

Bodies of De/Composition: Leprosy and Tattooing In Beatrice Grimshaw's Fiction and Travel Writing

Footprints runnin' cross the silver sand
Steps goin' down into tattoo land
I met the sons of darkness and the sons of light
In the bordertowns of despair

Bob Dylan (Dignity)¹

Introduction

When Irish travel writer and novelist Beatrice Grimshaw (1870–1953)² leaves Suva in 1905 to travel through the Fijian hinterland in a month when 'the power of the sun is almost alarming'³ she is wearing a Holland coat. Without this garment Grimshaw states that the 'flesh of one's neck, arms and shoulders would soon begin to crackle and cook' (35). But even with this cumbersome protection a certain amount of epidermal damage is unavoidable:

[T]hose blinding rays that strike down through the slender bush foliage as through glass, and bleach the very colour out of the shadeless, quivering sky — these things, to the traveller from the dim grey North, are worth all the heat and glare, destruction of hands and skin, that must be encountered. (*From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 35)

Capable of leaving ephemeral/indelible, visible/invisible, solicited/unsolicited marks, travel impacts on the body.

This paper is an exploration of the body in motion in Beatrice Grimshaw's fiction and travel writing. In what follows, I compare Grimshaw's representations of the white European body with that of the indigenous Other⁴ in her work. Grimshaw displays a tendency to depict the body of the Other as a penetrable site, a space of decomposition and collapse. I draw upon Daniel Pick's account of nineteenth-century discourses of bodily degeneration in order to examine Grimshaw's portrayal of indigenous flesh in relation to the colonial project in the Pacific. She constructs the Other as a locus of social, environmental and moral atrophy in order to help justify European imperialism in Oceania. However, while this is an important aspect of Grimshaw's representation of the indigenous body, there is another, more fundamental, motivation underpinning this construction, one which is the primary focus of this paper. I argue that Grimshaw constructs the body of the indigenous Other as a site of dermal dereliction in order to confirm the integrity of her own surface. Projecting anxieties about body boundaries onto the Other, Grimshaw shores up a conception of self as a physically bounded, integrated and functioning whole. I have argued at length

elsewhere⁵ that throughout Grimshaw's oeuvre there is evidence of body image tendencies characterised by feelings of penetrability; a conception of self which body image psychologists Seymour Fisher and Sidney E. Cleveland associate with individuals who view their body boundaries as weak and lacking in substance.⁶ According to Fisher and Cleveland, individuals with this less than positive body image tend to conceptualise their skin as a cover that is incapable of holding and retaining its contents.⁷ In the following analysis of Grimshaw's travel writing and fiction, possible reasons for these feelings of penetrability and fragmentation are explored. Areas considered include: colonial fear of the unknown, fear of contagion, and the strangeness of the journey — travel as a liminal experience, a spatio-temporal upheaval that influences subjectivity. And of course, concerns about body boundaries indicate the sexual, a desire for and also fear of the Other. Focussing on such topics as miscegenation, cannibalism, homosexuality and the purchase of body parts as souvenirs, I have examined in detail elsewhere Grimshaw's desire to consume and to be consumed, to penetrate and to be penetrated, her longing for and aversion to the Other.⁸ In this paper Grimshaw's body image will also be discussed chiefly in relation to that which the journey necessitates: a loss, either temporary or permanent, of the social matrix called home. Grimshaw lost her first home, first post-partum carapace, at an early age. This is something that will be considered later; it is sufficient to say at this point that the loss of Cloona House, the family home at Dunmurry on the outskirts of Belfast, was the beginning of a peripatetic lifestyle that would continue periodically until her death in Bathurst, New South Wales in 1953. Grimshaw's body was frequently in motion; it was a travelling body, one contrasted with the body of the stationary, indigenous Other in many of her works.

Bodies of Decomposition

The body of the Other in Grimshaw's oeuvre tends to be highly penetrable: 'Three ribs were splintered, and two of them driven into the lung, wounding it seriously. The liver had been ruptured by the shock of the bullet, and protruded through the opening, a ghastly, gangrenous mass' (*From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 219). In this account of inter-ethnic group fighting we are also told of a 'woman up in the hills, who had died not long before, after living more than a week with all her face shot away' (219); moreover, of 'the many men going about with crippled and shattered limbs; of the twenty corpses, some buried, some eaten, that had been living human creatures only a few weeks before' (219). These people are from the island of Tanna in Vanuatu. Their bodies are in pieces as a result of gunshot wounds. While there are exceptions, broken bodies in Grimshaw's writing are,

primarily, those of indigenous people, people who have been the victims of shark attacks, firearm injuries, decapitation, flaying, cannibalism, and skin disease:

Primitive man grows up at fourteen, is middle-aged at twenty-eight, and usually dies before fifty. He takes everything that is going in way of disease, and takes it very badly. In spite of the fact that he lives without clothes, he is liable to bad colds. He suffers from some skin disease, usually repulsive, in three or four cases out of ten; he gets tumours and cancers and dies of them, just as if he were a City grocer, and he can even show you some pretty cases of hypochondria and hysteria if you like to look for them. (*The New New Guinea*, 1910, 118)⁹

Seemingly inviting disease, this body appears to be susceptible to every known illness, illnesses which would have been familiar to Western readers, illnesses which lack exotic appeal. And Grimshaw, keen to emphasise the benefits of colonial organization and plantation labour for Papuans, posits environmental and social degeneration as the cause:

His medicine is sorcery pure and simple. He shuts out every breath of air from his hut if he can manage to do so, and washes only when he is caught in the rain. He eats roots out of his garden when he cannot get meat, and meat when he cannot get superfluous aunt or undesirable neighbour [. . .] His life is a tissue of murder, fraud and oppression, and his pleasing wife (one of a large number, regular and irregular) never enjoys a moment's pleasure, amusement, or peace during the whole of her miserable life if he can help it. (118)

In *The New New Guinea* this delineation of social degeneration is immediately followed by the description of the 'health of primitive man' (118) quoted above; morality is being inscribed on the flesh, crimes are being made manifest at the site of the body. A pervasive discourse, indeed a 'key word' in England at the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of degeneration (*dégénérescence*), owes much to the work of French psychiatrist Bénédict Augustin Morel. Attempting to offer a definition of Morel's use of the term, Daniel Pick states:

Whilst seen to stem from acquired diseases (drawn from poverty, immoral habits, unhealthy work and so on), *dégénérescence* tended to imply an inherent physical process, an immanent narrative within the body and across bodies, beyond social determination, or even the possibility of normal perception.¹⁰

Culturally nuanced, 'degeneration' was a notoriously difficult term to pin down. While Morel's conception of it involved hidden processes, in England Charles Kingsley was focusing heavily on the visible:

Kingsley's concern here was with the body, as though the whole social process could be grasped and analysed in its degradation and degeneration. The 'condition of England question' was now centrally concerned with the condition of the English body.¹¹

Described, as we have seen, as 'repulsive', it is probably fair to say that the physical condition most frequently associated with degeneration at this time was skin disease. This is due to the fact that dermal eruptions readily facilitated a visualisation¹² of what was believed to be happening within:

We came in at dusk, and were surrounded at once by the usual crowd; but it was not a pleasant crowd on this occasion. Nearly half of them seemed to be suffering from unpleasant skin diseases. One or two were scaly like fish; several were marked with the horrible Fijian "Thoko" — a disease that shows itself in flat, button-eruptions, turning by and by to formidable sores — some had open ulcers, all black with flies, on arms and legs; and not a few were generally sick and decrepit-looking. Their clothes — only a loin-cloth apiece — were unspeakably dirty, and every unoccupied moment seemed to be spent in hunting through each other's huge frizzled heads for certain small game, which, when found was immediately eaten by the finder. (*From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 92)

