Collisions of Cultures and Identities

Settlers and Indigenous Peoples

Edited by

Patricia Grimshaw and Russell McGregor

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"How White She Was!": Race, Gender and Global Capital in the Life and Times of Beatrice Grimshaw

Julie Evans

Recently, certain feminist scholars committed to theorising difference have prioritised the collective need to confront the interests of global capital as an urgent focus for justice struggles.[1] While structural analysis has often informed conventional critiques of western feminism, this strategic reconfiguration reflects increasing alarm at the widespread costs of globalisation.

With different interests in mind, two such scholars, Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Sara Ahmed, direct attention to the importance of material analysis in their otherwise broad-ranging engagements with inequality and discrimination, seeking at once to acknowledge yet also exceed race, class, and gender divisions. When revisiting her classic text "Under Western Eyes", Mohanty takes the opportunity to correct impressions arising from her early exposé of feminism's Eurocentrism, that difference should be valorised over commonality.[2] Rather, Mohanty clarifies, we must understand "how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully". This refined conceptual framework underpins her broader goal of bridging feminist academic and political activities so that "women of different communities and identities" can begin to build solidarity across borders.[3] Mohanty wrote anxiously in 2003 about the necessity of a universal anti-globalisation feminist practice at a time when material and political processes, while always central to her work, had become "more brutal, exacerbating economic, racial and gender inequalities, and thus…need to be demystified, re-examined, and theorized".[4]

Similarly, in outlining the risks apparent in what she regards as the potentially narcissistic preoccupations of "critical" whiteness studies,[5] Sara Ahmed calls on scholars and activists to engage with racism not so much as an attitude of mind, which is simply susceptible to therapeutic psychological "correction", but as a far more complex "on-going reality", whose resilience to reform reflects its deeply structural provenance. Accordingly, such a task requires determined "interventions in the political economy of race", supported by a detailed understanding of how racism in the present, as in the past, "distributes resources and capacities unequally amongst others".[6]

In the following account of the writings and activities of Beatrice Grimshaw, I seek to support the force of these arguments by grounding the contemporary concerns of Mohanty and Ahmed in an earlier global economic context. In line with established scholarship on race, gender and imperialism,[7] Grimshaw's early twentieth-century texts further demonstrate how race and gender were deeply imbricated in the production of the very social inequalities upon which empire depended. The historical analysis therefore addresses at the outset Ahmed's concern that race continues to gain purchase in the present "only by being cut off from histories of labour, as well as histories

of circulation and exchange".[8] The discussion then moves on to consider gender's distinctive engagements with race in the colonies. Though similarly grounded in notions of biological essentialism, race and gender developed in response to colonialism in particular ways, supporting Mohanty's claim that "capital as it functions now depends on and exacerbates racist, patriarchal and heterosexist relations of rule".[9]

The discussion traces the intersections between certain popular discourses of difference, both reflected and produced in Grimshaw's texts, and the project of establishing a globalised market economy, evident in Britain's so-called civilising mission throughout the Pacific in the early twentieth century. Accordingly, the analysis seeks to restore to race its material correlates, forestalling the powerful propensity of race, both now and in the past, to suggest that physical appearance rather than subject position determined its operations historically.[10] In so doing, it demonstrates the significance of place in articulating the purposes of difference and, therefore, the additional salience of Mohanty's concern about the need to link "everyday life and local gendered contexts and ideologies to the larger, transnational political and economic structures and ideologies of capitalism".[11]

Grimshaw's writings indicate that these founding discourses of difference not only fostered a range of British economic interests far from home. Such representations of the region's indigenous peoples also supported the imperial pretensions of the new Commonwealth of Australia, which cast its own colonising gaze northwards towards the peoples and resources of Papua/New Guinea, as well as inwards towards those it had already dispossessed. At different times and places in the Pacific, the interests of capital sought variously to displace local populations and exploit their resources, and were supported, too, by the brutal regimes of indentured labour recruitment and employment practices, which crisscrossed the region.[12] Accordingly, specifying the correlation between these broad-based economic imperatives and the discursive operations of race and gender in a seemingly localised context provides compelling evidence that the interests of capital have indeed long been global.

Beatrice Grimshaw

Beatrice Grimshaw led an unconventional life as a single woman, challenging the gender norms of late nineteenth-century Britain to work and travel in the Pacific. Born in Northern Ireland in 1870, she took advantage of the opportunities available to the "New Woman" at the end of the century, gaining higher education and asserting her individuality, contrary to stereotypical Victorian notions of femininity. Some scholars claim she had little ideological affinity with feminism,[13] yet her life choices implicitly contested women's role in the patriarchal order. In flouting these personal constraints, Grimshaw's writings and actions nevertheless reinforced and produced powerful notions of European superiority, and the social and economic privilege it endorsed, both at home and abroad.

