

# Not Above Your Gods

**Surfacing the editor process through six case studies from post-war Australia**

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This thesis of 88 000 words is my original work.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Alice Grundy', written in a cursive style.

Alice Grundy

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## **Abstract**

For the most part, editorial labour goes unseen and unremarked by literary studies scholars. When it is the subject of discussion in Australia, it is often decried or part of a racist assumption that First Nations writers would be incapable of producing work themselves. This thesis takes six case studies from the second half of the twentieth century in Australia: Ruth Park, Thea Astley, Jessica Anderson, Sally Morgan, Ruby Langford Ginibi and Kate Jennings. Unlike most existing work on editing that centres male writers and individual genius, this thesis focuses on women authors and editors and argues that studying editing unveils the editor process — a wide spectrum of interventions that contribute to the version of the text with which readers engage. This thesis also argues that, despite existing orthodoxies about the dangers of highlighting editorial labour, studying editing instead highlights authors' agency in new and critical ways. Drawing on genetic criticism, textual studies, book history and editing studies, this thesis offers new ways of reading the relationships between authors and the network of contributors to the production of their texts. This project has also been informed by my own experience as a professional editor for the past fifteen years. Through detailed analysis of archival materials, extensive engagement with existing scholarship as well as close readings, I outline alternative approaches for literary and publishing studies scholars alike.

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## Introduction

In the biggest literary scandal in Australia of the past decade, journalists found that Miles-Franklin-shortlisted author John Hughes had extensively plagiarised other novels in his book *The Dogs* (2021). Hughes' novel, purportedly about his Ukrainian grandparents' experiences in World War II, lifted text from a range of books including Svetlana Alexievich's non-fiction book, *The Face of War* as well as *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Anna Karenina* and *The Great Gatsby* (Verney np) and even a review from his former student (Earp np). After initial outrage at the author's behaviour, discussions about these acts raised questions about the role of the editor and publisher of the novel (Burke 2022 np). To what extent are they responsible for the author's transgressions? Should they have noticed and what should they have done?

Editorial labour tends to be invisible up until there is a problem and then, as was the case with John Hughes, the publishing process suddenly attracts critics' and scholars' attention. The project of this thesis is to explore the multiple forms of labour — cultural, aesthetic, interpersonal — that the editor contributes to a book and makes a case for using that knowledge to inform literary scholarship. It also demonstrates how discussions of editing are coded according to the race of the authors and editors involved and that commentary on editing of First Nations' authors' works, such as books by Sally Morgan or Ruby Langford Ginibi, is markedly different from that of Anglo-Australian authors. Lastly it provides some corrective to the existing body of scholarship on editing that almost entirely ignores women authors and editors. Research into women's roles in the editorial process is urgently needed since the contemporary industry is overwhelmingly dominated by women on both sides of the equation. As an editor myself with fifteen years' experience, I started this research with an understanding of how wide-ranging editors' contributions can be but was surprised to find evidence for the significant consequences even minor editorial interventions can have. By exploring editorial labour through close analysis of editorial practice, archives, literary

scholarship and the works themselves, this thesis argues for new interpretations of the different roles that editors adopt — from a social barometer who advises a writer based on anticipated reception to a lifelong friend and confidante who offers support and succour even when others have rejected the author and their work.

Existing scholarship on editors such as monographs by Abram Foley and Tim Groenland focuses on the changes to the text itself and the dynamic between one author and one editor. My intervention names and describes the editor's labour in each case and shows why reflecting on editorial contributions changes how scholars read works of literature. It builds on Foley and Groenland's scholarship, broadening the scope to consider a range of agents who contribute to a work in the course of production. With close reading of six authors' novels in conjunction with correspondence from the archives and contemporary reviews, this thesis argues for new interpretations of novels by Jessica Anderson, Ruth Park and Thea Astley and non-fiction from Palyaku writer Sally Morgan, Bundjalung writer Ruby Langford Ginibi and Kate Jennings, as well as advocating for new methodological practices accounting for a range of editorial labour and the resultant implications for literary scholarship.

When editors describe their work, their figuration is often a move to hide or minimise their contributions in order to maintain the confidence and position of authors; editors tend to self-describe as modest, supportive agents in the production of literary work (Brett 79). Gendered metaphors editors use such as 'midwife' (Greenberg, *Poetics* 3) or 'invisible mender' (Cosic np) or labels such as 'service worker' (Gross np) characterise the role as secondary, assisting in a given task, where the author takes credit and responsibility. This is usually reinforced by their comments that editors *should* be invisible, but this thesis shows that the study of editing does not undermine an author's position. Instead, what my research finds is that examining editorial work usually highlights an author's agency as they respond to queries, suggestions and comments. Indeed, the exploration of agency that animates much of

the discussion in this thesis can assuage concerns that a focus on editing undermines an author's agency. Rather, my research shows that an author's responses can unveil their decision-making processes, their priorities and the responsibility they take for their work.

This thesis addresses the questions: precisely what is it that editors do; how do we locate and understand their contributions; and what do these contributions reveal about individual texts, authors' oeuvres and the cultures in which these works were produced. Answering these questions offers both fresh intelligence on both literary production and deeper knowledge of the individual texts. This thesis describes and interrogates editing practices for students and scholars of editing and literary studies scholars alike. While there is limited existing scholarship on editing, and extensive literary scholarship, this research intervenes in both disciplines by demonstrating the value of synthesising the two approaches. The choice of authors and editors works to redress an existing imbalance in studies of editing that have identified men as their subjects and expanded from the editor–author pair to be the first concerted study of the networks activated in literary production.

This thesis takes six case studies from the second half of the twentieth century in Australia, devoting a chapter to each — Ruth Park's *Swords and Crowns and Rings* (1977); Thea Astley's *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* (1996); Jessica Anderson's *Tirra Lirra by the River* (1978); Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987); Ruby Langford Ginibi's *Don't Take Your Love to Town* (1988) and Kate Jennings' *Bad Manners* (1993). Each of these authors has won prizes, been studied at high school and tertiary levels and had marked impacts on Australian — and international — culture. Through my analysis I disentangle some of the existing confusion in literary scholarship about what constitutes professional editing. Further examining existing literary scholarship on each of the authors, this thesis offers fresh readings of the writers' oeuvres with the benefit of archival insights. While all the case studies are Australian, cross-continental negotiations are part of the anglophone publishing sphere, and the fact that publishing

processes throughout the English-speaking world are largely similar (Thompson 12), ensure this study is relevant to a range of territories.

My scholarship emerges from the intersection of several different methodological approaches to literary work including textual studies, genetic criticism, book history, sociology of the book, publishing studies, editing studies and Australian literary studies. Each of these fields offer conceptual and practical tools for the analysis of archives, reception and the books themselves. Each has different but related approaches to recognising editorial labour and in what follows I will describe how this project draws on and intervenes in these bodies of scholarship.

## **Editing**

While editing has been sidelined in some fields of scholarship, there are three kinds of writing that address editing specifically, which assist the project of this thesis. One of the most famous editors is Maxwell Perkins, notoriously interventionist editor, subject of a bestselling biography *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius* (1978) and of the film adaptation simply called *Genius* (2016). Perkins is what I will call a limit case: operating at the extreme end of editorial intervention, especially for his work on Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward Angel* (Skipp). This level of intervention drew the ire of contemporary critic Bernard de Voto who argued that 'works of art cannot be assembled like a carburettor — they must be grown like a plant' (4) and that Wolfe's books came from 'the assembly line at Scribners' (14). This metaphor of organic growth and development arises time and again with heavily weighted moral arguments about what should and should not be tolerated in artistic production. Alongside Perkins in the popular imagination, an outlier in terms of his revisions to the books he published is Gordon Lish. DT Max unveiled Gordon Lish's edits of Raymond Carver for *New York Magazine* (1998), showing that Lish made changes to as much as seventy per cent of Carver's works including *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981): changing short

story titles, characters, descriptions and endings. Max's article was a forerunner to an adjacent publication (2007) of edited and unedited versions of Carver's stories published online and an eventual publication of Carver's short stories, without Lish's edits and with the book's original title: *Beginners* (2009). This degree of highly interventionist editing is also visible in the facsimile of TS Eliot's 'The Waste Land' that Ezra Pound edited, first published by Faber in 2010 and reissued in 2022 to coincide with the poem's first publication. These are each extreme examples of editorial contribution to literary labour that can be read as collaboration or co-authorship, even though none of the editors made claims on copyright or royalties.

One of the reasons for a lack of discussion on editing is 'A long-standing tradition of reticence [that] reflects professional protectiveness of the relationship between author and editor and the fear that too much detail about production — seeing how the sausage is made — could discourage the reader' as Susan Greenberg writes (*Poetics of Editing* 5). It is not the intention of this thesis to reveal private information, cause embarrassment or undermine authors' reputations but rather to use editorial engagements as a means to better understand both publishing and the cultures in which it has been conducted. This will be particularly important when I consider Thea Astley's novel *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* (1996) which was published late in her career but edited by a relatively young woman whose contributions clearly signal social norms at the time the book was in production. Further, when an author's responses to suggestions that tackle changes in social norms their agency becomes visible.

While there has been a marked increase in scholarship on editing, notably during the period of my research for this PhD, much of the work that has acknowledged these agents in the recent past has tended to be from sociologists and book historians. Pierre Bourdieu describes the editor's 'consecration' of texts and how the personal charisma of the editor is significant not just for their interactions with the author but for the ways in which their

influence effects changes on a book as it passes through the production process and for their framing of the ways the book is received in the marketplace (76–7). Nowhere is this more evident than with *Swords and Crowns and Rings*, whose editor Beatrice Davis supported acquisition of the book, and edited it, but also was a judge on the Miles Franklin prize, which was awarded to Park that year<sup>1</sup>, and the author of the judge’s commendation which was used in promotional material for the book in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Davis is an example of an editor who ‘creates the authority with which authors authorise’ in Bourdieu’s words. It is the publisher who acquires the book and the editor who prepares the book for publication who converts a manuscript into a cultural artefact (76). As Nicholas Shea argues, ‘understanding published works as artefacts that both contribute to and are reflective of culture will help editors remain in constant conversation with the text, the author, and the reader through an increased awareness of the work within and beyond the editorial process’ (116). Shea finds a multidirectional flow from the culture to inform the publishing process and from the publishing process to shape the culture.

I have identified four different existing modes of scholarly engagement with editorial practice — memoir, textbooks, interviews and the developing field of editorial analysis which has emerged from and is connected to book history. The first two types are of limited usefulness for this thesis but, nevertheless, offer a background of the kinds of figurations of editorial labour that currently exist. The invisibility of editing — and in particular editing by women — is a highly gendered phenomenon. It is no coincidence that this labour, largely completed by women in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond, goes unremarked. When it has been the subject of commentary, feminised metaphors, such as ‘midwife’ or ‘mender’ are common to describe the labour involved. In her study of

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<sup>1</sup> Park was the not the first of Davis’ authors to whom she awarded the prize. The first year Davis was a judge the prize went to her author, Thea Astley (Lamb 153).

<sup>2</sup> MLMSS 7638/12

publishing, Susan Murray draws from Reskin noticing that the decline in prestige is pegged to the increasingly feminised nature of the workforce (114): in other words, the greater the number of women working in editorial, the lower the prestige of this labour. When editorial labour has attracted attention, it has usually been about and by men: from *Double Talk: The erotics of male literary collaboration* (1989) to more recent work from Tim Groenland (2019), Jordan Carroll (2021) and Abram Foley (2021). Foley's book, unlike the others, does at least include one woman editor out of four case studies. As most writers, most editors and most readers in Australia are women (Driscoll and Bowen 2022; Throsby et al 2015) this disproportionate attention to men is overdue for redress.

### Memoir

Some highly successful editors have written about their experiences, notably Robert Gottlieb (2016) — publisher at Knopf and the *New Yorker* — and Diana Athill — publisher at André Deutsch. Athill's first memoir *Stet* (2009) was so successful that she went on to write five more. While these works are star-studded, engaging and vivid in their depictions of twentieth-century publishing, they offer a cursory interrogation of an editor's role and how they go about their work. The author is never giving the reader access to details of how they operated as an editor at the level of an individual manuscript, let alone a paragraph or sentence.

In the Australian context, Hilary McPhee's memoir *Other People's Words: The rise and fall of an accidental publisher* (2003), closes with what she sees as detrimental changes to the industry in comparison with her time as publisher concluding that working with writers 'doesn't fit current notions of efficient corporate structures' (284). By way of contrast, Craig Munro's *Literary Lion Tamers* reflects on his experiences at University of Queensland Press, however, he imagines that if editors and writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century 'could time-travel to the Sydney offices of Allen & Unwin, I'm sure they'd discover that editors in the 2020s are still working hard to transform raw manuscripts into objects of readerly desire' (251). Despite their different readings of contemporary publishing culture, Munro and

McPhee's books operate in a similar way — they feature anecdotes and impressionistic descriptions, written for general audiences, and do not consider editorial work in detail.

Memoirs by editors and publishers as a genre reinforces the charismatic cultural agent role that Bourdieu describes, as mentioned earlier in this section. Further, the lack of detail on edits for individual authors or books is consistent with the general reluctance for editors to discuss their practices with any specificity.

### Textbooks

Editing textbooks provide some additional context for examining the edits I find in the archives of each of the authors. As a lecturer of Professional Editing at the University of Technology Sydney, I used the textbook, *The Australian Editing Handbook* (2014), which includes information on the different stages of editing — structural editing, copyediting and proofreading as well as advice on how to approach editing on-screen, marking up printed galleys and engaging with authors. Given their intended audience and function, editing textbooks are interested in describing and demonstrating how editors perform some of their work and do not dedicate attention to the rationale for such processes or the implications of their suggestions. Where they are relevant to this study is in the figuring of different kinds of editorial labour — that is the standard stages through which manuscripts pass: structural editing, which operates at a macro level considering elements such as character and setting, plot and point of view in fiction or orientation and argument in non-fiction; copyediting, which occurs at the level of the paragraph and sentence and considers expression, concision and clarity; and proofreading, which occurs after the text has been typeset and checks for errors while also ensuring pagination, lineation and general presentation are correct.

A key difference between such textbooks and my research is they often use invented examples to demonstrate a given point whereas my analysis of actual editorial labour offers students of editing specific and authentic examples of how editing can operate, what is at stake and how the choices editors make, and especially the ways in which they communicate

their suggestions, have significant consequences for the authors' responses to their comments. While textbooks may reference tone or presentation (Flann et al 2014) such nuance is not part of their primary function. My research can make a useful contribution to editorial training — especially since it can be very difficult to access edited manuscripts from contemporary authors.

### Editing studies

Since commencing this thesis, a number of aforementioned new works have been published in editing studies. Tim Groenland's *The Art of Editing, Raymond Carver & David Foster Wallace* (2019) studies the working relationships of the titular authors and their editors: Gordon Lish and Michael Pietsch<sup>3</sup>. It is worth noting that even in the title of a book about editing, two editors who star in the book are absent from the front cover. Through careful consideration of the edited manuscripts, and the kinds of suggestions that the editors made, Groenland offers one of the most productive examinations of professional editorial practice to date in his exploitation of genetic criticism, close analysis of the edits themselves and attention to correspondence; I also use these tools in this thesis. Where my work differs from Groenland's is my interest in what I will call standard cases. *The Art of Editing* presents two extreme cases; in the first instance an editor who changed as much as seventy per cent of his author's prose (Max 1998) and in the latter an editor who worked on the posthumous publication of an author's magnum opus. In contrast, the case studies I have chosen include a wide range of editorial interventions — from the prompt of a single sentence to a standard copyedit where the revisions are at the level of simplifying sentences or correction errors as opposed to complete reworking of a manuscript. Less extreme versions of the editing process offer both scholars and students of editing examples of the labour that underpins most publishing rather

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<sup>3</sup> Since Groenland's book was published, Michael Pietsch appeared as a witness in the Department of Justice vs Penguin Random House case. Pietsch is now CEO of Hachette and appeared as an expert witness on the potential effects of a Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster merger.

than just a few books. The other key characteristic that sets my work apart from what has gone before is my interest in multiple editors and others involved in the production process. Although Groenland acknowledges ‘we begin to apprehend the dynamic interplay of the writing as it is contested and negotiated by multiple collaborating (and sometimes competing) agents’ (15) when I widen the focus to include editors, he limits his own study to singular editors rather than including others in the production process. Looking at multiple editors’ interventions demonstrates just how wide-ranging different approaches can be, even in the production process of one book. For Kate Jennings and Jessica Anderson, I examine the contributions of both structural and copyeditors, finding an extraordinary range in the responses of different agents at their respective points on the path to publication.

Abram Foley foregrounds the role of editor as tastemaker in *The Editor Function* (2021) as he considers the socio-political implications of small press publishing in America. Foley repurposes Foucault’s ‘author function’ to expand a reading of publishing culture to the extra-authorial agents who bring works to market. Since he is concerned with publishing companies and their output, his work does not generally engage at the level of specific editorial work and the role of this labour in the production of books. In this thesis I take not just the processes of acquisitions and publication as the subject of study but also interrogate the editorial labour itself to create a detailed picture of the machinations of publishing from the level of the manuscript through to the finished book.

In the Australian context there has been ample writing on the editing of local First Nations authors. Although there are sound reasons for paying attention to this dynamic, it also speaks to a discrepancy in the reception of these works. The editor is anticipated and then investigated in the case of work by First Nations authors in ways that are not evidenced in responses to settler authors’ work. For the most part, the authors of these studies are operating from a settler subject position believing themselves sensitive to their First Nations

subjects, desirous of understanding and explaining the kinds of peculiar pressures exerted on First Nations authors. However, an unintended consequence of this attention, and the lack of its equivalent for non-First-Nations authors, is the tacit assumption that these authors would be less capable of preparing work for publication while settler authors do not have the same suggested shortcomings.

Social scientists and literary studies scholars Adam Shoemaker (1989), Penny van Toorn (2006), Jennifer Jones (2009) and Michele Grossman (2013) have all explicitly considered the question of what it has meant for First Nations writers to work with non-First Nations editors. For Jones and Shoemaker, their primary focus was on the early publishing of First Nations work in Australia while Grossman and van Toorn worked with their contemporaries both in scholarly and publishing contexts — notably van Toorn partnered with Ruby Langford Ginibi to produce *Haunted by the Past*, a book about Langford Ginibi's son, Nobby (1999). Wiradjuri writer and scholar Anita Heiss addressed the issue in *Dhuuluu-Yala* (2003) and interviewed both Aboriginal writers and editors to develop a picture of the status quo for publishing First Nations authors. Since it remains true that the Australian publishing industry has very few First Nations employees (Driscoll, Bowen 2022), clear-eyed research of these interactions is crucial for respectful work in this sphere. My thesis is the first in-depth examination of the publishing history of *Don't Take Your Love to Town* by Ruby Langford Ginibi and investigates how her editor claimed copyright for the book in the early editions but later her name was removed from contracts granting her royalty payments and from the copyright line on the imprint page. This project explicitly rejects the stated and implicit assumptions that First Nations authors cannot produce literary works without disproportionately intensive help from editors by quoting from archives and showing the ways these authors exercised their agency during the publishing process.

My research also follows in a strong tradition of book history in Australian literary studies. Recently there has been work from Margaret Harris on Patrick White's archive (np), Paul Eggert and Desmond Schmidt on Charles Harpur (2019) and Roger Osborne on Joseph Furphy's *Such is Life*; in each case the scholars draw on the archive to assess carefully the work itself and the drafting process. Susan Sheridan's ongoing commitment to archival work aided the research I have undertaken on Jessica Anderson and Thea Astley. As in other countries, professional editing has not been a primary concern for scholars until recent years when local publishing studies have increased. Australia is now disproportionately represented in publishing journals (Augustyn) and the first two titles in Cambridge University Press' new series on editing have been by Australian authors (Hargrave; Grundy *Editing Fiction*). This thesis draws together book history and publishing studies to make legible some of the connections between edited drafts, author's process and the contingencies of the publishing industry.

### Poetics of Editing

Pivotal to my discussions of editing practice is Susan Greenberg's *A Poetics of Editing*. The first of its kind, this book offers a thoroughgoing investigation of how editing operates and a conceptualisation of what these dynamics mean for creative work. With a background as a professional editor herself, Greenberg also draws on psychology, literary criticism, translation and film studies to describe the negotiations of editorial work. Central to her description of editing practice is the recognition that:

Editing can and must be free to see multiple motives, and yet still make decisions. The text is opened up and then — sometimes sooner, sometimes later, depending on the variables of circumstance — it is closed down again, so that the text can move from private to public. (*Poetics* 246)

There are two movements here — the first is the perception of several options, weighing up the potential results from a given choice and making a determination on anticipated

effects. The second is on pinning down the text and selecting a single version to recommend. There are instances where editors may offer options, but these are less common. Greenberg's figuration of the openings and closings of editing are borne out in Chapter Four when I examine the suggestions Jessica Anderson received from different editors on her novel, *Tirra Lirra by the River*.

Greenberg's characterisation of these dynamics is reflected in a delineation of the roles of author and editor in a letter from Ruth Park to her editor, Beatrice Davis with whom she had worked previously:

I have always known that, like a good Greek actor 'you do not put yourself above your poet.' And whatever my faults and frailties as a writer — which I do most deeply realise — I do also have the good Greek actor's profound feeling ... 'You do not put yourself above the god.' Which is truth.<sup>4</sup>

Park is communicating a clear differentiation here between the editor — who occupies the lowest position, through the author to the 'god': 'truth'. This quote is the title for my thesis since it is a pithily rendered characterisation of the editor's role, from the perspective of an author. In her letters, Park is unfailingly polite, as I will cover in Chapter Two, but there is a steeliness underneath as this delineation demonstrates.

Unlike other methodological descriptions or processes I have considered thus far, Greenberg outlines the work of editors as dynamic, responsive and highly contingent (*Poetics* 19). This thesis takes questions Greenberg raised in the abstract and applies them to the specific, finding concrete examples of the triangulation of editorial labour, the adoption of different roles at different points in the production process and the ways that editors will identify various possibilities of the text before choosing one option to present to the author. When Greenberg posits that editors are participating in a dynamic process, weighing up the

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<sup>4</sup>MLMSS 7638/12 10/11/76

considerations of the publishing company, the market and the author, so this equation is visible in the edits and correspondence for Park's *Swords*. Greenberg argues that the editor's embodiment is an important consideration, and this is evident in the case of Astley's editor for *Multiple Effects* whose age and her specific experiences are legible in the copyedit.

## **The Editor Process**

In this thesis I propose the 'editor process' to delineate the work of the editor as distinct from the author and, in the case of some books, a series of treatments of the work by different embodied actors. While Abram Foley followed from Foucault in his evocation of the 'editor function', I am not only interested in editors acquiring titles, building a list and performing a social, intellectual and aesthetic role as Foley has it. What also enjoys the attention of this thesis is the work of less celebrated editors — copyeditors, proofreaders, production or project editors and as well as their (marginally) more visible peers, commissioning editors and publishers. There are three components to the editor process as I define it. First, that it is embodied — following on from Greenberg and Eggert — and that each edit is undertaken by a person who cannot help but bring their personal, intellectual and emotional history to the project. Secondly, that while an edit enacts significant changes on a text it is also reversible, changeable, something that can be rejected or revised. And lastly the editor process is one of several processes through which a manuscript will pass that change the work — some of these come in advance of first publication and some come after. The editor process affords scholars a way to consider the contributions of editors (whether at structural, copyedit or other levels) as discrete from other parts of the publishing process. Separating these contributions from other developmental aspects of the process describes how the work was produced, what forces exerted pressure on the work and how the factors impacted on the work in advance of publication. I have alighted on 'process' because of its implicit emphasis on change and movement.

## Tracking Editorial Interventions: Textual studies

When looking for methodologies with similar concerns as this project, perhaps the most salient is textual studies where the intersection of bibliographical, ontological, epistemological and ethical queries overlap with the questions I ask in this thesis about the means of production, the agents who contribute and the relationships between people and published books. In this thesis I examine both the pre-publication procedures of editing and production as well as post-publication textual expressions such as the release of different editions.

Medievalists and early modern scholars have been engaging with questions of editing and production since at least the nineteenth century and are comfortable with the idea of a team of individuals contributing to the creation of a literary work (Kleinhenz; Watt). The post-war Anglo-American tradition of textual editing, which begins with WW Greg and *The Rationale of the Copytext* (1950) and is then taken up by Fredson Bowers in *Greg's Rationale of Copy-Text Revisited* (1978) and G Thomas Tanselle's *Greg's Theory of Copy-Text and the Editing of American Literature* (1975), usually involves using an author's archive and various other sources in the interests of determining the author's final intentions with the aim of producing a version of the work that can be useful for scholars and students alike. Their careful comparison of versions and interest in holographs, galleys and published books has informed my process of tracking changes through the different embodiments of each work examined in this thesis.

Greg claimed that a scholarly editor should 'choose whatever extant text may be supposed to represent most nearly that what the author wrote and follow it with the least possible alteration' (21). G Thomas Tanselle was still invested in the use of an author's final intentions in textual editing in 1989 — even though he thought it was polyvalent; in other words, he found that such work 'offers the search for past intentions in all their rich complexity' (59).

Tanselle was also part of the characterisation of an 'implied distinction' in Kathryn Sutherland's words, 'between, on the one hand, an authorially intended idea of the work, and on the other, its realization as a text, where the text can seem no more than a local

manifestation of something that will always elude full expression' (Chapter 2). This reading sees an author's vision and the reality that results from the production process as different versions of the work, and it is this kind of thinking that can lead to representations of professional editors as corruptors or hindrances rather than useful collaborators. Through the course of this study, I too am interested in the author's intentions, however, I also see an editor's contributions as valuable and deserving of both recognition and study.

The 1980s also saw the rise of socially mediated understandings of literary work; in particular contributions from DF McKenzie in his *Bibliography and Sociology of Texts* (1986) and Jerome McGann in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983) shifted discussion in textual studies. McGann finds that, 'A hypnotic fascination with the isolated author has served to foster an overdetermined concept of authorship, but (reciprocally) an underdetermined concept of literary work' (*Critique* 122). In other words, attributing all credit to an individual obfuscates the production process and makes a work seem like a book — a straightforwardly tidy object — equivalent to the tablets that Moses received from God, arriving fully formed and immutable. McGann recognises 'the social dimension which surrounds the process of literary production' (*Critique* 113) and has continued this work into his later projects that are concerned with digital production and the scholarly possibilities and limitations such processes present (2001). These social dimensions play out in my analysis of Ruth Park's depiction of a short-statured character in *Swords and Crowns and Rings* and Thea Astley's *Multiple Effects of Rainshadow*.

Hans Walter Gabler finds common ground with McGann and cautions scholars about the potential dangers of a final-intentions approach. Gabler, who straddles the fields of textual editing and textual studies, argues that textual editors are editing 'not work, but texts' (157). It is important to clarify the distinction between work and texts since, for the most part, I will be speaking of 'work' in this thesis by which I mean a literary creation before it has been

published. Paul Eggert argues that ‘the work emerges not as an object but as a regulative concept that embraces the endless iterations of the text–document dialectic, a dialectic that inevitably involves the workings of agency and takes place over time’ (*The Work* 173). In other words, a literary work can simultaneously be both the holograph and the published edition; it is the unifying idea that is expressed in different ways at different times. Eggert is careful to frame this in such a way as to avoid to invocation of some sort of Platonic ‘ideal’ or a perfect version that exists in an abstract sense, but rather he anchors this thinking in the world of writing, production and circulation. When a scholar such as Eggert is performing scholarly editing, that is producing a version of a text for publication by consulting archives, editions and other versions, he is producing a publication without consulting the author and working according to principles determined by scholarship and personal experience. While such a textual editor is consulting pre-publication materials, the work has already existed for the reading publication and attracted responses of one kind or another. While textual editors should be concerned with both the text and the work, according to Eggert’s formulation, this thesis is predominately concerned with a professional editor in their pre-publication instantiation as their work on reprints or reissues is relatively minor. For the most part their labour is not informed by careful methodological puzzlings out, as in the case of scholars, and instead is the result of on-the-job training, limited by the pressures of deadlines and focused on a general reader. Textual editors are often academics; professional editors, while commonly having university qualifications of one kind or another, are led by practice, not theory, especially given the current industry status quo where there are limited opportunities for training at work and much of this is outsourced to postgraduate study. For many scholarly editions, the anticipated reader is either a student or an academic — at the very least an aficionado — and their reading practices operate accordingly. This friction between different editors’ projects was made visible when Craig Munro, then publisher at the University of

Queensland Press, attended the Editing in Australia conference Paul Eggert convened in 1990. Munro took exception to how professional editors were characterised by academics over the course of the conference. He kept notes (which have been reproduced as endpapers on the conference's publication) and made a rejoinder at the conference itself asking textual editors to rethink their attitudes to his work and that of his peers (Grundy 'Blue Pencils' np). Given my experience as an editor in trade publishing and more recent academic work, I have sympathies with both attitudes and hope to describe an approach in this thesis that draws on wisdom from both kinds of editorial practice.

This thesis argues that a final-intentions approach is unnecessarily limiting given the possibilities afforded by recognising the effects of the social systems and context in which a work is produced. This aligns with the stated position of scholars such as Jerome McGann and Hans Walter Gabler, even though there remains some tension between their espoused positions and their practical realisation in scholarly editions. Perhaps because of the limitations of textual editing, both Gabler and McGann can seem to slip into practising a final-intentions-style practice in their own work. As Eggert calls efforts to determine an author's intentions a 'quixotic' enterprise (*Securing the Past* 190) perhaps textual editors continue to tilt at windmills since McGann has spent a decade producing a digital archive of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's work (2000–2007) to trace his drafting process and when Gabler was producing an edition of *Ulysses*, he strove to represent 'the work, as a text, in as close an editorial approximation as possible to what James Joyce wrote' (161). In each case, while it may appear on the surface that an author's written word holds a privileged position in their project, their contributions are more nuanced and concerned with offering different versions to afford a reader the opportunity to make their own divinations about the work. Gabler is simultaneously providing the apparatus for viewing versions and a readable text in his edited edition of *Ulysses* and McGann is also offering readers possible iterations of Rossetti's work

rather than simply creating definitive versions. This thesis continues in this tradition, taking up a very broad definition of the work and concerning itself both the pre-publication versions, in which professional editors intervene, and those that exist through publication and public reception in which I note the biographical, market and social influences on a work.

In his 1991 book, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, Jack Stillinger seeks to reconsider the work of textual editing after making the acknowledgement that a work is not produced by an individual in isolation. He argues, ‘there is a basic contradiction between the theorists’ single-author standard for interpreting and editing and the way much of our literature has been, and continues to be, produced’ (202). Of particular relevance for this project is both the respect he affords editors and his recognition of those other than editors who nevertheless take on that role over the course of a book’s progress from manuscript to book as in the case of Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie*, which received attention, intervention and support from Dreiser’s friend and his wife (157). Stillinger proposes a model of ‘versioning’ to reconcile the demands of textual editing and the irrefutable contributions of non-authorial agents (200). He argues that scholars should be mindful of the different incarnations of a work over the course of its production in order to better understand its interests, aims and how these are realised. Eggert is unconvinced by Stillinger’s ‘versional editing’ because it ‘removes the possibility of literary or biographical criticism linked to the textual agent. In effect it removes agency and its contents from the equation. Or more accurately, to look at the question and dismisses it’ (*Securing* 197). In contrast, I take Stillinger to offer a system in which he is concerned with identifying the different contributions of the author and others involved in the process to better understand literary work — the way I locate these contributions is through acknowledging and consulting different versions. In this way I see Stillinger as noticing the question of who holds agency and keeping it front of mind, rather than dismissing it as Eggert contends. Perhaps Stillinger’s case would have been more

persuasive to scholars such as Eggert if he had acknowledged existing concepts of ‘versions’ in textual editing scholarship as described by Hans Zeller (1975) and others. Versions have continued to be a key framework for textual studies scholars such as John Bryant in *The Fluid Text* (2002) in which he argues against the easy habit of considering that books are stable objects and instead recognising that variations describe the relationships between the work and the world.

As Meredith McGill describes in her essay, ‘Echocriticism’, the connections between the work and the world can be made visible through particular attention to reprints and the kinds of information they can impart; she finds that literary scholars miss useful and salient detail when they ignore reprints (4). This thesis follows her recommendation to be alive to the possibilities of studying reprints given that such attention can reveal not only of the kinds of errors or impediments that texts in the recent past exhibit or experienced — such as in the case of Jessica Anderson’s novel published with printer’s errors in the US that were replicated in the UK edition — but also the critical information about contested authorship in the case of Ruby Langford Ginibi’s *Don’t Take Your Love to Town*. The first edition of *Don’t Take* listed the book’s editor as a co-copyright holder on the imprint page and on the back cover but by the thirteenth edition her name no longer appeared in the book’s paratexts. Tugging at these threads of literary history proves revelatory.

From my experience as a literary editor and from my work with the archives of prize-winning authors and in line with other work on editing (Ginna 2017), I understand a professional editor’s labour as directed to make the published text its best version through interventions that are usually invisible. This is the opposite to the textual editing tradition of putting editors’ work ‘on full display’ as McGann puts it (*Textual Condition* 84). This thesis then renders formerly invisible editorial interventions visible and adopts the concerns and

methodologies of textual editing with a particular focus on professional editing to generate fresh readings of literary work and offer new approaches for literary study.

This thesis takes up concerns evident in recent scholarship from Janneke Adema. Her *Living Books* (2021), though focused on scholarly publishing, picks up similar questions to those that occupy this thesis: namely, how do scholars think about authorship, how do the means of production affect the work and how do these separate but intertwined threads influence the ways in which scholars read and discuss texts. These concerns also occupy a recent issue of *Textual Cultures* (2022) in which I can see that textual editing is broadening in scope to give due attention to work of authors from marginalised or underrepresented backgrounds as Mathelinda Nabugodi suggests in ‘Editing Otherwise’. In ‘Editing as a Creative Act’ Emily Orley poses a string of questions as a provocation to reimagine how editing can be a way of opening out possibilities rather than a tool to create a definitive edition. This thesis uses the openness of contemporary textual studies, the recognition that authorship is often collaborative and the relationship between the text and the world is not unidirectional to unfurl new readings of both the works and the texts that make up the six case studies of my project. The published book can bring about change in the world just as revised editions or reprints reflect the effects of the world on the text.

### **Sociology of the Book and Publishing Studies**

Robert Darnton’s ‘communications circuit’ remains a useful reminder of the many individuals and companies involved in the production, circulation and reception of a book. Darnton places editors alongside other agents such as booksellers and printers to explain both how a book comes into existence and how its circulation effects readers’ responses. I accept his invitation to pay attention to the contributions of a range of agents who contribute to the life of a book — both before its birth into print and afterwards. In 1982, Darnton posited that:

...the parts do not take on their full significance unless they are related to the whole, and some holistic view of the book as a means of communication seems necessary if book history is to avoid being fragmented into esoteric specialisations, cut off from each other by arcane techniques and mutual misunderstanding. (67)

In ‘What is the History of Books’, Darnton names printers, shippers, booksellers, readers and, naturally, authors and publishers and others and through the simple act of naming opens possibilities for recognition and interrogation of these agents’ contributions. For this thesis I have taken Darnton’s circuit as an invitation to not only consider the labour of an editor for a given book but also to look at the work of project editors, those in-house employees tasked with shepherding a book through the production process, copyeditors as well as structural editors and those who operate as editors even in cases where they are not employed to do so. For the purposes of this project, it was not always possible to investigate the labour of each of these agents for each book but, where possible, I follow the trails discernible in the archives, on the imprint pages and in the reviews, and consider the various contributions of the many individuals involved in the transmogrification of a work from manuscript to printed book. Since 1982 when Darnton’s circuit was first included in a journal article, there have been some updates, notably Padmini Ray Murray and Claire Squires’ ‘revised communications circuit’ (np) that includes a literary agent — an addition that is relevant to my discussion of Kate Jennings’ networks in Chapter Seven. Notably, for Ray Murray and Squires, editors are again one node in their circuit and their position remains unchanged, despite the additions of other agents.

The other components to Darnton’s communications circuit are the elements in the middle of his ovoid shape (Figure 1) including publicity, political and legal sanctions and economic and social conjuncture (68).

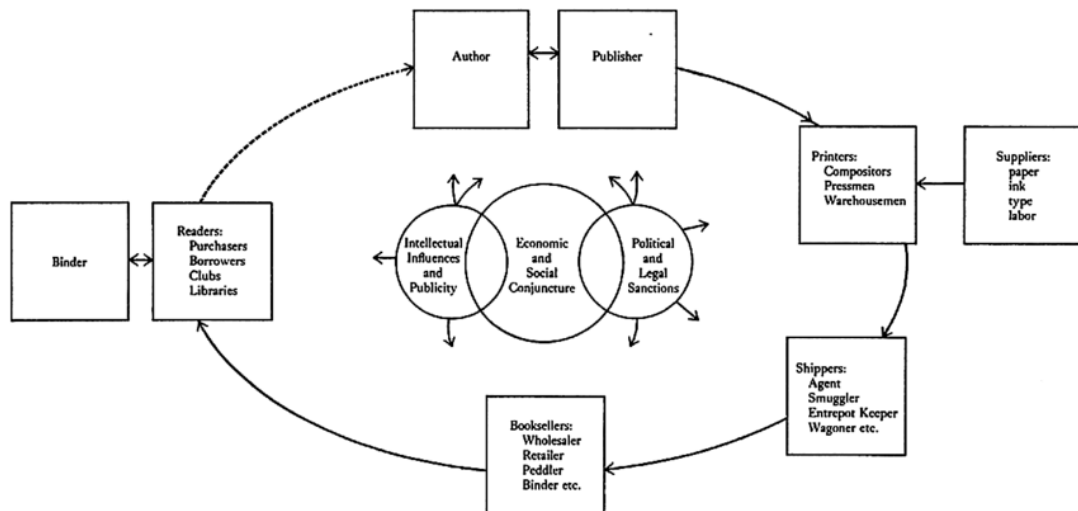


Figure 1

Here book history meets with sociology of the book in efforts to examine the relationships between books and the world and the omnidirectional nature of these entanglements: book affects society affects book affects society. This aligns with DF McKenzie's work in *Bibliography and Sociology of Texts*. In his close reading of 'The Intentional Fallacy', McKenzie checked the provenance of the epigraph Wimsatt and Beardsley use at the start of the work only to find that it has not been correctly transliterated and the word 'wrought' appears as 'wrote' (19). He goes on to argue that the 'misreading has become an historical document in its own right' (22). Just as texts are made by the world, they in turn go on to make the world and careful uncovering of textual provenance leads to better understanding both of the means of production and the effects of production. Work of the kind this thesis undertakes is not simply interrogating literary works but also helping to form an understanding of the situations that led to their creation. For Jennings, this helps me reconstruct feminism of the 1980s and 90s in Australia and for Thea Astley I come to a more nuanced picture of settler and First Nations relations around the same time.

Moving from the more general perspective of considering the full circuit, this thesis draws on scholarship on authorship and how this role has been figured in the recent past to tease out the implications an editor's involvement in the production of a text. There is no

disjunction between the study of editing and the study of authorship; for editing studies scholar Susan Greenberg, ‘... editing is not so much a radical break with authorship but on a continuum, involved in a process in which different agents take turns to join the same three-way conversation’ (*Poetics of Editing* 237). Indeed, the arbitrary separation of individual authorship from editing labour can lead to false conclusions. Michel Foucault marks the Middle Ages as a point where a shift to anonymity for scientific writing was a means to generate authority but that:

At the same time, however, ‘literary’ discourse was acceptable only if it carried an author’s name; every text of poetry or fiction was obliged to state its author and the date, place and circumstance of its writing. The meaning and value attributed to the text depended on this information. (21)

According to Martha Woodmansee, who takes something of a different position, ‘The shift from the concept of all involved in production as equally deserving of pay and credit to the author as primarily responsible began, in earnest towards the end of the 1700s’ (49). The legal change that has shaped our understanding of authorship is the introduction of copyright law as Christine Haynes comments (drawing on Zionkowski, Hammond and Siskin, 302). Before copyright, the individual author was of less concern than the work itself as Leslee Thorne-Murphy finds in her study of Charlotte M Yonge’s publishing history (80–103). While the book-buying public in the time before copyright might have been interested to read work in a series, they may not have paid attention to the author responsible for the work. When copyright made creative work property then authorship changed irrevocably since there had to be a named party responsible for the work and to whom the benefits should go. In Chapter Six I examine a copyright dispute that plays out the kinds of material, ethical and personal repercussions for the correct attribution of creative work.

When scholars focus on individual authorship, the contributions of all other agents involved in book production move to the background. From a legal perspective, the common practices of professional editing could entitle editors to a share of the copyright — as legal scholars Lionel Bentley and Laura Biro noted in descriptions of Max Perkins' role in *The Great Gatsby* (2014 254) — however, as they also note, editors do not make this claim either rhetorically or financially. In other words, copyright law and editorial practice are not aligned both for practical and aesthetic reasons. First, authors may be reluctant to enter into relationships where authorial credit is attributed to editors given the history of this relationship and the expectation of attribution. Secondly, it is editorial practice to defer to authors' desires, vision and expectations. Again, I will return to this in more detail in Chapter Six and the discussions of Ruby Langford Ginibi's 'editor', who was written into the publishing contract, as a copyright holder.

A more contemporary logic of publishing is contingent on emphasising individual ownership and the importance of the single author in order to mask the reality that so many people are involved in a book when it is published by a multinational firm. Even with a smaller, independent press, there will likely be at least two editors who are part of the process. Dan Sinykin argues in a 2017 essay entitled 'The Conglomerate Era', the concealment of all those involved in the production of a book helps to maintain romantic notions in the general public of the author and how they create a book. I can find a commonality here, between the reading public and the tendency in academic scholarship to elevate the individual author to the exclusion of all other contributions. As Christine Haynes notes, much of the work around authorship continues to operate as if the idea of the genius is unshakable:

Whether conceptualized as a discourse-function (as in Foucauldian theory), an intertextual construction (as in New Historicist criticism), an actor in a 'communications circuit' (as in book history), or a position in a 'literary field' (as in

cultural sociology), the author is still often depicted in literary scholarship as an individual, autonomous, and inspired figure. (291)

Editors, in part given their aforementioned self-effacement, contribute to the cult of individual authorship and may not keep careful records of their suggestions. Indeed, in many cases it is not possible to trace these networks and determine the differing kinds of interventions. This thesis demonstrates the benefits of archival examination and is the result of an Australian government scholarship. The luxury of time in the archives is increasingly difficult to wrangle but despite these potential impediments, this thesis strives to demonstrate the value of archival research for literary and publishing studies.

The fact that many literary scholars do not engage with the work of professional editors, may in part be a result of the behaviours and practices of the editors themselves. One of the most famously interventionist aforementioned American editors of the twentieth century, Maxwell Perkins:

professed a philosophy of editorial self-effacement, consistently maintaining, as he remarked to a group of extension students at New York University a year before he died, that ‘an editor does not add to a book. At best he serves as a hand maiden to an author. Don’t ever get to feeling important about yourself, because an editor at most releases energy. He creates nothing.’ (Stillinger 150)

This is despite the fact that Perkins was responsible for making changes at all levels of a text — from developing characterisation and plot through to establishing style; at the macro level, Perkins shaped Thomas Woolfe’s ‘truckload’ of pages into the publishable novel *Look Homeward Angel* (Berg 130) and at the micro level he suggested Gatsby’s verbal tic ‘old sport’, (Stillinger 49)). While the editors themselves may choose to obscure their contributions to authors’ work, evidence of the degree and significance of editorial intervention is obvious in the archive. And the significance is manifest. As Stillinger notes:

An editor who gives this much help to an author is ultimately responsible for the difference between the existence and the nonexistence of a book. Small wonder that numerous authors and publishers (if not literary scholars) have recognized the central importance of editors to their success. (154)

Where literary scholars have a history of addressing the role of editors in publishing a given book is in relation to for First Nations authors. For Sally Morgan and Ruby Langford Ginibi, in reviews of the books and, to a lesser extent, in the criticism that has followed since, authorship is repeatedly discussed either in the sense of assuming greater editorial interventions than other authors would receive or critiquing such work. The implication is that First Nations authors would be incapable of producing books without disproportionately interventionist contributions from editors. After having read widely through existing scholarship for the six cases studies in this thesis, I confirm that editorial labour is very rarely the subject of comment for settler authors and in those cases only related to typos or infelicities rather than to questions of the development of the work. As my research shows, assumptions that editorial labour is minor or undeserving of attention for these books are misguided. It is the contributions of these different agents that enables the creation, and to use Bourdieu's term, the *consecration* of a given work. He finds:

The ideology of creation, which makes the author the first and last source of the value of his work, conceals the fact that the cultural businessmen (art dealer, publisher etc.) is at one and the same time the person who exploits the labour of the 'creator' by trading in the 'sacred' and the person who, by putting it on the market, by exhibiting, publishing or staging it, consecrates a product which he has 'discovered'; and which would otherwise remain a mere natural resource; and the more consecrated he personally is, the more strongly he consecrates the work. (76–7)

Without the publisher and/or editor's transubstantiation of a manuscript into a book, the author does not come into being, but it is this same movement of creation that hides the publisher from the book's target audience. James English's argument that sociology of literature 'stealthily advances on many fronts and seems now ... to be arriving at a point of especially rich potential as both sociology and literary studies turn toward new, more rigorously "descriptive" or "pragmatic" approaches' (xii) is a guiding principle for this research. When English writes 'pragmatic', I take him to mean an approach that is less occupied with the metaphysical qualities of a work and instead concerned with the means of production of a literary work. Taking the potential energy, captured at the meeting point of sociology and literary studies, I exploit this opportunity in the chapters that follow.