This village is in the Ndreketi district of Vanua Levu, a place Grimshaw describes as 'truly the "back of beyond"' (108). Here there are no references to 'murder, fraud and oppression', no suggestion of an atavistic return, just a soft, slow dropping down, a quiet inertia that lets flies rest in ulcers and clothes remain unwashed. This indigenous body is, according to Grimshaw, degenerate. Engendering much public debate in Britain throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century¹³ the following is one of many reports focussing on degeneration published in *The Lancet* at this time:

[Degeneration] . . . is undoubtedly at work among town-bred populations as the consequences of unwholesome occupations, improper [diet], and juvenile vice . . . while the optimistic view has most to urge in its favour, it would be wrong to ignore the existence of widespread evils and serious dangers to the public health. Amongst these evils and dangers are enumerated sexual indulgence in early life, premature marriages, over-pressure in education, improper food, increased tension . . . and the abuse of alcohol and tobacco.¹⁴

Similar to widespread colonial views on the Pacific, the urban crowd was believed to be in the grip of environmental, biological, and moral degeneration. Attempting to 'confirm the periodisation' of the term, Daniel Pick states that medical definitions of degeneration were introduced into the language in the 1850s, and according to the

Oxford English Dictionary they suggested '[a] morbid change in the structure of parts consisting in disintegration of tissue or in a substitution of a lower for a higher form of structure.'¹⁵ In 1880 Edwin Ray Lankester posited degeneration as 'a gradual change of the structure in which the organism becomes adapted to less varied and less complex conditions of life.'¹⁶ If the organism continues unabated in a steady downward flow toward increasingly simple 'conditions of life', the only outcome is death.

And this, according to Grimshaw, is what the population of Fiji have to look forward to: 'The decline of the native population is a matter that has occupied the attention of many governors, but so far it continues unchecked' (*From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 20). Grimshaw states that no one 'knows why almost every Pacific race dies out by degrees through contact with the white, and certainly no one knows how to stop the decline' (20). White imperialists may not be able to stop this perceived deterioration, but that does not mean that they cannot benefit from it: 'In any case, Fiji is not among the lucky nations, and so far has the population declined even since the cannibal days, that large tracts of fertile land are lying waste and uninhabited in many parts of the group' (20). After stating that 'every colonial and traveller would deeply regret' (21) the collapse of the Fijian race, Grimshaw adds: 'The Fijians themselves are, unfortunately, quite indifferent about the matter' (21). It is possible that this European preoccupation with the imminent disappearance of Pacific peoples is simply the manifestation of a colonial fantasy: the myth of unpopulated, empty lands, lands that are there for the taking. Suffused with a sense of elegiac inevitability, these discourses of depopulation, or what Grimshaw calls 'the decay' (21), may also be indicative of colonial guilt, and the need for rationalisation: people are dying *en masse* due to contact with whites, but there is no point in their leaving as the process is unstoppable.¹⁷ Alternatively, during a period of rampant urbanisation and industrialisation, such narratives of decline and decay could reflect concerns pertaining to the metropolitan centre which have been projected onto a Pacific setting. In contrast to this view Daniel Pick argues that while:

sectors of the population of the imperial metropolis were eventually bracketed off with the races of the empire [. . .] the real 'hegemonic task' lay in the ideological construction of 'inferiority', 'savagery', 'atavism', 'moral pathology', in the far-flung countries which came increasingly under Western political control.¹⁸

Pick suggests that the 'notion[s] of physical, mental and technological backwardness was used to justify the formidable use of military force in the suppression of rebellions just as elsewhere it was used to condone the philanthropic paternalism of the missionary.'¹⁹ In the

Pacific the disease that colonial tourists and writers most frequently associated with physical, mental and indeed moral backwardness was leprosy.

Consider Grimshaw's description of the aforementioned Fijian village in the Ndreketi region:

The house seemed to be clean, but I did not like it. It smelt close and heavy — a faint yet curiously revolting odour seemed to cling about everything in the place. I could not make out the cause, nor could I call up any recollection of a similar smell, even from the varied experiences of the last few months. I wondered greatly; but my wonderings soon came to an end, for the Turanga ni Koro appeared in a few minutes, and limped across the floor to welcome me, leaning on a stick. His foot, half hidden by a rough scrap of bandage, was almost dropping off; the bone was visible, and the odour. . . (*From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 93).

The skin diseases which Grimshaw observes among the inhabitants of this village reach their apogee in the chief's leprosy. What this colonial encounter decisively illustrates is the cultural specificity of reactions to the disease. While Grimshaw, engulfed in a clinging miasma, is horrified at the prospect of being in close proximity to someone with leprosy, Gideon remains 'lying on the floor, chewing sugar-cane' (93). Irritated by his lack of concern, Grimshaw states: 'That anyone could object to a leper as a host and entertainer did not, however, enter into his view of life. The Fijians are absolutely reckless about such matters, and cannot understand the meaning of infection' (93). She does not consider that the Fijians may fully understand the nature of contagion; that, resisting colonial attempts to police illness, they may have made an informed decision not to isolate their friends and family. As stated, attitudes to leprosy are historically and culturally determined.²⁰ In the West responses to the condition have been all but inextricable from biblical notions of corruption and decay, with the sufferers frequently being perceived as the unclean, and the morally suspect. Within the Pacific approaches to the disease varied greatly. Discussing attitudes to the condition on Palmerston Island, Grimshaw comments 'These people are very much alarmed at the appearance of leprosy, and have segregated the lepers on an island in the lagoon. They are anxious to have them removed to the Molokai at Penrhyn' (*In the Strange South Seas*, 241).²¹ She goes on to say:

In Rakahanga, the lepers are not quarantined in any way, but wander among the people. There are only a few cases as yet; but the number will certainly increase. This may also be said of Manahiki, for although very serious cases are isolated there, the lepers are allowed, in the earlier stages, to mix freely with

everyone else, and even to prepare the food of a whole family.
(241)

Grimshaw states: 'The New Zealand Government, it is believed, will shortly pass a law compelling the removal of all these cases to the Molokai at Penrhyn' (241). How the indigenous people reacted to the news that a colonial power was going to police their sick Grimshaw does not say. However, when discussing an old man on Manahiki who has leprosy and still resides with his family, she claims: 'That is the way of the islands, and no white rule can altogether put a stop to it' (253). Grimshaw then tells how the Manahikians refused to comply with government attempts to quarantine a man in 'a lonely part of the bush' (253). The man was removed to the isolated spot by government agents, but, once there, he found that he had a lot of spare time on his hands. No longer having to worry about gainful employment, he whiled away the hours training his pet rooster to dance. News of the bird's talent spread all over the island, 'as far away as Rakahanga, so that the natives made continual parties to see the creature perform, and the quarantine became a dead letter' (253). The man's bird was a tourist attraction for other islanders. When Grimshaw visits the 'Molokai' at Penrhyn Island it is the body of the individual with leprosy that is the tourist site/sight.