At the beginning of her career Grimshaw worked as a journalist in Dublin. In 1902, at the age of thirty-two, she moved to London to take up a position in the literary department of the Cunard shipping line. Eventually she spent several years travelling throughout the Pacific, acting as a publicist for government and commercial interests and producing newspaper articles for the *Daily Graphic*, *Sydney Morning Herald*

and *Pearson's Magazine*. In 1907 Grimshaw published her first reflections on these adventures — *In the Strange South Seas* and *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands* — and a novel called *Vaiti of the Islands*. She also visited Australia and travelled throughout Papua, which eventually became her home for the next twenty-seven years. Retiring in 1936, she moved to Bathurst, Australia, where she died in 1953. It was rumoured that she was once engaged, and although speculation also surrounded her relationship with Australia's Lieutenant-Governor in Papua, Hubert Murray, she never married.

Grimshaw's literary output as both a journalist/publicist and a novelist was prodigious and, given its imperialist context, was often explicitly political. According to Susan Gardner, Grimshaw "gave orders to [Australian Prime Minister] Alfred Deakin on how to colonise Papua, run Northern Australia and gain control over the New Hebrides and New Caledonia, as if the Pacific Ocean were a family pond".[14] In 1908, she sought an Australian Government commission to attract investment to the North of Australia, citing *In the Strange South Seas* as proof of her success in such enterprises: "I can certainly get settlers for the North of Australia, the place attracts myself very strongly, which makes it more likely that I shall do my best work in writing about it".[15]

Deakin employed her to write settlement and investment literature for Australia's recently acquired territory of Papua (formerly British New Guinea).[16] Indeed, her influence as a journalist and publicist is reflected in her comment to Deakin that

> I am acting as occasional correspondent (by special arrangement) for The Times and I have active and intelligent agents in London, also in Sydney, who place anything I may send them in the most effective manner. In fact, when I need it, I have a very satisfactory system of disseminating any desired information or impression widely through the press of the world, not necessarily under my own signature ... I will do my best ... for Australian interests.[17]

Her personal relationship with Hubert Murray provides further evidence of her close association with the Australian colonial administration. According to Gardner, contemporary newspaper photographs "show her virtually living in Government House" in Papua.[18] As she was a notable figure in Murray's own correspondence,[19] such claims to influence were perhaps not exaggerated. Certainly her articles were published in newspapers with large circulations, which, as Roger Thompson confirms, served to inform contemporary government policy and public attitudes: "Newspapers were ... virtually the only sources of information about such issues [external affairs, particularly the Pacific Islands] ... editorial cuttings were often filed with Australian government documents dealing with Pacific Islands questions".[20]

Grimshaw's novels were similarly widely read. She is listed as one of the best-known women novelists of her time by the *New South Wales Bookstall*,[21] which published three of the forty books she wrote. Sixteen of her popular novels were set in Papua or New Guinea, nine in the Pacific Islands. Her first Papuan novel, *When the Red Gods Call* (1911) was reissued and translated several times over the next twenty years. The 1928 motion picture *The Adorable Outcast* was based on her 1922 novel *Conn of the Coral Seas*. Many stories were serialised in the *Australian Women's Weekly* while she reached an even wider audience through occasional world tours and radio broadcasts, organised

by her London publishers. Gardner claims Grimshaw exerted "colossal contemporary influence" not just in Australia and Papua but also in Britain and the United States, where, even during the Depression years, she was paid $1,000 for a short story in a magazine.[22]

> It is significant that Grimshaw's work was popular in the metropole as well as in the colonies. According to Henrika Kuklick, novels such as Grimshaw's enabled the non-specialist ethnographers back home "to be entertained as well as to be reassured of the merits of their own way of life".[23] Kuklick argues further that by the first decades of the twentieth century, Europeans were sufficiently numerous in the colonies to become "inward-looking" and were eager to create and consume images of themselves that conformed to metropolitan standards and identities, no matter how these may have conflicted with colonial realities.[24] James Boutilier confirms this more general observation, drawing particular attention to Grimshaw's popularity in the Solomon Islands and the ways in which her novels confirmed and created new identities for the European women who lived there.[25]

The following discussion addresses a selection of three of Beatrice Grimshaw's novels: *When the Red Gods Call* (1911), set in British New Guinea/Australian Papua; *My South Sea Sweetheart* (1921) set in various mid-Pacific Islands of Polynesia; and *Conn of the Coral Seas* (1922), set in the fictitious New Cumberlands, Melanesia.[26] In each of these novels, Grimshaw calls on prevailing notions of racial difference, significantly inflected by place and gender, to portray Europeans as clearly superior to the indigenous population. I hope that the risk of reiterating their offensiveness here is mitigated somewhat by the importance of demonstrating both the explicitness of such integrated discursive frameworks and their correlation with a range of colonial endeavours throughout the Pacific region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Race, Place and Gender

