Gendered Violence in Indigenous Literature of Australia and Oceania: Surveying Archie Weller's *Day of the Dog*, Keri Hulme's *the bone people*, and Joseph Veramu's *Moving through the Streets*

by

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To my beloved mother, Shirley Chestine Duncan Byrge (1946-2022), who called me a "doctor" before I was one, and who continued to support me and give me strength always. May you rest in peace and know that you are my guiding angel and inspiration.

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Women and Gender Studies Graduate Certificate program and through her classes, I was able to understand the ways gender biases exist in day-to-day life. She was always patient with me, knowing I came from an English background, where most of what we do as researchers is qualitative analyses, not quantitative analyses that is more prominent in Sociology and Psychology.

Other inspirations for me that helped along the way was the American Association of Australasian Literary Studies (AAALS), which I became a part of while at MTSU and presented at several of their conferences in North America. In 2014, I won the distinguished Wertheim Prize for Best Graduate Student paper at the conference proceedings in Portland, Oregon. Through the conferences, I was also able to meet Jeanine Leane, a Wiradjuri writer, poet, and academic from Australia who helped me immensely with this project. Her conversations and insights into Indigenous Standpoint helped to formulate my position in this project. I was also reacquainted with one of my greatest mentors, Dr. Anne Brewster, who I had met many years ago when I was working on my M.A. thesis, and she had hosted me in 2008 while I was attending the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL) at the University of Wollongong. Although we had kept in contact over the years, the conference proceedings for AAALS in Orangeburg, South Carolina allowed us to confer on my new position as scholar and teacher. Dr. Brewster's scholarship will forever be instrumental in the way I approach and see the connections being made in texts.

Although, I dedicated this dissertation to my mother, Shirley Chestine Byrge (1946-2022), I would be remiss in not acknowledging how important of a force she has been in my journey through academia and life, followed of course by my father, Rev.

Donnie Hugh Byrge (1945-2005), and my paternal grandmother, Birdie Aline Byrge (1921-2001). Growing up in the mountains of East Tennessee, one might say my upbringing was something akin to a mix of *The Waltons* and Peter Marshall's story (à la *A Man Called Peter*). We were poor, but closely-knit and religiously devout. I was given a love for plants, tales, and jigsaw puzzles from my grandmother, as she taught me how to sing, and I learned how to play piano in the small country church we attended together. She also taught me how to gather eggs and set hens and keep the vegetable garden free from weeds. My father would take me in the woods and show me how to hunt for ginseng, and we would pray for the family at the little altar he had made himself and put on top of the Meadow Hill. My father, who was a Baptist minister, never knew I was a gay man, because I worried that he would disapprove, but I did share this information with my mother about five years before she passed away, and she never made me feel in any other way but accepted and loved, which I suppose, is all one can do for their child. Perhaps all mothers are like that, or they are supposed to be, but mine was the best. I also want to mention by oldest brother, Donald Ebbie Byrge who passed away in September of 2021, five months before my mother. I remember him now as I did as a child singing alongside him as he played his guitar to accompany me at church and at talent shows.

I grew up with a passion for literature and reading and a love for music and films. Somewhere along the way, at five years old, I developed a love for old movies, especially Bette Davis, and became a fan of a TV series called *Dallas*, where, in the summer of 2014, I finally visited South Fork ranch, the location for the series, while on a trip to Dallas, Texas. My interest in Australian literature came when I watched a movie called *The Man from Snowy River*, and found out that it was based on a poem by an Australian

writer, AB Banjo Paterson. I checked out an anthology of Australian literature from the local library so I could read this poem, and I became hooked on this literature from a place thousands of miles from my own world. Years later during my Master's program at East Tennessee State University, I focused my thesis on Australian literature looking at how White Australian writers—Thomas Keneally, Nobel laureate Patrick White, and children's author Colin Thiele—depicted Aboriginal Australians in their work. My M.A. thesis director, Dr. Donald Johnson, who previously taught at the University of Hawai'i had a deep interest in Pacific Island literature, and I promised I would expand my studies further with my Ph.D. to incorporate other representations from other places.

Writing a dissertation while working full time, part of which was during a Pandemic, and the loss of two very close family members might make others give up and not continue, but maybe perhaps because of these obstacles, I saw the need to keep on going, which might not have happened without my dearest friends. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Phyllis Ann Thompson of Johnson City, Tennessee and her husband David Wood, who have been the biggest advocates for me through my academic journey. In many ways, I see Phyllis as a second mother because she is the one who I go to first to tell her good news or ask her advice. She traveled all the way to my family church to attend my mother's funeral, and given her work and many obligations as a professor, academic, and administrator, I know that was not easy for her to "drop everything" and come to be by my side. Levanda Swafford of Rossville, Georgia has been my friend for twenty-seven years, more than twice as long as I have been alive. She never fails to offer encouragement and give me help when I need her the most. A month after my mother's death in early March of 2022, and three weeks after I fought off COVID, I had a fall and

ended up with a broken leg. Levanda came to my rescue, and helped take care of me, even with her own familial obligations. I finished teaching my classes virtually, etching out more work on the dissertation, and working on my recovery, which I could not have done without her kindness. Levanda and I share a common love for Eurovision and coffee. Well, maybe I like coffee a wee bit more than she in the end, but I have recently introduced her to house plants. Finally, I want to mention my best friend from the Russian Federation, Evgeny Kochergin, who I was able to meet in Moscow, Russia in 2018 and then again, last year, in Tbilisi, Georgia. Evgeny pushed me to learn Russian, which I am happy to report is progressing, and he encouraged me to continue with my dissertation even in moments of doubt.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which I present this study, the Mississippian culture who existed in the Middle Tennessee area as early as 850 BCE, the later Yuchi, Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw tribes whose traditional hunting grounds were in the region before and after colonial disruption, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

ABSTRACT

Violence in Indigenous communities has often been studied in ways that attribute such violence to colonial conquest—when Indigenous land and autonomy were stripped away and replaced by a set of Western standards and rules. Colonialism and its effects contribute to Indigenous pain and feelings of unbelonging, as seen in many literary texts including the ones in this study; however, colonialism alone does not account for the complex and multi-faceted presence of violence within Indigenous communities and literary texts. The following study discusses three works by Indigenous authors—Archie Weller's *Day of the Dog* from Australia, Keri Hulme's *the bone people* from Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Joseph Veramu's *Moving through the Streets* from Fiji—to demonstrate how literary depictions of the daily lives of Indigenous men offer valuable insights about different ways violence manifests itself in the present.

For Weller, critics have misread the violence in his work by isolating it from other lived experiences. While violence and moments of disparity exist, Weller wants his readers to see the beauty and richness of Aboriginal lives that exist alongside violence. Next, Hulme brings attention to ways that the colonial imposition of Western conceptions of gender and sexuality continue to impact expressions of violence. Her novel calls into question the ways that performing and reasserting manhood can contribute to current family violence and explores ways to counter the erasures of non-binary genders and sexualities. Veramu's novel also sees violence in a gendered context but looks at the ways performativity of gender and messages from the West about what a successful man

looks like can affect the ways that young Indigenous Fijian men enact violence in their contemporary communities.

While I approach these works as a Western critic, I practice a two-pronged approach of analyzing literary texts by using both Western and Indigenous scholarship in order to locate Indigenous knowledge at the center of the study and address ways that Western knowledge production impacts conversations about colonial and contemporary violence. I juxtapose texts from multiple nations with differing experiences of colonization to facilitate connections across contexts, but I also look at a variety of texts to reflect the rich diversity of experiences, perspectives, and literary production and counter tendencies to homogenize Indigenous men.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Novelist Kim Scott, a descendant of the Noongar people who inhabited the southwest coast of Australia before colonization, explores the colonial past in his book *That Deadman Dance* (2010). His examination exposes that first contact, while fraught by imperial ardor from the very beginning, at one brief moment had a potential to be something more profound and amenable for both parties. The book is a landmark entry in a reexamination of that first contact, a time when possibility had not turned to failure, and friendship and cooperation had not become hostility and injustice. Scott's *That Deadman Dance* won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the Miles Franklin Literary Award, the ALS Gold Medal, and many other accolades. In his novel, Scott remembers the first contact between the Noongar people of Western Australia with the English. The novel, although set in an historical past, also makes claims about future events. What sets Scott's novel apart from similar stories about the settler-Aboriginal[1] encounter is that Scott's account shows how the white abuses upon the Australian Aboriginals since colonization need not have occurred. In the novel, Geordie Chaine is a brutal white

[1] The use of the term "Aboriginal" is important here to qualify. Aboriginal designates Indigenous Australians whose home is on the Australian mainland, whereas Torres Strait Islanders are the inhabitants of the various 274 separate islands that make up the Torres Strait Islands. Both are broad terms that cover various nations with different languages and cultural traditions. The even broader term "Indigenous Australians" includes both Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders. The term "aboriginal" with a lower case could refer to any Indigenous person anywhere in the world. "Aborigine" as a noun is an outdated word and often seen as offensive due to its colonial origins. That term does not appear in this work outside of quotations from other writers. When discussing specific individuals, I will try to follow their self-identification, which might be as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous, or as a member of a specific group such as the Noongar. Individuals and groups have different preferences of terminology, and recently there has also been a growing preference for the term "First Nations Australians." I will also use the terms "Indigenous peoples" and "Indigenous knowledge" throughout the study to refer to the first peoples of Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji and their knowledge.

colonial who represents a compartmentalized English capitalist mindset. Dr. Cross, on the other hand, also English, respects and forms friendships with the local inhabitants. Instead of making all the colonials bad, Scott represents a more nuanced portrait of that first encounter. Scott's use of narrative structure, memory, and language in reimagining that first contact gives the novel more depth and complexity than the traditional linear Western model.

While Scott narrates from a non-Western perspective, one could still use Western scholarship to interpret his literature. Such an interpretation, it might be argued by some, would be placing a Western mind-set upon that reading, and in effect recolonizing the Indigenous perspective by Western thoughts and perceptions. In her Introduction to *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith discusses the idea of "knowers," those who have the right to discuss their people and their literature, and who come from a place removed from Western privileges. Even what we as scholars do in terms of "research" is historically implicated with practices that reposition Indigenous knowledge as "other," as Smith explains: "from the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I [Smith] write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (1). The perception of research stirs strong and visceral reaction among Indigenous peoples for good reason. Experiments and research conducted on Indigenous people in the nineteenth century and later is well-documented. One such case included Tasmanian Aboriginal, Truganini, whose remains were exhumed two years after her death, put on display from 1904 to 1947 and only laid to rest in the 1970s when her ashes were scattered in D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Even as

late as 2002, some of her remains were discovered in the Royal College of Surgeons collection in England, and finally returned to Tasmania for burial. When "research" is mentioned, according to Smith, "it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that indigenous people often write poetry about research. The way in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples" (1). Knowing the fraught nature of such exercises, how can a Western scholar contribute appropriately and be truly mindful of the ethical implications of scholarly engagements with Indigenous knowledge?

In a personal conversation at a conference of the American Association of Australasian Literary Studies in Orangeburg, South Carolina, I asked Wiradjuri writer, poet, and academic, Jeanine Leane, the best way Western scholars could approach researching Indigenous literature. She explained the only way to do it is by using a two-pronged approach, using Western and Indigenous scholarship in tandem with one another. After this conversation, I began to pursue this line of inquiry, which would ultimately guide my plan for the way I approached this project. During my investigation, I found that several Indigenous scholars have been grappling with a related dilemma about how they might approach their own work. Melitta Hogarth, a Kamilaroi woman and scholar whose research focuses on Indigenous rights and experiences in education explains:

> As an Aboriginal researcher, there was an identified need to draw on Indigenous research methodologies. However, as the study was analysing Indigenous education policy, there was also need to draw on Western methodologies as a means to gain understanding of not just the context of Indigenous education, but

> also the power of language to establish a position of authority and control. By gaining an understanding of how discourses are used, I was, as [Martin] Nakata. . . asserts, theorising knowledge from a particular and interested position—not to produce the 'truth' of the Indigenous position but to better reveal the workings of knowledge and how understanding of Indigenous people is caught up and implicated in its work. (23)

Indigenous scholars have themselves turned to Western academics in their own research to better understand the complexities of the issues they hope to articulate in their studies and the power dynamics involved in knowledge production. Indigenous scholars have met the call to challenge Western methodologies by creating Indigenous ones, but they have also drawn on Western concepts as a means to elucidate self-knowledge that can manifest their own research goals. Works like Marie Battiste's *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, a collection of essays out of a 1996 conference at the International Summer Institute mandated the cultural restoration of indigenous peoples and encouraged reconciling Indigenous and Western epistemologies; Lester-Irabinna Rigney's "Internationalization of an Indigenous Anticolonial Critique of Research Methodologies: A Guide to Indigenist Research Methodology and Its Principles" explores the ways to move Indigenous scholarship from oppression to a more self-determining one and aid in the progress of Indigenous scholarship; and Martin Nakata questions the cathexis of where Indigenous and non-Indigenous Knowers meet.

To be more insightful as a critic coming from a Western frame of reference, including non-Western theoretical discussions alongside Western perspectives will guide one's reading in a more informative trajectory. At the same time, Western non-Indigenous scholars cannot divorce themselves from a Western standpoint. Therefore, a complete disavowal of all Western theoretical concepts would not only be a falsehood but

also would be unproductive since there are many insights from the Western academy that can be useful in the interpretation of Indigenous texts.

Torres Strait Islander and scholar in the field of Indigenous Studies, Martin Nakata has written at length on such concerns and devised a model for academic inquiry called Indigenous Standpoint theory. Nakata derives his philosophy from a Western feminist line of inquiry called Feminist Standpoint theory, which places the role of women's lived experience or point of view at the center of any line of thinking that investigates feminist issues or concerns. Similarly, Nakata, in *Disciplining the Savages, Savaging the Disciplines* (2007), argues that Indigenous Standpoint theory depends on reflexivity and the distinction between experience and standpoint (214). Experience and standpoint differ in that Indigenous experience frames or grounds the Indigenous standpoint as a point of reference. Indigenous experience includes cultural and traditional values of the ancestors as well as lived familiarity with systemic racial intolerance and cultural disruption imposed by colonization. Indigenous scholars, therefore, know the history of colonial dissonance and its ill-effect on their people and culture through their lived experiences. When Indigenous scholars bring the situation of themselves as "Knowers" into the framework, they make themselves part of the study as well. Social relations might in turn be informing knowledge. Being an Indigenous Knower, according to Nakata, does not yield a ready-made critical stance on the world, but the situation of Indigenous Knowers provides questions from which scholars can start to analyze Indigenous peoples and topics (214). Acknowledging that Indigenous writers are coming from their own distinctive position as Knowers is central to examining issues of the Indigenous experience in literature. Non-Indigenous scholars can also apply the lessons

of Indigenous Standpoint theory by putting the experiences of Indigenous Knowers at the center of their studies. Using theory from Indigenous scholars helps to inform the analysis I put forth here; I am acknowledging differences in the positions of scholarship in my analysis, and thereby affirming my own limits as a non-Indigenous Knower. I cannot use Indigenous Standpoint because I am not an Indigenous Knower, however, I can use the theory to help put Indigenous thinking at the center of my analysis here and recognize that my own position is a factor in the knowledge production presented in this study.

The following study looks at Indigenous literature of Australia and the Pacific alongside systems of violence in Indigenous communities. The study explores the impacts of colonialism and also considers the colonial tactics in modernity which continue to disrupt and fragment many Indigenous communities through violent assault or perpetuation of colonial dissonance. Much of the violence both from the outside and within includes gendered violence. Many of these instances of violence show that while internalized violence occurs, the efforts from outsiders spur on feelings of uneasiness and vigilance within Indigenous communities, feelings which have existed since colonial disruption and conquest centuries ago. My study will use a cross-comparison of Australian and Pacific Indigenous literature, including Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Fiji. I will look at the following primary works for this study: Archie Weller's *Day of the Dog*, Keri Hulme's *the bone people*, and Joseph C. Veramu's *Moving Through the Streets*. Many of these texts have very little research done on them, which makes this project valuable both in calling attention to the issues the novels raise and to these writers as well. Applying a two-prong approach of incorporating both Indigenous and Western

criticism, I will show that the authors of these works are coming from a particular position, and that using non-Western concepts on gendered violence in conversation with Western gender theory will give a better understanding of their depictions of the complex causes and impacts of violence in current communities. While the study pursues an important line of inquiry that examines constructions of violence, alternative sexualities, and gender in the Pacific and Australia, this study's use of Indigenous as well as Western scholarship to do close readings of the representative texts makes for a more nuanced study. The aim is not to make bold claims that all Western ideologies are wrong, but instead show that using non-Western perspectives as well aids in more accurately interpreting Indigenous writing. The choice to compare texts from various cultures instead of exclusively analyze literature from one region further expands the point that cultural disruption does not exist in a vacuum but occurred in many parts of the world across many different peoples. Showing that similar effects continue to impact colonized regions across the Pacific shines a larger light on the toll that colonialism has dealt to the global community, and its continued effect in the present, while studying texts from different traditions also resists the homogenization of Indigenous experience that would result from letting one writer or one region represent an Indigenous voice.

Colonial Violence and Its Legacies

While Kim Scott imagines the possibilities of what could have been, European colonialism in Australia and the Pacific was characterized by violence against people and cultures that has left a lasting legacy. In order to better contextualize the systemic violence of colonial disruption and trauma that appear in the novels in this study, I offer

historical background about the colonial encounter in Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji highlighting issues most relevant to the novels. Beginning with Australia, surveying some of the historical moments of abuse and intolerance by White Australia is important. Indigenous Australian history can be divided into two categories: the history before the arrival of the Europeans and the history after their arrival. Some estimates date the appearance of the Aboriginal people on *Terra Australis* between 125,000 and 40,000 B.C.E. The First Australians and Europeans were separated from one another for centuries before colonial contact. Visited first by the Dutch in the seventeenth century, Australia was claimed by Great Britain in the late eighteenth century and originally set up as a penal colony to transport British prisoners from England.

Divisive class systems were constructed by whites in Australia on the grounds of white skin preference from nearly the very beginning of European contact with the Aboriginals. With the arrival of the Dutch—Dirk Hartog in 1616, Abel Tasman in 1642—and the later British invasion in the eighteenth century, beginning with James Cook in 1770, brutality and a concentrated effort to acculturate the Aboriginals into the dominant white culture flourished for the next two hundred years. Jennifer Sabbioni argues that "armed conflict between Aboriginal peoples and Europeans began almost immediately after 1788 with the landing of Governor Phillip and the First Fleet on the shores of Botany Bay (near Sydney) and continued for approximately 140 years" (xxi). By the end of the nineteenth century, 700,000 to 750,000 of the First Australians who inhabited the Australian continent when the Europeans arrived had been killed by dispossession, introduced diseases, massacres, poisoned waterholes, blankets, and food rations. Europeans' own records in fact support this claim. In 1837, a Parliamentary

Select Committee in England acknowledged that genocide was in fact going on in the Antipodes (Sabbioni xxxvii).

Genocide, torture, and forced removals were some of the atrocities committed by white colonists toward Indigenous Australians. Penny Van Toorn posits that the "arrival of the British at Sydney Cove in 1788 initiated a series of processes which, in various ways and to different degrees in different regions, brought death, displacement, and severe cultural disruption to Aboriginal peoples" (19). Violence and disease destroyed Aboriginal populations; welfare officials removed Aboriginal children from their homes; and Christian missionaries forbade the use of traditional Aboriginal customs and ceremonies and even the Aboriginal's own languages (Van Toorn 19). Whites had no recognition of the Aboriginal oral traditions or that possibly "graphic signifying systems such as sand drawings, body scars, paintings, or carvings might be viewed as forms of writing" (Van Toorn 19-20). Whites instead hoped that the Aboriginals would adopt white customs and attempted to acculturate Aboriginal Australians into the white way of life. The personal liberties of Aboriginals were threatened by colonialism, which stripped the Aboriginals' freedom of movement and choice of locations for settlement. As for Aboriginals for whom freedom to move was part of their way of life, this action was especially devastating (McGrath 2). White Christian missions or the government, "who wanted them [Aboriginals] to become sedentary or remain under control on their 'settlements,'" consistently dictated white-approved lifestyles for the Aboriginal people (McGrath 2). The Aboriginal families "suffered extreme trauma of having their children taken away to dormitories or distant towns" (McGrath 2). For Aboriginal children any "association with their own Aboriginal parents and kin was said to be degrading or

subjecting them to neglect. Girls and boys were segregated and taught to conform to sex roles approved by an outside culture" (McGrath 2). Australian colonization, therefore, was not only about the possession of land or property but also the possession of people and continued to separate families of the Indigenous people for a century. White atrocities on Indigenous Australians "broke the hearts and minds of individuals" and abductions of both adults and children were quite frequent (McGrath 2). A white-minded way of living was imposed on Aboriginals including changes to the way the Aboriginals had used the land for perpetuity (McGrath 2). Colonial domination and acculturation of Indigenous Australians would continue for the next two centuries as a perpetuation of governmental policies, regulations, theft of native titles, and colonial schemes which disrupted lives, uprooted families, and continue into the present. In short, "it is deceptive to assume that 'colonial Australia' ended with the coming of the twentieth century, or that successful British settlement meant the end of 'colonial' relations between Aborigine and non-Aborigines" (McGrath 2).

Land ownership is a key part of colonial violence, and the history concerning land rights is an integral part of my analysis of Weller's *Day of the Dog* because lack of ownership and the privileges engendered to White Australia contributes to much of the violence contained in the novel. In *Day of the Dog*, Dougie hopes to reclaim the land of his family, but he exists in a place that sees him as second-class and right of ownership is never guaranteed or seen as attainable for him. Although there is much contestation among historians and legal scholars about when the justification for England's claim first took root in British colonial law, the idea of *terra nullius* allowed the British to claim that Australia had no inhabitants at the time of conquest, which made it, in effect, free land,

and ripe for the taking. The last two centuries have seen fierce debates on the question of ownership in Australia and Aboriginal claims to lands seized in Anglo-European conquests. To silence the voices of those who remembered a time before the white people came, whites engaged in a "white-washing" of history.

For Indigenous Australians, the relation with land was not based on ownership, but rather consisted of a celebration of the land. Humans were understood as guardians or keepers of the country and were responsible for sharing the land with others and future generations. Many Indigenous traditions also involve a spiritual connection to the land in which humans and the natural world coexist in cooperation and understanding with one another. To reject Aboriginal claims to the land, White Australia propagated the myth that civilization in Australia began with the arrival of the colonials. *Terra nullius* was the premise for the Anglo-Europeans' claim to Australia for over two hundred years. Elizabeth Webby states that "in 1770 James Cook arrived to claim the eastern part of the continent [Australia] for the British Crown and name it New South Wales. He apparently did so under the impression that there were few Indigenous inhabitants and that, since these few did not use the land in the European sense of cultivating it, they did not own it" (7). Ownership debates, specifically about Aboriginal land titles, have continued throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The battle for Aboriginal ownership and a continued effort to rewrite history persisted after Aboriginals, in 1949[2], were officially granted citizenship. The subsequent official renaming of Australian icons, such as Ayers Rock to Uluru in 1993 is demonstrative of marginal progress toward

[2] Under the Nationality Act of 1920, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders born after 1 January 1921 gained the status of British subjects (Jordens 24). In 1949, they automatically became citizens under the Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1948 (Jordens 24).

reconciliation. However, as many injustices have been perpetrated on Indigenous Australians by White Australia, such placations were insufficient in redressing all the past wrongs.

Indigenous Australians' alienation from the land can be seen as an integral part of the colonial dissonance that has been felt by Indigenous Australians and reflects in much of their literature. For example, Dougie in Weller's *Day of the Dog* hopes to one day own the land that had belonged to his family but is unable to fulfill his dream and is sent spiraling into a violent end. The late 1960s and 1970s land rights debates were part of the formation that grounded Archie Weller's motivation in *Day of the Dog,* and an earlier short story called "The Stolen Car," under the pseudonym of R. Chee, which introduces a character named Johnny, not unlike Dougie or perhaps Weller himself, who is wrongly accused and put into lockup on a false charge. Weller has long been an activist in his own life and the work of those Aboriginal land rights activists of the 1960s and 1970s were formative in the creation of his novel. One disappointment after another from White Australia and his own personal trauma pushed Weller to pen *Day of the Dog* in the late 1970s when the debates were still raging from Aboriginal communities who wanted to right the wrongs handed down from White Australia to their forefathers and foremothers. Cliff Watego writes that "the period after 1967[3] was one of frustrated waiting [for the Aboriginals], aggravated by setbacks such as the delaying of the Gurindji land claim and the disillusioning Gove land rights decision in 1971" (13). In the early 1970s, fragmented

[3] In 1967, the Australian Parliament approved two separate referendums which made alterations to the Australian Constitution concerning Indigenous Australians: 1) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would be counted as part of the population and voting rights granted and 2) the Commonwealth would be responsible for Aboriginal affairs (Atwood and Bain).

relations between Aboriginal Australians and the Australian government came to a head with an Aboriginal gathering at the Australian Embassy. A peaceful demonstration called the "Tent Embassy" was erected at the nation's capital of Canberra on Australia Day 1972 to call attention to the grievances of the Indigenous Australian people regarding land rights claims. In a personal correspondence with Cliff Watego, Aboriginal poet Kevin Gilbert writes that Australian Prime Minister William McMahon's decision in 1972 that "'his government would only consider short term leases. . . not ownership for Aborigines and their land'" (qtd. in Watego 12) led to his idea to erect a permanent camp outside the Parliament House. Gilbert assembled five young Aboriginals from Redfern[4], deciding they must act more directly with the Australian government than in the past. Watego admits that the Aboriginals saw Prime Minister McMahon's decision as "a flat denial of land rights" (13). McMahon's rejection of Aboriginal claims reaffirmed the patronizing view of the government in relationship to the Aboriginals' legitimate claims to the land.

Bitter struggles followed with truly little headway until the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Director of the Central Land Council, Bruce "Tracker" Tilmouth explains that "land rights is a relatively new concept to white Australia, but it is a profoundly important part of Aboriginal life. Land is at the core of our existence. It is the source of our identity, culture, and spirituality" (ix). Alienation from the loss of land that is such an integral part of Indigenous history, culture, and existence can be seen as one of the factors involved in violence in Aboriginal communities. The loss of land and place is

[4] Redfern is an inner southern suburb of Sydney, located three kilometers south of the Sydney's central business district.

inextricably linked to the fate of Dougie in Weller's *Day of the Dog* as that chapter will show. Bob Pease and others have theorized colonialism, including loss of land, has resulted in a stripping of masculinity and a loss of self-worth for Indigenous men. The abuse of alcohol or drugs to manage depression and anxiety can be linked to much of the violence as shown in all the works represented here in this study but is especially apparent in Weller's novel.

Progress has been made since Weller's novel appeared in respect to Native title, most notably through the *Mabo* decision. In 1992, the *Mabo* decision sent shockwaves across Australia and questioned its very foundation. The long held political premise of *terra nullius* finally ended with the *Mabo* ruling which recognized the claim of Torres Strait Islanders to their land and opened the path for a broader recognition of Indigenous land rights. The High Court's ruling on 3 June 1992, validated the claims of the Meriam people of the Torres Strait Islands, led by Eddie Mabo, who had asserted they possessed native title to Mer (Murray Island). With this ruling, it was further established that native title was held for all Indigenous Australians. While other land legislation has occurred since, this was the first time that the very idea of *terra nullius*, the principle of Australia's founding, was seen as fictive, thus questioning the Commonwealth of Australia's very existence. Felicity Collins and Therese Davis contend that "despite a history of Indigenous resistance to dispossession, supported at different times in the nation's past by a number of non-Indigenous Australians, the story of the nation's origin, in the occupation of land belonging to no one [*terra nullius*], remained intact until High Court's *Mabo* decision in 1992" (4). The long journey to reconciliation continues, and other key events include Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's official Apology sixteen years later for the

Stolen Generations, the Indigenous children forcibly removed from their families. The "Sorry" did not end, however, the on-going litigation concerning native title as many Indigenous Australians all over Australia continue to fight to regain traditional ownership of lands seized during the great conquest of Australia. Because White Australia had enacted so many barriers to keep whites and Aboriginals apart over the years, the "Sorry" from the Australian government was also hard for many to swallow.

Locating the Pacific

The Pacific Ocean boasts a vast array of island nations and kingdoms, which unlike many other places in the world, remain culturally and geographically unknown to Westerners. Perhaps due to the remoteness of many of these tiny islands, lack of attention on the world stage or in the media, and the xenophobic tendency by Westerners to group all the island nations into taxonomic categorizations like "The Pacific" or "Oceania," relatively few Americans in the continental U.S. can distinguish Vanuatu from Kiribati, know the difference between Micronesia and Melanesia, or could locate any of these countries on a world map. Outside of the television show *Survivor*, most Americans have little knowledge or intimacy with the Pacific region and her peoples. Today, for many of the inhabitants of these locations, the increasing push from the West continues to encroach into their lives and communities. From Western goods and services, media propaganda, climate change, pollution, an increase in ocean levels, and tourism to perhaps the growing need for commerce and participation among the global community, the way of life for the people of these many islands continues to be forever changed. Before the Westerners came, the Pacific Island peoples established rich cultures and

communities unencumbered by Western ideologies or religions, but colonial contact and continuing pressures from the West have created cultural, social, and environmental disruptions. In Joseph Veramu's *Moving through the Streets*, Onisi and other characters, like many young Fijians, were forced into schools that were English-only, backed by Catholic, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist, and other missionary-affiliated churches. In a post-colonial world, the process of colonial disruption lingers in local villages, tribal ceremonies, family households, and in more urban sprawls like the cities of Suva or Honiara. Many of the Indigenous youth do not remember their culture and heritage and are forced into the city. Veramu demonstrates the breakdown of traditional tribal power and the move from village to city in his novel. *Moving through the Streets* exposes the reader to a little seen portrait of Fiji, a place known by most Westerners as perhaps a reality TV destination or for the adventurous type, an exotic vacation spot. In the novel, Western messages reach Fiji in ways that mislead young Fijians to the belief that economic success is at their fingertips if they can dream it into being by modelling the behavior seen in Western media. While much of the media demonstrates that wealth comes from conquest and violence, the roots of colonial dissonance in the Pacific began in exactly that same mindset.

To understand the dynamics of Veramu's Fiji, one needs to look at the history of Western interference in Fiji. The Pacific region became a new playground for explorers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when Empire furled its claws in new imperialist fervor, intent on expanding not only its size but developing new interests in other parts of the world, yet unknown and untouched by the West. In 1516, Spanish explorer Vasco Balboa traversed the Isthmus of Panama to become the first European to sight the Pacific

Ocean, calling it *Mar del Sur*. After Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation of the earth later in 1521, Magellan bestowed the name *Mar Pacifico*, meaning "peaceful sea" in both Portuguese and Spanish. Unfortunately, the remaining centuries for many native inhabitants of the region constituted anything but peace. Colonization, war, and continued Western interference altered local island communities and threw many Pacific Indigenous groups and customs into disarray.