Introducing Penrhyn Island to the reader Grimshaw says: 'Its pearl-shell and pearls, its strange, wild, semi-amphibious natives, and its melancholy leper station, make it a marked spot on the Pacific map' (132). Positioned amidst pearls and shells, the body of the Other is a tourist space. Grimshaw visits the 'Molokai', an islet off the Penrhyn coast, in order to look and, as always, in order to be looked at (as we shall see later in this paper, Grimshaw enjoyed the attention that she received in the Pacific). She does not approach any of the residents, preferring instead to shout at them from a distance. Nevertheless, she is close enough to see that, having put on their best clothes, they have made a great effort for the visitors. After describing this tragic and poignant scene, Grimshaw immediately offers a description of herself, and the joy which she believes her visit has engendered on the little island:

Every face was lit up with delight at the sight of the strangers from the schooner; above all at the marvellous view of the wonderful "*wahiné papa*" [white woman]. Why even the men who lived free and happy on Penrhyn mainland did not get the chance of seeing such a show once in a life time! There she was, with two arms, and two legs, and a head, and a funny gown fastened in about the middle, and the most remarkable yellow shoes, and a ring, and a watch, which showed her to be extraordinarily wealthy, and a smooth pale face that was not at

all like a man's, and hair that was brown not black — how odd!
(239)

This description is followed by one of the islanders:

Bright as all the faces of the lepers were at that exciting moment, one could not mistake the traces left by a more habitual expression of heavy sadness. The terrible disease, too, had set its well-known marks upon every countenance. None of those who came out to see us had lost any feature; but all the faces had the gross, thickened, unhuman look that leprosy stamps upon its victims. (239)

Contemplating these people, whose body boundaries are in imminent danger of collapse, Grimshaw confirms the integrity of her own surface. She depicts herself as being surrounded by a barrier that is intact. Unlike the people she is viewing, she has a 'smooth pale face' (239), a face that has not even been touched by the Pacific sun, never mind disease. Her body is enclosed; it has definite boundaries: a healthy skin, a gown, shoes, jewellery. The residents of the 'Molokai' are helping Grimshaw to shore up a positive conception of self, one which connotes definite boundaries.

An implied sympathy fails to prevent Grimshaw from putting the islanders on the tourist itinerary, from producing their bodies as spectacle. It does not stop her from suggesting that their terrible illness may have been caused by degenerate lifestyles: 'That their lives are immoral in the last degree, their religion, in spite of early teaching, almost a dead letter, is only to be expected. Penrhyn is not alone in this terrible scourge' (241). Why it should be expected that the lives of these people are immoral to the last degree, Grimshaw does not say. Despite the fact that she has not seen any indication of immorality Grimshaw presents the leprous body as sexualised, a desiring body that could reproduce even as its surface is seemingly decomposing. Discussing the representation of the disease in European writings on the Pacific, Rod Edmond states: 'The sexualization of leprosy was a projection of deep anxieties, and the figure of the leper became a social text on which the history of contact was inscribed.'²² He goes on to add:

It was feared that the world-wide movement of trade and labour of the late nineteenth century would create a 'free trade' in disease, and that leprosy would find its way home to Europe to avenge the colonized in a kind of bacteriological writing-back.²³

Describing leprosy as a 'terrible scourge' (241) Grimshaw evokes notions of a biblical curse, a just punishment. When Vaiti, one of Grimshaw's fictional characters, is marooned on the 'Molokai' the residents are referred to as 'the remnant of a "plague-smitten tribe"' (*Vaiti of the Islands*, 86).²⁴ They are depicted as threatening, and do

not appear to have any qualms about infecting others. Indeed as one pursues Vaiti along the beach, it is suggested that this may happen:

The thing was featureless. Nose, eyes, and mouth were gone. In the midst of a cavern of unspeakable ruin the ghastly throat gaped vacant. Two handleless, rotting stumps of arms waved blindly about — feeling — feeling Could it hear? Some instinct told the girl that it could. Softly as a snake she writhed out of the reach of those terrible groping arms. It did hear. It sprang blindly forward — it snatched. (86)

Entirely dehumanised, un-gendered, reduced to 'it', the leprous body in these lines is in a state of extreme deterioration. In *In the Strange South Seas*, Grimshaw describes the 'Molokai' of Penrhyn as a place where 'wretched creatures' have 'passed away from death in life to life in death' (238). The leprous body, particularly in *Vaiti of the Islands*, is apparently decomposing as it continues to breathe; it is a body where the boundaries are dissolving, where the skin offers very little protection.²⁵

Body as Travelogue

As a site of de-composition this body is in many ways diametrically opposed to the heavily tattooed body of Hugh Lynch, main protagonist in what was Grimshaw's favourite²⁶ among her novels, *When the Red Gods Call*. The novel opens in Papua's capital, Port Moresby, where the imprisoned Lynch is trying to write an account of his life. Because he is not a 'young lady in a novel' (4),²⁷ he cannot give a physical description of himself. Therefore he relies on information from the prison register, a large part of which pertains to his tattoos:

Marks — Knife scar on left shoulder. Spear mark right thigh. Tattooing — Dragon left forearm; mermaid, red and blue on back; snake (blue) encircling right upper arm; "Panchita M." center of chest; "Amour éternel, 1887", enclosed in circle (red) over left breast; girl's head in a crescent moon (blue) over fourth rib, right side. Device apparently erased with acid, just above. (*When the Red Gods Call*, 4)

As we can see from the year inscribed on his chest, Lynch was travelling in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. At this time and until much later, tattoos, in Western European society, were largely associated with sailors, the armed forces, and also with prison populations.²⁸ While there had been an ancient tradition of tattooing in Europe,²⁹ which still existed in certain areas,³⁰ the increasing popularity of the practice from the end of the eighteenth century onward is generally believed to be the result of colonial encounters in the Pacific, particularly in Polynesia.³¹ The tattoo was identified with

travel, an authenticating mark of contact with the foreign. It was a travelling sign, something that had arrived from an elsewhere.³² In Western Europe tattoos performed various functions³³: punitive (including surveillance), apotropaic, decorative, a badge of belonging, the hallmark of transgression, narrative (skin diaries, 'the word made flesh').³⁴ Underlying these disparate services were needs that frequently appear to have been engendered by the prospect or the reality of liminal states: the prison sentence,³⁵ the journey (especially sea faring), a life divorced from family and friends in the armed forces, the battle, the enforced exile of transportation. *Vis-à-vis* the latter, it has been shown that:

Of a sample of 939 women arrested in Paisley, Scotland, January 1841 – November 1847, only six were described as tattooed. The rate among Paisley's arrested men in the same period was slightly higher, 78 out of 2,161, still less than 4 per cent. By contrast, of 1226 male convicts sentenced in Scotland and disembarked at Hobart, 1840–53, 26 per cent sported tattoos. Records of over 2,000 female convicts transported from Britain to Van Diemen's Land in the 1840s reveal 25 per cent as tattooed upon arrival.³⁶

This association between tattooing and the liminal is the burden of the lines from Bob Dylan's song, 'Dignity', which provide the epigraph to this paper. The verse opens with a reference to that littoral strip between sea and land – the beach. It is here, in this ever changing interspace, that the speaker sees the ephemeral footprints leading to 'steps goin' down into tattoo land.' Tattoo land is connected with the beach and the underworld; home of the 'sons of darkness and the sons of light', it is a spatio-temporal liminality, a place where spaces and times mingle. Located in 'the bordertowns of despair', it is a place of darkness and light, a place between departure and arrival. Throughout the nineteenth century tattooing was associated with travel, particularly life on the ocean wave. The transportees were opting to get tattooed either prior to departure, or whilst in transit. If it were the latter, was this simply because the days were long and boredom intense within the bounded space of the boat? Or were these marks the manifestation of the skin's fear of penetration and fragmentation as the social matrix – spaces, places and interpersonal relations – that had enfolded it for so long was being ripped away by the convict system?³⁷ Tattooing among transportees could be interpreted as an attempt to hold on to, or to reconstruct, this protective structure by creating dermal shrines to significant people and events from the past. The tattoo is both exterior and interior, a visible memorial *on* the flesh and a subcutaneous holding *within*. Important dates were recorded, events, relationships, beliefs, lucky numbers, dreams, schemes, secret signs, magic symbols, spells cast on the flesh.³⁸ Hope was also inscribed: as

the anchor was being raised on subjectivity due to the destabilising influence of the journey, it was being lowered into the skin, a small emblem of aspiration drawn in green ink.³⁹