Discourses of difference calling on notions of race, place and gender interrelate throughout the novels, yet each plays a distinctive role in establishing and upholding European pre-eminence in the region. In *My South Sea Sweetheart,* Australian-born Dara, living out her father's Enlightenment ideal on a Pacific island, close to nature and far from the corrupting influences of civilisation, "had to the full the racial pride of the white girl reared among coloured people".[27] When faced by the "murderous Malaita men" she finds comfort in the only thing she had which they had not: "a white man's brain".[28] In *Conn of the Coral Seas*, Deidre Rose, an Irish girl seeking her destiny in the New Cumberlands, experienced the "solidarity of race felt by all Europeans who live among dark people",[29] while in *When the Red Gods Call*, Hugh Lynch, an Irish adventurer in British New Guinea, feels that there was something "immensely flattering in the deference paid to a solitary white in a crowd of dark skins all the world over".[30] Reflecting the colonist's characteristic anxiety about miscegenation, Lynch regards himself as having committed "the unforgivable sin — folly" of marrying a "native woman".[31] Despite caring for his ill and pregnant wife, Lynch felt enormous relief at her miscarriage: "The thought of a little half caste boy or girl — a child with woolly

hair and flat nose, that would nevertheless bear my own likeness — worse, might even look like my dear dead mother, or my father — was almost revolting to me".[32] Grimshaw deplores those who "go over" rather than "maintain their race" and Lynch eventually finds true love in the new Governor's daughter, Stephanie, who represented "the whole world of white women to those few solitary men of Port Moresby; who had all of them wives or sweethearts or sisters with white skins and straight hair somewhere a long way away".[33]

The main characters throughout the novels illustrate Mohanty's contention that "colonisation almost invariably implies … a discursive or political suppression of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question".[34] Grimshaw's largely undifferentiated portrayal of the indigenous peoples of the region accords, too, with Marianna Torgovnik's notion of "primitivist" discourse: "Primitives are like children, the tropes say. Primitives are our untamed selves, our id forces — libidinous, irrational, violent, dangerous. Primitives are mystics, in tune with nature, part of its harmonies. Primitives are free. Primitives exist at 'the lowest cultural levels'; we occupy the highest ..."[35]

Reflecting on her early marriage, Dara is mortified to hear another European woman comment that "Nobody marries at those absurd ages but natives".[36] In *Conn of the Coral Seas,* Deidre, finding herself stumbling through a dancing ground full of "shrined and painted fiends, and the brooding bat-vulture images, with the hideous smell of the braining-stones rising up about her", asks her hero Conn, "Why are all these devils and natives and the bats the same sort of thing, and why are they all like Fursey?"[37] In reply, Conn equates his enemy, the evil white man Fursey, with the "evil principle in nature": "Because … they really are the one thing. The bats and birds and fiends are the natives' embodiment of the evil principle in nature. And they're mostly evil themselves. And Fursey, the swine, is bad — clear through".[38]

In *When the Red Gods Call,* British New Guinea is described as "an unexplored wilderness of cannibal savages, about the last place on the face of God's earth".[39] In choosing a "Mission girl" over a "wild little savage" for his wife, Hugh Lynch reflects on the Mission's influence: "you must fill a native's mind up with something or other, if you want to keep him or her out of mischief: and some of the things they taught her — not to eat dogs or cats or human beings; not to buy charms from sorcerers to kill her enemies; what to do with a piece of soap; how to make bread and sew clothes — were really useful".[40]

The establishment of place is a particularly potent discursive strategy in the novels. Both Britain and Australia are viewed as synonymous with civilisation, while the islands are their polar opposites. Grimshaw draws heavily, too, on the common contemporary assumptions about the so-called "Polynesian/Melanesian" distinction.[41] *When the Red Gods Call* and *Conn of the Coral Seas* are set in Melanesia where "Things, on opposite sides of earth, at opposite ends of history, seemed to meet and mingle".[42] She employs the tropes of blackness, evil and darkness to establish the Melanesians as more uncivilised, more primitive, and potentially more dangerous than the lighter-coloured, "capable of being civilized" Polynesians: "Tahiti is honey. Mead, perhaps — she intoxicates you, too, does Tahiti, gently — sweetly. But the Cumberlands — ah, the Cumberlands! They're like a wicked, beautiful, black and scarlet sunset, the kind that goes before an earthquake or a typhoon … far away at the end of the Pacific, at the end of all things known".[43]