Abel Tasman was the first to sight Fiji in the early seventeenth century, followed by James Cook in 1774, and then William Bligh, who escaped through Fiji in a longboat after the mutiny of the *HMS Bounty*, but returned two years later to explore the islands. Soon the islands had been raped and pillaged of their lush sandalwood resource. Veramu discusses the assault on the environment in his novel as Western interference has reshaped the islands. Commercialism has shifted the interests from traditional values placed on the guardianship of the land by native Fijians to the greed of Western capitalists. The development of taking Fiji's natural resources and interference with the native populations began nearly from the arrival of Westerners. In the nineteenth century, traders continued to visit the islands in search of native Fijian foods. Traders introduced muskets to the Fijians, and increased rivalries over the newfound power that came with colonial trade led to disputes among rival chieftains, most notably the kingdom of Bau led by Cakobau and the Tongan chieftain, Ma‘afu. Ma‘afu led an army of Christian Tongans against Cakobau. The two warring groups made a short-lived alliance, during which Cakobau became Christian in 1854 and most Fijians were then brought under the influence of Methodist missionaries. Over the next half of the century, settlers saw the commercial value of Fiji in the hopes of building cotton plantations. Cotton saw steep

price increases due to the American Civil War. Land and political disputes among Fijian communities and the Europeans led to violent interaction and the beginning of imperial administration. Fiji was first set up by the British as an administrative colony of the Crown in 1874 at which time, a governor was appointed who could oversee the needs of the colonial government back home. The most well-known of these colonial officials was Sir Arthur Gordon, who oversaw the first importation of Indians into the islands as indentured servants after the unconditional cessation in 1874 made Fiji a Crown colony. Gordon saw himself as a "protector" of the Fijian people, banning the sale of Fijian land and taxing the Fijians with agricultural goods, instead of money. The Fijian people were given freedom to self-govern through traditional political structures, while being indirectly ruled by the Crown.

While British rule had ended by the time Veramu's novel was released in the early 1990s, the impact of colonial history can be felt in many ways, including organizations of race and gender that contribute to ongoing raced and gendered violence. In some island communities, women and men shared equal status. Colonists introduced Western masculine ideals to many of the islander men, and thereby encouraged native men to measure up to a white standard, which contributed to an objectification of native women by native men who did not view women as equals any longer. Additionally, the loss of power and prestige by many local tribal elders significantly altered their self-esteem and worth in many villages. With much of their power stripped, many native men began to view women as an obstacle regarding their regaining some of the lost power they could potentially reclaim by acting like whites. Further, Britain's occupation of the island brought with it indentured Indian servants, who are still a primary population in

the region and included in Veramu's depiction of Fiji. Fiji includes two main groups: the Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Both groups are integral to Veramu's novel as much of the violence among Fijian youth come at the expense of the Indo-Fijian shopkeepers and business owners. As the Indians were brought to the island as indentured laborers, they now constitute a marginalized minority group in the nation often in conflict with the Indigenous Fijian majority.

While it is important to note the ongoing impact of colonization, it is equally important to acknowledge that colonization was not imposed without local resistance. Robert Nicole, in his Introduction to *Disturbing History: Resistance in Early Colonial Fiji*, brings attention to ways that colonization of Fiji was contested, pointing out the disparity between the artifacts left by the colonists, "numerous signs and inscriptions, including the major landmarks, statues, building and street names, public holidays, and school textbooks, denote the triumph of authority," and the traces of those who resisted: "little is known of those historical figures who dared to be different and defiant" (1). Like many others who contested colonization around the world, "these individuals and their deeds have been edited out of history, out of Fiji's landscape, and out of its people's memories and historical consciousness" (Nicole 1). While Nicole's book looks at many of the examples of Fijian resistance, Western histories of imperialism too often disavow and overwrite the many histories and memories of those who dared to be brave and sought to halt colonial intrusions and quell the fervor of invasion. Nicole contrasts that historical narrative of "a country that excelled under British tutelage, where indifferent villagers obeyed the wise rule and exemplary leadership of their chiefs, and where Indian laborers toiled endlessly in the sugar plantations to build the colony's economic

prosperity" with another story, one untold, or forgotten, a story that years of colonial rule wanted to be unknown (1). Nicole argues that "contrary to public discourse, a massive undercurrent of resistance to colonialism existed but that the capitalist class, with the complicity of mainstream historians, had conspired to hide it from posterity" (1). Now, the Fiji of Veramu in *Moving through the Streets* exhibits what the painful history and desecration of the land has wrought on Fiji and its youth who prefer their lives to be sought in dreaming, not reality because reality is too painful. However, Veramu's Fiji similarly reveals traces of resistance from those who were displaced, rewritten, and encouraged to forget their own culture. Onisi and other Fijian youth of the novel are coming from the squalor of urban decay, the remnants of colonial vestiges that left their mark on Fiji, where war and distrust of local authorities culminated in political upheavals.

Fiji finally gained its independence from Great Britain in 1970, however, the damage on Fijian people and culture executed by the British invaders left a powerful mark. Fiji entered, left, and reentered the British Commonwealth several times over the years following its independence and went through four coup d'états in the span of twenty years. Veramu's novel appeared five years after the first of two coup d'états and before the next. Much of the social and political upheaval from the coups can be felt among the pages of his book. While considerable social and political unrest has plagued Fiji, the country boasts a diverse cultural heritage. Still, the nation continues to be pushed by colonial forces which threaten both the Fijian traditions and the islands themselves.

Aotearoa/New Zealand's growth as a nation began with colonial intervention and conquest by the British. However, like Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand was installed by

the English as a settler colony, meaning one that displaces Indigenous populations in place of the colonizer. Such colonial enterprise involved systemic appropriation of lands and attempts to teach English to and Christianize the Indigenous populations. Some systems, like in Australia, employed eugenic schemes that attempted to remove the Indigenous populations entirely. Before the arrival of the English, Aotearoa/New Zealand was settled first by the Māori who came from Hawaiki[5] one thousand years ago. Abel Tasman was the first European to see Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1642, before he continued later to sight Fiji. Aotearoa/New Zealand was settled by the British who continued to rule the islands for a hundred years beginning in 1769 with the arrival of James Cook. In 1840, the British and the Māori signed an agreement called the Treaty of Waitangi, which represents an important founding document. The Treaty was a promise that Māori culture would be protected, and Māori would be allowed to live in Aotearoa/New Zealand as Māori but gave Britain the right to rule the island and be a representative for all New Zealanders, settler and Māori alike. Unlike the enormous lie around the founding of Australia that the continent was empty and uninhabited, the British set Aotearoa/New Zealand up with the rule that the Crown could buy land, but that Māori also held cultural and legal claim to the land. The Treaty of Waitangi was written in multiple versions in both English and Māori languages, which caused consternation about what the document included in it, and was even agreed to, thereby causing frequent disputes.

[5] Hawaiki in Polynesian mythology is the original home of Polynesians before they settled throughout Polynesia.

Nonetheless, the development of Aotearoa/New Zealand, like Australia and other former British colonies, came about in ways that marginalized the Indigenous population in favor of the Western colonial. Settlers acquired land and started raising sheep on the islands. Unlike the Australian Aboriginals who were often in conflict with the British, the Crown chose a more peaceful arrangement in Aotearoa/New Zealand that would allow them to seize control and even offered Māori chiefs input and support as subjects of the Crown. While conflict did happen, particularly because of the British attempting to sell Māori land and incursions into their territories by the ever-growing settler population and sheep farmers, the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand, fraught with inequalities and setbacks for the Māori throughout the years, is not the same as Australia due in large part to the strength of Waitangi's position that declared Māori land and other legal rights in the New Zealand Constitution. Some Indigenous scholars outside of Aotearoa/New Zealand argue that the Māori are in a much better place socially than other Indigenous people in the world. Regarding the history of violence among Indigenous people of other colonized nations in comparison to Aotearoa/New Zealand, Morgan Godfery points out that "commentators often turn to [the nature of violence] when explaining why Māori appear to fare so much better than Indigenous peoples in other parts of the Anglosphere" (*The Guardian*). The Māori are fifteen percent of the Aotearoa/New Zealand population. This population is "more than five times larger than the Aboriginal Australian or Native Americans share of their national populations—meaning Māori are in a better position to press for guaranteed representation in [P]arliament and local government, for dedicated television channels and radio stations, for native language schooling, and more" (Godfery). While there is more representation of Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand than of

other Indigenous populations in formerly colonized nations, that does not signal that Māori are free from the injustices and marginalization that other Indigenous people have faced and continue to face worldwide.

Māori have made advancements through representation in government, land rights, education, and visibility on the world stage, and the 1980s, the time when Keri Hulme's, *the bone people*, appeared was a time of protest and calls for change regarding racial prejudice. Godfery posits that "in the 1980s socialist organisers were turning out tens of thousands of people on the streets to protest the Springbok tour, nuclear warships, and racism against Māori" (*The Guardian*). During this time there was a push by Māori activists to strengthen the Treaty of Waitangi's position in the New Zealand Constitution (Godfery). The activists of the 1970s and 1980s had some success because they were able to join together people from disparate groups, bringing Māori activists together with non-Māori university students, trade unionists, politicians, and other activists who were able to make real progress (Godfery). During the 1970s and 1980s, many Māori were dissatisfied by their representation in the government, which still kept the antiquated number of Māori seats in Parliament capped at four. In 1867, the Māori Representation Act set the number of Māori representatives in the Parliament, based on population at four, but it had not changed in over a hundred years. Based on the current population, the Māori were entitled to more than a dozen representatives at least in the Parliament (Godfery), and the Māori activists of this time were committed to changing the laws to better represent their people. While Māori currently have a stronger voice in national government than other Indigenous people in formerly colonized nations, racism does not go away and in fact has reared its ugly head in different ways throughout the years. While

advancements move some forward, others are overlooked. Those who Hulme writes about in *the bone people*, Joe and Kerewin, both half Pākehā[6], who do not exist wholly in the Māori or the White world and face opposition from the dominant white culture can be seen as facing significant social prejudice.

Surveying Scholarship on Gender, Sexuality, and Violence

This project seeks to explore how the social issues represented in the novels not only reflect extended histories of colonial violence, but also to bring greater attention to the gendered dimensions of this violence. Therefore, it is crucial to explain my approach to gender and how it responds to existing scholarship. Gender research on Indigenous peoples of Australia and the Pacific often centers itself in anthropological or sociological research. Margaret Mead's early work in the Pacific at the beginning of the twentieth century, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), for example, has since been put under intense scrutiny by critics for placing a Western notion of gender roles and customs upon Indigenous peoples of Samoa. Even important contemporary gender scholars like Raewyn Connell, Bob Pease, or David Buchbinder in Australia are for the most part concerned with and informed by Western ideas. However, if the positioning of scholars is kept in mind, Western gender scholarship can be brought into productive conversation with Indigenous scholarship, a combination that can prove useful for analyzing Indigenous literary texts. Connell's articulation of marginalized masculinity has a valuable place in this inquiry, but only in as much as it is made clear that although

[6] Pākehā refers to a white New Zealander as opposed to a Māori individual.

Connell's theories help to explain violence within minority cultures as products of the colonial experience, they are not the only answer to the prevalence of violence in these novels or Indigenous culture at large.

Looking at Connell's ideas in connection with non-Western discussions on lateral violence and trauma will aid in explaining the role of violence and gender in an informed way. Much of her work focuses on the historical nature of social reality and practice. In her early work, Connell argues that "the conception of masculinity as a psychological essence obliterates questions about social structure and the historical dynamic of gender relations. At best, the formation of masculinity within the family is treated as a moment of reproduction of the gender order" (599). Refusing ideas of gender as essence, she combines empirical detail, structural analysis, critique, and its relevance to practice in her work. She focuses mostly on empirical data that deals with life history vis-à-vis education, family, and the workplace. Connell theorizes gender as a social practice. She considers that in observing gender one must look at the differences and similarities as well as explore processes of the body that relate to gender and sexuality such as childbirth, arousal, and intercourse. Connell asserts that the "reproductive arena" is not biologically based, but historical. Similarly, "gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not social practice reduced to the body" (71). Since biology does not determine the social, gender, therefore, exists. Gender responds to specific situations and generates alterations in social relations.

In Connell's 2005 essay, "The Social Organization of Masculinity," she first sets out to define masculinity. Connell explains that "all societies have cultural accounts of gender, but not all have the concept 'masculinity'" (67). Connell argues that only in the

modern era has the term come to be understood as a personality type based on behavior. For example, a person who is not masculine would behave in a more peaceful way instead of being violent, dominating, and aiming for sexual conquests. They would be conciliatory, sensitive, and "hardly able to kick a football" (67). Connell realizes that such conceptions of masculinity "presupposes a belief in individual difference and personal agency" (68). Such beliefs date to early modern Europe during the spread of capitalism and colonial Empire. Such concepts are also relational and cannot exist except with differences in femininity. Connell argues that "a culture which does not treat women and men as bearers of polarized character types, at least in principle, does not have a concept of masculinity in the sense of modern European/American culture" (68). Connell's approach to gender is significant to analyzing the works in this study because like race, gender is a construction that exists in different cultural and signifying representations throughout time and place. Social expectations around masculinity contribute to many of the instances of gendered violence that exist in these works.

Connell warns that instead of trying to provide a definition for masculinity in terms of the object or norm, scholars could benefit from observing how women and men conduct their gendered lives. Following this approach, one might define masculinity as "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the efforts of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (Connell 71). Masculinity is not a role one plays or an essence which inherently exists, but is instead a set of relationships and practices that are lived on a daily basis. These relationships and representations of them can change, and as a result, scholars must meet the call to look at contexts—those places in physical locations where

gender is lived and practiced and the dynamics of the relationships which impact the way gender is expressed in the world. Other scholars take Connell's theories and apply them to specific cultural spaces. For example, Jack Halberstam incorporates what Connell observes to discuss female masculinity in drag culture. Halberstam sees masculinity "as the connection between maleness and power" in his observations concerning drag-king performances (Kang et al 41). Such ideas are important to this study in guiding attention to how gender is lived in specific, physical and cultural spaces and how gendered identities are expressed through individual practices. Violence is one of these practices that men and women engage in to assert their gender.

Connell has also suggested that instead of one standard of masculinity, multiple masculinities trouble the gender binary; these masculinities differ based on race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. Connell provides a framework for thinking about interactions between different masculinities, drawing on the work of Antonio Gramsci to explain the dynamics between hegemonic forms of masculinity and other masculinities. Hegemony "refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life" (Connell 77). Hegemonic masculinity, therefore, describes socially accepted and celebrated forms of masculinity and operates to keep the patriarchy in charge. Connell writes, "hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of social practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of the patriarchy, which guarantees. . . the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (77). Not all men, however, display hegemonic masculinity. Subordinated masculinity is a term that Connell uses to recognize differences internal to the gender order, which she illustrates with the example of heterosexual masculinities

that are privileged over homosexual masculinities. She also recognizes that factors external to gender such as race or class mean that some men display other forms of masculinity or are not capable of attaining the ideals that define hegemonic masculinity; she applies the term marginalized masculinities to account for these forms of masculinity. This framework allows scholars to analyze varieties and complexities of masculinities and men's relationships. Many men of the privileged groups, Connell argues, use violence to hold on to their dominance. They intimidate women to retain power and other men due to rivalries. Violence is also crucial to gender politics among men. The gendered violence seen in the books represented in this study show that a complex conception of masculinity is needed to understand interactions among men and women and intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Connell's framework also opens up space for thinking about the specific ways that Indigenous men live out gendered relationships. Many Indigenous scholars have written about Indigenous men and the effect colonialism has had in relation to internalized violence. Indigenous critics have also looked at issues of gender and masculinity from an Indigenous perspective. Brendan Hokowhitu, member of the Māori iwi, Ngāti Pūkenga, in Northern New Zealand, has written at length on how critics in settler colonial studies should look at the ways specific Indigenous masculinities are presented.

Such attention to specific contexts is needed because constructions of gender across the Pacific are not the same. For instance, Niko Besnier shows how transgendered performances in Tonga rest on tensions between local and trans-local identities. Judith Raiskin's work in Samoa signals the existence of alternative gender constructs.

Anthropologist Ty P Kawika Tengan's work on masculinity in the Pacific shows that people are often situated in multiple ways, so they can draw on dominant gender constructs for contradictory, even subversive purposes. Steven Fischer shows that gender across the various Pacific regions changes over time. Melanesia, the site of Veramu's Fiji in *Moving through the Streets*, displayed a diversity of attitudes about women and their status in society before colonial invasion. Women's labor was needed in all Melanesian communities. Women actively helped accumulate wealth, but they helped to elevate males who dominated public office. Melanesian women rarely ever competed for their own prestige. Women's health items like banana leaves were often just given away in the Trobriands for mortuary ceremonies and women's status there is measured by the quality, not the quantity of which they are able to part with for these ceremonies. In order not to lose face, men also contributed to the store. Fischer explains that women, however, did create their own domestic subculture, with some prestige and status between other women. Here, men have no place or say. In nearly all aspects of Melanesian society, men and women occupy separate spaces, exclusive domains of activity. In Polynesia, the site of Hulme's *the bone people* in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the role of women differs in relation to private or public authority. Women frequently ranked higher than their brothers, but generally abstained from political power. Their higher rank allowed them to influence community issues through their son, brother, and/or husband—even the chieftain, as was the case in recent histories of Tonga, Tahiti, and Hawai‘i. Therefore, placing the whole of the Pacific under a Western prescribed concept of gender roles would not only be reductive, but it would also be ill-informed.

Skimming through any journal on masculinity or gender studies which discuss colonial or post-colonial literature, one can see the exciting new research being conducted that makes this project timely. A rise of scholarship on gender and sexuality studies in Indigenous culture and literature currently is underway. Important volumes like *Emergent Masculinities in the Pacific*, edited by Aletta Biersack and Martha Macintyre, *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, edited by Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration*, edited by Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson, *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies*, edited by Joanne Barker, *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality and Spirituality*, edited by Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, *Gender and Rights*, edited by G.N. Devy and Geoffrey V. Davis illustrate increasing scholarly engagement with Indigenous men and masculinities from different nations and cultures around the world. These studies, along with special issues of journals and conference proceedings, cover a wide range of topics and scholarly methods from historical recovery of traditions and vocabulary related to gender diversity to personal narratives to scholarly analyses of emergent Indigenous genres such as Aboriginal "chick lit," which explores Indigenous women's sexuality and relationships.

Turning to a specific example of current work in Indigenous sexuality studies, scholar Andrea Smith of the United States at the University of California—Riverside has made contributions to alternative sexuality models that have often excluded Indigenous experiences and conceptions of gender and sexuality. Although Smith is an American

critic, she identifies as a member of the Cherokee Nation and her writings highlight the limitations of Western critics who view Indigenous people from a strictly Western lens. Smith sees that "queer studies and native studies often do not intersect because Native studies is generally ethnographically entrapped within the project of studying Natives" (42). In "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," she argues that while queer studies have advanced in the academy by moving "past simple identity politics to interrogate the logics of heteronormativity," little research has been done that investigates Indigenous conceptions of and experiences of sexuality, leaving discussions dominated by a heteronormative settler-colonial mindset. Smith considers that "Native studies does not question the logics of Western philosophy that are premised on the self-determined subject's aspirations to achieve universality" (44).

Such scholarship from the developing field of Indigenous sexuality studies/queer studies proves relevant to this study, offering ways for thinking about Indigenous identities intersectionally. When Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw first coined the term *intersectionality* in 1989, the critical conception of intersectionality dealt primarily, at least in terms of Crenshaw's study, with black women and employment. Since Crenshaw's study, many other scholars, including Crenshaw herself, have expanded on the concept of intersectionality to include many other facets of identity, which under the umbrella of this theoretical discourse, form modern intersectionality studies. Some of these facets include, but are not limited to race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, education, age, and ethnicity. In "Intersectionality Queer Studies and Hybridity: Methodological Frameworks for Social Research," Aristea Fotopoulou argues that

"Intersectionality is the systematic study of the ways in which differences such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and other sociopolitical and cultural categories interrelate. In research employing the formulation of intersectionality. . . this interrelation—but not conflation—of differences is seen as central in how subordination is experienced and lived" (19). While Fotopoulou's central concern is intersectionality in queer studies, attention to the "interrelation—but not conflation—of differences" is also vital to analyzing literary depictions of Indigenous men.

As Crenshaw postulated in 1989 that black women must be recognized as both black and women and illustrated how this recognition affects them in terms of the law, Indigenous people possess their own intersectionalities that frame their relationships between Indigeneity, class, gender, and sexuality. While Kimberlé Crenshaw uses intersectionality to make observations of black women, Hokowhitu adapts this concept for his framing of "elite Indigenous masculinities." This model is also similar to Connell's conception of hegemonic and marginalized masculinities because it attempts to address the intersectional nature of class and gender. Hokowhitu asserts that this masculinity developed since colonization in part as a way to mimic other dominant forms of invader/settler masculinity that he calls "elite Indigenous masculinity." Writers like Keri Hulme interrogate "elite Indigenous masculinities" in her writing, which I will explore more in Chapter Three on *the bone people*, and using Indigenous scholarship is important in approaching these issues. In general, an intersectional approach to masculinities such as Connell's and Hokowhitu's is important to this study's analysis of violence because it challenges reductive essentialist notions of Indigenous men as naturally violent and allows for exploration of violence in relationship to complex social

and economic histories as well as intersections of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, education and other factors in the present.

In masculinity and gender queer studies of Indigenous scholarship, violence emerges as a place of colonial dissonance. Much scholarship centers on the effect of colonialism and the emergence of violence within and outside Indigenous communities. While colonialism is often seen as one of the main reasons for Indigenous violence, some scholarship, particularly by Indigenous women show that such observations, while partially true, do not extend far enough to measure the violence against Indigenous women by Indigenous men. Some studies have turned to the notion of lateral violence, a term most notably associated with scholarship from nursing and health fields, in looking at some of the causes of violence within Indigenous communities. Lateral violence emerges in Hulme's *the bone people* as Joe's drunken rages turn his bitterness and violence on to the one, he loves the most. While Simon is Pākehā, he is the adopted son of Joe, and therefore family or *Whānau*. Tai Walker articulates that

> Whānau is often translated as 'family,' but its meaning is more complex. It includes physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions and is based on whakapapa. Whānau can be multi-layered, flexible and dynamic. Whānau is based on a Māori and a tribal world view. It is through the whānau that values, histories and traditions from the ancestors are adapted for the contemporary world. (*TeAra*)

Whānau in Māori tradition and culture links families, the land, and each other together in ways that differ from notions of family held by non-Indigenous New Zealanders. Walker expands that "Whānau relationships include those with whāngai (foster children)" and those who are no longer living (*TeAra*). Thus, attention to specific cultural contexts in which gender is lived and practiced becomes important in understanding the complexities and the dynamics of the relationship of Joe and Simon.

My project, therefore, contributes to an on-going surge of studies seeking to complicate approaches to Indigenous gender and sexuality and, it also works to highlight how more nuanced analysis of masculinities in literary texts might shed light on the complex causes and effects of violence in Indigenous men's lives. My study looks at Indigenous works from three different colonized nations: Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Fiji, all with different histories and current issues. While the novels from Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand both feature racism and intolerance from white settler culture toward the Indigenous populations, Fiji's Indigenous population demonstrates intolerance toward other minorities. While the novels are published over a twelve-year period in the 1980s and 1990s, they each raise issues that continue to affect Indigenous society today. The focus on literary texts in this study remains important because other scholars tend to focus on history, law, and theory; literary expression serves to showcase specific cultures, languages, traditions, and the realities of colonial atrocities that are still being committed upon Indigenous people. Virtually no criticism of any sort exists on Joseph Veramu's *Moving through the Streets* apart from a scant five-paragraph book review that appeared shortly after the novel was first published. While Keri Hulme's *the bone people* and Archie Weller's *Day of the Dog* do not garner much attention these days in literary studies, Hulme's novel in particular did gain some critical attention at the time of its publication. This study returns attention to these under-explored novels and suggests that literary studies that address those complexities of men's lives and forms of masculinities remains a gap in current studies of Indigenous gender, sexualities, and violence.

Literary Pacifica

The Pacific islands boast an array of rich culture, art, and literary achievements, although the West largely ignores or rejects these accomplishments. In a 1914 book called *A Century in the Pacific*, W.H. Fitchett, B.A., L.L.D. from Melbourne reckons that the Pacific did not as of yet have any true artistic voice to speak of as opposed to the West, and that its beauty might best be experienced through tourism. Fitchett writes:

> The only way, indeed, to realize what, from the artistic point of view the Pacific is, is to lie in a deck-chair, under a cool awning, on the white deck of a great modern steamboat, as she traverses 'this broad belt of the world' and watch the lazily heaving sea, the white clouds drifting in the wind, the island peaks against the horizon, the splendours of tropical dawn and sunsets. (3-4)

Later, when identifying a literary purveyor of the Pacific, Fitchett points to the Western poet Homer as a likely candidate and reports that "the Pacific has not yet found its poet, or even its adequate artist in prose, and the best bit of literature for the deck of a steamboat running across the equatorial belt is the *Sailing Directions to the South Pacific*, issued by the Admiralty Office" (5). Discounting centuries of oral tradition and art, Fitchett speaks with the voice of the Westerner, uninformed in his assessment of Pacific literature and advancing colonialist ideas of the West as the spreader of civilization and knowledge to a wild, endless void.

Despite prejudices of Western thinkers, many native Pacific writers thrive, writing significant prose and poetry which speaks to a culture under assault from the West. Key figures in contemporary Pacific literature include Samoan author Albert Wendt who wrote *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* (1979) and several other novels, short stories, and poetry. Witi Ihimaera, an Aotearoa/New Zealand writer of Māori descent has written novels, short stories, and even librettos. Ihimaera became a writer because he felt Māori

were misunderstood in much of the writing he read as a child. His book *Whale Rider* (1987) was made into a major motion picture in 2002, and his work has received many awards and accolades. *Kava in the Blood* (2008) was a major entry into the study of the Fijian coup d'état of 1987 and won its author, Peter Thomson the EH McCormick Prize for his autobiographical account. Arlene Griffen's important entry into the literary oeuvre of Fiji is her 1997 compiled and edited volume, *With Heart and Nerve and Sinew: Post-Coup Writing from Fiji* that gathers together a collection of poems, stories, essays, letters, excerpts from diaries, copies of newspaper and journal articles, photographs, art, cartoons, reflections and even a play from the island nation following the 1987 coup d'états. She dedicates the book to the late Fijian Prime Minister, Timoci Uluivuda Bavadra, who served one month. She includes an epigraph for Bavadra by Nobel laureate V.S. Naipaul. Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors* (1990) from Aotearoa/New Zealand is required reading in some colleges and universities for post-colonial and world literature surveys and became a major motion picture. Samoan author Sia Figiel published *Where We Once Belonged* (1996), *They Who Do Not Grieve* (2003), and several other books of poetry and short prose. *Where We Once Belonged* marks the first instance of a book being published in the United States by a Samoan writer. Epeli Hau'ofa was an important author and anthropologist from Tonga, born to missionaries in Papua New Guinea, and later moved to Fiji where he in 2009 died. His major works include *Mekeo: Inequality and Ambivalence in a Village Society* (1981), *Tales of the Tikongs* (1983), *Kisses in the Nederends* (1987), a novel, and a collection poetry, essays, and short fiction called *We Are the Ocean* (2008).

The state of current literary criticism about Australia and the Pacific is wide-reaching and a flourishing discipline. Many journals and conferences are available which produce criticism or present papers on literary works and other important topics from the Antipodes and Pacific region, internally, but also in North America, Europe, and Asia. I personally am affiliated with a literary group in North America called the American Association of Australasian Literary Studies (AAALS), which publishes the journal *Antipodes* and hosts a yearly conference in a different city in North America each year. While there is special attention and interest in topics of Indigenous literature from Australia and the Pacific, other genres of Australian and Pacific literature are presented during their annual conference. *Antipodes* publishes creative works by Australian and Pacific writers as well as includes criticisms of different aspects of Australian and Pacific literary topics. The Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL) is an important conference within Australia which holds a bi-annual conference and publishes a journal called the *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* (*JASAL*). Important creative writers have been invited by both conferences in the past as the keynote speaker, including Kim Scott, Alexis Wright, Peter Carey, Thomas Keneally, Anne Brewster, David Malouf, Jeanine Leane, and many others.

Several anthologies have appeared that represent different areas of literary criticism on-going in Australia and the Pacific. Michaela Moura-Koçoğlu's *Narrating Indigenous Modernities: Transcultural Dimension in Contemporary Māori Literature* (2011) highlights different issues of race relations and cultural and critical interpretation of Māori writing in Aotearoa/New Zealand. While the volume contains many different essays on literary works by Māori authors, much of the criticism focuses on primarily

place, un/belonging, and identity. No essay in the entire volume concentrates specifically on aspects of violence in Māori literature. While the author includes an essay on Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors*, violence does not generate the interrogation in the author's analysis. Instead, the essay focuses on place. Keri Hulme's *the bone people* is mentioned only in connection to the larger body of Māori literary history and more attention is put on one of her short stories, "Midden Mine," which is more apropos to one of the ideas presented here about the subject of anthropoidal studies. The short story "features a group of anthropologists with their students at a West Coast site" where they uncover human bones (Moura-Koçoğlu 156). The idea of messing with the remains of the departed is presented in this story as the narrator is told by a child, "'You should know better to pick up pieces of people!'" (qtd. in Moura-Koçoğlu 157). While Moura-Koçoğlu's book is very informative, Keri Hulme's body of work generates a small percentage of the discussion in the book with a sizeable devotion to the literary works of Witi Ihimaera and other Māori writers.

Editor Belinda Wheeler has produced two different anthologies about Australian Aboriginal literature. In *A Companion to Australian Aboriginal Literature* (2013), several Indigenous and non-Indigenous critics review different aspects of Aboriginal Australian literature from humor or identity to specific genres like film, literary fiction, poetry, and drama. Wheeler's introduction to the volume calls attention to the emerging canon of Australian Indigenous writers. Wheeler's *A Companion to the Works of Kim Scott* (2016) looks at different aspects from Noongar writer Kim Scott's body of work. Again, none of the essays in any of these volume deal specifically with representations of gender and violence.