### **Genetic Criticism**

While textual studies has historically been an Anglo-American and German tradition, genetic criticism largely started in France and offers another methodological toolkit for this thesis.

Where genetic criticism differs from textual editing is first with a foregrounding of material that does not appear in the text itself and secondly in affording a different kind of attention to the contributions non-authorial agents, such as editors. In my discussion of textual editing, I focused on the Anglo-American tradition as that has been most influential in the English-speaking world. Crossing the channel/pond, I encounter genetic criticism, which was initially a project that arose from the need to develop methodologies around the use of new archives. Genetic criticism takes up a range of materials that contribute to an author's drafting process to inform scholarship of the finished book. Proponents included Louis Hay whose work on Heinrich Heine's archives are some of the early instantiations of this project (Deppman et al 7). This methodology was further solidified as a result of attempts to find an appropriate means to analyse the French poet Louis Aragon's materials that had been donated to the

Institute des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes which became a Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique laboratory (Lecompte np). According to Hay:

To say that the text is marked by social structures, ideologies and cultural traditions is to say that it continues to speak to them, that in its warp and woof we can read, at every moment, the truth of the time. Or rather a certain truth since the cultural imprint is inscribed in each text in a specific fashion. (23)

He uses the archives as a kind of Rosetta stone that helps me read the circumstances in which the book was produced. Such decoding is a practice I use when examining the drafting, editing and multiple incarnations of ‘High Horses’, an essay by Kate Jennings. Through archival work I find both personal and professional influences on her feminist text.

Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden disambiguate genetic criticism from textual editing in their introduction to *Genetic Criticism: Texts and avant-texts*: ‘Genetic criticism comes closest to textual criticism when it presents — edits — a manuscript or part of a document for presentation in print, but this presentation is only part of a broader goal of reconstructing and analysing a chain of writing events’ (11). There is an assumption of cause and effect in this process: that by looking at various inputs it is possible to read their effects in the finished book. By considering a range of events, including the work of editors, genetic criticism has an insightful contribution to make to literary studies. However, this field tends to replicate the focus on the single author and their vision, as some textual editors continue to perpetuate — even in instances where they claim to be acting otherwise. In his book, *The Art of Editing*, Tim Groenland interrogates the potential limits of genetic criticism finding that ‘While the terms of the inquiry attempt to open the text to multiple readings, this is effected only by using the author-figure to delimit the space in which this is possible; in the attempt to dissolve the stable text, the genetic critic invariably invokes a stable author’ (13). He continues, ‘A recurring thread in my analysis is the way the editorial presence illuminates the

persistence of this paradigm of single authorship in the reception and criticism of contemporary fiction in the face of the poststructuralist truism of the author's disappearance' (13–4). I develop on Groenland's approach by not simply considering the author and the editor but the set of editors who contribute to a work as well as the publisher and other agents involved in the process.

Genetic critical research can help position the text in its social and cultural context and using the insights gained from this positioning to better understand the conditions in which it was produced and also the world that it depicted. This recognises what Paul Eggert has coined 'ideological absorbency' (*Securing the Past* 157), the evidence of the world that produced the book as shown by the book itself. The editing of Thea Astley's novel, *Multiple Effects*, is an excellent example of the ways that texts are revised during the production process to fit with cultural norms. This thesis enacts genetic criticism in a similar way to the work by Thomas Pynchon scholars Luc Herman and John M Krafft. Their 2007 essay, 'Fast Learner: The Typescript of Pynchon's *V.* at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin' employs genetic criticism to examine the author-editor dynamic. Importantly, they had access to all editor Corlies Smith's correspondence with Pynchon, which 'proved invaluable, since [the letters] provide the key to the connection between the Ransom Center's typescript and the published novel' (2). According to Herman and Krafft:

the many substantial cuts do warrant further detailed examination, not just for their technical but also for their ideological dimension. We are thinking, for example, of the reduction of McClintic Sphere, and of the cuts relating to the theme of marriage. This work to come will deepen, complicate, and perhaps correct the image of Pynchon some readers have derived from the published works. (18)

Krafft and Herman's genetic critical approach adds detail to our understanding of the text — for example the character McClintic Sphere and the depiction of marriage. By

examining the changes that the manuscript underwent during the progression from holograph to printed book, a scholar can answer questions or challenge assumptions about a text, as well as what effects the editorial changes had on the work. In the case of the Pynchon archives, Krafft and Herman went on to write further articles considering the depiction of race and further examinations of gender in *V*. Through analysis of the construction of Sphere as well as investigations of representations of gender and race<sup>5</sup>, their work shows the ways in which such archival mining yields rich critical results. Their work is an example of the kind of analysis that I conduct in recognising both the author's drafts and the editors' interventions, rather than simply and automatically privileging one over the other. From Jessica Anderson's responses to copyedits, it is clear that the edits did not align with her desire to create a sophisticated reimagined chronology for her character's life, and the scholarship that praises her experiments with chronology vindicates her choice. On the other hand, for Kate Jennings, when her editor suggested she remove elements such as a dictionary definition and other tangential material, she assessed these comments on their merits and accepted some while discarding others. This thesis is interested not simply in an author's intentions or privileging the response of an editor but instead working to understand how it came to take its final form.

This thesis takes a similar approach to Krafft and Hermann in that I use the material from the manuscripts, typescripts and proofs to help reframe existing orthodoxies on Australian literary works and consider questions posed by the scholarship such as, why does Ruth Park portray Cushie Moy's father in such a limited, distant fashion and what is the significance of the editor's suggestion to change sections in *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* by Thea Astley from first to third person? For each of these authors, their careful collection,

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<sup>5</sup> cf Krafft and Hermann's contributions to the critical books on Pynchon, *Dream Tonight of Peacock Tails* (2015) and *Thomas Pynchon Sex and Gender* (2018).

collation and eventual donation of research materials to libraries has ensured that researchers like me can produce a picture of the genesis of their writing.

It is worthwhile both for the purposes of this thesis and for scholarship that incorporates archival research more broadly to consider Louis Hay's suggestion that 'Perhaps we should consider the text as *a necessary possibility*, as one manifestation of a process which is always virtually present in the background, a kind of third dimension of the written work' (75). Studying the archives surfaces the negotiations that lead to the published version through the author's responses to edits and their acceptance or rejection of suggested changes. Whether or not scholars consider the process of production, their effects and implications for the book are present. As I note in relation to several the cases in this thesis, when scholars ignore this 'third dimension' they can easily reach false conclusions.

In Chapters Three and Six I use the archives collated by Ruth Park and Thea Astley to interrogate how historical research as revealed through their notes, clippings and drafting processes reveals key information about their work. This offers insight into the texts' ideological absorbency by deploying genetic criticism to develop a picture of the conditions in which, or through which, the author drafted. By examining the genesis of these projects, I can better assemble a picture of what the authors were working to achieve and how that relates to the reception of their works. Park's historical research and wrestling with the question of how to represent a short-statured character offer the potential for new readings of *Swords and Crowns and Rings*. Using the tools of genetic criticism to consider Astley's archive leads to a revisioning of her writing First Nations characters and her sensitivity to questions of appropriation and representation. Piecing together the genesis of Kate Jennings' drafting process for essays in *Bad Manners* is a different process. Rather than uncovering historical sources or returning to material that inspired her writing, in the case of 'High Horses' I reveal the different feedback that she received and use her responses (either accepting or rejecting

the suggestion) either encouraged her to develop her ideas or made her disinclined to accept the changes. In each case, genetic critical scholarship opens new possibilities for reading and examining the authors' work.

## **Archives**

Archives, and their materiality, create the possibility for the kind of research I undertake in this thesis; any work on editing is predicated on access to an author's archives. While Derrida's oft-invoked 'archive fever' (1996) has been one of the touchpoints for theorisation of the archive for the past thirty years, it is only one aspect that influences the research in this thesis. In *Paper Machine* (2005) he ventures into the sociology of the book, finding that the archive can reveal 'writing, the modes of inscription, production and reproduction, the work and its working, the support, the market economy and the economics of storage, the law, politics and so on' (5). In this figuration, Derrida draws together some of the contributing methodologies I have addressed in this introduction including textual studies, genetic criticism and authorship. Archives offer an opportunity first to notice and secondly to interrogate how a book reached its published form.

The archive is not inert. Scholars who have pursued the 'material turn', as described by James English (2010) have often found that the archive is not a static or overdetermined presence but that archives are 'formed and altered through material contact as well as archival context' (Stuchel 6). It is not simply the words on the page that generate my interpretation of editorial labour but also the kinds of materials the archives hold. That Susan Hampton rewrote, by hand, pages and pages of the Langford Ginibi manuscript immediately communicates the laboriousness of this process and suggests that such actions may well produce the idea that she was a co-author as opposed to an editor. The very material of the archive speaks loudly, as well as the content of the holographs. For Kate Jennings, the predominance of now-fading faxes and steady but largely trivial email correspondence shows

the shifts in communication models for writers of her generation, the relative transience and permanence of different kinds of materials, their affordances and gaps that enliven this project with detail and unintended signals about production, communication and the shifts in technology over the course of these writers' lives.

Unlike the Mitchell holdings of Jennings' drafts and other material, the Thea Astley archives have been the subject of study for several scholars, in part thanks to grants from the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland. Such attention, however, has not always led to fulsome consideration of their contents as I demonstrate in Chapter Three, where I show that a careful genetic critical approach to her work reveals that pre-existing descriptions of her First Nations characters are limited and, in some cases, incorrect. The social context that the scholar brings with them can limit their ability to soundly interrogate archival contents. As Thomas Richards argues in *The Imperial Archive*, 'Like power, information does not exist in a vacuum. It has to be made and used' (73). Previous scholars of Astley's work have used her archive as part of an argument that her treatment of First Nations characters became more progressive over the course of her writing life but existing examinations of the editorial work in *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* proves this to be inaccurate. As Māori scholar Alice Te Punga Somerville argues, 'We collectively constitute archives. We create them and tend them through our engagements with specific sources alongside each other' (121). In other words, the researcher's interests and attitudes necessarily affect what they find in the archive and how they interpret it — and naturally I am no exception. As Chapter Three demonstrates, the concerns, predispositions and personal history of previous researchers of Thea Astley's archive at the Fryer Library, University of Queensland meant they saw the editorial labour on the typescripts, but none considered it worthy of detailed engagement and none reflected on the meaning and import of the suggestions. I read this as a product of the book historical tendency to diminish the role of the professional editor — in line with textual editing — and

in part a result of the wider academic concerns of the times scholars were conducting their research.

In *Paper, Materiality and the Archived Page* Maryanne Dever contends that archives are often enlivened by inclusions as well as absences, as her consideration of a blank card in Marlene Dietrich's archive demonstrates (41). Dever asks scholars to consider not just what archives hold but what they can *do* (102) — a particularly salient point when I come to consider the presence of Aboriginal people in the archive and the cohabitant horrors and possibilities of these holdings. Narungga poet and scholar Natalie Harkin's work with her grandmother's records are a reclamation of personal history through a synthesis of poetic composition and scholarly analysis. The archives are not dry, inanimate papers but it is in these boxes, folders and files that:

We gain insight into intimate conversations, letters, behaviours and movements, juxtaposed with categorisations of people, places, landscapes and objects. These records are our memories and lives; material, visceral, flesh and blood. The State wounds and our records bleed. I travel through my own Nanna's records and recognise that we have never lived outside the State, and this very act of recognition continues the wounding. (4)

At the same moment that First Nations authors use archives as an opportunity to rework histories, accessing these materials continues some of the violence inflicted by settlers on generations that came before.

Over the past decade there have been several essay collections from First Nations poets, particularly women, that draw on the archive as part of their creative practice. Notable examples include Wiradjuri poet and scholar Jeanine Leane's *Walk Back Over* (2018), Narungga poet Natalie Harkin's *Archival Poetics* (2019) and Noongar and Yawuru poet Elfie Shiosaki's *Homecoming* (2021). Part of the effect of these collections seems to be a reckoning

with a past that has been interrupted by settler-colonial interventions such as forced removal of children and forced relocation from Country. In a situation where colonial structures have attempted to sever many of the connections to family and Country, these poets initiate an ‘entanglement’, as Leane calls it in an essay on Bundjalung poet and critic Evelyn Araluen’s work, where the First Nations author uses the colonial tools for First Nations purposes (*Staring Back* np). This operates in a correlative way when Ruby Langford Ginibi uses the structures of the Western archive to create a new record of First Nations experiences and, consistent with her work during her lifetime, educates scholars and any reader who cares to engage by inviting them to go and look at her archive (Barnes 12). Where the state has regularly intervened and disconnected First Nations people from their Country, the archive offers a site of potential reclamation and reinscription of history.

In large part, the choice of subjects for this thesis has been determined by access to and richness of archives. The kinds of analysis that I have conducted largely rely upon correspondence, drafts and other publishing ephemera. The best-case scenario is the existence of drafts ranging from holographs through edited typescripts to galleys and accompanying correspondence, however, it was also possible to unearth valuable and novel insights into the authors in this study and their texts with relatively scant resources: in the case of Sally Morgan a single copyedited typescript offered ample opportunity for new insights into her oeuvre. This process of considering the contribution of editing is worthwhile even in the cases where limited prepublication materials are extant.

One of the most comprehensive archives that I encountered is that of Ruby Langford Ginibi. It takes up significant physical space in the Mitchell Library. Historian Mark McKenna has noted that First Nations people walk in and out of the archive — meaning they are visible in colonial records for prisons or hospitals but otherwise largely unseen by the official colonial gaze (117). Langford Ginibi’s archive works against this by including letters

from her children while they were incarcerated and a clear record of her drafting process which is relevant for those keen to understand how she came into conflict with her 'editor' Susan Hampton, as I will explore in Chapter Six. In the context of Dever's encouragement to consider what an archive can do, I can see that Langford Ginibi's is a kind of activism, consonant with the work she undertook speaking at schools and universities.

Ruth Park's archive, and the conditions of its access reveal the author's attitude to her own oeuvre and her expectation of researchers examining these materials. On commencing my research, most of her archive was not open and it was with the permission of her literary executor and agent, Tim Curnow, that I was able to access certain nominated boxes and folders on the condition that he and some of Park's descendants review any work I produce in advance of publication. What has given me confidence in writing and sharing details from the archive (both for Park and for other authors considered in this thesis) is first the knowledge that Park would not have created such a resource had she not anticipated a future researcher. Secondly, her archive includes notes directed at this imagined researcher that argue for a given interpretation. Naturally any archive has more omissions than inclusions, especially in the age of paper communication as in the second half of the twentieth century. My examination of archival material is always undertaken with the understanding that these authors have had the opportunity to collate, coordinate and cohere their material, with the help of archivists, into the form that I can access. The archives are constructed in their version of events and future work may well uncover more information; therefore this work is always provisional.

To complete this discussion of archives, it is worth addressing attention to the institutions that house archives and recognise the changes in these spaces, their limitations and affordances. The Mitchell Library at the State Library of New South Wales, which holds the Anderson, Park, Langford Ginibi and Jennings collections, has an unusual requirement in

accessing archives: a ‘pain and embarrassment’ undertaking. While all libraries have different means to regulate access to potentially sensitive materials, the Mitchell’s form asks the signee to agree not to cause ‘pain or embarrassment’ to living people in their written or spoken sharing of archival contents. Where this undertaking becomes contentious is in considering competing pain and embarrassment that may occur — as in the case of Langford Ginibi. The archive includes letters from ‘editor’ Susan Hampton that may well cause embarrassment, however, I have chosen to quote from them given the significance as a historical record and a potential warning to well-intentioned non-First Nations editors working with First Nations authors.

### **Six Case Studies from Post-war Australia**

Since this thesis is dedicated to Australian authors, and women authors in particular, each case study creates an opportunity to re-examine existing scholarship afresh. It is a common claim in Australian literary studies that a given author’s oeuvre is understudied and this is indeed true for several of the authors in the thesis, in particular Kate Jennings and Jessica Anderson. This thesis, then, goes some way to redressing that gap. On the other hand, Sally Morgan’s *My Place* has attracted a particularly large body of scholarship but with the emergence of more First Nations authors and, given some of the existing critiques of the work, particularly from other First Nations writers, scholarly attention to *My Place* has waned in recent years. As Katherine Bode notes in *Reading by Numbers*, even though the number of women writers being published overtook men in the Australian publishing context by the 2000s, the criticism remained disproportionately skewed to male authors (133–4). This phenomenon is exacerbated for writers whose work was not taken seriously by critics such as Ruth Park or Ruby Langford Ginibi. In recent years there has been some improvement in the public sphere as Julieanne Lamond and Melinda Harvey have shown (np) but until there is an equivalent updated study on criticism, I can only hope that such an improvement has

also occurred in the academic space — though would not be surprised should such a study prove the contrary. This thesis, then, is a small contribution to remedying the gender balance in its exclusive choice of women authors.

Almost since the beginning of Western publishing of First Nations work, settler scholars and commentators have reduced the agency of First Nations authors as Anita Heiss, Penny van Toorn and others have noted. While dedicating two chapters of this thesis to the editing and publishing history of First Nations authors may seem to replicate this pattern, instead my research demonstrates the agency of these First Nations authors in their drafting and their responses to editorial and publishing processes. Further, I have endeavoured to follow contemporary best-practice of foregrounding First Nations scholarship when engaging with the work of First Nations authors (Janke). Following on from Goenpul woman, Aileen Moreton Robinson's standpoint theory, I acknowledge that I am operating from the position of an Anglo-Australian woman and the attendant limitations on my understanding such a position entails (2020).

As an Australian editor with knowledge of local publishing, the opportunity to focus on local authors and the local industry was my first prompt in determining the subjects of study for this thesis. This decision was vindicated by the importance of being able to access archives, especially given limitations on overseas travel during the pandemic. Aside from a desire to focus on writers whose work has attracted both reviews and scholarship, that has remained in print and been taught at various levels, I was eager to choose authors whose work is open for researchers which, for the most part, meant authors who have passed away. This also afforded me the opportunity to work with paper archives which is useful given the complications of accessing and examining digital archives.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Aside from the fact that many contemporary authors do not keep files of separate versions of their work, accessing digital archives requires different practices and skill sets than paper archives (cf Dever; McGann *Radiant Textuality*).

In Chapter One I trace through the archival record to find what path led to the publication of Ruth Park's *Swords and Crowns and Rings* (1977). Park was born in New Zealand and moved to Australia to continue her career as a journalist. Here she married D'Arcy Niland and the two determined to make livings as writers (*Fence* 373–6). With a first novel that was a major commercial success thanks in no small part to winning a *Sydney Morning Herald* prize and being syndicated in the newspaper, Park made a living writing for the radio, for children and through adult novels as she describes in her memoir (*Fishing the Styx*). This range of writing and having a 'pulp' publisher for editions of some of her novels may have led to Park's peripheral position in Australian letters and relatively sparse coverage in literary scholarship. The novel, *Swords*, was published after Park's husband had died and when she was running a bookshop on Norfolk Island. It received one of Australia's highest literary accolades, the Miles Franklin award, and sold well as evidenced by its reissue in B-format. This chapter shows that Park resisted cuts to the book from her editor, Beatrice Davis, despite knowing that her agent had found it more difficult to find a publisher for the novel than some of her other works. The knowledge that several publishers rejected a book may have prompted an author to accept editorial input, recognising that they have limited options for publication. Nevertheless, Park rejected suggestions that would have cut Park's characterisation of her short-statured character, Jackie. This resistance, I argue, demonstrates a kind of advocacy that Park enacts on Jackie's behalf as she strives to represent disability with sensitivity.

In Chapter Two I turn to Thea Astley's *Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* (1996). Unlike Park, Astley's works feature in Australia's literary canon not least because she has won four Miles Franklin Literary Awards. Born in Queensland, Astley trained as a teacher before moving to Sydney and tutoring at Macquarie University for many years (Lamb 12–3; 219). The author of fifteen novels and two short story collections, her prose is distinctive for its rich

descriptions, laconic wit and frequent use of a polyphonic narrative mode. Several scholars celebrate her work for becoming increasingly progressive in representations of First Nations people, but this chapter demonstrates that is not straightforwardly true since she read Birri Gubba man Peter Prior's account of events on Palm Island in the 1930s written in standard English by his daughter Renarta, *Straight from the Yudaman's Mouth* (1993) and converted them into an invented Aboriginal English. In this chapter I also define one of the roles of professional editors as the 'social barometer', guiding the author into the potential adoption of new societal norms since Astley's editor changed sections of the novel written in first person from the perspective of First Nations characters to third person. As this change adds some distance between the narrator and author Astley's editor was working to reduce the possibility of readers' accusations that the author was appropriating First Nations stories. As a much younger woman and an editor who is au fait with the social norms of the time, Rose was in the position of social barometer communicating the atmospheric conditions to Astley.

In Chapter Three I examine the publishing and editing history of Jessica Anderson's *Tirra Lirra by the River* (1978). Like Astley, Anderson spent much of her life in Sydney but unlike Astley she did not join the literary scene attending festivals and events (Margaret Jones np). Anderson's early writing for was radio; she started writing novels in her forties — the first two of which were published in the UK before she found local success with *Tirra Lirra*. Anderson sent a draft to her former editor in the UK who, with a single sentence, made a suggestion that resulted in Anderson's converting *Tirra Lirra* from a short story into a novel. However, once the book was being edited by staff at its publisher, Anderson hit editorial difficulty as the suggestions so contravened her vision for the work that she asked for them to be 'cancelled'. This chapter highlights the extraordinary range of editorial interventions that can be minor and of great use or detailed but working at odds with the author's project.

The remaining three case studies are non-fiction, starting with Chapter Four and Palyku author Sally Morgan's *My Place*. Published in 1987, *My Place* quickly became a cultural phenomenon, going to sell more than 500,000 copies. This debut work of life-writing chronicles Morgan's childhood and subsequent discovery of her Aboriginal heritage then features sections told from the perspective of her great uncle, her mother and her grandmother. While, as I have noted, the archival record for this work is very sparse, it nevertheless reveals details that contradict existing commonly held views about the means of production for this bestselling and oft-studied book. The first finding is that Morgan's editor suggested removing the description of an encounter between Morgan and the Christian God. I also found that other editorial changes lower the register. From this evidence I argue that editing can function as an operationalisation of settler expectations of Aboriginal voice and experience. Morgan published a second book of life writing, *Wanamurraganya* (1989) and later a series of children's books, some co-written with her children. The critical reception for her work has tended to focus on questions of authenticity, genre and editorial input but as I have not found any scholarship that cites the edited typescript my contribution to analysis brings fresh evidence from the archive to these debates.

By contrast, Chapter Five and Bundjalung Ruby Langford Ginibi's *Don't Take Your Love to Town* (1988) has a deep and rich archival record that both exposes fraught publishing practices in the recent past and plays out discussions of what constitutes authorship and what constitutes editorial labour. Born on a mission in New South Wales, Langford Ginibi left school before year twelve — even though she was offered a scholarship to progress with a view to attending teacher's college — because her father was concerned about owing a debt to the Aborigines Protection Board. After a range of physically demanding jobs both in cities and rural areas and giving birth to nine children, Langford Ginibi's first book was published when she was in her fifties. Although Langford Ginibi's archive is extensive, I have not found

any research that addresses these holdings. From the holographs, typescripts and correspondence I find that Langford Ginibi's editor initially claimed the position of co-author, despite her work falling within the range of usual work editors perform. I also argue for a reading of the relationship between editor and author as one where each was the other's teacher. She went on to write several more books and became a political and social advocate for First Nations people.

The final case study in Chapter Six is Kate Jennings' *Bad Manners* (1993), which offers an opportunity to trace editorial and publishing labour through personal networks such as her long-time friend who first edited her essays to her husband designing the cover as well as the contributions of her publisher, in-house project editor, a freelance copyeditor and proofreader. Of the authors in this thesis, Jennings is perhaps the least famous and least celebrated — which may in part be because she spent most of her life in New York. Born in Griffith and educated at the University of Sydney; it was there that Jennings gave an influential speech in 1969, calling to account her male peers for their sole focus on conscription and not on the health and wellbeing of their female counterparts. Initially a poet, Jennings also wrote essays, reviews, two short novels and a memoir. Although different in genre, intention and publishing process, what each of these cases have in common is the ability to demonstrate the dynamic relationships whereby books are informed by the situations that produce them and simultaneously inform those situations.

The progression of these chapters is not chronological but rather moves through different modes of intervention to describe the editor process. For Ruth Park, the suggested edits were significant and related to both the structure and content of her novel. Astley's editor was not only considering the text in and of itself but also its relations between the work and the world. The last of the section of fiction texts examines the relatively minor edits for Anderson's novel but how even a 'cancelled' edit and a single sentence standing in for structural edit had

notable effects. For the second half which considers non-fiction, I open with one of the most successful books ever published in Australia, continuing on with an examination of copyediting and its significance. In researching Langford Ginibi's work, I draw in some of the extended critical discussions introduced in the preceding chapter and demonstrate the bivalency of the editor process given an author can teach their editor and vice versa. The thesis concludes by studying an author who was also an editor and returns to discuss the potential effects of gender dynamics on the editorial relationship.

Given the cross-disciplinarity of publishing and editing studies, it follows that this thesis draws on a number of methodological traditions to inform research practices and scaffold arguments. With novel use of textual editing, genetic criticism and detailed archival analysis, this thesis is both a contribution to the relatively new theorisations of editing and Australian literary scholarship that will be of interest to those in publishing studies and literary studies. Using six case studies, I find that editors embody an enormously wide-ranging set of roles — from social barometer to creative foil, from indispensable aid to crippling hindrance — and that by examining the different kinds of editorial labour that a text undergoes on its path through production I find new and insightful readings both of the books themselves and the culture in which they were produced.

### **A Note on Terminology**

When writing on Ruby Langford Ginibi and Sally Morgan I say 'Aboriginal writer' because they are Bundjalung and Palyku women respectively. Where possible I note the Country the writer belongs to. When writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples I use the term First Nations as recommended by the *Australian Government Style Manual* (2022). The use of language has changed significantly in recent times and even scholars concerned with respectful representations of First Nations people have used terminology that is now

recognised as offensive. It may well be that in the future terms and approaches in this thesis will no longer be appropriate, but I have endeavoured to operate according to best practice at the time of writing.

I refer to women or men (or male or female) writers and editors because, to the best of my knowledge, none of the writers or editors that I discuss in this thesis are non-binary. It remains true that the publishing industry is dominated by women but with each new generation, this may well change.

## Chapter One: Editing and Authorial Advocacy

At my first conference as a PhD student, I told a senior academic that Ruth Park was one of the case studies in my thesis and her response was, ‘Why would you write about *her*?’

Although Park is now claimed as Australian, she arrived in Australia in her early twenties during the Second World War and used her experience working for the *Auckland Star* to get jobs at the *Sun* and *Mirror* (*Fishing the Styx* 369–71). She was to spend the rest of her life earning a living from her pen. This chapter traces the publishing history of her late career novel, *Swords and Crowns and Rings* (1978) and finds in Park’s archive a compelling case of authorial agency made visible by the editing process. While Park has been sidelined from literary scholarship this chapter interrogates some of the social and historical nuances in her novel, *Swords*. Despite, or perhaps because of her position as a bestselling author of novels, children’s books, who also wrote for radio and newspapers, Park has been largely ignored by literary scholars. In this chapter I argue for new readings of her late-career novel, *Swords and Crowns and Rings* (1978) based on findings from her archive and that of her editor, Beatrice Davis. Through these revelations I offer examples of the editor process: namely of the editor making suggestions partly determined by the commercial demands of the publisher and what they perceive to be the expectations of the market. I begin this chapter by arguing that Park’s long-running relationship with her editor was varied and changeable, contingent on each of their circumstances, but that Davis’ sensibilities had a longstanding effect on Park’s oeuvre. This chapter finds that instead of diminishing an author’s agency, studying editing foregrounds their choices and makes visible the elements of the work they felt most strongly about — for Park, in this novel, it was maintaining what she saw to be the fully realised representation of a disabled character. Similarly, Park’s rejections of edits to historical details that were the result of careful research speaks of her eagerness to communicate these ideas with her readers and foregrounds her authorial agency. The corollary to these findings is that when an author

agrees to changes it may be that they are less wedded to certain content and ideas: in the case of *Swords* it is one of Park's protestant characters whose interiority she agreed to cut.

Prominent author–editor relationships in existing scholarship have become inextricably linked such as Pietsch and Foster Wallace (Groenland) or public separation such as Gordon and Lish (Max); for Park and Davis, the conclusion of their editorial collaboration was quiet but categorical. In this chapter I figure the editor process as susceptible to the vicissitudes of personal taste and experience in the embodied agents who participate and to the external forces that determine publishing processes.

Despite the misgivings of the academic who queried my choice, Park makes an excellent subject for this thesis for several reasons; first, perhaps more than any other author I discuss, the neglect her work has suffered seems to be ending. Monique Rooney is undertaking a literary biography and is editing a special issue of *Australian Literary Studies* on Park due for 2024. Secondly, Park's editing history for *Swords*, her Miles Franklin award winning novel, unearths key features of the editor process including how an author's exertion of agency offers me a way to interrogate their relationship to their work. Park's rejection of edits relating to her short-statured protagonist reveals her advocacy for this disabled character and her acquiescence to edits for other characters speaks to a greater ambivalence related to their role in the book and in her politics. This chapter also shows how bureaucratic processes, in this case a stipulation of word length for Literature Board-funded novels, can have unexpected consequences for the editing and post-publication life of a novel.

Park is also a perfect candidate for this thesis because of the richness of her archive and that of her editor, Beatrice Davis. In Park's memoirs there is a reticence when it comes to discussing her personal life, however, the fact that Park kept extensive records including edited typescripts and that she made some notes to accompany the materials in the archive indicates that she was anticipating someone like me going back through her records in the

interests of better understanding her work. As much of her correspondence is closed until 2070 there may well be a revisioning of her work in the future and this thesis can only draw on the folders to which I had access, granted by her literary estate. Beatrice Davis' papers, also held at the Mitchell, contain several letters from Park and some of Davis' draft correspondence as well as internal memos from her time at Thomas Nelson.<sup>7</sup>

Other than contemporary book reviews, there is hardly any scholarship on *Swords*, and what reviews exist are predominantly profiles and refer to her personal life, notably that she had five children, and that her husband was also a writer (eg *Courier Mail* unattributed, 16). In a 1961 profile in the *Bulletin*, Park was described as 'handsome, happily married to a famous writer, a capable housewife, the mother of five children and a highly successful writer herself' (np). Aside from her role in the home, Park was also described in terms of her dress, as Helen Frizell mentions Park's 'slacks, a woven jacket-top of bright colours, and flat shoes' (7) at the Miles-Franklin-award ceremony. Given this representation and the perception that she worked quickly, alongside her choice to write for a range of media, ranging from low culture upwards, some readers, and scholars, view Park as a commercial writer, and therefore by an outdated logic, not deserving of scholarly attention. Katherine Bode's finding that 'Scholars in Australian literary studies have long failed to recognise' the changes in twentieth century publishing in part due to a 'focus on select literary texts' ('Along Gender Lines' 79) corroborates this idea. Further alienating her work from literary prestige was her choice of subject matter: people marginalised as a result of their poverty, lack of access to education and adequate housing.

Park's place in the Australian literary canon is tenuous as evidenced by her exclusion from the *Macquarie Pen Anthology of Australian Literature* (2009) despite her oeuvre including eight

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<sup>7</sup> The papers relating to Angus & Robertson are part of that collection, also at the Mitchell however, unlike many other authors published by Angus & Robertson in this period — including Thea Astley — there are no papers relating to Park in those files.

novels, two memoirs, four non-fiction books and thirty-eight books for children. Her most famous novel, *The Harp in the South* (1948) has been adapted for stage and screen, as has her young adult novel, *Playing Beattie Bow* (1980). Naturally, I am not the first person to devote a thesis chapter to Park; she features in two PhDs from the 1990s: Jill Greaves (1998) and CA Cranston (1991). While I could find no scholarship on *Swords* other than in PhD theses, there is some work on her novels including by Paul Genoni (*Ruth Park* 27) and Frank Molloy ('Woman's Place' 77); both of whom refer to her Catholicism and perceived sentimentality.

This chapter takes the opportunity to draw on CA Cranston's interest in Park's portrayal of disability and builds on recent work in critical disability studies to demonstrate the sophistication of Park's disabled character. It also takes up genetic critical tools in examining Park's archive not only for the editor processes but also to uncover the kinds of historical research that she undertook in developing the novel. Lastly, this chapter will return to the questions of authorship and agency raised in the introduction to prove that analysis of editorial intervention in this instance moves in the opposite direction to that anticipated by Beatrice Davis when she suggests an editor should 'submerge himself in helping the author' ('Editor's Statements' 253); rather than undermining authorial agency, studying editing highlights the choices an author makes offering unparalleled insight into their process and aims.

### **Friend, editor or foil — How Beatrice Davis' editorial labour affected Ruth Park's Novels and their reception**

When Park first encountered the woman who was to be the editor of several of her adult novels, it was an inauspicious start. Prestigious local publisher Angus & Robertson had agreed to publish Park's novel, *The Harp in the South* as the prize for winning a *Sydney Morning Herald* competition in 1948. Corresponding with the author for the first time, editor Beatrice Davis wrote that *The Harp in the South* was 'not the kind of book A & R cares to publish but we have a gentleman's agreement with the *Herald*' (Park *Fishing*, 178). The tone, however, changes

markedly over the course of their relationship. Davis edited several of Park's novels both at Angus & Robertson and later at Thomas Nelson before their last collaboration on *Missus*, the final book in the *Harp in the South* trilogy, ended with Park largely rejecting Davis' feedback as I will detail later in this chapter.

In her biography of Beatrice Davis, *A Certain Style* (2002) Jaqueline Kent briefly describes Davis and Park's working relationship but there are some elisions and revisions in the narrative that Kent employs in her depiction of the editorial relationship; these would align with Beatrice Davis' desire to keep editorial labour invisible but obfuscate the publishing history of Park's books. When the editor process is functioning well, embodied by Park and Davis, it collaborative and consultative. At the start of their relationship, Davis set out Angus & Robertson's superiority in her claim that they would not ordinarily publish a book such as *Harp* but by *Swords*, as the archive shows, their relationship was much more collegiate. When Kent, herself an editor for trade publishers, tells the story of *Swords and Crowns and Rings*, she says that when Davis:

went to work for Thomas Nelson in 1973, Park followed her. Beatrice edited her novel *Swords and Crowns and Rings* (1977) — it won the Miles Franklin Award and Miles Franklin would have been appalled<sup>8</sup> — and *Missus*, about the early lives of characters from *The Harp in the South*. Beatrice also edited *Playing Beattie Bow*, which was published in 1980. After thirty-six years, then, her editorial relationship with Ruth Park returned to its beginnings, with a novel for children. (142)

In the first instance, Park did not 'follow' Davis to Nelson. I was first corrected on this point when I wrote to Tim Curnow, Park's literary executor to request access to the archive using the term 'followed' only for Curnow to respond contradicting this claim<sup>9</sup>. As I discuss

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<sup>8</sup> Jerath Head quotes Miles Franklin describing the book as 'a shoddy sordid performance of a very phony journalistic book' (np).

<sup>9</sup> Correspondence with the author, 9 May 2019

later in this chapter, Curnow's version is corroborated by correspondence in the archive. In addition, *Playing Beattie Bow* was not the last book of Park's that Davis edited. *Missus* was the last Davis was hired to edit and her response to the book instigated a deterioration of their relationship. Kent's representation of Davis's role in Park's writing life over-emphasises her intervention in Park's writing. However, while Kent may have given too much attention to Davis' editorial role, returning to *Swords* specifically, I have found that Davis was particularly influential in terms of its reception. The Mitchell archive includes a copy of Davis' launch speech for *Swords*, and she was one of the judges who awarded the book the Miles Franklin award. Indeed, her judges' comment was quoted in an advertisement in the 1 July 1978 edition of the *Bookseller*:

A rare talent for dialogue, beautiful landscape and description, compassion and human understanding, make this a novel of exceptional quality that is also a brilliant evocation of the Australia that evolves as a nation between the two Great Wars. Given her power as a storyteller, her rare sense of comedy and drama, it is as a social historian that Ruth Park must also be acclaimed.' Beatrice Davis, on behalf of the judges. (34)

There are several markers in this comment that can help the reader orient their experience of the novel. It frames the book as important historical fiction, the use of 'storyteller' flags that the reader should expect something enjoyable, as do the mentions of comedy and drama. Opening with praise for the writing also means that the book is being lauded on literary grounds. Interestingly, even though in the editing process Davis suggested cuts to some of the historical detail, by the time she was 'judging' the work for the Miles Franklin, Park's role as a 'social historian' is worthy of praise. Davis is performing the transformative role that Bourdieu describes, converting a novel into a superior cultural product (76–7). Without the interventions of editors and others who contribute to the

production process, the work is unlikely to reach an audience. Acknowledging this reality does not undermine the text itself but does emphasise the importance of mediators in affording a work's reception.

Despite its success in the Miles Franklin and commercially, *As Swords* is not widely read, allow me to offer a brief summary of the plot here. *Swords* is a coming-of-age story of Jackie, born short-statured, and his childhood playmate and later sweetheart, Dorothy 'Cushie' Moy, who both live in the fictional town of Kingsland. Predominantly written in a realist mode, *Swords* also 'draws upon the ancient legends and fairy tales of Europe to tell the story of Australia' (Greaves 149). When Jackie is unable to get a job after leaving school because of prejudice towards his disability, he moves north to help some relations, the Linz family, on their farm. After Jackie leaves home, Cushie finds she is pregnant with his child and moves to Sydney to stay with her aunt and arrange an abortion. Away from her comfortable home life, and depressed at her separation from Jackie, Cushie becomes an alcoholic before finding purpose by helping her grandmother run a charity. Meanwhile, during his stay with the Linzes, Jackie is abused and tormented and ultimately tricked into marrying his cousin, Maida. Marriage offers a new start, and Jackie creates a life away from the Linz family. Just as Jackie has found work and is hopeful for a future with his wife and small child, tragedy strikes and Maida and the baby are killed in a fire. Jackie is falsely accused of causing their deaths but is cleared by the coroner and returns to Kingsland. By now, the Depression has started, and it is even more difficult for him to find work. He travels with his stepfather, 'the Nun', from town to town, trying to survive. It is during these travels that Jackie's political thinking finds form and Park's commentary on economic policy and the suffering of working people emerges. Ultimately, after much hardship, Jackie and Cushie are reunited and plan to spend the rest of their lives together.

### Unintended impacts: The accidental effects of bureaucracy on editing

When I think of the reasons a novel might have major cuts as part of the editorial process, I know from experience that often it is edited to meet generic or market expectations: for example, by deletions of purple prose or to cut excessive exposition or ‘telling’. What the present study shows is that other forces can have unintended impacts on the editorial process that may be just as significant as aesthetic or commercial factors. In Park’s case it was the limits of the Australian Literature Board’s funding model of only subsidising works of up to 150,000 words in length that led to requests to cut Park’s manuscript from profit-margin-conscious publishers.

Davis was the primary editor on *Swords* but there were a number of different editors involved in the production of Park’s novel. *Swords* was acquired by publishing director Bob Sessions and the archive shows correspondence with Thomas Nelson editor Sue Ebury, who was part of the acquisitions decision-making process. After the book was signed, Davis was responsible for interventions at structural or big picture and copyedit or line-edit levels.

Through reference to the archive, in the section that follows I demonstrate that prejudice against disabled characters at the time Park was writing was pronounced and such prejudice almost curtailed her narrative and characterisation in *Swords*. In an internal note at Thomas Nelson, editor Sue Ebury wrote to colleagues Anne Godden and Beatrice Davis:

Collins, Macmillans, A&R and Penguin have all rejected it. Collins weren’t mad about the dwarf theme, and wanted to cut it severely, (author wouldn’t consent); I’m not sure what A&R thought; John Hooker would have loved to do an original Penguin, but decided that it wasn’t quite up to the literary standards required by that; Macmillans couldn’t come at the main character being a dwarf — turned them right off! The idea turned me off too, but I overcame the feeling quite quickly.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> MLMSS 7638/ 12

Ebury may have hesitated initially, but this did not inhibit the acquisition. Although Davis was a contractor for Thomas Nelson in the late 1970s, not a staff member, and normally an offer of publication comes from a company employee, she was the person who wrote to Park to discuss acquisition. She said the book was:

a wonderful piece of work which Nelson's would very much like to publish — if you can bring yourself to agree to cutting by about 30,000 words. I do pray that you can — whether you do this yourself or allow me to suggest how and where. It would be wonderful to be working with you again after so many years.<sup>11</sup>

It is not uncommon for publishers to stipulate terms when signing a work; however, it is less common for those terms to be determined, even in part, by a bureaucratic body. In the case of *Swords*, one of the determinations was the cultural and financial force of Literature Board grants.

In an internal letter from Thomas Nelson publisher Robert Sessions to editor Beatrice Davis, he wrote:

The 30,000 words which we asked to be cut is simply a figure which brings the total word length within the ambit of the maximum grant available from the Literature Board. The grant is sufficient for us to be able to go over the maximum number of words if we absolutely have to and this figure is probably no more than a useful yardstick ... Quite frankly, whatever can be cut will help the costing enormously and I believe will also improve the book. However, I do not want to fall out with Ruth over, say, 5,000 words here or there.<sup>12</sup>

If the grant only covers a certain word length, then anything over that amount would be more expensive for the publisher to produce; Sessions is saying that for each few thousand words over the limit, the book will have a smaller profit margin. He softens his request with a

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<sup>11</sup> MLMSS 7638/12/ 13 August 1976

<sup>12</sup>MLMSS 7638/12/ 18 November 1976

comment that he also does not want to ruin the relationship with Park, since he would have understood that it is in large part an author's cooperative efforts that help sell a book once it becomes available. Beside which — as Nelson's continued publishing of Park demonstrates — they were interested in continuing the relationship. The fact that he drew on a publishing truism by saying a cut would improve the book suggests that he was trying to soften the blow by offering a common rationale.

Park asked:

Who fixed this arbitrary figure and why? Longer novels are more and more being published. Taking at random two from my shelf, I have counted them up ... Margaret Drabble's *Needle's Eye* is almost 163,000, and it covers a very small area of time, space, life. Kerryn Jones's  *Holding On* is over 150,000, though that covers a longish lifetime and is a spacious book in character development and historical happening.

Please answer this question.<sup>13</sup>

When Park says she is taking books from her shelf, she likely meant the shelf in her shop, since at the time of writing she a bookseller on Norfolk Island. Park was speaking as an author but also as a retailer with a sense of contemporary publishing trends.

The archive does not include a straightforward response from Davis on the question of the word length, although of course it does not mean that no answer was offered. Perhaps it was a mistake on the part of the publisher to mention a particular number of words that needed to be removed rather than to talk of the kinds of material to be taken out, since that would likely have been more persuasive from an aesthetic perspective. But Davis' recommended word count seems arbitrary because it is: a number determined by bureaucrats at the Literature Board rather than the marketplace (as evidenced by Ruth Park's reference to books of similar lengths on her bookshelf) or according to the internal logic of the novel itself.

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<sup>13</sup> MLMSS 7638/12/ 10 November 1976

In response to Davis's request that Park make these cuts, she continued:

Yes, I am willing to do cuts, provided they are in keeping with my overall plan for the novel. I worked terribly hard on its shape, I think I have achieved harmony and balance, and I do not want to do anything to interfere with this.

Thirty thousand is an awful whack to come out of a closely-planned [sic] novel, and at the moment the idea frightens me.