In *The Ego and the Id* Freud emphatically states: 'The ego is first and foremost a body ego; it is not merely a surface entity but it is itself the projection of a surface.'⁴⁰ Clarifying the second part of this statement, Joan Riviere, the book's authorised translator, states: 'That is, the ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body. It may thus be regarded as a mental projection of the surface of the body.'⁴¹ The psychical centre is at the periphery, which according to Didier Anzieu, corresponds with the anomalous anatomy of the brain:

The cortex — the Latin word for bark or shell which passed into the language of anatomy in 1907 — designates the outer layer of grey matter which sits like a cap upon the white matter. We are faced, then, with a paradox: the centre is situated at the periphery.⁴²

Following Freud, Anzieu asks the question: 'what if thought were as much an affair of the skin as of the brain? And what if the Ego — now defined as a Skin Ego — had the structure of an envelope?'⁴³ Arguing that 'every psychical function develops by supporting itself upon a bodily function whose working it transposes on to the mental plane', Anzieu posits the ego as embedded in the body surface: 'The Skin Ego is the original parchment which preserves, like a palimpsest, the erased, scratched-out, written-over first outlines of an "original" pre-verbal writing made up of traces upon the skin.'⁴⁴ The skin as parchment is an interface with the outside world; it is a plane of communication which cannot be closed; stimuli cannot be rejected. As a barrier it is a point of separation and connection. It interacts with the exterior while containing the interior; it conceals and simultaneously exposes much about the inner state. The skin's constant interaction with the outside and its containing function are, according to Anzieu, fundamental to the ego's development. The ego must be able to conceptualise itself as unique, as occupying its own space, as being able to withdraw into itself. These needs are fulfilled by the sac or protective barrier of the skin. Early in the infant's life they are provided by the mother's holding embrace; then when 'the baby's growing Ego finds sufficient support upon its own skin [it] take[s] over the function for itself.'⁴⁵ As noted, Fisher and Cleveland's study shows that there are people who conceptualise the protective shield as inadequate. Viewing the epidermis as deficient, they apprehend the skin as a sac which fails to contain. For such individuals, feelings of vulnerability and borderless-ness can be exacerbated by certain life events. In an attempt to counter such feelings they may attempt to construct what William Reich calls

'character armour.'⁴⁶ Initially Reich used the term in relation to patients who displayed an aversion to self-disclosure.⁴⁷ Then later in his career he began to associate it with the idea of musculature, 'which he thought of as a second muscular skin.'⁴⁸ According to Reich: 'Muscular tension physically represented the effort to form an impenetrable carapace to resist intrusions.'⁴⁹

Hugh Lynch is not only heavily tattooed, he also has a powerful build. His prison profile states that he has 'Exceptional muscular development all over' (*When the Red Gods Call*, 4). In contrast to the indigenous flesh described earlier, especially that marked with the signs of leprosy, Lynch's skin suggests composition and barrier. Lynch is extremely proud of his physique, and he draws attention to it frequently: 'I could have broken his neck for him, if I wanted, but then, I am said to be the strongest man in the western Pacific' (32). This remark is prompted by the presence of Bert Sanderson. From the moment they first meet, this man makes Lynch feel insecure. Confronted by the 'best-looking piece of male humanity that ever [he] set eyes on' (32), Lynch immediately flags up his own physical prowess: 'I would not have exchanged an eight part of my strength for the half, or the whole, of his poisonous goods looks — ugly red-haired brute that I am' (32–3). Lynch's 'exceptional' musculature suggests that nurture may have played a role in his physical build: 'I had the education of a gentleman, and the muscles of a strong man in a circus, and the salt drop in the blood that drives to wandering' (8). There is a forced quality to Lynch's strength. It suggests something that has been worked on, something that has been moulded; gentlemen from the nineteenth century were not renowned for their exhibition physique. When Lynch believes himself to be threatened he seeks solace in physicality; his muscles are alert to anything that feels like an intrusion. And this is exactly how Sanderson's arrival at Clare Island, Lynch's home, is perceived:

it may have been a mere dislike to having my sovereign royalty of sole white man disturbed — I cannot say — but I swore at Sanderson in my heart, as I went down to my little coral jetty, and hoped fervently that he was badly wanted at Buna Bay, and would have to make sail again before sundown (32).

Lynch enjoys being the sole white man on Clare Island because: 'There is something immensely flattering in the deference paid to a solitary white by a crowd of dark skins, all the world over' (30). Lynch does not consider that this deference may simply be lip service to an employer with a violent temper.⁵⁰ He states: 'Nobody questioned what I said. Nobody gave me advice. Nobody ever "wanted to know" anything about anything' (30). Nobody, in short, is penetrating the boundaries of Lynch's Skin Ego; nobody is trying to move below the surface.

Lynch views this lack of challenge to his position as something akin to adoration, failing to reflect that the people in question may have no interest in what he knows, or that they may be reluctant to interfere with a man who has the might of the British Empire behind him. Like Grimshaw, Lynch revels in being the sole white in town; his subjectivity appears to be as dependent upon being looked at, as it is upon looking. Recalling a visit to Port Moresby he says:

I do not think, if I live to be a hundred, I shall ever swagger again, mentally or physically, as I swaggered in my fine clothes down Hanuabada village that morning, proud as a peacock of my youth and strength, and feeling that I was coming among these savages like a fairy prince from another world, his hands full of gifts and honors . . . (12-3)

Lynch is promenading through the Hanuabada village at Port Moresby like a colonial *flâneur*. He is looking and, in 'clean white shirt and trousers' with 'a Canario knife, with an ivory and silver inlaid handle' stuck into a 'red Spanish sash' (14), he wants his gaze to be returned. And he believes that it is, although discreetly: 'They were pretty, these Hanuabada women [. . .] But with the men about, the looks that they cast at the "Taubada" were necessarily few and veiled' (14). Searching for a Papuan wife,⁵¹ Lynch is strolling through Port Moresby consuming the body of the Other, and believing that his own body is subject to similar visual scrutiny. Lynch's visit to Hanuabada is reminiscent of Grimshaw's first arrival at a Fijian village:

My men lowered the bars of the gate, and I rode into the village . . . The inhabitants took all this quite as a matter of course, merely asking (or so I judged) who the marvellous apparition might be, and then squatting down outside the doorways to stare their fill, in stolid amazement. (*From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 42)

Grimshaw is enjoying the attention that she receives in the Pacific; she is enjoying her role as travelling white woman; she is enjoying being the focus of the Fijian gaze; and she is enjoying making grand entrances into outlying villages. Clearly relishing these opportunities for repeated self-affirmation, it is not long before Grimshaw's arrival scenes start to acquire a choreographed dimension:

By this time, word of our coming had gone round the whole countryside, and at every village we came to the same ceremony took place. I would jump Tanéwa over the pig-bars, and cross the green, desirous only of getting away (for the path invariably led right through the villages). The Turanga ni Koro, in a clean white shirt and sula, would rush out at the sound of hoofs, and waylay my men. (54)

Writing of her entrance into Natuatathoko, Grimshaw states:

To-day, the men of this mountain town, once the home of every devilish cruelty, were running and shouting, and swinging their cutting knives about, simply to express their uncontrollable delight at my arrival. A white woman up here! A white woman alone! What a tremendous event, and what a source of mad excitement! (59)