The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature (2007) looks at literary works from both Australia and the Pacific. As the name suggests, all the essays in this volume are connected to issues of belonging/unbelonging in these works. A chapter on *the bone people* discusses the reception of the novel and the history of its publication, but does not specifically address the instances of violence in the book. *Pacific Islands Writing: The Postcolonial Literatures of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Oceania* (2007) by Michelle Keown organizes literature of the region based on historical eras from the age of exploration and initial conquest to contemporary times. Keown's analysis interrogates diaspora, oral histories and memory, and notes the increase in publication of Māori and Pacific literature beginning in the 1970s to the present. There are discussions of European representation in the literature as well as Māori warrior culture but from a more historical vantage point. What Keown does well here is look at various aspects of the Pacific region from English as well as non-English colonization. The book explores Indigenous literature of the Pacific as well as European settler literature from a variety of texts and genre including fiction and non-fiction as well as oral, textual, and other types of literature. The book does not focus singularly on specific writers except in broad strokes rather than close examinations.

Chapter Overviews

My study opens with a discussion of Archie Weller's *Day of the Dog*. The novel was published at a very turbulent time for Aboriginal Australians. 1981 was pre-*Mabo* time, and a time when Indigenous writing did not receive the same kind of acknowledgement as seen today. The Stolen Generations had only officially ended ten

years before, and the decade was filled with protest and debate on Indigenous land claims and Aboriginal rights. Weller wrote his novel in a period of intense and personal upheaval in his life in a few short weeks. The novel explores the incarceration and reentry into society by an Aboriginal man, Doug Dooligan, in Western Australia. Weller himself had recently been released from incarceration when he wrote the novel. The novel recounts Doug's journey into a world of constant intolerance and violence, often fueled by wrongful assertions from the outside world about Aboriginals. Weller's book shows the realities of daily life through these portrayals including crime, violence, and drinking but also incorporates moments of joy and survival. Weller includes the topical but fraught issue of land ownership in *Day of the Dog*. Doug's attempt to find the dream of regaining the lands his family had once owned, and his father sold—a dream troubled by many obstacles and interventions—ends in failure. Ultimately Doug becomes a casualty to the violence he hoped to escape when he came out of prison.

From topics of abuse suffered in prison to navigating an unforgiving society, Weller's novel exposes contemporary problems facing Aboriginal men at the time. The chapter explores peer pressures and the ways the community itself affects Dougie's reentry into society. The dream of land ownership is most prevalent in this chapter because ownership of the land for Dougie comes with acceptance and reclamation of his self-worth and possibilities. His version of land ownership, while having some legal claim, goes deeper than possession of a physical document. The ownership of land in Weller's novel demonstrates that the appreciation of land is something much deeper and more significant: the land is tied to culture and family in a way that goes beyond Western notions of ownership. Weller explained that many critics missed the point of his writing

because too much focus was put on the violence and drinking and other negative aspects of Aboriginal lives. While these issues exist, and Weller does not skirt them in the novel, there is a deeper meaning which Weller hopes readers will understand in his work about the Aboriginal people. The beauty and everyday moments shown in *Day of the Dog* include Doug's experiences to regain his family's lost land, his relationship with Polly, and the memories and happy moments he experiences with his friends. This chapter explores those beautiful moments along with the realities of violence to show that while violence and bad moments do happen, there are many moments of goodness too.

The next chapter discusses Keri Hulme's *the bone people* to bring attention to the role of violence, marginalized masculinities, and alternative understandings of gender and sexuality in a post-colonial Aotearoa/New Zealand. The novel was published in 1983, shortly after Weller's novel. The book won many accolades when first published, but the publication was fraught with much opposition in the beginning. Few publishers were willing to take the novel due to its unusual content and complex style. The novel concerns a young white boy's relationship with two half-Māori adults, who both feel ostracized by the outside world and retreat into themselves, both physically and emotionally. Joe, the adopted father to white Simon, inflicts much pain on the boy as he abuses him as an outlet to face the colonial past and his own sufferings. Kerewin, the protector and sometimes absent accomplice in this abuse is at first unwilling to let Simon into her Tower and her heart, although she soon grants admittance to both. This chapter looks at this unconventional family and the ways lateral violence affect Māori culture and disrupts the family unit.

The final body chapter culminates in looking at *Moving through the Streets* to shine a light on a novel that has not been given any attention by scholars. The novel, however, has much to offer contemporary scholarship by the way it illuminates how colonialism continues to affect those who live in Fiji. The novel was published in 1993, a decade after Hulme's novel and five years after two coup d'états changed the government in Fiji. The novel takes place in Fiji's capital, Suva. Many of the young men and women in the novel are set in a world of constant violence and social tumult. The films and media from the West create false messages that to become rich and achieve, one must commit violence and act out the behaviors seen in these crime-fueled imports. This chapter looks at the way Western messages and media create impossible standards for Indigenous Fijian youth where dreaming becomes the only way out of the pain and violence of their daily lives. Much of the violence seen in this book is gendered or directed toward racial minorities. The main protagonist, Sakaraia, like Weller's is also a young man recently released from prison facing constant peer pressure from his friends and the community.

Although the novels emerged in slightly different time periods in different countries, all three depict cultural assault on Indigenous people and the colonial dissonance found in their world. Examining these works in relationship to Western and Indigenous scholarship about gender and violence reveals the realities and complexities of violence often obscured in narratives that are reductive to the Indigenous experience. These narratives attempt to make broad sweeps placing violence as inherent in Indigenous communities without analyzing the roots or showing the non-violent moments. In contrast, carefully examining moments of gendered violence in relation to

cultural contexts helps to elucidate the need for change and advance the conversation beyond surface explanations and stereotypes. Because colonialism still exists in the world and has not simply died off or stopped affecting the lives of Indigenous people, investigating these stories and helping to shed light on injustices is an important step in advancing the movement of change. Exploring violence in these works opens a line of inquiry as to why violence occurred in the first place, how it continues to affect Indigenous people, and how—if we follow the imagination of Kim Scott and other Indigenous writers—we might work toward more just, less violent futures.

CHAPTER TWO: A DIFFERENT CONCEPTION OF VIOLENCE IN ARCHIE WELLER'S *DAY OF THE DOG*

Upon his release from the Broome jail in the early 1980s, Noongar writer Archie Weller wrote his first novel in the span of six weeks. In a fit of anger over what he describes as a "wrongful conviction" ("Biography"), Weller wrote *Day of the Dog* (1981). Similar to his own experience, *Day of the Dog* looks at an Aboriginal man recently released from jail. Weller, in "Thoughts on Aboriginal Writing," calls the novel his "first true breakthrough" and a "personal book," confirming that the book was "based on many of [his] friends" (50). Recalling the monumental shift in his career since *Day of the Dog*, Weller states:

> Since the publication of 'The Day of the Dog'[1] in 1983[2] I have been invited to many conferences all over Australia and the world. I have written many critical essays such as 'Aboriginal Men in Literature', 'The Portrayal of Aboriginals in Literature' and given several talks on the subject. I have published a collection of short stories called 'Going Home' published by Allen and Unwin in 1986. I have had short stories accepted in several anthologies and had a number of my poems published as well. I have had several plays performed and was the editor of a book on West Australian Aboriginal writing entitled 'Us fellas'. I also worked for a number of years on turning my book 'The Day of the Dog' into a film called 'Blackfellas' and this was interesting to learn of the development of a film script. (50)

Weller's accomplishments as an Aboriginal Australian writer, while significant, do not create the same fervor in literary circles today. Although Weller has published several short stories and books of verse, his next novel would not be released until nearly two

[1] Weller refers to the novel as 'The Day of the Dog,' although it was published as *Day of the Dog*.
[2] Weller used the year 1983 either mistakenly here, because *Day of the Dog* was published in 1981, or he was referring to that year as when he started receiving invitations to various conferences and readings.

decades later[3]. Weller does admit, however, that he "enjoys [writing] the short story more" (51). The film, *Blackfellas*, based on *Day of the Dog*, won two Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards, but that was in 1993[4], and Weller has yet to replicate the success of his first novel in literary terms. Still, there has been some acclaim generated for Weller's shorter fiction. Weller's script for "Confessions of a Headhunter," co-written with Sally Riley, won the Western Australian Premier's Book Award, the Cinema Nova Award, and was nominated for an AFI Award for Best Screenplay in a Short Film, while the film won an AFI for Sally Riley as Best Short Fiction Film and later the Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards in 2001 for Best Short (*IMDB*). Weller's current endeavors include his activism with regard to wrongful confinements and abuse of Indigenous Australians in prisons.

Most of the academic attention surrounding Weller presently concerns his shorter fiction with Janine Little, who has conducted personal interviews with the author, being the leading Archie Weller expert. Relatively few scholars discuss *Day of the Dog* today, although its relevance continues to be seen in the growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders being arrested or racially profiled in Australia. The continued racially motivated surveillance of Indigenous Australians has not seen the same amount of attention outside of Australia. Americans' awareness of racial profiling has increased since 9/11 and even more in 2020 after the death of George Floyd and the rise of the

[3] Weller's second novel, published in 1998, was *Land of the Golden Clouds*. Weller does write in "Thoughts on Aboriginal Writing" that he began writing when he was twelve years old and "wrote perhaps ten novels none of which, of course, will ever be printed" (49) before *Day of the Dog*.
[4] David Ngoombujarra won the AFI for Best Actor in a Supporting Role and James Ricketson won Adapted Screenplay. The film received two other AFI nominations for James Ricketson as Best Director and John Moore for Best Actor (*IMDB*).

Black Lives Matters movement. Critiques of the treatment of Indigenous Australians in the justice system of contemporary Australia have also increased, but not to the level of the conversation ongoing in current American culture. When Weller was incarcerated and when he wrote *Day of the Dog*, even less attention was given to the treatment of Indigenous Australians within the justice system or why Indigenous Australians were disproportionately incarcerated. Weller's novel was even published pre-*Mabo*, the High Court decision in 1992 that changed the political premise of *terra nullius* and reshaped the story of Australia's own founding. This chapter will investigate how violence at the time the novel was written stems from a past of colonial and racial injustices that continue to permeate Australia to this day. The depiction of violence in this novel is not meant to show a negative view of Indigenous Australians as a violent people, but to illuminate how violence is only one part of the complex lives of these peoples, lives that also include beauty and traditional knowledge with strong ties to the land.

Indigenous Incarcerations in Australia

For many Indigenous Australians, incarceration has become commonplace. Systemic bias and racial discrimination are both words that critic Chris Cunneen contends are most associated with the overincarceration of Indigenous Australians. Many periods of confinement result in deaths in custody as demonstrated in the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody's report. The relevance of the study, although now three decades old, can still be felt in contemporary Australia as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, who represent 2% of the total population of the country, constitute 27% of the nation's prison population ("Disproportionate Incarceration Rate").

The Australian Law Reform Commission informs that twenty out of every one thousand Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders are incarcerated as the rates of incarceration between 2006 and 2016 have increased by 41% ("Disproportionate Incarceration Rate"). Prison reform activists argue that Australia must look at the country's overdependence on prisons to avoid becoming like the United States, as many Indigenous Australians are incarcerated for "petty offenses" (Gleeson). Activism remains strong to combat the physical and emotional abuse that go on as well toward Indigenous Australians in custody. Disability rights researcher, Kriti Sharma, sets up a grim portrait of life in custody in the beginning of her article entitled, "The Nightmare Lives of Indigenous Prisoners in Australia." Sharma writes:

> A prisoner lies in his solitary confinement cell in the safety unit at Lotus Glen Correctional Centre, northern Queensland. Prisoners in solitary confinement typically spend 22 hours or more a day locked in small cells, sealed with solid doors, without meaningful social interaction with other prisoners; most contact with prison and health staff is perfunctory and may be wordless. (3)

Beyond this single example of a prison in Queensland, Sharma's piece looks at the inhumane conditions many Indigenous inmates face in Australian lockups throughout the country. Prisons, like the ones where Weller and the main character of his novel, Doug Dooligan, were housed are "rife with racism and abuse" (Sharma 3). Archie Weller's activism in response to the imprisonment of Australian Aboriginals came out of his own experiences in the Australian judicial system.

Weller took his frustrations into writing *Day of the Dog*, which was published when Weller was only twenty-three years old. The novel is set in the urban squalor and surrounding countryside of Perth in Western Australia. The injustices Weller interrogates in the novel with regard to Doug and Indigenous Australian culture as a whole marked a

milestone in Indigenous Australian literature due to the realistic portrayals of urban life and interactions with local authorities. The novel presents a raw and unapologetic portrait of a young man caught in the throes of unseen potentials, unable to escape his past mistakes or shake the threats to his current dreams. Ultimately Weller makes no assumptions that life for Indigenous Australians will be changed by his story. Drawing on his own past experience with White Australia and the criminal justice system, with the systemic abuses both racially motivated and socially constructed in White Australians' perceptions toward Aboriginals, Weller shows the reader that the inequalities confronting Aboriginals in modern Australia stem from a culture that is innately biased toward non-whites. Australia's present political landscape, which prominently features radical groups and alt-right extremists such as Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, shows that the biases still persist.

Because of the present experience of Indigenous Australians, a careful analysis of a novel like *Day of the Dog* has much to offer in the way of elucidating a history of these biases. Through analyzing the violence, incarceration, and alienation from traditional relationships with land in *Day of the Dog*, I will show how the lives of Indigenous Australians are complicated in Weller's depiction of masculinity. Violence is often seen as a means to realign power imbalances and reinforce autonomy for Aboriginal men. While some scholars assert the violence of Indigenous men comes from a place of colonial shame, as an attempt to reassert their manhood, many Indigenous women scholars see gendered violence in a much more nuanced way, where colonialism can account for a large part of the violence but is not an overarching explanation for every instance of violence. My analysis here is not intended to whitewash the evils of

colonialism, but to complicate the issues that surround violence in Indigenous communities and point to other causes—ones that incorporate a history of racism with the predominant current notions about maleness.

Aboriginal Lives, Land, and Identity

In order to understand the scope of Weller's novel, an examination of Aboriginal identities and historical contexts of Aboriginal-settler relationships is necessary. The following fictional scene by Kim Scott illustrates how Indigenous Australians have been imagined as "others" by White Australia. One of Kim Scott's short stories, "Capture," indicates the lack of value and consideration toward Indigenous peoples through his tale of a creature being captured by a pair of scientists. Scott writes:

> So its capture had not been intentional. True, they had set traps, but they had wanted some other warm-blooded and indigenous thing; some other shy, elusive and wary creature to study.
>
> Humanoid, it seemed. Human-like. Sort of. It was hard to know what it was, really, but this much was clear: it wasn't healthy. Even an untrained observer such as you or I—let alone anyone able to render a creature so easily observable as this one had become—would have noticed blood and mucus seeping from the cracked skin of its nostrils and lips. (26)

Throughout Australia's dark past, treatment of Indigenous Australians has been less than humane from forced separation of children from their families to abuse in orphanages and asylums to the outright denial that Australia even had any inhabitants. The entire premise of Australia was founded on the lie of *terra nullius* that there were no inhabitants on the continent. Scott's use of words like "humanoid" and "human-like" signals the comparison to a human being, and with words like "indigenous" there is a larger implication that Scott is using the capture of this creature to symbolize the capture and

dissection of Aboriginal people. The passage questions the way that White Australia sees the Aboriginals as "other," something maybe not even human, but a "creature," from primitive derivation, and maybe even nature itself. As Natalie Quinlivan describes in her analysis of Scott's story, "The silencing, exploitation and imprisonment of the creature is suggestive of the colonial abuse of Aboriginal people who, treated like flora and fauna, were studied as specimens" (43).

Because the abuses of Aboriginals by White Australia are one of the main concerns in my interrogation, it is important to look at how Weller positions himself in relationship to these abuses. Weller explains "Aboriginality is by far the most important issue in my stories and if I have a message then it is this. Aboriginal people are alive and well in many shapes and forms" (52). According to Susan Hosking, "Archie Weller has always shown an affinity with semirural and urban Aboriginal people, particularly young Aboriginal men who struggle to survive on the fringes of the city. Much of his writing takes the point of view of 'ordinary city people who just happen to be Aboriginal'—people who are removed from traditional culture, yet still feel the pull of that culture." Doug Dooligan in *Day of the Dog* often feels a tension between his family and the traditional values he experienced while growing up in the country and the rough streets of Perth, where temptations and influences propel Doug into sometimes dangerous directions. Like Doug, "Weller clearly identifies with an urban Aboriginal underclass that belongs nowhere" (Hosking). Doug and many of his friends see their existence as aimless, although there is a hope at least for Doug. Doug dreams of buying land and creating a better life for himself and his mother. For Doug, the idea of ownership, of having land, does not signify only a legal attestation, but an actual physical tie to the

land, a reclaiming of what once belonged to his family. Aboriginal ties to the land are well documented in their literature, their songs, their art, even their language. As they were once the stewards and owners of Australia prior to the intrusion of Europeans, many Indigenous Australians see ownership of land as a reclaiming what was once theirs.

While emphasizing the importance of Aboriginality in his literary work, Weller also insists on the need to respect differences among Indigenous cultures. According to Weller, "The word Aboriginal is deceptive and most indigenous writers call themselves Murris, Nungas, Kooris, Nyamitje, Wongai Nyoongah or any tribal groups that still exist in the Desert regions of our vast country" (52). Weller further contends that whites have a misconception about Aboriginal people. Weller considers that "the problem is that many people tend to think of Aboriginals as all in one group when, in point of fact, there are several hundred groups all different to the other yet all united in the blanket of oppression, Racism, and misunderstanding that is thrown over them" (52). Weller observes that "for someone like [himself] who is fair-skinned with hazel brown eyes and reddish brown hair, legacies of English, Scottish, Irish, German, and other assorted ancestors being Aboriginal is a particular hard task" (52). While literary critics and the media have questioned Weller's identity as an Aboriginal writer, Weller identifies as a Noongar writer, and many of his characters and their experiences are strongly tied to the Noongar culture. The Noongar people occupied southwest Western Australia for over 40,000 years and consider it their "right and responsibility to care for [their] country" (*Derbalnara*). Nyungr boodjar "extends from north of Jurien Bay, inland to north of Moora and down to the southern coast between Bremer Bay and east of Esperance" (*Derbalnara*). Traditionally, Noongar boodjar included fourteen distinct groups:

"Amangu, Balardong, Juat, Kaneang, Koreng, Minang, Njakinjaki, Njunga, Pibelmen, Pindjarup, Wardandi, Whatadjuk, Wiilman, and Wudjari" (*Derbalnara*). I would be remiss in not mentioning here that while other critics use alternate spellings, I choose the spelling of "Noongar" in this chapter because this is the most current usage and spelling by Kim Scott and other Indigenous scholars who are undergoing the language recovery of the Noongar language. Weller's novel was written in the early 1980s, a time before this restoration, and he uses a different spelling in his own novel. As I will look at the novel using both Western and Indigenous interpretation, I feel this usage is in keeping with the most appropriate current preference for the spelling.

Day of the Dog shows the difficulty of Aboriginality and how fitting into a society that regards Aboriginality as something other than valued or appreciated can break down an individual. Weller focuses on the Noongar in *Day of The Dog*, celebrating the distinctive heritage of the Noongar people and their stories and complicating stereotypes that fail to register differences between Indigenous peoples. At the same time, while this novel is grounded in the specificity of Noongar culture, it also allows for recognition of similarities with other stories all over Australia where Indigenous men are forced to make similar decisions and face a similar criticism from White Australians. Racism and intolerance for Indigenous Australians after all does not end within the city limits of Perth or the pages of *Day of the Dog.*

Theorizing Violence in *Day of the Dog*

In the following, I will look at the interplay of violence vis-à-vis Doug Dooligan's narrative and the larger implications being made about colonial Australia in Archie

Weller's *Day of the Dog*. Several theoretical concepts will be outlined in this chapter that lay the framework for how systemic violence keeps Aboriginal autonomy stifled. *Day of the Dog* examines the daily struggles and ultimate disaster for a Noongar man, Doug Dooligan, who, like Weller, was left with feelings of anger after his release from confinement. While Weller turned his frustrations into writing, Doug celebrates with drinking and reuniting with the same friends who were responsible for his incarceration in the first place. Weller does not make Doug innocent, however, but he also does not make Doug wholly responsible for his incarceration and ultimate downfall. Instead, through a series of unfortunate circumstances, the reader discovers Doug's Aboriginality determines that he has no future in White Australia. Violence and temptations amidst constant hopelessness and intolerance plague Doug throughout the novel. Doug's yearning for freedom, however, extends beyond the confines of the prison he left into the fulfillment of a dream began by his father to reclaim his family's home. Doug's dreams for love with an Aboriginal girl named Polly and regaining his father's land are thwarted by White Australia's unwillingness to admit an Aboriginal man into their exclusionary club. With those illusory dreams dwindling, Doug must make the ultimate decision to succumb to the pressure to passively accept a white world or use violence to create an alternative. The novel does not present many options for Doug. Activism while another possibility that excludes violence but does not signal surrender never fully resonates in the novel. The maltreatment of Doug and others by the local authorities throughout the novel serves as another type of violence that Weller uses to show how often violence must meet violence. The violence seen throughout the novel between Doug and his friends only counterbalances the violence from White Australia.

The use of violence among the colonized is often seen as a means to receive justice. Violence is seen by some scholars like Frantz Fanon in *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) as the only way to seek true justice. Because Fanon saw violence as a defining characteristic of colonialism, only equal violence from the oppressed could counteract or upend colonial violence by the oppressor. Fanon writes that "for the native. . . violence represents the absolute line of action" (85). The colonized begin to see the violent actions of the colonizer and begin to see retaliatory violence as a means of regaining power. Fanon goes on to argue:

> Daily life becomes quite simply impossible. . . The violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity. This reign of violence will be the more terrible in proportion to the size of the implantation from the mother country. The development of violence among the colonized people will be proportionate to the violence exercised by the threatened colonial regime. (87)

Although violence can be viewed by individuals like Doug as a way to "fight back" at the establishment, the dominant authority sees such retaliation as counter intuitive to its aim of conquer and control. Fanon contends that passivity and activism do not create the desired result like violence. Still, toughness or a willingness to use force can sometimes engender nominal power.

Urban life for an Aboriginal with a criminal past like Doug often repeats this familiar pattern of using violence to resolve issues as a means to be heard and feared. Many Western and Indigenous scholars including Martin Nakata, Bob Pease, Graeme Harper, and Henry Reynolds argue that a great deal of the violence enacted in the Indigenous communities of Australia as well as in the Indigenous Australian literature has its roots in colonialism, wherein traditional power and reverence of the mob's

patriarchy is upended in light of White conquest. Once the heads of families, native men are stripped of the patriarchal role and demoralized by colonization. The loss of respect among these men can be countered with violent action that some see as a thrust to regain their respect in the community. Unfortunately, alcohol abuse and crime fueled by materialism also takes a significant toll on these men.

Many Indigenous feminists such as Melissa Lucashenko, on the other hand, reject such explanations for the violence and have explored how systemic violence among Indigenous communities, while having some connection to the historical encounter of colonial disruption, cannot be solely linked to this cause. Weller himself argues against the continued portrayal of Indigenous men as violent, although his novel has many violent episodes. One of the chief misconceptions about Weller's work occurs by White academics according to Janine Little. In "'Deadly' Work: Reading the Short Fiction of Archie Weller," Little asserts that some readers and critics might misunderstand him "as a chronicler of despair, squalor, and violence" (1), or as Chris Tiffin claims a "'relentless realist' with a bent for the romantic" (qtd. in Little 1). Little goes on to explain that "These patterns of reading have been perpetuated mostly by white academics/audiences who construct the frames for reading Aboriginal literature in a cultural context" (1). While the conclusion is true that many White academics tend to incorporate all Aboriginal experiences into a shared one stemming from the beginning of colonialism to present on-going oppressions, writers like Kim Scott and Weller see violence and its results as preventable. Weller sees colonialism as partly responsible for much of the violence, but does not believe in focusing on the violence as the only context of Aboriginal life.

While Little draws attention to ways that White critics have (mis)read Weller, Indigenous writers and critics have raised other questions relevant to interpreting Weller's depictions of violence. For instance, Mudrooroo[5], charges that Weller fails to produce "authentic Aboriginal prose'" (Little 1). This charge raises questions about what kinds of writing styles and content count as authentically Aboriginal and who is able to decide, intersecting with complex debates about Aboriginal identity beyond writing as well. According to Mary Ann Hughes, "at a conference in 1985, the question was asked of Jack Davis[6]: 'Some people say that Archie Weller isn't really an Aboriginal, Faith Bandler isn't really an Aboriginal. What do you define as including Aboriginal writing in Australia? How does it encompass these people?'" (21). The question of an authentic Aboriginal style and identity remains a fraught topic in some academic circles even today. Paul Behrendt explains that the Australian Commonwealth has a specific definition of Aboriginal identity: "'someone of Aboriginal descent who identifies as an Aborigine and who is accepted by the Aboriginal Community as being Aborigine. The qualification of acceptance by the Aboriginal Community has recently been deleted'" (qtd. in Hughes 21). Another problem in this wording is the need to homogenize Aboriginal experiences and identities into one single classification that devalues Aboriginal identity. Hughes states that "Aboriginal identity joins together various groups

[5] Questions as to the Aboriginality of Mudrooroo (Colin Johnson) have been raised since 1996, and he previously had excluded another Aboriginal writer, Sally Morgan, as not fitting his definition of Aboriginality. In the1996 article by Victoria Laurie called "Identity Crisis" from *The Weekend Australian* that Hughes mentions, Mudrooroo's sister engaged in research into their family history (22). Mudrooroo's sister argues that Mudrooroo's ancestors were of Anglo-Celtic heritage from his mother and African American ancestry on his father's side (Hughes 22). The article created a huge controversy at the time with many other articles appearing that denounced Mudrooroo (Hughes 22). Laurie argued "the all-important question of his mother's identity is left unexplored; so, too, by implication, his Aboriginal credentials'" (qtd. in Hughes 22).

[6] Noongar poet, playwright, and activist.

of people from all over Australia whose traditional backgrounds represent different racial types and different cultures and languages" (21). During the controversy surrounding questions of Mudrooroo's own status as Aboriginal, writer Victoria Laurie argued in her article that "'the controversy of judging a person's 'real' Aboriginality could trigger a minefield. . . Isn't it the obverse side of racism, coming after humiliating decades in which people's ethnicity was decided by white officials using labels like 'full-blood', 'quarter-caste' and 'octoroon', or racist notions of how a 'real' Aboriginal person should look?'"[7] (qtd. in Hughes 23). Questions like these are at their very core symbolic of the injustices many Indigenous peoples have endured through anthropological research, the kind that create opposition and elicit distrust from Indigenous people. Furthermore, my feeling on the topic is that as a Western academic, I have no right to question what an Indigenous Knower says with regard to the legitimacy of their culture or identity.

Weller's writing does show many dark and depressing moments of daily struggles for Australian Aboriginals. Darkness exists, but even in darkness, Weller wants to highlight the beauty of the Aboriginal experience, where violence serves as just one part of that experience. In an interview with Weller conducted by Little, Weller states:

> The main thrust of white criticism [is]. . . that my stories come from the pen of an angry young man. All the European readers see in my stories are sad and horrible things of [Nyoongah] society that I write about: the racism, the police brutality, the drinking, the third-rate lifestyles. They don't see the humour that exists alongside this unnecessary living, or the beauty the characters perceive as they look back at the paradise that was their ancestors' heritage. However, as long as there is one redneck racist in this country then I feel I should write about things as they are. (2)

[7] Despite Laurie making this statement about judging Aboriginality or attempting to make generic labels, she did just that with the publication of her article on Mudrooroo's ancestry.

Weller wants the reader to view his work as a product of a rich culture full of diversity and history but also is making a statement about the reality facing his people in the modern world. Martin Nakata terms this a "cultural interface." Colleen McGloin, another Western academic responds to his approach after hearing Nakata speak at a conference: "I [McGloin] want to make sense of how non-Indigenous academics function at, and contribute to this site of struggle: how I (we) learn to understand protocol, how we can be effective contributors to a rigorous anti-colonial pedagogy, and how we become savvy about what is required to support an Indigenous politics" (36). Like McGloin, I, too, am attempting to examine the world of Aboriginal discourse from a Western standpoint, but answering the call of Nakata to put Indigenous writers at the center of my inquiry, I am carefully highlighting and listening to Weller, tuning in to the positives that can exist alongside the violence.

In their article analyzing colonialism and race and its impact on adolescent violence, Katherine Irwin and Karen Umemoto remind the reader that James W. Messerschmidt has argued masculine identity can be achieved vis-à-vis violence and shows direct linkage to marginalization (4). Messerschmidt, arguing about violence among marginalized adolescent males in the United States, explains that "most young males come to identify the connection between masculinity-power-aggression-violence" and as marginalized men are "economically powerless, they remain powerful in terms of gender" (qtd. in Irwin and Umemoto 4). Irwin and Umemoto conclude that "violence or the threat of violence is one way for men to establish their dominance, control, and autonomy in worlds where they have few legitimate avenues by which to take on traditional male identities such as a family provider, head of the household, and leader in

civic life" (4). My aim is to unpack that while masculinity has a role in violent action, for Indigenous Australians violence represents a means to regain legitimacy in the face of colonial oppression. White Australia's continued policy of surveillance and incarceration continues to disrupt the social dynamics of families and communities. Weller's novel often receives attention due to its extreme violence, which is often misunderstood. Weller does not assert that violence manifests itself as a result of Doug Dooligan's actions alone, but as a result of the environment in which Doug finds himself. I will examine, then, violence as one of part of the cultural location of Aboriginal men, which is often conveniently framed in a way that reduces the complexity of Aboriginal men as purveyors of violence.

Cultural Complexities of Violence in *Day of the Dog*

In Weller's first description of the Aboriginal people, the narrator explains that "the bubbly, noisy circle of nyoongahs has been visited by the police twice and the third time there will be some arrests for sure because tempers are starting to warm up now after a day's drinking" (1). This description, in many ways, exemplifies a daily experience for many Aboriginals who are constantly being profiled by police. The description also sets the framework for the parallel assessments Weller wants readers to understand in his novel. Weller critiques both Aboriginal and White culture from the very beginning of *Day of the Dog*. Weller draws the intersection of violence and the effects of alcohol as an Aboriginal burden with its roots in a colonial past, and alcohol is shown as an arbiter in a significant amount of the violence that occurs in these opening pages. The abuse of alcohol can be linked in large part to the historical record of Whites supplying alcohol as

an historical means to pacify and maintain control over Aboriginals. In *Day of the Dog*, after being released "from Freemantle jail after eighteen long, lonely months" (Weller 1), Doug Dooligan celebrates immediately by becoming drunk with old acquaintances. He reunites with his friends, mostly notably Pretty Boy Floyd, who is responsible for Doug's arrest in the first place, and Sylvester "Silver" Jackson. The opening lines of the novel lay the framework for the prominent themes of alcohol abuse, anticipated violence, and the Aboriginal interaction with the police which reappears again and again throughout the novel. Weller writes: "he's [Doug] been drinking all day in the park, under the moulting trees that leave yellow tears strewn all over the scabby lawn" (1). The imagery shown here as "yellow tears" (1), foreshadows the intense sadness that dominates most of the novel for Doug. The implication in this description of molting yellow leaves like "tears" is as if nature herself feels a sense of sadness and is crying over the tragedy that will come to pass for Doug. One can also connect the sadness here to the systemic abuses engendered on Aboriginals since colonial disruption. Alcohol, a gift from the White conquerors to curtail Aboriginal freedoms continues to cause much harm among Indigenous peoples today and as such, Aboriginal health is greatly affected. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare:

> The Australian Burden of Disease Study identified that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people experience a burden of disease that is 2.3 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians. . . The gap in the disease burden is due to a range of factors including disconnection to culture, traditions and country, social exclusion, discrimination and isolation, trauma, poverty, and lack of adequate access to services. (*AIHW*)

For many Indigenous people, alcohol can be seen as a panacea to counteract societal inadequacies and deal with depression and suffering.