However, you know I have intimate knowledge of your literary judgement, and I would welcome hearing what cuts you think would be good ones.<sup>14</sup>

Park is taking part in the delicate negotiation between author and editor here, flattering her editor while also holding her position on the question of cutting out material that was the product of careful work and development. Park had produced many drafts, investing time in research and planning to produce the novel, and was not prepared to change it without good reason. Later in the same letter, Park added, 'You will infer from the above that any cuts to be made, if they are to be, I should do myself'.<sup>15</sup>

The covering letter that accompanied the edited typescript is of note because of how it describes the editorial relationship. In a traditional editorial manoeuvre, Davis flatters Park, debases herself and then shifts some of the responsibility on to the publisher and the exigencies of the marketplace, writing: 'I enjoyed reading the story again, but felt both timid and impertinent in suggesting the cutting of such a sound and well-structured piece of work — to achieve what I've been told is necessary for those dull, practical reasons'.<sup>16</sup> Her word choice, in particular 'timid and impertinent', clearly positions her below the author and softens what might otherwise be perceived as a kind of slight on Park's artistic prowess. Davis also manages to skirt the potential comment that the book would benefit from being trimmed

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<sup>14</sup> MLMSS 7638/12/ 19 August 1976

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> MLMSS 7638/12/ 3 November 1976

out of consideration for style or content by saying that she must suggest deletions for ‘dull, practical reasons’.

In responding to the edit, at the start of the letter Park says she’s glad Davis provided her home address so she could write a more frank response. ‘Forgive me, I had forgotten, temporarily, that you are a true workman. But I have recalled it all over again. Most of your cuts I accept without question. Some I shall replace by others of the same length.’<sup>17</sup> This terminology reveals key information about Park and her working practice. Nowhere else have I seen such a masculine epithet for an editor, woman or otherwise; this is a compliment and a recognition of the labour of editing. Park would have had more motivation to meet the condition of editing the manuscript because she did not have offers from other publishers, but she also expressed pleasure at the prospect of being edited by Davis again, writing:

I have always known that, like a good Greek actor ‘you do not put yourself above your poet’. And whatever my faults and frailties as a writer — which I do most deeply realise — I do also have the good Greek actor’s profound feeling ... ‘You do not put yourself above the god.’ Which is truth.<sup>18</sup>

Park is outlining a clear hierarchy here as she compares herself with the Greek poet; the actor is Davis’s avatar with ‘truth’ sitting at the top. This comparison with another art form also flags Park’s understanding that collaborative processes are a reality in different kinds of art. Park concludes the point by saying, ‘I think that whatever way I have had success as a writer ... and the only success I prize at all is that readers recognise my characters ... is because I have tried to be true to the god.’ The linchpin for her argument as to why she wants to maintain certain material and is unprepared to accept trims on it, is Park’s imagined reader and her sense of how they value her work.

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<sup>17</sup> MLMSS 7638/12/10 November 1976

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

When Greenberg figures the editorial relationship in her *Poetics of Editing* (2019), there is no hierarchy, although there is an equivalent delineation between author, editor and work as she maps her schema onto political philosopher Edmund Burke's triangulation of 'Spoken-to', 'Speech' and 'Speaker' (65). This figuration situations a text as part of a triad that is called into being only in its position between the author (speaker) and the reader (spoken-to). Awareness of these agents and their connection through a text determines both how the work is formulated and read. By delineating the author, editor and text, both Burke and Greenberg highlight the dynamic of editing: that is, (at least) two individuals work with and on a text. Editing is a process rather than just a conclusion or end point. Secondly, editing is necessarily personal since it involves embodied agents. Park's invocation of the relationship is in the context of the 'good Greek actor' wanting to emphasise that Park will only act according to what she sees as the 'God' in this context: truth. By delineating the two agents working on the text from the text itself, both Burke and Greenberg highlight not only the dynamic of editing. I take Park to use truth in a broad sense of the term, meaning things that are true about the human condition. Further, Park identifies her fidelity to this God as the source of the success that she values most highly: readers' responses. What is equivalent in the two characterisations is a dynamic process of working through the creative material with an end goal of developing the text.

While many authors may tacitly consider such a question, it is useful to have Park's expression of the dynamic, especially in her response to Davis's edit. One reading of her articulation is that Park wants to affirm her position in the hierarchy and to legitimise her decision to stet Davis's edits, especially in relation to character. As I examine in greater detail in the following section, the cuts to a character that Park contested the most were those relating to her short-statured protagonist, Jackie Hanna. Rather than undermining authorship, studying Park's editing foregrounds her agency in particular with her advocacy

for Jackie. While editors such as Davis are concerned that discussions of editing can undermine an author (White 48), in this case editing emphasises Park's role both in the creation and in the realisation of her character in the published book.

### **Taking a Risk: Editorial concerns at centring a disabled character**

Perhaps the most striking finding from the archives is Park's advocacy on behalf of her short-statured character. Often able-bodied authors reduce disabled characters to devices or metaphors, but Jackie Hanna is a well-realised character and Park's resistance to edits of scenes where Jackie is more than just a plot device reinforces this point. Though disabled characters are far from common in literary works, when present they often serve as what critical disability studies scholars term 'narrative prosthesis'. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder define this phenomenon as using disability as 'a stock feature of characterization and an opportunistic metaphorical device' (222). As these authors argue, such an approach produces 'a conundrum: while stories rely upon the potency of disability as a symbolic fixture, they rarely take up disability as experience of social or political dimensions' (222). Using correspondence between Park and her editor, and consulting the edited typescript, I argue that Park resisted this prosthetic approach and imagined a more fully realised character. In *Swords*, the protagonist's disability is not simply a plot device or a figurative element. The social, political and personal repercussions of his disability are questions that the book addresses directly, and Park's novel both explicitly and implicitly works to construct a fully realised character who is short-statured.

*Swords* is not the first Park novel to feature a disabled protagonist but unlike these other novels, including *The Harp in the South* that includes a character with Down Syndrome, the disabled protagonist in *Swords* features in many scenes that demonstrate the injustices he faces and how he constantly resists discrimination and poor treatment. Indeed, Park's attitude to her short-statured protagonist changed during the process of drafting the work so that her

resolve was clear by the time she and her agent were submitting the book to publishers. In an undated note in the archive, Park asks herself: 'Why is Jackie a dwarf? He could just as well be black, to handicap him. But there's a fairytale aspect to dwarfism, especially when a great big spirit is contained in a little frame. The great strength of dwarfs too'.<sup>19</sup> This comment demonstrates an inclination to instrumentalise Jackie's short stature as a figurative element in the novel. However, over the course of the writing, it became important to her to make Jackie a rounded, believable character. In another comment to herself about Cushie that seems to have come later in the process she said, 'She has this very strange feeling for Jackie ... they're almost two sides of the same coin. But Jackie is firmer. He may be small but he's a real man, and really I think that I have developed him well and naturally'.<sup>20</sup> Here the use not only of edited typescripts but Park's notes to herself demonstrates the utility of genetic criticism in generating a fulsome explanation of the author's project.

While Jackie's stature may have initially been a choice in order to include the 'fairytale aspect', the finished work does not reduce him to a token character and Park's resistance to edits that would have limited his characterisation demonstrate her focus on presenting him as a sophisticated character and not simply a device to further the plot. Editorial changes that Park resisted strongly were those that concerned her protagonist, Jackie; specifically, trims that removed references to his short stature and the impact this had on his experience of the world. Since Park accepted other edits, especially those relating to peripheral characters, the places where she stood firm are notable. Her decisions in this respect demonstrate that she was eager to produce a character whose disabilities were not simply devices for the sake the plot and that as a character he was convincing, fully formed and believable. Indeed, it may not always be clear to an author what their intentions are as they work but in responding to an editor's feedback they may become clear. Further, in a letter to Davis, Park reinforces the

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<sup>19</sup> MLMSS8075/4/1

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

importance of keeping the descriptions of Jackie and his experiences, ‘I must keep in material about dwarfs, how they are the same as other people, just smaller ... and how greedily they grab any information about historic dwarfs which shows that a man’s stature does not matter.’<sup>21</sup> Park writes of Jackie ‘greedily grabbing’ stories of short-statured characters early on in the book.<sup>22</sup> Jackie shows Cushie picture books of ‘black elves working at their goldsmiths’ forges’, and together they go into the hills in search of ‘a whole race of people’ like him (15). Around the time that *Swords* was published, there were other short-statured characters in Australian literature, such as in Park’s earlier novel *Pink Flannel* (1955) and Christopher Koch’s *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1979), but there had not yet been a book with a protagonist with Jackie’s level of physical disability affecting all aspects of his life: romantic, political and professional.<sup>23</sup>

Another key instance of Park rejecting Davis’ suggested edit is in relation to Jackie’s working life: she asks ‘Ruth, could you delete this episode.’ The episode in question is where Jackie remembers his attempt to get a job in the office at the Dairy Co-op and the interviewer tries to dissuade him on the grounds of Jackie’s ‘delicate health’.<sup>24</sup> Park’s response was short, emphatic, written in red and circled: ‘No.’ Davis also suggests cutting an episode later in the text when Jackie is trying to improve his situation and get a job as a bookkeeper. After initial rejection Jackie says to his prospective employer: ‘I’m a good bookkeeper sir, and you don’t need height for that.’ In response: ‘The man stared, his pulpy face swelling with blood pressure or affront. Jack thought: He’s in a funk for his own job. If he takes on a dwarf there’ll be someone after his hide and he can’t risk it’ (723). The episode is important because it

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<sup>21</sup> MLMSS 7638/12/ 10 November 1976

<sup>22</sup> While there is no record in the archive of Park interviewing short-statured people (although there is a record of Park interviewing someone about the Depression MLMSS 8727/2/5), she mentions such research in two separate newspaper interviews (Jordan 37; Riddell 8).

<sup>23</sup> Perhaps Thea Astley’s *The Acolyte* (1972) comes the closest with a major character who is blind, but disabled protagonists were not something that had figured in Australian literature to that point.

<sup>24</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/4, 113

shows that Jackie, despite all the discrimination that he faces, still has empathy for someone in a difficult position. This generosity of spirit sets him apart from other characters and elevates him.

Elsewhere, Davis suggests a cut when Jackie asks a Catholic priest for a student's uniform as a way to replace some of his tattered clothes. The priest stares at Jackie's body as he is getting changed, and Jackie says, 'Picture, aren't I?' (721). None of these instances of suggested edits in relation to short stature are connected to mythic representations of 'dwarfs', and none are crucial to the plot, qualities that would risk a kind of narrative prosthesis. Through these scenes, Park is emphasising Jackie's experiences in the world in which he finds barriers where others would face no difficulty. Each case actively avoids 'narrative prosthesis' by showing Jackie as a flesh-and-blood character who is navigating professional and personal circumstances. Jackie ultimately passes many of the milestones that might be considered notable in an 'ordinary' life: he is gainfully employed, finds love (first with Cushie, then with Maida, then Cushie again), fathers a child and is politically and socially engaged.

Aside from setting the scenes with the interviewers and priest, Park also resisted cuts to realist sections in the novel with descriptions of the 'orthopaedic and optical deterioration' (48–9) that Jackie learns could be a difficulty for him in the future, as associated effects of reduced growth. Park again rejects cuts of similar material a little later in the manuscript (97). Where Park did accept edits are those occasions where Jackie was figured in a mythic way, suggesting that she was actively refining the characterisation. For instance, Davis suggested trimming a description of Jackie daydreaming about people like him: 'No dwarfs lived there, nor amongst the haystacks of festering timber where towers and windlasses had collapsed, filling the tainted scrub with snakepits of corroded wire rope' (33). Park's fairy-tale characterisation of short-statured people in this sequence renders them less realistic characters, less fully formed and persuasive and more as devices for metaphor and imagery.

For the most part, Park works to avoid the kind of one-dimensional characterisation that attracts the charge of narrative prosthesis. Not only is the reader told about his search for work and his engagement with economic theory, but I also see his romantic interests with repeated depictions of Jackie as a sexual character with desires, who finds pleasure with Cushie (54) and Maida (222). These scenes flesh out Jackie's character as a physical and emotional entity, not just a device. As Park was keen to emphasise in her letter to Davis, characterisation was what she considered the strongest aspect of her writing, and by insisting on the inclusion of scenes explicitly relating to Jackie's short stature Park clearly saw this material as key to the project of the novel. In contrast, Davis' concern seems to be a combination of lowering the word count and reducing the space afforded to discussion of the characters' disability with a view to bringing the work in line with the publishers' expectations and their reading of the market's expectations. In the next chapter I explore the role of an editor as a social barometer in more detail, but this interaction is one indication of a publisher trying to offer their understanding of the market to the author with a view to revising the book to meet its audience on their terms.

Park's advocacy for short-statured people continued after the book's publication. When it was first published, several reviews of *Swords* echoed the concern that editor Sue Ebury expressed about the work at the acquisitions stage: namely the presence of a short-statured protagonist (*The Age* unattributed 24; Sykes16). As Elizabeth Riddell remarked:

Ms Park ... was taking a risk in writing a book about a dwarf...Even with the addition of a fond and sexy friendship between Jackie and the better-endowed, financially and physically, Cushy [sic] Moy, the line is a hard one to sell. But some powerful reason kept me reading it until 3 am. (8)

Evidently, the editors at Macmillan, Collins et al who rejected the book had correctly anticipated that some readers may react negatively to Jackie, however, Riddell emphasises

that Jackie is endearing, persuasive and highly engaging and Park's efforts were ultimately successful since she managed to overcome this 'risk'. When reflecting on her work, Park had faith in the authenticity of her protagonist as I can see from a note to herself in the archive: 'It seemed to me to be better than anything I have ever done, the character first-rate, and the central figure, Jackie, so alive he jumped. I just couldn't wait to hear what came next.'<sup>25</sup> It is this faith in her own writing that perhaps gave her the confidence to push back against requests to remove material from her work. Literary scholar Frank Molloy produced a quote pulled from Park's memoir and used to claim her limited development of characterisation: "'I did not truly know any of [my characters]'" (*Woman's Place* 77). What I note in Park's archive and her responses to edits is that Molloy not only uses this comment in bad faith, misapplying it to all her fiction, but that it is not accurate according to Park's own working practices. Although Davis seems to have shared the concerns of Sue Ebury (who foresaw comments of the kind that Riddell made) in that she suggested trimming the material relating to Jackie's stature, Park's decision to keep scenes and comments relating to his short-stature was not ultimately an impediment to readers since the book sold well (around 7000 copies in hardback in the year of its release, second only to *Thornbirds* according to the *Bulletin* in 1978) — or indeed to prize judges since it won, and was shortlisted for, major prizes.

Aside from the representations of Jackie as a character with agency, the power of self-determination and extraordinary fortitude despite the discrimination that he faces in the novel, Park was advocating for short-statured people in the interviews she gave on the occasion of the book's publication. Park was working to persuade journalists, in the same way she persuaded her publisher, that Jackie is the right protagonist for her novel. From her comments I note that it was a chance meeting that led to the inspiration for the book. She says in an interview, 'I had never had much feeling about dwarfs, except that it must be a

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<sup>25</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/ 13 May 1974

terrible handicap, that lack of stature ... Then I met a dwarf and this was a person of such enormous stature ... I realised that a person has no size at all' (Sykes 6). In another interview she comments on the way short-statured people are portrayed 'either as sinister or mentally deficient, when, really, the only thing different about them is their stature' (*Courier Mail* 16). Making a similar point in another interview, Park says, 'People are uneasy about dwarfs, even fear them. A dwarf is placed in jeopardy from birth' (Riddell 8). This calls to mind the response that the Kingsland residents have to Jackie on hearing about the death of his wife and child (290). Park reiterates the point she makes over the course of the novel about Jackie's humanity, encouraging able-bodied readers to shift their perspective. Through a combination of edits, contemporary comments as recorded in Park's archive and commentary in interviews, Park's advocacy is increasingly apparent.

Although there are clear calls for empathy in some of her remarks, not all of Park's interview comments were so straightforward in their advocacy. There remains a tension between her initial idea of the fairy-tale element in her novel, embodied in Jackie, and her eventual determination to ensure that he present to the reader as a fully realised character. This is legible in the text itself and in her comments quoted about the standard portrayals of short-statured people at the time she was writing. In a newspaper interview, asked how she came to write about a short-statured protagonist, Park said, 'One day in the city I saw a dwarf in the crowd, and I started to think about him and couldn't stop, about how strange it must be, like being from another planet. A dwarf who gets through has to be a hero' (Riddell 8). In another interview, Park said 'After some research, I was amazed that a dwarf had never been a hero for a novel. I looked at all the situations a dwarf would face — the physical side, which seemed like an obstacle course, the sexual side, and the jobs side' (Jordan 39). While these comments show Park was conscious that disabled protagonists were rare and that she wanted to depict a rounded character, one engaged economically, sexually and socially in the

Australia of the time, she characterises short-statured people as alien, ‘from another planet’ and admits to writing about her protagonist in part because of the ‘novelty’ of his stature. Each instance is a kind of ‘othering’ that Dan Goodley critiques in his discussion of contemporary disability studies (639). These accounts thus exist in some tension with Park’s treatment of Jackie and disability in *Swords*.

It is in the coupling of Park’s public remarks with her private responses to edits that I find convincing evidence for her attitude to her disabled character that continued through drafting and revision to the publicity phase of book production and promotion; the author’s agency does not end when the book goes to print but continues through the discussions afforded through interviews.

### **The Product of Careful Research: Park’s realisation of the Depression on the page**

Another finding from the editorial archive and consideration of genetic material is that Park both conducted historical research and included details from her own experience. By considering Park’s historical research and her determination to safeguard certain passages from deletion through the editorial process, I demonstrate that *Swords* is designed to not simply entertain or enchant but to offer a personal insight into the effects of the Depression for individuals who lived through it. Park’s archive holds newspaper clippings, notes from interviews and notes from books that she read as she researched the project.<sup>26</sup> Park also used events from her own life. In her memoir *A Fence Around the Cuckoo*, Park tells the story of her father seeing a destitute carpenter’s belongings sold at auction (38). Her father bought the man’s tool kit to return to him — an incident that she later used in *Swords*. Her retention of research materials in her archive marks her desire for future scholars to understand the depth of her work and is a comment on the seriousness with which she approached the task of

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<sup>26</sup> MLMSS 8727/ 2/5

writing historical fiction. Park's notes on interviews, responses to newspaper stories of the day and details garnered from books demonstrate her meticulous approach and show that she wanted anyone who consulted her archive to learn of her process.

As with the proposed edits to the material about Jackie and his short stature, the suggested trims to material about the Depression reflect an editor's differing sensibility to the work from the author's. Park was making social and political commentary and was using her research and personal experience of the Depression to comment on conditions of that period in an attempt to educate an audience who may not have been alive at the time and to interrogate how governments weigh the immediate needs of their constituents against more abstract policy questions such as interest repayments on loans.

To take one example of the kind of cut to historically accurate detail that Park resisted, Davis suggested a substantive trim at the start of section V, 'Jackie Hanna 1931'<sup>27</sup>, where there are descriptions of camps, itinerant workers and hardships. Davis marked significant cuts to material about 'hobos' and their living conditions (523), as well as descriptions of men's faces and their missing teeth (530). However, Park elected to keep the majority of this material in the finished work, even though it was not crucial to the plot. Park emphasised in her note to Davis, it was important to her to keep the material relating to the Depression: 'I must, even if I do it in a briefer way, give anecdotes which show the really terrible condition of Australians, particularly in New South Wales, during the Depression'.<sup>28</sup> In another instance, Davis made a suggestion to cut material related to the 'Interest on the British Bonds'.<sup>29</sup> This relates to the exorbitant loan repayments that Australia owed England following the First World War and the debate that was under way in Australia at the time about whether or not to default on the loans when local people were starving. Rejecting these

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<sup>27</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/4, 513–30

<sup>28</sup> MLMSS 7638/12/ 10 November 1976

<sup>29</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/4, 688

kinds of edits fits with Park's determination to preserve historical detail and suggest that Park's novel was simultaneously telling the story of Jackie's personal struggles and the effect on Australians of the monolithic economic forces at the time.

The painstaking effort that Park made in terms of interviews, archival research and getting details right was the subject of a letter from the eminent Australian historian Manning Clark. In a letter that he wrote to her following the book's release he enthused:

You have that gift to tell a story, which [is] the envy of every writer, [including?] Myself, who tries to write history as a story. You also have the GRACE to be able to look at people in the 'LOWER DEPTHS' of life and confer on them a sensibility and aesthetic grandeur.

Permit me also to thank you for publishing one to understand Australians — being so say [?] for why we are as we are.<sup>30</sup>

Park replied, 'I conclude that to me [history] is merely a long succession of "nows". Its fascination for me is because through its study I can see and assess how a brief "now" in 1910 was the seed of a series of other "nows" which coalesced in many of the nows of today'.<sup>31</sup> Park wanted to communicate the reality of these 'many nows' to her reader by including anecdotes about the extraordinary poverty of the Depression, and her resistance to cuts of this material, despite the conditional offer of publication on a shortened manuscript, emphasises the importance of history to Park's conception of the text.

Despite Park's work to incorporate accurate historical detail, the novels' happy ending leaves it open to a charge of sentimentalism. However, unlike *Harp*, the young female character does have an abortion; Jackie experiences extraordinary hardship and the shift from utter desperation to a kind of promise is in line with the shift in fortunes of the nation — making the end plausible within the world of the book. Furthermore, a moment of

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<sup>30</sup> MLMSS 8555/4/2/ 15 January 1978

<sup>31</sup> MLMSS 8555/4/2

reconciliation and happiness at the end of the book does not necessitate that the characters will enjoy uncomplicated and perennially happy lives. However, the kind of research that Park conducted and her choice to include detail of particular hardships as opposed to glossing over this material demonstrates her commitment to creating a novel that is not simply sentimental or romanticised but an opportunity for readers to reach different understandings of their country's past.

Offering a different response to the question of sentimentalism and the book's conclusion, Peter Pierce in his review of *Swords* describing the book as '... a tale of unsentimental friendships and unexpected kindnesses; last and most daringly, it is a love story with a happy ending' ('Worlds of Their Own' 66). Pierce avoids a pejorative response to the book's conclusion and instead focuses on the relationships of its characters. Although the book has a version of a happy ending in that the two protagonists find each other after a long separation, the reader can be under no illusions that Jackie's life will be easy or unmarred by discrimination but rather that Cushie and Jackie will confront these hindrances together.

Significantly, Park's comments on her own relationship are useful in terms of understanding the purported incompatibility between sentimentality and realism. If 'sentimentality' is a synonym for romance, Park's comments may trouble a dichotomisation of romance and reality. As she wrote in a note to herself about *Swords* 'The theme is the simple one of a deep uncomplicated love, which is really all I know about life, anyway. Its quality of self sacrifice which is so often forgotten in fiction'.<sup>32</sup> This is where genetic criticism is significant in building an understanding of the work that Park intended to do and how she came to produce it. By reviewing both drafts and the edits and Park's own commentary on her work I develop a different perspective from the existing scholarship.

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<sup>32</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/1/undated

Without the insight of the archive, and knowledge of Park's resistance to these changes, there would be no record of her stated intentions for the work, or of the kinds of pressures that the publisher was negotiating simultaneously. By using the information gained from genetic criticism and from studying the professional editing and publishing history of the book, I assess both Park's vision and identify where that conflicted with the expectations of her editor and publisher.

### **Mr Moy: Decreasing the footprint of a Protestant character**

As well as highlighting an author's agency and their attitudes to the content of their work, studying edits can also correct misconceptions about an author's oeuvre. Park has been characterised as a Catholic author, but this section shows that the diminution of one of her Protestant characters in *Swords* was the result of editorial intervention. Since there is so little criticism on Park's oeuvre, two essays on the question of her Catholicism have a disproportionately significant effect on the framing of her work. My research shows, however, that the editorial process may have helped foster this perception in the case of *Swords*. Attention to Park's biography also demonstrates the limited utility of such a categorisation. By the time Park was writing *Swords and Crowns and Rings* she had adopted Zen Buddhism — travelling to San Francisco to learn from a monk (*Fishing* 344).

As Alice Pung notes in her introduction to the 2012 reissue of *Swords*, 'Park had by this time abandoned the Catholic faith of her youth and become interested in Zen Buddhism' (ix). Park commented on her engagement with Buddhism in an article published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* around the time *Swords* was released, describing when she was wandering San Francisco after a Buddhist retreat. When a well-dressed university student asked for money, she was initially annoyed at herself for giving him a coin, out of shock. On reflection she determined that, whether or not the man was deserving, she was right to give what he asked for since the 'good is still there, inherent in the giving itself' (16). As Park notes in the article,

this is not part of a Christian sensibility but a different way of thinking. Pung determines that when ‘Park sat down to write about Jackie and Cushie, she was no longer dealing with fixed absolutes but with fluid, more radical identities’ (ix). The book includes a lesbian couple, people from different social strata and, unlike in *The Harp*, where an accident befalls a character, so she does not have to go through with the abortion she planned (296), in *Swords* Cushie aborts a foetus. Although Park had moved away from Catholicism in her personal life at the time this book was published, many of her characters were not demonstratively Catholic.

Paul Genoni writes about the significance of Park’s Catholicism — referring mostly to the *Harp in the South* books (‘Ruth Park’ 26) — despite the fact that Park’s memoirs had been published around a decade before this article and, in the first of the two volumes, Park describes the formative role that Māori spirituality had on her sense of the world (*Fishing* 90), and in the second volume she dedicates significant space to the end of her Catholic faith. Frank Molloy pins Park as an Irish author (‘Woman’s Place’), making the point that autobiography was important in her work, but her Irish heritage was only one part of her ethnic and cultural makeup. In fact, the book to which he was primarily referring, *The Harp in South*, was largely concerned with observations that she had made in Surry Hills rather than drawing on her family’s experience. As a New Zealander, newly arrived in Sydney, Park was more readily identified as a foreigner from across the Strait than an Irish-catholic (*Fishing* 187). Further, it was only Park’s grandmothers who were Irish. Her grandfathers were Scottish and Swedish (*Fence* 16, 26, 60).

Unlike edits to material on the Depression, or Jackie’s short-stature, attention to the edited typescript reveals that Park was prepared to limit the presence of Protestantism — which perhaps contributed to her ongoing characterisation as a Catholic author. One of the changes from the edit of greatest interest to this project comes from Beatrice Davis’s excision

of material about, or from the perspective of, Cushie's father Mr Moy. Unlike the cuts to material about Jackie's short stature or the Depression, Park acquiesced to Davis's trims of this character. In the draft that Park first submitted, Mr Moy was a more prominent character, with material written from his perspective in close third person. The published novel, however, has a clear demarcation between the overwhelmingly male 'Jackie' sections and the female 'Cushie' sections in which Mr Moy makes only limited appearances. The edits emphasised this separation, which has the effect of creating greater cohesion in separate parts of the novel.

The reader is first introduced to Mr Moy at the start of the book as having a 'rare moment of humour' when he said his daughter looked just like a little cushion, an observation soon shortened to 'Cushie' (12). While Cushie 'idolised her handsome father', for her mother Mr Moy was 'the cause of her exile from riches and admiration' (13). His financial position is again the focus of his characterisation when the reader discovers that he 'frequently found himself with a bitter taste in his mouth. He was jealous' (59). This description directly precedes one of the first multiple-sentence cuts to his presence in the book:

Cushie, in her new, strangely smelling black clothes, looked dignified and very Saxon, a real Jackaman for which Mr Moy was thankful. If only James, the old devil, had seen her before he died, her legacy would be more certain. But surely — his own granddaughter! And Isobel had been prevailed upon to send photographs of the girls to their grandmother at least once a year. There was no need to worry, surely.<sup>33</sup>

Several ideas arise from Mr Moy's perspective here, including his conclusion that he should not worry. His reflections on Cushie's 'Saxon' appearance are also relevant in terms of the religious affiliations of the characters. If a Saxon appearance is Germanic (and more Protestant than Catholic) then Mr Moy is making both a religious and a genetic heritage

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<sup>33</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/4, 110 This excision was pencilled in the margin, and then Park agreed to the cut.

claim on his daughter. By cutting some of the interiority that would have helped the reader develop a richer understanding of Mr Moy, the edit shifts his characterisation and his role in the text and leaves him as a plot device rather than a convincing human presence. Without his thoughts, Mr Moy is much more distant and has a far smaller role.

It was not just Mr Moy's interiority that was cut but also comments on his agency (or lack thereof): 'But of course Cushie was ~~strapped, not by her father, who came of a class that never raised a hand to a female, but by her mother. Hopping, shrieking, promising never to go to the hills again, she was~~ whacked at [by her mother] all the way up the stairs into her room.'<sup>34</sup>

Davis marked this edit in pen, without a pencil mark in the margin, indicating that she intended it as a directive rather than the pencilled suggestions elsewhere on the typescript.

Later, there is another significant Davis cut to the text. The original passage read:

Mr Moy flushed darkly. But what was he to say? He could offer no alternative way out of this catastrophe. Keep the whole matter dark as the grave, get rid of the — the thing, for he could not bring himself to think of it as his grandchild — keep Cushie in Sydney for a few weeks until she had recovered her health, and then forget all about it.<sup>35</sup>

Park agreed to remove all but the first sentence; as with the last example, this text was exclusively the thoughts of Mr Moy. Again, on page 672, two full paragraphs are struck through (marked in the margin and then deleted by Park). These cuts prove that there was a consistent and intentional trimming of Mr Moy. Notably, such edits take place not only in a given part of the book but throughout, including an extended section on pages 672–3. One reason these edits are important is because they focus the Cushie sections of the book and, as stated earlier, give greater emphasis to the duality of the male and female sections. The closest analogue in the text for Mr Moy is Mrs Hanna, Jackie's mother (a parent who is the opposite

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<sup>34</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/4, 39

<sup>35</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/4, 298

gender to the protagonist of a given section). There are no consistent and sustained cuts to her interiority. The reader spends some time in the early sections following Mrs Hanna's responses to Jackie's short stature.<sup>36</sup> Davis did mark up some potential extensive excisions around these sections, but they were pencilled margin suggestions as opposed to pen strikethroughs, as in the case of the passages relating to Mr Moy. Park did not accept them. A few pages later, there is a cut to one sentence in a paragraph of Mrs Hanna's thoughts (42). This is a much smaller trim than equivalent material for Mr Moy. Similarly, there are parts that Davis could have cut concerning Mrs Moy (eg 85) but again, these were only marked with pencil in the margin and not approved by Park.

After careful consideration of the whole typescript, it is my contention that the treatment of Mr Moy is unique. If the primary aim of Davis' editorial work was to shorten the book overall, simplifying some of the side characters is a relatively light-handed way of achieving this. However, it is not something that Davis suggested for other secondary characters in the Cushie section who were female. Take, for example, Cushie's Aunt Claudie and her partner Iris. Although these characters are not central protagonists of the story, there are hardly any cuts, and none as long as a paragraph. It points to the unusual nature of the Mr Moy cuts, since they are the only edits of their kind. In reflecting on the material that Park consented to cutting, it is evident that Mr Moy as a male and one of the few Protestant characters in the work is not central to Park's vision for the novel. Paying attention to what was removed reveals Park's project, namely her rounded portrayal of a disabled character and retention of historical detail for which she asserted her authorial position.

### **Missus: The unhappy end of an editorial collaboration**

Research about editing usually examines authors and their acceptance of editorial changes then describes the importance of those interventions. However, editors are taught that the

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<sup>36</sup> MLMSS 8075/4/4, 12–13

published text is always ultimately the responsibility of the author. The question then arises: what happens when there is a disagreement? How are such differences resolved, especially when the author is under pressure given limited options for publication? Of all the authors considered in this thesis, Park had the longest-running relationship with her editor, but just as it did not start on good terms, the ending of their relationship was also fraught. With the last book came a falling out that was the product of a difference in sensibility and in expectations for the work, particularly the prose that the author used. The ending of this relationship suggests that while Park valued Davis' work on a few different novels, she held true to her assertion that her god was 'truth' and the fidelity of her creative vision as opposed to following an editor's suggestions, even when framed as important for the literary and commercial success of a given book.

The archive holds evidence of the rupture in their relationship over the conclusion of the *Harp in the South* trilogy, *Missus*. This disagreement is perhaps not surprising given the fact that *Missus* is part of the same world as *Harp in the South*, the book that Davis had initially described as being unfit for Angus & Robertson. In her edit, Davis argued that the tone of the *Missus* manuscript was too clipped and journalistic; for instance, when discussing Chapter Six in her queries, Davis wrote: 'The almost telegraphic manner doesn't give the reader a chance to savour, or even to assimilate, the significance of the action and reaction of the characters'.<sup>37</sup>

In an internal note to Robert Sessions at Nelson, Davis wrote, 'The MS. Will need quite a lot of work to make it popular and to avoid nasty reviews: it will get no literary acclaim. I'll do my utmost with tact and persuasion in talking to Ruth'.<sup>38</sup> Notable in her comment is Davis's invocation of commercial and literary measures of success, that is, she believes that without her edits the book would suffer both in terms of finding readers and in terms of critical responses. Here the editor is positioning herself as a reader but also a representative of the

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<sup>37</sup> MLMSS 7638/13

<sup>38</sup> MLMSS 7638/13/13 September 1984

market. Davis uses straightforward language to make an argument on the grounds of commercialisation, to ‘make it popular’, and reception, ‘nasty reviews’. As quoted elsewhere in this chapter, the tone of these comments is far more blunt than when the editor corresponds with the author.

True to form, when it came to delivering feedback to Park, Davis adopted many of the common editorial postures of subservience to the author and the work and personal fallibility, saying:

And of course I feel nervous and embarrassed to be suggesting even small changes to a writer like you. Every spot of green ink I’ve put on the typescript seems an impertinence: and I hope you won’t be angry with me and will believe that the suggested amendments are made with the very best of intentions.<sup>39</sup>

Contradicting the cover note, some of the suggestions marked on the typescript were rather strongly worded. For instance, in Chapter Nine, Davis’s first query was: ‘This chapter seems to [sic] scrappy and weak — though I like its comic ending. Could you please rethink it to make a more satisfying ending to this remarkable novel?’<sup>40</sup> In turn, Park’s response was that she knows her readers well, another invocation of her anticipated audience, and that she has faith in her own talents. Park is approaching the end of her career by this point and has confidence — misplaced or otherwise — in her knowledge of her readers.

In her archive, Park included a note from the time of the edits, discussing her internal debate over how to respond. The note is significant not just for its revelation of Park’s state of mind but also for the fact that its inclusion in the archive demonstrates that Park desired for researchers to consider her responses to the edits and to have an insight into her thoughts on the author–editor relationship. Park writes:

I cannot choose between a friend and a novel, the novel must win every time.

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<sup>39</sup> MLMSS 7638/13/19 October 1984

<sup>40</sup> MLMSS 7638/ 13/ undated

I shall withdraw this novel rather than muck it about. There's no question and no indecision about that. I'm wondering, though, whether I shd ring Tim and tell him to hold the advance cheque, don't cash it, in case it has to go back . . . How to write that letter however? How to be kind? My experience is that people never accept rebuffs of this nature in the spirit in which they are offered.<sup>41</sup>

Park is so serious about these edits, she considers calling her agent to ask him to 'hold the advance', not wanting to accept money for the work; very likely because it would make her beholden to the publisher. This is reminiscent of her comment to Davis that the god to whom she has fealty is truth. After her internal wrestling, Park still wants to preserve what she can of her relationship with Davis, and in a letter explains:

I fear that when you look again at this typescript you will be offended or hurt at the many deletions and measures of your editorial marks. You know how I cherish you. Truly I do not want to cause you vexation of any kind. But I cannot see eye to eye with you on the majority of these alterations.<sup>42</sup>

Just as Davis tried to soften her responses, so Park attempts to appease Davis, reminding her, 'You know how I cherish you.' There is a move here to separate the editor from the edits in her comment, which differs from prior correspondence, quoted earlier in this chapter, where there had been extensive emphasis on the personhood of Davis, and that she in particular was engaged in the project. Noting the dates here, Davis and Park's editorial relationship lasted longer than many marriages and was nearly up to a ruby anniversary.

Fitting with other expressions of her subservience to the author and their work, when Davis sent the (largely unchanged) pages to Robert Sessions she wrote: 'Ruth rejected many of my suggestions, and I don't blame her a bit. After all, she is the writer'.<sup>43</sup> The last sentence

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<sup>41</sup> MLMSS 8078/5/Missus/ undated

<sup>42</sup> MLMSS 7638/13/ 18 November 1984

<sup>43</sup> MLMSS 7638/13/ 25 November 1984

is the perfect summation of Davis's attitude to authors; it is likely she would have been uncomfortable with the kind of attention that both Kent's biography and this thesis shine on her work.

In the reception of *Missus*, there is some vindication of Davis' position. One of the few reviews of Park's work that directly engages with the writing and its themes, as opposed to her personal life, appeared in the *Australian Book Review* in 2009 on the re-release of the *Harp in the South* trilogy. The review is largely complimentary of Park's work but does take issue with some of the writing in *Missus*, using the word 'melodramatic' twice in the space of as many paragraphs (Walker 26). This review shares some of the same concerns that Davis raised in her edit and that Park rejected. What I note about this exchange is it indicates that particularly later in an author's career, they can be in a position to reject edits and so the judgement of a work rests with them since it is often a less collaborative process than for a younger writer.<sup>44</sup> Unlike *Swords*, there is no extant correspondence that stipulates publication was wholly or in part contingent on editorial changes.

While authors might be less likely to accept edits at the later stages of their careers, in the case of *Missus*, Park's dismissal of edits seems less to do with a perception that her prose was perfect and not in need of editing but rather the sense that the editor and the author were not *simpatico* in their vision for the style and aims of the book. Even if her comments to Davis about her editing were positive, Park's concern with her relationship and the work itself, preferring to lose a friend than imperil a novel, indicate a continuing preoccupation with the work itself. This connects to McCormack's focus on 'sensibility' or how an editor 'tastes and judges' (53).

When figuring the editor process, the opportunity to examine the differences in edits from Davis on Park's work at different stages in her career affords a perspective on both the

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<sup>44</sup> Perhaps the most dramatic and widely referenced representation of this phenomenon is the relative length of each of the Harry Potter books; the first is 309 pages and the final is 759 pages.

interpersonal dynamics of this relationship and how it can change over time. Just as Greenberg draws attention to an editor as an ‘embodied’ agent, so it is useful here to remember that Park is always operating with her own prejudices, experiences and preconceptions of both the market and the work. My intention is not to determine which expression of the work is preferable or to critique Davis’ editing practices but rather to tease out the knot that forms when author and editor have different visions for a book and to determine how resolutions evolve through the production process.

## **Conclusion**

The interactions between Park and Davis illustrate the ambivalent nature of editorial dynamics by demonstrating the kinds of negotiations and hierarchies of priorities at play in the publishing process, for the author, the editor and the publisher alike. Studying the Davis edits shows that the draft Park delivered to Thomas Nelson was significantly longer, was the result of careful and sustained research and included a key Protestant character. Park agreed to most of Davis’s edits relating to Mr Moy but rejected those that would have lessened the attention on Jackie’s short stature or descriptions of the Depression and the suffering that people of the time endured. From this resistance it is possible to determine the positions that Park held more strongly and those that were more loosely guarded.

The relationship between Park and Davis spanned friendship and a professional collaboration: it was both personal and aesthetic. Although Park could have insisted on her version of the manuscript of *Swords* without explanation, she was always careful to offer reasoned explanations for her rejections of edits, namely her planning and care in drafting, her experience as a bookseller and her vision for the book as a whole. She was savvy in her responses, spotting the arbitrariness of cuts of a given number of words, and she resisted changes that were not in keeping with her vision for the book — a book that ultimately went on to sell well in Australia, find publishers overseas and recognition with awards.

Park's assertions of authority over the text both in the editing phase and in her interview responses after the book's release demonstrate her intentions for the work. In this way examining edits is not only illuminating in terms of understanding the market-based and other pressures of a given publishing environment but also an opportunity to read an author's intentions for a book. Indeed, such scholarship draws attention to an author's agency in the editing and production process and presents an opportunity to reconsider their oeuvre in the light of this new information.

## Chapter Two: Editor as Social Barometer

Although books on editing cover a range of roles that editors inhabit over the life of a book, such as mentor, friend, bank and psychologist (cf Munro; Athill; Gottlieb), as well as a number of intellectual and emotional tools they use, such as sensibility or instinct (cf McCormack; Brett), one of the aspects of the practice that I want to introduce to the scholarship is the role of editor as social barometer. Along with all their other roles and modes, editors are responsible for considering how literary and commercial markets will respond to the author's engagement with politically fraught subject matter, the position of characters from marginalised backgrounds, and the language the author uses to produce the work. As editors anticipate responses, they operate according to their interpretation of the social norms of the time and make corresponding suggestions. In doing so, editors knowingly or unconsciously anticipate the work's position in the Bourdiesian field placing it somewhere on the axis between literary and commercial, 'making a connection between the size of the audience its *social quality*, in terms of the objective and subjective relationship between the producer and the market (Bourdieu and Johnson 48–9). In other words, editors are determining the relationship between the work and the anticipated readership and adapting their approach accordingly. Naturally, their habitus has a significant role in determining their own engagement with a given text. In the Australian context, these questions are most fraught when it comes to non-First Nations or settler authors representing First Nations characters and events of violence, dispossession and other mistreatment. This scenario also calls to mind Greenberg's 'embodied' editor; in other words, an editor is always the sum of their parts, a person who cannot help but bring their personal experiences to a text. In this chapter I am making the argument that editors' experiences inform their deployment of social norms in their editing process.

This chapter presents the case of study of Thea Astley's *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* (1996) and argues for a new reading of Astley's representations of First Nations characters based on her interpretation of source material to restage events from Palm Island in the 1930s. Edited typescripts in Astley's archive also show the ways her editor suggested revisions that bring the work more in line with social norms of the day — namely moving the perspective of sections related by Manny Cooktown from first to third person. Complicating the narrative this change in perspective starts to communicate — that the editor was making the work more progressive — there are also changes of the Aboriginal word 'Murri' to 'black'. While at the time the book was in production, 'black' may have been read as progressive, such a categorisation is no longer current. I also examine the typescripts for edits relating to style, one of the features commonly celebrated in Astley's prose and argue that Astley's editor's decision to leave the style largely unchanged reflects their recognition of her literary project.

It might be a surprise that the author who has won the greatest number of Miles Franklin prizes has received the Patrick White Award for an author not adequately recognised for their contribution to Australian letters. This contradiction gives some insight into the paradoxes of success in Australian publishing. The author of fourteen novels, two novellas and two short story collections published from 1958 to 2000, Astley was also prominent on panels at writers' festivals (an emerging phenomenon in the 1980s and 1990s [Weber 5]) and widely reviewed and discussed — even during her lifetime reviewers were concerned she was not receiving adequate adulation (cf Glover). Although many critics comment on the lack of recognition for Astley's work or appropriate attention, compared with many of her contemporaries, Astley now has a firmly established place in the canon of Australian literature with two book-length works dedicated to her (Sheridan and Genoni *Thea Astley's Fictional Worlds*; Sheridan *The*

*Fiction of Thea Astley*), a literary biography (Lamb), and she remains the only author to have won four Miles Franklin prizes.

A long-term tutor at the University of Macquarie who only belatedly was made a staff member (Lamb 218), a Queenslander and a woman who was a little early for second-wave feminism, Astley identified herself as a misfit again and again (Verney 106; Willbanks *Speaking Volumes*, 37; Gilbert 112). When Mandy Sayer asked her directly whether she thought of herself as a misfit, Astley responded: ‘Well, I think of myself as boring and dull, but I do like screwballs, yes. I like observing them’ (21). Many critics note Astley’s provenance and the role of her home state in her work<sup>45</sup> and it is perhaps in part because of her Queensland upbringing that she felt like a misfit. Several scholars trace increasingly progressive representation of First Nations characters in her novels (cf Dale 150; Sheridan, *Nine Lives* 19; Lever, *Changing Times* 144). Indeed, Astley’s inclusion of First Nations characters in books such as *The Kindness Cup* (1974) positioned them not simply as marginal figures but central to stories about place and settler crimes in Australia. Later in *It’s Raining in Mango* (1987), Astley uses dramatic irony to highlight the mistreatment settler characters enact on their Aboriginal peers through several generations. This chapter draws on both editing history and genetic criticism to probe this orthodoxy. I examine Astley’s archive and research she used to write her late career novel, *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* to explore the ethics of settlers’ writing and editing First Nations characters. I argue that to accurately understand Astley’s drafting process, the production mechanisms and the novel itself, it is necessary to engage with her archive. Such engagement reveals shortcomings in existing Astley scholarship and that, as intimated previously, her editor was a kind of social barometer: registering and making legible the socio-political atmosphere of the day.

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<sup>45</sup> cf Verney ‘Multiple Effects’ 100–110; Hatherell 142; Heseltine 12; Glover 88; Genoni *Thea Astley’s Fictional Worlds*, 153

Of the authors featured in this study, Astley has one of the larger and more complete archives available, predominantly because she gave material to the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland over a period of years. The University of Queensland Press archive also held at the Fryer Library is a rich source with contracts, correspondence and other material offering corroborating evidence and further detail about Astley's publishing history. Astley scholars such as Susan Sheridan (*The Fiction of Thea Astley, Nine Lives*), Karen Lamb, Cheryl Taylor (*This Fiction, Genesis*) and Deborah Jordan and Louise Poland (21-9) have all spent time in the Fryer archive considering the role of editorial intervention, the vicissitudes of publishing deals and the relationships that Astley had with contemporary writers such as Patrick White and Helen Garner. What differs in my approach is my interest in the contributions to the publishing process and especially Astley's editors. Karen Lamb does describe some of the work that Beatrice Davis did but not in detail. For Cheryl Taylor, the copyedits Meredith Rose performed on *Multiple Effects* are 'small changes' (*Genesis* 7) but I examine these edits in detail and find they are not minor; their implications are not small.