In *My South Sea Sweetheart,* Grimshaw depicts the local women as "handsome creatures, pale brown in colour, with the immense dark eyes of the Polynesian girls, and the long, rich hair that one finds nowhere west of Samoa".[44] On viewing the Malaita men, on the other hand, Dara observes that: "Beside the gentle, soft-eyed Hawongan men and women, they had looked like a pack of devils out on holiday from hell — so dark as to be almost black; broad chested, heavy muscled, their naked bodies flung back from the waist with an inimitable savage swagger, their fierce eyes roving boldly, and meeting the eye of the white man with an angry stare … I had felt as one feels at the sight of dangerous animals led by under control".[45] Deidre, too, finds herself at the "utmost ends of the earth", which actually "smelt of the end of the world": "Black-hands — black hands of this black country — holding her fast, closing round her heart. The voice of this black country, wicked and black, calling her insistently and low".[46]

Hugh Lynch, meanwhile, regards Melanesia as actually constitutive of evil, displacing responsibility for personal actions on to the nature of the region itself:

> Do those who live in the placid countries — in the lands where all things always are the same — realise how much of their own law-abiding nature is made for them by the surroundings of their lives? Do they know how every evil passion of humanity flourishes in these wild countries? How the fierce climate adds its fierceness to jealously and rage; how the violence and the cruelty of the savages among whom one lives, and the small account set on human life by men who are forced in their own person to disregard danger of any kind, envelop one's mind like a poisonous miasma, stifling and even destroying the white man's hard-won heritage of pity.[47]

It is in such places that Grimshaw's heroes and heroines begin to "write" Empire. On finding herself on an apparently deserted island, Dara wonders "whether Columbus ever felt such a sense of proprietorship in his New World as I found, at first, on my deserted island?"[48] In explaining his exploits in the dangerous New Cumberlands, Conn tells Deidre that Europeans like them are "the stones of Empire, little girl, and things are built with us".[49] When eventually appointed Administrator, Conn feels the joy of "[writing] one's name across the map of a new country".[50] Significantly, though, Deidre's delight in their joint "ownership" is tempered somewhat both by her jealousy of Conn's quest and her own fears that "It isn't us — this country. It hates us; it's lying in wait".[51]

By 1922, this ambivalence about the certainty of European presence in the region not only further dramatises the evocation of place in the novels.[52] It also marks Grimshaw's enduring preoccupation with the absence of law and order as a frightening yet potentially liberating environment, particularly for her heroines. In each of the three novels, Grimshaw locates her characters in countries where, she claims, the rule of law has yet to be imposed. Until the arrival of Governor Hammond, for example, "British New Guinea [was] notorious as the most utterly lawless colony in the empire".[53] Such primitive lawlessness offers not simply a justification for domination, but also an illicit fascination for a place where things "unthinkable" in civilised cultures could still be imagined, perhaps even where a person's "real" being could be freed from the constraints of Europe.

Significantly, Grimshaw's male characters often risk their downfall in this environment. Lynch is jailed for murdering his native wife's seducer, while Fursey

completely "loses" his race to become a fallen White man "worse than any cannibal".[54] For Grimshaw's female characters, however, confronting the primitive helps unleash their identity and their sexuality. Stephanie, the delicate, protected and wronged daughter of the Governor, finds her true self only when returning to Melanesia: "I felt as if the Stephanie of London days … never had existed, and as if this new Stephanie who perilled her life so readily — went ashore with a loaded revolver stuck in the belt of her dress and looked without emotion at garlands of human skulls and necklaces of human teeth — was the real woman after all. I knew that, being thus found, it would never be lost again".[55] Grimshaw consistently evokes both the possibilities and the dangers the region holds for women. The chance that European women might actually transgress the very respectability they should uphold always seems imminent within the text. For the first time in her life, Deidre was beyond the "help and the protection of the law"[56] — the New Cumberlands were a place where "things unknown, unnameable, were being done".[57] Dara, too, had "known things unspeakable", recalling a time "when you feared to open your lips lest some wild animal of a secret that you were keeping caged should glimpse the light and suddenly bolt for freedom".[58] She exclaimed that she "hated rule and order, though my life had been ruled and ordered ever since I could remember",[59] while for her Aunt Lorraine, "Duty, restraint, reserve had been the watchwords of her youth … industry … was her eleventh commandment … She never showed her feelings if she could help it. She never sat unemployed".[60]

Despite the allusions to breaking free of such constraints, the complexity of Grimshaw's own subjectivity is reflected in the way that the text both asserts and contests such patriarchal concerns. Grimshaw's heroines are clearly placed as conventional moral guardians, whose primary tasks, as Ann Stoler argues, are to reinforce imperial control by defining and maintaining distinctions between coloniser and colonised, and to redeem European men in danger of "going over".[61] Marriage therefore remains an important trope for civilisation, order and legality.