While these descriptions clearly contain a note of irony, I would nevertheless agree with Susan Gardner that Grimshaw was impressed⁵² by what she considered to be her elevated position in the eye of the Other.⁵³ Throughout her travel writing there are accounts of self as reified subject, accounts which are frequently structured around a type of reverse 'anthropological' gaze.⁵⁴ Grimshaw and her fictional character, Hugh Lynch, believe that they can see and be seen in these colonial centres in a way that was not possible in the European metropolis. The sprawling cities of Europe could not have provided so much space for self-exhibition. Neither Grimshaw, nor Lynch, are pedestrians; neither desires to be jostled by the crowd. The *flâneur*, as Benjamin reminds us, requires 'elbow room':⁵⁵ 'The man of the crowd is no *flâneur*. In him, composure has given way to manic behaviour. Hence he exemplifies, rather, what had to become of the *flâneur* once he was deprived of the milieu to which he belonged.'⁵⁶ With urbanisation accelerating at the end of the nineteenth century the type of space required for poised promenading was becoming increasingly elusive. Grimshaw is conscious of the urban crowd, and her response to it is largely negative. The city is a grey place which seems to douse its inhabitants with a 'drab-coloured' uniformity (*In the Strange South Seas*, 13). A reference to 'huddled houses' (13) suggests a group of people living in close proximity to each other; this is a tightly packed crowd, a place where it is more difficult to see and to be seen. As the milieu of the *flâneur* and the *flâneuse* was being eroded in metropolitan centres of the West, urban spaces, where sedate strolling was the chief occupation, were becoming increasingly available in colonialised countries.⁵⁷ The empire, particularly for the *flâneuse*, was providing street space. The crowd may not have been large, but reduced to an amorphous mass of racial others it was frequently just as anonymous.

The section of the crowd, white and middle class, that would have been familiar to Grimshaw would also have embodied a degree of disconnectedness insofar as they would have had only partial (if any) knowledge of her past. They would not have known that Cloona House, the country home that she loved to mention in interviews, had to be sold because of her father Nicholas' dissipation when the young Beatrice was just seven years old. Individuals who were losing, or had lost, their position on the social ladder may have savoured the anonymity which life in colonised countries frequently provided.

Neither Grimshaw nor her fictional construct, Hugh Lynch, came from families with a sure footing on the social ladder in Ireland. It is clear that Cloona House was important to Grimshaw. She mentioned it in interviews throughout her life; and when she died in the poor section of Saint Vincent's hospital in Bathurst, New South Wales, a photograph of Cloona was one of very few personal effects. Grimshaw had carried this image across the Pacific: her first home present in the many homes that she came to occupy. The first house is the first carapace outside the womb that any of us know. Grimshaw lost this shell at an early age. It was replaced by a peripatetic lifestyle as her family moved to France and then back to the North of Ireland where they occupied various addresses in the years that followed.

This pattern continued when Grimshaw emigrated to the Pacific. I have argued elsewhere that the hierarchy of inhabiting which Cloona inscribed indicates two possible preoccupations: rootedness and movement.⁵⁸ When one considers the dwellings which Grimshaw commissioned in Papua a third preoccupation emerges: the desire for barrier and containment, a desire for very definite boundaries, which, as Fisher and Cleveland note is characteristic of someone with a body image dominated by feelings of penetrability.⁵⁹ Grimshaw's first home in Papua, the first she owned, consisted of 'a house built on three huge war-canoes, moored in the sea.'⁶⁰ Commenting on this residence Grimshaw states: 'I loved that house until it became the meeting place for crocodiles who lived in the surrounding shallows and bellowed like bulls at night.'⁶¹ Grimshaw's nautical home is a man-made island. When its boundaries are ruptured by rowdy reptiles she moves to an actual one. Called 'Coralands', Grimshaw's second home in Papua, second to be built from her own designs and specifications, was 'on the top of a high narrow promontory that ran far out into the loveliest of Papua's coral seas' (*Isles of Adventure*, 208).⁶² This house, situated on Sariba Island, two miles from Samarai Island, intimates a desire for enclosure and containment. The same is also true of 'Marana' (daylight), Grimshaw's next architectural venture. Although built on the Papuan mainland, Marana's location in the 'heart of the forest' (210) evokes a similar need for barrier. Twenty miles inland, the final house which Grimshaw commissioned in Papua bespeaks inaccessibility as fluently as the first three. A cottage of timber and iron, it was 'set on the lip of a precipice that overlooks the famous waterfall at Rona' (217). After twenty seven years in Papua (1907-1934), Grimshaw retired to Australia. Her first home there was at Kelso, a village near Bathurst. Rather than a wooden house and a dusty small town street, Grimshaw purchased 'Wayside.' A solitary holding positioned on top of a hill, it had been the Bathurst Military Barracks:

Nearly 100 years ago it had been erected by convicts to withstand the attacks of aborigines, who were particularly wild in this area. The walls are two feet thick and composed of solid rock. Miss Grimshaw is, possibly, the ablest commandante ever to grace the fortress. From her impregnable heights she is guardian of Kelso and the undulating plains that spread out below her in all their panoramic beauty.⁶³

Whether 'moored in the sea', in the 'heart of the forest', on a 'narrow promontory', on 'the lip of a precipice' or on 'impregnable heights', Grimshaw's homes all evoke the notion of barrier, the notion of containment and enclosure, the notion of crystalline, impenetrable boundaries. Like Grimshaw, Hugh Lynch lost his family home in Ireland; and the homes that he comes to occupy in the Pacific suggest a desire for clear lines of demarcation, boundaries written large. The first of these, called after the Irish county of his birth, is on Clare Island, an isolated spot 'ten or fifteen' (*When the Red Gods Call*, 8) nautical miles from the Papuan mainland. Lynch's second home, in the Purari Estuary, is similarly inaccessible. Describing this dwelling Lynch states:

I would sit on my veranda, above the water, with the currents from the channels outside swirling among the twenty-foot piles, under the house, and see the last rays of the evening light disappear from the darkening agate-green of the inner lagoon that held my tiny island in its secret heart, and hug myself to think how safely I was concealed. (341)

Lynch's house suggests a longing for definite boundaries: 'The ladder to the veranda was of lawyer cane, and I could draw it up and down at will, making the house at any moment into a complete fortress' (341–2). Lynch has created a fenced fortress in the mouth of the Purari River. Situated within an enclosed lagoon, his home, like his body, which is heavily muscled and extensively tattooed, is doubly bounded. His choice of habitation indicates a desire for unequivocal boundaries, boundaries that are not easily transgressed.

The Grimshaws, as we have seen, descended the social hierarchy quite rapidly, but not nearly as rapidly as Hugh Lynch:

A gentleman to begin with, a County Clare lad meant for the army, and brought home from his tutor's at eighteen to be told that his father was dead, his property muddled away, and himself a beggar — that was the beginning of life for Hugh Lynch. (*When the Red Gods Call*, 6)

At eighteen years of age Lynch loses his father (his mother had died earlier), his home, his social standing and his way of life. Sailing his father's yacht around Ireland, Lynch had been a prosperous, well-catered for young man; now, alone and penniless, he signs up as an

able seaman on 'a five hundred ton brig, bound for Buenos Aires' (7). And like many sailors, Lynch, either before and/or during the journey, gets his body tattooed.⁶⁴ He has lost his social envelope, home, parents, friends and wealth, and he appears to be trying to create a new one on his flesh, a second skin, an extra protective layer of images. Commenting on the military and tattoos, Alfred Gell states:

Soldiers and sailors (especially in old-style armies in which enlisted men had little chance of marrying and having families) tended to cover themselves with national flags, regimental badges, plus sundry female figures, identified as mothers, girlfriends, wives, etc. so as to create an enveloping social matrix as a symbolic surrogate for the domestic envelope which their circumstances in life made it impossible for them to develop satisfactorily.⁶⁵