Naturally, as with any collection, there are also lacunae. Although there are some notes that accompany the material, there are relatively few comments on the collection from Astley herself and only one appointment book — no journals or diaries. There is relatively scant material in terms of correspondence with editors or publishers.

Unlike some other institutions, the Fryer offers generous grants for scholars to spend time with their collection and I was the recipient of one such grant. It is perhaps for this reason that Astley's archive has attracted so much attention, but it may also be that the archive itself is large and offers plenty of opportunities for study — whether in examining manuscripts and typescripts, reading the changes in the publishing industry through her contracts and correspondence or feeling an immediate connection with the author's process by seeing two

of her typewriters: portable green Hermes models.<sup>46</sup> Leafing through these papers that fill twenty-three boxes created a mental picture of Astley as industrious, generous and confronting many of the same difficulties as contemporary writers, including scraping about for money, turning to university teaching to fund her writing and confronting the indignities of publishing contracts. These impressions have unavoidably influenced the work of this chapter. To recall Alice Te Punga Somerville's comments quoted in the introduction, my approach to the archives, including my contemporary political sensibilities, affects how I examine that holdings (121) and what meaning I develop from my findings.

As well as the archival work, taking Astley's paratexts into consideration develops a picture of the decisions that the author made as she was constructing her characters out of historical records, both First Nations and non-First Nations. Just as Park's editors were concerned that readers may not engage with a protagonist who is different from them, Astley's editor and publisher would have been conscious of the discussions around First Nations' representation and cultural appropriation in the wake of flashpoints in Australian culture during the late eighties and early nineties such as the bicentenary and the Mabo decision: this period is what Jeanine Leane refers to as 'the great unsettling' ('Tracking Our Country' 5). Astley's last two books were published after the Mabo decision of 3 June 1992 that replaced *terra nullius* with pre-existing native title as an Australian legal principle; Paul Keating's plea for racial justice in his Redfern speech of 10 December 1992; the United Nations' Proclamation of 1993 as the 'Year of Indigenous Peoples'; and the opening in 1995 of the inquiry that led two years later to the tabling of the *Bringing Them Home Report* (Taylor 'Genesis', 3). Critic Cheryl Taylor's summary of key moments in settler-First Nations relations in the early 1990s, from which I drew the preceding list, emphasises just how many key changes took place in a few short years. These major milestones were passed just after the

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<sup>46</sup> UQFL97

1988 bicentenary of the arrival of the First Fleet in Australia, and at a time when significant attention was given to the settler–First Nations dynamic in Australian society.

While the work is always ultimately the author’s responsibility, the editor, with their personal experience and their responsibility to the publisher that pays their wage, has a crucial role in working to align a given text with the social norms of the day in the interests of the work, its reception and the author’s reputation.

### **Astley’s Editors: A string of supporters**

Astley’s publishing history shares commonalities with other subjects of this thesis in that she changed publishers several times and worked with many editors, including Beatrice Davis at Angus & Robertson. Unlike some other writers of her generation, it seems that Astley predominantly worked with female editors including Davis, Jackie Yowell at University of Queensland Press and Meredith Rose at Penguin/Viking. In their essay, ‘Star Making, A publishing history of Thea Astley’, Louise Poland and Deborah Jordan claim that for *Beachmaster*, ‘Yowell’s editorial support was crucial to Astley’s success with Penguin just as Carla Taines’ freelance editorial work was to the high literary standards Astley maintained’ (27). She did collaborate with male publishers, such as Laurie Hergenhan at University of Queensland Press and Bob Sessions at Angus & Robertson but overwhelmingly her experience of being edited was by other women. For this reason, Astley makes a particularly good case for this thesis with my intention to spend more time on this demographic that dominates the current publishing workforce both as authors and editors as I described in the introduction (Driscoll and Bowen 2022; Throsby et al 2015).

From the archival holdings at the Fryer it is apparent Astley tended to deliver manuscripts that are quite close to the published versions of her books. Beatrice Davis’ edits for *A Descant for Gossips* (1960), *The Well Dressed Explorer* (1962), *The Slow Natives* (1965), *A Boatload of Home*

*Folk* (1968) and *Hunting the Wild Pineapple* (1979), are what I characterise as copyediting.<sup>47</sup>

Astley's archive does not reveal requests for significant changes to characterisation, plot or style; most of the edits are either correcting typos or suggesting a replacement word. Perhaps the most interventionist of Davis's edits across these works is in suggesting a new title for one of Astley's short stories, which went on to title her collection *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*.<sup>48</sup> From this history it is clear that Astley was accustomed to relatively light editing that reflected both her finely tuned understanding of English — Astley had a sub-editor for a father, studied Latin and trained as an English teacher (Lamb 13).

In her retelling of the story of Astley's career, Sheridan notes the important role that Beatrice Davis played: 'Davis's acceptance of Astley's literary ambitions, unorthodox as they were at the time, and her promotion of the novels, proved to be a great advantage in the early part of the writer's career' (*Nine Lives* 62). Similar to Davis' consecration of Ruth Park's work, her contribution to Astley's reception attracts Sheridan's attention as a meaningful aspect of Astley's early career. Karen Lamb's assessment of the relationship matches Sheridan's as she comments on the dynamic between the two writers. In the case of *Girl with a Monkey*, 'Davis found little to change ... and quickly became "an urger"', Astley was excited by this but also extremely anxious about how to meet such expectations (Lamb 114). It was not simply a relationship of warm encouragement; Astley 'confided to [a friend] that she felt nurtured but a bit "pushed" by Davis, who was already talking about a deadline for a second novel' (Lamb 114).

Although she never named Davis in acknowledgements, Astley contributed to a panegyric to Davis in 1974<sup>49</sup> and remarked on Davis' influence in interviews, including to Jennifer Ellison for *Rooms of Their Own*: 'I sent it to Angus and Robertson's and, fortunately for me at

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<sup>47</sup> UQFL 97/1–26

<sup>48</sup> UQFL 97/3/25/ 50

<sup>49</sup> NLA MS4530, *Tributes*

the time, there was an editor called Beatrice Davis, who has been one of the most effective forces in Australian literature in moulding and guiding it' (58). These metaphors are different from some of the others invoked by writers or scholars when discussing editorial engagement. The work is not equivalent to a midwife in terms of birthing but closer to a teacher who helps shape and form the prose. Astley's figuration of the editor aligns with some of the claims that Bourdieu makes for the editor, namely that in their consecration of the text, it changes through a process of 'moulding'. Further, Astley seems to be acknowledging the role of the editor as an intermediary between an author and their readers; when an editor 'guides' a book there is a connotation that there needs to be something to lead the way, to help it progress from one position to another. In this sense, the editor process extends beyond the pen marks on a typescript but into the world of dissemination and reception.

For *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* Astley returned to Penguin, having been signed by Bob Sessions (the same person Beatrice Davis corresponded with about Ruth Park and the Literature Board). He had been publisher at Nelson when Astley's *A Kindness Cup* was acquired. While she spoke highly of Beatrice Davis<sup>50</sup>, her esteem for an editor was only one of the reasons for choosing a publisher; the size of the advance and the systems in place to promote her work were also relevant factors. By the time she was published by Penguin in the 1990s, her advances were sizeable: \$30,000 each for *Multiple Effects* and *Drylands*.<sup>51</sup>

As well as significant advances, it was at Penguin that Astley discovered 'a new ally' as Karen Lamb (296) puts it. At the time, Meredith Rose was a relatively young editor, but she and Astley 'clicked'. Lamb continues, 'Rose had her own "crazy Methodist upbringing" to rival her author's Catholicism, and they shared a similar sense of humour. Astley always knew how to play many roles almost simultaneously; friend-teacher-parent ...' (296). The importance of this relationship is borne out by the acknowledgement in *Multiple Effects* (Astley

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<sup>50</sup> MLMSS 2808/1974

<sup>51</sup> UQFL/46/297

2), which is the only time that Astley ever thanks an editor, and by the fact that Rose was asked to edit Astley's last book, *Drylands*. As Lamb explains:

... Meredith Rose, now in Broome working as editor for Magabala Books, agreed to take on the editing, sending pages of minor edits from there for Astley to consider. Astley was surprised that Rose had said little about the book itself — just the edits coming through. She was still unusually sensitive and easily undermined, and Rose knew this, sending a note praising the book's 'undeniable feeling of the emptiness of everything. And the fullness of it.' (302)

What is telling about this comment is that despite the existing working relationship and the stage in Astley's career — *Drylands* was to be her last published book — nevertheless she was eager to receive reassurance and praise from her editor. When Meredith Rose completed the copyedit for *Multiple Effects*, she was new to Astley, but their collaboration was productive as borne out by Astley's receptiveness to the edits and her stated gratitude in the book's acknowledgements.

### **'Maddening to read' — Editors' respect for Astley's style**

From the figurations of editing that I discussed in the introduction, it is clear that there are differences between the kind of labour that operates at the structural or development level and the kind of labour involved in a line edit or copyedit. When considering style, the tools at hand are usually word choice and punctuation but when I examined Astley's archive I found these elements of her writing went largely untouched. What I offer here is a reading that ties Astley's literary ambition to her use of style and the archive shows that her editors were largely sympathetic to this enterprise. If an editor's job is to prepare a work for market and if the market is Australia from the 1950s onwards, one may imagine that Astley's novels, with their occasionally florid descriptions, inventive similes and use of Latin, would be the subject of significant edits but the archive shows that this is not the case. What follows is a

reconciliation of the scholarly responses to Astley's work and the editorial processes on *Multiple Effects* and other works.

Generally, reviewers did not comment on the perceived state of editing in Astley's books — where they were critical of the style, the blame was attributed to the author herself. There is one exception that I found where a reviewer in the *Sydney Morning Herald* took issue with a particular image:

‘Outside the sweating louvres of my now-town the sun flashes the morse of it back and back.’

Born and brought up in Queensland I have yet to see a louvre sweat. Where was the stringer editor when that line slipped past?

The book trade and the hapless reader can do without such self-indulgence, which does nothing for the often shining reputation of Australian literature. (‘This mess!’ np)

Given the limited space afforded to reviews it seems misguided to waste so many words on what is really such a short description, but it reflects the kind of moral disgust that some readers have for the perceived failings of editors as noted in the discussion in the first chapter of *de Voto* and his response to Thomas Woolfe's comments on the interventions of his editor.

In some contemporary reviews — notably in two from her home state — Astley was critiqued for her florid style. One described her as ‘... maddening to read’ (Conley), another wrote that ‘One minute she is wonderfully perceptive, the next she borders on pretentiousness.’ (McRobbie) Her word choice often drew comment; JM Couper thought that ‘... the words, especially words like *ovately*, are too often like ocean liners sitting in shallow waters: their circumstances do not support them’ (37). In one of the most strongly worded responses to her style, Astley's sometime friend Helen Garner reviewed *An Item from the Late News* for the *National Times* saying that the ‘kind of writing drives me berserk, and not because I'm against messing with sound, but because the way Astley does it here is heavy-handed,

layered on, inorganic, self-conscious, hectic and distracting.’ Garner later adds, ‘She’s got ease and power, she doesn’t need to pump iron.’ In later interviews, Astley referenced this comment (misremembering the word choice (Johnson)) which demonstrates the effect that such a response had on the author. Astley spoke of her admiration for authors such as Nabokov and her characters also mused on his aesthetic as Meg Brayshaw notes (260) whose prose could similarly be described as ‘inorganic’ and ‘self-conscious’ but the games that they played were as much a part of their prose as the plots and characters. There are authors who choose to ‘pump iron’ and readers who enjoy the spectacle.

While there were some detractors, for the most the contemporary commentary was positive. In her review of the book, Debra Adelaide wrote that ‘...there’s a certain softening up of style, detectable, I think, in the last three of her novels. The narrative voice or voices are a little more accessible yet they still contain their characteristic bite, their wit, their pervasive irony’ (*Northern Disclosure* 10S). Agreeing with Adelaide, Bantick wrote that ‘The consequences [of the events on Doebin] though harrowing, are told by Astley with a certain simple elegance’ (np). Karen Lamb records Elizabeth Jolley’s response to the book; ‘that the writing in *Rainshadow* was “poetical and musical”, “vivid and haunting” and above all endorsed the title’ (299).

While there is a sense that the prose is perhaps less dense than some of her other works, there are still characters who think in grammatical metaphors (Mrs Curthoys for example, 11) and there remains rich poetic language, puns and language games and characters who not only learnt Latin but refer to it on occasion (cf *The Acolyte* 25). The question of style is inextricably linked to the question of Astley’s gender and the role of gender in her work. As Sheridan notes, ‘Like Judith Wright, all her early literary heroes were men’ (*Fiction of Thea Astley* 63). Not only were Astley’s literary heroes male but she wanted her work to be read by men, that she could write books that men wouldn’t be embarrassed to read on a plane

(Gilbert 110). In an interview with Jennifer Ellison, Astley said, ‘You’ve got to remember my age. Men didn’t listen to women when they expressed an opinion. I always felt that they wouldn’t read books written by women, because it would be like listening a woman for three hours, which would be intolerable’ (56). And further as Elaine Lindsay notes, ‘Astley has spoken many times of her need in those days [in her early books] to obscure her female voice, to spiritually neuter herself in order to be read — to write, in other words, as a nonwoman for men’ (119). If I read florid literary style as a masculine posture on the page, none of the editors strove to feminise her writing and instead left the style untouched.

There is a clear delineation between Astley’s early novels written primarily from a single point of view (with the occasional shift into free indirect style) whereas her later works *It’s Raining in Mango*, the short story collection *Hunt for the Wild Pineapple*, *Beachmasters*, *Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* and *Drylands* are all polyphonic — almost to the point of reading like interconnected short story collections. The shift in style does not mean a separation from earlier themes such as the misfit or ‘the magnetic north’ but does allow for sections written from both female and male consciousnesses — perhaps a reflection that Astley continued to believe that she needed to be careful to avoid alienating male readers. It also means that there is space to write from different cultural perspectives within the one book.

Given the tendency towards such language in Astley’s earlier works, and the fact that authors are often edited less in later works, one might expect that Astley’s later books would have more of her literary flourishes than novels such as *Girl with a Monkey* or *The Well Dressed Explorer*. However, *Multiple Effects* does not demonstrate this, either in the finished version, which Debra Adelaide (‘Northern Disclosure’ 10S) praised as ‘accessible’, or in the edited typescript. There are relatively few instances of Rose removing language that might be considered particularly descriptive or rich.

For the most part, her editors left such embellishment untouched: however, in the case of *Beachmasters* (1985) the editor noted that Astley had used sixteen foreign words on pages three, four and five, and queried whether the resultant feeling of unfamiliarity might be too much for readers, suggesting that she should change a few instances in the interests of accessibility.<sup>52</sup> Astley did not reduce the number of foreign words in the book's opening pages. Meredith Rose was fairly restrained in her suggestions about trimming or removing descriptions or poetic language, but there are instances where she suggested deletions and Astley followed her advice.

In the case of *Multiple Effects* I offer three examples in the first half of the book of editing that moves to greater simplicity. The first is when Rose suggested changing the phrase 'describing a parabola of invitation' to 'gestures'.<sup>53</sup> The change is not simply about reducing a phrase of five words to a single verb, but also changes a visual description deploying maths and a sort of courtly formality into plain English. Another example is when Rose suggests removing the simile 'stabs of delicious pain like a rocket in screaming stars of red and orange' (110). Arguably this is a mixed metaphor, first describing the pain as a rocket and then saying that the rocket is made from stars. Also, from a plausibility perspective, stars do not scream, given the vacuum of space. Rose transplants the word 'delicious' from describing pain to describing the stabs, keeping a sense of the perverse pleasure in pain but simplifying the sentence significantly.<sup>54</sup>

The last example is a suggested trim to reduce the wordiness of a sentence and to remove the repetition of one word. The edits are marked with strikethrough and the insertions are italicised:

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<sup>52</sup> UQFL 97/5

<sup>53</sup> UQFL 97/17/105, 10

<sup>54</sup> UQFL 97/17/105, 116

In one of those pauses between cloud-bursts, ~~clouds nimbus~~ peeled back like stage drapes and a watery moon ~~lighting the garden~~ subjected us to *lit* drama too melodramatic to be believable.<sup>55</sup>

Again, this is an instance of replacing six words with one to make a sentence more straightforward. That said, Rose did not touch the mixed metaphor of a ‘watery moon’ and ‘stage drape’ clouds. While editors may be taught that mixed metaphors should be avoided, in the case of a writer such as Astley the prose is generally quite dense with description, and it is this kind of evocative image that surely contributed to the overall impression that led eminent Australian literature scholar Elizabeth Webby to describe *Multiple Effects* as ‘poetical and musical’ (quoted in Lamb 299). Notably there are consistent and clear reasons for each change (there are instances of more idiosyncratic editorial choices in the chapter on Kate Jennings’ *Bad Manners*).

Overwhelmingly, Rose’s edits were minor nicks and cuts rather than slashes or major extractions. She cut descriptions such as ‘a Conrad character, foul-mouthed, foul-breathed’ and ‘His eyes charted her coast but wanted to try the inland of her. All that within seconds. He had to look away from eating up surfaces’ (186).<sup>56</sup> Over the course of the work, there are relatively few instances of these cuts and Astley’s rich, detailed prose with word play, Latinate vocabulary and linguistic jokes remain. The editor process that Rose performs here is one of restraint; even though some critics had raised questions about Astley’s style by the time that Rose was editing her work, this did not influence her approach and, for the most part, she left Astley’s prose as she found it.

One of the interesting findings from the archive is that Astley was not always moving towards greater simplicity as she edited her own work. In the draft for *Multiple Effects* she raised the register of the prose on a few occasions such as when ‘ploughed’ became

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<sup>55</sup> UQFL 97/17/105, 46

<sup>56</sup> UQFL 97/17/105, 209

‘furrowed’, ‘Down under’ became ‘in the Antipodes’ And ‘Mate’ became ‘friend’.<sup>57</sup> This proves that the editing and revising process is not unidirectional; in the iterative stages, there can be shifts both to great simplicity and to more poetic language. It also demonstrates that, when it came to the revision of her work, she was unperturbed by some of the previous comments about her style.

Rose’s circumspect editorial approach is carried through to *Drylands* (1999), a playful postmodern work that toys with meta-fiction and intertextuality. While *Multiple Effects* also engages in formal experimentation in its juxtaposition of different voices, its play with time and perspective and its post-colonial interrogations of relationships to place, environment and people, in *Drylands* Astley’s reading of Italo Calvino and her desire to experiment is evident on the page. The edits operate in a way sympathetic to that aim, not interrupting rich language and description nor touching the structure. Although these editors are separated by time — indeed they are generations apart — they each were largely consistent in leaving Astley’s style largely untouched.

Indulging in a counterfactual here for a moment, had Astley worked with a more interventionist editor, or an editor who saw fit to limit her stylistic idiosyncrasies, she likely would not have one as many prizes or held the position that she does in the Australian literary canon. What may have been the correlative is that perhaps she would have sold more copies of her books. The purpose of this thought experiment is to highlight the fact that editorial suggestions, and the choices authors make in following them or not, impact not just the individual work but the author’s reception and their career trajectory more broadly.

While it is the case that editors often make suggestions that authors ignore or dismiss, in Astley’s case, her archive shows that, for the most part, her editors were sympathetic with her style and did not frequently suggest changes to her prose style, even where such changes

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<sup>57</sup> UQFL 97/16

would have appeased some of the critics of Astley's work. This differs significantly from what I note in the next chapter, where Jessica Anderson's editor suggests change to style and voice, and she reacted very strongly against their requests.

### **Writing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander characters**

When discussing the role of textual editors in his 1998 essay, Paul Eggert reflects on the limitations of a post-structuralist reading since it precludes a phenomenological account of the work and how it comes into being. Eggert finds Derrida's account of authorship wanting, arguing that textual editors 'are faced with ... manuscripts which beg not so much for structural as phenomenological explanation: who wrote them?, when?, for what audience even if only the writer's later self?, under what externally imposed limitations?' ('Social Discourse or Authorial Agency' 109). Indeed, I am posing some of the same questions in this thesis as I argue that the material, ideological and social conditions in which a work is created and edited can productively inform scholarship from literary and sociological perspectives. In the section that follows I examine how *Multiple Effects* represents its First Nations characters and what Astley's language choices reveal about her approach to source material.

As with Astley's earlier novel *Beachmasters*, *Multiple Effects* does not neatly slot into a framework of postcolonial fiction, but it is intertwined with that literary project as Leigh Dale (21) and Gelder and Salman (42–3) have noted, in large part because of its setting and because of its First Nations characters. The two novels have much in common. Both were based on real events in the Pacific. Both feature the language of the local people and both were morally underdetermined: a seemingly conscious decision to avoid making any sort of overt or definitive ethical statement about the characters. Though Paul Sharrad was specifically writing about *Beachmasters* in his contribution to *Thea Astley's Fictional Worlds*, many of his comments also are applicable to *Multiple Effects*, in particular the way he discusses Astley's moral ambiguity:

... the text seems even more radically open-ended and accepting than most other novels on the Pacific. Astley jumps from vignette to vignette, presents a situation and withdraws from it without an attempt to pack it into a tidy frame of meaning that will be of some significance to the largely non-Vanuatu readership. (79)

Sharrad also comments on Astley's determination to get the language right by interviewing people who witnessed the events and consulted books to ensure verisimilitude (81). That said, Astley could never be more than a kind of 'tourist' in the culture with the associated limitations of that role (Sharrad 82).

*Multiple Effects* is the fictionalised story set on Palm Island, Queensland, in the 1920s and 1930s the government formed a mission on the island and moved Aboriginal people there from all over the state for supposed crimes that included being a 'larrikin' or a 'wanderer' (Watson 38). Astley's novel centres around the 1930 Palm Island tragedy when Superintendent Robert Henry Curry went on a murderous rampage until stopped from causing further harm when shot dead by Peter Prior. Astley renamed the setting Doebin Island, and the protagonists Captain Brodie and Manny Cooktown. In the novel, after the death of his wife, Brodie has a breakdown, murders his sleeping children by setting dynamite and blowing up their house and then rampaging with a gun. He is killed by an Aboriginal man, Manny, who has been asked to take down Brodie. Manny is then charged with murder but later exonerated. The book covers a span of thirty years and is narrated from the perspectives of several settlers who have connections with the island. In between each chapter is a short, italicised section that is from Manny's perspective and written in Astley's version of Aboriginal English. This is a challenging book for its emotional intensity and its messy, ambiguous ending. It has elements in common with *It's Raining in Mango* in the telling of story by multiple generations and with different perspectives for each chapter. This has echoes of the short story collection *Hunting the Wild Pineapple* also.

In each case when Astley depicts First Nations characters in her fiction, it is a political act as Christopher Bantick explores in a feature on *Multiple Effects*:

Astley goes some way to show the disparity of views on Aborigines and this is one of her aims in her story.

‘I like people to think twice before they use pejorative terms about the Aborigines.

There are as many ugly whites as there are blacks. I’ve said what I’ve wanted to say in the book, yet perhaps I should have dedicated it to Pauline Hanson.’ (‘Maiden Speech’ np)

At the time she made this comment, politician Pauline Hanson had recently made a speech to parliament in which she claimed she had been elected for publicly commenting on Aboriginal people receiving more benefits than non-Aboriginal people (np). With this comment, Astley is proclaiming her disdain for Hanson’s rhetoric. Since several critics have commented on Astley’s moral ambivalence (Adelaide ‘Northern Disclosure’; Wolitzer; Sharrad) it is implausible that Astley wrote to show ‘the disparity of views’ — her literary project was not so blunt. Instead, her fiction exploits a wide range of resources including her language play and sense of humour to approach social and political questions obliquely. Gelder and Salman take Astley as an author who works ‘juxtaposing white liberal humanist guilt with the rampant exploitations and cruelties of white capitalism’ (230). Astley was clearly concerned with the politics of colonialism since it was a subject to which she returned in *It’s Raining in Mango*, *The Kindness Cup*, *Beachmasters* and *Multiple Effects*. In these works, Sheridan argues that Astley is ‘not so much interested in shaping historical details into a narrative as in the emotional dynamics of colonial racism’ (*Fiction* 139). This leads me to ask, how exactly did Astley ‘shape’ historical details into a narrative and what changes did she undertake in this process? Further, how does a reading of these sources affect reception of the novel as a whole?

As I mentioned earlier, *Multiple Effects* is the only book in which Astley credits her editor, though it is not the only book in which she acknowledges the historical texts that have been a basis for her creative work. As it is not generally within the copyeditor's remit to check the source materials, it is unlikely that Rose would have read the books that Astley cites in her acknowledgements. If anything, it probably would have been reassuring to see the kinds of works that Astley cited there. At the same time this study starts a conversation about how to shape contemporary best-practice of editing. Through Astley's research, drafting and public comments it seems she was eager to sympathetically represent First Nations characters but her use of material from Birri Gubba man Peter Prior's memoir works in an opposite direction. Astley removes Prior's sophistication, downplaying the agency of her fictional character, Manny Cooktown.

Thea Astley's acknowledgements in her historical fiction novels demonstrate a change in her drafting practice over the course of her career. These paratexts offer an important revelation about Astley's process as a writer. Part of the reason the acknowledgements in *Multiple Effects* are important is their recognition of the different individuals and works that contributed to Astley's drafting process. In his work on textual editing, Jerome McGann argues 'Every literary work that descends to us operates through the deployment of a double helix of perceptual codes: the linguistic codes, on one hand, and the bibliographical codes on the other.' (*Textual Condition* 77) Some of these bibliographical codes that are operating in Astley's novels are the acknowledgements at the start of her historical fiction novels.

*Multiple Effects* starts with the following acknowledgements:

This book is based loosely on an incident in north Queensland over sixty years ago.

All characters are fictional.

Impulses came from Compton Mackenzie's *My Life and Times: Octave Six*, Henry

Reynolds's *With the White People*, Bill Rosser's *Dreamtime Nightmares*, John P Maguire's

*Prologue: A History of the Catholic Church as seen from Townsville 1863–1983*, and Renarta Prior's *Straight from the Yudaman's Mouth*. The *Kuku-alanji Dictionary* compiled by Lynette F Oates was also useful.

Astley's acknowledgments also mention people as well as sources such as Prior's book; she thanks 'Professor Elizabeth Perkins of James Cook University; Geoff Hadrill, Reference Librarian of the Nowra Municipal Library'. These thanks to a historian and librarian, aside from the politesse of publicly acknowledging their help, also add a degree of gravitas to the role of historical material in the book. Importantly, the list of books gives the reader an opportunity to explore the story further and to educate themselves on the events.

In each of Astley's previous historical fiction books, all the 'impulses' have been from settler-colonial sources. In *Beachmasters* (1985) it was 'Maggie Paton's Letters and Tom Harrisson's *Savage Civilisation*'. Although, as Paul Sharrad notes in his analysis of the work, *kriol* and some of the characters' mother tongue is a preoccupation of the work (79), Astley does not list First Nations sources for this knowledge and instead seems to have based her usage on details gleaned from her travels to Vanuatu — where she would have been in the role of a tourist, never gaining the insights of an insider. Earlier, in *A Kindness Cup* (1974), 'Acknowledgements are made to the report of the Secret Committee on the Native Police Force, Queensland 1861'. Susan Sheridan notes that:

Charles Dunford Rowley's landmark trilogy, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*, had begun to appear in 1970, establishing a new focus on frontier violence, which influenced current debates about Aboriginal land rights. This was the context of public debate in which Astley made her first attempt to dramatise such historical events and their legacy. (*Historical Novels* 16)

From Sheridan's comments and Astley's work, I determine that Astley followed and engaged with contemporary political and social debates and seems to have been receptive to

changing settler understandings of colonial violence. Astley's earlier works of historical fiction include First Nations characters, but the *Multiple Effects* acknowledgements contain the first reference to a First Nations source. Sheridan traces Astley's research in the archive, writing that:

Astley read an article about the Curry tragedy which set her off researching the history of Palm Island, including stories about it by Black writers, most importantly *Straight from the Yudaman's Mouth*, Renarta Prior's account of her father's story. This enabled Astley to incorporate Indigenous perspectives, and to do so in language which attempts to transliterate Indigenous English ... (*Fiction of Thea Astley* 136)

The difficulty with Sheridan's assessment that Astley was seeking to 'incorporate Indigenous perspectives' is precisely the choice of her language and the incorporation of Aboriginal English. Crucially, and unsurprisingly, *Straight from the Yudaman's Mouth* is not written in Aboriginal English. There are occasional Aboriginal words (Murri, migaloo) and some slips in grammar ('bought' instead of 'brought') but it is written in standard English. In the Prior book, there is a description of Peter confronting a well-armed John Curry: '... I don't know how I managed to say it, but I said to him "Hey Boss, surrender."' (21) In *Multiple Effects*, the same exchange is rendered 'Manny remember the word he was supposed to say. He call, Surrender. He call, Put down your gun.' (130) Clearly the Prior account of this event puts the First Nations man in a position of control, both of the English language and of his own actions. The Astley account shifts agency by saying that Manny says what he was 'supposed to say' and makes Manny simply a conduit for settler intentions. In the Prior version, the language is assured, clearly expressed and uses standard English. In the Astley version the English is highly accented and non-standard. Given Astley cites this work as one of her 'impulses' I know that she read it and must conclude that she made the decision to change the language. By shifting the register and the expression of the language, rather than

‘incorporating Indigenous perspectives’, it would seem that she is rewriting the existing narrative told by the person who was present. Although Rodoreda writes that Astley ‘seeks to give her Indigenous characters more agency’ (133) in *Multiple Effects*, instead, this rewriting reinscribes a patronising settler interpretation of First Nations people, their use of language and their agency. It reiterates colonial narratives and contributes to negative representations of First Nations people.

Cheryl Taylor analyses different representations of Palm Island in fiction and documentary in her essay, ‘This fiction, it don’t go away’ (2009) and considers Astley’s *Multiple Effects* and the works she lists in her acknowledgements. In the same essay, Taylor comments that ‘Fittingly, Astley does not speak for black Palm Islanders, except insofar as her writing is supported by black texts’ (‘This Fiction’ 56). It is difficult to understand what Taylor may have meant by this since Astley wrote a song in the voice of Normie which was her own invention. It was ‘supported by black texts’ insofar as Astley used a dictionary to write the song but it was by writing a song in language that Astley was speaking for Palm Islanders in a way that appropriates culture. As demonstrated in the previous paragraph, the ‘support from black texts’ is not quite accurate. Astley used a First Nations account of an event and then imposed a different manner of speaking, and different degree of agency, to the man involved. Ambelin Kwaymullina makes the point that it is only Aboriginal authors who can truly write from the standpoint of Aboriginal people given the insurmountable differences in worldview, connection to country, social and cultural inheritance (144).

In her essay outlining the four kinds of literary responses to Palm Island’s history, Cheryl Taylor divides them into white-washing by which she means hiding away the dark past; Aboriginal writing that covered polemics and reminiscences; writing by the Prior family; and then gave Thea Astley in general, and *Multiple Effects* in particular, a section of its own. Her contention is that the novel draws on white and black traditions and has a role to play in

helping outsiders understand the history of Palm Island (63). Taylor sets Astley apart from other settler authors as an example of someone who is faithfully representing Palm Island's history. While Taylor has considered Astley's archive and noted that 'Astley's drafts reveal that she included Manny as a narrator late in the novel's evolution', she only pays close attention to the holographs but, as is common in genetic criticism and other modes of scholarship that privilege the sole author rather than considering the multiple individuals that contribute to the publication process, she makes no comment about the copyedit.

Astley did speak for Palm Islanders in the draft of the manuscript when she wrote Manny Cooktown's sections in first person before the manuscript was copyedited.<sup>58</sup> In this instance, it could be that editorial intervention was determined by an editor's consciousness of the changing norms in publishing and the expectation that settler authors should maintain a greater distance to avoid appropriation of First Nations stories. Since Meredith Rose was younger than Astley, perhaps she was bringing a different kind of social consciousness to the draft and an anticipation that some contemporary readers may respond adversely to some of the depictions of First Nations characters in the draft. What is critical for the purposes of this study is the position Astley affords Rose in her acknowledgements. As mentioned earlier, in none of Astley's other books is there a thanks to her editor, or indeed anyone else involved in the production of her books. I take this as Astley's recognition that Rose's contribution was more than simply correcting typos and that instead Astley equated Rose with others who helped in the genesis of the work including librarians and scholars.

Taylor reflects in another essay that, 'Probably eager to avoid any appearance of pidgin in Manny's language and conversely to underline its difference from the language of the invaders, Astley and her Viking editor continued to make small changes to Manny's language into the novel's copyediting stage' ('Genesis' 7). I contend this is an inapposite reading since

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<sup>58</sup> UQFL97/17/ 105

Manny does speak in a sort of ‘pidgin’ English and the only reason for differentiating his speech from ‘the invaders’ is to indicate a lack of fluency. I also argue that Rose’s contribution cannot simply be considered ‘small changes’ and that instead, close reading of the copyedit highlights that the changes she suggests are substantial and formative.

Since contemporary criticism, in particular the work of Cheryl Taylor and Geoff Rodoreda, is concerned with tracing the dynamics between settler writers and First Nations stories, the question of the materials that Astley used to develop her project are of particular interest. The most significant of these is the dictionary of Aboriginal words which she used to write the song at the end of the novel. Normie Cooktown, Manny’s son, sings a song as he is taken away, ‘not one of his people’s songs. He is weaving words learnt from Moses Thursday and Freddie Sweetwater in a gesture of brotherhood’ (281). This layer of distance — that the song itself is a fabrication and not in the character’s mother tongue, perhaps offers a little more room for the kind of invention that Astley created. Normie sang:

*We are leaving now*

*We do not understand*

*That island belongs to our people*

*We do not understand*

*Those flowers were beautiful*

*Long time, long time, long time*

*Now they are wilted*

*We do not understand.* (281)

His peers Moses and Freddie pick up the refrain and sing ‘*Ngana kari binal* — we do not understand’ along with him. This song, first in Kuku-Yalanji and then in English leads to the end of the book and forms a moving scene that is one of the reasons critics comment on the moral ambiguity of the book. It is particularly stark that the characters are singing ‘we do not

understand' first in a language that does not belong to all of them and second in the presence of people who would not be able to translate the lyrics for themselves.

It seems important for the verisimilitude of the book that Astley used the *Kuku-Yalanji Dictionary* 'compiled by Lynette F. Oates' — as Astley notes in the acknowledgements (2) — to compose the lyrics. There are clear protocols for contemporary writers to follow around the appropriation of Aboriginal songlines and language and I would be very surprised if a publisher released a book with this material in the current market but there is also a reading of these scenes that is more generous to the author and the idea that she was writing in part as a kind of teasing out of the inter-generational traumas that government policy inflicted on Australia's First Nations people — in this case specifically those who were sent to Palm Island.

Looking at Astley's paratexts supports the argument that there was a shift in her oeuvre as a result of social and political change, particularly after the Mabo judgement. While Astley had long been interested in telling stories of settler-colonial transgressions against First Nations people (both in Australia and in the Pacific), it was not until after the Mabo judgement that her acknowledgements include work by First Nations authors and a dictionary of Aboriginal language — despite her interest in kriol in *Beachmasters*. I have made claims that Rose's contributions are substantial, but they are nevertheless limited by the standards of editorial practice. While they may work as a social barometer, as I argue in this chapter, an editor's work usually will not involve checking primary sources, searching for corroborating evidence or checking secondary materials as is often the case with journalism (Copley Eisenberg). Had the editor looked at *Straight from the Yudaman's Mouth*, as a fact-checker would have done, she may have been in a position to advise Astley against her conversion of standard English into the invented Aboriginal English of the finished book.

### **Adding space: Changing a from first to third person for sections narrated by a First Nations character**

Of all the changes that editor Meredith Rose suggested for the manuscript of *Multiple Effects*, the most interesting for the purposes of this study was the shift from collective first to third person in the sections narrated from Manny Cooktown's perspective. These changes insert greater distance between the author and the narrator and can reduce the risk of perceived appropriation of a First Nations voice by a settler author. What this suggestion demonstrates is the role of the editor's habitus in their contribution to the publishing process.

I have not found any criticism that references the fact that Manny's sections, while written from his point of view, are not in first person. Indeed, critic Geoff Rodoreda remarks that Manny's segments 'are "spoken"' (135) as if Manny is directly addressing the reader. Careful attention to the prose reveals that this is not the case. While these sections are mostly in non-standard English and they are italicised, almost as though the reader is eavesdropping on Manny's thoughts. They are not presented as speech, and they are not narrated in the same way as other sections of the book. Since it is a convention to italicise thoughts in novels, such formatting may further encourage readers to respond to the text as if it were thought. In her contemporaneous book review, Debra Adelaide mentioned Manny's sections as 'another narrative thread, which gives brief glimpses in the yearning puzzled heart of Manny Cooktown' ('Northern Disclosure' 10s). The distance of third person does not stop Adelaide from seeing, albeit briefly, into the character's heart.

Sheridan also raises the choice to narrate given sections from Manny's perspective writing:

Here Astley represents Manny's perspective in the rhythms of Aboriginal English rather than describing his thoughts in standard English. This was a matter that had occupied her in *Beachmasters*, where the virtues and limitations of Seaspeak, the local *kriol* language, are debated. (*Fiction of Thea Astley* 137)

Sheridan does not make a value judgement, as Taylor does, about the use of such language and whether or not Astley was ‘speaking’ for a given group. Further investigation of the archive reveals some interesting detail about the role of editorial intervention in these sections and its effects on the book more broadly.

The book opens with direct speech (although not in quote marks): ‘The blue fire, he said. This blue. Burn my heart it jump like fish jumping straight down.’ A few sentences later comes Rose’s first change of perspective, as marked on the copyedited typescript: ‘In the mornin after ~~we~~ *they* creep out from behind the rocks where ~~we~~ *they* shelter all night, the bodies’.<sup>59</sup> The rest of the section was written in collective first person and changed to collective third person, except for one instance where Manny says: ‘All night too they rattle and the smells get bad in the little place ~~we~~ *they* sit and ~~I~~ *he* wet ~~myself~~ *himself* just thinkin’.<sup>60</sup> Here is a shift from first-person singular to third-person singular. With collective first person there is already a degree of indeterminacy, an imprecision about who is speaking. Changing it to collective third person creates further distance between the narrator and the subject. This could represent either an increase in the power differential, or the insertion of space between character and author to limit any possible perceptions of cultural appropriation.

Later in the work, more instances of first person and collective first also change to third and collective third respectively. This section concludes:

~~But~~ He forget that year but the next he take us them and when ~~we~~ *they* got pay too, more than when ~~we~~ *they* see ~~our~~ *their* wives an kids everythin all right.

~~We~~ *They* got pay too, more than ~~we~~ *they* ever got on Doebin workin for the gubbamin.

That make Jeannie happy. Then ~~I~~ *he* remember mumma say, Happy don’t last.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> UQFL 97/17/105, 1

<sup>60</sup> UQFL 97/17/105, 2

<sup>61</sup> UQFL 97/17/105, 194

There is clearly a greater distance between ‘we’ and ‘they’, regardless of whether the text is rendered in non-standard or standard English — for example, the shift in the final line of this section from a character remembering what his own mother said as opposed to someone else’s family member — and the distance registers with the reader, even if only on an unconscious level.

The choice still prompted discussion. In her analysis of *Multiple Effects*, Sheridan comments:

Although the Indigenous men in Astley’s novel can speak ... their access to the symbolic order is different from that of the (relatively) powerless white women. This difference between the white woman and the black man’s access to the power of discourse is dramatised in *Rainshadow*: even though Normie has an education and is not afraid of the whites, he does not speak in the same register of power as them.

(*Fiction of Thea Astley* 144)

While Mrs Curthoys, as manager of the boarding house, is socially below Brodie, Vine and Donnellan, she is keen to point out that her speech and comportment surprise her peers; in one instance she says of the doctor, ‘I think my vowels have confounded him, brought him to social heel, as it were’.<sup>62</sup> I gather from that detail that if there is a distinction between different kinds of settler English, any non-standard English would attract even greater disdain and lead to greater disempowerment. That is, the First Nations characters in the book do not have power in the same way as the non-First Nations characters and do not have the control of a first-person narration of their own story. Although the First Nations men can and do speak, in the sense that there is direct dialogue in the Manny sections and elsewhere in the book, the Aboriginal men never narrate their own story directly to the reader as the settler characters do. Manny was given this voice in the book’s draft but in the version that went to

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<sup>62</sup> UQFL 97/17/105, 20

print, his personal pronoun almost never appears. This adds to the discrepancy of power between the settler characters — including the women — and the black characters. Even though Leonie and Mrs Curthoys are generally operating at the mercy of the men in their lives, they have the agency of telling their stories directly to the reader. It is not the case for Manny. While the ‘I’ may be implied in his sections, it never actually appears; he does not have ‘voice’ or control over his own story in the way that the other characters do.

Rose’s edits keep Astley’s version of non-standard English, even while shifting perspective. One example occurs with the edit: ‘Thirty now. Father Donnellan tell ~~me~~ *him* thirty ... Them people Italian. Look bit like ~~us~~ *them, like Willie, like Hector*. But the day she smile, eh, and show ~~us our~~ *them* rooms in shed’.<sup>63</sup> Further, Rose added a degree of distance by choosing Willie and Hector as the examples and not naming Manny. This fits with Manny being a kind of unnamed, unvoiced narrator of the section.

In many cases, Rose removed the pronoun so that the speaker is implied rather than clearly stated. There is not ownership over the words, as in the case of the author or the character articulating their pronoun. Chloe Hooper, in her introduction to the recent Text Classics edition of *Multiple Effects*, speculates: ‘The sections written in Aboriginal English will strike some contemporary readers as evocative but others will regard the style as unfortunate cultural appropriation’ (xii). If there is a concern about ventriloquising an Aboriginal character or speaking on behalf of Aboriginal people, then perhaps by removing the pronoun, Rose’s shift to greater indeterminacy was not just about widening the narrative voice to potentially belonging to more people but avoiding potential perceived cultural appropriation. In this way, the editor becomes the intermediary between the expectations of readers, reviewers and scholars and the author’s original text.

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<sup>63</sup> UQFL 97/17/17, 193

Since the book was published in the 1996 and discussions of the responsibilities of settler writers to Aboriginal subjects were well under way, Rose was likely acting in the interests of amending the work to make it more appropriate to the cultural market of the day. Although the editor does not have a detailed recollection of the reason for the change or whether it was her or the author who was the instigator<sup>64</sup>, the change at the copyedit stage can be read as a shift to increase the distance between author and subject as a response to the contemporary attitudes to First Nations characters at the time of publication.

### **Changing the Aboriginal Word ‘Murri’ to ‘black’**

Careful attention to the details of the copyediting process demonstrates some of the complexities of the editorial process and the reality that editorial intervention is not unilateral; instead while an editor’s interventions may be read as drawing the work into alignment with the expectations of time — as Rose did by introducing greater distance between a settler author a First Nations character by shifting from first to third person — the next editorial change I will examine seems to move the novel back in the opposite direction. In Astley’s draft there were repeated references to ‘Murris’ and ‘natives’ but in the marked-up copyedit, the word was changed to ‘black’. ‘Murri’ is an Aboriginal English word for a First Nations person from the north-eastern part of the continent (Dixon, Rawson, Thomas 172). Over the course of the book there are at least fifteen of these changes. On two occasions there is a change from ‘Murri’ to ‘abos’.<sup>65</sup> While it is possible to read the change from Murri to black as a sort of standardising and perhaps changed with the intent of making the text more straightforwardly intelligible to a non-First Nations audience, the change to ‘abos’ can only be read as a means to communicate the characters’ racism. In the case of ‘natives’, the word would have been used by some settlers represented in the text to refer to Aboriginal and

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<sup>64</sup> Rose, email to the author, 6 July 2021

<sup>65</sup> UQFL 97/17/110, 115

Torres Strait Islander characters and is now recognised as a slur. Flattening the two different word choices into a single replacement, ‘black’, removes nuance.

