enclosed by the security and wealth of social class and American cultural-economic global primacy. At the more theoretical level, the voice of the immigrant postcolonial critic is itself subject to the analytical processes of discourse deconstruction. Said is guilty of speaking for otherness, of synthesizing the views of 'dominated peoples' beyond the borders of his home nation — America⁶ — and of drawing these other voices into his own monadic conception and an historical reality over which they have no control or power. To this extent, otherness is already being drawn from the margins which, in Said's own system, denies its integrity.

Said would, of course, confront such a criticism by pointing to his Arabian ethnic and cultural derivation. In fact he claims in Culture and Imperialism that he feels himself to be caught between the activism of colonial liberation and the theoretical universalizing of Western intellectualism, particularly as a postcolonial phenomenon (Said, 1993: 234). Yet in defining his own identity, in attempting to reconcile the competing propensities, Said again moves away from personal or subjective instabilities toward a less ambiguous political activism. Indeed, Said's own obvious disdain for the perceptions of Forster, Gide

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⁶ The point being made here does not deny Said's own claim that he feels a certain dualism in his own sense of home. I am using the notion of 'home' in a non-figurative way.
and Conrad — in spite of a claimed admiration for their 'formidable prose' — contrasts with his celebration of other canonical works spoken from the perspective of anti-imperialism (Joyce and Yeats for example), and more particularly texts written by formerly colonized peoples. Put simply, Said will not accept any voice from the imperial nation because it cannot speak validly of itself or its other because any narration absorbs the other into its own self-legitimating historical system. When the dressings of Said's sophisticated theoretic are removed there is little remaining other than a general contempt for those writers who would wish to explore the personal details, contradictions and aesthetic effects of colonialism. Thus, the overlapping territories, the delicate balances of theory and ideology, culture and imperialism, even the relativism that distinguishes Mill from Carlyle, Trollope from Haggard — all these would collapse finally beneath the weight of lingual synthesis and political activism.

Thus, as well as its sheer scope,7 the fundamental ambitions of Said's project need to be scrutinized. Specifically, Said, along with a number of his Australian followers, has attempted to revitalize materialist history by re-theorizing its liberational intentions. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, this re-theorizing of liberational politics has produced new cobbings of the Enlightenment liberalist or Marxist dialectics — capital and labour, bourgeoisie and proletariat — with the poststructuralist interest in discourse and subjectivity. Radical politics and social theory, therefore, have been more or less transformed by the interest in new social formations: as feminism challenges patriarchy, ethnic essentialism challenges European hegemony. The category of difference, whether defined in simple or complex terms, has been proposed and promoted as the new oppositional formation, appropriated as the focus and essence of resistance. As we have noted, however, the concept of difference has been too easily ossified in oppositional discourse as an all-encompassing category that denies the very pluralism it would hope to promote. This is precisely the concern of Stuart Hall who has seen difference become a conduit of even greater and more imaginative capitalist utility (Hall, 1991a). That is, and to echo David Harvey (1989, see Chapter Two), capitalism by its very nature will appropriate the essentialism of Difference and transform it by commodification as mere and meagre difference. We have also noted Katharine Betts' (1993) claim that this interest in difference has some broader sociological implications. Betts, we recall, argues that the new class of altruistic

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7 John Legge (1990) suggests that the basic problem with Said's *Orientalism* is its centralizing of Orientalism as a totalizing description for the East West relationship.
cosmopolitans have come to define themselves through the purveyance and celebration of multiculturalism, an embrace of superficial cultural variation with themes of exotic location, clothes and cuisine. Betts, deriving her ideas from U.S. sociologist Alvin Gouldner, makes it very clear that this new pluralism in Australia is unquestionably class-based, though such a conceit is distinctly unfashionable in Australian political discourse.