Covering what is frequently perceived to be the physiological core, the heart, Lynch has his social relationships inscribed on his chest: "Panchita M." center of chest; 'Amour éternel, 1887,' enclosed in circle (red) over left breast; girl's head in a crescent moon (blue) over fourth rib, right side' (*When the Red Gods Call*, 4). Anne McClintock has shown how sailors, during this and earlier periods, attempted to recreate the domestic within the space of the boat.⁶⁶ Vessels were given female names; the apotropaic female figurehead was placed on the prow; on-board time was organised, to a large extent, around domestic chores like deck-scrubbing. By using the body to express social relations sailors appear to be trying to create two domestic envelopes, one within the boundaries of the boat, one within the boundaries of the flesh. This desire for barriers would not simply have been provoked by what was being left behind, but also by what lay ahead. Anxiety concerning the journey, and the journey's impact on the body, could well have inspired sailors to enhance their character armour through tattooing. For Hugh Lynch it is clear that travel has exposed the vulnerability, indeed the penetrability, of his body boundaries: 'Marks — Knife scar on left shoulder. Spear mark right thigh' (4). Sailors and cartographers on the early voyages of discovery covered the legends of their maps with mythological sea serpents and fantastical beasts in order to separate the known from the unknown; Hugh Lynch appears to be doing something similar when he has a large snake, a dragon and a mermaid tattooed on his flesh. He is cementing boundaries, drawing up lines of demarcation, colouring the margins of his body in order to claim them as his own. He is staking a claim in the flesh, flesh that needs to be defined against, and protected from, the decomposing indigenous body:

Tattooing can be regarded in this way as character armour which defends the social person (an apotropaic second skin) and

simultaneously, at a higher level, as a component of the social person as a whole, regarded as a defensive structure. In this way one can think of tattooing as simultaneously protecting and also constituting the social person.⁶⁷

According to Anzieu, a vital function of the skin is individuation.⁶⁸ The same could also be said of clothing. Clothing is an extension of the body; as J.C. Flugel argued in 1930, it 'possesses the quality of an externalised skin with its hygienic and erotic functions, as well as that of an ambulant house with its protectiveness, decorativeness and modesty.'⁶⁹ As is evidenced by the two photographic portraits included in this paper, clothing was extremely important to Grimshaw. Indeed, it is difficult to find photographs of Grimshaw where she is any less elaborately attired. In Plate One, we see her bedecked in a rather extravagant costume of heavy satin with a richly embroidered bodice. Creating a layered effect, the lower half of the dress is covered three-quarter way round with a net over-skirt, an effect replicated on the upper garment by the addition of the shawl. In plate two the shawl is removed from the shoulders and held in front of the lower body, covering most of the thigh area. In both, overskirt and shawl are used to create an additional boundary, an extra layer of protection between the self and the outside world. Grimshaw was not relaxed about clothing; any sartorial slippage, no matter how slight, appears to have harboured myriad dangers. Grimshaw had to demonstrate to her readership that travel had not eroded her sense of propriety; that she had not gone native; that she had not moved toward the body of the Other, the body that her own flesh, and that of her white fictional construct, Hugh Lynch, is so decisively defined against. She also had to convince herself that her body boundaries were intact. One way of trying to achieve this was to self-fashion in fabric — a tattoo in warp and weft.

Like Grimshaw, Lynch is greatly concerned with dress: 'Yes, I used to shave, and got Kari to cut my hair, and she washed seven clean shirts a week for me, and I wore a tie, and shoes and socks too' (*When the Red Gods Call*, 29–30). Appearing to believe that identity can be snared within the knot of a necktie, Lynch, labouring manually on a tropical island from dawn until dusk, wearing a shirt and tie, exemplifies colonial paranoia: 'I hadn't knocked about the South Seas for nothing, and I knew what's the end of dressing in pyjamas, and going uncombed and barefoot' (30). Prompted by a fear of race change, this rigid dress code is being used to create a barrier between self and Other, an Other frequently represented in Grimshaw's oeuvre as a site of penetrability and decomposition. As a receptacle for projected body image concerns, this flesh was used to help shore up a conception of the white colonial tourist as a site of barrier and composition; an idea also expressed by Lynch's body art. Tattooing,

penetrating the skin, injecting pigment under it, then sealing the wound and leaving a highly visible sign of that seal, foregrounds individuation, a separate skin, a movement away from the skin of the mother, while also underpinning individuality; a tattoo can set one off from the crowd. It can also make one feel protected from the crowd, something that is important if the crowd contains that which



Plate One, n.d., State Library of New South Wales



Plate Two, n.d., State Library of New South Wales

is represented as crumbling, possible contagious, indigenous flesh. The dragon on Lynch's left forearm and the snake encircling his right upper arm draw attention to, accentuate, and symbolically represent his musculature; tattoo and muscles combine to create a character armour that has two linings, a vanguard and rearguard doubling. A defensive rearguard action is also suggested by the mermaid on Lynch's back. Mermaids are an ambivalent symbol. In folklore they

have been conflated with the sirens, associated with the erotic and thought to lure sailors onto the rocks with their beautiful songs. They have also been credited with rescuing shipwrecked travellers, by giving warnings of storms and tempests. But regardless of the symbolic import of this tattoo, one thing is clear — Lynch has covered his back.

Conclusion

In this paper I have examined Beatrice Grimshaw's representation of the indigenous body. I have demonstrated how Grimshaw constructs this body as a location of social, environmental and biological degeneration in order to promote increased colonial intervention in the Pacific. The Other as a site of decomposition reaches its apogee in Grimshaw's oeuvre when she discusses skin conditions. This is especially obvious in her account of leprosy, which she interprets as a dermal manifestation of moral putrefaction. Contemplating people whose body boundaries appear to be in imminent danger of collapse, Grimshaw confirms the integrity of her own surface as she projects body image anxieties onto them. The residents of the 'Molokai' help Grimshaw to shore up a positive conception of self, one which connotes definite boundaries. In contrast to this friable indigenous body is that of the white European, Grimshaw's own body in motion, and the body of her fictional creation, Hugh Lynch. Lynch's body, with its heavy musculature and extensive tattooing, bespeaks a desire to establish that which is perceived to be lacking — definite boundaries. These boundaries, like Grimshaw's, may have been disrupted by the liminality and strangeness of the journey, by colonial fears of the unknown, by the fear of contagion, and by the abrupt and permanent loss of the social matrix called home. This is a loss that cannot be left behind. Never alone, the body in motion is accompanied by the most dauntless traveller of all — the past. Intrepid, ineluctable, it is always present in the *away*.

Clare McCotter

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Notes

¹ Bob Dylan, *Lyrics 1962–2001* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2004), p. 540.

² For biographical information on Grimshaw see: Clare McCotter, 'Colonising Landscapes and Mapping Bodies: Imagining Tourist Space & Place in Beatrice Grimshaw's Travel Writing' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Ulster, 2005), pp. 18–47. See also: Clare McCotter, 'Islanders, Tourists and Psychosis.