However, in each of the three novels, the "slip-knotted noose that is marriage" also enables Grimshaw to examine questions of female freedom, identity and sexuality. Literary critics Janice Radway[62] and Rachel Du Plessis[63] explain how such ambivalence is characteristic of a particular genre of romantic fiction wherein female characters consistently challenge social bonds yet typically only achieve fulfilment by repressing their individual aspirations and conforming to expectations. Even though Grimshaw clearly adopts a "critical approach to the production and maintenance of gender categories",[64] at least for European women, in resolving her heroines' conflicts in conventional ways Grimshaw is ultimately complicit with patriarchy. Although her [European] female characters might demonstrate "mastery, self-realisation and even personal independence", in the end her plots consistently rest on a heroine "whose importance in the society of the book lies in her status as an object of choice and as an educative influence".[65]

Accordingly, Grimshaw asks us to sympathise with the child bride Dara, who scorns her father's notion of ideal womanhood, bitterly resenting the different educations she and her chosen husband Luke receive — the books she is not allowed to read, the secrets she is not told, the schooling she is not allowed to have, and the social and intellectual

freedom denied her. Indeed, Dara comes to regard marriage as requiring total submission to "the proprietor". Yet while Dara eventually rejects Luke and his domineering ways, she does so in order to commit to the wicked Harry England. England's sexuality, lawlessness and "unspeakableness" certainly attract her but they serve simply to change, rather than remove, the constraints upon her. England would be not just her partner, but also "her king".[66] In response to his decree that "I'd give my life to make you happy, but I shan't. You had best know it, girl", Dara confesses, "I don't want to be happy. I want you".[67]

In so doing, however, Dara also discovers her repressed sexuality. In Grimshaw's texts, such sexual undercurrents are often evoked by the metaphor of the sea — wild, uncontrollable and unrestrained. Along with cannibalism as an "unspeakable" marker of lawlessness and loss of civilisation, sexuality is imagined as a consuming passion. Repeated references to darkness, secretiveness, and womb-like caves, alert the reader, and women in particular, to "things unknown, unnameable".[68] Heroines often find themselves alone with "natives", in boats on "the untamed sea" or the "wild jungle" or indeed, alone with any man, outside the legality of marriage — "To be abandoned in the middle of the night in the dark, on an unknown island, is not a fate that most women would accept without protest".[69] The prospect of such illicit sexuality, the dangerous possibility of bigamy and the "horror" of miscegenation all function within the text to challenge patriarchy's constraints, which clearly seem so much less certain in the colonies.

Dara's repressed sexuality is explored both in her rejection of a pure but loveless marriage in favour of a dangerous worldly lover and in her recounting of her experiences alone on a deserted island. Watching the lace "rising and falling on the breast of (her) sea-blue gown", Dara hears the reef "calling-calling! The call of the sea! The call of the wild sea-life and of the wild souls who lived it".[70] She dreams "as one dreams impossible things", of travelling "in the wonderful, wicked ship".[71] The ebb and flow of the tide are her "pulse of life": "The tide was coming in … I heard it and I knew, as clearly as if the free, triumphant waves had spoken in words, what they were bringing to me".[72]

Sea and land become tropes for wildness and civilisation, freedom and control, sexuality and respectability. Despite Dara's ultimate surrender to Harry England's control, she has nevertheless tasted the pleasures of personal fulfilment without a man. She directly addresses the reader thus: "I don't know what there is in a girl that so loves the empty woods, the lonely sea, without thought of anything or anyone beyond. But I know that, whatever it is, it exists. That morning I tasted strange pleasures, delights without name; I fed on honey-dews and magic fruits … What is the use of trying to tell the untellable? You must go to a desert island to find it out; and that you will not do".[73] Grimshaw's interrogation of European women's entrapment is consistently articulated in each of the novels. Deidre looks out "towards the sea that glimmers"[74] and seeks her "fate" as a woman who refuses to be like other women, a woman who wants "to see the world".[75] An arranged marriage, intended to free her from moral constraints and enable her to travel as an apparently "widowed" woman, becomes instead a "cruel coil about her neck".[76] She knows that "One always walked, bumping against the crowd, if one stepped off the customary side of the road".[77] She, too, however, though so desperate to escape the traditional confines of a woman's life in Ireland, ultimately surrenders to love and marriage — "Her independence, the spirit that had carried her, alone and brave, through all the

world, seemed to be failing her; and strangely, she was almost glad it did".[78] In *When the Red Gods Call*, Stephanie, too, chooses marriage but asserts nevertheless that, "a woman is — a woman; her heart, sometimes, will turn to what is nearest, while her soul, the best and truest part of her, still points like the magnetic needle steadily to its own pole".[79]

Perhaps it is significant, then, that Grimshaw's heroines find fulfilment with men who, despite their ultimately patriarchal affinities, have themselves rejected certain notions of respectability, and in a region at the other end of the civilised world, "where life is real, naked even, and the elemental powers of nature press close around the little strongholds of civilization … I was afraid of it but I loved it, just as in days gone by I had both feared and loved the man who was so completely one with the wild places of the earth".[80]