Without correspondence in the archive outlining the reasons for such changes and, given that the editor has not been able to recall details about the editorial process<sup>66</sup>, I cannot say precisely why such changes were made, but I can make informed suppositions. There are a few potential reasons for this shift. One is a concern that the book’s readership would be unfamiliar with the term ‘Murri’. However, a Google Ngram of the word ‘Murri’ shows that there have been a few spikes in usage over the more than 200 years of colonisation (see Appendix). The largest spike by far is around the 1890s, but there have been smaller spikes around the bicentenary and around the year 2000. Although a rather blunt measure, the Ngram suggests that there was a fair amount of usage of the word at the time that *Multiple Effects* was being edited. Another potential reason is that, in anticipation of the book’s publication in the US (as many of Astley’s books had been by the time *Multiple Effects* was in production), perhaps the word was changed since ‘black’ would not need to be amended or glossed for a foreign audience. While these possibilities might be in play, the most likely scenario seems to be that the changes were made based on the editor’s expectations of the audience since, in my experience, a work will be revised for a foreign audience, if necessary, after the initial publication.

While it may seem that this change is relatively minor, a closer look at some specific examples demonstrates just how the change impacts on the text. In the published version of the book, in a section narrated in close third person from the perspective of Morrow, a radio broadcaster, the reader learns about ‘The rollcalling of his gangs of resentful black workers ...’. In the typescript, the parenthetical aside ‘(it took time for him to learn to call them Murriss)’ follows on.<sup>67</sup> Removing this reference is consistent with the general change to

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<sup>66</sup> Rose, email to the author, 6 July 2021

<sup>67</sup> UQFL 97/17/72

remove the word from the book but it also removes a degree of nuance about the character learning Language, as well as a representation of the shift in power dynamics that comes with a settler character addressing First Nations characters by the word they use to self-identify. The idea that Morrow would use ‘Murri’, that it took time for him to acclimatise to the word, puts him in a more sympathetic light, despite other shortcomings to which the reader may respond. It is worth considering this factor in relation to the change of the word ‘native’, which was also switched to black on more than a dozen occasions throughout the novel. While the real-world people on whom the characters in Astley’s novel were based may well have used that word to describe First Nations people, the decision to change it, despite the fact that *Multiple Effects* is a work of historical fiction, is consistent with a general move to create a text that is more in line with readers’ expectations.

While a scholar such as Taylor may characterise the change of a single word as a relatively small revision, I contend this move from ‘Murri’ to ‘black’ forms one part of more substantial discussions of appropriation, representation and audience. In this instance, the lack of correspondence in the archive is frustrating as it would have been useful to see a discussion between author and editor explaining the rationale for this change.

## Conclusion

Expectations of editors and their position as mediators continue as a recent review by Elias Greig of a *Bruny Island*, a novel by a settler author shows; the expectation for editors to assist authors in making their prose fit for contemporary norms continues. Greig is surprised by the author’s ‘repeated use of “Aborigines”—how *did* this make it past her editors?’ (np). Although the rest of the review is highly critical of the novel, this is the only time that Greig invokes editors (and I am pleased to note his use of the plural, acknowledging that there are multiple individuals involved in this process). His brief comment reveals an expectation that an editor should be performing this work and they should be operating according to the standards of

the time. The longevity of this phenomenon speaks to its fundamental role in the editorial process.

The careful examination of genetic materials and editorial revisions extant in Astley's archive for *The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow* demonstrates how such work can reveal new readings both at the level of an individual novel and an author's oeuvre. In Astley's case this has added nuance to the claim that she became more progressive over the course of her publishing career in her representation of First Nations characters. This is clear from her treatment of source material and her acceptance of an editor's revisions that changed the Aboriginal word, 'Murri' to the Western word, 'black'. My research also shows how an editor acts as a social barometer — registering the atmospheric conditions of the time, in this case concerns about appropriation of First Nations stories — and inserting space between Astley and her character, Manny Cooktown, by revising sections told from his perspective from first to third person. In this change the habitus of the editor is clearly a contributing factor to the practice of their task: Rose was a young woman in 1990s Australia, and I read some of her editorial revisions as a responsiveness to the social and political climate around her. If, as this chapter has demonstrated, editorial revisions reveal detail about the environment in which a work was produced then the examination of editing is not simply a literary task but an opportunity to reveal historical, sociological and political details otherwise elided by study of published books.

In this chapter I also locate editorial restraint: it was rare that Rose made suggestions relating to Astley's style; she tended to leave the similes and syntactical formulations as she found them. As I will explore in the next chapter on Jessica Anderson, some editors look to standardise and impose a certain sort of conformity on the texts in their care and this possibly alienating the author and disrupting their aesthetic intentions for the work.

## Chapter Three: Editing as expansive or limiting

Rather than looking only to outlier cases in the study of editing, such as Maxwell Perkins and Thomas Wolfe or Gordon Lish and Raymond Carver, students of editing and scholars alike benefit from examining the contributions of editors operating within the standard range of intervention that most contemporary books receive, not least because most books do not have a budget for the American, twentieth-century sort of editorial labour. This case study of Jessica Anderson's 1978 novel, *Tirra Lirra by the River* demonstrates the ways that editorial intervention, at the structural and line-editing levels, can open possibilities for a text, and close them, across the span of the editorial process. It illustrates that editorial work can range from the powerful prompt of a single sentence to the introduction of errors and mischaracterisations at a line level and emphasises that editorial work is often undertaken by multiple individuals over the course of a book's production: embodied agents who oftentimes have different aesthetic, ethical and social sensibilities. Aside from the contributions' variance in terms of length or detail, this chapter also shows that editorial labour can facilitate the ambition and vision of the author or limit and constrain it. These edits make clear the contributions of non-authorial agents in the production of a work, even in the case of a relatively minor comment which extended the author's vision for the work and confirms assertions that some textual editors have made historically about the corruption of texts at the hands of editors and others in the production process. Although *Tirra Lirra* is often read as a semi-autobiographical work, this research reveals a highly worked and carefully executed novel.

There are at least three editors who worked on *Tirra Lirra*, according to my findings. Alan Maclean was not employed to edit the novel but gave feedback that led to significant changes to the work. Susan Nicholls corresponded with Jessica Anderson about the work, operating in the role of 'project editor'; namely, someone who manages the manuscript on its path to

publication, but who does not necessarily edit it themselves. The copyeditor was Pamela Reid. As with Ruth Park's *Swords and Crowns and Rings*, it is likely there was a proofreader, but the proofread pages are not held with the archive at the State Library of New South Wales.

Anderson was born in Gayndah before moving to Brisbane with her family (Blair). Her parents were atheists, which was unusual at the time, and involved in the labour movement and her work is politically progressive throughout her career, especially with her inclusion of gay characters as Damian Barlow explores (136–52). As with many women in her generation, she did not study what she wanted — having initially gone to design school in Brisbane, she relocated to Sydney not long after and did commercial graphic work (Willbanks *Australian Voices*, 17) before she began her writing career penning short stories pseudonymously to contribute to household income (Goldsworthy, 'Tirra Lirra'). Biographer Elaine Barry recounts that Anderson's short stories stopped being accepted because they were too good, meaning too literary, for the populist outlets that published them, so she wrote radio plays, dramatising novels by Henry James and Dickens, and then created her own (4). This experience in writing for radio might be an explanation for her mastery of dialogue (Gallagher). In a eulogy, Anderson's daughter Laura Jones commented on Anderson's writing life after she married her second husband and moved to Hornsby: 'It was, in a way, as if she was making up for the years when she hadn't been able to write' (Keenan np). Anderson's first novel, *An Ordinary Lunacy*, was published in the UK when she was forty-four, three years after her move (Willbanks *Australian Voices*, 20).

After her first two novels were published in the UK, the second as 'crime fiction', and her third as historical fiction with a Mills-and-Boon-style cover (Baker 24) it was with *Tirra Lirra by the River* that she found commercial success and critical accolades. Anderson was sixty when she was awarded the Miles Franklin for the first time. Her first three books were published over the course of twelve years, but she published three books in the five years following her

second Miles Franklin win. While there would have been other factors at play, no doubt money was a causal factor in this change. The other cluster of publishing came towards the end of her career with three titles in seven years.

Anderson's approach to finding a publisher was as considered and practically minded as her prose. She tells Elaine Barry in a letter:

When I finished *An Ordinary Lunacy*, I went to bookshops and libraries and studied the type of book each publisher favoured. I couldn't find an Australian publisher who had issued anything like it. Dramas of sexual obsession were not set in Australia, but were seen to take place elsewhere. Christina Stead's *Teresa* took her obsession overseas. Elizabeth Harrower's novel of obsessive love was set in London. I had done just the opposite, and *imported* an object of passion. Much as I would have preferred, in every way, to publish here, I could not see any Australian publisher liking this story of how a utilitarian society treats those with unserviceable gifts. Once I had an English publisher, it was easier to stay with them. (5–6)

Unlike other authors of her time, such as Thea Astley, Anderson was not a regular at writers' festivals and, although she lived in Sydney, 'she remain[ed] somewhat aloof from the Sydney literary scene, refusing to involve herself in its controversies, feuds, struggles and campaigning.' (Margaret Jones np). This sort of self-imposed exclusion from the 'scene' would have had an impact on the ways in which her books were received at the time of publication. One of the difficulties for her publishers would have been her refusal to develop a 'brand'; although critics have drawn connections between her works — such as the focus on characters who are out of place (Barry; Willbanks *Australian Voices*) — but her shifting genres with each of her books coupled with poor cover design for her early publications and the difficulties of participating in the production process from the other side of the world, exacerbated the challenges in developing a devoted audience in the opening of her literary

career. The move across genres also made it less straightforward for readers to follow her from one book to the next since preference might lead a reader who loved the plot-driven contemporary narrative of *An Ordinary Lunacy* away from *The Commandant*, a work of historical fiction.

American authors whose editorial experience has been the subject of study, or indeed local authors Ruth Park and Kate Jennings, enjoyed the benefits of advocacy, of a champion who could represent their work over a number of years, but because Anderson changed publishers — switching from Macmillan UK to Macmillan Australia, and later to Penguin and because she did not have a long-term, highly involved agent, she had no such support.<sup>68</sup> In an interview with Jennifer Ellison in 1986, she says she did not have any particularly close writer friends and so I am left to conclude that throughout her writing life, the drafting process was predominantly solitary for her. From these comments, one may imagine that editing had little impact on Anderson's experience of publishing, but a study of the archive as presented here reveals that the converse is true.

### **Anderson's Early Career: Editorial care and neglect**

Anderson's first editors collaborated with her from the other side of the world, but the distance did not determine their level of engagement: it was the individual responses to her work that informed the editor process for these two novels. Anderson's first book was acquired by Alan Maclean at Macmillan UK, and the two that followed were signed by Maclean's colleague, Lord Hardinge of Penshurst (who always referred to himself as such in their correspondence). Maclean had suggested Anderson send her manuscript for *The Last Man's Head* to Hardinge, since Maclean knew he was setting up a crime list at Macmillan.<sup>69</sup> The archives show that Hardinge and Anderson had an occasionally testy relationship and a

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<sup>68</sup> Another of her books would have been published by Bodley Head in the UK if Collins in Australia had agreed to take it on, but Collins did not accept and so the manuscript was never published (Ellison 31).

<sup>69</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040/4 September 1969

few exchanges over royalty arrangements, paperback publishing as well as a string of letters about the disappointing performance of *The Last Man's Head* and even worse sales for *The Commandant*. A further point of contention was that *The Commandant* had a thoroughly inappropriate cover — something that would have been better suited to a Mills and Boon title — and a printing error so significant that an erratum slip had to be included with the book as it was processed through the warehouse on its way to bookstores.<sup>70</sup>

In terms of editorial intervention, there are only two notes on the file where Hardinge has made suggestions of an editorial nature. He suggested a change to the title of *The Last Man's Head*, initially entitled *The Winner*<sup>71</sup>, and the second note included a few suggestions about *The Commandant*. Crucially, his editorial suggestions can be read as a clashing of male and female sensibilities for he writes, 'Towards the end I think it is a bit anti-climactic in that really the male parts are best but we are stuck at some length with the women and children'.<sup>72</sup> It would appear to be an instance where the author and editor have different opinions about the nature of the book. In this way the fraught possibilities of the editor process rise to the surface. Where an editor has expectations of the work at odds with what the author was working to accomplish there may be adverse reactions – as when two incompatible chemicals interact. Having previously collaborated with an editor who misunderstands or misreads a work might explain Anderson's subsequent hesitancy around editorial suggestions.

Hardinge's approach contravenes both textual editors' edicts and the commonly described tenets of professional editing as well. Hardinge is not working with the author's 'final intentions' as his guiding principle but nor is he working for a best version of the work. Instead, he is imagining a particular kind of reader, one who is uninterested in the female

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<sup>70</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040, 23 April 1975

<sup>71</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040, 3 October 1969

<sup>72</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040, undated

characters and the children with whom they spend time. His version of the reader is at odds with the reader whom Anderson has conjured with her draft.

Further, the archive shows that Anderson did not enjoy structural editing support either from her publishers or from her agents. Anderson engaged Campbell Thomson and McLaughlin for representation for *The Commandant* but although there are friendly letters between Anderson and Stephanie Townsend, a literary agent, there is no record of suggestions relating to drafting, intervention with the publishers to manage the misprint or help with managing difficult discussions about royalties.<sup>73</sup> Just when Hardinge was supplying edits that she found unsympathetic, there was no agent or writerly friend to whom she turned for support.

Given these experiences, it would be possible to expect a lifelong suspicion of editing, but Anderson was receptive to a suggestion from her first editor, Alan Maclean, to expand a section of *Tirra Lirra by the River* when she sent him the short-story version of the work for his consideration. This receptivity came to a sudden halt with the copyedit from Pamela Reid whose expectations of the novel did not align with Anderson's aesthetic aims. Despite these early hurdles however, Anderson was receptive to editorial collaboration as was the case with one of her later titles, *Taking Shelter*, published by Penguin in 1989 and edited by Susan Hawthorne. Anderson's response to these edits show that she was not averse to editorial intervention. Although Anderson had to explain some of her jokes to Hawthorne (for example, one instance where she had written the text as pig Latin and Hawthorne suggested correcting it<sup>74</sup>) and resisted some other changes, but she wrote that she was 'grateful for the detailed work you have done on TAKING SHELTER', and 'happy to have had the chance to make corrections at this early stage'<sup>75</sup>. Anderson's receptivity was contingent on the

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<sup>73</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040

<sup>74</sup> MLMSS 3773/6/8, 129

<sup>75</sup> MLMSS 3773/6/8/ 4 January 1989

individual contribution of a given editor; to Hawthorne and Maclean she was grateful but to Hardinge and Reid she was tenacious.

Greenberg emphasises that an editor is an embodied agent who has a part in representing the publisher, the text and sometimes the author, depending on the context (*Poetics* 21). One of the important findings of this chapter is the potential conflict between embodied agents working on the book, their readings of the work, and the resulting potential clash of sensibilities. Since the standard practice in trade publishing is to have different editors involved at different stages of the process (structural, copyeditors, proofreaders), there will be different perspectives from each of these agents who exert influence on the work. This chapter shows that editing work is highly contingent and the potential development or hindrance of a text from editorial intervention depends on the editors themselves and the author's response to their comments. Here I play out an argument for paying attention to editors at different stages in a book's production process and demonstrates the value of considering the work of all the editors involved where possible.

### **Anderson's Archival Record: A rich record of editorial interventions**

Happily for scholars interested in Anderson, her archive at the State Library of New South Wales, and some of her earlier work at the National Library of Australia are multifaceted with a range from early holographs to edited typescripts of her novels; this material allows me to generate a detailed picture of the editor processes for her work. In a draft of a letter dated July 23 with '83?' written in pen at the top of the page and at the bottom 'Arleen Sykes, a Queensland academic' Anderson relates something of a history of the *Tirra Lirra* manuscripts. Initially the National Library had asked to keep of all her drafts, but they stopped responding when she was asking them about *Tirra Lirra* and:

I saw Russel Doust at a party and asked him if he would liek [sic] # and that's how the Mitchell became the unfortunate repositry [sic] of my material, but ~~whether the~~ short

story was included I cannot at this stage I could not swear that the short story was part of it. In the visual memory, which is [sic] the most reliable of a rather unreliable source, I see the blue notebook, with bits of paper pinned into it here and there, the finished ms. and the radio play, ~~The fourth item I can't see I'm sorry~~ with a VOICES card sheet.<sup>76</sup>

Her visual memory is accurate. This draft also explains that neither the archives at the Mitchell nor those at the National Library contain her drafts for the short story — likely since this was written at a time when she was getting rid of her draft material.

Not only is the archive incomplete but its chronology is often unclear. Since almost all of her drafts are undated, it's difficult to put an exact time on the drafting of *Tirra Lirra* but the fact that some of the notebooks contain draft material both for *The Commandant* and *Tirra Lirra*<sup>77</sup> and that the research trip that she took to flesh out the London section of the book took place in 1973<sup>78</sup>, in the two years that she had Australia Council funding to work on *The Commandant*, it is clear that she was redrafting this novel before she was working on the radio play version which was produced in 1975 and included most of the significant points of the redeveloped London section. Interestingly, with voiceover sections from Nora, some of the same text came over from the book draft to the radio play — for instance, much of the material around Nora's abortion.

If the blue notebook version is in fact the first draft of the novel<sup>79</sup>, then the first two words Anderson wrote establish the first-person narration in the present tense. However, since this is the start of a new notebook and given that the first paragraph is almost exactly what is published in the finished version, it seems unlikely that this is the first time that Anderson wrote these words (though not impossible of course). As the blue notebook contains the major

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<sup>76</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040

<sup>77</sup> NLA MS3094/14

<sup>78</sup> MLMSS3773 Add-on 2040, 1995

<sup>79</sup> MLMSS 3773/2/1

elements of the UK material, including Nora's abortion, her botched facelift and her suicide attempt it seems as though this draft is the first fulsome one.

In the Mitchell library holdings there are no personal letters and while there is much correspondence from Anderson's publishers and agents, there are only some drafts — and never carbon copies of the letters that she sent. As a result, I am conscious that the record is not just incomplete — as any archive must naturally be — but that there are significant, unfillable holes and so any conclusions that I draw must be provisional and allow room for alternative interpretations.

### **An Iterative Process: Genetic criticism and the development of a novella**

While literary scholars commonly treat a published book as a stable entity, complete, finite and determined as Janneke Adema notes (Introduction), with *Tirra Lirra* I see a particularly pronounced case of an iterative development process with each phase building on what came before it and then contributing to the next stage. What follows here is an explication of the process that culminated in the book version of *Tirra Lirra*, drawing on genetic critical tools of archival research and tracing the origins a work and publishing history. While in the previous chapter, genetic criticism revealed detail about the social and political circumstances that formed Astley's *Multiple Effects*, for Anderson I uncover the means of cultural production, in part determined by transnational networks. *Tirra Lirra* first existed as a short story that won Anderson joint third place in the Captain Cook short story prize.<sup>80</sup> The original story is not held either in the collection of Anderson's papers at the Mitchell Library or in other papers at the National Library of Australia. As Anderson notes in a draft letter to academic Arleen Sykes dated July 23 [with 83? handwritten in pen on the page], 'Perhaps the short story no longer exists'.<sup>81</sup> Next was a radio play that aired on the ABC in 1975 (Blair 1). After the

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<sup>80</sup> MLMSS3773 Add on 2040

<sup>81</sup> *ibid*

publication of *The Commandant*, Anderson completed the draft and sent it to the Australian arm of her English publisher who accepted it for publication.

*Tirra Lirra* is narrated by Nora Porteous who has returned to her childhood home in Brisbane after the death of her last living relative — her sister Grace. Nora grew up in Brisbane but, eager to leave, moves to Sydney not long after finishing school where she learns dressmaking and marries Colin Porteous. Colin is often described as a kind of unimpressive Sir Lancelot — one of the key players in Alfred Tennyson's poem 'The Lady of Shalott' from which Anderson plucked the title for her novel. Accepting an unfavourable divorce settlement just to get away from her husband, Nora takes a boat to London having an affair with a fellow passenger on the way, 'He was a middle-aged, squat bodied American,' who 'with five children already ... was delighted by my barrenness' (105). Confounding his assumption about her fertility, Nora falls pregnant on the way and enlists her childhood friend to help her find an abortionist in London. Getting work as a dressmaker, Nora makes it through the war, suffering spells of pleurisy and bronchitis. A customer speaks of getting a facelift and Nora is inspired to undergo the surgery herself — only the result is terrible and on returning to her flat, Nora attempts suicide. After being found and recovering with the help of friends, Nora becomes a costumer at a theatre and finds a new outlet for her talent. She had not planned on returning home, but falling ill and needing to take care of the family house draw Nora back to Brisbane.

The novel is written in first-person present tense with gliding shifts backwards in time as Nora reflects on her childhood, her adolescence, her young life and time in London. She also ruminates on her peers, Olive Partridge who leaves Australia and becomes a successful novelist and Dorothy Rainbow who stays, marries a local man and later kills almost all her family before killing herself. As with some of her other works, gay men also make for

important figures in her work, as Damian Barlow noted in his work on Anderson's gay characters.

When written in summary, *Tirra Lirra* may seem like a melodramatic work. As critic Roslyn Haynes argues:

The novel contains several incidents which invite sensational treatment — Nora's experience at the abortionist's, her attempted suicide, her failed face-lift, Dorothy Rainbow's massacre of her children and subsequent suicide; yet these are related in an almost off-hand way. (319)

Part of the impact of the novel is created by the disconnection between the points of high drama and Nora's almost affectless retelling; in particular this is visible in her depiction of the life of the woman artist, recurring images of a globe of memory, motifs of travel and costuming and the use of colour to maintain a tightly woven, synchronous effect.

Overwhelmingly, the contemporary reviews that greeted the publication of *Tirra Lirra* were positive, or even rapturous; the dissenting voice criticised the novel's editing. The praise was for her writing: 'The restrained artistry of Jessica Anderson's construction is exceptional in any literature' (Hewett 15) and for her play with the novel form: 'The interaction of memory and reality is handled exquisitely. It is often accompanied by a fluid stream of consciousness and a crisp, pithy language ... and is quite extraordinary' (Smith 13). The main dissenting voice came from fellow author Jean Bedford, published in the *National Times*. She wrote that the novel is 'annoying', that there are 'noticeable printers' errors' and even 'mistakes in the grammar' and concludes that 'It is a pity that the amateurish beginning wasn't edited to the standard of the rest — it would have been a much better book' (41). Bedford takes issue with Anderson's choice of tense, her tone and subject matter in Nora's 'self-conscious reminiscences'. Given the overwhelming popularity of the simple present in contemporary writing and the continued attention and acclaim that this book has enjoyed,

these must be personal reactions against style and form rather than attempts at a more objective assessment of literary merit.

Bedford assumed that the beginning of the work had received less attention than other parts of the novel, but analysis of the archive proves this to be false. One of the major changes from the radio script to the published novel — and an example of the kind of reworking that Anderson undertook in developing the work for publication — is the opening, which is masterful in its efficient creation of voice, evocation of setting and establishment of tone. The reader learns something of the narrator's age from her reference to bifocals, the setting from the mention of 'subtropical ... spring afternoons' and of the freedoms and cages of narration from the last sentence: 'I am not wearing the gloves Fred gave me because I have left them behind in the car, but I don't know that yet' (1). From the first, the reader knows that information will be imperfect, determined by reminiscence. The word 'annoying' for example, a highly inflected adjective, supports this assessment. In fact, these comments, and more recent comments on perceived poor-quality editing, have a common denominator — that is, a reviewer who can see an alternative version of the book and believes it would have been better had it followed their imagined version. Here I see a reviewer adopting one of the editorial manoeuvres that Greenberg describes (*Poetics* 246) — that is, contemplating alternatives for the work — but for the reviewer there is no opportunity of effecting changes in the work, only in reacting to the version that was published. On the topic of 'printer's errors', without comparing the typescript with the printed book, it's impossible to know with whom to lay the blame and it seems preposterous that Bedford would have had access to these materials. That Elaine Barry considers the end of *Tirra Lirra* to be its weakness proves that these considerations naturally are influenced by personal taste as much as literary expertise (83).

Reviewers are almost never privy to the editorial process and so Bedford's comment that had 'the amateurish beginning [been] edited to the standard of the rest — it would have been a much better book' is pure conjecture; she imagines that there was significant editorial intervention in the second half of the book but has no evidence. What the archive reveals is that the first third of the novel was one of the sections reworked over the different incarnations of *Tirra Lirra* — in that it was part of the short story and radio play whereas the London section, with which Bedford has not voiced a complaint, is not the subject of her critique even though it enjoyed less editorial intervention.

Aside from critical responses, many readers have assumed that Nora was based on Anderson herself even though the book opens with a disclaimer of sorts: 'The characters in this story are imaginative constructions. Only the houses on the point are taken from life' (x). In Anna Funder's essay on *Tirra Lirra* she writes of this authors' dilemma:

When a reader assumes the literal veracity of fiction it gives you a double-edged feeling. It is a kind of compliment: they have found this art to ring true. But at the same time to presume a one-to-one correspondence to the writer's life is to doubt the artist's powers to invent. Worse, it is to assume an open window, even an invitation, to climb in and rummage about the writer's private life, looking for evidence to tie her to the deed. Jones [Anderson's daughter] says her mother reacted testily, as well one might to the assumption of exact parallels with Nora. 'See?' Anderson would say, lifting her hair back off her face, 'no scars. No facelift.' (10)

Perhaps the confusion forms part of the reason why Anderson never cited *Tirra Lirra* as the favourite of her works, despite its success and popularity. Throughout her career, it was this book that attracted the greatest number of questions on autobiographical writing but the reworkings are in line with her thematic interests that developed over the course of the drafts.

### Editing as Prompt: The power of a single sentence

In studying as many editorial interventions for each case study as is practical, I can juxtapose the extraordinarily variable instances of the editor process that may occur, even across the drafting and production of a single title. The other notable finding of this study is that an editorial contribution may not even come from someone employed to work as an editor on a given text. For *Tirra Lirra*, one of the most substantial editorial contributions came in the form of a single sentence that acted as a prompt rather than an instruction. Anderson acknowledges this when she says, in a note accompanying the archive:

I sent [the short story of *Tirra Lirra*] to Alan Maclean who was a good editor, hoping that he would suggest a way of expanding it rather than asking him to publish it; and he did in fact define the weakness of the U.K. part. I was able to expand this part after a visit to London in 1973.<sup>82</sup>

The page that follows is the original letter from Maclean dated 2 June 1971, in which he writes:

As far as length goes it is as you know very awkward in form I believe it is really more a long short story than a short novel, but I don't think that it is satisfactory either way. Looked at as a novel there is a great deal left to the imagination and the whole of the UK experience is only lightly, though marvellously sketched in. Looked at as a very long story the converse is true and there is too much for the reader to absorb. Your writing has real distinction, insight and clarity and it is just that the shape and structure seems to me to be all wrong.

This is a poor sort of letter which will I am afraid only serve to irritate you. However, it is one of these maddening times when I can think of nothing really constructive to say, at the same time finding only praise for the actual writing.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040

<sup>83</sup> MLMSS3773 Add on 2040

Maclean's comment about how he cannot think of anything particularly 'constructive' to add is typical of a self-effacing approach to editorial work: a comment in line with remarks from editors Maxwell Perkins (Berg 6) and Beatrice Davis (Kent 3) about the role of the editor and the importance of downplaying their contribution, both to maintain the author's sense of control and to ensure that the work is ultimately in line with their intentions.

Since Maclean's letter was, in effect, a rejection, he may have felt the need to be particularly cautious with his wording. However, it seems that rather than 'irritating' Anderson, she found in his suggestion a path to pursue with an otherwise unpublishable work. In this way, Maclean made an important contribution to the work in that Anderson adopted his suggestion of how to develop it. Notably, Maclean's comments are not prescriptive and are more general suggestions rather than a detailed structural edit. It is what Anderson did with the suggestion that created the award-winning book *Tirra Lirra* became. From a commercial perspective, it seems likely that Maclean's suggestion would have had an element of self-interest, since it is a publishing truism that books sell better in markets that feature in the books themselves or, in other words, if the book features more scenes set in England, then it has a greater chance of appealing to English audiences; Maclean is anticipating an English readership for the work and therefore makes a suggestion based on this assessment.

As the interchange demonstrates, the greatest editorial interventions are not always from the person who is professionally engaged as the book's editor. In Anderson's case it is not a spouse or a close friend but someone whose opinion she trusts and who has been her editor in the past, although he is not taking on that role for *Tirra Lirra*. Just as textual studies scholar Stillinger notes in his study of *Sister Carrie* by Theodore Dreiser (57), the contributions that lead to editorial development of a work do not always come from those employed to work on it. In the same way that Dreiser's work was amended in response to commentary from people not employed by the publisher of his book, so Maclean is significant in the history of *Tirra*

*Lirra*, even though he was not the book's editor or publisher. As in the case of a friend or spouse, Maclean's editorial work was provided gratis. For any critique about the commercialism of the publishing process and denigration of the work of major corporations, Maclean's contribution was in the spirit of literary cooperation, and while it may have been in his interests to maintain a good relationship with an author whose future work could be profitable, in this instance the time spent reading and the useful criticism he offered were not directly tied to commercial gain for his employer.

Extending the section in London also affords Anderson the opportunity to write more of the relationships between contemporary Australian and English life. At the time the novel was set, when it was still routine for artists to leave Australia for the UK, Nora finds that London is not all that she had imagined of a great city. For instance, Nora is surprised by how difficult it is to get an abortion there, which as Brigid Rooney notes, 'provincializes the great metropolis' (96). The idea that London would be a sort of artistic haven is also problematised by Nora's discovery that the embroideries she created in Brisbane were significant aesthetic achievements (*Tirra Lirra* 92).

One facet that Anderson was able to extend in the London section was the discussion of artistic work as vocation. *Tirra Lirra* is like other works Anderson wrote in that her character has a creative vocation. As in the short story *The Milk*, where the protagonist is an illustrator (1987), Nora initially earns her living working as a seamstress assisting fashion designers in London. Acting as the machinist for other peoples' vision leads to '[t]he privacy of the gratification, the vicariousness of the achievement, and the rationalisation of the whole process [which] tell their own story of the suppression of Nora's identity' (Barry 72). The added description of this incarnation of Nora's working life acted as a proxy for her artistic life. Indeed, on hearing of the possibility of the job, Nora says 'my interior eye was assailed by a medley of rich ripping colour, of bright lights and inhabited shadow' (158). Each of Nora's

jobs is important for empowering her at different stages in her life. Her work as a dressmaker gives her independent income when her husband denies her. In London it affords her a living initially, and as a theatre costume maker she finds a job where ‘eagerly, after the idleness of Sunday, I returned to my work. I grew to love those big cluttered low-ceilinged rooms, and the memory ... can still fill me with nostalgia’ (160).

Several critics have focused on the portrayal of female artists (Thomas; Garrad; Haynes) and what Anderson considered the artistic life and Barry has also expounded on the idea of the expatriate artist or artist out-of-place in her 1984 essay, ‘The Expatriate Vision of Jessica Anderson’. In this article, Barry parallels the Lady of Shallot ‘Artist-as-Outsider’ with Nora’s experiences in London (8). However, she also highlights that Anderson was not simply writing a retelling of the classic poem — Nora’s fate is very different in that the work does not end with her death, in fact it follows a kind of reclamation of her life. Barry writes that ‘Nora’s real work of art is not her embroidery but her life — a very Jamesian theme and image’ (8). Further, Barry concludes that Anderson’s vision of expatriation and artistic work is nuanced, complicated and ultimately one of the strengths of the novel. The trajectory of Nora’s artistic career and the relationship between her art and her costuming extends through the middle of the book, set in London. Anderson’s decision to develop this material, at least in part because of Maclean’s comment, drew out some of the most thematically powerful threads of the novel.

Although slight, Maclean’s comment on the London section encouraged Anderson to awaken these elements of the story that might otherwise have laid dormant. Bedford’s review, quoted at the start of this chapter, marks the opening as needing more editorial attention and said that the book would have been better had the standard of editing been equivalent over the entire work. She could not have known that, in fact, the middle section was the ‘youngest’ of the book and that no editor had intervened in the middle or the end of the book at a line level, let alone in terms of developing structure, aside from the one suggestion from Alan

Maclean. This also shows the benefits of combining genetic criticism and a focus on professional editing. Rather than simply considering the holographs, iterations and inspirations that contributed to Anderson's drafting, by acknowledging the others who had a role in the production of her book, I locate a richer understanding of how the text came to exist in its published form.

There is an inherent tension here between expectations of some textual editors that professional editors can corrupt an author's aesthetic ambitions with Bedford's surmise that professional editors will improve an author's work. Perhaps this is in part because of her own positive experiences as a published author. Notably, Bedford blames the publishers and not the author for the errors with the understanding that it is their responsibility to produce a text that is as error-free as possible. Unlike some figurings of authorship that place sole responsibility with the individual author, and likely as a result of her personal experience, Bedford is conscious of the multiple agents who contribute to the publication of a book, but she is anticipating editorial labour at the level of the sentence, not guessing at the complicated trajectory of *Tirra Lirra* from idea to published book.

### **Editing as Overdetermination: The limitations of titles**

A title is one of the first elements of a book with which a prospective reader has contact and so it is often a topic of discussion between publishers and authors over the course of the acquisition and editorial process. As demonstrated by Raymond Carver's *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* — a formulation that has since become hackneyed and reworked for many an essay — titles can have significant lasting cultural impact. The archive reveals that Anderson's publishers sought to change her title without her approval and it was only through continued resistance that Anderson was able to retain her chosen title. Such resistance highlights both Anderson's agency as an author and her dedication to this title, which in turn adds nuance to existing scholarship on the title.

Titles, like other paratexts, as Gerard Genette and Marie Maclean write, ‘surround ... and prolong [a work], precisely to present it, in the usual sense of this verb, but also in its strongest meaning: to make it present, to assure its presence in the world, its “reception” and consumption, in the form, nowadays at least, of a book’ (261). A title is one of the first points of engagement between the work and the reader and therefore is of critical importance for the publisher, in the interests of reaching a market, and for the author, in terms of setting expectations. It is also a question to which Moretti devoted attention in his analysis of British novel titles from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century (136). Although he only considers eighteenth and nineteenth-century titles, his observations on the increasing dominance of short titles are still relevant today given the ongoing fashion for giving books pithy names.

In what must have been an unnerving development for Anderson, she received the contract from Macmillan for a book called *The Crystal Mirror*. The publisher had renamed *Tirra Lirra by the River* without consulting her. As Anderson wrote in response to the contract:

I have never heard of THE CRYSTAL MIRROR. The title of the ms. I sent you is TIRRA LIRRA BY THE RIVER. Has someone changed it for me? Or have you got it mixed up with another novel? And would you also tell me if you propose to publish the two stories (TIRRA LIRRA and THE OBEDIENT GIRL in one volume, or only TIRRA LIRRA as a short novel.<sup>84</sup>

In a later letter, her editor at Macmillan, Pamela Reid wrote, ‘Thank you for your recent letter returning the signed contract for THE CRYSTAL MIRROR’.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps the strategy at Macmillan was simply to act as if Anderson had accepted the title change until it was too late.

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<sup>84</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040/ 27 May 1977

<sup>85</sup> MLMSS 3773, Add on 2040

Anderson was determined to keep her original title, offering the opinions of others as evidence for her argument: ‘a number of people said they turned [the radio play] on because their curiosity was aroused by the title, and when, in its first genesis as a short story, it won a prize in the Capt. Cook centenary comp., the judges all liked the title’.<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, in her defence of her original title, Anderson only refers to the comments others made in praise of the title, both commercial and literary judgements, rather than offering her own explanation for its importance; this reticence fits with Anderson’s general avoidance of spelling out the subtleties of her work. Her repeated arguments to keep it, however, reinforce how strongly she felt about this.

*The Crystal Mirror* would have been an appropriate title for the book, being both thematically tied to the novel and from the same stanza of Tennyson’s poem as Anderson’s title, a section quoted in the early pages of *Tirra Lirra*: ‘From the bank and from the river/He flash’d into the crystal mirror, “Tirra lirra”, by the river/ Sang Sir Lancelot’ (*Tirra Lirra* 13). This mirror is the device through which the Lady of Shalott can view the world, and something that Barry describes as a kind of ‘leitmotif’ in the book, arguing:

The novel is in a sense a hall of mirrors: there is the Lady of Shalott’s mirror, the ‘cheap thick glass’ of the window that opens onto the dream landscape of Nora’s childhood, the globe of memory inscribed with its ‘millions of images’, the hand-mirror reflecting the blankness of her identity after her facelift operation, the television screen that reflects a ‘shadow’ of the real world in her living-room, and the reflections of herself that other people all through her life, have given back to her (‘Who does she think she is?’). (Barry 85)

The mirror is an obvious image for the title, but it would have perhaps overemphasised these elements in the book. Instead, Anderson’s unusual title shifts the focus elsewhere. Critic

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<sup>86</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040

Roslyn Haynes (316) contends that the title emphasises the plight of the woman artist and the disappointments of dealing with an ineffectual paramour. The interest scholars have in titles, and Anderson's title in particular, is one of the reasons why this kind of archival research is important to literary studies. By uncovering the requested change and Anderson's resistance, her dedication to her choice of title is clear. As with Ruth Park's resistance to changes revealing some of her more strongly held ideas about her work, so Anderson's dedication to her unusual title surfaces her intentions and her agency.

If I consider the suggested title, *The Crystal Mirror*, as an attempt on the part of the publisher to make the book more market-friendly — and in line with more standard titles, the article adjective noun that Moretti identified as a common construction (145) — then Anderson's resistance is part of a vision for the work that privileges art over the commercial market. Her insistence on *Tirra Lirra by the River* asserts an ambition for this work aesthetically and in terms of the market. A more unusual title is not simply a question of representing the text to potential readers, but it also marks the work as more literary and less commercial; Anderson wants to assert her work's place in the literary field. It is perhaps also indicative of its genesis in that such a title is not so unusual for a short story, or a radio play for that matter.

### **Copyediting: The dangers of applying a standard mode to a specific text**

While Gordon Lish's editorial strategy with Raymond Carver's work was to remove material, reducing the level of determination, not all editorial suggestions move a work in that direction. In fact, in the interests of clarity or conforming to traditional models, some editors may intervene to add greater determination to a text. This was the case with *Tirra Lirra*'s copyeditor, Pamela Reid. Although the archive includes a letter to Anderson from Susan Nicholls saying, 'I will be looking after your manuscript TIRRA LIRRA BY THE RIVER, as

editor and general overseer of its progress through production<sup>87</sup>, it seems it was Pamela Reid who edited the book, judging from letters and the edit itself.

There are two kinds of editing that Reid undertook, one at the level of suggested structural changes and the other at the level of a copyedit. Overwhelmingly the changes are for minor amendments such as going from double to single quote marks, an Australian convention, which could be called uncontroversial and a question of house style. However, for almost every other change, Anderson wanted to keep the original and rather than simply writing back to reject the changes summarily the archive holds a draft of her letter, dated 26 August 1977, where she lists each of the edits that she wants retracted and, in many cases, the reason why.

In another letter dated 13 September, Anderson reiterated her concerns:

On the first of September I wrote to you asking that the alterations made by an editor on the ms. of *TIRRA LIRRA BY THE RIVER* should be cancelled before it goes to press, I enclosed three foolscap pages of explanations of each cancellation I asked for, as well as explaining the changes and corrections I made myself.

I have had no acknowledgement of my letter and am rather worried about it. There is a mail strike here, but my other mail from Melbourne is coming through. If you have not already written, would you mind doing so? I would be very pleased to have your assurance that the changes made by your editor will be cancelled. It would be much more expensive and troublesome to make them on the proofs.

There is also the title to be decided on. I really can't go past my own title; it is so much better than any other I have thought of. Have you a publication date yet for the book?<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040

<sup>88</sup> MLMSS 3773/2/2

Rather than saying she wanted the original reinstated or some other phrasing, Anderson's use of the term 'cancelled' is interesting here. This is a definitive position and not something to be negotiated. Further, she appeals to the editor's sense of frugality, referring to the expense of changing typeset pages. Lastly, her mention both of the title and her ignorance of the publication date show how disempowered and disconnected the author may feel from the publishing process. After nearly a fortnight, she had not had correspondence from Macmillan and was anxious that her book would be published otherwise than she had intended.

The language that Anderson uses in her letter, a second letter on the subject since the first went unanswered, is assertive and determined. Compared with Davis and Park's correspondence, for example, it is much more forthright and carries none of the affection or professional admiration. Anderson opens with 'Many thanks' for the returned manuscript and cheque but shortly complains that the introduction of breaks is 'positively obtrusive' and on the question of keeping her original title she asks, 'Could you perhaps reconsider it?'<sup>89</sup> For the most part, the copyeditor was restrained in her approach to *Tirra Lirra* and her intervention would be equivalent to the work of many contemporary proofreaders. She suggested very little in the way of significant changes, be they at the level of paragraph or sentence, and the changes that she did suggest are, for the most part, easily justified according to editorial convention. An example of a more significant change is Reid's suggestion on several occasions to introduce line breaks. These indicate a greater passage of time; for instance, on page 51, a new paragraph begins 'That night, feeling safe and detached ...'.<sup>90</sup> From the opening the reader understands that time has passed from the previous scene and so convention would have it that a section break would be justified. However, as Anderson argues in her letter opposing the changes, 'There is no logic in breaks to indicate a shift in time unless you make one at every shift, in which case this ms. would be a mass of little

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<sup>89</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040/ 26/08/77

<sup>90</sup> MLMSS3773/2/2

fragments'.<sup>91</sup> The time shifts Anderson left unmarked by paragraph breaks were part of her vision for the work.

To take one example, Nora's voyage to London is not flagged by a new chapter and so there is a smooth flow between Nora's leaving behind her ex-husband and her affair with the American aboard the boat. This sense of flow is part of Nora's remembering. One of the last Australian scenes is set on the tennis court and not long after Nora arrives in London. When she is recovering from her abortion at Olive's house, she hears the sounds of tennis and at first considers them a 'remnant of a dream' (*Tirra Lirra* 116). The procession of ideas and memories, uninterrupted by the chapter marker that Reid suggested, is indicative of the internal logic to which Anderson referred in her letter. By leading, without a break, from one setting to another, the reader's imagination glides over time and space, just as Nora's does. The insertion of chapter and section breaks makes for a more determined reading experience, narrowing the potential interpretations of a given section and smoothing the reading experience. This is operating in the opposite way from many other edits; consider Lish's work on Carver where he repeatedly deleted material that offered the reader more room for interpretation (Max). Anderson seems intent on a work where the text elides time, replicating the experience of memory and the often unexpected shifts in thought that can defy a straightforward chronology.

In every instance where there is a strong section break, the new paragraph is set in the 'present-day' of the novel, that is, Nora at home in Brisbane, age seventy. By only ever having section openings at these points, there is an emphasis on these parts of the narrative and the work that the present is doing. As critic Elaine Barry notes, 'Much of the effectiveness of the novel rests in the choice of narrative voice — not only the first person, not even the more unusual present tense, but the sense of that present simultaneously lived and observed' (85).

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<sup>91</sup> MLMSS3773, Add on 2040

Had Anderson accepted the changes that Reid suggested, the sense of simultaneity would have been disturbed.

This fluid relationship with time plays out in Anderson's other writing from the first of her novels, *An Ordinary Lunacy* (1963). To take one marked example, within the space of two pages, Anderson moves from the steps of the courthouse to David Byfield's living room to his mother sitting in a dentist's chair the following day (109–10). Moving between events and perspectives slips seamlessly and demonstrates a masterful control of the flow of information and the passage of narrative time. Such prose appears in shorter fiction as well, notably in Anderson's long short story, 'Outdoor Friends', published in *Stories from the Warm Zone and Sydney Stories* (1986). The story has section breaks but also has scenes that flow from reminiscence to dialogue and back again. Owen, thinking of the woman with whom he is having an affair, shifts from thinking about her approach to feminism, to recalling 'verbatim' a conversation about the anti-nuclear movement and back to his family relationships (173–4). Just as in *Tirra Lirra*, this passage has its own internal logic and although the shifts in time could be marked by a section break, the flow of the memories, analysis and associations make for a rich and engaging work. Time was something Anderson used as a device and a key stylistic component in her fiction. Her editor was not sensitive to it and was working at cross purposes, trying to bring the text in line with a standard style rather than maintaining the author's style.

The archive not only shows Anderson's responses to the edits that she received from Macmillan but a dissenting voice from within Macmillan itself. On 21 September 1977, Anderson's 'editor', Susan Nicholls wrote:

P.S. I have just received your latest letter and apologise for the delay in acknowledgment. I am able to tell you unofficially that we are moving towards TIRRA LIRRA BY THE RIVER as a title, but no final decision has been made.

Also, for your interest, another editor made all the preliminary editorial alterations, almost none of which I agreed with — *entre nous*. S<sup>92</sup>

The note is particularly interesting since Nicholls had claimed in another letter quoted earlier that she would be responsible for *Tirra Lirra* at Macmillan. If it were the case, then why did she allow an edit that she did not agree with to be sent to the author? The note also underlines the fact that all editorial work is subjective and that while Reid may have been following convention in making the recommendations that she did, following those conventions was not necessarily the obvious editorial choice in the case of *Tirra Lirra*. Acknowledging Anderson's resistance to Reid's suggested edits allows me to reflect on Anderson's vision for the work and how she was using literary techniques that were relatively unusual at the time but came to be commonplace. She was developing prose that moves beyond a straightforward chronological treatment. Further, it reminds editors of the importance of working to recognise the author's project instead of following a standardising impulse. As with the Ruth Park study, there is as much to learn from the changes that Anderson rejected as those that she accepted, and archives help clarify the aesthetic and literary dimensions of a work.