Alcohol can be seen as a means to counteract the pain of Indigenous people who have little legal recourse in the justice system. Thus, the consumption of alcohol only increases to further alleviate the pain and suffering. Doug attempts to adjust to life outside of prison, but the peer pressures continue to pull him back into that world of crime he had left before going to jail. As Doug consumes large quantities of alcohol with his relations, the hanging cloud of the police returning to make arrests illustrates Doug's precarious position as a parolee. In the Aboriginal poem, "The Black Drunkard" by Kevin Gilbert, the narrator explains, "It only hurts when I'm sober" (117). Like the speaker of the poem, Doug's pain and loneliness can be silenced through drinking. Doug's prison life had been savaging on his spirit. The narrator explains that "Doug gets drunk to forget those nights on lumpy beds in the overcrowded cells, with people keeping him awake pissing and shitting and dreaming out loud: to forget those days of milling around the yard or working in the garden—the same faces, the same walls, the same stories. In prison there is no privacy, no peace, nowhere to dream by yourself" (Weller 1). The dreaming, the privacy, and peace are the things which Doug missed the most while in jail. While Weller's depiction of Doug's consumption of alcohol might complicate the stereotype that some perpetuate in portrayals of Indigenous men as drinkers, the reality for Doug in his consumption of alcohol is seen as more of a celebration, just released from jail, and where one of the freedoms removed from him while in jail included being able to drink.

Alcohol can be seen as a factor in much of the violence in Indigenous communities, but sociological scholars suggest understanding violence and resulting incarcerations as a response to traumatic stressors. In her dissertation *The Violence*

Continuum: The Australian Aboriginal Male Violence and Generalized Post-Traumatic Stress (2008), Caroline Lisbeth Atkinson asserts:

> The history of widespread traumatic stressors and the generational transmission of these traumatic stressors throughout the Australian Aboriginal population are manifested in a series of social problems. The high levels of violence we are now witnessing in some Aboriginal families and communities, which in turn contribute to the high incarceration rates of Aboriginal men for violent crimes, are seen as one of the most serious symptoms resulting from these traumatic stressors. (ix)

While much of the violence seen in *Day of the Dog* concerns the outlying forces surrounding Doug, including his criminal friendships, Doug does display symptoms of what Atkinson describes with regard to his alcohol-induced outbursts, as well as Doug's own descriptions of himself. When a drunken Doug attempts to come down from his stupor, he does so with vehement declarations targeted toward his kin. Doug exclaims, "'Fuck train. Fuck ever'body'" (Weller 3) and "'Willice my bes' frien'. No-one love old Doug. No-one give a fuck'" (Weller 3). Doug might be feeling since his release from jail that society or even his own people have sort of forgotten him whilst he was imprisoned. He addresses this later when he sees Pretty Boy Floyd for the first time, chastising him for never visiting Doug once while he was locked up in jail. The arbiter of this moment is the booze; no matter how he promised himself this indulgence upon his release, the combination of his trauma and the alcohol do not mix well.

Now here Doug is surrounded by his relations, drinking, trying to forget the memories from jail that he had just left behind. He promised himself this alcohol as a reward for being set free. Later, when his friends help Doug to a taxi to carry him home, Doug falls on the uneven ground and the movement causes him to become ill. The narrator states "the jolt sets his stomach in motion and he heaves upwards, retching and

vomiting out all the flagons of wine and beer and the bottle of Caruba rum he has consumed; the rum he had promised himself the moment he was released" (Weller 2). While the alcohol took away the memories momentarily, Doug finally manages to remember that he had not even been to see his mother yet. She would be wondering where he had been since he was released from jail earlier that morning. Now night had fallen in Perth and Doug is trying to sober himself when the feelings like in Gilbert's poem resurface.

Some of the horrors that Doug faced in jail included many nights of loneliness and helplessness. While Weller does not describe every detail of Doug's time in prison, Sharma sheds light on the treatment of Indigenous Australians through her discussion of Waru. Waru describes his abuse in confinement: "'The senior officer stood on my jaw while the other [officer] hit my head in and restrained me. They said, 'You don't run this prison. . . we do,' and they cut my clothes off. They left me naked on the floor of the exercise yard for a couple of hours before giving me fresh clothes'" (Sharma 2). Sharma extends that "for Waru (not his real name), an Indigenous prisoner with a psychosocial disability (mental health condition), the unspeakable is almost routine. As an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander man with a disability in an Australian prison, Waru was tragically accustomed to being locked up in solitary confinement, facing physical abuse, and hearing racial slurs from prison officers" (2). Even for Doug, who is not diagnosed in the novel as possessing a mental health disorder, prison changed him and leaves Doug with stressors that affect him in his day-to-day life outside of confinement. Doug attempts to suppress these memories of incarceration and the deep loneliness through drinking.

For many Aboriginals, incarceration is the most inhumane punishment of all. Doug's memory of Eddie Wundonie, an Aboriginal boy from Mowanjum mission exemplifies such an experience. The narrator related that when Eddie had been arrested, the law enforcement had treated Eddie like a Perth boy, but Eddie was "as proud and indestructible as his country, [and] fought off almost the entire lockup staff before being subdued" (Weller 15). However, Eddie's life was never the same thereafter, as he would cry one moment, and laugh the next moment, all the while willing "himself back to his country, out from the cold walls that tried to squeeze the pride from his sun-kissed and cyclone-caressed body" (Weller 16). Weller sees prison life as the ultimate crime, more than the ones the person may be charged because for Aboriginal men, it does something much worse, much deeper and life altering.

Walking around the streets of Perth, Doug feels low self-esteem and regret about his time in confinement. The narrator explains that for Doug, "Perth had changed. For a moment he [Doug] is afraid and huddles into a corner along with the spiders and old butts and other unwanted things" (Weller 4). He had been in prison so long; the old haunts of the past are now foreign and unfamiliar to him. The truth is there is little faith in Doug. Even his relations feel that he will go right back to jail. Doug sees jail as the worst punishment. Before leaving his relations, Doug explains to his cousin, "'Don' never go to jail, Will'ce. Fuckin' jail a bastard,' he says" (Weller 3). Violence inflicted upon the inmates by the police, prison guards or other prisoners looms heavily in the minds of former inmates and has resulted in many ex-convicts developing post-traumatic stress disorder.

For Doug, and a larger extent Weller, being incarcerated presents many explanatory circumstances for Aboriginal men for the level of outrage and disgust of prison life. While Atkinson recounts some of the physical and psychological abuses, many times Indigenous men in jail do not make it out alive. Journalist and activist Jim McIlroy discusses the disgrace of Aboriginal men ending up dead while in custody. For the *Green Left Weekly*, Sam Watson, a Queensland Aboriginal leader and Socialist Alliance member called for a national audit across Australia in 2010 to investigate Australian Aboriginal deaths in custody. Watson explains, "'instead of real action, there has been an increase in the rates of Indigenous deaths in custody, and an overall increase in the rates of jailing of Aboriginal prisoners, in the 19 years since the royal commission [into Black Deaths in Custody]. This is a national disgrace and a tragedy'" (McIlroy). Abuses like these weighs heavily on the mind of Aboriginal men in lock-ups, and particularly for one who finally is granted freedom again. For Doug, there are many possibilities. Perhaps his kin and peers have little faith in Doug's ability to stay out of jail, but the one exercise Doug was able to do in jail was dream.

While Doug eventually was released from jail, the narrator tells us that his father remained. Later in the novel, Doug explains that jail makes one cold and angry. The narrator explains "that's what too much jail can do to a man too; boil him up as if he an apple being stewed in a stone cauldron, until he is all shriveled and sour inside" (Weller 61). The portrayal of violence in the novel exposes the injustices, but brutal reality of Aboriginal existence and the ways that the impacts of the current incarceration system may be contributing to the cycle of violence in Indigenous communities.

The Richness of Indigenous Lives

Many of the scenes depicted in the novel that include Doug and his friends or family show Weller's argument that while violence and drinking and other negative aspects do exist, there also exists what some critics have missed or perhaps ignored. Moments of beauty and laughter and deep introspection, close ties to their families, their communities, and nature typify Indigenous lives as a whole. Doug's life is more than the constant scenes of violence or anger propagated by critics of Weller or the Australian media at large. Weller shows violence because it does exist. However, too much attention, as Weller has argued, seems to focus on the violence and the destruction in his work, and the beauty of something more becomes lost in the analysis of his work. In *Day of the Dog*, Doug feels "they [outsiders] see only the dusty and dirty out of him, so they don't understand his joy" (Weller 4). Doug feels the joy of freedom, the thoughts of all the possibilities that he can now have in the world beyond prison. Outsiders cannot understand what Doug has endured, nor do they know the plans he has to reclaim his lost legacy.

Instead, most outsiders see the Indigenous people as violent or angry as exemplified by the taxi cab driver who was too afraid of Doug and his friends to refuse the fare, but shows his misgivings through Weller's description: "'He [Doug] hasn't got any money. Look at him,' the driver complains, glancing at Jerry [one of Doug's friends], who is young and fierce and who could be dangerous. Besides, he's still standing and able to throw a punch, whereas the potential passenger is harmless enough" (Weller 3-4). What Weller does extremely well as a writer is to not make broad generalizations about characters' motivations. The feeling of unease coming from the taxi driver seeing Jerry as

"dangerous," emanates from the driver's *own* perspective, not an over-arching conclusion that Jerry is actually a dangerous individual. Such observations are common among some white Australians who continue to perpetuate the myth that Indigenous people are given to anger or violence. While violence exists, like in any society, instances of violence cannot be used to make broad inferences that categorize whole groups in this framework. The episode involving the taxi driver exhibits many of the biases some feel toward Indigenous Australians. The narrator explains "He [the cab driver] would like to refuse the fare, but he does not dare unless he wants some rocks through his rear windows" (Weller 3). Again, the threat of violence which Weller relates here in this scene exists in the mind of the cab driver, not in the reality of what Jerry does to him. The emphasis here on violence draws in the discussion on stereotyping and assumptions surrounding violence. Connell documents the concept of "*psychological essence*, and inner core to the individual. This may be inherited, or it may be acquired early in life as the essence of a man's being" (599), but she also rejects psychological essence as a generalized explanation that does not consider the institutionalized role that hegemonic masculinity plays. In this case, the notion that marginalized men routinely commit violent action is based on stereotyping of Indigenous men that perpetuates essentialist ideas that Indigenous men are naturally violent. Many Indigenous men are consistently and unfairly pegged with the label that they could become angry or are inherently prone to violent action. The idea that Indigenous men are threatening or could enact violence at a moment's notice is an idea that comes from the intersection of race and gender, and shows the importance of thinking about violence in relation to multiple masculinities because in hegemonic masculinity the threat of physical force is celebrated as

demonstrating dominance or prowess and a core strength of the man. The threat of violence valorized by white men through hegemonic masculinity becomes a threat to whites when it is perceived as Indigenous violence.

Weller provides access to multiple parts of the characters' lives so that in addition to seeing how outsiders judge them, readers also get glimpses of their intimate relationships, providing readers a way to understand masculinity in relation to multiple places and practices in gender relationships. For instance, Doug's experience with Polly, the young Aboriginal sister of Pretty Boy Floyd's girlfriend, Valerie, when he reenters the outside world is one of joy and satisfaction for him that stands in stark contrast to the loneliness he felt behind bars. While Doug could be "shriveled and sour inside" (Weller 61), Weller describes the sense of friendship and love inside the flat with Doug and his friends versus the cold and harsh outside world that holds nothing good or accommodating for them. The outside world comes with intolerance and prejudice toward Doug; they only see him as a convict with no future. The law would have no problem putting Doug back inside at the slightest moment. However, inside, with his friends and a potential lover, Doug feels happy and free away from all the chilly receptions beyond those walls.

Polly presents an alternative for Doug, one that is not the stoned, hardened criminal and violent offender society deems him to be, but a real flesh and blood human being. Doug's description of Polly in the moment he awakes in his friends' flat, attempting to adjust to the realities of his newfound freedom, also presents a beautiful portrait, distinct from the violence and disappointments. Doug looks at Polly and thinks, "she looks exquisite with her smooth honey-brown skin and her moist lips that inspire all

kinds of delightful thoughts in him. Her long eyelashes brush her cheeks. A black orchid would be no lovelier" (Weller 14). Polly and Doug officiate their beginning together as a couple, all the while Doug is reminded of the horrors of prison life. Behind bars, Doug, to assert his own masculinity, had to mimic this space of domesticity, unable to act it out with a real woman, but now with Polly, now that he had *his* woman, that was all different for him. With Polly, Doug can still not forget those memories of life in prison:

> [C]old, cruel phantom women or lumpy pillows during the dead nights he spent inside. . . no dancing, or brilliant lights, or golden and red bottles of beer and wine; no shouting at the moon in carefree joy or murmuring to the sun in happy, lazy appreciation. No silken, flowing, black hair and sweet perfume and clinging clothes and voices twittering like birds in a mulberry bush. (Weller 15)

Polly offers a positive connection for Doug, but she cannot assuage the constant feeling of inadequacies he faces from the memories of life in jail, the loss of his family's legacy, and the disappointment from outside forces that deem him undesirable and predestined to criminal activity. The struggles Doug brings encompasses a fragility that even Polly cannot solve for him, but by putting them together Weller demonstrates a larger message about Aboriginal friendship and love, one that remains foreign to the outside world. As Dougie and his friends represent a community of love and friendship while together, Weller again compares this moment to that of the city outside their warmth. The narrator writes "outside it grows dark and cold, but inside it is warm with friendship and feeling" (Weller 19). Outside from their circle only exists bad spirits and darkness and cold, but that is not their entire world; they do have spaces of love and comfort.

With this depiction, Weller is setting up a different view of Aboriginal life, one that includes the reality of the daily experiences of violence and haunting remains of the colonial past as well as personal pasts of incarceration, but also beauty and goodness, and

how life might be without constant patrols and interrogations from the outside world. With those first moments of Doug's reentry into the world, while he feels most alive with his friends and Polly, such moments are ones that anyone could understand or relate to: being in the comfort of familiar voices and laughs or being touched by someone who values and wants to be a part of the life that they hope to develop together. These are also the moments which Weller most feels become overlooked by outsiders in his work. The narrator explains "there would always be husbands drunk and brothers gambling and sons in jail and fighting and swearing and everyone giving up. But, as long as there were babies to hold and love, hope would be reborn all over again and there was something worth living for" (Weller 14-15). Weller presents the realities of Aboriginal life, but there is so much more to that daily life than some critic or politician sees in Indigenous portrayals or communities at large.

Doug's loneliness and lack of peace and dreaming, which he describes at the beginning of the novel, momentarily ends with Polly. While optimistic, even she cannot mediate every problem for Doug. Polly comes with her own tortured history and like Doug never feels at peace or safe. The narrator explains that "like most Aboriginal girls of her age she [Polly] is 'on the run' from the Community Welfare Department and she supposes one day they will catch her but she makes no real attempt to hide" (Weller 12). While Polly's situation is different from Doug's, the constant feeling that the law is only one step behind, the waiting, and the watching, for any chance of an accusation, real or unfounded, creates a tension in the character's thoughts and actions. Doug remembers the ones he spent time with while in jail, and how prison life broke them and made their lives worse, and changed them, in some cases irreparably.

Relationships Among Men in *Day of the Dog*

Riley Keely, cousin of Floyd, illustrates how those who are different, even among friends, also face marginalization and hardships. Riley is a close friend to Doug, there in moments when Doug is at his lowest. Doug remembers "Riley was there when Doug's dog was run over by a carload of white boys. Only he, of all the people there except Doug's mother, understood the boy's [Doug's] grief and shared in it. They buried the dog together and drank beer outside to forget" (Weller 19). Riley was also there when Doug and Floyd fought, "a small gentle boy, with the biggest eyes he [Doug] ha[d] ever seen; brown and soft and warm, like a horse's" (Weller 19). Weller's depiction of friendship between Riley and Doug, and the language that Weller uses to describe the sensitivity of Riley, the way he feels about life and the evocative description Weller gives Riley that is full of warmth and beauty, transcends the traditional bonds between men. The bond between Riley and Doug runs counterpoint to the other examples of masculinity, where men are seen as violent and angry. To the outside, Riley might be vilified as a street hustler, but Doug had a deeper relationship with him, one that showed the beauty of friendship, and the parts of Weller's work that he feels too often are ignored. Doug's friendship with Riley brings him power and comfort even as the rest of the world lives in chaos and misery.

While Weller uses Riley to show the power of supportive relationships between men, his characterization of Riley is not free of complications. Weller depicts Riley Keeley as, "ostracized by his people and society" (Weller 19), and the narrator observes that "strange things happen to sensitive people who are locked up too soon, too long, too often" (19). Unlike Riley's brother, who locked himself in his room for three months

after being released from jail, Riley used his time in jail differently. The narrator details, "with his [Riley] soft eyes and gentle nature, [Riley] had been an easy victim for the depraved inhabitants of jail and learned a profitable trade [as a male prostitute] in there as a result" (Weller 19). While Riley uses his body to gain profit, Weller ignores the subject of sexual violence. Confirming that the men in jail with Riley are "depraved," instead of focusing on the fact Riley had few alternatives, Weller suggests that Riley holds power to turn his situation into something better. While Weller's depiction of what happens in jail to "gentle" men like Riley might relate to his own experiences of horrors that he witnessed while in jail, a troubling assertion is made here by Weller, too.

The repeated mention of Riley's soft eyes and gentleness can be seen as Weller attempting to code Riley as homosexual, but this characterization also evokes Connell's theories of subordinated masculinity. Subordinated masculinity refers to men that do not fit the construction of hegemonic masculinity and are placed in a lower position in the hierarchy of gender. While marginalized masculinities considers the role of factors in addition to gender such as race and class, Connell argues that subordinated masculinities are hierarchies within the gender order. When Riley is first introduced, the narrator relates that "Riley Keeley, Floyd's cousin, has become a homosexual and was getting two hundred dollars a go from old midnight cowboys in the Hay Street mall" (Weller 18). The appellation here, "has become" can be viewed as problematic. Perhaps at the time, such an assertion that a person could "become homosexual" might be viewed as more commonplace, taking into account the lack of knowledge of queer lives. This was a time before AIDS made its way into the zeitgeist along with its own set of stereotypes and assumptions, before Judith Butler or Raewyn Connell's seminal treatises on the topics of

gender and sexuality studies, and before homosexuality was more accepted and recognized by national laws. Still, the gay rights movement had been in full swing for the last decade and certainly Weller would know that making the assumption that someone could "become gay" might be viewed as problematic. With the benefit of contemporary views, Riley's actions might not even be called homosexual; other terms like "gay for pay" or "curious" are often seen in the media or on Grindr and other gay dating apps and distinguish more carefully between sexual identities and sexual behaviors. The experience of life in prison, too, comes with more complexities regarding sexuality that allows explorations of same sex relations sometimes against a man's will. Weller makes the claim that while in prison, Riley escaped a situation that could have been worse by making profit from it. While some could certainly challenge Weller for his lack of acknowledgment of common beliefs that homosexuality is not a choice, Weller does portray Riley's situation in very empathetic terms, challenging the way society and Riley's own people have ostracized him.

Another way to view Weller's treatment here of sexuality is to acknowledge that the characters and the situations in *Day of the Dog* lay the foundation for these opinions on homosexuality due to their own preconceptions, biases, and opinions. Earlier in the novel, when Silver and Floyd first see Doug again after his release from Fremantle Prison, Floyd promises Doug that they will find him a woman, saying, "'We'll go and pick up a woman for ya Dougo. . . we'll get Dougo a proper moony. Poor bugger, never seen 'ide nor 'air of a woman for two years nearly, ain't it, budda?'" (Weller 7). Silver then makes the joke that perhaps Doug might not have been interested in women, saying, "'Is that going to worry Doug; no women being there? I thought his true form would

come to light'" (Weller 7), insinuating Doug might have had gay experiences in prison or was a homosexual. With this analysis, which has more plausibility than assuming Weller lacks understanding of the gay experience or could be seen as anti-gay, Weller instead uses these assumptions in the narrator and characters' own failings at understanding same sex relationships. These depictions complicate the stereotypes of Indigenous men regarding violence and give the reader a more nuanced location of violence in complex real-world situations where Indigenous men are living, breathing persons. Adding these details speaks to the complexity and depth of a writer like Weller who could just have ignored them given the lack of understanding and phobia surrounding queer lives at the time the novel was released to the public. In many Aboriginal communities there still exists some bias toward homosexuality, so the fact that Weller mentions it at all is important to note. While Weller uses Silver and a flawed narrator to discuss the stereotypes and misconceptions about gay lives, he then shows a deeper empathy for Riley and Doug's fond memories of Riley who had helped him through difficult times.

For Doug, there is other marginalization and preconceived ideas about what kind of man he must be to his community or the world at large, and what type of man outsiders deem Doug to be as an Aboriginal man. Connell contends that marginalized masculinities exist in conflict to the hegemonic masculinities. Because of their race and class, Indigenous men are unable to meet the reified aims that come with hegemonic notions of masculinity. They cannot wholly meet the call that masculine ideals dictate for them to be welcomed into the fictive club of "maledom," so they become *othered* and placed on the fringes. Some of these men are pegged as criminals or given to criminal activity. Expectations are placed on Doug and other Indigenous men from the outside

which keep them marginalized. When Doug was first caught up in trouble with Floyd, only Floyd was nabbed by the police that first time, and Doug went free, but as the narrator explains, "the episode was the start of Doug Dooligan's underworld career. Now he has a record and a sentence to prove that he is what everyone said he would be" (Weller 6-7). Even the narrator acknowledges the stereotypes and biases about what Doug exudes to the outside world. The narrator associating Doug as a criminal exemplifies the way the outside world sees him, enacting one of the many myths about Indigenous people being criminals or violent. Perhaps because Doug's father, Carey Dooligan went to prison, or from the White outsider perspective because Doug is Aboriginal, members of his own people and outsiders both assume Doug will follow the same path. Weller is hoping to dispel these misconceptions, however, through his characterization of Doug, that while Doug might have been in prison, that does not constitute his whole being.

In many ways, the Aboriginals depicted in *Day of the Dog*, constantly being told they will be a criminal or go to jail, begin to assume and perhaps embrace the idea themselves. Even the community at large expects it. When first meeting Polly, she asks Doug his name, and Silver remarks, "*He's* [Doug] Ned Kelly, Sunshine, so look out that he doesn't shoot you with his gun" (Weller 10). While Doug is not the famous white Australian bushranger, the association of an Aboriginal with a white historical criminal is perhaps Weller's wink at the irony here, that a "Ned Kelly" could be seen as the colonial progenitor of what has now been passed on to Doug, and as an Indigenous Australian he finds himself in juxtaposition with white law. Weller has commented in interviews in the past about his feelings toward the mythos surrounding notorious white outlaws like Ned

Kelly, saying that if "white authors idealise and mythologise the white heroes like Ned Kelly. . . then so, too, should Aboriginal authors elaborate on our own fighters and people of merit" (qtd. in Little 4). Weller believes in the authenticity of his characterizations and a need to show the daily lives of Indigenous people. Weller's characterization of Dougie is not to glorify his actions as heroic or make him a model for the Aboriginal male. Weller has argued that "'[he] really [doesn't] believe there is such a thing as a true hero. Heroes are found in American comic books or the old Commando comics. [He] believe[s] in anti-heroes because they are more real'" (qtd. in Little 4). Rather than presenting larger than life heroes, Weller's depiction of the complexities of gendered violence, and his characterization of Doug, Polly, and Riley, all prove that Weller is arguing for a more nuanced image of Indigenous lives.

Ties to Country

The reclamation of country is the most important dream for Doug when he returns home, and he hopes that one day he could regain his family's legacy for himself and his people. Doug had possessed a deep connection and kinship to country when he lived there with his father and mother and siblings, and it was the greatest regret that they had lost it. Carey Dooligan lost the land after a series of unfortunate debts from difficult years, when he finally ended up selling it. Carey then moved the family to the urban sprawl of Perth, an enormous change for the Dooligans. Once the land was gone, Carey never truly recovered, and ended up in prison. Carey's connection to the land might be seen as another form of colonial dispossession because he had been farming the land following the white model of ownership, which in a colonial context involved taking the

land from the Indigenous people, eliminating their traditional association to the land, and disrupting nature in the process. Doug had not seen his father since he was fourteen and the family left the farm. Doug's older brother, Tom, had been killed in Vietnam, which left an indelible mark on the family, especially Doug, who had been close to his older brother.

In the early days, life had been good for them. Doug's father worked hard and the farm seemed to flourish with resilience and their hard work. Doug remembers his father, Carey, "would recite Banjo Patterson by the yard, usually in winter when the huge fire was alight and blazing a fierce red and all the work was done" (Weller 16). Weller's evocation of Banjo Patterson, here, a white settler poet, demonstrates another way that Weller is informing the reader how Carey had turned his back on Indigenous culture as he attempted to replicate the settler model of land ownership that runs counter to the one that Doug feels in his connection to country. Carey sees the land as a cash source and does not feel the draw of the ancestors or the pull of history and tradition so entrenched in Doug's feelings. In this way, Weller is drawing a distinct contrast between Carey and Doug, holding the former to account for his losing the land and not appreciating it, and the latter as the one who carries on the dream of country, but a different one, one that values country and has a connection to it that extends beyond seeing it as a source of financial profit.

Carey Dooligan had married Edith Menzies, daughter of a Presbyterian minister and neighbor to the Dooligans. The family was happy at the beginning, and Edith had initially married for love, but that was the beginning, and through many troubles later, Carey became someone different, distant, and neglectful of his family and farm, spending

more and more time away drinking. With the fortunes turning against them, droughts, and the death of his oldest son, Tom, "Carey gave up" (Weller 27). Carey Dooligan "had hoped that Tommy would help him on the farm when he came home [from Vietnam], for skinny little Doug was no good, off living in a fantasy world by the river or pond or in the bush all day" (Weller 27). Unlike Carey, Doug has no interest in using the land as a means to make money and profit off it. Instead, Doug creates his own association to the country of his forefathers, that shows a deep understanding and values country for what it is and not what he could do with it. Eventually, Carey sold the farm and the family moved to Perth. Doug had a different view on this leaving than others:

> It hurt him more than anyone else. . . it hurt to be torn from the earth he cherished. In their new house, in east Perth, he missed the swaying trees and the choir of birds. The sheep bleating and cattle lowing, whistling across the clear, tangy morning air. Most of all he missed the cool brown pools where, it was said, the ancient tribes had come for initiation ceremonies. (Weller 27)

The strong ties Doug still feels for his lost legacy in the novel demonstrates one of the many effects of colonialism, where dispossessed Indigenous Australians live in a country often apart or far from the lands they once walked over for thousands of years before British invasion.

The meaning of country and the connection to the land reappears in many Indigenous literary texts and songs and the day to day lives of Indigenous people. Melissa Lucashenko feels of two extremes. The one, "this is our [Indigenous Australian's] country, not yours [whites] in your historical murders and current shame," and the other "we all share country, we all must live here, Aboriginal and Other alike, and the only question is how to do that honourably" (Lucashenko 9-10). The interesting application here in Lucashenko's awareness is her classification of White Australians as *Other*.

Weller's idea of country means something else, but he is quick to chastise the ways Whites have used country for profit and hurt her in the process. In his poem, "My Sunburnt Country," Weller postulates:

> Why do you say you love this country
> when you rape my mother?
> The gold and silver, opals and diamonds
> you place upon fingers of your loved ones,
> who eventually turn withered and dry
> as the dust that is the perfume on her body, come from her womb.
> Wheat that makes the bread that feeds your children;
> grapes that make the wine that quinches your mans thirst
> are like cancerous growths upon her skin.
> . . .
> How can you say you love this country
> when, with arrogant tread,
> you leave your concreate footmarks?
> You tear the trees from her breast;
> Penetrate her naked soul. (25)

Through Weller's association to country in the poem, he figures white aggressors as rapists and destroyers of the land with their farms, their consumerism and greed that has now left the country barren and removed trees and waterways in place of asphalt and fire hydrants. In Weller's novel, Doug, too feels that same feeling of upheaval having to leave the land and go to Perth where there are no remnants of the traditional connections he once felt to country. An analogy can be made that the country in *Day of the Dog* represents the traditional ways, the beauty and the memories of the Indigenous people, whereas the city represents all that is destructive about what whites have done to Australia and to the Indigenous Australians. The city is where Doug feels out of place and disconnected, and this is where he commits crimes that send him to prison.

An early passage when Silver is first introduced in the novel can help explain the way the city is seen as a negative force when compared to country and helps readers to

put into perspective the way Doug feel about the land. Silver's mother "must have had fine ideas for her only son. But he turned into a street person early in life, and the streets are a cruel and bitter place in which to grow up, for they love no-one; only the lights and spiders and the rain and sun. The streets gather up all the rubbish and all the stories in them close to their stony hearts forever" (Weller 5). Urbanization is seen here as a process of becoming hard and bitter, a hardness from the concrete itself, but also in the hearts of many who lack any morality or empathy. Urbanization can also be interpreted as a further method of colonization for the Indigenous people, removed from the traditional ways they had practiced for centuries. The loss of country can be seen as a contributing factor of the violence in *Day of the Dog*, but not all Indigenous people connect as strongly as Doug to country, as seen with Carey Dooligan. Weller is opening up the complexities that all living breathing people come with a different set of ideas, but there are also those, like Doug, where removal from country can be seen as a great wound that many Indigenous Australians have also felt since colonialism.