Race, Place, Gender and Imperialism

If Grimshaw's critique of patriarchy is limited by the ultimate conformity of her heroines to broader social expectations, there is no such ambivalence about her portrayal of indigenous women. Far from seeking common ground on the basis of gender oppression, Grimshaw's overwhelming imperialist concerns valorise European women over those whom she regards as duplicitous, licentious, degraded or child-like. She often represents indigenous women as undifferentiated "natives", and calls upon the contemporary presumption that the status of women is secondary to that of men in every society, so that the low status of women in any one society reflects the low status of the society in general.[81] When Deidre travels to the fictional New Cumberlands, for example, she hears of "black women who crawled on hands and knees past any man; towns where a woman who walked on one of the men's special roads was instantly clubbed and hurried to the cooking pot".[82]

Within the novels' sensational contexts of cannibalism, spiritualism and general lawlessness, Grimshaw's depiction of indigenous women as degraded victims of cruel and tyrannical men places them in direct contrast to the behaviour, aspirations and beliefs of their European counterparts. On the rare occasions when women are individualised, it is for clearly defined purposes. Only the Polynesian women, Lalua and Maiera, assume a role central to the plot. Representing the "elite" of the indigenous social order, Lalua asserts a "shrewd" wisdom and has "power … not even the British Empire had availed to dethrone".[83] Together with Maiera, her silent, beautiful and watchful maid-of-honour, Lalua becomes a figure of mystery, engaging in strange and secret magical practices, which almost succeed in seducing Dara to "going over". Finally, however, their scheming betrayal is revealed once they "forged, poisoned and carried through their designs at a cost that angered [Harry] England deeply".[84]

When Melanesian women are named, on the other hand, they are generally accorded more passive roles. Kari, the simple "woolly headed child of nature", deceives Hugh Lynch, first precipitating his fall from grace and race by becoming his wife, and then by her "licentiousness", which causes him to murder her white lover, the evil Australian Bert Sanderson. Before meeting Stephanie in all her beautiful whiteness, a "native wife" had been "good enough" for Lynch, who had thought of himself as a "ne'er-do-well".[85] Lynch came to regret the "Papuan savagery latent in my gentle little wife",[86] thinking of Kari as he had known her before her deception: "a gentle, frightened child following me … almost worshipping me as her rescuer and protector … loving me after the capricious

fashion of a native, yet somehow making warm my heart for her. The other Kari, the wild Papuan savage, with all the evil nature of her cannibal ancestors suddenly awakened and brought to daylight by the black influence of the blackest-hearted of men [the evil Australian, Sanderson] — that Kari I would forget".[87]

In the end, it is Stephanie who assumes the ultimate role of defining and representing indigenous women by being so clearly their opposite. Grimshaw takes four pages to describe the beauty of the newly arrived Governor's daughter, "fair-complexioned" and "blue eyed", with "slight, well bred hands and feet … charmingly gloved and shod". She made Hugh think of "Christmas annuals and coloured pictures — of primroses coming out in green lanes under a soft, cool, milky sun … and the even, pleasant murmur of the talk of well-bred people about a civilised dinner table — of many things that were no longer in my life …"[88] Stephanie was so clearly "a white lady, dainty and delicate": "No tropical hibiscus or flame-flower this, but a snowdrop, a spring anemone ... How white she was! … And the curls, well, the probability that she had put them up in paper at night made them all the more admirable to us, who had seen nothing but frizzled wool for so long".[89]

Grimshaw's commitment to the role of the coloniser is never in doubt in the novels, but her identification with its British exemplar is less stable. Although Britain might still have claimed Australia as colonial, Grimshaw firmly places Australia within the ideological camp of the Europeans, and as a country that has its own imperial ambitions. Australia is constructed as the civilised intellectual centre amidst its primitive island margins. In *My South Sea Sweetheart*, Luke is sent to Australia to acquire status, knowledge and manhood. Dara retreats there, too, to recover in "the gentle autumn" and "the tempered light of noon" following her traumatic encounters in tropical Polynesia: the capital city of Sydney "healed my sorrows, and restored my youth, as nothing else would have done".[90] When Stephanie leaves Australia to return to Papua, she also draws "nearer and nearer to the wild, uncivilised lands that are so mysterious and so cruel, yet so compelling".[91]