Naturally, it is not just copyeditors who can intentionally or otherwise impede the production of a book. There is potential for introduced error and corruption at every stage, including setting and printing. For readers, the presence of errors disrupts their experience of the text and foregrounds the failings of the production process. One of the criticisms levelled at contemporary publishing is that the process of producing books is increasingly rushed (ie Clark np). Consulting the archive shows that interventions sometimes occur in different ways. In a letter to Anderson on 27 June 1978, her editor Pamela Reid wrote:

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<sup>92</sup> MLMSS add on 2040

I do apologise for the punctuation mistakes in this edition. We had a similar problem with another book set by these particular typesetters and we are taking action to ensure that this does not recur. As to the two-line run-on, this was correct at final proofreading stage and is therefore a printer's error.<sup>93</sup>

From this I understand that there were two kinds of errors in the book: the first introduced by the typesetter and the second introduced at the printing stage. Typesetters' errors should be picked up and corrected at proof stage; for whatever reason, they were not. A printer's error can only be discovered on delivery of the final copies, which, barring a major disaster, will have to be rectified in any subsequent editions, since the only option is a reprint: a costly and time-consuming solution. Let me recall Darnton's communications circuit here and that it is as a result of contributions of many different kinds of agents in the book production process that there will be a given version of a text on the page. Interestingly, it is usually in the case of errors or mistakes that these contributions become visible to reviewers, readers or critics. As with editorial labour, such work is supposed to avoid drawing attention to itself. Here I find confirmation of some textual editors' fears: that the processes of production introduce errors into a given work. This is not only a concern for authors insofar as it can impede their artistic prospect, but it also undermines readers' confidence in the books they consume.

The effect of these kinds of mistakes is to undermine the confidence of the reader in the publishing company, just as they undermine the confidence of the author who has entrusted their work to editors, typesetters, printers, distributors and booksellers to get their ideas into the minds of their readers. Such mistakes can have the correlative effect of making readers think that if there are mistakes at the level of words or sentences then there has been insufficient editorial attention to the book. Since *Tirra Lirra* quickly became popular and was

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<sup>93</sup> MLMSS 3773, Add on 2040

reprinted many times, the typographical and printer's errors could be corrected within a fairly short period of time, and so my conjecture is that often when readers assume that quality has decreased, it is in part because if they are reading older or successful books, in many instances the edition will be a corrected copy as opposed to the first edition, which is more likely to include errors.

Typesetting errors were not peculiar to *Tirra Lirra*; there are many similar mistakes in Anderson's next published book, *The Impersonators* (1980). On pages 174–5 there are three errors in as many paragraphs (immediatelly, neddle, thier) and elsewhere there are typos such as 'Acquarius' (79) and 'eylids' (181). Such mistakes are not symptomatic of a lack of interest in the work; it was the follow-up to Anderson's Miles Franklin winning, best-selling novel. Macmillan would not have neglected editorial procedures on the book. Rather, checks are done by editorial staff who are human and naturally err. The presence of these mistakes suggests that equivalent errors in contemporary books are not simply a result of deteriorating standards, but part of a long tradition of mistakes.

Aside from printers' errors, there was one other error that has been repeated in several critical works on *Tirra Lirra* but only flagged as incorrect in once instance. In quoting a line from the book, Haynes (318) notes a mistake in the original referring to Nora's self-description as a 'student of the French subjunctive tense [sic]'. This should have been 'verb' or 'mood'. Arguably the mistake would be Nora's since the book is told from her perspective and it is plausible that Anderson included the error intentionally, but more likely is that neither author nor editor was conscious of the mistake.

These sorts of errors were also not a uniquely Australian problem. In correspondence with her English publisher, Anderson complained of the prevalence of typesetter errors in the proofs for *The Commandant*. George Hardinge replied to Anderson on 24 April 1970:

I am sorry you were disappointed in the standard of setting ... Generally speaking, the standard of computers and setting has not improved in England in the last few years, and I agree that these could have been better. At the same time, having looked at them very closely, I can promise you that this is an average or even above average piece of setting ... I am sorry if this is a depressing thought, but I think it is the true position these days.<sup>94</sup>

To further compound the problem, these errors were replicated in the American edition of *The Commandant* as Anderson's English agent, Stephanie Townsend, informed her: 'I was absolutely horrified to see that despite what they wrote back, I think in July, they had not after all made the correction'.<sup>95</sup> The significance of these mistakes is to indicate that failings in production are not a new phenomenon, and Anderson suffered from human error in a number of her books. Unlike for some of the other authors I examine in this thesis, Anderson's books did suffer corruption over the production process and the kinds of negative results that some textual editors have associated with professional editors' labour. Such errors can also undermine an author's confidence and trust in the publishing process. Nevertheless, Anderson's professionalism was such that when she was sensitively edited — as by Susan Hawthorne later in her career — she was grateful for the contribution.

## Conclusion

The edits, both from Alan Maclean and Pamela Reid, demonstrate the push and pull of editorial work and describe completely antithetical editorial processes. In writing about editing the attention is usually on single author–editor studies (cf Groenland; Koestenbaum) and in genetic criticism the focus usually rests on the individual author; it is textual studies scholarship that is more likely to recognise of multiple contributions over the pre-publication

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<sup>94</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040

<sup>95</sup> MLMSS 3773 Add on 2040/ 22 October 1976

phases as I discussed in the introduction with the editor process for *Sister Carrie* by Dreiser. In professional editing the work at different phases of the process determines the kinds of edits that they suggest, and an author's response to them. Importantly, different editors often are working with different ends in mind, in part because of their interpretations of the work and anticipations of the market. Maclean, in the UK, naturally would have held the expectation of an English audience in mind. Reid, working in Australia, potentially with experience on more trade rather than literary titles, would have imagined a different reader. *Tirra Lirra* ultimately belongs to its author — after all, it is Anderson's name on the spine — and so Anderson's objections both to the title and the editorial changes were respected. What makes this study so useful is the way in which it demonstrates that editing is a multivalent process and that a published work is the result of multiple contributions. By examining both the helpful suggestions of Alan Maclean and the problematic suggestions of Pamela Reid, I follow the practical and aesthetic movements of the editing process and trace the decisions that led to the celebrated novel *Tirra Lirra by the River*. Further, in her steadfast commitment to the title and rejection of edits that would have interrupted her fluid chronology, Anderson's authorial agency becomes visible.

## Chapter Four: Editor as Translator

One of the most commercially successful Australian books of the twentieth century, *My Place* (1987) sold more than 500,000 copies and was translated into many languages. The timing of this autobiography, an exploration of Sally Morgan's Aboriginal heritage, is critical. Just as Australia was approaching the bicentenary of the First Fleet arriving and the founding of the colony of New South Wales, so discussions of Aboriginal dispossession and protests about the treatment of Aboriginal people were increasing. Within three years the publisher, Fremantle Arts Centre Press had produced illustrated and children's versions and there were study guides, reviews and scholarship responding to the book shortly after its publication. Morgan also wrote a history of her uncle, Jack McPhee entitled *Wanamurraganya* (1989) and has a career as an artist, children's and young adult book author and playwright (Dashfield 24). Her children's books continue to win prizes such as the Children's Book Council of Australia award and reach large audiences.

This chapter describes the editor process between Sally Morgan and Ray Coffey as a form of translation. Coffey and other editors would have anticipated a predominantly non-Aboriginal readership for *My Place* and as such would have worked to make the work appealing to these readers. In the case of Morgan's book, this would have meant meeting the generic expectations of the work – autobiography, mystery, Aboriginal writing. Translators are supposed to keep themselves invisible, like editors but they are working, 'constantly alert to the differences that comprise foreign languages, texts and cultures, constantly engaged in signalling those differences to constituencies and institutions in the receiving situation' ('Translation' 80) as translation studies scholar Lawrence Venuti describes it. Susan Greenberg finds similarities between translation and editing in that in both cases, 'the aim of decision-making is to convey meaning to the reader' (*Poetics* 45). In this chapter I argue that Morgan's editor is working to signal the author's Aboriginality to her readers through word

choice. While an editor's involvement does not usually involve making a choice over every word, the copyedits I note in the typescript for *My Place* are a manifestation of a similar operation and following this evidence I describe another aspect of the editor process.

Unlike in scholarship and reviews on settler Australian authors, editing is a focus in much of the writing on First Nations literature, however, it is almost never the scholarly product of consulting archives. Indeed, for Sally Morgan, the subject of this chapter, I have not found any scholar or reviewer who has checked the copyedited typescript. This typescript, held at the National Library of Australia since 1989<sup>96</sup> sits alone in a folder, unaccompanied by letters, research materials or other ephemera and so is the archive that takes up the least shelf space.<sup>97</sup> Such a modest holding in terms of shelf space, has nevertheless been displayed as part of the library's 'Treasures' exhibition demonstrating the esteem in which the curators hold this item and their figuring of its place in Australian cultural history. Despite primarily consulting this relatively small archival record, however, this study makes a new contribution to Morgan scholarship, confounding some existing orthodoxies. Consulting the archives reveals that changes to the typescript were not necessarily revisions of the kind that many reviewers and scholars expected; that is, the edits suggested a shift to decreased formality and reduction in a passage on Christian spirituality. Since scholars have tended to index Morgan's authenticity as an Aboriginal woman against representations of spirituality in the book and ruminated on how her mother and grandmother are voiced, these changes are particularly noteworthy. Given the limited material on which this chapter is based, the conclusions are provisional, however, from the evidence at the NLA I complicate the existing narrative of what role settler editors working on First Nations literature perform as they shepherd a book through the production process. The changes I have identified anticipate a settler audience

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<sup>96</sup> Confirmed in an email to the author from the NLA, 16 March 2021

<sup>97</sup> The NLA also holds some of Morgan's artworks which is important for the collection but not for the purposes of this study.

first in terms of performed Aboriginality and second in language use. This chapter opens space for more nuanced readings of authenticity in Morgan's work and moves to reinstate the agency of an Aboriginal author responding to editorial feedback which then can complicate existing assumptions about editorial practice and First Nations creators.

This chapter builds on the contributions of scholars who have interrogated the role settler editors have performed in the production of First Nations work including Wiradjuri scholar and writer Anita Heiss, Jennifer Jones, Penny van Toorn, Bain Attwood, Alison Ravenscroft and Michele Grossman. Unlike the general condition of silence surrounding editorial labour and settler authors, editing First Nations work is the subject of at least three book-length works including by the aforementioned scholars Jones, van Toorn and Attwood. I am conscious that my contribution could be read as a continuation of this skewed approach but my aim, through examining both settler and First Nations' authors editorial experiences in this thesis is to pay equivalent attention to the edits of a range of Australian authors.

### **Where is My Place? The history of Australia's highest-selling book**

In order to unravel the discrete and overlapping questions around authenticity in *My Place*, I will first offer a description of the book's publishing history and its content. Born in Perth in 1951, Sally Morgan was raised by her mother and grandmother in the suburbs of Perth. She was in high school before she became aware of her Aboriginality and then as an adult she explored her Aboriginal family history and met more of her Bailgu extended family. *My Place*, published in 1987, is part of the second wave of Aboriginal women's life writing in Australia and one of the most successful books ever published in this country. *My Place*, a work of 'life writing' about Morgan's coming to knowledge of her Aboriginality has sections 'told' from the perspectives of her great uncle, her mother and her grandmother creating a story of dispossession, colonial violence and forced secrecy. The book has been translated into several foreign languages such as German, Chinese and Turkish and is one of the bestselling books in

the second half of the twentieth century in Australia having sold over 500,000 copies —the book’s publisher, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, released an edition to commemorate the achievement in 1999 (Henningsgaard 2013 436). Starting with her childhood and moving through to her university years, the book then includes ‘Arthur Corunna’s Story’ narrated in first person. After another passage in Morgan’s voice the book moves to ‘Gladys Corunna’s Story’ narrated by Morgan’s mother. Again, following a passage from Morgan bringing the reader up to date in the ‘present’ of the narrative, the reader moves to ‘Daisy Corunna’s Story’ narrated by her grandmother. The book concludes with ‘The Bird Call’: a description of Morgan’s responses to her grandmother’s disclosures and then Daisy’s passing.

Shortly after its publication, *My Place* started appearing on curricula at schools and universities and so a minor industry of critical works to support this sprang up, including collected essays and interviews as well as student study guides (*Autobiography: The Writer’s Story* (1988); *Whose Place?* (1992) and later Henningsgaard 2014, Kennedy ‘Sally Morgan’s *My Place*’; Smith and Atkins; Kay). From the outset, reviewers and critics have been eager to classify *My Place* and to determine the relationship between its mode and its mission. As well as its official, publisher-designated category of ‘autobiography’, the book has been called a mystery (Attwood ‘Portrait’; Thomas; Newman, 384), a detective story (Muecke, 135; Ommundsen 3; West-Pavlov; Lever, *Real Relations* 116), Gothic (Attwood ‘Portrait’, 317; Muecke), a history (Gare and Crawford 82) and a romance (Narogin/Johnson *Writing from the Fringe*, 33; Muecke 138)<sup>98</sup>. Generic conventions and readerly expectations inform both the editorial labour that positions the work in the market and the critical responses. Not simply a question of classification, the form ‘autobiography’ has implications for Mudrooroo Narogin/Colin Johnson in that its ‘individualist’ slant makes the book part of ‘a literature of

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<sup>98</sup> The failings of Western generic conventions in reading First Nations books continues as Lisa Fuller (2020) notes, in reviews of her own novel and novels of other contemporary Aboriginal writers such as Alexis Wright where the term ‘magical realism’ is misapplied.

reconciliation' (198). Stephen Muecke takes up this point saying that the genre 'with its focus on the individual history, is very far removed from traditional Aboriginal genres' (121). Later he adds 'This rhetoric is emblazoned with a number of sacred icons: (a) the primacy of the individual set against its contradictory term, the human collectivity; and (b) the quasi-documentary or historical truth-effects of the autobiographical fiction as a genre' (126).

Russell West-Pavlov is also concerned about the role of the chosen genre on the impact of the book:

The deflection of the message implemented by the text, both in its generic (detective) affiliation and its populist diction, runs the risk of having its accusatory force flattened and blunted. In other words, the discursive strategy employed by the text to enable its unpalatable message to be conveyed to white Australia, a collective subject adept at forgetting the racial crimes of the past, may risk vitiating its own objectives. (293)

Generic expectations of autobiographically coded works often anticipate an author's performance of their authentic experiences and can presuppose a lack of rigour or seriousness. For Muecke, it also meant that the work had a 'franchise on absolute truth' which 'makes for interesting readings of the text' (132). Given the inherent subjectivity of autobiography or life writing, this expectation of 'absolute truth' is surprising. Eric Michaels was similarly concerned about the book's truth claims and what he took to be a locking out of potential critique as a result of its emphasis on personal recollection and memory (44). In the same essay Michaels goes on to ask, 'whether the conventions of modern European autobiography are an appropriate way to package these stories, or whether they finally do violence to the very subjects they seek to describe' (50).

Since Morgan was discovering her Aboriginal heritage and already was versed in European cultural logics, it seems a European mode was the only one available to her at the time she started writing. Extrapolating to the logical conclusion of Michael's comments, he

seems to suggest that Morgan should not have written the book, that it may 'do violence' to its subjects. Given Michaels' subject position, I am left to question whether he is the person to make this assessment. Indeed, others have arrived at different conclusions and analyses of the truth value of the work. Roseanne Kennedy describes

autobiography [as] a performative act of self-fashioning rather than the reflection of a stable, enduring self and identity. Viewed through this lens, the writing of *My Place* can be regarded as Morgan's act of staking a claim to an identity with which she desires to be identified instead of as a reflection of an inherent identity. ('Narrator as Witness' 213)

This formulation of the book encourages a reading that recognises *My Place* as a process rather than something static and already actualised. It also sees Morgan as reaching an identity through the work of the book rather than claiming an identity that was always with her. Heiss finds 'The act of writing often becomes more than solely creative for many authors who use the process as a vehicle for analysing, understanding, asserting, determining and defining their own sense of identity' and that 'The process of writing also allows individuals, like Sally Morgan ... to follow their journey of discovering their Aboriginality and documenting it for their own and others' benefit' (1). According to this formulation, autobiography is a simultaneously public and private act that has bivalent implications for the author in their sense of self and for the (predominantly) settler readers in their understanding of Aboriginal experience.

Morgan was one of several Aboriginal women claiming their position through the writing and publishing of memoir. Johnson, Attwood, Muecke and others compare Morgan with her contemporaries — as Gillian Whitlock notes '... we need not turn to critical writing to look for different perspectives. We can do this by making connections to different autobiographical texts' (158). Morgan's contemporaries include Ruby Langford Ginibi (*Don't Take Your Love to*

*Town* 1988), Shirley Smith (*MumShirl* 1981) and Glenyse Ward (*Wandering Girl* 1987). Given Morgan's upbringing, it is not surprising that her book bears resemblance to traditional Western autobiography but, nevertheless, her repeated emphasis on family, the natural world and the inclusion of three long sections — transcribed and edited oral histories from her mother, grandmother and great uncle — mean that this is not a book consistent with settler autobiographical works of the time. Narogin/Johnson compares *My Place* with *Poppy* (1990) by Drusilla Modjeska because they were 'were placed in a debate that gender comes before indigenality [sic]' (*Willi Willi Wangka* 193). Notably, while Modjeska is trying to find out about her mother, the book's attention is occupied with uncovering details of her own psyche. Modjeska uses theory and psychology to add ballast to her quest while Morgan uses interviews with family. There is a fundamental difference in terms of authority's localisation in these books and a difference in voicing; Modjeska only uses her own voice whereas Morgan's polyphonic approach can be read as a counterpoint to Johnson's claim that the book is overly individualistic.

At the risk of belabouring the point, I want to emphasise that critical responses to the book's autobiographical style are contingent on what the critic perceives the book's purpose and audience to be. To Edward Hills, Morgan is 'rewriting history, and reconstructing cultural identities'; he sees Morgan as 'telling stories to dismantle, however, temporarily, the very orthodoxy the genre encourages.' (99). For Susan Lever, the question of genre is closely tied to questions of 'authentic' Aboriginality and gender. As she writes, 'These debates about Aboriginal storytelling reflect back to women's storytelling, in that part of the political importance of feminist writing is to tell stories which haven't been told, and to find ways to tell them which challenge narrative conventions' (*Real Relations* 119). On this reading, as part of the second wave of Aboriginal women's life writing, Morgan's contribution is as much the political and social as well as the way in which it is told. Here there are echoes of Darnton's

comment that books do not simply record history; they make it. *My Place* through its inclusion on curricula and its wide distribution and consumption has had greater influence on settler perceptions of First Nations people than many other cultural artefacts of the twentieth century.

Michaels, Muecke and Attwood, all settler critics, take issue with Morgan's truth position.

As Michaels writes:

What is challenging about criticising this book is first, simply, how dare one dispute Morgan? ... she constructs criteria for evidence, history and truth which are self-referential. Aborigines do not forget, do not lie, do not selectively interpret their memories, and so their stories are true ... beyond even the context of their presentation (ie neither the narrative genre nor the translation from oral to written modes influences the story). (44)

For an autobiography to appeal to an audience, the readers need to believe in the honesty of the work and the credibility of the author. Where this can come into conflict with editorial labour is the standardisation of a text to meet linguistic and stylistic conventions. Michaels is concerned with the truth value of Morgan's book in a fashion that is different in kind from questions readers pose of settler memoir. In the same way that I have not been privy to Meredith Rose's mindset when she was editing, I do not have documentary or other evidence to illuminate editor Ray Coffey's mindset when he was working on the book, but given the political and social environment in which the book was being produced — the lead-up to the Australian Bicentenary when there was new funding for Aboriginal writers<sup>99</sup> and particular focus on Aboriginal stories — it is highly likely that he was conscious of potential readerly and critical responses to a book that centres discovery of and reckoning with Aboriginal identity and made editorial decisions accordingly.

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<sup>99</sup> As I note in the following chapter, Ruby Langford Ginibi was the recipient of such funding.

Muecke agrees that critics are shut out from evaluating the veracity of the book's contents:

Are critics to ignore the generic construction of event and character, the rhetoric of the fiction, in favour of interpretation of the text as straight history? And, if the critics question the motives of this or that character, will those comments be taken as criticisms of real people? (132)

Russell Pavlov-West also locates a tension in Morgan's mode and, her claims to authenticity and the associated repercussions. He claims that her writing:

... allows Morgan to perform two otherwise mutually exclusive functions: on the one hand, to speak explicitly as an [I]ndigenous person with the moral authority conveyed by that status, and, on the other hand, to speak implicitly as an average Australian, with another sort of moral authority typical of antipodean working-class reverse snobbery. (291)

However, there is not consensus on this point. A dissenting voice is John Docker who argues that the book '... offers enough clues to establish that her attitudes, opinions, and self knowledge can be questioned: she is not a wholly reliable narrator' (9). If Morgan acknowledges the limits of her own knowledge, her shortcomings as a historian and the edges of her understanding, then she is not claiming an infallible narratorial position. Docker goes on to write that Morgan 'develops a complex diasporic sensibility that is not centred on recovering a single totalized ersatz Aboriginality' (17). Are settler critics applying this same interrogation of truth value to non-First Nations works? Either at the time that *My Place* was published or since, determining the answer to that question is beyond the scope of this thesis but the repeated credulity to which *My Place* has been subjected is nearly ubiquitous in a way that is not present in the reception for the others works examined in this thesis.

Joan Newman turns the focus to the ways in which the book is a literary artefact, writing:

While having no wish to lessen the importance of the factual dimension of Morgan's narrative, it is important to recognise that *My Place* is not a transparent documentation of reality, but a highly structured text, adhering to a number of literary conventions, chiefly those of autobiography, and also the family saga and the detective story. (73)

The idea that it is possible to have 'transparent documentation' of any life story is naive, let alone in an instance where secrecy has long obscured the truth. Newman notes that *My Place* operates as texts do: the author, in collaboration with editors, interlocutors and family, makes decisions at every step about what to include and what to excise and these decisions determine the representation of events, discussions and interactions. What is worth recognising here is that such remarks are not part of standard commentary in non-academic work. Rather, there is an intense focus on the question of truth of the narrative because of the stakes in Morgan's work. First, as a work by an Aboriginal woman in the lead-up to the bicentenary when there was a renewed attention on First Nations people and Australian history; secondly since the work was the first time many of its readers considered the implications of settler occupation and land-holding; thirdly because the book reveals family secrets that had long been held but were revealed with the implied aim of correcting the record. A memoir, just as with any text, will always be a mediated version of events.

Susan Lever takes up the question of the constructed nature of the work and its use of 'detective stories and oral history' but continues 'the recognition that these are constructions — that Sally and her family are making stories in order to make meaning of their lives — does not render them artificial or less worthy of attention' (*Real Relations* 116). These comments show a bias against this work of autobiography when all kinds of written documentation involve mediation of one kind or another.

### **First Nations Writers and Editing: An unusual degree of scepticism**

Having examined the generic expectations that reviewers and critics had of the work as a whole, I now move to a closer examination of the expectations of the editorial process projected by scholars and critics onto *My Place*. Although in an early review Nene Gare comments that Morgan ‘has left the tales of Arthur, of Nan and of Gladys exactly as they were told to her. So the truth of them digs deep’ (80), time and again in criticism, scholars have remarked on what they imagine the editorial process for *My Place* was. Judging from their references, none consulted manuscripts to check the veracity of their claims. Since the book is, in some ways, the documentation of process — Morgan’s genealogical investigations — it follows that critics have paid particular attention to the means of its production, but such attention lacks evidentiary support, some of which I locate through examination of the book’s paratexts, attention to contemporary interviews with Morgan and her mother and through consultation of the archive.

For both *My Place* and *Wanamurraganya*, there is a line on the imprint page naming BR Coffey as ‘Consultant Editor’. No other editor is listed, and *My Place* does not include acknowledgements. Coffey had been at Fremantle Arts Centre Press for some time when he read *My Place*, having worked the highly successful autobiography *A Fortunate Life* by AB Facey (1981). According to a talk he gave to a bibliographical society, Coffey, tends ‘not to mark the author’s text at all, but rather produce notes which are referenced by page, paragraph and line to the manuscript’ (‘Getting it Right’ 33). He goes on to describe a later stage where he makes ‘revisions etc. directly on the manuscript’. The National Library of Australia does not hold any of these ‘notes’ but the marked-up typescripts of *My Place* and *Wanamurraganya* demonstrate working ‘directly on the manuscript’. Though it seems that the typescript has been marked up by an editor, any of the larger changes are entirely without commentary.

I have already noted the tendency for ‘The attribution for a published work of fiction will in almost every case be singular, though, with the author’s name usually appearing

unaccompanied on the book's cover and the editor's work rarely foregrounded' (6) as Matt Groenland describes it. In the previous chapter I flagged Meredith Rose's presence in acknowledgements; there is only one other editor in this study whose name appeared on multiple imprint pages: I will look at the work of Jamie Grant, Kate Jennings' editor in Chapter Six. The only editor who appeared on a cover (a back cover, and for early editions of the book) was Susan Hampton whose editorial role is the subject of the next chapter. In both *My Place* and *Wanamurraganya*, there is no reference to editing in an introduction perhaps in part because that would undermine Morgan's authority and interrupt the 'single author' myth. If Morgan's personal claim to Aboriginality is already debated by scholars and other readers, her authorial role and claims to Aboriginal identity performed in the book would be further imperilled if there had been greater acknowledgement of Coffey and his contribution.

In interviews (Hammond, O'Neill, Reid eds; Bird and Haskell) Morgan herself made comments on the role of editing in the production of her first book. Responding to questions from Mary Wright, published in an illustrated study guide produced by Fremantle Arts Centre Press (Hammond, O'Neill, Reid eds), Morgan spoke briefly about the publishing process for her book:

Mary: Why did you take the book to Fremantle Arts Centre Press?

Sally: Ken Kelso knew I was writing it, and he suggested I take it down, so I took about half a dozen chapters, and Ray Coffey really loved it, and from then on, every time I finished a section I'd send it down, and we ended up with a whacking great manuscript that was miles too long.

Gladys: And you had all the photos, too...

Mary: Yes, I was going to ask about the photos. There was a conscious decision made, wasn't there, not to include photos because it would then assume the mantle of some

kind of social historical reference, when really it wasn't, it was an exertion of the Aboriginal story-telling tradition?

Sally: Yes, I'd prefer it was read like that. (12)

Let me note that both Gladys and Sally Morgan are represented in this interview; by their joint discussion of the work, the reader has a sense of their continued collaboration to facilitate *My Place's* reception. Although this interview was available at the time Attwood, Muecke and Narogin/Johnson wrote their critiques of Morgan — and emphasised their perceived understanding of the book's heavy editorial treatment — none of them references this interview, or indeed any evidence of editorial work.

Again, in 1992, Morgan commented 'we did a lot of editorial work on it' in an interview with Delys Bird and Dennis Haskell as part of a critical study, *Whose Place?* (4). She continued:

He has got a light touch, Ray, some editors haven't. When he makes comments you can always see the point behind them, whereas I have since worked with other editors and they will make comments and I think 'what!'. But with Ray you always understood his criticism. And also if I didn't agree I would say 'No, I just don't agree' and he would say 'Well, okay, it's your choice and he would leave it the way I wanted it. (4)

This last comment asserts that it was a standard editorial relationship where ultimate authority lay with the author — a comment reminiscent of Beatrice Davis' remarks quoted in Chapter Two. There is also important nuance here: Morgan acknowledges that there was 'a lot of editorial work' but also establishes that she held veto power over changes. That is to say, although the editorial interventions may have been significant, they were only ever executed with her express approval. Morgan credits Coffey with his own intentions, which she takes to be operating in the interests of the book, that with his edits, 'you can always see the point behind them' and moves to certify her imprimatur on the final work, 'well okay, it's your

choice' her editor says. There are a series of movements in this process and a resolution, a dynamic sequence rather than a decree or edict. This description aligns with Susan Greenberg's figuration of editorial dynamics, that 'editing is not so much a radical break with authorship but on a continuum, involved in a process in which different agents take turns to join the same three-way conversation' (237). In this conversation the author often makes the final determination but in the process the agents take turns as they work to produce the published book.

In her response to *My Place*, Bidjara/Pitjara, Birri Gubba and Juru writer Jackie Huggins repeatedly remarks on what she identified as the editorial intervention, '... something Black writers fight against all the time — white control, white editors and white interference in our stories.' ('Always Was' 460) She continues, '... that jumbled bit in the middle appeared as if white editorial intervention had reared its ugly head yet again. It just didn't fit' (461). She then concluded, 'Overall there is little which indicates the writing and story of an Aboriginal. I would swear white editorial intervention has desecrated the text' (461). Similarly perturbed, Narogin/Johnson claimed that *My Place* is 'a heavily edited literature written and revised in conjunction with a European and its message is one of understanding and tolerance' (*Milli Milli Wangka* 16). Here concern here is of an editor's corrupting tendencies, particularly in the case of a settler editor intervening in the prose of an Aboriginal author. Such comments echo some of the concerns certain textual editors hold about the corrosive qualities of editorial labour on author's vision for their work as discussed in the introduction.

According to Gillian Whitlock, 'Both Ruby Langford Ginibi's *Don't Take Your Love to Town* and Sally Morgan's *My Place* are extensively edited ... This has led to criticisms that as a result they lack legitimacy and authenticity, and yet in both instances the writing of the text is openly embraced as part of a process of "making" Aboriginality' (162). Whitlock cites Narogin/Johnson's commentary on the editing of *My Place* but his work itself cites no

evidence for editorial work — though he does include Bird and Haskell’s book in his bibliography so presumably he read the interview where Morgan spoke about being edited. This comparison with Langford Ginibi’s book is highly problematic because there was a dispute about the editorial relationship that preceded the publication of *Don’t Take Your Love to Town* as I will address in the next chapter. No such dispute is on the record in a relation to *My Place* — in fact, the converse is true in that Morgan acknowledges and applauds Coffey’s approach as respectful. Further, Gladys’ contribution to the publicity effort demonstrates her ongoing support of the book.

Without citing so much as an interview as corroboration, Muecke claims that ‘Judith Brett, for instance, is very happy about the rendering of the “oral” passages in *My Place*, passages which must have been heavily edited ...’ (135). Muecke critiques Brett for what he sees as her lack of recognition that the ‘oral’ passages would have been edited but offers no evidence or detailed argument as to why he is certain that they were. It seems he takes the point to be self-evident.

While Anne Brewster demarcates the difference between editors who are not acknowledged and those who are named as part owners of the copyright and/or on the cover and title page and (*Reading* 8) Joy Hooton sees these editors as generally ‘sensitive to the integrity of their authors’ texts and attempts to intervene between author and reader are rare’ (*Stories* 313). Michaels, on the other hand, imagines:

There must be complex forms of translation here, but they are utterly masked. I do not mean merely the odious problems of transcription (Morgan’s appear highly edited), but of a more fundamental ontological fit which seems forced in order to construct the easy narrative surface — indeed to achieve the verisimilitude that makes *My Place* so credible to a popular readership. (45)

Michaels is commenting both on the kinds of work that he assumes was done in preparing the transcripts for publication but also over the course of the whole book, a sort of smoothing out with the intention of making it easier to read and more believable. He assumes that settler editorial intervention necessarily reduces the Aboriginal author's authentic text. What none of these critics credit, and what Morgan claimed in her interview, is that the editorial process was collaborative and the result of negotiations rather than the imposition of given set of norms on the work. Taking Morgan at her word, then it possible to see edits to the text as sanctioned and legitimate rather than simply a settler imposition. There is also a practical consideration here. A full, verbatim account of someone's life would never be publishable, let alone three such accounts in a single book. Indeed, any writing concerned with accurately describing the world must unavoidably be truncated and revised. Surely such truncation is not automatically and in all instances a corruption of the text.

It remains a relevant question of who edits a text and how, but this particular focus on editing in relation to First Nations authors (something that is a very rare comment in scholarship and reviews of settler authors) is disempowering and a removal of agency. Given the vanishingly small number of First Nations editors and publishers at the time *My Place* was produced, insisting on First Nations publishing staff would have likely prevented the book from ever reaching the market. Further, assuming that settler editors usually corrupt First Nations language denies agency in First Nations people who have resisted editorial intervention and their ability to advocate on behalf of their own work as Morgan described in the interview quoted earlier. As Anne Brewster puts it:

The argument that Aboriginal people are granted access to the public sphere through publication only because of white technologies — which induce confession for a constituency the dominant group along has the power to name, denies Aboriginal people agency in the production of their own texts. (*Formations* 37)

In a review of Bundjalung woman Evelyn Araluen's debut poetry collection, Jeanine Leane introduces the concept of 'entanglement' as a means of Aboriginal writers seizing control. Leane writes:

our unique ability to be able to turn the 'master's tools' back at the master. We can make the introduced language our own at the same time as mounting a substantial and sophisticated critique of the invaders that forced their language on us in the first place. ('Staring' np)

It is possible to read both Sally Morgan's work and that of Ruby Langford Ginibi, the subject of the following chapter, as performing this in their career as authors, speakers, educators and activists. As Michele Grossman argues:

... Aboriginal writing is conceived of as a frontier territory along which lies, on one border, 'writing', 'theory', 'textuality', 'history', and 'mediation'; on the other border, 'talk', 'experience', 'story', 'performance', and 'witness'. As a frontier zone, Aboriginal writing is marked on a number of levels as a place where persistent contests are waged over who authorizes and controls the relationship between Aboriginality and textuality, and who defines the effects of this relationship on how we understand Aboriginal relationships to modernity more generally. (128)

Whether the authors are First Nations or not, this thesis contends that is important to consider the means and modes of production of a given text. However, the fact that comments on editing are ever-present in scholarship on First Nations authors speaks to a condescending expectation of the inability of First Nations people to create their own work — a point to which I will return in detail at the conclusion of this thesis — while simultaneously recognising that since the first Aboriginal woman's life story was published, paratextual commentary on the means of production has been prevalent.

Penny van Toorn's book *Writing Never Arrives Naked* (2006) claims that since shortly after the arrival of English ships, First Nations people have been creating texts legible to settler readers in order to communicate with colonisers — using these technologies for desired ends.<sup>100</sup> Naturally all creative work, whether memoir or fiction, is the product of a countless number of decisions made by the author, the editor, the publisher and often the author's early readers. It is a phenomenon that is notably associated with criticism of First Nations writing that the role of the editor is continually foregrounded — both shortly after the book's publication and over time. In some instances, this is because the editor had significant involvement as is the case with Langford Ginibi's first book, but I argue that this commentary is the product of an expectation that First Nations writers have limited capability.

Muecke imagines a methodology that 'would combine both attention to texts and to their social conditions of production and circulation as a necessary part of the aesthetic' (138). This project is interested in undertaking that exercise — though not just for First Nations authors. By including First Nations and non-First Nations authors in the same thesis I can highlight both the commonalities of editorial intervention and the discrepancy in critical attention to this fact.

### **Spirituality: Editing to meet reader expectations**

Both Aboriginal and Christian spirituality figure in *My Place* but until now discussions have tended to be abstract and have missed a vital piece of information offered by the copyedited typescript. I find that there is one significant edit on the typescript that indicates an editor's intervention to revise the work so that it more neatly aligns with reader expectations of Aboriginal authenticity. Several of Morgan's critics have indexed her Aboriginality against readings of her representation of Aboriginal spirituality and connection to Country or to her

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<sup>100</sup> cf *Karobran* by Monica Clare as the earliest example, and it has continued through the work of Jackie and Rita Huggins and MumShirl's collaboration with Bobbi Sykes.

expressions of Christian faith. Aileen Moreton Robinson sees Morgan's discussions of spirituality as emblematic of First Nations spirituality more broadly:

Indigenous women perceive the world as organic and populated by spirits, which connect places and people. Sally Morgan's grandmother and mother hear the corroboree in the swamp when Sally's father is ill and understand this as the spirit's recognition of the father's mental turmoil. After his death the corroboree is no longer heard. When Daisy Corunna dies, it is the call of the bird that tells Sally both the end of her Grandmother's life. (*Talkin' Up* 18)

In a contemporary review, Nene Gare comments 'Until I had read Sally's book I had not truly understood why the mission children I met were so fervently religious' (81). Though she does not give details, it seems Gare was commenting on Daisy and Arthur's stories of their upbringing. Gladys and Sally are also Christian and comment on their faith in the book. To Michaels this presents as '... a Christian mythology (and a protestant "self") demonstrably at work here, acting almost as a kind of filter through which these histories are processed' (Michaels 45). While the Christian mythology is a filter, the Aboriginal spirituality draws his scorn as he says:

The recurrent trope of the 'death bird' may prove more familiar from the TV miniseries *Women of the Sun* than any ethnographic source. There are elements of theosophy, New Age astrology, even something like Pyramid Power in Sally Morgan's religion which are indeed interesting syncretisms. (45)

Aside from his pleasure in neologisms, Michaels as a sociologist is interested in verifying the 'source' for the death bird from ethnography rather than accepting Morgan's telling in her memoir. Muecke also questions the place of spirituality in the book, finding in *My Place* that:

... Aboriginality ... is more a genetic inheritance than a set of social practices to be engaged with; it is a psychic essence that allows, for instance, for extra-sensory perception: the bird call is one such moment in the text where the members of the family achieve an intuitive collective knowledge'. (129)

Both Muecke and Michaels' depictions of Morgan's spirituality are the sort of characterisation that contemporary critic, author and Wulli Wulli woman Lisa Fuller challenges in her discussion of spirituality in First Nations writing. She writes, '... people are essentially labelling my beliefs "fairy tales". I've had this conversation multiple times' (np). Questions of representation of Aboriginal Dreamtime stories or spirituality are present in debates about *Carpentaria* ('Dreaming' Ravenscroft) and other contemporary First Nations writers (cf Kwaymullina).

Moreton-Robinson notes the intersection between people, place and spirit, writing:

... Indigenous spirituality encompasses the intersubstantiation of ancestral beings, humans and physiography. The spiritual world is immediately experienced because it is synonymous with the old physiography of the land. In the life writings the reality of spirituality is a physical fact because it is experienced as part of one's life'. (19)

Sue Thomas seems to concur, finding that 'Morgan is able to place her family's experience squarely within newly emerging positive discourses of aboriginality [sic] associated with relationship to the land, spirituality and social relations characteristic of a *Gemeinschaft*.' (np). Hogan sees spiritual elements presented as part of the 'proof' of Morgan's Aboriginality (21).

In contrast, non-First Nations critics such as Suzette Henke, in line with the commentary from Michaels et al outlined earlier, take issue with the book's spirituality, 'Since Sally's mother Gladys relates this (ostensibly) implausible story [about spirits] in her own oral

narrative, it is difficult for the Eurocentric reader to doubt its psychic and cultural veracity, if not its empirical truth status' (Henke 41).

Tracing the connections between Christian and Aboriginal spirituality, Gareth Griffiths writes:

... Nyoongah spirituality finds its expression for her through the Christian religion which she simultaneously clearly recognises was a major factor in the suppression of her people's pre-colonial beliefs. In the same way, when the text shows her grand-uncle Arthur locating himself in the gap between his position and the 'bushy' blackfella, this functions not as a sign of inauthenticity but as a sign of the actual subject position occupied by many Nyoongah people under colonial settler rule in a specific time and place. (78)

Leaving aside the fact that Morgan has not self-identified as a 'Nyoongah' woman, Griffiths sees it is an accurate and therefore authentic depiction of the spiritual position of many Aboriginal people, rather than identifying Morgan's Christianity as a trait that removes her from her Aboriginal heritage. Hogan considers this intersection an unaddressed issue in the book (21).

To Fran de Groen, place is of pivotal importance in the depiction of spirituality:

Settings ... are represented as wholesome or unhealthy, sacred or profane: the hospital represents the most alienating and unhealthy environment in the narrative while the natural settings of the swamp and Corunna Downs afford a healing serenity and spiritual peace. (Bird, Haskell eds 35)

De Groen is distinguishing Morgan's spirituality as different from settlers' experiences in that a hospital is 'unhealthy' and Corunna Downs brings 'spiritual peace'. In the shadow of these responses, the editorial changes in the typescript add critical detail to readings of

Morgan's Christianity as depicted in the work. In the typescript, underneath a rewritten paragraph cut out and taped over the top is the following extended interchange:

'Who are you?' I asked mentally.

'God.'

'What are you doing here?' I asked, I don't know why. I don't know why I was surprised. It was a church hall after all.

'I've come to meet you.'

'Go away,' I replied.

God chuckled then said 'Whether you like it or not, I love you. You can live your life alone or with me.'

I groaned inwardly. What a rotten position to put me in.

'I hate church things,' I muttered.

'I'm not asking you to believe in church, just me.'

I was really mad that he wasn't living up to my low expectations.

All my life I'd carried a rotten picture of Jesus Christ, and now I'd met him in person I hated to admit that I'd been wrong. You see, not only did He love me, but He liked me too. And He had a sense of humour. I knew I could crack my weak jokes and he'd laugh. It was a trait I valued highly, my audiences were small. I suddenly felt terribly guilty and terribly responsible for what had happened to him two thousand years ago. I knew that if he came today, we'd do the same thing to him. Maybe I'd be the one to stick in the spear.

'Okay, I sighed, "how can I say no? I like you too much.'

A warm humorous voice replied, ‘Welcome home, Sally. Welcome home!’ And I did feel as though I’d come home. All of a sudden the spiritual awareness I’d had a child merged with the me that was now. I felt complete.<sup>101</sup>

This is quite different from what appeared in the finished book. The section is much shorter and reads:

‘Who are you?’ I asked mentally.

With a sudden dreadful insight, I knew it was God.

‘What are you doing here?’ I asked. I don’t know why I was surprised. It was a church hall after all.

It had to be Him because the voice seemed to come from without not within, it transcended the reality of the room. I couldn’t even see my surroundings any more. I was having an audience with Him whom I dreaded. (102)

The edit takes a conversation between Sally and God into a more abstract and much briefer interlude. In the typescript, God speaks to Sally directly and she responds with belief. His humour and his way of speaking appeal to her and make her feel ‘complete’. This conversation between Morgan and the Christian God takes place when she is a teenager; in the book it appears only a few pages after a conversation with her sister Jill who is surprised that Morgan has not noticed kids at school calling them ‘boongs’. What follows the divine dialogue is a conversation with a deacon at the church who asks Morgan to spend less time with his daughter, saying to her, ‘You’re a bad influence, you must realise that’ (103). The reader understands that, whatever Morgan’s personal relationship with God, the deacon’s racism impeded her participation in the church community.

Through this exchange, the reader sees a highly personal relationship between Morgan and God. When Morgan expresses concern that she must be part of the church — a space

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<sup>101</sup> MS8007/119

controlled by the non-Aboriginal deacon — God tells her that the most important thing is their direct relationship. This is particularly important in light of the following scene where Morgan is told that she should not associate with someone in her youth group. While there may not be institutional approval, Morgan had personal approval from her God. In other words, settler people, including those supposedly part of the church and tasked with shepherding God's flock, can be racist and discriminatory, but Morgan's God has a direct relationship with her and so whatever interference she may experience from humans in her life, her relationship with God is independent and unmediated.

One plausible reason to cut this sequence is to downplay Morgan's Christian spirituality. If the book's focus is predominantly on Morgan's coming to knowledge about her family and her heritage, then her relationship with the Christian God is a potential confusing factor. Eleanor Hogan interrogates the inherent tension between Aboriginal and Christian spirituality: 'How Morgan or any of her family reconcile this experience of Christianity as an extension of patriarchal and colonialist control with their use of Christian authority to validate their identity is never addressed in the text' (21). Since Christianity came with colonisation, there is an assumed tension between this organised religion and Aboriginal spirituality. The Christian faith is a constant presence in the book — in part because of the role of Christian missions in the lives of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the first half of the twentieth century and in part because of the personal faith of Daisy, Arthur, Gladys and Morgan herself. While there was a significant change in the description of Morgan's relationship with God through the deletion of this material, a new passage was inserted concerning Gladys's religion:

I guess Mum had always been quite religious in her own way, but it only became really obvious to us as we grow older, and after Dad died. She had occasionally gone to a church meeting when I was younger, but Dad was not very positive towards such

things and would have discouraged it. Basically, I suppose, religion and the spiritual were private and personal with Mum. (62)

This characterisation of Gladys having a ‘private and personal’ relationship with the Christian religion and spirituality mirrors Morgan’s depiction of her conversation with God. It is also the kind of comment that may have contributed to the commentary that Morgan’s book is too individualistic and not community minded which, according to a number of critics, is a defining feature of Aboriginal culture. I contend that the change to this section is indicative of an editor’s interpretative position. In an essay on publishing, Coffey writes, ‘An editor has to imagine the future readers and be a first reader on their behalf; an editor will therefore try to approach the text not only with their own knowledge, expertise and limitations, but with those of the imagined readers’ (‘Ute’ 51). Here he is describing one of the functions of an editor that parallels that of a translator: anticipating the expectations of the readership. In this case he is moving to align Morgan’s book with readers’ expectations of Aboriginality by downplaying the presence of Christian religion.