Conclusion

Doug only really experienced a few short days of freedom in the end. Earlier in the novel when Doug is finally with his mother, Doug makes a toast: "'Ere's to a long life and a 'appy one'" (Weller 24). Doug's mother responds, "'I certainly hope so,' is all she says" (Weller 23), as if to signal her hope for the sake of Doug but foreshadowing that a long and happy life may not be the outcome for him or her. Doug's mother had already seen the death of one son, her husband had lost everything and gone to jail, and now Doug, the one she had kept her last hopes in, is a convict, paroled, but perhaps destined to

disappoint too. The assertion early on in the novel that "strange things happen to sensitive people who are locked up too soon, too long, too often" (Weller 19), while referring to Riley Keeley, can also apply to Riley's brother who locked himself away when he returned home, to Dougie, and even Weller himself. Weller makes the point in *Day of the Dog* that prison changes a person, perhaps irreparably, and that even the most ardent and well-intentioned plans can sometimes fail. Unable to acclimate to life on the outside, surrounded by the old friends and memories of the past, the peer pressure and old habits, Doug cannot escape his outcome. Doug fails in his attempt to reclaim his family's land and fulfill the dreams that his father had for them.

The violence that sent Doug to prison ultimately ends his life, and that of his friends. In the final scene, on the run from the cops in a stolen car, Doug and his friends crash in the pursuit and are killed. Weller writes:

> The tortured shriek of metal on metal, as he slides along the side of a truck, and Shagger's screaming, high-pitched as a woman's are the last things Doug hears before they cannon into the other car and disintegrate into flames.
>
> Flames as high as those on the night that he murdered the swamp in readiness for progress and new crops. Flames as red as the blood of the dead killed on this fateful day. Smoke as black as Pretty Boy's eyes, billowing up to the cloudy ghosts that wander around the sky after today's battle. All in a silence as quiet as Doug Dooligan's many dreams. (165)

The final description in the novel could demonstrate the ultimate moment where Doug and his friends fight back at a society that has ignored and pushed them to the fringes. The death of Doug in the car could signal, too, the death of Doug's dream of his return to country and his reconnection to his past. His death also ends the hope for an alternative path, beginning a life with Polly, and ultimately, it could end her own dreams too. A life of crime, living on the run, and in constant confrontation with authorities ends for Doug

and his friends, Silver and Pretty Boy Floyd, but there do remain loved ones that are left behind—the grieving mother of Doug, the girlfriend, Polly, who came with her own set of plans for a future that is now uncertain, and other young Indigenous men who might be wanting to connect to country or see the possibilities of living a life not prescribed by societal hatreds and tyranny. As Weller wrote earlier in the novel, "there would always be husbands drunk and brothers gambling and sons in jail and fighting and swearing and everyone giving up. But, as long as there were babies to hold and love, hope would be reborn all over again and there was something worth living for" (14-15). At the end, the dreams and hopes of Doug and his friends might be lost with them, but the cycle of life continues. Weller's aim to show the reality and brutality of the daily lives of many Aboriginal men and women can be summed up both in that quote. There is the drinking and the gambling and violence, those who are in jail, and those who are free, but there is always the hope and the belief that with the next generations, life will be better. In this interpretation, Doug's hopes and dreams did not die with him because they live in those left behind and in other lives that have not been born.

The ultimate frustration for Doug in *Day of the Dog* is his inability to regain access to the country of his forefathers. Doug remains unable to escape the same peer pressures and damaging relationships with the same group of friends who helped cause his previous incarceration. While Weller does not give any passes regarding the reality of Doug's failings, Doug and his friends in *Day of the Dog* are people who have fully fleshed out and sometimes flawed characterizations. They possess sadness and triumph, joy and dreaming, but in those moments come the beauty that Weller wants his readers to appreciate in his work. Stories like Doug's shows there is more to the lives of Indigenous

men than the failings and drinking or harsh reality of violence that exists in many communities daily. There is more, too, than the stereotypes that claim Indigenous men are violent or angry. There is more to the Aboriginal experience than the violence and difficult times. And yet, while Weller wants readers to realize that more, he also refuses to turn away from the violence and give his characters a happy ending. Perhaps the ultimate failing for Doug is what the alternative could have been for him, reclaiming country, and with Polly, living the dreams he had dreamed all along.

CHAPTER THREE: CONSTRUCTIONS OF FAMILY AND GENDER DIVERSITY IN KERI HULME'S *THE BONE PEOPLE*

In *A History of the Pacific Islands*, Stephen Roger Fischer explores the historic formation of the islands, including Aotearoa/New Zealand, from the beginning of human settlement in the Pacific Ocean to colonization and neoliberal globalization. While Fischer's account does not seek to repudiate or even rebuke colonialism of the Pacific, it does include an anecdote on how colonialism continues in contemporary New Zealand society. Fischer discusses a singular event unfolding in his neighborhood that has all the hallmarks of colonial elenchus currently underway. The removal of a Monterey Pine, planted in 1875 in Auckland, New Zealand, consumes the general population's consciousness. Fischer explains that many New Zealanders see the pine on One Tree Hill as a symbol that binds all New Zealanders together and represents the country's strong unity. Others see the pine as an image of European dominance. As the City Council moves to remove the pine or in Fischer's words, "fell it," people begin to wonder what exactly will replace the tree. Fischer uses this anecdote to connect the image of the tree to the state of the Pacific Islands in the modern era, a place shaped by colonial disruption and continued change in the twenty-first century. Fischer explains that island nations in the Pacific of the last half of the twentieth century saw much change. Fischer writes: "the last half of the twentieth century witnessed the dissolution of the time-honored allegiances in the region, the transformation of colonial patronages into new trading partnerships, and the creation of interregional organization" (xi). The last half of the twentieth century also saw many island nations claiming their independence from

colonial rule, violent demonstrations, and the growing popularity of Indigenous land rights actions. The anecdote about One Tree Hill opens the discourse to similar symbols of colonialism that over time changed, or that invader governments renamed in light of the modern social consciousness sparked by Indigenous activism. These include rechristening of towns and landmarks in India which were once controlled and given names by the British Empire and reaffirming names of important historical landmarks in Australia like Uluru, the traditional Aboriginal name for the sacred rock formation that English settlers labeled Ayers Rock. Just as in other parts of the world, the Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand are currently undergoing a reassessment of the nation's colonial past and disavowal of many settler place names.

Cultural Mapping Projects and Other Indigenous Recovery Efforts

New Zealand's current digital mapping projects extend the notion of rejecting colonial place names and reclaiming traditional ones. Kā Huru Manu, The Ngāi Tahu Cultural Mapping Project, currently underway, attempts to rename places, towns, and landmarks and to reestablish Māori ancestry for future generations. According to their website, they house an impressive atlas with "over 1,000 traditional Māori place names that have been fully referenced from whānau manuscripts, published books, 19th century maps, newspaper articles, and a vast array of unpublished material" ("Cultural Mapping"). The *Ngāi Tahu Atlas* "also includes information about ara tawhito (traditional travel routes), Native Reserves and other original Māori land allocations such as the SINA and half-cast crown grants. The website tells the story behind the project and celebrates the people who have been involved" ("Cultural Mapping"). For Keri Hulme

and many other Indigenous writers of Aotearoa/New Zealand, signification of the events that shaped and changed the Māori way of life since invasion concerns most of the literature they produce. Most important to these writers and many other Indigenous writers and activists worldwide in the process of reshaping and reestablishing their presence since colonialism includes reckoning with this loss and the toll of colonial disruption. Speaking on the loss of Indigenous knowledge and history in North America, Kelsey Leonard writes about the absence and invisibility of Native Americans on maps. She posits: "while serving as a tribal coleader for the former Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body of the United States' National Ocean Data Portal. . . examining this digital mapping interface—which federal and state agencies, fishery management councils, and broader stakeholders throughout the United States regularly use—I noticed that Tribal Nations were absent from the map" (*ESRI*). The lack of inclusion of Tribal Nations on maps communicates, she argues, that "we need maps by Indigenous Peoples, for Indigenous Peoples. . . and there is no justice for Indigenous Peoples if we are not participating in the decision-making that affects our territories" (*ESRI*).

The reclaiming of lands and culture through renaming, which Leonard and other scholars currently engage, speaks to some progress made to reawaken and revitalize world consciousness to what has been whitewashed and hidden. In a 7 May 2021 press release, Māori Maps launched an online re-presence with a search engine for marae and maps. The Google maps platform after ten years had been replaced by Orbica's "intuitive mapping solution with Mapbox and OpenStreetMap. . . [and] enabled a Māori place names layer on the map, helping complete full interactivity in te Reo or English" (*Scoop Independent News*). The Indigenous Mapping Collective boasts a global network of

Indigenous mappers. The mantra of the Collective is "decolonize the map. Indigenize the map" (*Indigenous Maps*). Conferences like the one put on by Indigenous Mapping Wānanga also bring Indigenous cartographers together who seek change and representation (*Digital Navigators*). As Moka Apiti explains, "the concepts of cartography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are not new to Māori. In fact, Māori have been doing cartography and working with GIS since the beginning of time" (122). While Western conceptions of cartography are seen as "the art of map making" and GIS "lets us [Westerners] visualize, question, analyze, and interpret data to understand relationships, patterns, and trends" (Apiti 122), Māori understand a GIS as "a paataka korero tuku iho, a central repository of whakapapa (genealogy), and traditional knowledge, which has been passed down from generation to generation" (Apitit 122). For Māori, cartography "should be defined as the visualization of the korero tuku iho such as pepeha (tribal sayings), whahairo (carvings) taa moko (tattooing) paatere (chant/songs), whakataukii (proverbial sayings), and whaikoorero (speech making)" (Apitit 122). With the advent of modern technologies, Māori continue to find ways to preserve their culture and knowledge. As Apitit points out, "The adoption of a New Zealand Geospatial Strategy to make spatial data freely available and the integration of different types of technologies such as drones, augmented reality, web and cloud-based services has meant that more iwi are able to use geospatial technologies in everyday applications" (122-23). With the advent of modern technologies to make such exercises easier, Māori can reclaim knowledge discredited due to colonialism. They are able to "capture, preserve and present their oral and traditional histories; visualize their cultural heritage; manage their cultural

and commercial assets; and reconnect their communities to their cultural heritage and identity" (Apitit 123).

Other on-going efforts include projects to rebuild tribal ecosystems and land disrupted and harmed by colonialism and coalitions working to preserve languages that are disappearing. According to Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, "Indigenous knowledge recovery is an anticolonial project. It is a project that gains its momentum from the anguish of the loss of what was and the determined hope for what will be. It springs from the disaster resulting from the centuries of colonialism's efforts to methodically eradicate our ways of seeing, being, and interacting with the world" (359). While referencing here recovery efforts of Native Americans, Wilson identifies a thread that connects recovery projects that are happening with different focuses in different communities: recovery projects actively respond to a history of loss. For instance, while the dominant language of Aotearoa/New Zealand today is English, there is a huge danger of losing the traditional Māori language. Te Reo Māori, or the Māori language, has "only between 4 and 8% of the Māori population [who] are fluent in this language. According to most reports, despite a major language revitalization movement spanning over 20 years, te Reo Māori remains in danger of disappearing or being reduced to a language of 'ritual' only" (Murray 233). The need to reclaim what colonialism took away or destroyed drives much of the restoration efforts among Indigenous peoples today. Recovery efforts exist now on many fronts to counter the colonial devastation that continues to change and remove large amounts of Indigenous knowledge.

Approaches to analyzing and teaching Indigenous literatures are also connected to recovery efforts. For example, Hobson writes about his experiences teaching Native

American Literature in his Introduction to *The Remembered Earth: An Anthology of Contemporary Native American Literature*. Released in the early 1980s around the time Keri Hulme was attempting to publish *the bone people* and just after the publication of Weller's *Day of the Dog*, Hobson's book provides insight into academic study and teaching of Indigenous literature. Hobson remembers a student being mesmerized by a selection of Mohawk poems that he had xeroxed for the class. The student burst out with the exclamation, "'Isn't it amazing how Native American literature has just burst so suddenly upon the scene?'" (2). Hobson likens such a feeling to the experiences of Indigenous peoples' many losses due to colonialism. While Hobson explains how the idea that Native American literature had merely "sprung up" erases a lengthy history of Native American storytelling, he does admit there had been a publishing surge at the time and that "has to do with remembering, continuance, renewal" (2). Hobson, thus, highlights that teaching contemporary Indigenous literatures in relation to specific histories of storytelling can also be part of recovery work.

Even before the arrival of Europeans, Native Americans remembered their stories through storytelling that was passed on across generations. Stories also served as a way to communicate ideas about specific groups' ties to the land. With the disruption of the land, the capture, theft, and desecration of the land, the Indigenous culture itself became infringed. Hobson writes: "In remembering, there is strength and continuance and renewal throughout the generations. It was when things became forgotten and lost, when the chain of generations were broken by European invaders, that many Native American people became lost and forgotten" (2). As the name of the anthology illustrates, remembering these lost voices or bringing out those here for future generations, one must

also remember the land. The land itself is irrevocably linked to the people through their literature and their stories. In the Māori context, "Colonisation significantly disrupts Indigenous peoples' ways of life and their long-established relationship with their lands. For Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the loss of traditional lands has resulted in intergenerational material poverty, under-education, unemployment, and dependence on social welfare" (Reid, et al., 32). Researchers have identified the far-reaching impacts of the loss of land: "In recent decades, health researchers and practitioners have come to realise that mass traumatic events, such as displacement and land loss from colonisation, generate chronic, as well as acute, collective psychological suffering for Indigenous peoples" (32). For Native Americans, Indigenous Australians, and Māori, reclaiming land and language are linked projects.

While Hulme's literature also speaks to the violence and tragedy that colonization brought forth, it pursues its own kind of recovery project. The association of recovery projects to *the bone people* draws into play the larger concepts about colonial violence and how recovery of knowledge also means the recovery of gender diversities. The recovery does not exist only about recovery of the past but the process of healing in the present and imagining a future that creates new families and a path forward for the family and the nation itself in the future.

Māori Gender and Sexuality Knowledge

As Waziyatawin Angela Wilson believes the reclaiming of Indigenous knowledge accomplishes change and betterment for Indigenous peoples, another movement among Māori recovery includes engagement with Māori terminology for gender and sexuality.

Francesca Marino discusses the reconstruction of Māori postcolonial cultural identity and specifically non-conforming gender identities. Her study looks especially at Takatāpui, the umbrella Māori term that encompasses "non-conforming wairua (spiritualities, gender identities), sexualities and sex characteristics" (1). Marino articulates that Takatāpui "was officially used for the first time in references to the health needs of Māori homosexual men in a government document compiled in 1994" (1), but has since come to include all non-heteronormative identities. Elizabeth Kerekere, Toni Duder, and Morgan Butler explain that "Takatāpui is a traditional Māori term meaning 'intimate companion of the same sex.' It has been reclaimed to embrace all Māori who identify with diverse sexes, genders and sexualities such as whakawāhine (trans women), tangata ira tāne (trans men), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer. These are often grouped under the term 'Rainbow communities'" ("Growing Up Takatāpui: Whānau Journeys"). The authors further state that their website "is about whakapapa (descent from ancestors with sexual and gender fluidity); mana (authority and power to be who we are); identity (claiming all of who we are – culture, gender, sexuality and ability); and inclusion (unity across all iwi, sexes, genders and sexualities)" ("Growing Up Takatāpui: Whānau Journeys").

Before invasion, Māori conception of gender roles were different. Kerekere, Duder, and Butler state: "Pre-colonisation, many parts of Māori culture were gendered, but the roles of both women and men were valued as essential for survival. The work and leadership of women sat alongside and equal to that of men. Sexual and gender fluidity were accepted as long as the work got done" ("Growing Up Takatāpui: Whānau Journeys"). Kassie Hartendorp writes about Māori stories and storytellers before

colonization, interrogating notions about gender identities. She writes: “All tūpuna had a role to play in whakapapa, and each role was necessary to the benefit of the wider group. . . without the unique characteristics of each and every individual, the strength of the collective is diminished. This visioning of whakapapa is one where every person is valued, because it is through their contribution that the wider whānau is enhanced” (“What Do We Really Know About Gender Diversity in Te Ao Māori?”). Like many other cultural removals due to colonial disruption, obscuring these gender and sexuality conceptions among Māori was yet another adverse consequence. Marino also argues that “The British colonisation impacted the Māori way of conceiving gender and sexuality. In fact, as Te Awekotuku (2004) highlighted, same sex relationships were depicted in many pre-colonial Māori taonga (carvings) celebrating sexual diversity, but, unfortunately, many of these carvings were destroyed or mutilated by the colonisers” (1).

In an interview, Nghahuia Te Awekotuku herself acknowledges that “the composers, the poets, the creators of traditional Māori literature were primarily female” (“Ngahuia Te Awekotuku—He Tohu Interview”). Te Awekotuku further extends that “in the notion of wāhine toa [special status of women among Māori culture], you have an idea of a female warrior. We have always been warriors, but certainly because we are not a—I don’t know how to put this—we are not an iwi or tribal society which is the same, the expression of female strength, of woman power can vary” (“Ngahuia Te Awekotuku—He Tohu Interview”). Here, she is suggesting that contemporary images of the female warrior are reducing the gender variety that was recognized among the Māori in earlier generations. She notes that the work of Māori scholars and artists in the 1970s and 1980s tended to standardize women as the same, but as Te Awekotuku asserts, “we

aren't" ("Ngahuia Te Awekotuku—He Tohu Interview"). Just as many other cultural figures and events were lost, Te Awekotuku notes the unsung and forgotten women who were brave fighters and leaders during the Land Wars of the nineteenth century must be remembered. Regarding the current state of gender inequality in New Zealand, Te Awekotuku blames the patriarchy. That being the case, while Te Awekotuku observes that the patriarchy in Aotearoa/New Zealand stifles real growth for Indigenous women with regard to meaningful progress both in the workforce and socially, she also points to the ways that scholars and artists circulate images of women that reduce awareness and respect of gender diversity. Recovering the stories of past generations of Māori women contributes to promoting understandings of gender diversity and constitutes an important part of Te Awekotouku's approach to feminism and her activism for women's, lesbian, and Māori rights.

Attention to language and the ways that it conveys conceptions of gender diversity is a related endeavor. While Māori language seems to show a decline in recent years, the term Takatāpui has shown a marked increase in its use. Murray posits that "the increasing presence of this term raises a number of questions about language in relation to sexual and other identifications: how does language figure in the negotiation of same sex desires and identities amongst an indigenous group who live as a minority in an Anglo-European colonized society" (233). Furthermore, Murray goes on to question, "are there distinct forms of same sex talking and text-making amongst this group whose primary language is that of the colonizer and whose native language is only spoken fluently by a minority? Is language the primary boundary marker for sexual and ethnic identification?" (233-34). The use of Māori terms to describe sexualities provides

individuals with a way to express identities and make meaning in ways that exceed or challenge colonial categories.

The reclamation of the Māori term Takatāpui can be considered as a response to the homophobia and disdain for non-heteronormative identities that are effects of colonialism. Anthropological understandings have shown the commonplace nature of various same sex relationships and gender diverse roles in Indigenous communities predating colonialism. For example, Murray states that "it appears throughout pre-contact Native North America, many societies had an institutionalized role for men who dressed as women and/or specialized in women's work or for women who dressed as men and/or did men's work" (235). The "berache" or "two-spirit" concept, known as a "third gender category" has also been heavily researched by anthropologists looking at early queer identities (Murray 235). Part of the popularity of the third gender category, according to Murray, comes from "the fact it manages to encompass both sexual and ethnic identities, and it is inclusive of men and women" (236). Such studies are very relevant to Māori gender and sexuality studies pre-contact; however, this concept cannot answer for or serve to blanket all groups and cultures or be seen as a universal precept. Common ground between these situations is the way that Indigenous understandings of gender and sexuality are erased or distorted by Western conceptions. When anthropologists make claims about the absence of homosexuality in Indigenous societies, they mean the absence of Western understandings of homosexuality and gay and lesbian identities. For instance, an article published in 1974 from the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* argued that homosexuality did not exist before European contact because there was no record of it in historical notations (Murray 236), but Stephen O. Murray and

Manuel Arboleda, in a 1985 article, "noted reasons why this reasoning is faulty" (236), including that the conclusions were shaped by the language, morals, and values of nineteenth century Europeans.

While individual writers such as Witi Ihimaera and Keri Hulme narrate different sexual identities and experiences, the depiction of non-heteronormative lives in Māori literature has not been fully documented. Clive Aspin and Jessica Hutchings argue that "historically, Māori society was based on sexual diversity and acceptance of difference" (416) as Te Awekotuuku has also argued in her interview. Only after colonialism did settlers influenced by Western religious ideals attempt to impose a dogmatic Western concept on the bodies of Māori people. Aspin and Hutchings cite the Māori Sexuality Project, whose aim "is used to inform these historical records" that gay and lesbian lives did exist in the past as seen through carvings, historical accounts, oral histories, and archival material (416). The information coming out of the Māori Sexuality Project is formative because it "support[s] and illustrate[s] some of the views of sexuality held by a range of Māori people within contemporary society. . . [and] they represent the views of a diverse range. . . and serve to refuse some of the narrow views of sexuality that have developed since colonisation over two hundred years ago" (Aspin and Hutchings 416). Fundamentalist Christian groups continue to marginalize and *other* Māori within New Zealand society, especially seen with attacks on members of sexual minorities. Aspin and Hutchings note the conservative backlash against the passage of the Civil Union Bill that granted partnership rights to same sex couples. The Destiny Church, which boasts a "significant Māori membership" (Aspin and Hutchings 417) further exemplifies efforts to supervise the continued colonization of Māori. The teachings of such churches that all

forms of sexual behavior should be limited to marriage and the emphasis on the monogamous nuclear family "would have us believe that monogamous heterosexuality was the norm within indigenous cultures" (Aspin and Hutchings 417). One should remember that "the colonizers of the New World came from patriarchal, religious monarchies where there was no separation of Church and State. Because of this background, they held racist, sexist and heterosexist ideas" (Le Duigou 198).

The belief that homosexuality did not exist prior to European contact undermines the history of a diverse people who were far more open and understanding to difference than contemporary society would have one believe. Efforts continue to whitewash and hide these histories, led by politicians, religious groups, and revisionist historians, which is why research on works like Keri Hulme's *the bone people* and other Indigenous texts that reflect diverse genders and sexualities is so important to present scholarship. *the bone people* stands out as a pivotal text that calls colonially-imposed gender norms into question. When one does such work as Joanne Barker explains in her Introduction to *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies*, "they confront the liberal work of those theoretical modes of analysis and the political movements from which they emerge that seek to translate Indigenous peoples into normative gendered and sexed bodies as citizens of the state" (Barker 7).

Keri Hulme's *the bone people*

Appearing in 1983, Keri Hulme's *the bone people*, derived from a shorter piece called "Simon Peter's Shell," brought a whole new light to the world of Indigenous literature from New Zealand. The novel became a critical success, and in 1985, it won the

Booker Prize. However, before meeting this success, Hulme had tried multiple times and failed to publish the novel due to its unique topic and style of writing. Hulme's novel had in fact been "refused by three mainstream publishers as too long, too different, and too unwieldy" ("Keri Hulme"). Hulme's novel might not have even come to being had a feminist publishing cooperative not rescued the work (Shieff 144). Members of this cooperative, Spiral Collective, "began to search for funds, but they, too, faced rejection: ironically enough an advisory committee on women turned down their request for support on grounds that the novel 'did not give a positive enough image of women, especially Māori women'" (Shieff 144). Hulme's struggles demonstrate an unwillingness to recognize the value of literature written by an Indigenous woman as well as pressures to produce a certain, expected picture of womanhood.

To state that Hulme's novel remains uneasy to digest would be an understatement. Without a doubt, the novel remains a masterpiece, nearly forty years after its publication, distinguished by rich characterizations and innovative narrative style. Hulme breaks the Western tradition of narratology, but employs many characters' thoughts and digressions in a very inventive use of stream of consciousness technique. The novel does in fact not end on the last page of the book, but the end comes on the first few pages. The three brief esoteric descriptions of three individual people walking down the street disrupts the Western concept of how a novel can be written, breaking the rules of time and narrative chronology; these descriptions are not accessible to many readers because they either gloss over them due to the complex nature of the prose or forget them entirely by the time they read further into the novel. Despite Hulme's titling of this Preface as "End at the Beginning," part of the complexity in Hulme's narrative choices, here, lies in the fact that

the histories of Indigenous and settler lives have been shaped by various interacting and overlapping events so that readers encountering these shades and layers cannot help but feel uncomfortable for a moment. These events cannot be placed in the beginning or at the end because they still continue.

In many ways, Hulme's narrative style itself may prove too difficult at times for the casual reader. Hulme writes an unflinching, unadulterated, type of storytelling that puts readers in a state of constant uneasiness. Every thought and feeling remains exposed, open, and naked to the reader's inspection. When Kerewin, one of the three chief protagonists, feels judgment and anger toward Simon who intrudes into her tower at the beginning of the novel, the reader, too, feels a sense of disarmament and violation. The novel also realigns the readers' expectations. We end up liking people who in real life we might not. Another of the main protagonists, Joe, functions as an abusive parent. His actions put young Simon in the hospital. Kerewin appears complicit in this act, as per their arrangement with one another, she gives the go-ahead for Joe to abuse his son after one of his drunken rages. Fast-forward to the next part of the book and Kerewin suffers a mysterious illness, Simon ends up in a group home, and Joe goes to jail. Just as we, the reader, are ready to hate these characters, we, instead, feel empathetic. Even Simon, who stabs his father with a broken piece of glass, longs for his "family" to be reunited. Hulme's work is fraught with extreme moments of gendered violence and child abuse that erupt from a history of colonial dissonance, but makes way for something else, something different, and perhaps something valuable. Even faced with extreme violence and bitter realities, Hulme offers these cathartic moments cathartic in the hopes they might contribute to healing.

This chapter will explore the ways gendered violence in *the bone people* problematizes the struggles of being minority and being male for non-white New Zealanders. Joe's frequent abuse of young Simon demonstrates his uncontrolled anger at the loss of his wife, coupled with a White world where fitting in can never be fully realized. Joe's actions, while personal in many ways, could also be rooted in the colonial experience where loss of primacy and autonomy result in reactionary violence toward European culture, expressed in the novel through Joe's abuse of his White, adopted son, Simon. Joe enacts his hostility on the White boy as a way to make sense of the years of colonial upheaval in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Brendan Hokowhitu's theorization of "elite indigenous masculinities" and relationships among elite Indigenous men, non-elite Indigenous men, and White men helps to explain the complexities of Joe's position. Joe represents a non-elite Indigenous man because he is not a tribal leader and is only half-Māori. Hokowhitu suggests:

> Indigenous masculinity was often asserted as reflecting the collective will for liberation; in reality, elite indigenous masculinities have habitually served to exclude alternative forms of indigenous masculinities and indigenous women from leadership roles. . . The dialectics between heterosexual patriarchal masculinity and feminism, and colonised/coloniser become complicated, as indigenous masculinities are both imbibed with privilege and denied it; both performing colonial hetero-patriarchy and resistant to it. (23)

Joe, in *the bone people* performs as a working-class member of the club of malehood, and in such a classification he also is denied access to many masculine privileges that elite-Indigenous men might enjoy due to his class status. He is allowed to keep and abuse a White child, while also being marginalized from both Māori and Pākehā culture.

Joe resists letting Kerewin inside his world just as he keeps Simon in a detached position, removed from real devotion or allowing as much perhaps as a Māori man can give to a Pākehā child after the kind of treatment he has endured from the non-Māori world at large. While the topic of gender and masculinities ever-evolves and morphs into new areas of discourse, this chapter attempts to elucidate the ways that masculinity studies can help make sense of the brutality and gendered dissonance found in *the bone people*. This chapter will also investigate the ways that gender-fluid lives are lived and experienced in this community. Kerewin, like Joe unable to assimilate to dominant New Zealand society, represents a different type of gender, never wholly being one or the other, but existing in an interstitial space, happy alone, lacking nurturing qualities in the beginning, trying to push out any type of longing or love, although ultimately unable to resist Simon's longing to be loved. Kerewin is "a strong eccentric artist, witty, bitter, self-deprecating and wise, skilled at fishing and aikido, who can defeat a man in a fight or at chess, and drink any man under the table" ("Keri Hulme"). Not unlike Keri Hulme, herself, who in many interviews described herself as "gender neuter" ("Keri Hulme"), Kerewin strides the range of multiple gender options. Hulme explained to Shona Smith that being "a neuter to me is not so much standing on the fence as being on both sides of the track at once. . . You are then free to adopt whatever blend of qualities society deems to be specifically male or specifically female without being put on the line as to where your loyalties lie—sexual loyalties lie—you don't have them." ("Keri Hulme").

While the complexities of gender fluidity exist in *the bone people* alongside masculinity, violence, in particular gendered violence occupies a place of examination. This chapter will also explore the issue of lateral violence, the violence that concerns the

ways one group turns violence on their own community. Often studied in the area of nursing and health sciences, lateral violence now offers an important intermediary to understanding the ways domestic and often gendered violence exists within family units and among Indigenous communities. While much attention can and should be paid to the many thematic undercurrents and breadth that encompasses the vastness of Hulme's work, an interrogation of lateral violence in the family might prove beneficial to academics and scholars questioning the role gender and violence play in this novel as well as Indigenous communities beyond its pages.

Building a Family

Three individual characters, a Māori-white man named Joe Gillayley, a Māori-white woman named Kerewin Holmes, and Joe's "adopted" white son named Simon P. Gillayley, form an unusual "family" unit. Although on the surface they do not appear to be a typical family—the two adults are of Māori descent, unmarried, and not the biological parents to the young white boy—the trio seem to come into one another's lives at just the right time. Simon nearly drowns in a shipwreck, and Joe rescues him before the novel begins. Joe's own family, irreparably interrupted through the death of his wife, appears to cause Joe to descend further away from people and the love his adopted son gives him. Kerewin retreats into her tower to paint and avoid any human contact, away from her "ex-family" and love, perhaps to find something that she lost or form a new understanding about herself. Simon brings Joe and Kerewin together; he is a troubled boy who cannot speak, so what he might know about his own history is lost. Lost to the adults in a confusing and violent world, but maybe like Joe and Kerewin, he wants to forget.

The pain from the young boy's past, so unbearable, that maybe he wills himself to endure abuse at the hand of his adopted father, Joe, if only to have someone to count on and love from afar.

With this disturbing and ameliorated version of love, Hulme presses the reader to feel the same optimism and longing that Simon feels. We learn later in the book that the ship Simon had been on was carrying a cache of heroin, which explains Simon's fear of needles, hospitals, and nearly everything else. Simon probably had been abused prior to Joe saving him on the beach, and while there is a breaking point in the novel where Simon can no longer take the abuse he receives from Joe, in some unusual way maybe he understands Joe. Perhaps having that much pain allows another human being to really understand the pain of another. Such an observation can clearly be connected to the plight of the Māori. Kerewin, too, seems to be suffering, but she pushes out the world and those who make her feel something. Down deep, Kerewin knows that Simon and Joe have found her out, found that secret stash of love and friendship that she keeps hidden beneath her tough exterior. In order to counter their "discovery," Kerewin must push them and her feelings further away.