- Doing Time in Beatrice Grimshaw's Travel Brochures', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 4 (2006), pp. 1–18.
- ³ Beatrice Grimshaw, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1907), p. 35. Further references to this text are in the body of the paper.
- ⁴ See: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 67.
- ⁵ Clare McCotter, "'The Geometry of Innocence Flesh on the Bone': The Body as Souvenir in Beatrice Grimshaw's Travel Writing.' *The Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 5 (2007), pp. 106–127.
- ⁶ S. Fisher and S. E. Cleveland, *Body Image and Personality* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), p. 58.
- ⁷ Fisher and Cleveland, *Body Image and Personality*, p. 58.
- ⁸ See: McCotter, "'The Geometry of Innocence Flesh on the Bone'", pp. 106–127; Clare McCotter, 'Nurses, Fairytales, Cannibals: Constructing a Nationalist Narrative in Beatrice Grimshaw's Papuan Landscapes', *Irish Feminist Review*, 2 (2006), pp. 125–139. Also two, as yet, unpublished papers: Clare McCotter, 'A Bloodied Bond: Fly River Heads and Body Image in Beatrice Grimshaw's Colonial Landscapes'; Clare McCotter, 'Through Skin Darkly: Miscegenation, Cannibalism & Homosexuality in Beatrice Grimshaw's Pacific Fiction.'
- ⁹ Beatrice Grimshaw, *The New New Guinea* (London: Hutchinson, 1910), p. 118. All further references to this text will be given in the body of the paper.
- ¹⁰ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848–c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 51.
- ¹¹ Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 195.
- ¹² Some 'French theoreticians internalised degeneration, speculating on the invisible lesions of the nervous system, an obscure and secret world of morbidity.' Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 136.
- ¹³ Pick states that: 'Amidst the early disasters of the Boer War and the scandal of an apparent deterioration in the average physique of potential recruits, the fear of urban degeneration found its apotheosis'. Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 189.
- ¹⁴ Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 201.
- ¹⁵ Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 216.
- ¹⁶ Edwin Ray Lankester cited in *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 216.
- ¹⁷ This rhetoric of the vanishing race was (and is) standard in the Americas as well.
- ¹⁸ Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 37.
- ¹⁹ Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 37.
- ²⁰ Rod Edmond has stated that in Hawaii leprosy was known as 'the separating sickness' (*ma'i ho' okawale*), because as a result of colonial quarantine laws people were separated from their family and friends. However, this was not always the case; sometimes individuals accompanied their relatives into the Molokai. Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 204.
- ²¹ Grimshaw, *In the Strange South Seas* (London: Hutchinson, 1907), p. 241. All further references to this text will be given in the body of the paper.
- ²² Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, p. 196.
- ²³ Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, p. 197.
- ²⁴ Beatrice Grimshaw, *Vaiti of the Islands* (London: George Newes, 1916), p. 86. All further references to this text will be given in the body of the paper.
- ²⁵ Interestingly, Edmond argues that:

The putrefying but lascivious body of the leper also, and vividly, transgresses the boundary between life and death. As a living corpse,

decomposing while it continues to reproduce, it is a mordant example of Kristeva's category of the abject.

(Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, p. 202.)

²⁶ [Unsigned interview], 'Explorer, Tobacco Grower, Novelist: Beatrice Grimshaw's Remarkable Career', *Sydney Morning Herald*, (Women's Supplement), Monday 13 February 1939, [n. p. n.].

²⁷ Beatrice Grimshaw, *When the Red Gods Call* (New York: Moffat, Yard & Company, 1911), p. 4. Further references to this text are in the body of the paper.

²⁸ See: James Bradley, 'Body Commodifications? Class and Tattoos in Victorian Britain' in *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History*, ed. Jane Caplan (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), pp. 136–156.

²⁹ See: C.P. Jones, 'Stigma and Tattoo' in *Written on the Body*, pp. 1–16. Mark Gustafson, 'The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire and Beyond' in *Written on the Body*, pp. 17–31. Juliet Fleming, 'The Renaissance Tattoo' in *Written on the Body*, pp. 61–82.

³⁰ Religious tattooing was popular in Europe up until the Middle Ages. But despite the fact that it was outlawed by the church it remained popular in Jerusalem and, much to the disgust of Caesar Lombroso, in Loreto, Italy. In these centres pilgrims could still get a tattoo of a crucifix or some other religious symbol. This practice dates back to the crusaders who 'wanted to secure a Christian burial should they die abroad.' Stephen Oettermann, 'An Art as Old as Humanity: A Short History of Tattooing in the Western World' [Introduction], in *Tattoo*, Stephen Richter (London: Quartet Books Limited, 1985), p. 11. With regard to tattooing and European Christianity see Chris Wroblewski, *Skin Shows: The Art of Tattoo* (London: Virgin Books, 1990), p. 5.

³¹ Jane Caplan states that 'it is clear that Europeans learned neither the technique nor the imagery of tattooing from Polynesian societies, but drew on local practices that existed well before the eighteenth century, whether these were indigenous or imported.' But she also recognises that: 'It would be rash to dispute the mountain of evidence that shows the tattoo being propelled into a new quality of visibility from the end of the eighteenth century'; this was as a result of colonial activity.' Caplan, *Written on the Body*, pp. xx.

³² This is even true of Polynesia: 'Curiously enough, the idea that tattooing is foreign is universal in the cultural regions encompassing Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji. Alfred Gell, *Wrapping in Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 66. Gell goes on to argue:

[T]attooing as a foreign practice indicates that, however much admired, it always has something faintly suspect about it. In Polynesia, tattooing is almost without exception regarded either as foreign [. . .] or, which really amounts to the same thing, as deriving from the underworld, these two categories tending to merge [. . .] In the West, tattooing is historically foreign (witness the name) and clings to its foreignness in the prominence it still gives to foreign designs (tigers, dragons, etc.) and the common practice of sailors and soldiers of commemorating their peregrinations by picking up tattoos in foreign parts. Tattooing marks a displacement, and the same could even be said of the tattoos acquired in prison. (p. 67)

³³ Re: the punitive function of tattoos Wroblewski states that it remained: an instrument of social control up until fairly recently. It was not until 1879, for example, that the British Army stopped tattooing deserters with the letter "D" and men of bad character with the letters "BC".

Meanwhile, inmates of Siberian prison camps and Nazi concentration camps have been tattooed with identifying signs or numbers in ways which still haunt society today (p. 4).

Tattooing could also be used as a means to counteract surveillance. Tattoos could be removed, re-inscribed, material could be added to deliberately bluff the authorities. Tattoos could also be used as a means of defiance: 'Some prisoners in the Soviet Gulag are reported to have tattooed their own foreheads with letters signifying "prisoner of Brezhnev."' Gustafson, 'The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire' in *Written on the Body*, p. 30. With regard to the second listed function it is clear that religious symbols are one example of the apotropaic use of tattoos. There is a long tradition of tattooing among European Christians. This was done not only as a sign of faith, and to ensure a Christian burial in places where Christians were in the minority, but to help ward off dangers, to help maintain the integrity of the body. The tattoo has, for a long time, been used by some as a symbol of collective identity. Around the end of the nineteenth century when members of the armed forces were wrapping their bodies in military insignia and symbols specific to their regiments; large numbers of craftsmen were tattooing their 'respective guild emblem on the underarm' (Oettermann, in Richter p. 12). For many today — gang members, people who hold certain beliefs, people who have made certain lifestyle choices — the tattoo still means a badge of belonging. For others, however, it is the seal of individuality, not that the two are mutually exclusive. Tattoos have long been associated with unconventionality. As Gell states they are frequently considered 'faintly suspect' (p. 67). That this perception of the tattoo remains today is evidenced by the fact that: 'Tattooing is prohibited by law in New York City; in some other American states a tattooed person is not allowed to serve in the police force.' Oettermann, in Richter (p. 16).

³⁴ Wroblewski, *Skins Shows*, p. 1.