In our discussion of the various media and fictional texts, it was noted that the development of ideologies like multiculturalism, postmodern pluralism and even new utilitarianism can be explained, at least in part, as a response to the destabilizing effects of transcultural communications and globalism more generally. We have argued against the reductive impulses of such ideologies and conceptualizations, noting that tensions and instabilities flow inevitably through the transcultural text as it attempts to negotiate the counterflows and abstruse pathways that link and disengage cultures, languages and people. This is true for the more simply formed news or advertising text (e.g. the Elle Bali Calendar) and for the more complex filmic or literary construction (e.g. Koch’s *The Year of Living Dangerously*); in both cases meanings are compounded through complicated social, semiotic and lingual processes. In particular, our examination of these texts — and their instabilities — unveiled some distinct realignments in power and meaning, most notably in respect of ethnic and national boundaries. Difference as the essential cultural quality cannot be assumed, and indeed the dramatic and ideological tensions that drive many of these news and fictional texts are founded on transcultural alliances and affiliations that defy national and ethnic divisions: the sexual and spiritual unions of Alex-Maruli, Komala-Hammy, Maria-Raka, Marla-Alit; the political alignments of Billy-Kurmar, Hamilton-Jill (in Weir’s film), Reeves-Rosa, O’Rourke-Aoi, McQueen-Gusmao; the utilitarian penetrations of Keefe, Cooper, Sam Konig, Sinclair and the Embassy staffs in *Monkeys in the Dark* and *Embassy*, the journalists of *The Year of Living Dangerously* and *Turtle Beach*, the public servants of *A Cry from the Jungle Bar*. In all cases, and as our analysis has continually indicated, the simple category of ossified and essential difference is weakened by the contrary flows of affiliation and contiguity. The differences that do exist are generally non-essentialist, temporary and giving of their pleasures as ‘cuisinal’ otherness.

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8 Recent novels by Brian Castro, Alex Miller and David Foster, and television films like *Aya* (Solrun Hoass, 1990) centralize the Chinese as the symbol of identity reconfiguration in the post-modern context. The borders of China and Australia merge as new transcultural allegiances and identities are formed.
In other words, the difference that is configured in these texts is very often a
difference that is available to the pleasures of the First World middle-class and
to the broader processes of global capitalism, the conduit of postmodern
transculturalism. The significant communion that exists between the Australian
and the South East Asian characters in these texts is facilitated by capitalist
wealth and productive of pleasures that are determinedly bourgeois in
orientation. In fact, there is very little communion in these texts between the
middle-class visiting Australians and the indigent labouring classes of the
region; rather, texts commonly depict the coming together of the middle classes
in both regions. Significant non-Australian characters — Maruli, Kurmar, Rosa,
President Calvao, Hammy, Alit, Raka, Rai, and all the major players in Games of
the Strong — are educated, middle-class or high caste. Significantly, the only
poor and uneducated South East Asian characters who appear in any
meaningful way in these texts are prostitutes. Billy Kwan's impotent and failed
relationship with the unspecified 'Tbu,' Komala's inability to help Tati, Keefe's
'sacrifice' of the young dancer — symbolize the intransigence of class and the
greater propensity for cross-national or cross-ethnic communion..