Yet despite asserting its undeniable Europeanness, Grimshaw is determined to establish Australia as part of the New World, and carefully outlines its capacity to surpass the limitations of the Old. Luke regards himself as "Australian enough to guard myself this good while, though I daresay I'd still be sucking toffee and writing impositions at school if I were an Englishman".[92] He likes, too, the colour his skin has acquired as an outdoor student in Australia — "It seems like the colour a man ought to be ... I hate pinky fellows".[93] The Australian Bert Sanderson, meanwhile, has little regard for the new Governor's daughter — "I hear she's full of airs and graces. If there's anything on earth I can't stand, it's those — conceited people out from 'Home', thinking they can teach us everything".[94] Moreover, in praising the fortitude of Australian women, Hugh Lynch exclaims: "They came out from home with their men, and stuck to them through thick or thin — and I'd stake my life on it that if you could round up all that's left of that crowd, and all that's left of their sisters who stayed at home, and kept their complexions and their place in society … you'd find the Australian lot thought they'd made the best use of their lives".[95] At the same time that Grimshaw creates a distinctively Australian identity, however, she also signals the dangers the nation faces through inheriting an empire located in Melanesia, a region that is simply "lying in wait" for those who seek to exploit it.[96] Grimshaw's careful evocation

of place reveals Australia's fledgling "empire" to be an empire of islands, a colony's colony where the margins between sea and land, wildness and civilisation are always and inevitably under threat, with few settlements and no established enclave.

CONCLUSION

The fact that Australia exercised its external imperial control within the "dark" region of Melanesia further illuminates the powerful discourses of White masculinity that helped frame Australian identity at this time.[97] The popularity of Grimshaw's novels indicates the extent to which prevailing constructions of the absolute primitiveness of the region's inhabitants, which included the indigenous peoples whose dispossession upheld Australian sovereignty, served both British and Australian economic interests. It is clear, too, that similarly explicit notions of race, place and gender were deployed domestically in Australia to rationalise not only the original expropriation of land but also to continue to justify the comprehensive regimes of management and control to which indigenous peoples were subjected as the century unfolded.[98]

> In examining the complex "hierarchies of colonization"[99] that characterised globalised economic development in its earlier mode, this regionalised study of Grimshaw's novels has sought to indicate just how profoundly regimes of difference were called upon to underwrite structural inequality in the Pacific. Accordingly, as Mohanty and Ahmed have outlined, the challenge for feminists interested in redressing widespread economic inequalities is not to elide difference in theorising the universal. Rather, as the interests of capital extend the scope of their global operations, it is necessary to recognise the deep historical resonances of their continuing dependence on maintaining distinctions of race, place and gender.

NOTES

1 See for example, M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (New York: Routledge, 1997); C. T. Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Sara Ahmed, "Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-performativity of Anti-racism" in *borderlands e-journal*, 3, no. 2 (2004). For related scholarship, see also M. Fine, L. C. Powell, L. Weis and L. Mun Wong, eds, *Off-White: Readings in Race, Power and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Z. Leonardo, "The Souls of White Folk: Critical Pedagogy, Whiteness Studies, and Globalization Discourse", *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 5, no. 1 (March 2002): 29-50 and R. Frankenberg, ed., *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

2 Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, chapter 9: ""Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity Through Anticapitalist Struggles". The original version was published as "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" in *Feminist Review* 30 (Autumn 1988): 61-88.

3 Ibid., 226.

4 Ibid., 230.

5 Ahmed, "Declarations of Whiteness". For critical engagement with certain assumptions informing whiteness studies, see the special issue of *borderlands e-journal*, "Why Whiteness Studies", ed. D. W. Riggs, 3, no. 2 (2004), especially Jane Haggis, "Beyond Race and Whiteness? Reflections on the New Abolitionists and an Australian Critical Whiteness Studies".

6 Ahmed, "Declarations of Whiteness", paras 48-55.

7 See, among others, P. Grimshaw. M. Lake, A. McGrath and M. Aveling, *Creating a Nation* (Melbourne: McPhee Gribble, 1994); L. Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); C. Midgley, ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); C. Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Oxford: Polity, 2002);

8 As Ahmed puts it more fully, "Racism works to produce race as if it was a property of bodies (biological essentialism) or cultures (cultural essentialism). Race exists as an effect of histories of racism as histories of the present. Categories such as black, white, Asian, mixed-race, and so on have lives, but they do not have lives "on their own", as it were. They become fetish objects (black *is*, white *is*) only by being cut off from histories of labour, as well as histories of circulation and exchange": "Declarations of Whiteness", para 48.

9 Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 231.

10 I discuss this more fully in J. Evans, *Edward Eyre, Race and Colonial Governance* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2005).

11 Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 225. Mohanty acknowledges the influence of Maria Mees on this point.

12 See O. W. Parnaby, *Britain and the Labour Trade in the Southwest Pacific* (London: Duke University Press, 1964) and T. Banivanua Mar, "Stabilising Violence in Colonial Rule: Settlement and the Indentured Labour Trade in Queensland in the 1870s" in *Writing Colonial Histories: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. T. Banivanua Mar and J. Evans (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2002), 145-64.

13 Susan Gardner, "A 'vert to Australianism; Beatrice Grimshaw and the Bicentenary", *Hecate* 13 no. 2 (1987–1988): 34 and H. Laracy and E. Laracy, "Beatrice Grimshaw — Pride and Prejudice in Papua", *Journal of Pacific History* 12 (1977): 157.