The pain and trauma experienced by all often comes in the form of symbolic dreams, passing remarks, or flashbacks, and second-hand accounts. Seldom do these characters voice their pain to one another. Kerewin describes a frightening and symbolic dream in the following passage:

> The crayfish moved in silence through clear azure water. Bright scarlet armour, waving antennae, red legs stalking onward. Azure and scarlet. Beautiful.
>
> It was about then she realised she was in the middle of a dream, because living crayfish were purple-maroon and orange; only when cooked, do they turn

> scarlet. A living boiled cray? A crayfish cooking as it walked calmly through a hot pool?
>
> She shuddered. The crayfish moved more quickly through the blue crystal sea and the fog of dreaming increased. . . (Hulme 12)

Occurring early in the book before the reader knows what comes next, the dream articulates the feeling of pain and suffering these people feel, albeit the pain while still walking, still alive, still feeling, but dead. Perhaps as a symbol for Simon, Kerewin, or the Māori people as a whole, the dream can speak to a person who exists in reality, but on the inside also appears nonexistent. For this unconventional family unit, Patrick Holland writes that "*the bone people* problematises the conventional family portrait in part by foregrounding negative reactions" (117). While the little "family" unit struggles to make sense of themselves and one another, they must also do this with a repressive and intolerant community. They walk upright and alive, but dying, dead, on the inside.

As the heterosexual patriarch, Joe represents a distorted version of what it means to be a father or a patriarch. Hokowhitu contends that "indigenous masculinity enables a model for looking at colonial power. The two essentialised notions associated with the dominance of colonised man over the indigenous man, the man over woman, create the ambivalent figure of the indigenous heterosexual patriarch" (Hokowhitu 29). He argues that a "post-hegemonic analysis of indigenous masculinity" is central to uncovering the "Janus-faced and ambivalent figure of the indigenous heterosexual patriarch; both oppressor and oppressed" (23). Joe represents the indigenous patriarch, overseeing the Pākehā, boy who he nurtures, but often times also abuses. As Hokowhitu proposes, Joe provides an opportunity to think about the operations of colonial power and the way it relies on dominance over an Other. The consistent abuse and the belief that he is doing

what is best for Simon creates a frightening vision and reflection of colonial dominance for the reader to digest. The question remains, why does Keri Hulme have the reader empathize and maybe even like a child abuser like Joe? Joe's abuse of Simon can be seen as his way to deal with the trauma and travails of colonial dissonance. Hulme does not condone Joe's actions. On the contrary, she uses Kerewin to show him, and the reader, that what he has been doing to Simon is very much wrong. Still, Joe represents this patriarch, Hokowhitu foregrounds as the oppressed and the oppressor. Joe does not make liking him easy. His actions are reprehensible on even a perfunctory scale, but Joe's trauma and how he deals with the trauma at least makes sense. Rebecca Wirihana and Cherryl Smith explain that "the high rates of indigenous peoples exposed to traumatic experiences are exacerbated by the effects of historical trauma passed from generations to generation" (197). Joe represents a Māori male whose daily instances of trauma continue reverberating again and again.

Perhaps the answer as to why readers feel so attached and often times empathetic to these characters, all the while disliking certain actions they display, can be found in how marginalized and misunderstood they seem to be from everyone else in the book. Joe works at a blue-collar job in a factory, unable to advance into a higher class, but committed to performing certain "manhood acts" that give him the signification of maleness. Joe's inability to advance socially and financially causes him to act as the white male dominant model which indicates how a male should be: exert violence, be assertive, and engage in aggressive behavior. Being a minority male brings a specific set of standards, expectations, and myths that the marginalized man must negotiate. Not only does the non-white male have to perform his manhood because of his subjugated role put

forth by the white male. As some scholars duly note, powerful men become popular by the emasculation of other men. Speaking on Australian Aboriginal perspectives of masculinity, Bob Pease writes, “The emasculation theory that argues racism strips away black men’s manhood has surfaced in the debates about the experiences of marginalised men in Australia[,]” and as such, many critics have commented on the fact that Indigenous men’s “traditional power and authority have been undermined since white colonisation” (122). Perhaps by inflicting violence on Simon, in some way, Joe feels that he is avenging the years of oppression and trauma he and his community suffered, retribution for a world who took his own family.

Socioeconomics in relationship to racial dissonance is, as well as Whiteness, often an indicator of White male privilege. Masculinity functions like Whiteness as a racialized construction. While Whiteness frames society through a “White” lens, masculinity calls into question the idea of “White male privilege” and the function of the patriarchy in racializing groups. Angela dyer explains that “Race acts as a powerful social and cultural force in countries colonised by Western nations where Indigenous or First Nation peoples often remain disadvantaged across all socio-economic indicators including education, health, employment and housing” (191). French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s theories on power might explain the socioeconomic conditions among non-whites and Indigenous men through Hulme’s depiction of Joe. So long as the dominant culture does not acknowledge race exists or uses racial language to break down social norms, one can pretend there lives no racism. The dominant race, as Richard Dyer succinctly posits, do not see themselves as a race. Dyer writes, “whites are not of a certain race, they're just the *human race*” (3). Bourdieu’s work on Algeria’s imperial structures aided the philosopher

with the knowledge that grounded most of his formative theories on power dynamics and those who lacked power in societies. Colonial rule of northern Africa by the French, not unlike the British Empire's incursions all over the world, brought with it tyranny and injustices for all concerned, most notably the subjugated groups. Witnessing many of these problems first-hand while in Algeria, Bourdieu hypothesized on the ways power affects Indigenous people in society. Dominant members of societies, according to Bourdieu, do not "consciously reproduce inequality in social relation," and "do not recognize when their behavior is inequitable or discriminatory and instead accept it as the norm, thereby reproducing the status quo" (qtd. in Durey 196). Attempting to assert his male authority through his abuse of Simon, Joe sees himself in a bastardized version of male dominance, assimilating a discriminatory behavior that copies, as Bourdieu explains, the patriarchal norms of the status quo. While not deliberately accepting and reproducing colonial hierarchies like these, Joe's behavior reflects the legacies of colonialism and its impact on the colonized.

For Joe, his performance as a male includes providing dinner as well as offering rides to "damsels in distress" on the back of his "manly" motorcycle. After their first meeting where Kerewin treats Joe and Simon to dinner at her place, Joe sends Simon over to her tower the following day with a lunch for her and the boy and hopes later to make them dinner himself. Simon forgets to relay the message to Kerewin, but Joe does, in the end, make dinner for them that evening. Joe cannot understand why Kerewin does not feel the same way about him that he does for her and is unable to reconcile the issue of asexuality against his view of how men and women should behave. Regarding Kerewin, Joe thinks, "'Sometimes she seems ordinary. She is lonely. She drinks like I do,

to keep away the ghosts. She's an outsider, like me. And then sometimes, she seems inhuman" (Hulme 101). In another moment when Joe is sexually aroused, he says to himself, "'God, what makes her tick? She must feel like this sometimes'" and then deduces that she must have been hurt by someone (Hulme 174). Unable to understand how a woman could be asexual and not give in to the temptation of being with him, a strong, virile man, Joe makes the false assumption that she is the one messed up and unwilling to engage in such a connection due to old wounds. As Jana Fedtke observes, Joe believes "the common notion that asexual individuals are often seen as sexually not fully developed yet and/or traumatized in terms of sexual relations" (332). Hulme raises the notion here to challenge the stereotype, not extend it. Again, Joe's representation as the patriarchal figure complicates his understanding of any sexual differences.

In the case of Simon, he is learning how to behave like a male and be normative vis-à-vis copying the actions of his father, Joe. Young boys' knowledge toward gender constructions shows that the messages about how to behave as a male are made apparent from early in their development. Simon, on the other hand, is lucky if he is called a boy. What various outsiders say regarding him and the comments from his father and Kerewin demonstrate that Simon's status, even as a white male, is truly marginalized. Simon's marginalization stems in large part due to his inability to speak for himself. Again, Simon is a child, so he is labelled a child. He is unable to physically speak, so he is labelled dumb or crazy. Sometimes, as happens with minorities, there is a lot of self-reflexive marginalization that occurs. While Simon sees the world from a different side, it would be impossible to assume that some of the abuse, both physical and verbal is not being internalized as self-reflexive marginalization. Simon is white, but as a child, he is

classified as undesirable and unwanted by the townspeople, his natural family in Europe, and even at times by his adopted family. Simon is left to create his own identity from how he sees Joe. Breaking out windows, skipping school, and stealing can be viewed as explicit manhood acts that come from modeling the gender performances he is seeing from Joe. What is most troubling in the case of Simon is the adults' lack of understanding. Kerewin understands more than most. She can hear the music he makes on the beach with his shells. Joe, however, wants to silence the music. Discovering Simon's creations on the beach, Joe remembers hearing a "'faint, but growing music from Simon's creation. . . nothing he could really hear, a sound of darkness that seemed to sing. . . he had never told Simon about it, and he never listened to the music hutches. And he stopped the child from making them whenever he caught him at it'" (Hulme 103). Joe explains to Kerewin that Simon is "'disturbed enough without doing anything that adds to it'" (Hulme 103). Simon occupies an unusual position due to his age, ability, and race, but rather than receiving understanding and acceptance of his diversity, Simon is limited by contemporary understandings and the pressures to perform manhood.

In many other moments in the novel, Hulme reinforces the idea that these people are outlaws or misfits. The telephone operator at the beginning of the book when Kerewin finds that Simon has broken into her tower, says, "'it's well known he's not all there. Emotionally disturbed or something'" (Hulme 34). Then before hanging up, he reaffirms, "'as I said, the kid's batty. Deficient'" (Hulme 35). Although more sympathetic, even Kerewin calls Simon "urchin," "imp," "bandit," and many other negative epithets. Both she and Joe commonly refer to Simon as "it." Thus, there is a conclusion being made by Hulme that Simon functions alternatively within his "family"

and to the rest of society as a whole. The abuse he has suffered, which materializes in fitful outbursts and destruction of property all over town, as well as his inability to speak, all conspire to make Simon "something of an oddity" or in Joe's words, "an outlaw." All of the behavior, which Joe seems to even acknowledge himself, is Simon's way of trying to make people hear him. Joe tells Kerewin, "'if you push him hard enough, he'll fight you to make you understand. It's his last resort spitting and kicking. . . he'll do his damnedest to punch you into what he wants to say. That's bad, I know, you know [. . .] but he's still trying to talk to you [. . .] you know?'" (Hulme 49). Much of Simon's silence can be linked back to whatever trauma he experienced in his past, a past that he cannot speak of, but still feels the trauma with him. As a white European, Simon complicates the idea of trauma experienced by Māori people at the hands of colonials. Although not Māori, Simon has been adopted into a Māori family unit, and while his trauma is different, Keri Hulme wants the reader to understand that violence can exist within any race or age range. Unfortunately, Joe often will not listen to Simon because like Kerewin he has spent a good amount of time pushing people away. For Joe, his consolation is alcohol, while Kerewin keeps to her tower and her solitude.

Beyond Binary Gender

Perhaps an alternate fictional portrait of Hulme herself, Kerewin does not ascribe to her community's expected gender norms and identifies herself as asexual. She drinks, smokes, fishes, and in many ways takes on the persona of a man because with it comes power and some form of achievement. Kerewin describes her nightly ritual, which includes behaviors her society codes as masculine: "It's an odd macabre kind of

existence. While the nights away in drinking, and fill the days with petty killing. Occasionally, drink out a day and then go hunt all night, just for the change" (Hulme 13). Kerewin exhibits traits her community associates with being male and takes great pride in her otherness. She renounces feminine coded traits such as nurturing, for instance, saying early on in the novel that "she doesn't like children, doesn't like people, and has discouraged anyone from coming on her land" (Hulme 15). In the very first page of the novel, we find Kerewin drinking in a bar, sitting alone, judging all the patrons, being nearly unseen. Even the oft-friendly bartender retreats to the livelier conversations on the other side of the bar, after asking Kerwin about the state of fishing. In a patriarchal society, maleness brings certain privileges, even for characters like Joe who may lack full privileges due to race and class. Kerewin, however, exists on the fringes of society. Outsiders greet Kerewin with unease and suspicion. As she leaves the bar, the men stop their joking and stare like Kerewin must be probed or studied. Perhaps this is why she locks herself away in a tower, devoid of human interaction.

The feeling of "otherness" resonates over and over in *the bone people*. Perhaps Hulme considers such "otherness" the daily existence for herself and her people, as being Māori comes with a particular disassociation and isolation from Pākehā New Zealanders; being of mixed race, both non-white and European unwraps a new set of struggles and societal habitus for people like Kerewin and Joe. Kerewin's solitary existence, locked in her tower, reflects the sense of isolation that Hulme herself felt. Hulme left her studies after four semesters at The University of Canterbury in Law, with a feeling of "estrange[ment]/[being] out of place" (Hulme 5). Like Kerewin, Hulme also came from a mixed lineage ancestry. Hulme discusses her background in an article for the *Ngāi Tahu*

magazine, *Te Karaka*, where she gives details on her early life and education. Hulme's father, John William Hulme, traces his ancestry to Lancashire, England, while Hulme's mother, Mary Ann Miller, can trace her lineage to Māori and Orkney Scottish roots ("Keri Hulme"). Commenting on herself and how she understands familial connection and centers her writing, Hulme explains:

> I am lucky to have got two extremely rich and potent mythological traditions, one is Kai Tahu or Māori in general and the other is Celtic—I can't section me up, but I think of myself as Māori rather than Pākehā [white] and where this may seem ridiculous to someone who goes through the whakapapa, the family tree, and says, oh but you're only an eighth Māori, how can you feel like that? Well—that's where I draw my strength from, that's where I learnt about works first and that's the side I learnt to tell stories from." ("Keri Hulme")

Many writers pull from their own experiences in their writings, producing what they know from their rich traditional beliefs and life experiences. Hulme indentifies a tradition of Māori storytelling as one of her shaping influences, and she uses her writing to explore liminal positions, those that fall between established racial and gender categories.

In the novel, the characterization of Kerewin draws on both qualities of maleness and femaleness and complicates a neat division. Keri Hulme creates a strong characterization of femaleness in her depiction of Kerewin, however, there does exist tension between the idea of femaleness and the idea of being gender neuter. Hulme explains that like her mother, she "in [her] depths/height [is] family oriented" ("Keri Hulme") and "[has] always been pro-female, not least because [she] come[s] from a line of matriarchs. Being female is a position of strength, like being Māori" ("Keri Hulme"). Hulme problematizes the socially-constructed notions of masculine/feminine roles in her depiction of Kerewin by showing that Kerewin regularly performs behaviors associated

with both genders and by suggesting that femaleness can also be associated with power and strength. Kerewin, like Keri, is self-reliant.

Throughout the novel, Hulme raises issues about gender presentation and the ways that others read or struggle to read outward performances of gender. Gender confusion of Simon and Kerewin, for example, both suggest that outsiders question their ideas of gender-based knowledge due to certain appearances or mannerisms or maybe a lack of acknowledgement of gender. When he first meets Kerewin, Simon is not even sure she is a woman. Joe explains that "'Piri said you seemed a nice sort of person. A lady, he said you were. Sim wasn't sure whether you were a man or woman until Piri said that" (Hulme 48). Earlier Kerewin herself tells Joe, "I don't like getting mizzed or mistered either" (Hulme 47). Thus, there is an implication being made here by Kerewin that this might not be the first time she has been mistaken for or called a man. Hulme is pointing out here that Kerewin resists the idea of being addressed with gendered terms. Later in the novel when Kerewin investigates Simon's family history, she receives a letter from his potential family who addresses Kerewin as "Mr. K. Holmes" and "Sir" (Hulme 98-99). Although Kerewin remarks, "apparently one Gabriel Semnet, Secretary to his Lordship the Earl of Conderry. Isn't that luverly?" (Hulme 99), she never really acknowledges, even in her own thoughts, which she is transcribing in her journal, the apparent gender mistake.

When Joe first discovers Simon on the beach, he is momentarily confused about his gender as well. Joe explains, "'His [Simon's] eyes were black, all pupil, and he didn't see me at all. I thought he was a girl at first, you know because of the hair, but when I picked him up I saw his penis'" (Hulme 85). The confusion on gender here speaks to

preconceived ideas from the European model. Hulme problematizes gender here to maintain that gender serves as a construct. Who a person is biologically matters in the sense that identity is ascribed and lived through specific bodies. Joe's mention that he knew Simon was male because he had seen his penis, for example, illustrates Joe's reliance on biology to categorize gender. Hulme notes the reality of biology in engaging with gender conversations, but does not limit her discussion to such. Gender is more fluid and complicated than tying it simply to a biological explanation. Social expectations about gender create ideas about the meanings of bodies, how certain bodies should look and behave. Constructs of gender exist and matter greatly; they can have extreme consequences in terms of ways that individuals perceive themselves, act out gendered lives, and react to others. Hulme in *the bone people* is troubling Western binary constructions of gender, and these challenges should be considered not only in relation to contemporary theories of gender as construction or performance, but also in relation to historical Māori practices concerning sex and gender and the language recovery projects and contemporary Māori queer activism that provide access to language that reflects and respects non-binary genders and sexualities.

In terms of the gendered language Hulme deploys in the novel, Kerewin at one point, calls herself a "neuter" (like Hulme herself), which for her explains her identity to the outside world in the best way she can. In many ways, Kerewin functions in the role of both genders and neither. Holland notes that "Kerewin is stigmatised because she is not married, as a lesbian; some characters assume that she is in a relationship with Joe, and they use Simon's presence to account for her disavowal" (117). Such a position for

Kerewin— being labelled as "lesbian" or having outsiders misread her relationship with Joe— creates a lack of understanding of Kerewin's sexuality and aromanticism.

Holland, however, also imposes judgements on Hulme's depictions of sexuality. Holland argues that while Hulme is "apparently flexible. . . to gender and demarcated gender roles, which relates to the project of resisting colonial ideology. . . *the bone people* is distressingly homophobic" (118). Joe represents the heteronormative patriarch set forth in the Hokowhitu model, but that does not mean that the novel itself is homophobic. Yes, some of the characters make judgments about non-heteronormative sexuality, but if anything, Hulme uses these examples to point out how homophobia is a part of the baggage of colonialism vis-à-vis religious ideologies. Holland cites Kerewin's rejection of the bisexual Polly and Binny Daniels' unexplored molestation of children as an example of homophobia (118). Holland's association of molestation with homophobia or associating homosexuality with pedophilia is itself ill-informed. Perhaps the attitude of Kerewin here speaks more to her alliance with the masculine side of herself or an unwillingness to understand people who are different than herself. Such an attitude is perplexing considering the many passages where Kerewin feels alone or misunderstood. She explains at one point, "'unjoy is that all I can do?'" (Hulme 91). In the end, though, she observes, "'all the world is a little queer'" (Hulme 89).

In Keri Hulme's *the bone people*, an unconventional "family" reaches out for connections and acceptance. While Kerewin and Joe are reluctant to embrace the love Simon intends for them all to share, in the end maybe there can be true acceptance for one another. While Hulme's narrative style is very innovative—her discussion of gender roles goes beyond the reified model of Western prose—*the bone people* shows the ways

men navigate different cultural and social spheres and the ways that they are impacted by and participate in silencing of non-binary gender and non-heteronormative identities. In many ways, the marginalized characters in the novel exhibit the same oppressive behaviors as those dictated by White culture because in order to fit in, even among this little group of outlaws, they feel pressure to act in ways that reaffirm the dominant ideal. Like other recovery efforts that are contributing to a realignment of perceptions concerning the definition of a family in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Hulme's novel pushes colonially-inherited models of what it means to be a family. In the end, maybe what Hulme wants the most is for people to merely "listen."

CHAPTER FOUR: WESTERN DREAMING IN LITERARY OCEANIA: ESCAPISM AS AN AGENT OF ASSAULT ON INDIGENOUS FIJIAN CULTURE IN JOSEPH VERAMU'S *MOVING THROUGH THE STREETS*

In his stirring novel *Moving through the Streets* (1994), Indigenous Fijian author Joseph C. Veramu shows a bleak existence for Indigenous Fijian youth growing up in Suva, the capital and largest city in Fiji. Many of these young people, coming from the squalor of slum life in the low-cost government housing suburbs, turn to gangs, drugs, prostitution, and violence. The lives of these young men and women are especially grim as the theme of hopelessness reoccurs throughout the novel. Gendered-thinking affects the young men in the novel in many ways. From the very beginning of the novel, Veramu makes the point that distinct differences and gendered biases impact these characters' thoughts as well as their daily lives. Sakaraia, the main protagonist of the novel, while emboldened by the affections of his girlfriend, Merenia, cannot escape the violence from his past, and his constant need to feel fulfilled and affirmed as male continues to affect his self-esteem and actions throughout the novel. The scars on Sakaraia's back from constant beatings and brutal assaults remind him of moments in his life when he failed at "being a man." With every stripe, every scar, they carry with them painful memories of his failings. Those memories bring hate and shameful thoughts to his mind as he struggles to allow Merenia into his heart. Throughout Veramu's novel, other young men engage in violence directed toward one another, society at large, and the establishment, but oftentimes the target of violence is women. The novel explores how messages coming from the West contribute to gendered violence. Western ideals of masculinity ensnare

many of the young men with a feeling of inadequacy due to their position in the world. If they are jobless, lacking clear direction or purpose, unable to afford a decent home, much less keep up the illusions of manhood that are circulated in Western media, placing blame on someone else becomes attractive to them.

In the following, I will investigate the root causes of and impact that Western messages have on the Fijian characters in the novel that I hope might shed light on the larger impact of Indigenous peoples' struggles to acclimate to Western modernity. I will unpack the racialized and gendered violence seen in the novel by focusing on specific issues that determine much of the gendered-thinking in the novel, including: the club life of Fijian youth which creates the fictive premise that manhood must be measured by sexual prowess; the use of film vis-à-vis coded messages being sent to the Fijian youth from the West; and the destruction of the environment which removes centuries of cultural ties to nature and frames a more nefarious Western thought that nature and the environment lack any meaning unless there is a monetary price attached. Further, I will discuss the cultural upheavals and disintegration of island culture in Fiji and analyze how Veramu's use of escapism serves to negotiate the response among Fijian youth to deal with their alienation from Indigenous culture. I argue that for many Fijian people, escapism through dreaming comes as an important outlet to counter the cultural and physical destruction of colonial disruption. The dreams, like film and other coded messages, present a false sense of power that only furthers the destruction initiated by the West.

Through my analysis of *Moving Through the Streets*, I will explore the harmful messages that Fijian youth receive from the West, which precipitate, in many cases, their

ultimate ruin. Many of these messages are ones that promote a gendered and racist view that many of the young Fijian men in Veramu's novel are susceptible to because they come from extreme poverty and see the root cause of their failure or lack of progress in their inability to be real White men. Fijian youth cannot attain the Western options presented for them and turn the violence on other people. For young women, they are trapped in a world where these men see them as possessions and prizes. While Veramu presents a tale of daily life for young Fijian men and women living in Suva, many of the characters in the novel see their lives as meaningless, wandering from one desperate situation to the next, one bar or nightclub after the other, to a different bed or warm touch, all as a means to escape or maybe cope with the monotony of life's travails among the squalor of urban unrest. Gendered-thinking consumes this world, too, in harmful ways that strip away both men and women's personal liberties into a Western ideal. Veramu's ultimate message may in fact be that this is the new world in Fiji, ravaged by cultural assaults that threaten the very lives of the new generation of Indigenous youth.

The novel's attention to the distinct ways that Fijian men and women experience the impacts of colonization and cultural destruction make theories of masculinity and gender integral to this study. In keeping with my overall methodology in this project, I attempt to use Western perspectives or scholarship selectively, because indeed "emphasis on [Western] discourse detracts from an assessment of material ways in which colonial power relations persist" (McEwan 102). Instead, I propose to balance my reading with Western and non-Western scholarship side by side. In this way, such a reading will be a more textured one that can outline some of the struggles with regard to violence and

gendered-thinking which affects the dreams of young men in Fiji throughout Veramu's novel.

The Coup d'états and Fiji in the 1990s

Colonization, war, and a sustained Western interference altered local island communities in the Pacific. Disruption and fragmentation of the Fijian people can be attributed to these same actions. As depicted in Veramu's novel, historically, the Fijian people experienced a series of challenges that threw many Indigenous groups and customs into disarray. Released in 1993, *Moving Through the Streets* comes at a point in Fijian history when the country attempted to regain an identity apart from the United Kingdom following a series of coup d'états[1]. The subsequent election of 1987 extended the negative view toward Indo-Fijians as Timoci Bavadra defeated the ruling Alliance Party headed by Kamisese Mara. The new government was predominantly now Indo-Fijians, which led to widespread resentment and anger by Indigenous Fijians.

In May, the first Coup d'état began and would culminate in the deposing of the newly elected government. Peter Thomson, Fijian islander by birth and upbringing, lays out Fiji's historical repositioning in the late twentieth century including an eyewitness account of the first May1987 Coup d'état in his book *Kava in the Blood* (1999). Thomson served as district officer for government administration around the outer islands of Fiji, diplomat in Fiji's overseas missions, as well as a kava farmer, hotel developer, and book

[1] The first Coup d'etat occurred in May 1987 led by Lieutenant Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka to depose the newly elected government that consisted of a majority Indo-Fijian constituency. The second coup in September 1987 also led by Rabuka declared Fiji a republic after severing ties with the British monarchy. In 2022, Rabuka became the Prime Minister.

publisher. He recounts how on 14 May 1987, he was engaged in serving kava to a group of foreign journalists in the media room at the Ministry of Information in the nation's capital, Suva. They had come to the country for any news of the growing unrest after the recent election to give to their readers. Thomson explains that "they [the reporters] were keen to hear stories of pending strife and were visiting us at the ministry in the hope of obtaining insights in this regard" (21), whereas Thomson aimed to dampen their enthusiasm for stories of malcontent. Thomson told the reporters, "You parachute journalists drop in here, become instant experts on the country and then produce half-truth, bad-news stories. Only a few months ago Pope John Paul stayed here and told us Fiji was a symbol of hope for the world" (21). Thomson's words proved to be a bit too optimistic because before lunchtime a Coup d'état would overthrow the government of Bavadra, the Fijian Prime Minister. The hearings that followed the May Coup d'état were meant to strengthen the representation of Indigenous Fijians in the legislature because the election of the previous month had resulted in representatives being a majority Indo-Fijian constituency for the first time in Fiji's history (Thomson 21). As discussed in the Introduction, the Indo-Fijians' ancestors came to Fiji in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as indentured servants. Indo-Fijians now make up around 37% of the population of Fiji compared to 57% of Indigenous Fijians, and tensions continue to divide these groups.

Negative attitudes toward Indo-Fijians in Fiji can be seen in Veramu's novel as gangs frequently loot and vandalize Indo-Fijian owned businesses. Historically, Indo-Fijians never owned land in Fiji as Priya Chattier explains, Indo-Fijians "only leased the agricultural land from the indigenous Fijians. Fiji has a unique system of land ownership

where indigenous Fijians own 83% of the land on a communal basis, 7% is freehold owned privately by individuals, and 10% is owned by the state" (78). Although Australian companies control most of the economy in Fiji, Indo-Fijians own most of the shops and dominate the middle levels of bureaucracy. This undercurrent is seen at the time of Veramu's novel, where a disgruntled attitude toward Indo-Fijians exists. Following the 1987 Coup d'états, Fiji underwent two other coups in 2000 and again in 2006, which saw increasing violence toward Indo-Fijians especially. Susanna Trnka writes that "violence targeting Indians was not a new phenomenon" (117). Such sentiments:

> Galvanized by the anti-foreigner and anti-Indo-Fijian rhetoric of *Taukei* or Fijian nationalists, its intensity in the months immediately following the 2000 coup reached unseen heights (at least since the end of Indian indenture in 1920). Battery, rape, and the burning of Indo-Fijian homes occurred throughout Fiji's largest island, Viti Levu, and in parts of the second major island, Vanua Levu. (Trnka 117)

Much of the prejudice can be linked to the socio-economic inequalities that exist between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. As of 2022, while many Indo-Fijians are still living in Fiji, some change has occurred due to economic factors that have precipitated an exodus of some Indo-Fijians out of the country.

Since the 1987 Coup d'états, changes were made that attempted to reclaim traditional values and autonomy for Indigenous Fijians. Brij V. Lal in *Broken Waves: The History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century* posits that following the coup, a majority of the people supported the new Constitution, although a precise number was difficult to ascertain (330). However, a majority of the Indo-Fijians did not support the Constitution as it was deemed racist. Lal writes that "the new constitution provides

explicit direction to the new government to promote positive discrimination in favor of Fijians and Rotumans[2]" (326). Chiefdom and cultural divisions exist in Fiji between the eastern chiefs and the western chiefs, however, the tensions between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians are even more strained. During the Coup, thousands of Indo-Fijians were attacked in Suva by Indigenous Fijians and many were injured (Kristof). Rajendra Prasad argues that the election was a defining moment in Fijian history and that "it culminated in the crucifixion of democracy. Racism, which had threatened it so ominously from time to time, finally devoured it" (213). Lal expands that "the postcoup period [after the 1987 coup d'état] has been a trying time for most Indo-Fijians, a time of humiliation, suffering, and torment when 'everything's gone wrong in terms of their legitimate rights and expectations.' So far, their reaction has been one of silent, passive protest, which is understandable given all the guns are on the other side" (328). Lal submits that "others among the oppressed will bide their time and hope that they, or at least their children, will be able to escape, their predicament and emigrate to greener pastures [and] [a]lready since the coups, some thirty thousand have left for North America, Australia and New Zealand" (328). Lal goes on to include a passage from an Anonymous play, called *A Matter of Principle*, that is included in Arlene Griffen's edited volume, *With Heart and Nerve and Sinew: Post-coup Writing from Fiji* (1997). The sentiments of the character in the play can speak also to the attitudes felt by those unnamed Indo-Fijians who are the subject of torment and racialized violence in Veramu's book: "My country? . . . I have always worked hard—even bring files home and work at

[2] Rotumans are a Polynesian ethnic group native to Rotuma, a group of islands in Fiji.

night. I was doing it all for my country. Hah! . . . But my country doesn't give a damn for me now. So why should I care for my country? As long as my cheque keeps coming in, that's all I'm going to worry about. The country can get stuffed, for all I care" (qtd. in Lal 328-9). Such is the background for *Moving through the Streets*, where racialized and gendered violence permeate the streets of Suva through Veramu's account.