Here again we return to the limitation of analyses like Said's Culture and
Imperialism which continue to treat the globe as a divisible power structure.
Said, as mentioned, pays little attention to the changing nature of the world and
the continuing destabilization of processes of power and structure. In particular
— and significantly for Australia — profound change in the postcolonized
world is characterized by this emergence of the new middle classes. As many
have pointed out, in absorbing the materials and meanings of First World driven
capitalism, these new social formations of human society within the previously
colonised world will necessarily hybridize the influences and elements they
embrace, producing something that is in some way a deviation from the original
and therefore 'different'. However, as these commentators would also recognise,
these differences are themselves relative and non-essentialist, even when they
are radically re-constructed as self-conscious political formation as may be the
case with Middle Eastern, fundamentalist anti-Americanism. The basic point,
however, is that difference becomes dilute and cuisinal, available for pleasure, as
it is absorbed and deployed by international capitalism and the international
middle classes. Hall, Wallerstein, Said and others may seek an essentialist
formation, a resistance that expresses itself as non-compromising, non-
mediatory, but even this hope is seriously challenged by the power of globality.
We have discussed in Section One the general implications of the new postmodernist politics which have derived from the poststructuralist interest in discourse and the instabilities of subjectivity and power. In particular, we noted the considerable consternation of writers like Harvey, Dews, Habermas, Wallerstein, Docker and others over the transferral of political interest from neo-Marxist materialism and the liberation of the proletariat to broader and less theoretically unified fields of interest. Harvey, for example, continues to doubt the efficacy of theories like those of Foucault, Lyotard and Baudrillard for the resolution of continuing problems in the international division of labour and the oppression of the world's poor. Habermas and Dews have expressed serious reservations about the ability of postmodernism to escape limpid relativism and excessive particularity. Feminists like Sabina Lovibond are equally suspicious of the new politics which celebrates, — as it promotes — the primacy of choice in capitalist economics for the emancipation of the feminine. Nevertheless, given the cognitive force and insights of poststructuralist-postmodernist conceptualizations, and given the equally potent impetus of globalism, it does not appear feasible that a politics of postmodernity could adequately inscribe itself on the thinking and imagination of the age without taking account of the new knowledge on language and culture. Certainly, we have attempted in the current study of transcultural communications to deploy the poststructural conceit in a manner that is cogent and forceful but which moves beyond reductive ideological descriptions. A number of commentators on the postmodern are attempting similar syntheses, drawing together the insights of discourse analysis and an interest in critical and social theory (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985., Hutcheson, 1988, 1989, Collins, 1989, B. Turner, 1990a, Boyne and Rattansi, 1990a). What is common to all of these studies is their interest in new modes of linguistic and subjective dispersal, and the possibilities of more wide-ranging liberational possibilities than are available through older Cartesian or Marxian dialectics. As we have noted, the corollary of these postulations appears to be the replacement of the working classes as the focus of social reform and political re-vitalization. Laclau and Mouffe, for example, claim to have extended the poststructuralist inheritance by abandoning Foucault's 'residual' distinction between the discursive and non-discursive social formations. In drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'assemblage' as it is developed in A Thousand Plateaux, though without the emphasis on the bodily pleasure as the source of political dispersal, Laclau and Mouffe attempt to elaborate a microphysics of power which is not cloyed, as they see it, by concepts of centralizing fixities of hegemonic structure.
Assemblage refers to the processes by which individual social agents function to overcome impediments to their freedom. The social is thus construed as a broad field of competing agents for control of discursive descriptions, especially the description of justice. Accordingly, the liberal and Marxist dichotomy which has characterized political debate in the West during the period of the Enlightenment may be viewed as merely the provincial politics of male, white humanists. In time and as the social field broadens, absorbing more and more of the political assemblages of the globe, the distinction between the two groups may be considered to be minimal, little more than the distinction between religious orders within the Christian faith. In fact, the authors tell us in Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, it is only through the legitimation of 'difference' and the partiality of meaning and power that a truly radical democracy can be construed:

If we accept the non-complete character of all discursive fixations and, at the same time, affirm the relational character of every identity, the ambiguous character of the signifier, the non-fixation to any signified, can only exist insofar as there is a proliferation of signifies (sic) . . . Society never manages to be identical to itself, as every nodal point is constituted within an intertextuality which overflows it (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 1113).

Like Jean-François Lyotard’s explanation of ‘differends’ (Lyotard, 1988), Laclau and Mouffe’s radical democracy draws together a number of the strands of poststructuralist theory in order to produce a cogent social critique. Most particularly, Laclau and Mouffe argue that identities are achieved in contemporary social relationships through the occlusion of difference. The quotidian experience is an assemblage of particularizations and relations of power which conceal their origin and relativity by suppressing what is outside them. Capitalism and the political accompaniment, liberalism, have been most effective in producing these effects on identity. It includes and excludes, though concealing its ambiguity by simulating consensus and unifying its referential objects. However, Laclau and Mouffe argue, when the signifier is

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9 Sneja Gunew, (1990) to whom we have referred several times during the course of this discussion, has adapted these arguments and applied them to the concept of multiculturalism in Australia. For Gunew, the legitimate social panorama is best described as a field of agents and competing ethnic voices. The difference between Laclau and Mouffe’s thesis and Gunew’s refers to the latter’s attachment to ethnic essentialism which appears to be the defining quality of liberation.
exposed as truly ambiguous it is most likely to produce the radical democracy required of postmodernity. Capitalism and liberalism are deficient because they reverse the progress of subjectivity toward genuine instability and hence genuine freedom. Radical democracy in the era of postmodernity is only possible when identities are negotiated in contingency and instability.

Pluralism is radical only to the extent that each term of this plurality of identities finds within itself the principle of its own validity, without this having to be sought in a transcendent or underlying positive ground for the hierarchy of meaning of them all and the source and guarantee of their legitimacy. And this radical pluralism is democratic to the extent that the autoconstitutivity of each one of the terms is the result of the displacements of the egalitarian imaginary (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 167).