The Christian God is not simply a relevant presence in Morgan’s and Gladys’ stories. In the Arthur Corunna section he remarks, ‘I’ve only got one good father and he’s in heaven. No matter which way the wind’s blowin’, he’s there with you’ (206). Arthur, like Morgan, has a personal, intimate relationship with the Christian God. For three generations, this God was a direct support and a very real presence. Although settler critics have assumed editors decreased the authenticity by downplaying Aboriginal elements, the edits on Morgan’s relationship with God instead decrease the presence of Christianity, which would tessellate with their expectations of what Aboriginal spirituality should be. This research troubles some of the assumptions critics had about the effects of editing on Morgan’s work, at least in relation to the copyediting stage, in expectations of how Aboriginal people would be authentically spiritual.

### **Copyediting Arthur's Story: Making cuts because of repetition or lack of sensitivity?**

Aside from changes to representations of spirituality, the other pattern in editorial intervention that I identify in the typescript is cuts to Arthur's story and his description of the treatment he endured at the hands of settlers. In the first of three sections of the book narrated in first person from members of Morgan's family, Arthur Corunna's story is an abridged version of his life. Different in tone, vocabulary and register from Morgan's prose, Arthur's story is written from the first-person perspective of an Aboriginal man with the expectation of a larger settler audience. What my analysis of the edited typescripts of Arthur's story shows is that there was a decrease in determinacy in some instances, the removal of some anecdotes depicting associates or acquaintances and removal of material that might be considered defamatory. On a few occasions there are deletions of references to race and treatment of Aboriginal people. For instance, 'I think we were just pack animals to him'<sup>102</sup> and 'You see, I was the wrong colour to them' (242). In each instance they follow a comment on Arthur's treatment by settler men. There are two potential readings of these cuts, which I make through an inductive process in the absence of commentary on the typescript or accompanying correspondence. One reading is that the description of the events themselves communicate this sentiment and so there is no need for Arthur's statements. This fits with an idea that editing can move to greater indeterminacy by removing blunt statements. Another reading is that, with a predominantly settler readership, the editor was conscious of not alienating the audience with too many comments on this demographic. This is not to say that all such comments were removed (ie 'Aah, things was hard for the black fellas in those days' (181)) but that perhaps the editor suggested removing a few instances to soften the overall effect of this position.

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<sup>102</sup> MS8007/213-4

Whether the reason for these deletions was one of the two I have hypothesised or something else entirely, these edits do fit with Huggins' comment that there was a kind of 'whitening' of the text during the editing process (*Always Was* 460). Without seeing earlier drafts I cannot comment on the ways in which the transcript was edited but it is clear from this copyedit stage that there was a kind of softening as a result of removing these statements.

On page 247 of the typescript a paragraph about the mistreatment of two Aboriginal people was cut. The marking is a rough squiggly line different from other markings, which suggests to me that it is more likely to be Morgan and less likely to be the in-house editor. The text in the typescript read:

I remember old Billy Mundy, he gave me some gold once. He had Mundy Hill and Yellowdine and he gave them away for nothin'. They found half a million in gold at Yellowdine and what did Billy Mundy get out of it? Seven quid, a bottle of whisky and no protection from the Aborigines Department. You see, the white man can take what he likes. He thinks all you want is a bit of flour, tea and some old clothes. Billy was cheated the same way Paddy Hannan cheated the black woman who found his gold for him. He gave her tobacco and a bit of tea, wasn't that good of him? (247)

This paragraph comes in the middle of a series of comments about the government robbing and mistreating Aboriginal people and the terrible state of land rights, so the cut would not seem to be the result of a desire to reduce the critique of settler people but seemingly to decrease the number of people mentioned in this section. For anticipated readers, predominantly settlers, to easily follow a condensed narrative of this sort, it is necessary to limit the cast of characters. My contention is that this edit, rather than interfering with Aboriginal voice or limiting Arthur's political commentary, makes for a more cohesive passage with a single focus, not interrupted by anecdote.

There are two deletions relating to Dudley Brake-Brockman, landowner and Arthur's employer. On page 202, deleted in pen is the following passage: 'Dudley's wife used to growl at him for this cruelty. Once, Old Timothy disobeyed and Dudley beat him and beat him with an iron bar. I remember taking eggs to Dudley's place once. On the way I stopped and played and one of the eggs got broken. Dudley beat me and locked me up.'<sup>103</sup> In these short sentences there are two instances of serious abuse of Aboriginal people. Later, on the same page of the typescript is a line already quoted in the previous section: 'Howden wasn't a religious man, Dudley was. Just like his mother and father. I think he was frightened of us black fellas. That's why God took him in the end, he was too cruel' (202). This was deleted in pencil. Over the course of the book there are several mentions of Dudley's cruelty, such as when Arthur eats a ripe tomato and Dudley 'gave orders for my Aboriginal father to beat me' (177). Dudley beat Arthur himself for speaking in Language (178). Something that marks the deleted passage as different from other comments about Dudley's cruelty is the extent of the punishments. He did not just beat Old Timothy but beat him with an iron bar. He did not just beat Arthur but also locked him up afterwards. Perhaps it was the extent and severity of the poor treatment that set this material apart as something that might attract a defamation suit. Perhaps it was that these anecdotes were seen as not being sufficiently relevant to the narrative at that point. Either reason could be the result of settler sensibility.

It would be difficult to make a case that comments about Dudley were removed purely to avoid a defamation suit. There is so much material that specifically names individuals and describes the violent, reprehensible treatment of Aboriginal people. If the author and publisher were trying to avoid attracting a legal suit, then the significant amounts of text that appear in the typescript — and the finished book — would have been marked for deletion also.

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<sup>103</sup> MS8007

One of the most interesting decisions editorially is the choice for Arthur's section to contain Aboriginal English. Notably, even when Arthur is referring to the process of Morgan writing the book, his first-person narrative includes dropped consonants and non-standard conjugations. Arthur says: 'I'm an old fella now and I got one of my granddaughters lookin' after me. That's something these days. And I got Daisy's granddaughter writin' my story. I been tryin' to get someone to write it for years, now I'm glad I didn't. It should be someone in the family, like. It's fittin'" (213). The apostrophes indicate that the dropped letters are intentional, and they fit with the spelling of 'fella' and expressions such as 'I been tryin'' and 'I got' instead of 'I have'. Including this style is part of the book's latent claim to authenticity. Apostrophes here also indicate punctuation in line with standard English for dropped consonants. This passage includes an endorsement for Morgan's project and publicly demonstrates Arthur's permission and encouragement for the publication of *My Place*. It is not just that Arthur wanted his story told but that he is pleased it is Morgan who is doing the telling.

The use of Aboriginal English and the rendition of Arthur's vernacular in the text are important sites of authenticity for *My Place*. However, Arthur's comments that it is 'fittin'' for Morgan to write the book could be read as consistent with Muecke, Attwood and Michael's comments that the book creates a sort of closed system which provides its own verification. It would be revelatory to see what kinds of copyedits the earlier drafts underwent — both at the hands of Morgan herself and with feedback from Coffey. Without those insights, the conclusions that I can draw are that, for the most part, the edits on the Arthur section are minimal and that there is not a systematic process of 'whitening' the text or erasing material that would be difficult for a predominantly settler audience to read. While the most significant cut is to material related to Dudley Drake-Brockman, it is unlikely that the reader would develop a different perspective of him with the inclusion of these sentences since almost all

material relating to him that was in the published book represents a cruel and difficult person who mistreated the Aboriginal people that he encountered.

### **Shifting Registers: Changing Gladys' 'Mother' to 'Mum'**

There is one consistent change in the typescript that reflects a shift in register: Gladys referred to Daisy as 'Mother' throughout the section 'Gladys Corunna's Story' but in the typescript each instance was changed to 'Mum'. In the Australian context, 'Mother' sounds very formal and somewhat distant; 'Mum' is much more intimate and casual. If it had been the case that there were two appellations for Daisy in the typescript, it would make sense to change to the more commonly used name but since every instance was 'Mother' and changed to 'Mum', seemingly there was a decision to change the text from what was transcribed from the recording. This change may be operating in a similar way to the dropped consonants in Arthur and Daisy's stories. By using 'Mum', instead of 'Mother', the text reads more like transcribed speech and unlike in some other contexts, it is speech that holds authenticity, not the written word. Such a change calls to mind the work of translators in the anticipation of an audience's responses to a text – following on from Greenberg's commentary this is an instance of an editorial change that translators 'must consider their form (placement, voice, colour, weight and context) as well as content (literal meaning)' (*Poetics* 45). A contemporary Australian audience may read the use of 'Mother' as distancing and it would communicate a separation between Daisy and Gladys whereas 'Mum' conveyed greater intimacy. I will return to the question of changing registers with the seeming intention of affirming authenticity in the chapter on Ruby Langford Ginibi.

One of the most detailed considerations of the register Morgan adopts comes from Joan Newman who was also interested in the role of Coffey as editor and the kinds of concerns that he had with preparing the text:

...to achieve a unity of expression, both the oral usage of the author and those whom she interviewed had to be somewhat modified. The editor was concerned that the Aboriginal English expression of some of the oral material could be regarded as demeaning to its users when represented in printed form. There was some fear the literature Euro-Australian readers would be less sympathetic to such “alien” forms of expression.’ So apart from a few dropped “g”s, and colloquialisms in non-standard English, such as “he learnt me” and “he didn’t know nothin” there is little indication of the Aboriginality of language use. This would seem to be a major capitulation. The language use signifies social class distinctions rather than racial ones. However, rather than totally disguise the natural speech forms of her respondents, Sally Morgan modified her own narrative voice to meet them, so that the disparity between her more usual speech and that of her relatives is decreased. (383)

Here Newman is talking about changes in both aspects of the text — both in the sections that are from Morgan’s perspective and the sections from the perspectives of her uncle, her mother and her grandmother. Newman calls the general lack of Aboriginal English a ‘major capitulation’ by which I take her to mean that the writing was given over to a ‘whiter’ version of prose to suit the anticipated audience. In the finished book, Morgan regularly uses the colloquialism ‘try and’ instead of ‘try to’. This has not been touched in the typescript. Perhaps this is kind of modification to which Newman is referring when she says Morgan worked to lessen the ‘disparity’ between her own voice and that of her family members. Newman also referenced a talk that Coffey gave in which he made comments about his editing processes. While, like the other critics, Newman did not examine edited papers, which had been acquired by the National Library of Australia in 1989, she clearly pursued the question of how the book was edited since she was concerned with the effects this would have had on *My Place*.

As a counterpoint, *Wanamurraganya* has more words in Language but perhaps this is in part because Jack spoke in Language throughout his life whereas, from the story that readers follow in *My Place*, Daisy would have had relatively few opportunities to speak in her mother tongue/s. Interestingly, Judith Drake-Brockman, Dudley's daughter and one of the children whom Daisy looked after, makes a point of emphasising that she spoke with Daisy in 'Nyungar and Wubella' (134) and even gave her book an Aboriginal title, *Wongi Wongi* (2001). As with mentioning that 'Dais' taught her about animals and describing a 'corroboree' performed in honour of her family (70–1), mentioning Daisy's healing (80), describing speaking in Language seems to be Drake-Brockman's claim for a greater, deeper connection with Daisy than that between Morgan and her grandmother.

### **Daisy's Silence and Voice: A revelatory addition to the typescript**

Since the question of how Daisy is voiced occupies the attention of several critics, the findings from the archive about some changes to the Daisy section at the copyedit phase make a novel contribution to existing characterisations of the book and its production. While scholars and reviewers have queried Morgan's Aboriginality, her grandmother Daisy's identity is never up for debate and indeed Daisy's behaviour is sometimes held as a counterpoint to that of her granddaughter. One of the more frequently quoted sentences from the book (already quoted in this chapter) comes from the Daisy Corunna section: 'You can't put no lies in a book' (325). Robyn Dizard (160) and Wenche Ommundsen (2) are among the critics who flag this self-referential statement that seems to draw attention to the novel's construction.

Daisy's reticence and ongoing resistance to sharing her story with her granddaughter — and her granddaughter's dictaphone — has been noted by a number of critics (Muecke 128; Roy 23; Elder 22–3 and Hogan 17). By this reading, Daisy Corunna is an 'authentic' Aboriginal voice in the text, not simply because of her parentage but also because of the way she withholds information from Morgan and, by extension, the reader. Muecke (128) and

Whitlock (168) see Daisy's resistance in the face of Morgan's requests as a kind of stance against the violence of colonisation.

When Daisy does speak, the style of her story attracts the attention of West-Pavlov who calls it 'nonstandard English' (291) and Lever mentions Morgan's explanation why Nan's section includes dropped consonants and different expression (*Real Relations* 116–7). Judith Drake-Brockman, in a memoir recounting her version of events growing up with Daisy as her 'nursemaid' wrote, 'Daisy spoke as I speak, after all, she trained me. Neither she nor I left or leave the ending 'g' off our words as "comin" or "going and "askin" as Sally's Daisy does in chapter after chapter' (138). Nan's expression has preoccupied a number of critics, the fact that a note was added at the copyedited typescript stage to comment on the register and vernacular that Daisy used is particularly significant.

After the end of 'Daisy Corunna's Story' in *My Place* is the comment:

Although there was one thing I had learnt; that had quite surprised me. Nana's voice had changed as she reminisced. She could speak perfect English when she wanted to, and usually did, only occasionally dropping the beginning or ending of a word. But in talking about the past, her language had changed. It was like she was back there, reliving everything. It made me realise that one stage in her life it must have been difficult for her to speak English, and therefore to express herself. (351)

This paragraph, in its entirety, was added — the words typed on a piece of paper which was then affixed to the manuscript.<sup>104</sup> Again, without access to further information, it is not possible to say what the impetus for this change was, but given the infrequency of such changes at this point, this edit self-identifies as unusual. Although a small addition, its effect on the text and the reader's response is significant.

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<sup>104</sup> MS8007/422

In her memoir on growing up with Daisy as her ‘nanny’, Judith Drake-Brockman contradicts Morgan’s representation of Daisy’s speech, as quoted above. Drake-Brockman’s insertion of the possessive her, ‘Sally’s Daisy’ is telling. It is notable that, although Drake-Brockman said Daisy’s speech was misrepresented in *My Place*, when she speaks to Daisy in advance of the book’s publication, Daisy is reported to have said ‘She’ll make me look poor-fella black’ (135).

Daisy’s English is the most inflected of all the narrators in the book. She says “‘member’ for ‘remember’, ‘lyin’”, ‘wondrin’” (325) while Arthur says ‘remember’. There are occasions where Arthur’s ‘g’ are dropped such as ‘seein’”, ‘walkin’” (181) but elsewhere they remain (‘visiting’, ‘marrying’ [175]). Given Daisy and Arthur had some similarities in their upbringing, and that Daisy’s working life was in the house with Alice Drake-Brockman and her children rather than out on the farm as was the case for Arthur, it is perhaps surprising that her speech is rendered as more inflected than that of her brother.

One possible reason for the discrepancy between Daisy’s reported speech in the book and her reported speech with Drake-Brockman may be context. Shifting register depending on audience, situation and circumstance is commonplace — one only needs to spend time in a playground hearing the difference between a dialogue of peers and speaking with a teacher. It may be that Daisy spoke differently around her employer than with her family.

Given the attention to the ways in which Morgan develops a sense of authenticity in the book and the question about the kinds of expectations that settler readers would have, the question of how closely the published text reflects the recordings that Morgan made with family members is worth considering. Though the text is rendered in prose rather than including Morgan’s promptings and the interviewees’ responses and though hesitations and corrections have been removed almost entirely, by including words that are shortened in one

way or another, it seems Morgan is indicating variation in the prose of the book as a whole and the ‘stories’ that are written in the first person from three of her family members.

While a physically small change to the typescript, the addition of a typed piece of paper with a comment on Nan’s English is a significant change in that it addresses several of the key concerns of the scholarship around *My Place*. First, authenticity is one of the fraught discussions that has surrounded the book since its first publication. It anticipates a potential reader query about how Nan spoke — especially since Nan’s speech elsewhere in the book is less inflected. The note is a signal to the reader that Morgan is aware of the way in which the ‘transcript’ of Nan’s life story has been mediated both by Morgan but also by Nan herself. If I follow Muecke and Hogan’s idea that Daisy’s withholding of speech is conscious act, demonstrating agency, then it would follow that her choices in speaking are also considered and communicate more than the sum of the words themselves. Morgan does not indicate whether or not she asked Nan about the register of her speech. Given the complicated relationships between voice, register and disclosure, this added paragraph is a significant change at the copyedit phase.

### ***Wanamurraganya*: A first book that was published second**

As in the preceding sections that considered *My Place*, the paratextual accompaniments and post-publication commentary on Morgan’s second book, *Wanamurraganya* both describe some of the means of production and the circumstances of its reception. According to Tom Thompson, Publications Coordinator for the Australian Bicentennial Authority, Morgan was at work on *Wanamurraganya* — the book that she wrote with her uncle, Jack McPhee — before she wrote *My Place*. In 1985 Sally Morgan:

sent me a letter at the ABA enquiring into the possibility of getting some financial help to work on a new volume, a biography of her uncle Jack. At the Authority, Phillip Morrissey (who coordinated the Aboriginal programme) was also aware of the way

that Aboriginal people were moving from a spoken to a written culture. Requesting an example of her work brought forward five chapters from her work in progress, which was *My Place*. The ABA commissioned Sally to write what became *Wanamurraganya* ... (35)

Generally critics do not comment on Morgan's second book in their discussion of her first — even when their responses were penned many years after its publication. In fact, there is scant critical engagement with this book at all. On the Austlit database, while three reviews are listed, there is not a single article, chapter or book dedicated to it whereas *My Place* has hundreds.

Following the huge success of *My Place* and the extensive critical attention it received, it is surprising that there has been such a quiet response to *Wanamurraganya*. Its publication, only two years after *My Place*, with Morgan's name prominently on the cover and one of her artworks adorning the front — just as with *My Place* — it is packaged as a sibling to Morgan's first book. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Thompson wrote that Morgan was working on this title first, and that she applied to the Australian Bicentennial Authority for funding before she started on *My Place*.

It is interesting to imagine the responses if *Wanamurraganya* had been published first since it was more in line with other books with Aboriginal subjects — a younger writer working with an older Aboriginal person to document a story. It seems likely that Morgan would have been greeted differently since McPhee's life experience is more connected to country and family than Daisy's: he worked fairly close to his birthplace for much of his life and was able to keep in touch more easily with family members. Although he started working from the age of seven, he underwent the first part of initiation, went to corroborees as a child and young man and spoke five Aboriginal languages (*Wanamurraganya*). Since the National Library holds a copyedited typescript for the book, I will briefly address the extant editorial interventions

evident and consider the implications of the changes; namely the anticipation of a settler audience and especially the reduction in material that contravenes some cultural protocols.

On the whole, the edits are relatively minor, and the significance of the changes is not always clear since there is no commentary either from editor or author on the pages themselves and no other materials held in the archive with the typescript. Consequently, this research is similarly preliminary to that of *My Place*. Perhaps in the near future more genetic material including letters, typescripts and edited pages will be available for scholars to progress this work.

*Wanamurraganya* is layered with paratexts that contribute to establishing its authority but also complicate the idea of authorship and ownership. The cover lists one author ‘Sally Morgan’ and includes the sub-heading ‘The story of Jack McPhee’. Facing the title page is a photo of Jack dated 1987. On the imprint page copyright is attributed to ‘Sally Morgan and Jack McPhee’ before the line, ‘Consultant Editor B.R. Coffey’. This is not a common term in Australian publishing, nor is it common practice to list the editor on the imprint page. Given Fremantle Arts Centre Press is a small publishing company, it is easier for more idiosyncratic practices to take place. What this inclusion of Coffey’s name on the imprint page would seem to indicate is the press was foregrounding Coffey’s role in the production of the book. The word ‘Consultant’ suggests a collaborative process where he would have offered feedback but that the work would remain ultimately the responsibility of the author/s. As with Astley, considering the paratextual elements in Morgan’s publishing output reframes our understanding of her oeuvre; crediting editors speaks to a particular dynamic at work in the production, a recognition of the editor’s labour and contribution.

Coffey’s position in the editing of this book is particularly relevant since, unlike *My Place* which had very little detail about Aboriginal life or ceremony, *Wanamurraganya* does include Jack McPhee’s memories of his first initiation ceremony and other Aboriginal Law. There

were cuts to a few phrases in the section about Jack's initiation but the majority of the material in the typescript appears in the finished book.<sup>105</sup> I am not reproducing the original text here out of respect but can say that the deleted material offered more specific detail about the initiation itself.

Clearly the book anticipates a settler audience since, on the page before discussion of initiation, there is an explanation of First Nations family ties: 'It's hard for white people to understand because they have different family relationships. We can call someone a close relation who a white person wouldn't think was close at all' (54). Such writing begs the question of who can tell which stories to which audiences. One of Huggins' already quoted main critiques of *My Place* was that it anticipated, and catered to, a settler audience.

Wenche Ommundsen comments that Morgan breached protocol by publishing material about Law and ceremony in *Wanamurraganya*:

This book has been condemned by black communities because it contains knowledge which should not be revealed to anyone but initiated members of the group to which it belongs. It is, as Stephen Muecke writes, 'a serious transgression of Aboriginal "copyright" to speak unlawfully a text which "belongs" to someone else' (14). Another position for the reader, that of outlawed and uninitiated eavesdropper, emerges here, a position which perhaps in many instances defines the white reader of black texts.

The very loud silences of *My Place* testify to the difficulty of communication across cultural boundaries. (4)

Ommundsen does not reference the condemnation from Aboriginal communities specifically to *Wanamurraganya* but returns to Muecke's critique relating to 'Aboriginal Oral Narrative in Ideological Contexts' (19). Non-Aboriginal people have acted as amanuensis and collaborator for other First Nations authors — I discuss the complicated case of Ruby

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<sup>105</sup> MS8007/Chapter 4, 4; 53

Langford Ginibi in the following chapter. Bobbi Sykes assisted MumShirl (The cover of the book reads ‘an autobiography with the assistance of Bobbi Sykes’) and according to the Foreword in *Karobran* (1978), Jack Horner and Mona Brand worked on that manuscript (vii). *Wanamurraganya* is different in that Morgan was family to Jack — albeit someone who did not grow up connected to her Aboriginal heritage. Is it the place of critics such as Ommundsen and Muecke to condemn Morgan’s telling of McPhee’s story given each of their subject positions?

Allow me to note that Morgan was conscious of potential transgressions. In the introduction she writes ‘... sometimes the interests of the community, especially specific Aboriginal communities, must be weighed against the right of the individual to import certain information’ (*Wanamurraganya* 15). Morgan continues:

Of course there are constraints in this kind of work as in any other. There was the obvious one of Jack being a male who had been through the Law and me being not only female but related as well. Also, I had to accept that there would be certain information shared which he did not want me to include in the book. (16)

The ethics of publishing this kind of material is complicated and would not have been helped by the lack of Aboriginal staff at Fremantle Arts Centre Press at the time that the book was published. Indeed, Heiss notes that there were no Aboriginal staff working at Fremantle Arts Centre Press at the time that *My Place* was published (*Dhuuluu Yala* 62). There is no record of consulting Aboriginal editors in producing the work and though the introduction takes a few pages to explain the process and Morgan’s part in the development of the work for publication, there is no mention of consulting relatives or other Aboriginal people to ensure that the content was appropriate to share.

One other notable series of changes in this edit was to rename several characters. Given this is a typescript and clearly has been through some revision before reaching this point, it is

significant that the changes occurred at this stage. In the introduction, Morgan notes that ‘Over a period of three years, Jack and I went through this process six times.’ (*Wanamurraganya* 15–16) The process is making tapes, producing transcripts, cutting sections out and placing them in chronological order, reading the text back to McPhee and making more recordings, starting the process over again (15). It is worth remembering that the names would have made it through all those rounds of revisions and there would have been multiple opportunities to change them. The decision to rename some personages at a later stage is consistent with the idea that the work was designed to produce an accurate rendition of the story with the permutation of alternative names added at the end when it could cause the least confusion. Of course, changing names is not ultimately a failsafe guard against lawsuits since, under Australian defamation law, if a person believes they are recognisable and that the depiction of them could cause serious harm to their reputation then those are sufficient conditions to bring suit.<sup>106</sup>

Interestingly, there are corrections to Aboriginal spellings. This could be for a few reasons. One, that Morgan transcribed names from recordings made with McPhee and did not use standardised spelling. It is also possible that she checked the spelling with McPhee but, given his relatively low English literacy levels, perhaps there were errors. In the introduction, Morgan mentions the JS Battye Library of Western Australian History as a place where she worked, ‘checking spellings, dates, people, stations, and photographs’ (*Wanamurraganya* 16).

As a companion text, and clearly demonstrating an equivalent copyediting process to *My Place*, *Wanamurraganya* offers invaluable insights into the kinds of decisions made in advance of publication. Analysing the typescript in conjunction with Morgan’s commentary on the process of developing the work in the introduction, it is clear that a significant amount of

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<sup>106</sup> <https://www.artslaw.com.au/information-sheet/defamation-law/#:~:text=A%20person%20who%20wishes%20to,of%20the%20allegedly%20defamatory%20matter.>

editorial intervention took place before the book reached that stage. Consideration of those edits is crucial to develop a better picture of the book's inception and production.

## **Conclusion**

As I outlined at the opening of this chapter, without access to correspondence and, ideally, to edited transcripts and typescripts, this analysis of *My Place* can make only a tentative first step in considering the role of editorial intervention. What my research shows is how such intervention was front-of-mind for many critics in their consideration of the book and that such questions are different from the questions concerning the ways non-First Nations authors' books are edited.

There are edits connected to potential defamation concerns, that may be read as negatively portraying Nan and that, perhaps most importantly of all, a paragraph was added as a commentary on the English that Daisy uses to express herself in the section narrated from her perspective. In a book where authenticity, voice and the ethics of who tells which stories is foremost in its reception and ongoing discussions of the significance of *My Place* in Australian literary and social history, there is much work to do on the role of editing and publishing. Such work could form part of a bigger discussion on the kinds of changes that Australian publishing needs to undergo before reaching a more equitable and ethical publishing space for First Nations people and their stories. The status quo of predominantly settler editorial staff persists but books by First Nations authors have increased substantially (Phillips np). Recognition of this history in Australian publishing can help develop better protocols for the current-day industry.

What the work of this chapter does demonstrate is that the editor process can operationalise some of the same decision-making protocols as translation. Whether in the instance of lowering register to meet reader expectations as in the case of Mum/Mother or adding an explanation for the register and word choices of Daisy, the editor for *My Place* is an

intermediary between the author, their version of the text and the anticipated reader.

Although such work is intended to be invisible, studying the changes and striving to understand the rationale for these suggestions offers a characterisation of the expected audience and figures their attitudes.

## Chapter Six: Interventionist Authorship

In the last chapter I examined an author and editor embodying different roles over the course of the production of the book. In this chapter I argue for a reading of feminist, poet, essayist and novelist Kate Jennings' writerly career with recognition for her work as an editor — both of other authors' work and as a manager of the team who worked on her own published works. Authors, as they are commonly figured from the Romantic period onwards, are responsible for the words on a page (Woodmansee 49) and their publisher is usually responsible for the cover, the layout and the positioning of the book in the market, but Jennings crosses these lines for several of her books. Although authors are usually asked to assist in the promotion of their book, their input after the manuscript is complete is limited. In this chapter I outline Jennings' shift from an author predominately operating in the standard mode — that is, an author responsible for little more than the text itself — to an author operating in the mode of a project editor or publisher. Jennings' first publishing experience was as editor of an anthology, and she worked as a magazine editor; I contend these experiences presage her later actions and agency.

For *Bad Manners*, her 1993 essay collection, Jennings chose an editor to offer developmental feedback, chose her cover designer, queried the typeset decisions and even consulted academics to determine the style guide for the book. This chapter finds authorial agency through the study of editing in a different mode from Chapter One. In examining Ruth Park's responses to edits I uncovered her activism on behalf of her disabled character. In studying the publishing and editing history for Jennings' oeuvre, and *Bad Manners* in particular, I find an author advocating on her own behalf. In each case, such research strengthens rather than diminishes the author's authority. This chapter also demonstrates the role of persuasion and personal connection over fidelity to rules and preconceptions in encouraging an author to adopt their editor's suggestions. In comparing Jennings' responses

to Jamie Grant's structural edits and the copyedit stage with Winnie Rosen, the importance of persuasion and a sense of shared purpose becomes clear. I also show the power of personal connections and friendships in bringing work to readers. Indeed, this thesis prosecutes the case for greater attention to editing as a powerful illuminator of the social conditions that produce the work and the publishing processes.

As an editor, one priority is producing work for publication that is without typos, well-expressed and fluent, but for the author it is usually the questions of ideas and style that take primacy. Although over the course of revision, and thanks to moments of inspiration, some sentences or paragraphs may come to be publishable at the hands of the author alone, for much of the text it is difficult for a single person to manage it exclusively. Filmmakers do not write, shoot, direct, edit and manage the sound and music on their productions, nor do playwrights or composers work alone, however, the seeming simplicity of writing leads to the misconception that writers might be capable of producing work in isolation. Just as shooting and directing are different though related skills, so writing and editing are different, and it is through collaboration that the most impressive work is created. While Jennings had experience as an editor, she was nevertheless incapable of producing copy ready for publication by herself. Instead, she turned her skills and experience to assembling and overseeing a team who assisted in the preparation of her work for publication.

Born in Griffith in the New South Wales Riverina in 1948 and educated at Griffith High School (Jensen 5; 25) Jennings moved to Sydney to attend university. She was a formidable figure at the age of twenty-two, standing on the lawns of the University of Sydney, as she charged male protestors with only caring about their own fate as potential conscriptees in the Vietnam War and ignoring the very real threats the women protesting alongside them faced (Moore 'Famously Fed Up'). Only a few years after this speech, Jennings was the editor of the landmark anthology *Mother I'm Rooted* (1975), produced by Outback Press, an independent

outfit founded by Morry Schwartz, Alfred Milgrom, Colin Talbot and Mark Gillespie (Schwartz 63). The anthology was the first of its kind in Australia, the result of Jennings' collection of 150 works by women poets, many of whom were unpublished, and many of whom went on to careers in the arts.<sup>151</sup> The contributors include Joanne Burns, Jennifer Maiden, Margaret Harris, Helen Garner, Antigone Kefala and Marlene Day. This anthology was Jennings' first experience of the publishing process and some of the relationships that she developed through the project would last a lifetime. She has been celebrated for this work (Hollier; Vickery) and has been put in lists: of feminists who edited books (Couani 11; Sheridan 'Generations of Women Poets' 364) and who were part of a 'scene' (Modjeska *Emergence* 117) or were expats (Hooton *Australian Lives*, xii). It was after she had graduated from university that Jennings' first collection of poetry, *Come to Me My Melancholy Baby* (1975) was published by Outback Press also.

After a brief time in Adelaide, she moved to New York City where she would live for the rest of her life. In New York Jennings met Jamie Grant which would prove a fateful encounter: he would become her editor and his wife her literary agent.<sup>152</sup> Penguin Australia published her essay collection, *Save Me Joe Louis* (1988), which brought together her journalism and opinion pieces from magazines and other outlets. For her short story collection *Women Falling Down in the Street* (1990) she started assembling her own team to produce her work. Her next poetry collection, *Cats, Dogs and Pitchforks* (1993) was released after she moved to the United States where she worked as a proofreader, copyeditor and freelance writer. The same year, her next essay collection *Bad Manners* (1993) was published collecting essays from the *Australian Book Review* and *Australian Vogue*. Jennings worked as a speechwriter

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<sup>151</sup> It is worth remarking on the lack of diversity in this collection. At the time, feminism did not have the kind of intersectionality that contemporary feminism aspires to and so First Nations authors, migrant authors and authors of colour are underrepresented.

<sup>152</sup> In her archive, Jennings noted, Grant and Connolly 'met over a manuscript of mine and married — 3 kids — I'm godparent to Jock.' MLMSS 9165/13

on Wall Street when her husband, Bob Cato fell ill, and she needed to support him. After Cato's death Jennings wrote *Snake* (1996), a novel of short chapters set in country Australia centred on Irene, a beautiful woman who feels stuck with her down-to-earth husband which Erik Jensen claims is the great Australian novel (2017). Released at the start of the Howard era, *Snake* may be characterised as a kind of auto-fiction since one of the characters and the author have several key biographical details in common. This crossover led Gabriella Coslovich to compare Jennings with Helen Garner concluding that 'Their genre-crossing texts inhabit the stimulating realm of the Lejeunian "autobiographical space"' (np). At the time of publication, *Snake* was widely reviewed, including by Carol Shields in the *New York Times* (np) in which she commented on the book's success at 'catching the absolute rub of the quotidian' and conjuring a 'magician's spell', and Alev Adil in the *Times Literary Supplement* describes it as 'a novel of extraordinary, if bleak, beauty' (23). In Australia it was reviewed in *Australian Book Review*, the *Sunday Telegraph* and several other publications where the consensus was that despite its brevity, the novel was excellent. Nevertheless, it was not recognised in awards and is currently out of print. Later Jennings reflected on the trend of bigger books and their success in prizes — perhaps as a result of perceived value or seriousness (*Trouble* 170).

The greatest critical acclaim came for *Moral Hazard*, a novel about a woman who becomes a speechwriter on Wall Street and simultaneously is managing her husband's descent into dementia. It won the Australian Literary Studies Gold Medal, the NSW Premier's Christina Stead Prize for Fiction, the Adelaide Festival Prize and was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin. In his introduction for the Text Classics edition, Gideon Haigh said it should have won. Jennings was friends with Shirley Hazzard by this time who contributed an endorsement for the cover: 'A unique book by an extraordinary writer. The great city illuminated from within, Kate Jennings brings all her power of pace and tone to bear in a novel that is humane and unsparing; witty, unsettling, and wildly intelligent' (Introduction). Another work with close

similarities to Jennings' lived experience, *Moral Hazard's* protagonist shares a name and job with Jennings while Cath's husband shares a profession and a disease with Jennings' husband, Bob Cato.

After *Stanley and Sophie*, a non-fiction work about her life after the passing of her husband, living with two dogs in New York around the time of 9/11, Jennings published her last books with Black Inc, owned by former Outback Press member, Morry Schwartz — Jennings' longstanding friendship again proved vital. Black Inc published a Quarterly Essay, *American Revolution: The fall of Wall Street and the rise of Barack Obama* in 2008 and *Trouble* in 2010, a collection of her writings ranging from the foundational 'front-lawn speech' through to her later reviews and essays, including an address to the annual dinner of right-wing think-tank, The Sydney Institute. This collection also includes interviews with fellow ex-pats (though each disliked the term) Shirley Hazzard, Ray Mathew and Sumner Locke Elliot. And it was a Schwartz employee, Eric Jensen, editor of *The Saturday Paper*, who wrote *On Kate Jennings* (2017) for the Black Inc Writers on Writers series.

It may be in part the change in her politics and her critique of Australia from afar that impeded book sales and local reception of her work. As Nicole Moore argued in an article following Jennings' death:

The legacy she leaves is complex and multi-voiced, marked often by a reassessment of her younger self by the older Jennings and, perhaps, by a certain distrust of any shared story she couldn't control.

But that legacy has been transformative and extraordinary, by any measure. (np)

While Jennings felt that she did not receive due attention from reviewers, on consulting her publicity schedule for *Trouble*<sup>153</sup> it is clear that when she did return to Australia, even towards the end of her career and to promote a book comprised of material that had

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<sup>153</sup> MLMSS 9582

previously been published, she was still able to command audiences at venues such as the National Library<sup>154</sup> and was a guest on Philip Adam's *Late Night Live* program on ABC Radio National. The print and radio coverage of her work was better than many authors would have been able to command in 2010 despite her long absences from Australia and her antagonistic attitude to some Australian writers and personalities. Jennings' networks are of particular importance for an expatriate author — or perhaps more accurately, an author publishing into a territory separate from their domicile. Had it not been for the long-running and unwavering championing of her agent Margaret Connolly, editor Jamie Grant and publisher Morry Schwartz, Jennings' later work may not have had such support and likely not the kind of publicity she received. Further, the modest success of her work internationally, may have determined she could not rely on publication in non-Australian territories.

Jennings' archive at the State Library of New South Wales is wonderfully rich including drafts — usually not holographs or early drafts but typescripts and edited galleys — correspondence, photographs, reviews, publicity schedules and even a box of floppy disks. I have examined an additional archive of material held by Jennings' agent and editor: Margaret Connolly and Jamie Grant. This includes more correspondence such as letters, faxes, emails and newspaper and magazine clippings. Although not as extensive as the archive of Ruby Langford Ginibi for example, the wide range of Jennings' collected materials makes for an excellent research opportunity. Grant edited several of Jennings' books, but these marked up pages are not held in either archive — however, there are letters that discuss the work in depth — notably for 'High Horses', which is the subject of detailed consideration in this chapter. Between the two archives I have pieced together a history of Jennings' work and workings, how her attitude to collaboration changed over the course of her lifetime and what kind of agency she enacted as an author which suggests that she exerted more control

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<sup>154</sup> MLMSS 9582/3

over her writing in the middle of her career than at the start – and indeed more than the other authors in this thesis. It is also thanks to this archive that I have had the chance to read contemporary reviews of Jennings’ work since these fall in a newspaper digitisation black hole, too recent to be digitised, too old to be born digital and difficult to find in hard copy. Here the techniques of genetic criticism and the depth of the archive afford the opportunity to reevaluate both Jennings’ oeuvre as well as existing figurations of authorial agency.

### **An Inauspicious Start: The production woes of Jennings’ first essay collection**

Having worked collaboratively with Outback Press, Jennings’ first experience of a trade publisher was for her essay collection, *Save Me Joe Louis* (1988). Published by Penguin in Australia, it drew criticism for perceived distance from Australia, and it was rejected by American publishers for being too Australian.<sup>155</sup> A review from Kerryn Goldsworthy that praised elements of the book but critiqued it for generalisations about Australia and Australians (‘An Expatriate Writers Home’ np) is indicative of its reception. As a few of the essays were published in Australian *Vogue*, the tone is relatively light, and when Jennings writes of alcohol it is not an existential investigation but a relative cursory critique of Australian habits.

The cover of *Save Me Joe Louis* features a photo of Jennings with what may have been an attempted Warholian approach — swashes of colour over the top of a photograph of the author laughing — but looks instead like a clownish graphic. Even more confusing is the inclusion of a second photo of Jennings, a smaller image in the left corner in black and white. Jennings hated the cover, saying it ‘turned me into a halloween figure’.<sup>156</sup> In the correspondence in the archive, her publisher John Curtain apologises for what he claims is a printing error — ‘the subtle pastel shades became much stronger in the printing than the

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<sup>155</sup> ie MLMSS 9167/19, Letter from Judith Jones at Knopf, 11 November 1987

<sup>156</sup> MLMSS 9582/3 23 February 2010

designer had intended'<sup>157</sup> — but this explanation does not seem plausible. Had the colours been different, the effects would have been the same. Instead, it seems likely that the project was rushed, and this version was simply pushed through.

The editorial experience for this book also left such a mark that Jennings was still referring to it over twenty years later. In an email to her editor at Black Inc about the collection *Trouble*, Jennings wrote, 'i get an extra proofreader because of what happened with my first book with penguin australia - - crammed with mistakes. astonishing. and when i talked to the editor running the show there, he just shrugged and said that sort of thing was expected.'<sup>158</sup> These mistakes coloured Jennings' expectations of the editorial experience for the rest of her career; her trust in editorial labour managed by publishers never recovered. No doubt the shrug and comment that it should be expected also would have exacerbated her sense of unease at editorial standards. Although the focus of this thesis is not changes in editorial practice over time, this comment does afford me an opportunity to note that concerns about editorial standards are not new and are at least as old as I am. In the rest of the chapter, I trace the actions that Jennings takes to insure her subsequent books against the potential shortcomings of the many agents involved in their production.

### **Taking the Reins: Author as project manager**

After her experiences with *Save Me Joe Louis*, Jennings assembled her own teams to assist in the production of her books. If the Romantic idea of a lone author holds, some might imagine that authors always make good editors for their own work. Jennings is an example of the implausibility of this idea. The essay, 'Which Way Haberdashery', which first appeared in *Toads: Australian Writers Other Work, Other Lives* (1992), and was included in *Bad Manners*, outlines some of Jennings' experience as an editor in New York. Given her education, this

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<sup>157</sup> MLMSS 9165 Box 2 3 August 1988

<sup>158</sup> MLMSS 9585 Box 3. NB: This email is indicative of Jennings' casual communication style — she often eschewed capitals and punctuation in her private correspondence.

seemed an appropriate option, but she soon found herself unsuited to the work, as an editor said to her, “What is it with you? Some days your work is excellent, other days, forget it.” The trouble was that on some days I could concentrate while on others, try as I might to curb this tendency, I daydreamed’ (*Bad Manners* 106). In an email to a friend some years later, Jennings retells this scene with different detail adding ‘Some days I could concentrate, some days my mind was elsewhere. I might also have been hungover - - I was still drinking those first two years - - but I don’t have that day-in-day-out focus that a good copyeditor/proofreader needs.’<sup>159</sup> Even if Jennings had some difficulties with the kind of concentration a proofreader relies on, this experience informed how she conducted herself in the business of publishing for the rest of her career. What is important about this sequence for the purposes of this chapter is to note that Jennings’ professional experience did not insulate her from the difficulties of inapposite editorial interventions, nor did it render her text error free. Indeed, perhaps in part because of her early adoption of different technologies, including shifts from typewriters to word processors, her archive reveals correspondence that is replete with errors.<sup>160</sup>

Jennings draws on the expertise of Jamie Grant from this point on, who was involved in each of her books for the next decade — for *Women Falling Down in the Street*, Grant is on the imprint page as ‘Editor’: an unusual phenomenon both at the time and now as I mentioned in relation to Ray Coffey on Sally Morgan’s imprint page. For *Bad Manners* he is listed in the acknowledgements. Correspondence in the archive also shows that Jennings consulted Grant on the epigraphs for each of her chapters in *Snake*.<sup>161</sup> Although Grant does not have a credit in Jennings’ last book, *Trouble*, the archives show that his connection to Jennings and her work continued; since many of the pieces come from earlier works his contribution is evident.

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<sup>159</sup> MLMSS 9582/3 23 March 2010

<sup>160</sup> MLMSS 9165/14 and 15

<sup>161</sup> MLMSS 9165/2

As well as managing editorial input, Jennings enlisted her husband Bob Cato to design the covers for *Women Falling Down in the Street*, *Bad Manners* and the US and Australian editions of *Snake*. Although by contemporary publishing standards these may not be deemed the most saleable covers — or in the case of *Snake* even appropriate for the book's content — they are determinedly stylish and have strong aesthetics. *Bad Manners* features an illustration of a boar (possibly Roman in origin) on an oxblood background with strong type all in capitals. *Snake* centres the eponymous creature, twisting on itself in dramatic black with hints of yellow. Cato's time in music design and promotion — he won two Grammys for his album designs (Ravo 16) — is evident in the bold use of type and shape.

From the archives I have consulted for other subjects of this thesis, there is little evidence of authors' involvement with the cover process — or other parts of their books' production — with the exception that the cover for *My Place* was Sally Morgan's own creation. Although these details about which people worked on Jennings' books at various stages in her life may seem minor or inconsequential, the fact that covers, editing and production affect not only a book's reception but also the author's own attitude to their work contradicts that assumption. A cover that an author dislikes is sufficient to discourage their involvement in publicity and promotion. All these factors are even more important for an author removed from her peers and networks by her choice to live in New York, and her separation from the local scene by her critical treatment of Australia in person and on the page. When Jennings was already creating a vulnerability by writing on alcoholism and critiquing Australia from afar, having a cover that seemed to render her — and by extension her views — clownish can only have been a further impediment. There is an attendant safety to partnering with Cato for her subsequent covers given his respect for her work, his experience as a designer and their closeness overall. Taking control of the packaging of her work, Jennings strove to shape the reception of her books — controlling what she could through the proxy of the book's design.