³⁵ James Bradley states that 'By the end of the nineteenth century tattoos had increasingly become associated with criminals.' Bradley, 'Body Commodifications?' in *Written on the Body*, p. 137. In the nineteenth century Caesar Lombroso argued that tattoos were the hallmark of the criminal. The tattooed man that had not committed murder, according to Lombroso, had simply died too early. Oettermann, 'An Art as Old as Humanity', p. 11. In Britain, however, 'The longstanding presence of tattoo descriptions in criminal records did not create the simple equation "tattoo equals criminal"'. Bradley, 'Body Commodifications?' in *Written on the Body*, p. 138.

³⁶ Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and Ian Duffield, 'Skin Deep Devotions: Religious Tattoos and Convict Transportation to Australia', in *Written on the Body*, p. 128.

³⁷ This would of course depend on what the tattoo depicted. The commonest tattoos among transportees at this time are those listed at the end of the present paragraph: lucky numbers, names of significant others, important dates etc.

³⁸ Re: tattooing, magic and the aging process see: Wroblewski, *Tattooed Women*, p. 6.

³⁹ 'Anchors symbolizing hope have biblical origins in *Hebrews* 6: 19: "Which hope we have as an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."' Maxwell-Stewart and Duffield, 'Skin Deep Devotions' in *Written on the Body*, p. 125.

⁴⁰ Sigmund Freud cited in *Body Image and Personality*, Fisher and Cleveland, p. 42.

⁴¹ Joan Riviere cited in *Body Image and Personality*, Fisher and Cleveland, p. 42.

⁴² Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 9.

⁴³ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, p. 9.

⁴⁴ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, p. 105.

⁴⁵ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, p. 102.

⁴⁶ See Gell, *Wrapping in Images*, p. 33.

⁴⁷ Gell states 'there is no need to restrict these ideas to their original context of abnormal psychology. These metaphors of carapaces, balloons, etc. and their bodily referents are often met with as components of the standard culture of the body, not by any means confined to the mentally unbalanced.' Gell, *Wrapping in Images*, p. 33.

⁴⁸ Gell, *Wrapping in Images*, p. 33.

⁴⁹ Gell, *Wrapping in Images*, p. 33.

⁵⁰ Lynch states: 'My overseer — a Fly River chap, with a good headpiece on him — used to gather my words like gold, and copy everything I did, down to my shellback roll in walking, and the "buckoo mate" language I'd use to smarten up the boys.' (*When the Red Gods Call*, p. 30). What is being described here? Homi Bhabha argues that mimicry 'is at once resemblance and menace.' He asserts that the menace of mimicry 'is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse disrupts its authority.' Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 86, 88. Bhabha makes it clear that mimicry is not identification. But what if that is how the white colonial interprets it? What if the mimic is so well-practiced that the menace is lost in the performance, or in translation? The above quotation from *When the Red Gods Call* draws attention to the limitations of mimicry and ambivalence as modes of resistance. They are individual acts that can easily be translated by the imperialist.

⁵¹ The following is Grimshaw's rumination at the graveside of a white woman who married a Penrhyn Islander: 'So, quiet and forgotten at last, lies in lonely Penrhyn the woman who sinned against her race and found no forgiveness' (*In the Strange South Seas*, 244). Grimshaw's attitude to white men who engaged in mixed raced relationships was, however, very different. Commenting on miscegenation in her fourth and final travelogue, *Isles of Adventure*, she states: 'While human nature is human, and men dependent on the society of women, the single man (whether married or not) will turn, more or less, to coloured women, in the absence of white' (26). Unlike the woman interred on Penrhyn, these men are not sinners; they are simply human and natural. Their relationships with black women occur only because suitable European partners are not present. It is therefore inaccurate to assume that Grimshaw would have disapproved of Lynch because he married Kari, a young Papuan girl. Lynch's relationship with Kari closely corresponds with Grimshaw's view of white male/black female miscegenation. Largely meaningless, and more or less accepted, it is a temporary affair constructed upon a lack. This lack is filled by Stephanie Hammond, an English woman who is the 'real' romance interest in the novel. Lynch's marriage to Kari, which ends with the young woman's dispatch to the ocean floor, functions chiefly as an obstacle in the romance plot. It is a superficial encounter which leaves no mark on Lynch's body. Unlike his other relationships it is not commemorated with a green tattoo. Kari does not get under Lynch's skin; she does not threaten his body boundaries. Lynch penetrates but is not penetrated. He is a complex construct which functions not only as Grimshaw's alter ego, but also as a site where anxieties engendered by fear of and desire for the Other are projected. I have discussed miscegenation and desire in Grimshaw's writing in detail elsewhere, see: endnote 8.

Beatrice Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1930), p. 26.

⁵² Susan Gardner, "A 'vert to Australianism": Beatrice Grimshaw and the Bicentenary', *Hecate*, 12, (1987), p. 45.

⁵³ See: McCotter, *Colonising Landscapes and Mapping Bodies*, pp. 187–192.

⁵⁴ See: McCotter, *Colonising Landscapes and Mapping Bodies*, p. 190.

⁵⁵ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1977), p. 174.

⁵⁶ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 174.

⁵⁷ The following example is from *Vaiti of the Islands*. The heroine is promenading alone in Wellington, New Zealand, enjoying the remarks that are being directed at her from watching admirers: 'Vaiti, quite accustomed to this sort of demonstration, and enjoying it in a languid way as she strolled along under the annoying parasol, covered half a mile or so of the quay at her own leisurely pace' (30). In *Nobody's Island* the chief occupation on Samarai Island is strolling: 'On the lee side of the island it was hot as a greenhouse, with greenhouse smells in the air; to windward, the south-east trade sang merrily, blew in the air and ruffled the white clothes of Samarai. Round and round went the white people on the white path, beneath the white moon' (300). Beatrice Grimshaw, *Nobody's Island* (London: Cassell, 1934), p. 300.

⁵⁸ McCotter, 'Maintaining a Wide Margin', in *The Travelling and Writing Self* ed. Marguerite Helmers and Tilar Mazzeo (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 97–115.

⁵⁹ Fisher and Cleveland, *Body Image and Personality*, p. 58.

⁶⁰ Beatrice Grimshaw, 'How I Found Adventure', *Blue Book*, April 1939, 3. Internet: <http://pulprack.com/arch/000107.html> [Accessed on 17/05/2004]

⁶¹ Beatrice Grimshaw, 'How I Found Adventure', *Blue Book*, April 1939, 3. Internet: <http://pulprack.com/arch/000107.html> [Accessed on 17/05/2004]

⁶² Beatrice Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1930), p. 208.

⁶³ [Unsigned article] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Women's Supplement', Monday 13 February, 1939.

⁶⁴ The following is the only description of Indigenous tattooing in Grimshaw's travel writing:

They are caught, dragged forward and, with the whole village delightedly looking on, are flung on the ground and held down by heavy logs, on the ends of which their special enemies gladly volunteer to sit. Then the operators take bamboo knives, which cut like steel when properly edged, and set to work. Before long the ground is streaming with blood, as though at a pig killing. The shrieks of the victims rise up ceaselessly, but are drowned by the fierce beating of the village drums and the cries and taunts of the lookers-on. (*Isles of Adventure*, 72)

Suggesting a sado-masochistic ritual, Grimshaw's depiction of indigenous tattooing evokes what Gell refers to as 'the imagery of sexual subjection, piercing, and flux' (Gell, *Wrapping in Images*, p. 36). Gell was not commenting on Grimshaw, but his description certainly illustrates how she conceptualises indigenous tattooing.

⁶⁵ Gell, *Wrapping in Images*, p. 27.

⁶⁶ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 24.

⁶⁷ Gell, *Wrapping in Images*, p. 34.

⁶⁸ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, p. 103.

⁶⁹ J.C. Flugel cited in 'The Origin of Clothes' by Angel Garma, *Psychoanalysis Quarterly*, p. 18 (1949), p.184.

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