Laclau and Mouffe propose a significant break with the liberalist tradition, especially as it is derived through the tradition of romantic essentialism. The freedom and egalitarianism promised by liberalism and formed through the writings of Rousseau, Fries, Schilling, Goethe and even Hegel is rejected as duplicitous. Yet what is even more distinctive about Laclau and Mouffe's arguments is their demand for a pluralism which is not itself grounded in essentialist claims. Rather, Laclau and Mouffe theorize a freedom which is formed around the instabilities described by earlier poststructuralists, and which is continually revitalized by its own inclination to deconstruction. Unlike Said's ethnic essentialism, Laclau and Mouffe's pluralism pursues its theorizations through all the irradiating points of discourse and subject dispersal. Ethnicity is valid insofar as it is unstable; the problem of one group speaking for another is never at issue because radical democracy dislodges synthesis at the very moment of articulation.

Clearly, Laclau and Mouffe would hope to extend Foucault's theories without reducing them to simple ideological valorizations. Their democracy does not exclude the European by reducing its its complex and often contradictory forms as merely 'imperial'. However, as Mark Poster (1991) argues in his own attempt to advance poststructuralist theories — most particularly in the specific context of the contemporary social field — Laclau and Mouffe's strategy produces its own version of social essentialism. In criticizing Foucault for retaining a non-discursive realm in his analysis, Laclau and Mouffe propose a social entirety where all contexts become meaningful as they are produced in
discourse. Poster claims that this view of the social demands that nothing can exist beyond the text, especially the deconstructive text:

If this is so, then closure has been reintroduced in Laclau and Mouffe's position. They have repressed the nondiscursive in order to render the field of the social totally amenable to deconstructive tactics. Deconstructive society is purchased at the cost of totalizing the intellectual strategy of deconstructive textuality (Poster, 1991: 140).

Compelling, therefore, as Laclau and Mouffe's arguments appear, the same Catch-22 of poststructural deconstruction returns to haunt them. As we have noted in our analyses in Section One — and this is a point most often directed toward Derrida and his infinite deferrals — intertextuality tends to produce an endless system of atomization: essentialism begins to re-emerge in a systematic description of the asystematic.

Poster's own answer to this familiar paradox in deconstructive methodology is to retain the non-discursive as given and to attend more closely to the context. As our leader passage indicates, Poster follows many harbingers of the contemporary in proclaiming the death of the proletariat. More like Lyotard than any of the other postmodern commentators, Poster attempts to explain and criticize the social field, most particularly as it is determined through the function of information gathering and dissemination. According to Poster, the contemporary field can no longer be explained by Marxist or progressive liberalist theories; new theories and analytic strategies of the contemporary must account for the radical pluralization of knowledge and power relations in the specific context of action. The proletariat is no longer an active social formation but is dispersed through infinite processes of power formation and resistance. The mode of information theory attempts to explain how these formations have been influenced by discourse and action.

Poster, however, like Foucault and like Lyotard too, is forced into irresolvable dualities. In following the postmodernist celebration of pluralism, Poster concludes his discussion with an uneasy reference to Lyotard's *The Differend* in which he identifies a tension in Lyotard's claims 'for a multiplicity of language games, for the justice of the acceptance of the multiplicity, on opposition to all arguments . . . for consensus, for totalizing unifications which reduce possible positions of enunciation' (Poster, 1991: 150). Lyotard's concerns have direct relevance for our own study where, as we have continually noted, instability and contradiction are inevitable outcomes of globalism and transcultural
communications. Specifically, Lyotard's interest in *The Differend* is directed toward this very problem of how to reconcile competing claims, and the function of philosophy in arguing a position which may have no clearly definable parameters. For Lyotard, retreating somewhat from a number of the more extreme claims of *The Postmodern Condition*, it is a matter of necessity that these complex language games or 'differends' must somehow resolve themselves as ideas without the surrender of their independence and 'difference'. The monadic and centralizing inclinations of new forms of ideological discourse being practised by Said and his Australian followers continues to be disparaged by Lyotard. In particular, the sort of idealist and cognitively driven 'community', which may manifest itself as ethnic essentialism or cuisinal pleasure — that is, 'difference' as the dialectical opponent of Orientalism, imperialism, or other forms of global hegemony — would transgress Lyotard's charter for the operation of philosophy. Lyotard treats community, for example, as an idea rather than as a concept (in epistemological terms), arguing that the Marxian or liberalist concepts of communal harmony and consensus are forms of positivistic knowledge, and are productive therefore of domination. Philosophy must articulate instability and the complex of language games by which a common rule may not be found for the resolution of opposing arguments. That is, philosophy must articulate that which strictly speaking cannot be 'known', which cannot be incorporated into 'knowledge' — 'The historian must break with the monopoly over history granted to the cognitive regimen of phrases, and he or she must venture forth by lending his or her ear to what is not presentable under the rules of knowledge' (Lyotard, 1988: 57).