14 Gardner, "A 'vert to Australianism", 34.

15 Cited in Ibid., 47.

16 In 1884 what is now called Papua New Guinea was divided between Germany and Britain. British New Guinea was formally annexed as a colony in 1888. By 1906 Australia had become legally responsible for the territory to be known as Papua. Hubert Murray was appointed acting Administrator in 1907 and went on to become Lieutenant-Governor between 1908 and 1940.

17 Cited Gardner, "A 'vert to Australianism", 48.

18 Ibid., 34.

19 F. West, ed., *Selected Letters of Hubert Murray* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970).

20 R. Thompson, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1980), 4-5.
21 C. Mills, *The New South Wales Bookstall as a Publisher* (Canberra: Mulini Press, 1991), 23.
22 Gardner, "A 'vert to Australianism", 56.
23 Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 13.
24 Ibid., 284-85.
25 J. Boutilier, "European Women in the Solomon Islands, 1900–1942: Accommodation and Change on the Pacific Frontier" in *Rethinking Women's Roles: Perspectives from the Pacific*, ed. D. O'Brien and S. E. Tiffany (University of California Press: California, 1983), 191.
26 Beatrice Grimshaw, *When the Red Gods Call* (London: Mills & Boon, 1911); *My South Sea Sweetheart* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1921) and *Conn of the Coral Seas* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1922)
27 *My South Sea Sweetheart*, 115.
28 Ibid., 262.
29 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 112.
30 *When the Red Gods Call*, 32.
31 Ibid., 24.
32 Ibid., 50-51.
33 Ibid., 138.
34 Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 61.
35 Marianna Torgovnik, *Gone Primitive: Modern Lives, Savage Intellects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8.
36 *My South Sea Sweetheart*, 115.
37 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 130.
38 Ibid., 131.
39 *When the Red Gods Call*, 2.
40 Ibid., 16-17.
41 For a more complete discussion of the significance of this distinction, see Margaret Jolly, "Illnatured Comparisons: Racism and Relativism in European Representations of Ni-Vanuatu from Cook's Second Voyage", *History and Anthropology* 5 (1992): 331-64.
42 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 130.
43 Ibid., 44.
44 *My South Sea Sweetheart*, 107.
45 Ibid., 267.
46 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 50.
47 *When the Red Gods Call*, 84.
48 *My South Sea Sweetheart*, 253.
49 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 138.
50 Ibid., 283.
51 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 188.

52 Grimshaw's recognition of an element of "threat" to European presence in her 1922 novel, *Conn of the Coral Seas*, is also evident in her short story "The People of Nobody's Town", written in 1931. N. Krauth, ed., *New Guinea Images in Australian Literature* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), 121-42.
53 *When the Red Gods Call*, 82.
54 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 275.
55 *When the Red Gods Call*, 350.
56 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 57.
57 Ibid., 264.
58 *My South Sea Sweetheart*, 132, 136.
59 Ibid., 162.
60 Ibid., 181.
61 Ann L. Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race and Morality in Colonial Asia" in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, ed. M. di Leonardo (University of Berkeley: California Press, 1991), 51-101.
62 Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984).
63 Rachel Du Plessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
64 Ibid., x.
65 Ibid., 11.
66 *My South Sea Sweetheart*, 124.
67 Ibid., 214.
68 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 264.
69 Ibid., 225.
70 *My South Sea Sweetheart*, 131.
71 Ibid., 104.
72 Ibid., 188.
73 Ibid., 253.
74 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 21.
75 Ibid., 24.
76 Ibid., 138.
77 Ibid., 181.
78 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 189.
79 *When the Red Gods Call*, 306.
80 Ibid., 312.
81 See for example, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Position of Women in Primitive Society and Other Essays in Social Anthropology* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965), 37-58.
82 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 47.
83 *My South Sea Sweetheart*, 154.
84 Ibid., 287.
85 *When the Red Gods Call*, 11, 24.
86 Ibid., 102.

87 Ibid., 107-08.
88 Ibid., 64.
89 Ibid., 64-65.
90 *My South Sea Sweetheart,* 286-87.
91 *When the Red Gods Call,* 312.
92 *My South Sea Sweetheart,* 133.
93 Ibid.
94 *When the Red Gods Call*, 45.
95 Ibid., 185.
96 *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 188.
97 See, for example, M. Lake, "Mission Impossible: How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation — Nationalism, Gender and Other Seminal Acts", *Gender and History* 4, no. 3 (Autumn, 1992): 305-22.
98 See, among others, C. D. Rowley, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1972); H. Goodall, *Invasion to Embassy: Land in Aboriginal Politics in New South Wales, 1770–1972* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996); A. Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families, 1800–2000;* P. Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999) and Evans, *Edward Eyre, Race and Colonial Governance* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2005).
99 M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Introduction: Genealogies, Legacies, Movements" in *Feminist Genealogies*, xxviii.