Veramu's depiction of these characters in *Moving through Streets* does not come from an uninformed position. Veramu worked with many youths in Suva as an educator and has written articles on his time promoting literacy in Suva's slums. Many of the examples of the three boys he cites in his article, "A Chance for a Better Life: Literacy Education for Liberation: A Case Study of Urban Young Adults in Suva City, Fiji," are ones who had faced severe abuse, lack of employment, addiction to drugs and alcohol, or had become caught up in gangs and trouble with the law. Veramu writes, "I came to know these youths through their friends or when they came to my office asking for help to get odd jobs or do vocational extension courses at the University of South Pacific" (114-15). Veramu created the Young Adult Literacy Programme and in the first installment of the program, Veramu worked with fifty young adults. While Veramu's novel is not an autobiographical account, the richness of his characterizations shines through because of his familiarity with the issues that plague the young people of Fiji coming from the slums.

Becoming a Man in the Bali Hai and Escapism

One of the central elements Veramu considers in the book concerns the role of men and the ways dominant gender ideals impact their understanding of themselves and

their relationships with others. Sakaraia, the chief protagonist of the novel who is recently released from Naboro Prison, feels like a "nobody" (Veramu 1), and he uses alcohol to "escape the world outside" (Veramu 2), while Onisi, Sakaraia's best friend, who projects an outward image of strength, "had a low opinion of himself, was often depressed, and needed drinks and sniffers to face the trials and tribulations of daily life" (Veramu 19). For Sakaraia and Onisi in the novel, being male or perhaps more aptly, "failing" at being male is linked to the circumstances of growing up in a different world than their forefathers and mothers had lived, the time before Whites came to make claims and disrupt their communities. These men must perform their masculinity through a hybridized mélange. On the one hand these men regard their cultural ancestry and beliefs, while on the other, the allure of the West with its messages of bountiful opportunities for wealth and unencumbered sexual possibilities, conquests, and acquisitions, create competitive urges within them that say, "This is what a male looks like, acts like, or feels."

Veramu's novel demonstrates that many of these young men begin to mimic their Western heroes and in part become radicalized ideologues for the propagation of Western views, even when cognizant these are coming from outside their own cultures. The messages many Western men are exposed to in the media, which helps to shape their own masculinities, reaches the Indigenous Fijian males in Veramu's novel. Therefore, to answer the call, these men engage in various behaviors to affirm their position as male. These behaviors exhibit many markers of Western masculinities. Western scholars Douglas Schrock and Michael Schwalbe refer to these manifestations as "manhood acts." They write: "All manhood acts, as we define them, are aimed at claiming privilege,

eliciting deference, and resisting exploitation. . . body types are irrelevant, except inasmuch as a male body is a symbolic asset and a female body a liability, when trying to signify possession of a masculine self and put on a convincing manhood act" (181). For the Indigenous men of Veramu's novel, while this definition may be applied, their "manhood acts" are a negotiation of the messages they receive from the Western world and sometimes their own communities. In their attempt to become like the idealized male, listening to the continued messages from the West about what men are supposed to be, look like, or act like (e.g., rich, autonomous, sexually virile, and powerful), the young Indigenous Fijian men of *Moving through the Streets* model their own behavior on the Western archetype. Ultimately these men remain caught between the two extremes—Western and Indigenous masculine ideals—in an interstitial void where their realities are being replaced by a myth of manhood, and the desire to "recover" their manhood that is seemingly lost means that they must forge a new masculinity.

In the first chapter, Veramu reveals a cathexis for masculine congregation in Suva through his description of the Bali Hai nightclub. At the entrance of the nightclub, "the burly man wearing an undersized yellow tee-shirt that accentuated his bulging biceps and chest cast a warning look at Sakaraia before he took hold of his hand and stamped it with the 'pass in' mark" (Veramu 1). The Bali Hai bouncer exhibits all the outward signs of maleness. He wears a smaller sized shirt in an attempt to draw attention to his masculine physique. He makes the final call to those entering the nightclub, in an almost accusatory way, scrutinizing the maleness of the men entering and finally stamping their hands, signaling that "they can join the club, they are male now too." Later in the novel, when Sakaraia again goes to the Bali Hai, Veramu describes the bouncer in the same ensemble

with only a different colored shirt. Every night, he waits at the door to give admittance to many Suva young men. While the male body becomes an asset that gains them admittance to the pleasures which wait inside the club, their manhood acts are much more than mere physique. They can perform to claim a sense of privilege, elicit deference from others, and resist exploitation in sexual conquests. In short, before the night ends, they will continue to perform manhood acts because this is what they think they must do to be recognized as men. Before the night ends, many of these men have completed their ultimate act of heteronormative masculinity by copulating with young women in the bushes outside the club or taking them back home. The Bali Hai beckons young Fijian men to a world of desire and excitement at their fingertips.

The Bali Hai, simultaneously, represents a way for the men to escape from their feelings of failure and their frustrations over their socio-economic deficiencies. The narrator continues that "most people who enter Bali Hai wanted to forget for a time who they really were. Here youths wanted to escape from their dreary lives through music, drinks and movement" (2-3). In many ways Veramu's description inspires memories of the 1970's era where African American and gay people in the United States and elsewhere frequented discos for a similar feeling of anonymity and escape from life's drudgery. Reporter James Gavin explains that "Disco was escapism; dancers had little time for anything that pulled them down from the clouds" ("Dance Dance Revolution"). Like the dancers of that time, the partygoers at the Bali Hai in Veramu's novel visit the club with the same kind of exhilarated emotions percolating among the crowd. Their night out was a night of unlimited possibilities, where the only real question was where the night would not take them. The whole world was their party. Entering the club like

partygoers of old, with the syncopated tribal beats of a drumline, underscoring the rapid movement of the club-set's heartbeats, the whole dance floors felt alive as if moving beneath them. Even the smells and colored lights in the club had their own tempo. For a brief moment, a young man coming from abject poverty became the life of the party, dancing his troubles away, and maybe scoring with a beautiful woman if he was lucky; he was overcome with optimistic fervor. Interestingly, the term "Bali Hai" does not derive from the Pacific region and does not exist in the Fijian language, although a similar term does exist in Hawai'i, called "Pali Uli," which has the similar meaning, a place of perfection or ecstasy. The term is an invention from the West, a siren call from the musical *South Pacific* by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Western perceptions of the Pacific continue to be clouded by stereotypes and fantasy, far removed from the realities that face much of the Fijian people. Even the Bali Hai, with all the joy it brings, is an invention, a manufactured fantasy that reflects Western interventionism.

Places like Bali Hai represent a mixing of Western and local cultural entertainment that aids in reshaping the culture of Fijian youth. Here, an insecure, shy, young Fijian boy like Sakaraia must stand out from the crowd by acting out a brooding, swaggering façade, not unlike the Bali Hai bouncer himself, in his tight shirt that shows off his muscular physique. The inner turmoil within Sakaraia describes a sense of inadequacy he feels from the "removal" of his manhood. Veramu writes, "Inside [the Bali Hai], no one would know he was a failure: without a job, without a future. A nobody" (1). The "inside," although referring to the Bali Hai can also refer to Sakaraia's inner self—the one he hides behind the mask like the other clubgoers at Bali Hai. For Sakaraia, the Bali Hai represents something else: "Here where the lights were dim and the music

was loud and where there were many people moving about, oblivious to the world outside them, talking, laughing, dancing and drinking and where everyone's face was masked, he [Sakaraia] felt confident that for a fleeting moment in his life, his identity wouldn't be known" (1). Sakaraia does not want his friends or strangers he may see here to know that he spent the last many months in prison. Perhaps if Sakaraia could keep up the façade, he could forget it himself. Sakaraia sees the throngs of other boys at the club all trying to outdo one another in a sort of ritualized performance to stand out, to be another type of person full of sex appeal and charm with an air he may have money even if he just came in from a nearby slum moments before. Sakaraia, on the other hand, would like to remain unnoticed.

Escapism continues to be a prevalent theme in Veramu's novel, although even inside the Bali Hai, Sakaraia acutely feels disgusted by his life. In the Bali Hai, Sakaraia meets Merenia, a young woman who shows keen interest in him. Merenia asks Sakaraia, "you don't have a job? I understand" (4). Unemployment is a constant problem that traps many young people in Suva and all over Fiji, stunting their futures and livelihoods. Fijian youth, left with no futures, dream about different lives and rely on escapism to forget the present problems, whether at the Bali Hai or at the end of a bottle or a warm bed with a stranger. In a cruel twist of fate, the Western powers that fragmented their cultures in the first place continue to give them means to escape, but only temporarily and never wholly.

Outside the Bali Hai, a different picture emerges of young, poor and jobless Fijian men who act out in violent ways. The narrator informs us that "Sakaraia closed his eyes. Anger rose in his heart and with it unbearable shame" (7). Sakaraia had recently been released from prison and needed to block out the embarrassment of being locked away.

While many of these young men are homeless or come from the slums, the majority shown in *Moving through the Streets* are drop-outs, leaving any educational opportunity they might aspire for a life of crime. Sakaraia's prison sentence can be linked to his association with this lifestyle. While in prison, however, Sakaraia uses intellectual pursuits to escape the bars. The narrator explains that "it was the prison library with its contents of books that forced his [Sakaraia's] mind from imprisonment. The books allowed him to travel to distant lands, to meet people of different personalities, and to be involved in their adventures. The more he read, the more he began to think deeply about his life" (6). In the beginning, Sakaraia wanted more from his life. While still "in his village, it had been different and in school he had dreamt of becoming a teacher" (Veramu 6). Becoming an educated man, helping others, and earning a living through honorable means might help to erase some of the shame of his past. As such, dreaming of a way out of his daily life in the Suva slums was worth thinking about when nothing else would help. Education presents the best alternative for Sakaraia because through books and education, one could achieve a greater chance at a job and a real means to escape the living conditions of the slums. Drinking or easy sex found in bar life might present escapism for a moment, and it helps to dull the pain of unbelonging or resentful thoughts that creep up inside him, but for Sakaraia, they never fully give way to anything substantial like the gifts that could come from a mind full of limitless possibilities. Escape continues to dominate the mind of Sakaraia throughout the novel as the West puts forth new ways for him and other Fijian youth to become men. Through such images, Veramu demonstrates a range of different strategies of escape that are present for Fijians as they navigate modernity. Veramu does not vilify the desire for escape, but he

demonstrates the dangers and pitfalls with the methods of escape that are only impermanent, which fall short in addressing the deeper causes of dissatisfactions and inequalities.

Veramu uses flashback techniques throughout the novel to explain events which have led to the present and inform readers why these characters are desperate to escape. Analyzing how the criminal justice system in Australia contributes to Indigenous anger and crime, Australian scholar Chris Cunneen, argues "it is important to understand how the past informs and makes sense of the present" (38). In the case of Sakaraia, his early upbringing demonstrates why he tries so hard in the present to escape the past. The background also foregrounds the gendered trappings that Sakaraia understands. Sakaraia learns from an early age how gendered thinking affects relationships and causes divisions. We learn that Sakaraia lived in Wailailai as a young child where his father was the head of the herald clan, the *matanivanau* (11). In this position "most of his [Sakaraia's father] time was spent in attending traditional obligations and ceremonies, where a lot of yaqona was drunk" (Veramu 11). Sakaraia sees very little of his father in the house because he drinks too much and sleeps most of the time. Thus, Sakaraia's mother works very hard for the family by farming, fishing, gathering firewood, cooking, and many other chores. Sakaraia, his two brothers, and his three sisters help their mother as much as they can, but Sakaraia feels resentment toward his mother for accepting her fate and wonders "whether there was any real affection between his parents," recognizing that his "father looked upon women as inferior begins" (Veramu 11). Although Sakaraia does not view Merenia in exactly the same way his father views his mother, gendered-thinking definitely affects his views on relationships. Coming from such a difficult

upbringing and trapped in a world that strongly reflects this past, Sakaraia is inspired more than ever to escape by any means necessary. His story is not unlike many other young men who have migrated from the villages to the city. They bring with them the same idea of escape, and many of the same attitudes toward women. Although Sakaraia wants to escape the kinds of relationships that he saw growing up in his village, his current manhood acts are still being influenced by the past and the difficulty of breaking those ties keeps him stuck in the same patterns claiming his privilege over women.

Western Messages Through Film

Another significant way that Fijian youth in *Moving Through the Streets* are targeted by the West includes messages coming from Western films and other media. The films coming from the West, filled with violence and destruction, instill in these young people, they too can be powerful and successful if they reenact these coded Western messages which proclaim, "take it, the world can be yours," no matter the consequences. While many of the films show the young boys, especially, that men can be successful, have all the money, fancy homes, and beautiful women so long as they take it, oftentimes illegally, the messages in these films often fail to acknowledge the real consequences of such actions. The men in these films commit crimes, abuse women, and have no fear or regret to the pain inflicted upon others. Veramu's young people of Suva are a lost lot, drug addicted, aimless, and hopeless to the perils and violence of their surroundings. They, as representative of many young, out of work gang members in Fiji today, display all the characteristics of a people hurting and disrupted due to the ravages of colonialism. These films give Fijian youth a sense that power and fame can be

accessed through brutality and conquest. One of the key reasons the street gangs attach themselves to these masculine Western concepts in films and other media may in fact be as an attempt to deal with their disrupted way of life and adjusting to city life. While many of these people once lived in rural villages, enmeshed in cultural ceremony and traditions, many of the poor Fijians come to the cities for better lives or earn a living leaving behind many of these cultural traditions. Coming to the urban sprawl, finding no way out of the poverty due to lack of education, they usually end up in the low-cost housing communities, unprepared for slum life. Merenia remembers her own story as she explains to Sakaraia. Merenia says, "'I miss my village too. It was so peaceful. . . life was so slow moving. We left the village because *Ta* wanted me to go to high school. I was glad I came,'" she paused. '*Ta* and *Na* didn't like city life. My father couldn't take it. He died'" (Veramu 61). Merenia moved in with her uncle and then took a flat in Jittu estate, eventually becoming a prostitute. Sakaraia joined the gang and ended up in prison for theft. Many stories of displaced people and ruined lives reoccur in the novel as many simply could not adjust to city life.

Much of this thinking can again be linked back to some of the forms of "escapism" Veramu uses in the book. Many of the young boys in the novel learn their ways of being male from the movies they watch. For some of the characters in *Moving through the Streets*, films represent an aspiration, but they are never wholly attainable dreams. Film as a colonial agent of masculinity has been explored by Indigenous scholars, and Western film's influences on Indigenous cultures of the Pacific have been investigated in the past, but there appears to be a gap in current scholarship on the topic. Sarina Pearson responds to Indigenous scholars who "focused on the Hollywood western

and the figure of the cinematic cowboy as particularly potent sites of identification in twentieth century Oceania," however she contends that "neither the genre nor the icon figures prominently in current film scholarship about the Pacific" (153). Important knowledge emerges from the scholarship, however, particularly in Samoa and New Zealand. Pearson surmises:

> The genre's [Western's] tendency to reaffirm the dominance of white masculinity at the expense of Indigenous people, suggests that westerns ought to have attracted utter contempt in colonial settings. . . The fact that the opposite seems to have been true, that westerns and cowboys were not only admired in Oceania but even imitated, cannot be simply dismissed as yet another example of 'spectators' (. . .) unwittingly sutured into a colonist perspective. (153)

While Westerns should in fact be viewed with contempt by Indigenous people due to overt stereotyping and distorted histories, they instead create identification among many Indigenous people. Pearson argues further that the cowboy never resonated with Samoans but was indeed popular in many other parts of the Pacific (156). While many Indigenous children in games idolized cowboys, no one wanted to be cast as the Indian. Māori writer Witi Ihimaera discusses this distinction in his short story "Nobody Wanted to Be Indians," in which two boys fight over who plays the cowboy and who plays the Indian (156). Ihimaera writes: "when we came out of the theatre Willie Boy and I saw ourselves as white, aligning ourselves with our heroes and heroines of the Technicolor screen. Although we were really brown, we could beat up on each other just to play the hero. Neither of us wanted to be the Indian" (222).

In Veramu's novel, Sakaraia watches Westerns and views the cowboy as the hero, in contrast to the "nobody" that Sakaraia sees in himself. Before going to prison, Sakaraia watches his first Italian Western at Raiwaqa cinema:

> These films he [Sakaraia] reflected created myths and built dreams for the common people who were searching for sex, power, and wealth. Tucked in the back of his mind was his desire to be like one of these heroes, handsome, strong and having the best of everything. As a child he had played these hero games and had dreamt of fame and fortune. But like many others who had the same desires and had left their villages to search for it in the city, he had found only disillusionment. (127)

From an early age, young Fijian boys are bombarded with messages from the West, so those images influence how they imagine a successful man looks and acts. They too can fantasize they will be just like the rich successful White men from the West. While Sakaraia does not feel a sense of inadequacy from the dominance of the cowboy as represented in Western White masculinity, he instead feels a sense of kindship and connection to it.

Virtuous action and good deeds inspire Sakaraia while others in the gang are motivated by the crime and bad deeds shown in gangster pictures. Through this characterization, Veramu wants the reader to know that Sakaraia represents a different morality than the other characters. As Pearson points out, such an identification is troubling. Sakaraia goes beyond a mere acceptance of this archetype; he identifies with the cowboy and bases his moral character and traits in that mythology. Veramu, here, deftly uses such an identification with a Western cowboy archetype to signal that this is the kind of character Sakaraia wants to emulate or possibly become. While the Indigenous Fijians in Veramu's novel consume the Western messages through media, they are not only being influenced by them, but they are basing their own morality on these characters and negotiate with one another the way they can adapt from these models. All the characters want to escape, but for Sakaraia, escapism does not have to

include breaking the law. While these characters in the films create a type of hero worship, the Fijian youth watching these films cannot become the idols they look up to because these opportunities simply do not exist for them. They must return home to the squalor of state funded housing and empty cupboards.

On the other hand, for some of the other boys in the gang who consume gangster movies, their emulation is one that creates a more destructive and harmful connection. In truth, all of these messages or imitations are harmful, but unlike Sakaraia, the other members of the gang are acting out their imitations through crime and bad behaviors. In comparison to Sakaraia's practices of viewing, two of the gang members, Vakati and Varasilade enjoy a gangster picture and emulate the two protagonists who rob banks and "are young, handsome, muscular and had around them the air of bravado that came with knowing they would succeed" (Veramu 44). The police, meanwhile, are depicted as inefficient and dumb. The young men "were also impressed with the criminals' girlfriends who were slim and pretty. The girls stood by their men in the good times and during times of hardship. Both wished they had girlfriends like that who were beautiful and fashionably dressed instead of the ugly foul mouthed smelly girls they had to make due with" (Veramu 44). Such images from the West not only give the young men a sense of fantasy and escape, but they also signaled that their lives were incomplete. They see women as an idealized creation, manufactured in a dream factory in Hollywood, which causes them to show disgust toward their own women because they do not look or act like the women they see on the screen. Such a view distorts what a woman is in reality and contributes to their behavior toward the women around them, as they end up taking out their anger and frustration, oftentimes through physical abuse, blaming the women for

not being the fantasy dreamed up by the West. Films like these, for the young men of Veramu's novel, embolden them. The narrator argues that "this type of film gave them courage to become criminals because they sincerely believed that when they made enough money, they too could live in big houses, driving fast cars and attracting beautiful women to their sides" (44). Because the young men see these images from the West, they equate their idea of being male with financial success, possession of material items, and women. The boys engage in manhood acts or understanding of masculinities by the abuse of women, committing crime, and attempt to attain this ideal through physical violence and dominations of others.

When they are grown, the Fijian youth learn that the fantasy is a cruel lie. The glorification of violence and crime has a tremendous effect over the Fijian youth, and they act out the messages they see of what constitutes a successful *Western* man. However, in their circumstances, breaking the law only results in incarceration, and even worse, abuses behind bars. A life of crime makes one lonely, with constant fear, and little comfort that the images seem to promise. Western messages from crime films consume the lives of Onisi's gang in how they behave toward society and the girls in the group. The dreams from the West wrap a hold the youth of Fiji with promises of success and fortune if they act like Westerners. These dreams set the youth up for failure because they develop internalized hatred and shame at never managing to become the White men of their fantasies.

Violence Among Men

Through escapist fantasies like the films, the violent images seen in the media lead to violent acts by the youth in *Moving through the Streets* that occur between men and violence directed toward women as a way of asserting their manhood. R. W. Connell provides a way of thinking about the role of violence in relationships between men. Connell theorizes that "violence becomes important in gender politics among men. Most episodes of major violence (counting military combat, homicide, and armed assault) are transactions among men. Terror is used as a means of drawing boundaries and making exclusions" (83). Some critics, however, charge there is a gap in the research concerning Pacific Island cultures. Indigenous Pacific and Māori scholar David Tokiaru Mayeda of New Zealand and American theorist Lisa Pasko contend that a "wide body of research has addressed various dimensions of violence among African American, white and to a lesser degree Latino youth, but only a sparse body of literature has examined youth violence among Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans" (122). Due to the increasing rate of violence among Pacific Island youth, the authors feel that an investigation of Indigenous Pacific cultures and their forms of masculinity and gendered violence would prove beneficial in opening up that conversation. Novels such as Veramu's *Moving through the Streets* also are useful and might help to address gaps in conversations around violence in Indigenous Pacific cultures because Veramu's novel although fictional contains many elements of gendered violence and crime among the young people of Suva.

Coming together to form street gangs like Onisi's and using violence to intimidate demonstrates one way that the characters assert their manhood through violence among

men. Robert Henry discusses Indigenous street gangs in his essay, “Social Spaces of Maleness: The Role of Street Gangs in Practising Indigenous Masculinities.” Henry cites Mark Totten’s work on indigenous street gangs in Canada and explores “the role of violence in constructing masculinity in the gang” and how “hypermasculinities are formed in order to encapsulate the image of the hegemonic male” (188). Because many of these Indigenous youth were sexually or physically abused as children, they exhibit confusion about their sexualities which in turn “leads to heightened levels of violence toward women and children as gang members reassert their power as men” (Henry 188). Henry further argues that “the hypermasculine activities surrounding violence are seen as a way to reaffirm power taken from them at a young age” (188). Totten expands that loss of “traditional means of achieving masculinity (such as supporting families through hunting and trapping) is compensated for by a hyper-masculine exertion of power and control over women and children” (142). Henry concludes that “the gang then becomes the space in which Indigenous males can assert ‘global manhood’ of power and control, lost through this cultural assimilation” (188).

Within the novel, the narrator describes some of the inappropriate actions exhibited by the “bad boys” with whom Sakaraia’s uncle forbids him to interact. Much like the ones Sakaraia’s uncle vilifies, Onisi’s gang must put on the actions of being male or at least an aberrant maleship like the films from the West has taught that means conquer, kill, destroy, and use. While many of these actions are stereotypical ones, they also can be seen in the performance of certain “manhood acts.” The narrator explains that these boys “were the school dropouts who roamed the neighbourhood in tight shorts or jeans and sleeveless tee-shirts. They walked with a swagger, were boisterous, used vulgar

language and terrorized Indian families who lived in that area" (16). The boys dress like Westerners they see in the movies. They use the slang and the words they hear on the radio and TV. They imbibe an air of bravado at all times, quick to the fists, and almost always too desensitized to allow emotion or warmth to penetrate their roles as they keep up the charade. Western boys, too, exhibit some of these same actions. For Indigenous youth the problem becomes more severe because the imposition of Western gender ideals acts as another way to conquer the Fijians. As the Fijian youth act, dress, and talk like Westerner men, they contribute to the erasure of Fijian models of masculinity. Connell's theories on hegemonic masculinity are seen here in the ways Onisi's gang attempt to negotiate their role at being male through violence and bullying behaviors. Like the gangsters in the films who achieve power through gains made in robbery and violent conquest, colonial men also promoted these aspirations to Indigenous youth by modeling ways that violence secures masculinity. By exhibiting the behaviors celebrated in the Western ideal, Indigenous Fijians are hoping to benefit from the same power and honors. Of course, when Indigenous people commit acts of violence, this is not seen as valorous action, and they are not rewarded, but incarcerated. Hegemonic masculinity accounts for the ways that certain models of masculinity among White men are socially awarded and approved and confer certain benefits while marginalized men are devalued and often punished for similar behaviors.

While not the same type of violence, boxing represents a more ritualized action of violence between men as a means to assert their masculinity. This type of violence is different to the gang violence and racial violence. However, an important component of boxing is that it, too, serves as an outlet for defining masculinity through violence among

the young men in the novel. Hokowhitu and other scholars have written at length about the importance of sports to Indigenous masculinities in Polynesia, particularly New Zealand and Hawai‘i, and boxing represents masculine power in Veramu's novel. Veramu explains that "boxing was a craze amongst these youths who were either unemployed, temporarily employed, or drifting slowly but surely toward delinquency" (80). Geir Henning Presterudstuen and Dominik Schieder discuss the importance of boxing in Fiji. They write, "although organized boxing in the modern form must be considered exogenous to Fiji its popularity is undeniable. The Fiji Boxing Commission organizes thousands of boxers in professional and amateur bouts across the islands, and high-profile local professional fights commonly draw live audiences in excess of 10,000" (27). Both Indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijians enjoy boxing, both as participant and spectator, although their relationship between the sport and value of the sport are seen differently (Presterudstuen and Schieder 27). The authors contend that "boxing is utilized actively in Fijian villages, as a recreational, yet competitive, activity, as part of a training regime or in the gendered socialization of young boys" (27). While Presterudstuen and Schieder argue that "the centrality of stylized and structured violence in Fijian villages as part of a social control and gendered socialisation of boys highlights the social and cultural construction of boxing," they also need to account for the fact that boxing's roots are colonial, coming out of eighteenth-century England (27-8). They cite the "civilizing process" and how "traditional bare-knuckle prize fighting associated with gore, bloodlust, and carnal damage" earned one's manhood in "post Medieval Europe" (Presterudstuen and Schieder 28). They go on to argue that indeed "boxing is often seen to symbolize Fijian manhood and help train young men to embody masculine ideals" (Presterudstuen

and Schieder 29). Again, as with the violent masculinity depicted in Western films, boxing gives another opportunity for the young Indigenous Fijians to perform gendered violent actions and these actions also need to be understood in relation to the ways that they carry histories of colonial European masculinity into the present.

Racialized Violence

Sociologist Michael Flood argues that "Indigenous men and immigrant men from 'non-English-speaking backgrounds clearly do not benefit from patriarchy in the same way as other men'" (qtd. in Pease 121). In that sense, Whites and non-whites do not benefit from the same privileges that come with masculinity. Because a disparity exists in White and non-white masculinities, non-whites often become emasculated. As also discussed in Chapter Three in relation to Joe in Hulme's *the bone people*, Bob Pease contends that, "The emasculation theory. . . argues [that] racism strips away black men's manhood" (122). Class dynamics also play an important role in much of the violence among young Indigenous Fijians. Poverty consumes the lives of many of the novel's characters, stuck in dead-end jobs, if they have a job, and they grow up in low-income housing neighborhoods where a strong probability exists that they will end up in gangs or in jail. The narrator explains:

> How could he [Sakaria] explain the shame of being a delinquent? That particular day when he was released from prison he had wanted so much to forget the past, to drown his sorrows in drink but he had not had the courage to do so. This very night he had confronted himself with the truth and the cold realization that he could never escape his past. Always people would eye suspiciously and never again would they trust him. (4-5)

In Veramu's novel, Sakaraia spent nine months in Naboro Prison. Upon his release, Sakaraia feels hopeless to escape his past. He feels that he can never rise above his past sins or lack of prospects. He has no alternatives, and like many other Indigenous Fijian youth, must now acclimate to a world of dreams, but completely cut off from any real progress to make the dreams a reality.

Other violence seen in the novel again returns to the concept of hegemonic masculinity and what Indigenous youth are shown from the West as a socially valorized form of masculinity which they in turn emulate. A type of mimicry takes place in Veramu's novel concerning the issue of racialized violence, which affects not only the lives of young Indigenous Fijians, but many of the minorities living in Fiji as well. Western hegemonic masculinity that privileges White men is being copied here by the local young men because this is how they think they should behave. Several of Veramu's characters stress contempt for Asians and other foreigners, particularly Indo-Fijians. In many ways, the Fijian youths in the novel are attempting to rebel against their own culture, which they feel allowed Indo-Fijians and others to have a foothold here in the country. However, Veramu explains Onisi's feelings of anger and desperation are directed not only at racial others, but also at his own community:

> He felt a violent kind of anger that made his head pound. He cursed the ignorant type of community he had been reared in; his people had been illiterate and puritanical to the point of abnormality. He suspected that had he been raised in a more enlightened way he would have perhaps fared better in his life. He felt frustration and anger bottling up inside him and he wanted to shout like a youth possessed, 'People of the bleak streets, curse you all! Damn you fools!' He wanted to take a stick and break louvers in his cheap neighbourhood. He wanted to batter anyone. . . (100)

Onisi's anger often compounds in the streets when he mugs strangers, rapes women, or harasses and beats other innocent people. Attacking others shows to himself, as well, that he can beat innocents and never own the self-hatred he has for himself. Onisi, especially, "was a person in whom a great rage was bottled up. Yet he would never admit the weakness inside him. He preferred to blame others for his dreary life and poverty. In his terrible moods, he was capable of great violence" (Varamu 83). The narrator describes one time when an intoxicated Onisi "had gone on a rampage, smashing the louvre windows of some poor working class Indians in Narere. He had beaten and kicked those who tried to confront him. Seeing the look of fear in his victims fueled his ego. His eyes had glinted as he damaged property and beat people" (83). Onisi continues to act out his manhood through violence and destruction.

Sakaraia understands Onisi's feeling of generalized rage, and also directs anger at racial others, but unlike Onisi, he grows in his understanding. The narrator relates that "it was true he had often felt frustrated and trapped. Most of the businesses belonged to the Indians, Chinese or Australians. An illusion had spread in his mind that these foreigners were trying to dominate his land and destroy his life. Why should they have the best businesses, buildings, life-style, and education while the Fijians remained at the bottom?" (82). Sakaraia often feels "revulsion for them and sometimes wanted to be violent," but later Sakaraia rethinks his irrational feelings and recognizes these people as hard workers who enjoy "the fruits of their toil" (Veramu 82). Onisi, on the other hand, lacks the empathy shown in Sakaraia for others. Onisi holds large amounts of hostility toward foreigners, especially those who have attained wealth. Onisi explains, "'I have felt so many times and so have the rest of the gang. We've wanted to smash windows, bashed

those rich bastards, anything that smells of riches because we are being trapped, fooled into accepting what little we have'" (Veramu 82).