Lyotard's views on modern politics, however, are complex, identifying the discourse of terrorism which denies its own foundation by repressing everything that points to its lack of foundation. Politics threatens the Differend by attempting to destroy it (Lyotard, 1988: 138). In other words, Lyotard would wish to maintain the heterogeneity of things and phrases as sustainable ideas without re-investing them as ideals or epistemological concepts. Many, Said among them, would probably despair of such sophisticated and uncommitted rhetoric, regarding it as an impotent deflection of the world of human action. Nevertheless, Lyotard's charter offers some considerable possibilities for the comprehension and analysis of the global postmodern. My own use of the notion of transculturalism attempts to articulate similar paradoxes, most particularly the new continguties and instabilities of postmodernity as they are carried in the Australia Indonesia communications relationship. I have not wanted in this study to articulate or idealize some nefarious and improbable
community between the two sovereign spheres and their cultures. My
dissatisfaction with the concept of difference as a political category derives
from a broader concern about the politicization of the human experience as an
investment in epistemology and structure. The complex nature of power must
constantly refer itself to the instabilities of subjectivity, identity and discourse. If
it cannot do this, then politics and power as heuristic categories will themselves
continue to collapse in on themselves and their own theoretical vacuum.

Too often, commentators have translated the poststructuralist insight that
power functions at the personal level as a microcosmic metaphor for structural
power division. That is, they have seen the unstable operations of power
through complex and uneven inter-subjective processes as simple separation:
greater power over lesser, European over Eastern, male over female. Stuart Hall
remarks that a 'general politics' can no longer exist and that we need to
understand the world as a series of localized political constituencies (Hall,
1991b: 52). However, his claim earlier in the same essay that theory is merely a
deviation on the way to the more important realm of cultural politics (Hall,
1991b: 42) signposts the weaknesses of a description of power, politics and
culture that does not account fully for the theoretical complexities we have
been pursuing in this current study. Lyotard's concept of the Differend at
least attempts to confront the crisis of ideas which has beset our thinking on
language and culture, without retreating to the objectivism or neo-objectivism
of ideological essentialism. What is continually disappointing about these
essentialists is their propensity for fury which is levelled against any critic who
detects inconsistency in their ideas or who seeks wider heuristic or theoretical
fields that can be located through their ideological orthodoxies. While the new
knowledge has understood the significance of power in human relations and
discourse, it is important to remember that even power is complex, its
functioning abstruse. Ideological essentialists who would appropriate cultural
discussion through the formation of unidimensional descriptions and the
exclusion of alternative considerations are themselves guilty of intellectual
oppression. Lyotard reminds us all that we are trapped in the material of
language and rhetoric: it is precisely this incarceration which demands that we
all at least aspire to express the inexpressible.

Cultural analysis, in fact, will need to revise continually its own theorizations;
power and individualism which have become so distinctively concentrated in the
bourgeois experience must not be allowed to isolate or parenthesize themselves.
Cultural discussion and analysis must accept the responsibility, like philosophy,
of elucidating through close and thoughtful reading of texts the complex
processes of meaning and power formation; it must thus deny the exclusivist propensities of any single probity or self-legitimizing essentialism to usurp the cultural debate, especially in the cause of its own pleasure or clandestine domination. In consonance with Mark Poster, I would argue finally that our knowledge needs to be linked to the world of action as discourse since this is the only way of ensuring that our readings and our own intellectual triumphs do not exceed their contextual immediacies to become ossified as ideology. That is, we must accept genuinely the disintegrating impulses of deconstruction though we must also be prepared to offer ourselves and our thoughts to the generalizing assemblage of texts. We must surrender the lie of materialism as we embrace — and not in spite of — our acknowledgement of the differend which constitute the world. It is this fine and precarious philosophical poise which has enabled the current study to be completed. Australia’s entry into South East Asia and its greater regional relationship with Indonesia cannot be easily epitomized, but need to be understood as a complex of processes that are delineated in culture, history, space and, above all, language.
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