### **Getting on a High Horse: The history of one of Jennings' most important essays**

Having assembled her team for *Women Falling Down in the Street*, Jennings fields them again for her next book, *Bad Manners*. The archives show that it was her agency at work in the production of this book. As with other cases in this thesis, it is difficult to name each of the individual agents involved in the editing and publishing of *Bad Manners*, or even an individual essay. In this section I pay attention to the trajectory of the essay 'High Horses', from a genesis on Jennings' computer, through her correspondence with Jamie Grant that helped clarify her thinking through to its production and publication. There are at least seven individuals who had some form of editorial engagement including the editor of *Australian Book Review* Rosemary Sorensen, features editor at *Vogue* Gail Heathwood, Reed Books publisher Louise Adler, Jennings' agent Margaret Connolly, editor Jamie Grant, project editor Adrienne Ralph and copyeditor Winnie Rosen. Likely there would have been a proofreader at the *Australian Book Review* and one at Reed whose names I do not have. I note each of these individuals not to claim that Jennings' authorship is diminished but instead to reinforce the range and contributions of non-authorial agents to a given text. While I may not have the names of all the individuals who contributed to each of the books I discuss in this thesis, their input nevertheless contributed to the version the reader responds to, and recognising such labour illuminates both the conditions in which the work was produced and the collaborative nature of book production.

*Bad Manners* (1993) was published by Louise Adler at Reed Books, run by Sandy Grant, Jamie Grant's brother. The collection features work previously published in Australian and US magazines and journals such as *Vogue* and the *Australian Book Review*. The discussion of alcoholism and her experiences with Alcoholics Anonymous are more detailed and unflinching than in *Save Me Joe Louis* and her critique of the Australian literary sphere is more pointed. The essays 'High Horses', first published in the *Australian Book Review*, 'Moral

Trouble' and 'Brilliant Brilliant', directly take aim at what Jennings saw as the failings of certain literary behaviours and practices. Perhaps in part because, or in spite of these critiques, the book received very little coverage. In one of the few contemporary acknowledgements of *Bad Manners*, Catherine Pratt assesses the discrepancies in content, rigour and intention in the different essays:

The jaunty, slightly whimsical, magazine tone means that she skims lightly from idea to idea: entertaining, yes, and true to her standard of being 'exploratory in spirit', but rather insubstantial in fact. This is frustrating, because Jennings' view of the promises and difficulties of contemporary feminism, for example, is so astute, judicious and accessible that I want to read more than 'Condemning the Fathers, Praising the Mothers' or 'Bad Manners' give me. (53)

Pratt finds 'intellectual depth ... sympathy and sharpness' in 'High Horses' and is disappointed by other essays. Perhaps this is because of the initial publications in which the work appeared such as travel magazines ('Sanitas Per Aquas') or as book reviews ('Condemning the Fathers'). The audience for the *Australian Book Review*, *Vogue* and *East West* may have overlap but the expectations of readers of each publication is different.

Two other pieces address *Bad Manners*, but neither was a review to mark publication. In *The Age*, a reviewer comments on the anticipated reaction to 'High Horses' in the *Australian Book Review* before it was even published — the same essay that went on to be a centrepiece of *Bad Manners*. In a review to mark the publication of *Snake*, critic Andrew Field wrote, 'I have heard *Bad Manners* spoken of as a poorly written book that "her publisher shouldn't have allowed her to print". It's no such thing, although it does have certain minor flaws such as some quaint Americanisms...' He continues:

With that said, *Bad Manners* shows that Kate Jennings has remained a radical in the best sense of the word, and her essays should be read by anyone with an interest in

Australian literature. ... It's not necessary to agree with everything she says, or even half of it, to enjoy her style and method of argumentation.

As well as appreciating Jennings' prose, Field also commented on the 'almost total silence' that greeted its release (np).

Writing to a friend fifteen years after its publication, Jennings commented, 'Technically "high horses" was one of the best essays I've written. To examine finger-wagging while finger-wagging too. I was kinda proud of it'.<sup>162</sup> Perhaps the most impressive essay in the book for its engagement with feminism, personal responsibility and the vicissitudes of cultural trends, the edits for this essay offer some of the greatest insights both to her processes of composition, the changes in her thinking over time and her ambitions as a writer and thinker. 'High Horses' starts with a scene where Jennings encounters an old friend from her university activist days and goes on to consider changes in feminism and culture more broadly with reflections on television sitcoms, alcoholism, representation, being a jobbing writer and what would now be called identity politics.

Jennings included an email to a friend in her archive in which she explains that she 'stopped writing essays after *bad manners* because it wasn't reviewed and because [acquaintances] ran around telling people 1) I couldn't write 2) the book was an embarrassment and someone should have stopped me from publishing it. Can neither forgive nor forget that little episode.'<sup>163</sup> From this comment I see both Jennings' difficulties with Australian literary coteries and her long-term grudge-holding. The archive includes references to fallings out and the end of a few friendships; Jennings seems to have taken personal responsibility and reactions to her work very seriously and this impacted her work and her relationships.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> MLMSS 9582/3/ 9 March 2010

<sup>163</sup> *ibid*

<sup>164</sup> MLMSS 9165/ 19

### **A First Reader: Jamie Grant and editorial tennis**

In the archive that Jamie Grant and Margaret Connolly hold are a series of faxes that constitute a portion of the correspondence between these three people: Jennings the author; Grant the fellow author and editor; Connolly, the agent: the trio all long-term friends. In Jennings' correspondence with Grant I identify a process that a former boss of mine would describe as editorial tennis: that is, editing is a game of tennis where the author serves the ball (a manuscript), and the editor sends it back. The success of the edit is contingent on how they return the ball. What I find in the archive is the ball going backwards and forwards over the net. Grant writes to Jennings, 'I understand that you are dissatisfied with "High Horses", and I think I can see why. The notes which follow are meant not as a critical attack on any of your points but as an attempt to resolve some of the problems with the piece which are causing you misgivings.'<sup>165</sup> He continues: 'Each new paragraph seems not so much the logical outcome of its predecessor as a new beginning' and suggests that she should '... get rid of the dictionary definitions'. Further, there is a discussion of some material about anthropologists and Pacific Islanders seeing the European ships for the first time. He concludes, 'Anthropologists, like poets, often get things slightly wrong ...' In relation to a discussion of sitcoms in the essay he writes, 'Could it be that the audacity and subversiveness has not been redirected all — that "Murphy Brown" was the direction the movement was heading in all along?' and he suggests that Jennings cut anecdotes and material about her alcoholism. In one extended comment, he addresses a key concern of the essay: feminism and how the movement shifted over time:

... feminism went wrong, I always thought, when its proponents failed to react appropriately to the contradictions and paradoxes in their position; there are two examples of these paradoxes on this page, in the peace-loving feminist who wants to see women progress in the armed forces, and in the question of abortion ... The

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<sup>165</sup> Grant Connolly Archive 22 January 1992

reaction of self-righteous feminists is to deny that such contradictions exist, or, like your friend, to refuse to discuss them. It would be more appropriate, I think, to see humour in them, and laugh them off. Everyone contradicts themselves occasionally, so what's the harm?

Brave is the man who tells a woman 'where feminism went wrong', but this candour and openness demonstrates the close and generous nature of the relationship between Grant and Jennings. In comparison with structural edits of the kind that I have noted elsewhere in this thesis, Grant's comments are neither overreaching nor hesitant, but they do have clear implications for Jennings' development of the essay.

While Grant's letter was three pages long, Jennings' response was five pages. Even accounting for a difference in font size, she explains in some detail her motivations and choices. Notably Grant was not employed by the publisher and had no financial stake in the work — his connection was through friendship. Her explanations were not a contractual obligation but a rehearsal of ideas on the page. It is also worth noting that Jennings' reply was to 'Jamie and Margaret' — the author addresses both her friend and correspondent as well as her agent. At the end of the letter Jennings remarks on the cost of recent phone calls she has had with Connolly so perhaps she had already discussed some of the comments in the letter with her agent before sending the reply by fax. Jennings writes:

I wasn't dissatisfied with the essay — I did say I found it hard to write because of the labyrinthine nature of the subject, that I had misgivings about tackling the subject because it is a treacherous one, but I was pretty happy with it by the time I had finished my rewrites and found the form I wanted to express my ambivalence, my shrinking from the subject.

She goes on to say, 'I don't pretend to have the answers and would have said so if I did' and further, '...what came out of doing the essay was the war in myself between the moral

relativist and the moral absolutist ...’ She is writing the essay as ‘A feminist and left-winger muddling — no apologies — her way through her loyalties, through her own behaviour. I shall go through it and try and catch where I am being self-justifying.’ These same qualities may form a further explanation as to her place in Australian letters; Jennings’ ambivalence, her lack of ideological certitude and needling at sensitive issues can be read as elements of her oeuvre that alienated some of her peers.

In response to a question from Grant about why she does not use ‘irony’ instead of ‘self-humour’ Jennings replies, ‘I used the term “self-humour” deliberately. I wanted an umbrella term which would include irony ... Also this comes up in the Shirley Hazzard interview.’ Here Jennings is referring to work that was commissioned by Cassandra Pybus for *Island* magazine that was later collected into *Trouble* (95–6). The interview is clearly a conversation between friends; indeed, Jennings often chooses prompts over questions such as ‘... I come from a left-wing feminist background where everything was black and white. And now I am completely absorbed in ambiguity, the shades of grey’ (119). There are interesting parallels between Jennings’ and Hazzard’s ‘interview’ and the correspondence with Grant. In each case they are concerned with the machinations of the Australian literary scene and Jennings’ place within or without it; each tackling what it means for feminism to change over time; each exploring just what it is the writing can *do*. By drawing this comparison, I mean to highlight that editorial practices are not mere machinations of the production process but rather creative, stimulating and sometimes challenging means of exploring concepts, the effects of social structures and the operations of language itself. Jennings continues the discussion of the nature of contradictions, raised in the interview with Hazzard in correspondence with Grant writing:

... we need to investigate the contradictions — this happening in a big way here with abortion, with many of us not keen on it but seeing it as an imperative but also

wanting birth control made easily available — or look at why we have such trouble admitting to contradictory behaviour ... while this essay is about contradictions.

Although Jennings is interested in and responsive to Grant's feedback on other occasions, here is a point on which she is unmoved.

Adding this to my figuration of editing builds on my interpretation of the communications circuit. For Darnton there is a kind of equivalence between different elements as indicated by the flat structure and equal weighting for each of the nodes. Darnton's circuit is dispassionate and the same is true for Ray Murray and Squires' circuit. What these edits demonstrate is that personal relationships — and trust in particular — are central to the production process, especially given the stakes for discussions of topics such as feminism and alcoholism. Jennings is not simply preparing a work for production or for sale but exploring her ideas with a trusted correspondent. The intimacy of these relationships makes for a particularly valuable contribution to the production process.

Reading the published essay in the *Australian Review of Books* (1992), I find evidence that Jennings followed Grant's advice on a few occasions. There is no section about Pacific Islanders and their response to ships — something that Grant refers to in his letter as being inapposite. Jennings comments, 'I took Lessing to be saying that the eye might see it but the brain couldn't compute it.' Despite her reply on this point, she must have decided to cut this section in the essay since it does not appear in the final. Also, there is no dictionary definition of 'self-righteous'. Another point that Jennings responded to — and about which I can only guess in the absence of an earlier draft, is that Grant says 'You'd find it ludicrous if anyone, these days, announced an intention like that declared by Stephen Dedalus. Gender doesn't come into it.' Jennings replies, 'I agree. I was uneasy about it. Too many holes,': she must have cut this comment. While there are other instances where she seems to find Grant's

reading of gender politics different from her own, on this point she is persuaded — in part because she already had unease about the quote.

Although Jennings disagreed with Grant on several points, and indeed took the time to describe her objections, that did not prevent her adoption of his suggestions where she deemed them to be serving the interests of the piece. From this I understand that Jennings was a writer, like Park, invested in the work above all else and that suggestions from someone whose ideas about a given work did not align with her own in some ways were not automatically bypassed; she appears to have assessed each comment on its merits. In other words, her god was the art — just as it was for Ruth Park.

For all her rebuttals of Grant's commentary, she was still interested to hear his response to the essay as a whole. Jennings writes, 'All that said, all your criticisms have been taken into account and I have spelled out my position wherever I could or modified it where I needed to. I have also made it more essay like and less zigzaggy. So, what do you think of it now?' While there were instances where she was not persuaded by his feedback, after responding to his comments both with changes to the text and in her letter, she wanted further responses and his assessment of the revised draft.

Grant's typewritten letter has a handwritten closing, 'Love, Jamie' and from Jennings there is the handwritten 'Thank you & with love, Kate' at the end of her typewritten fax, reminding me that for all the discussion of ideas and engagement with the mechanics of writing, this was a longstanding, personal relationship that was more than just a professional engagement. Even more than in the case of Park and Davis — who perhaps had the fondest letter-writing style of the authors studied in this thesis — these correspondents were personally very close, and the editorial engagement was always predicated on that relationship.

This exchange is different from the other correspondence that I have analysed in this thesis; there are two key reasons that account for the difference. First, although Grant was not the editor of the piece engaged for a fee by a company or organisation, he did write a considered and long-form response engaging both the ideas of the essay and how Jennings conveyed them. Secondly, Jennings seems not just interested in discussing the essay in and of itself but also interrogating Grant's responses to her ideas qua ideas — that is, she did not just want to acknowledge his responses to the essay but to convince him of the credibility of her aesthetic, rhetorical and ideological movements.

Jennings takes the time to highlight that the questioning, the lack of resolution and the range of different factors are important inclusions for her in that each of these elements contributes to the internal conversation she is conducting about what it means to operate as a moral being in the world. These are facets of process, not commandments or deterministic statements. As she writes in *Bad Manners*, she had a habit of sending Grant works-in-progress 'because he tells me exactly what thinks. I don't necessarily follow his suggestions but they always help me go the extra mile' (91) and later, 'he brings to this work intellectual honesty: he never pulls punches' (92). Jennings' explicit discussion of editing in the acknowledgements and in essays was unusual for the time — the small sample of books considered in this thesis offer examples, but the phenomenon of the lengthy acknowledgement has been within my working lifetime — since 2008. It is my contention that such a public comment on the labour of an editor is consistent with Jennings' attitude to writing more broadly. She was proud of her role as a 'working writer', one who lives from their writing, not from 'government grants or prize money or a professor's salary' (*Trouble* ix-x). Such a professional marks the roles of other professionals and is not embarrassed by their contributions, which was Beatrice Davis' stated fear of the foregrounding of editorial labour.

I find one missed opportunity in Grant's edits for *Bad Manners*. In a fax dated 2 March 1993, Grant wrote that '... there is a feeling with this order, of one thing leading to another ...' and later, 'With collections such as this (as with collections of poetry to a lesser extent) the order of the pieces is probably of more importance to the writer than the reader, as one tends (as we both know as readers) to read the essays in a fairly random sequence ...'<sup>166</sup> While this may be true of some readers, the enormous shifts in tone and style between the sections would surely have an impact on the reader who progresses through the book from start to finish. Had there been sections delineating different kinds of writing or groupings according to style it would have created the sense of greater intentionality and authorial control. Just as the provenance of some of the essays in *Save Me* from *Vogue* and the difference in tone from some of the more serious inclusions, so the contrast between work initially written for the *Australian Book Review* and *East West* travel magazine is pronounced.

When Jennings' last book *Trouble* was published, there were both sections and thematic ordering and this structuring of her work, which in the context of a celebration of her oeuvre, makes for a more cohesive reading experience. The juxtapositions offer fruitful comparisons and illuminate both the synchronicities and developments in her thinking over time. Indulging in a counterfactual for a moment, had the book more structure and sense of focus with different ordering and sections, readers may well have responded differently.

### **An Entirely Different Writer: a copyeditor's misunderstandings**

As with Jessica Anderson's varying experiences of editorial intervention on *Tirra Lirra*, so Jennings had varied engagements in relation to *Bad Manners*. This section explores the copyedits that the archive records for *Bad Manners*. The copyedit is not signed, but it is possible to deduce from the acknowledgements and from correspondence between Jennings and Grant that the copyeditor was Winifred Rosen. Rosen receives a thank you in the

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<sup>166</sup> Grant Connolly Archive

acknowledgments of *Bad Manners*, but as I will demonstrate, her editorial work was not simpatico with Jennings or with what I take to be the best interests of the work. As a detailed examination of the some of the copyedits will reveal, the changes were often arbitrary, invasive, and the manner in which Rosen conveyed her suggestions would be unlikely to endear the editor to the author.

Before considering these edits, however, it is worth noting again that ‘High Horses’ had already appeared in *Australian Book Review* before it was included in *Bad Manners*; I do not have a record from that stage of the process or Jennings’ response to them. In preparation for the book publication however, the archive holds a record of significant changes both at the line level and in terms of suggestions about content and style at the copyedit phase. Rosen has a far more blunt approach than some of the other editors featured in this study. Her brief annotations such as ‘fix’ are clearly different from those I noted in Beatrice Davis’ edit of Ruth Park’s work or Pamela Reid’s edits of Jessica Anderson — even though these were insensitive in other ways. Further, her changes are more consistent with rewriting or repositioning than a straightforward copyedit.

There are not accompanying notes explaining Rosen’s edits in detail, however, close attention to the mark-up demonstrates a set of expectations and responses to the text. Take the following example where deletions are struck through and additions italicised:

“The Self-Righteous Sisters”. ~~That could have been~~ *It might have been* a skit from *one of the all-women reviews* ~~the women I knew~~ we staged in the seventies ~~liked to stage~~. We had a good sense of humor *in those days in those days and engaged enthusiastically with self-parody* and ~~were able to parody ourselves which we did with verve~~. Whenever I look back through the profusion of newsletters, newspapers, and magazines, that feminists

produced in those early years, is not so much our idea, but our energy *that impresses me*.<sup>167</sup>

Many changes in this section are not for some of the most commonly cited reasons for copyedits: clarity, concision or consistency (Flann et al). For example, ‘were able to parody ourselves which we did with verve’ is not substantially different from ‘engaged enthusiastically with self-parody’. Indeed, the alliteration and the string of polysyllabic words make the revised phrase seem a bit pompous. Nevertheless, Jennings accepted almost all the edits in this paragraph, except for a change to the last line. The original reads, ‘We were naive, curiously trusting, seemingly unaware of ~~our~~ *any* limitations, filled with the spirit of experiment, like children who launch themselves from the ~~garage~~ roof ~~to see if~~ *imagining* they can fly.’ The published book reads ‘to see if they can fly’ (41). Jennings’ setting of this edit came at galley stage.<sup>168</sup> In this instance I am puzzled by the editor’s suggestion since if a child is jumping off a roof, they are not imagining; they are testing whether they can fly. From the acceptances and this rejection, it is clear that Jennings was amenable to change — even where there is not a clear argument for its necessity — but her limit was on the introduction of a logical problem.

In the following paragraph, I see more evidence of rewriting:

~~Even then~~ *Very soon*, though, ~~the line was being drawn~~ *a rift began to open* between those who were ~~able~~ *disposed* to laugh at themselves and those who ~~couldn’t~~ *weren’t*. I remember an instance in particular, when one of our group, as a lark at a party, decided she would jump out of a cake. ~~So~~ She constructed a gigantic cake out of crepe paper and edged it with tinsel and *managed* somehow *to acquire* ~~a~~ the *requisite* g-string and pasties, and at the height of the festivities, she jumped out of the cake out she came. *Actually she didn’t so much jump as tumble* ~~Fell~~ out of the cake ~~was more like it; she~~

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<sup>167</sup> MLMSS 9165/3

<sup>168</sup> MLMSS 9165/25x

~~wasn't an expert lacking proficiency as a cake-jumper-outer-of. At the sight of her, half of us had to hold our sides we were laughing so much hard. The rest were appalled : didn't crack a smile. For me it was a moment of revelation, watching these women Amazed, I saw them turn away from this harmless, inept prank to huddle together, their mouths and their eyes made small by disapproval, accusatory comments leaking from and as the sound of uproarious laughter gradually died away, I heard misappropriation leaking from them in a low hiss. For me it was a moment of revelation.~~<sup>169</sup>

This passage is worth reproducing in full for the information that it offers on the editor's habits and choices — and the inconsistencies therein. Note that in some cases the changes make the register more formal and in others less so: 'able' becomes 'disposed' and 'requisite' is added to 'g-string' but 'were appalled' became 'crack a smile'. From these edits, I deduce that the editor was not making changes for the sake of cohesion or consistency but rather personal preference. I can also see that some of Jennings' humour expressed through a laconic vernacular has been flattened. 'Fell out of the cake was more like it' and 'cake-jumper-outer' are changed to more standard subject-verb structure in the first instance the removal of the preposition in the second instance, which makes the text less playful.

The edits in this paragraph are far more invasive than elsewhere in the essay and verge on rewriting. Why would this passage merit this level of emendation? One possible explanation is that this is a scene of Jennings having a different response from her fellow feminists, her critiquing their behaviour, and so perhaps there was a concern that it was important for the prose to operate in a particular way. This explanation is not convincing, however, since the edits do not progress in a particular direction; that is, they alternately move towards a higher and a lower register within the one paragraph. My suspicion is that this is an instance of an editor's overreach and that once she started, she made changes to the paragraph according to

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<sup>169</sup> MLMSS 9165/3

how she would have phrased it rather than interrogating what the author had wanted the prose to achieve. Rosen's edits demonstrate a disconnection between the editor's vision and that of the author. The editor is giving their response more significance in the triangulation of author–editor–reader, to return to Greenberg's figuring of this dynamic (*Poetics* 19). Evidence for this position is the lack of consistency between registers, which flags a preferencing of personal response, rather than a concern with consistency as would be likely were she privileging the reader. If an editor does not demonstrate an affinity with the work and if their commentary is not persuasive, why would an author feel inclined to respond to their suggestions? The copyedits on *Bad Manners* are an example of how editorial practice and how an editor's engagement with the work and the author can influence the extent to which their suggestions are adopted.

In a letter to Jennings, Grant writes:

From what I gather of your experience with Winnie, it sounds as if she was trying to turn you into an entirely different writer, which is something many editors do simply to justify their labour. Unless there is a major fault I have carelessly overlooked, I expect the only editing I will need to do will involve repairing the inevitable trying errors which occur when a book is written with such speed.<sup>170</sup>

I have not seen Jennings' note in which she describes her attitude to Rosen's edits (perhaps she raised it in a phone call with Connolly) but this response clearly indicates that she found the changes difficult and the approach troubling.

Before moving on from edits on the quoted paragraph, I want to note that the proofreader's work is evident in this passage in the published book. Aside from the trivial capitalisation on the 'G' of 'G-string' there is also the removal of the cake's tinsel (41). Although these changes do not affect the meaning of the passage, they do remind me that

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<sup>170</sup> Grant Connolly Archive/ 2 March 1991

even after significant edits such as those in this copyedit, editorial interventions in the book usually continue until publication (and sometimes beyond in the form of corrections to subsequent editions). Next to the final paragraph in this section, just below the paragraph that is reproduced above, the editor wrote a question mark, which raises further questions about the editor's practice. How an author should respond to such a question mark without any explanatory comments or asking a specific question is unclear and indeed, there is no change to this paragraph between the typescript and the published version.

After examining the editorial relationship between Jennings and Rosen, and changes that interfere at a sentence level or indeed word choice, I want to return to the edits in *Don't Take* and the claim on copyright from its editor. The level of edits in some of the text for *Bad Manners* is equivalent as for *Don't Take*, but it is utterly implausible that Jennings' editor would ever make a claim on copyright. Had Langford Ginibi's editor been experienced then she would have known that copyeditors regularly reword passages and offer suggestions for framing, organisation and expression. The two key differences between the examples are that there was an inexperienced editor with an Aboriginal author and a more experienced editor with a non-First Nations author in the other. Indeed, the work of this thesis in examining and contrasting editorial practice is productive not just for the insight for the individual authors and their works but for an interrogation of the editor function more broadly.

Although the essay, 'High Horses' is the primary concern of this analysis, the copyedits on 'Condemning the Fathers, Praising the Mothers', another essay in the collection, offer a useful insight into the editor's approach and Jennings' resistance to the copyediting process is clear. This essay was initially a book review of two biographies of American women, Eleanor Roosevelt and Margaret Sanger. Aside from far greater intervention in the form of rewriting in this essay than in 'High Horses', which as I have noted was significant in some aspects, the editor writes 'fix' in the margins of 'Condemning the Fathers' (in one instance this seems to be

in response to a mixed metaphor but in other instances it is not clear what needs to be fixed) and next to another paragraph writes ‘eh’.<sup>171</sup> At the end of the essay there is a typed note, unsigned, but presumably from the editor with a comment about revising the essay to bring out more connections and, ‘Assuming you want to do some work on this piece’ she suggested reversing the order of the discussion of the two books. Jennings accepted many of the copyedit changes but did not rework the piece by changing the order or including more connections between the two books. Perhaps this was because she did not have sufficient time to make these changes, or perhaps it was because the editorial approach did not encourage her to engage with this sort of reworking. The editor’s tone, both in the note and in the marginalia is bossy, blunt and lacks encouragement or warmth. Given such feedback, it follows that the author did not dedicate herself to making more substantial reworkings. In the Pratt review, she singled out this essay as one she considered less fully formed than the others. Had the editor been more careful with wording or more conscious of the art of persuasion, the author may have been more amenable to making changes that readers could appreciate.

An editor’s labour is only ever as effective as their ability to persuade an author to follow their advice, to gain the author’s trust that the edits will be in the best interests of the book. In some cases this will be the result of financial or publishing persuasion — by which I mean the work would only be published, and the writer only paid, if the edits are accepted. For Jennings, who was quite experienced when *Bad Manners* was in production, there was not an apparent concern about withdrawal of payment or publication. Although Jennings accepted most of the copyedits, she did not make structural changes. My conjecture is that she was not persuaded by the editor’s suggestions at least in part because the editor failed to create a sense of shared purpose in her comments and mark-up. Without this sense, and given the prior editorial engagement Jennings had had from both Grant and the other editors who had

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<sup>171</sup> MLMSS 9165/3

previously published these essays, there would have been little motivation to enact further significant, structural shifts. Indeed, reading a comment such as ‘eh’ or ‘fix’ might strengthen an author’s resolve to ignore the comments of their editor.

### **Project Editing: Typesetting, cover design and style**

Jennings’ management of some of the production processes for *Bad Manners* does not simply relate to editorial but extends to production and marketing. The archive also holds correspondence from Jennings to project editor, Adrienne Ralph, with her concerns about the setting for *Bad Manners*.<sup>172</sup> Jennings not only wrote herself, but also her agent Margaret Connolly was agitating on Jennings’ behalf on the topic of the typeset.<sup>173</sup> Further, unlike other authors in this study, Jennings’ archive reveals a string of communication about the typesetting for *Bad Manners* in particular. Concerned at the perceptions of the book’s size and readability, Jennings wrote to Adrienne Ralph:

The typesize is smaller than the one I asked for. Is there any chance of making it the size I requested. This is important to me. The larger typeface is not only easier to read — it gives the text a certain emphasis and grace ... Please argue my case for me. I know that Heinemann probably wants to keep the number of pages down, but essays, like poems, aren’t served well in a tiny typeface.<sup>174</sup>

Jennings is advocating on her own behalf here, involved in positioning the work for the market. Ralph’s reason for rejecting this request was that a larger type would make the work appear less literary and more ‘mass market’ — the smaller type stayed.<sup>175</sup>

The last finding from the archive on *Bad Manners* is editorial input from an entirely unlikely source: two Canberra grammarians. Normally decisions about grammar and style

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<sup>172</sup> MLMSS 9165/19 22 July 1993

<sup>173</sup> MLMSS 9165/19/14 September 1993

<sup>174</sup> MLMSS 9155/19/13 July 1993

<sup>175</sup> MLMSS 9165/19/27 July 1993

are the responsibility of the publisher and these changes are made without consultation. For Anderson this practice meant changing quote marks from double to single or for Jennings this meant changing American to Australian spellings for words such as ‘defence’.<sup>176</sup> But in other instances, Jennings was involved in making decisions about style for *Bad Manners*. While Jennings was reviewing galleys for *Bad Manners*, she received a letter from RA Bolitho and Dr George Stern of ANU asking permission to reproduce some sentences of hers in a guide for writing — both examples intended to demonstrate the acceptability of breaking supposed rules: starting a sentence with a conjunction and ending a sentence with a preposition.<sup>177</sup> Jennings agreed but took the opportunity of her reply to say that, in proofing her latest essay collection, she noticed:

... that I have fallen into the habit of writing ‘I’m’ instead of ‘I am’; ‘don’t’ instead of ‘do not’; ‘couldn’t’ instead of ‘could not.’ Et cetera. One needs an intimate tone in essays, but I think I was being overly casual. I notice in the New Yorker, however, that they always elide negatives these days. One doesn’t want to be stuffy but one doesn’t always want to be sprawled on the couch either.<sup>178</sup>

Stern replied, ‘it depends on the tone you want to achieve. In a book of essays, I wouldn’t hesitate to elide negatives and the like.’<sup>179</sup> Despite this comment from an expert, Jennings decided to change all her contractions at this fairly late stage of the process, prompting a reply from Adrienne Ralph with three ‘please’s and the comment ‘Corrections at this stage are very expensive and time-consuming’.<sup>180</sup> Jennings chose to side with the *New Yorker* in this instance and not the ANU academic. While readers may not have consciously noticed this level of formality, nevertheless it affects the prose — otherwise Jennings would not have made it.

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<sup>176</sup> MLMSS 9165/19/23 August 1993

<sup>177</sup> MLMSS 9165/19

<sup>178</sup> MLMSS 9165/25x, 16 July 1993

<sup>179</sup> MLMSS 9165/19

<sup>180</sup> MLMSS 9165/19/9 September 1993

Perhaps there is something of a disconnect between relatively informal pieces — such as those published in travel magazines — and the decision to disavow contractions.

While this may seem a trivial change, and that these academics were not operating as editors on the text, nevertheless such changes influence a reader's response to the text. Given some concerns about the range of register and the juxtaposition of styles, introducing this formality may have had an effect on reviewers' and readers' responses to the essays — likely increasing a sense of seriousness or perhaps even pomposity. As such, the genetic critical work of examining correspondence in conjunction with editorial changes furnishes fresh insight to Jennings' work — and by extension her reception.

## **Conclusion**

Literary scholars ignore the work of non-authors in contributing to the book's completion, production and dissemination to their detriment; reflecting on the publishing team assembled by Jennings affords an opportunity to linger with the understanding that the contributors to the publishing process extend beyond the editors who form the main subjects of this study. Although Jennings may not have realised the position in Australian letters that Gideon Haigh and others consider her due, Schwartz's long-running and sustained support of her writing was a contributing factor to her continued presence in Australian bookstores even while she was in New York and even though she was not generating a significant amount of new work later in life. In editor Jamie Grant and agent Margaret Connolly, Jennings had dedicated friends, sounding boards, intellectual interlocutors and cheerleaders for her work when she would have felt removed from the culture and opportunities of her peers from university days. Without this network, her books would not have reached readers; the nodes would not have had connections.

In terms of sales or scholarly attention or presence on tertiary syllabi, Kate Jennings may seem a relatively minor figure in Australian letters, but her work deserves continued attention

because of its quality, originality and intellectual panache. For the purposes of this thesis, she also makes for an excellent case study given the richness of her archive both at the Mitchell Library and in the hands of her literary executor, Margaret Connolly. The range of editorial experiences that Jennings endured and the relationship that she had with friend and editor, Jamie Grant, inform a reading both of her career as a whole and her individual works, notably *Bad Manners*. Her oeuvre is also an example of the kinds of effects a publisher's support can have on the work on a writer who never received government grants, major local prizes or unmitigated acclaim. Surfacing the communications circuit, the history of Australian publishing and the changes in Jennings' feminist thought all justify her inclusion in this thesis and speak to the importance of discussing editorial and production processes.

## Conclusion

Wide-ranging, diverse and variable, the editor process can take place from the first drafts through pre-production and on to framing the book's presentation and reception. Whether help or a hindrance, editors are fundamental to the existence of many literary works and to ignore editors' contributions is to neglect a potential plethora of insights. As this thesis demonstrates, studying editorial labour can respond to long unanswered questions, challenge orthodoxies and, contrary to some editors' stated concern, foreground authors' agency. With six case studies of Australian women authors in the second half of the twentieth century, I describe some formulations of the editor process that range from informal feedback through developmental and structural edits, copyedits and proofreads. Unlike existing scholarship on editing, my research is interested in any editorial contribution that is extant in the archives and not just the input of an individual, often lionised, usually male, editor. This concern with networks as well as individuals signals a new approach that can inform future work. Attention to women authors and predominantly women editors ensure this thesis corresponds more closely to the contemporary industry than existing studies. My fifteen years working for trade and independent publishers, multinationals and small presses coupled with my experience teaching editing to postgraduate students means that I interrogate the evidence in the archive both from the perspectives of practice and pedagogy. The novelty of my method and the freshness of this attention afford new readings of work that has received little attention such as Kate Jennings' oeuvre through to that of Sally Morgan who has attracted more criticism and scholarship than most of her peers.

Through the editor process for Ruth Park's *Swords and Crowns and Rings* I uncover authorial advocacy on behalf of her character. Unusually, I find part of the editorial decision-making is determined by a bureaucratic stipulation to only offer funding for up to 150,000 words in length. I also find that editing can be based on a misplaced expectation of readers'

responses. In the first instance it was a contributing factor to a large volume in suggested cuts. In the second the suggested edits were to limit the presence of a short-statured character for fear readers would reject the work if they could not see themselves in the protagonist. Park's resistance to these edits is vindicated by reviewer and reader responses to the work. Further, her attitudes are more in line with contemporary expectations of representation of disability by critical disability scholars such as Tom Shakespeare, David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder. Park's determination to retain more of Jackie's experiences is evident in her consistent rejection of cuts that would have limited his presence by her editor, Beatrice Davis. This resistance contrasts with her acceptance of Davis' cuts to a Protestant male character demonstrating which aspects of the novel Park was more invested in. While Davis stated her concern about discussions of editing for fear it would erode an author's confidence or diminish their sense of control over their work, instead this chapter establishes that studying editing foregrounds an author's agency in the publishing process.

For Thea Astley and her editor Meredith Rose I identify the dynamic of editor as social barometer. Rose as the younger woman with fewer years in publishing and different life experience, had registered the changing expectations of readers and critics and communicated these to the author through the edit, just as a barometer communicates changes in the weather. Such work is invaluable both aesthetically and commercially since it helps with the development of the work and facilitates its reception. By helping align the book with contemporary readers' expectations, and increasing the distance between Astley's narrator and her First Nations character, the editor's role is fundamental to the structure and content of the work. Simultaneously, this edit offers evidence of the limits of editorial support in that it is likely Rose did not check Astley's sources for the book and notice that the author had rewritten an account of events on Palm Island in an invented Aboriginal English. Scholars who have examined Astley's archive did not notice this issue either.

For each of these case studies I demonstrate just how wide ranging and variable editorial practice is. While for Astley that was with one editor, for Jessica Anderson's *Tirra Lirra by the River* the variation was in her experience of two separate editorial interventions. The greater unfurling of creative possibility was in response to a single line in a letter from her former editor, Alan Maclean. When she received the copyedit changes, Anderson found they were so egregious that she requested for the edit to be 'cancelled'. Just as the purpose of this thesis is not to defend editors against accusations of overreach or poor performance, nor is it my aim to critique the professionalism or skill of individual editors but rather to examine which choices they have taken and strive to determine why. For this editor it seems she was working to bring the text in line with more standard formatting and pacing, but this method was at odds with the author's aims. The case of *Tirra Lirra* is particularly useful for uncovering how variable a publishing experience can be even within the production process of a single work.

By far the greatest volume of commentary on editing for any agents in Australian literature is for First Nations authors. This commentary tends to centre on two possibilities: either that the book has been extensively edited and corrupted as a result or the assumption that the work was reliant on interventions of non-First Nations editors to reach its readers. For Sally Morgan, only the copyedit for *My Place* is available in an archive but despite the limitations of this material, I find critical details that challenge orthodoxies about First Nations work and also confirm some of the criticisms of editorial practice. The editor's expectations for the expression of authentic Aboriginality affected their treatment of the prose including in the deletion of material about an encounter with the Christian God. Given the popularity of *My Place*, and its position in Australia's literary canon, it is surprising that I have found no reference to scholars' consultation of the archive. This chapter offers an update on literary scholarship that I hope will be taken up by First Nations scholars better positioned to interrogate and analyse the work and evaluate its implications.

Of all the chapters in this thesis, my work on the Ruby Langford Ginibi archive presents the most overdue examination of recent publishing history. This is especially critical given the increase in publication of work by First Nations authors and continued lack of First Nations editors. When Susan Hampton collaborated with Langford Ginibi on *Don't Take Your Love to Town*, she seems to have conceptualised her role as a co-author in private but avoided that appellation in public. But as I determine, both from my personal experience of editing and from the other case studies in this book, Hampton's work falls within a reasonable range of editing, as opposed to co-writing, and had she had any other editorial experience, or had she worked with a typewriter rather than reinscribing the text by hand, she may have conceptualised the process differently. Another finding from the archive is that author and editor adopted the role of teacher over the drafting process. For Hampton this meant sharing her expertise as a creative writing teacher and for Langford Ginibi this meant sharing her cultural knowledge. In this way, I argue editor and author adopt different positions over the course of their collaboration, further developing the concept of the editor process to extend past the text itself and to encompass embodied roles that have long-lasting effects on the individual agents.

Although she was neither a major bestseller nor a consistent presence on prize lists, nevertheless Kate Jennings' presence in Australian letters is notable for the quality of her work. Her self-positioning as an author-editor hybrid further makes her an excellent subject for this thesis. After unsatisfactory publishing experiences with some early books, Jennings assembled her own teams, adopting the role of a project editor as she enlisted her husband, designer Bob Cato and friend, editor Jamie Grant, to collaborate with her. Jennings' self-determination in this way offers another figuration of the editor process and I argue for a reading for her authorship as an extension of the standard agency associated with an author. Having such control, however, did not prevent Jennings from experiencing an unsatisfactory

copyedit. The editor, Winnie Rosen, simultaneously increased and decreased the register in a single paragraph as well as used blunt comments such as ‘fix’ and ‘eh’. Jennings chose not to act on some of the more significant suggestions which seems to indicate a lack of willingness to follow the direction of someone whose responses were unsympathetic to the work – highlighting the role of persuasion in the editor process.

### **The Editor Process and Editing Practice**

Since most formal editorial training occurs in universities now, and since it can be difficult to source edits from contemporary writers and publishers due to concerns about reputation and confidentiality, the archive presents a unique and invaluable resource for teaching students about the machinations of editorial work. This thesis demonstrates that with expertise and critical reading it is possible to unpick the seams of editorial labour and see the construction of the text underneath the published page, whether this is the importance of persuasion as an editorial tool as with Jennings or being receptive to the author’s project as with Anderson.

When editors first start they can often be surprised at the extent of editorial intervention in an author’s work. By examining these edits they can develop a more accurate understanding of how variable editorial practice is.

An unexpected outcome of this thesis has been a development of my own editorial practice. Having worked predominantly for independent literary publishers, the ethos I was accustomed to was respecting the primacy of the author rather than moulding the work for a given market. This research has precipitated a greater interrogation of my own work, especially when collaborating with writers of different backgrounds from my own. It has also encouraged me to query the function of editing more broadly. In recent essay, teacher and editor Helena Betya Rubenstein questions what she labels the ‘white supremacist project’ of standardising texts through editing (np). As the publishing industry becomes increasingly receptive to ‘own voices’ writing or work by authors with lived experience outside the

mainstream then editing will need to be more responsive to change. The Macquarie Dictionary already documents changes in usage at a quicker pace than some editors may be comfortable with; for example, it includes a definition of ‘literally’ that operates as an exaggeration only and ‘miniscule’ as an accepted spelling based on the frequency of its use. Editors will need to be more flexible in the future, rather than imposing recognised conventions on a work — such as chapter breaks in *Tirra Lirra* or lowering register in *Don’t Take* — editors may need to respond to more varied style guides for the books that they edit both to accurately reflect an author’s chosen vernacular or to preserve their intended articulations.

### **Future work**

This is not quick research. Archival work, drawing on the traditions of textual studies, book history and genetic criticism has opened unexpected readings of some authors whose manuscripts attracted little attention in the past or in other cases traced unexplored links between archival material and other sources. Either way, the process is laborious and time-consuming, which means in an environment of limited resources and reduced research time, such work is not always possible. While expensive in terms of time and resources, this work cannot be replicated by other means and is overdue both for authors whose archives have attracted attention such as Astley and those that have not such as Morgan and Langford Ginibi. My hope is that resources will continue to be available for scholars to undertake this research in the future since the kind of scholarship that I advocate for in this thesis is only possible with that support.

What will change for those undertaking archival research for more contemporary authors is operating with digital files as opposed to papers and folders. Such a shift presents two challenges: first that authors may not have good file management practices and so their drafts may not be available in discrete versions that make the kinds of analysis I have practised

possible. Secondly, there will be obsolete formats that will not be accessible over time. In Kate Jennings' archive, for example, there are floppy disks on which she has some draft materials. Due to time pressures and the availability of devices, I chose to focus on work that predated her use of this technology — such work also fit more neatly with the timeframe of my study. However, other researchers with other subjects will need to negotiate these technical difficulties. Of course, they are not insurmountable but do present challenges for future work. As Katherine Bode and Roger Osborne argue, digitised archives afford the possibility for ground-breaking qualitative and quantitative analyses ('Book History' 231-4).

As the first study of its kind — both for its concern with women writers and editors and for its interest in as many agents in the editorial process that I could identify — this thesis offers new methodology for the study of editing and publishing history. Further, it offers novel ways to research and read literary texts. By examining the relationships between authors, editors, market pressures, social influences and aesthetic endeavours, I find unexpected revelations about the creative process itself and how that relates to the market and argue that these findings can reframe literary scholarship. In six case studies I have progressed the project of centring the study of editing, not to devalue or undermine the position of the author but to better understand how a work comes to exist and what its published form reveals about the circumstances in which it was produced. No longer invisible or undermined by metaphors used pejoratively in the past such as midwife or mender, the editors in this thesis take their position as facilitators, peers, friends, assistants, foils, priests, alchemists, collaborators and conspirators.

As with other trends in literary scholarship, the question of ethics fell out of fashion as critical theory was ascendent but work by Namwali Serpell is an example of a reversal of this attitude as her *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* (2014) explores the ethics of literary works. Susan Greenberg

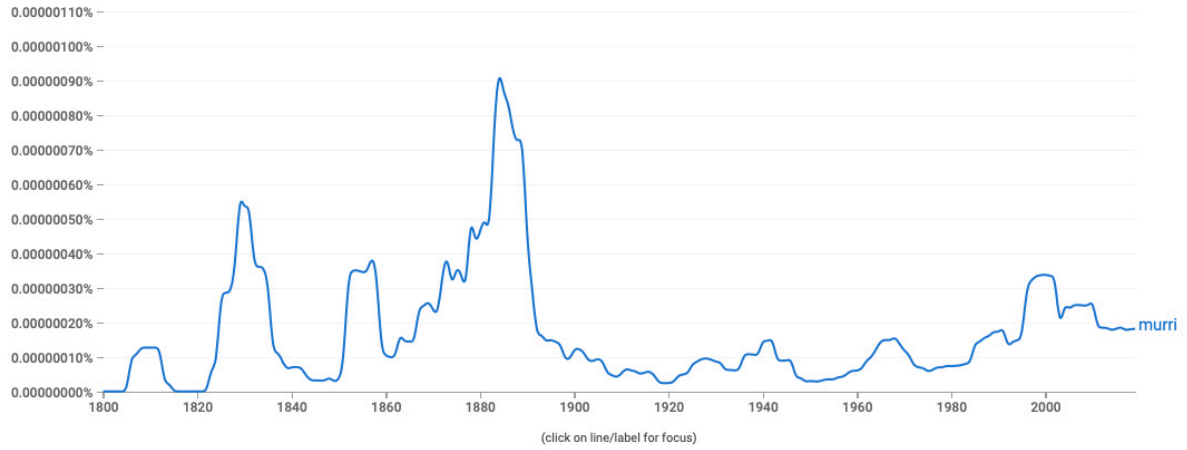
begins work on the relationship between ethics and editing (*Poetics* 244) and it correlates with older discussions in translation studies included in Lawrence Venuti's *The Scandals of Translation* (1998). The relationship between ethics and editing underpins some of the other debates in contemporary publishing around who tells which stories and who helps them in the production process. This thesis offers useful insights into the practicalities of publishing while opening discussions on the ethical implications of such labour. Future projects could include more detailed analysis into the ethics of the editor process, especially where there is a highly pronounced power imbalance between author and editor. Further work can also draw on publishing studies scholarship about the various incarnations of publishing companies. Dan Sinykin's forthcoming *Big Fiction: How Conglomeration Changed the Publishing Industry and American Literature* (2023) is concerned with the publishers as companies and there is potential for more detailed analysis at the level of editors and authors within these corporations.

# Appendix

Google Books Ngram Viewer

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1800 - 2019 | English (2019) | Case-Insensitive | Smoothing



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