Onisi's attitude shows how failures to enact change after the coups in 1987 left racial and economic tensions in place that eventually led to the 2000 coup in Fiji when many of the street gangs enacted harsh violent attacks toward the Indo-Fijian population. While the 2000 coup occurs after the timeline of the novel, the years after the publication of the novel saw increased violence directed toward Indo-Fijians by Indigenous Fijians. According to Susanna Trnka, during the 2000 coup, "urban areas became the staging grounds of the mass lootings of shops and businesses, and in rural areas, disaffected Fijians physically attacked Indo-Fijians in settlements and villages. . . Battery, rape, and the burning of Indo-Fijian homes occurred throughout Fiji's largest island, Viti Levu, and in parts of the second major island, Vanua Levu" (117). The most predominant elements of violence occurred in the Naltasiri Province. A newspaper headline about the 2000 coup from *The Telegraph* reads: "Fijian Gangs Wage Terror Campaign Against Indians." In the article Suruj Kumar exclaims, "'They threatened to rape my daughter and burn the house unless we gave them everything. We gave them clothes and money and the television" (Spillius). The coup lasted from May to November of 2000 with the worst violence occurring between May and August (Trnka 138). In *Moving through the Streets*, published during the period between the 1987 coups and the 2000 coup, Onisi's gang displays similar racially-fueled anger.

While Veramu's depiction of violent criminal gangs in Suva accurately shows contemporary Fijian life, a more sinister motive to keep young Fijian men enmeshed in violent actions sometimes benefits the government's own plans. During the 2000 coup in

Fiji, many young Fijian men were involved in looting and other violent actions on the street. While the Methodist church instructed the looters to repent, the government viewed the crimes less harshly. Nicole George argues that "the level of civil chaos created by such hypermasculine activity served the interests of Fiji's indigenous ruling classes and their ambitions to retain power" (172). The ruling powers understand well that to become powerful they must conquer others even if the victims are their own people in the end. Accordingly, George contends that "models of violent masculinity become hegemonic among young Fijian males, who encouraged by the view that lawlessness pays, and led by the examples of 1987 and 2000 (and later 2006), are convinced that Fiji is 'theirs' and they can do 'whatever they want to other people'" (172). Through his depiction of Onisi's gang that robs and steals all over Suva, Veramu illustrates the complex situation of Fijian youth who contend both with Western hegemonic ideals of masculinity and local hierarchies of men in which violence and lawlessness are acceptable, manly behavior.

Gendered Violence

Whereas Fijian men attempt to perform Western-style manhood, Fijian women, and other groups, become the targets and tools for men to perform their masculinity. Violence against women appears in the novel at many points in very graphic detail. Veramu incorporates newspaper articles into the novel to reflect the prevalent stream of sexual assaults happening to young women all over Suva. These articles are yet another example Veramu uses to point out the underlying gendered-thinking shaping all of the characters in the novel. The articles themselves seem so cavalier about such actions with

little consequences for the male perpetrators. One article reads: “A youth denied taking part in the gang rape of an eighteen year old girl. He was acquitted of rape but was gaoled for fifteen months for indecently assaulting her” (Veramu 20). The articles put broader patterns of gendered violence into contact with the daily lives of the characters like Merenia, who feels “these things were happening frequently and one had to be careful” (Veramu 20). Merenia’s description of some of the men she “bedded” includes a laborer who “attacked her with the kind of exuberance that a child would display towards a piece of candy. The difference perhaps was that a child’s pleasure was outwardly innocent” (Veramu 20). Merenia’s job as a prostitute gives her a general distrust of most men, and Veramu allows readers to see men through her perspective when she admits that she “detested these kinds of customers, especially the balding and impotent ones. Grunting like animals and with sweat dripping profusely from the pores of their bald heads, as they mounted her, she thought of them as frustrated people trying to delude themselves about their virility” (20). Much of the discussions later in the novel from Onisi and his gang speak to their obsession with their virility, which in many situations leads to attempted assaults and rape. Again, such behavior adds to the gender performance that informs men how to behave and what being male really means. Veramu’s use of the articles gives the reader an idea of the state of women’s daily existence in Fiji and raises questions about the violence they endure from men.

Rape, assault, and physical abuse of women dominates many of the actions of the male characters in *Moving through the Street*. Even in the villages, women were mistreated and “beaten periodically, for the man to prove to himself that he was head of the family” (Veramu 21). City life, particularly in the slums, offers little security for

women in the novel. In the context of Australian Aboriginal narratives, Ruth McCausland argues that the "research on family violence considers how Aboriginal narratives lay stress on collective experiences of trauma and loss and the impact of colonisation on family structure" (68). Because of the dynamic changes among Indigenous Fijians who have come to the cities, now being imported into slum life, the dramatic cultural shifts due to colonial disruption have engendered a major toll on Indigenous families. In the novel "women were mistreated in the slums and villages. Silent rape was a topic. . . whispered amongst the womenfolk. . . Women were treated like receptacles for the propagation of children, especially male ones, to perpetuate male geologies" (21). In a study, Australian scholars Peter Mals, Kevin Howells, Andrew Clay, and Guy Hall assert that "the overwhelming majority of victims of Indigenous violence were themselves Indigenous. Most believed females made up the majority of victims and that many of these were the partners of the perpetrators" (32). Women who are victims assumed that their life was not unlike the lives of many other women, and violence and abuse was a daily ritual.

Negative attitudes toward women shape the thinking of many Indigenous youth in the novel who have forgotten cultural ties to community and family. Veramu demonstrates in the novel how Onisi possesses negative views toward women. He "got tired of them easily. But even he needed a woman to live with and look after him," although he calls Martitana, for example, a "bitch" (Veramu 26). When a woman submits herself completely to him, only then can Onisi quell his feelings of inadequacy. Drugs and alcohol mask the rest of his shortcomings. His interaction with the gang and their continued abuse of women and other speaks to much of the disparities between men and

women throughout the novel. According to Charlotte Taylor and Sivendra Michael, "in Fiji, the main forms of violence reported by Fijian woman are: physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by an intimate partner; sexual assault and sexual harassment. Violence against women imposes a large cost: the Reserve Bank has calculated the direct and indirect costs of violence in Fiji to be FJ$210.69-million per year or 7% of GDP" (9). The statistics bear out the widespread nature of gendered violence in Fiji: 80% of women report having witnessed violence in the home, with 66% physically abused and half of those abused multiple times (Taylor and Michael 10). Other numbers show that 26% women report being beaten while pregnant, 48% of married women are forced to have sex by their husbands, and 13% of women report being raped (Taylor and Michael 10).

Because abusive behaviors are so commonplace, such violence begins to become accepted and normalized. Veramu's inclusion of news articles detailing constant violence toward women helps readers learn the far-reaching impacts of this brand of masculinity and violence on life in Fiji. His description of this same violence backs off from the sensationalized trappings that come from the news media to show the intimacy of how this violence affects the characters in the novel. The messages being shown in the media say that men will be violent and women will be the victims because that is what a man is supposed to be like. To be male means to be angry, confrontational, and violent in order to protect and solidify their manhood. These actions represent strength in society because men are told this behavior will make them masculine. Onisi's gang are frequently told this through much of the media they are seeing daily, and they in turn participate in violent acts and encourage one another to perform masculinity by inflicting violence against women. In one of the flashbacks, while Sakaraia still belonged to Onisi's gang,

they took turns raping an unconscious girl. Onisi remarks, “haven’t you noticed the fleshy thing inside the room, all knocked out and ready for the pumping?” (Veramu 36). One of the cronies, asks, “who’s first?” (Veramu 36). While the girl appears to be quite young, Onisi encourages a hesitant Sakaraia to engage in this assault. Onisi explains, “she won’t mind. . . she’s probably having sweet dreams at this moment” (Veramu 37). The violence here appears so matter of fact and normalized. Veramu counters such passages like this with the news articles to show that while these are people we know, they are not immune to the horrors affecting the rest of Suva.

Peer pressure among gang members occurs all too frequently, according to Veramu. Many of these pressures are to measure up to manhood. The narrator asserts that “most of the time when one is in a gang, one tried to show one was macho by doing all sorts of things that were not right. . . One drank, swore and flirted with girls. But sometimes, one came face to face with something that seemed so wrong. At such times one could follow the gang or turn away and be branded a coward. It was never an easy choice” (Veramu 37). Ultimately, Sakaraia refuses to rape the girl, while Onisi commences to do so, to show Sakaraia how it is done. The chapter returns to the present timeline, and the chapter ends with Onisi verbally abusing Maritana. Again, another signal that such behaviors and abuse of women are normalized because Onisi is only acting out his role as male.

The sexual virility shown in the novel by Onisi and his gang at many times comes as an attempt to prove their manhood. The narrator explains:

> Virility in sex was also a prized attribute. It was a reassurance of the male traditional role as procurer, provider, defender and superior partner in a man-woman relationship. Sex was a means by which youths proved they were not

> impotent or weaklings. Some like Onisi had at times cut the underskin of their penises and inserted marbles or other smooth objects to prolong erections. Girls were supposed to enjoy sex more in this way. (Veramu 91)

Onisi often uses sex as a means of possession. Onisi "was obsessed with physically possessing her [Maritana] and he felt guilty that she might detect the synthetic attraction he had for her and therefore dismiss him as another womaniser" (Veramu 92). Later, Veramu explains that Onisi does not view Maritana as any more than an object. Onisi concludes "there is no meaning in this relationship. He was detached from the emotions of loving and caring. She was an object of love to satisfy his needs just as food satisfied hunger" (Veramu 96). Onisi enjoyed imagining "women who were defiant and tried to be powerful become utterly powerless and subdued, moaning and groaning weakly. Devoid of power they became like obedient puppies, screaming as they were subdued" (Veramu 156).

Again, the messages in Western cinema might offer some explanation as to why these young men view women in such a way. After all, the West taught them that fantasy can be reality if they follow the Western messages of conquest. In one scene, Sakaraia watches a big-breasted heroine on the screen and remembers other films he watched while a member of Onisi's gang. The narrator informs, Sakaraia:

> [H]ad gone to see an Italian western film, characterized by lots of exaggerated violence, sex and humour. . . these films he reflected created myths and built dreams for the common people who were searching for sex, power and wealth. Tucked in the back of his mind was his desire to be like one of these heroes, handsome, strong and having the best of everything" (Veramu 127).

For women, the best of everything is a troubling thought considering the violence and day-to-day struggles that many must endure in the novel and Fiji at large.

An issue related to the emphasis on virility as an expression of manhood is control over the reproductive lives of women. Abortion remains illegal in Fiji unless there exists a threat to the life of the mother. According to Women on Waves, a non-profit group based in The Netherlands created to bring reproductive health services, especially abortion pills, to women in places where strict anti-abortion laws exist, anyone in Fiji performing an illegal abortion can be imprisoned for up to 14 years ("Abortion Law Fiji"). In 1976 in the *Emberson v Emberson* decision, "abortion was permitted when the performing physician had formed an opinion 'in good faith' that the abortion was necessary to preserve the pregnant woman's mental and physical health, 'taking into account the social circumstances of the patient'" ("Abortion Law Fiji"). However, the law also stipulates, "Those performing an illegal abortion are subject to imprisonment for up to 14 years. The same punishment may be applied to someone unlawfully supplying instruments to perform the abortion. A woman attempting unlawfully to induce her own abortion or consenting to its being induced, is subject to imprisonment for up to seven years" ("Abortion Law Fiji").

In *Moving through the Streets*, Onisi performs illegal abortions. His enterprise, although quite successful remains unnoticed by the authorities throughout the book, and he at one point performs an abortion on Merenia. Onisi performs such abortions to make money off the women as another means to gain a sense of power. If discovered, Onisi would face jail time for his actions, but the abortion laws in Fiji speak to a wider issue designed purposely to limit women's freedoms. Poverty, particularly affecting those coming from rural communities into urban areas, presents another impediment for the advancement of Indigenous women and men. Some women cannot afford another mouth

to feed, and they are limited in what they are able to provide. Many poor women turn to abortion, which the government forbids. Onisi's role in illegal abortions is not a crusade against abortion laws or in support of women's rights; he has found a way to profit from such actions, which relates back to Western capitalist tendencies. The inclusion of women's reproductive choice (or the lack thereof) in the novel demonstrates another way patriarchal rule damages women. Veramu uses this depiction of Onisi to show that people can be used for profit. Through the horrors of his own people's oppression, Onisi profits off the suffering of others as colonials had always done from the start.

Western Assaults on Land and Culture

Trapped by poverty and lack of opportunity, the youths in Onisi's gang flex their manhood only to continually fall back again. Veramu narrates, "these youths [Onisi's gang], Sakaraia observed, had come from the rural areas in search of better employment and the good life but, plagued by their lack of education, they remained at the bottom of the 'social ladder'" (80). The move from remote rural villages to large sprawling urban conclaves provides another factor in how these young men express masculinities. Fijian youth are pushed into the cities to learn English and become Whitened by society, while old ways and traditions are demonized. The influence of the village is now being replaced by concrete and high rises. Cultural anthropologist Aletta Biersack explains:

> Urbanization is a key reason for emergent masculinities in today's Pacific. Cities are cosmopolitan spaces in which actors are exposes to global institutions, values, identities, practices, and imaginaries. Cities are also spaces that are well integrated into national and international markets, thus discouraging cash-free subsistence economies of villages by motivating the accumulation and privatisation of income. (203)

Life in the remote villages stands in stark contrast to urban life, although the effects of colonial disruption can be felt in both locations. The novel reveals that Sakaraia's "village lay on a bay and in the mornings when the sun shone brightly, the water became dazzling blue. He [Sakaraia] would swim naked in it, laughing and screaming with his friends" (11). In contrast to the bay, exist the hills above village, where government intervention created a program to foster the planting of pines (Veramu 11). Accidental or intentional burning of these pines, however, "left the hills bare and sorrowful looking" (Veramu 11). The rural areas, therefore, are not an idealized contrast to the city, but also physically scarred by capitalist ideals and intrusions.

Later in the novel, the narrator describes the pollution of the rivers. The pollution is emblematic of the dirt and violence battering Fijian culture: "Onisi surveyed the dark oily waters of the creek. . . Onisi observed all sorts of waste material spilling out into the creek. All this, he had learnt, encouraged bacteria and fungus growth within the creek. On top of the waters there was always a film of oil" (145). The local newspapers report "fish were deprived of dissolved oxygen" (Veramu 145). With a country full of so many poor people out of work or trying to survive on what meager wages they can make, environmental desecrations such as these prove catastrophic. As leader of one of Suva's notorious street gangs, Onisi feels embittered that so few Fijians care for the environmental destruction befalling the country, but he, too, adds to its plight. Onisi's side job of performing illegal abortions adds to the pollution in the waters. Onisi believes "there was an in-built sense of complacency in people that gave them the illusion it was their privilege to desecrate nature. He saw his life reflected in these waters. The

community no longer cared. The basic rudiments of civil behaviour had disappeared" (Veramu 145). Onisi no longer cares either because he "had been created out of the nightmare of this demented community" (Veramu 145). He possesses no cultural connection to nature like ancestors of old who taught about the role of human life as interdependent with nature. Instead, he believes that enterprise over nature holds more value than environmental responsibility.

Onisi once possessed a tie to nature and love for the environment, but he now accepts the assault on nature as commonplace and maybe even justified to punish his people's complacencies. While in college, Onisi belonged to a youth preservation group, but now he laughs at how much has changed for him. One of Onisi's principal jobs was to pollute the rivers now. The narrator explains that "after the workers at the Raiwaqa Sewerage Plant had complained about the alarming number of foetuses that had been turning up in the plant, Onisi had made sure that those he dealt with disposed of their foetuses in the creek" (146). Onisi feels deep bitterness toward society and acts out in violent ways. Onisi, like many young Fijian gang members, feels "dirt in the air and violence. . . it was part of his [Onisi's] life. There was no other life for him" (Veramu 146). Onisi now dreams of Western models of success that rely on capitalist values of wealth and valorize using the land to become rich, except in the end he is still rotting away in the slums of Suva, doing what he feels he has to do in order to survive. He lost contact with other traditions and other models of masculinities, and Veramu makes clear that Western capitalist models continue to impose destruction upon the environments and peoples that are considered disposable resources.

An Alternative Way?

Although Sakaraia fails to represent a wholly perfect character, his role in Veramu's novel runs counterpoint to Onisi, whose gang he was once a part of, and who costs him his freedom. Sakaraia feels emotionally attached to Merenia eventually, but Onisi is unable to form any type of affection for the women in his life. In fact, Onisi's view of women bears many of the hallmarks of masculine domination through his interaction with his girlfriend, Maritana. Onisi believes that "the problem with her [Maritana] was that she was too inquisitive. With her loud mouth, she could put him into trouble. He would have to get rid of her sometime. But how could he? He sighed. She was such an excellent lover and always yielded herself completely to him" (28). Onisi desires women who project a passivity and ask very few questions, but who are always there to take care of him. Maritana hates talking to Onisi when he "was in one of his complex moods. . . Onisi had suffered a lot in childhood and had a complex about virility" (Veramu 29). Most of the characters in the novel convey a sense of suffering, although too often their suffering manifests into violent actions or bad decisions, and the cycle persists. Still, from within the pages of Veramu's novel, two dreams emerge. One represents a chance to be free of the crime and degradations of slum life through hard work and love, while the other embraces the elements of crime and sees life as a chance to fight back against those deemed responsible for oppression.

Throughout much of the novel, Veramu displays Sakaraia as the character wanting and often willing to change. Onisi, on the other hand, is committed to remaining in the same perpetual cycle. Sakaraia remembers when Onisi and he were friends. Onisi's justification for the crimes he commits speaks in many ways to the hopelessness

poverty brings. Reading in *The Fiji Times*, an article in which a 19-year-old school teacher defiles a young 13-year-old girl gives Onisi the idea such a man would make better use of his time as a pimp. Onisi argues:

> Everyday in all walks of life, especially at the top there's so much stealing. People steal because they need things they don't have. But it's always the poor chaps in the low areas like us who get booked and jailed. Those in the top rich class who are stealing by the truck-load never get caught and even when they are caught, get only light sentences. There's dirt everywhere. (Veramu 81)

Onisi feels like life is filled with "don'ts," and he might as well take what he can, whenever he can. Onisi explains to Sakaraia, "'those bastards at the top are really squeezing us, giving us no breathing space. Haven't you ever felt trapped between four small sturdy steel walls with little air to breathe. And these walls keep on closing in on you trying to take your space and your life. And haven't you ever felt like kicking outwards and freeing yourself?'" (Veramu 82). For Onisi, crime represents a means of escape, but ultimately offers none. Sakarai, on the other hand, sees possibilities, the same he dreamed while lying in Naboro Prison. He knows that the world which landed him in prison offers no possibilities, but only the same monotonous path that has brought him here. He continues to dream of a different road, one where he makes the right decisions and has a future for himself and his family.

Sakaraia sees Onisi as a victim too, caught up in a world not really of his making, but merely a casualty due to societal expectations or perhaps something more. Sakaraia, while at first full of anger, blaming Onisi for causing him to go to prison begins to reflect on Onisi. Inside Sakaraia, "the hate that had sprung like a hawk in search of prey had frozen in the knowledge that such hate and anger were futile now, for people like Onisi were not masters of the art of manipulation but were victims of fear, fate and their own

deficiencies" (Veramu 104). Onisi once had dreams of more and attended college. Onisi wanted to act out and attack Christian ideals that he regarded as dishonest. Stealing money from the school and later being expelled crushed the dreams of Onisi. Now, he runs the streets of Suva with his gang, harassing the public and committing crimes. In the end, any dreams Onisi had planned were ended.

Veramu offers no happy endings in *Moving through the Streets*, but perhaps a glimmer of what could be for these characters. Veramu leaves the reader with the knowledge that while there are young men like Sakaraia hoping for a different way out of the squalor of the Suva slums, there will always be others like Onisi unable to break free. In the end, "Sakaraia smiled uneasily and hoped that things would work out well for him" (Veramu 180). Perhaps although Sakaraia longs for change, he knows that such change will not come easily.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

At the end of Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance*, as an elderly man, Bobby finally performs the "deadman dance" in an act of finality and bitter regret, his one last attempt to communicate to the White colonizers. Disillusioned at what has become of his people and angry over the introduction of disease, violence, and the hunting of whales to near extinction, Bobby performs the dance to connect to the spirit of the land and show the Europeans what they have lost. Bobby finally understands, "'We [the Noongar] learned your [the English] songs and stories, and never knew you didn't want to hear ours'" (Scott 106). With that assertion, Bobby finally recognizes that what the colonizers wanted was what Geordie Chaine had wanted—land and monetary gain. Very few men like Dr. Cross exist now, and the hope that Bobby held out for friendship and shared understanding in the beginning of the novel has diminished. In the final scenes, Bobby removes his European clothes, reestablishing his kinship with the land, and denounces the European claims to it.

Again, what Scott affirms at the end of *That Deadman Dance* are the same assertions that he made from the start: that the imperial slaughter and the lack of understanding by the Europeans toward the Noongar did not have to happen. The English refused to hear the stories of the Noongar or appreciate their culture, and therein lies a failed opportunity of friendship and civility that could have existed between them. Bobby had stayed optimistic and was once able to bridge the two worlds, and there were some like Dr. Cross, who represented an open channel of communication, but that died with him. Ultimately, the Europeans chose conquest and chaos over friendship and trust.

Scott's novel is important in many ways because it illustrates the state of colonialism in present-day Australia, and how in the beginning there could have been a far different outcome. The novel also reinforces Scott's own language recovery efforts as, within the novel, the importance of names and the need to say those names or write those names is emphasized. Scott is, in this way, still trying to tell stories that were ignored by the early settlers.

Indeed, the art of storytelling can be viewed as an instrument for progress and perhaps as a force for change in people's minds. For Indigenous knowers, they use their writing to discuss the abuses from colonial governments of the past and present as an act of protest against colonial violence and an affirmation of alternative ways of knowing and being. Remembering their stories and telling their stories keeps their voice at the center of continuing work toward different futures and social justice. Scott's goal with *That Deadman Dance* is to reimagine colonial contact with Europeans and present the many paths available that could have built bridges and formed alliances instead of years of intolerance, devastation, and colonial genocide that cemented Australia's foundation as a nation. Following Scott's example of putting the Indigenous knower at the center, my study of Indigenous literatures from Australia and Oceania puts Indigenous stories at the forefront too; it starts with the stories that Indigenous knowers are telling about their lives and accepts the invitation to listen and to learn about their cultures and their understandings of how the colonial past impacts the present.

Continuing to tell stories can be understood as a form of activism that works alongside other forms of Indigenous activism. Archie Weller, for example wrote *Day of the Dog* in an act of anger and defiance at his wrongful conviction. What comes out of

such writing aids in some of the progress that can continue to develop in terms of understanding causes and impacts of past and contemporary violence. While Bobby in Scott's novel is devastated by the settler's lack of openness to his story, Weller has said his works are misunderstood. From Weller's perspective, he feels that critics focus on the violence and the negative aspects of Aboriginal lives but fail to see the beauty and the rich culture of his people. In short, like in Scott's example, many non-Indigenous audiences have failed to hear his stories. My project here, while acknowledging the violence in Weller's work, looks deeper to show that there is much more to his work and more to the stories of his people, and it uses scholarly methods that draw from Indigenous Standpoint theory to call attention to the position of knowers and consider how Western scholars can learn to listen to Indigenous voices.

This study tries to draw attention to stories that critics are not hearing, specifically stories that reflect the complexities of the lives of Indigenous men. As Weller notes, many of his critics fail to appreciate the nuanced depictions of men's lives that he creates in his fiction. For example, Chris Tiffin charges that "only very occasionally in Weller's fiction is there any fruitful and productive contact between Aboriginal and white, and even when this occurs is quickly swept away by events. The narratives are almost invariably closed" (222). Tiffin fails to see a real exploration of relationships between Whites and Indigenous peoples in Weller's fiction as he does in some Māori writers like Witi Ihimaera or Patricia Grace (222). Tiffin sees only the negative elements in Weller's work, arguing that the narratives "if not end[ing] in actual death[,] they involve either a return to jail or a definitive repudiation of former hopes" (222). Tiffin's assessment of Weller's work misses the point because there is indeed hope that still exists in the end of

novels like *Day of the Dog*, and failing to recognize the hope further undermines the beauty and sacred moments that Weller conveys.

The issue of hope re-emerges in critical discussion of Veramu's novel, but with the opposite charge: that the novel is overly optimistic. As of this date, there is no single scholarly article on Joseph Veramu's *Moving through Streets*. The only available scholarship on the novel is a book review from 1994 by Stan Atherton. The review argues that Veramu's novel is about two lovers, Sakaraia and Merenia. While there exists a romance and Sakaraia figures prominently in the novel, the statement is a bit short-sighted in terms of what the book actually narrates. Atherton is critical of what he terms "a conventional, even hackneyed, story line, with its 'things-may-look-tough-but-there's-always-hope' thematic overlay, [that] belies the strength of Veramu's work" (92). Atherton goes on to compare *Moving through the Streets* to Veramu's earlier novella, *Black Messiah* (1989), arguing that its "characters were those who were manipulated by the forces of their immediate physical and social environments," with the same issues continuing to dominate the characters' consciousness in *Moving through the Streets* (92). Atherton misses the point of Veramu's novel in his reductive analysis. His argument that Veramu offers a simplistic optimism in the face of adversity fails to acknowledge what becomes of the characters in the end, where hope remains unrealized.

By highlighting questions about hope, the critiques of Weller's novel and Veramu's novel raise vital questions as to what should be an appropriate ending for an Indigenous narrative. Atherton argues that Veramu's ending is too hopeful, whereas Tiffin sees Weller's novel as hopeless. Hulme's novel was often considered too complex and too unwieldy as a work of prose to be truly understood. The disparity in what critics

of Indigenous writers' works think should be included, the narrative choices they should make, and the honesty of these writers' true voice and vision are revealing. The short-sightedness of these interpretations presents a two-fold problem. First, the critiques are shaped by a Western mind-set, and they perpetuate pre-conceived stereotypes and Western concepts of storytelling. Second, the interpretations fail to account for the details of the literary texts. Many examples in Veramu's narrative point to the hardships and the realities for the young people in Fiji. Weller, too, presents many of the harsh realities of alcohol abuse, crime, and its effects. Hulme's book, although definitely complex and troubling, includes some of the most beautiful and nuanced prose ever written. Simon spent the entirety of *the bone people* lost in his thoughts, unable to speak, but hearing and listening until he was finally able to speak. The hope for these characters in these novels, though, is not simply about individual transformation; hope is not just about an individual attaining a better outcome for themselves, and hope does not end when the novels stop. Hope exists because the stories are being told and shared and made available to readers. A message that too many critics miss in these novels, as Hulme expresses in her ending, is that empathy and understanding comes through hearing. Hearing the stories of these writers and hearing their joys and sorrows is the ultimate hope in them. Reading their stories allows a greater understanding of the lives of Indigenous men and the complexities of violence in their lives.

These novels offer powerful insights into Indigenous lives, and it is important that they do not disappear from critical discussions and that they remain accessible to readers. The issues that plagued the characters of these novels some thirty to forty years ago have not ended in all this time. For example, in Australia, new bans on alcohol due to its

association with violence among Aboriginals dredges up memories of a colonial past, when other alcohol bans were in force in some Aboriginal communities. Geoff Shaw, an Aboriginal elder in Alice Springs claims that "'for 15 years, [he] couldn't buy a beer. . . [He was] a Vietnam veteran, and [he] couldn't even buy a beer'" (qtd. in Zhuang). In the Northern Territory, several bans on alcohol expired just last year, as the ban itself was deemed "racist," and with an uptick of violence, the ban was reinstated (Zhaung). Questions of racism and discriminations toward Indigenous Australians are being revisited with talk of new bans currently in places like the Northern Territory. While Australia's White leadership has frequently dictated "the decisions of the Aboriginal people, the alcohol ban's return replicated the effects of colonialism and disempowers communities" (Zhuang). Some argue that alcohol bans reduce the violence in Indigenous communities, but as Zhuang notes, these decisions are being imposed instead of empowering communities to make their own decisions about how to address violence. The article exposes a continued failure to listen to Indigenous voices and a continued failure to recognize and address complex causes of violence.

Meanwhile, the Pacific region continues to be fraught with climate-related upheavals that threaten some island nations' very existence. The islands of Tuvalu are projected to disappear completely in the next fifty to one hundred years, according to scientists, as the Solomon Islands are also the site of "sinking islands" due to climate change. Brianna Fruean, a Samoan climate activist, student, and member of the Pacific Climate Warriors delegation at COP26[1], claims that the people of Samoa fought back

[1] COP refers to Conference of the Parties, and is a yearly conference attended by those nations that in 1994 signed the treaty called the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). COP26

against colonialism in the early days and won their independence, but now there is another war, with a different type of colonialism. Although perhaps under-discussed, current climate crises can also be attributed to colonialism since most of the world's super powers contribute disproportionately to climate damage, the consequences of which are being borne by formerly colonized countries. Fruean argues that "for hundreds of years my people have been resilient. We fought back against our colonisers and we have made them change. As the rest of the world begins to suffer from the climate emergency as we Pacific Islanders already are, we can teach you how to fight back like us" (*The Guardian*).

Indigenous knowers in the Pacific are at the forefront of these issues, but they also must contend with the same colonial effects, the same injustices and pains from the past. The situation in the Pacific due to climate change has become imperative. In recent years, "the storms in the Pacific have been getting more violent, the droughts have been longer and the floods deeper. Fishers cannot feed their families. Family-owned shops that are flattened in a cyclone are rebuilt only to be destroyed by rising water" (Fruean). All over the Pacific region, climate change has shown its fierceness; the rest of the world, while experiencing some upheaval, has yet to feel the full horrors that those in the Pacific currently endure day-to-day. The climate change crisis effects mostly those on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, which can also be linked to colonialism, according to Fruean, as she claims that "all these fights are connected. The climate crisis and social inequalities are all symptoms of a world shaped by colonialism and then by capitalism,

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was hosted in partnership with the UK and Italy and was held in Glasgow from 1-12 November 2021, a year after being postponed due to the COVID19 pandemic.

both of them ways of organizing society that value comfort of one group over the lives of another" (*The Guardian*). While Fruean hopes to reach a broader audience through her commentary, in particular, she wants to raise alarms to those in positions of power who can enact changes, yet she cautions that the path ahead is far from easy. Fruean asserts that "We fought against the colonisers who tried to burn down our culture and achieved our independence. But now we're living through a different revolution: we're resisting climate colonialism, where rich dirty corporations profit from our destruction" (*The Guardian*). Volunteerism, grass-roots movements, and the overturning of elected leaders at the ballot box for ones that support climate change legislation are all actions that she envisions, to enact advancement, because as she explains, "we can show you what is coming, but we can also show you how to survive it. . . we know that if one part of a canoe is damaged, the whole thing sinks. What is happening now to the Pacific Islands is a warning sign to the rest of the world" (Fruean). In light of the climate emergency that threatens the world, one wonders if Westerners will listen now. As Bobby learned in *That Deadman Dance*, the colonizers were not interested in Indigenous stories or knowledge. At such an epoch of the human race's very survival, should hearing the wisdom of Indigenous knowers inspire openness now?

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