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Emerging Research in Australian Studies

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Edited by Christina Ringel, Leonie John, Friederike Zahn

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Leonie John, Christina Ringel, Friederike Zahn

Emerging Research in Australian Studies

Special Issue

What exactly are or counts as Australian studies? Usually, the answer will read something like research related to the continent of Australia; however, beyond this basic assumption, not much else is certain. It would be presumptuous to try and compress the manifoldness, the intricacies and the dynamics of Australian studies into a few sentences. Instead of providing an unwieldy and unrewarding definition in the space of this editorial, we have opted for appending five textual examples of what current investigations in Australian studies look like.

This special issue took shape in response to 'Emerging Research in Australian Studies' (ERAS), a virtual workshop for early career researchers (ECR) that took place on 16th and 17th September 2022 and was organised by Thomas Batchelor, Leonie John, David Kern, Christina Ringel and Friederike Zahn (in alphabetical order; all associated with the Centre for Australian Studies at the University of Cologne). The general aim was to provide a forum for exchanging thoughts among peers, for sharing research, for giving and receiving constructive feedback, and for generating new ideas. This aim was closely linked to the intention of creating an explicitly accessible, appreciative and stimulating space to experiment with inchoate ideas and build interdisciplinary networks. ERAS featured an impressive disciplinary range, including contributions from literary and cultural studies, linguistics, geography, history and anthropology. It was also a connective event, with close to half of the attendees from overseas and presenters from many different universities coming together. The panel presentations were framed by several pre-recorded talks, two keynotes from emerging scholars Bettina Charlotte Burger and Stef Spronck, and a writer's talk by African Australian scholar-writer Eugen Bacon.

As both organisers and editors, we consider the workshop to have been a great success, judging from the talks to which we listened, the interactions we witnessed, and the feedback we received. Towards the end of the two days, a number of participants expressed their interest in sharing their research with a bigger audience. All contributions resulting from the ensuing internal call for papers were doubly peer reviewed.

The broad focus of this special issue mirrors that of the workshop, allowing early career researchers to define Australian studies through their work, rather than the other way around. The special issue comprises five contributions, ranging from a focus on memories and the past, to the (fictional and actual) present, to other worlds and potential future(s). The articles attest to complex nexuses, particularly the ongoing relevance of colonial histories and shifting identities, by highlighting specific aspects of Australian history, language and literature.

Louise Thatcher takes an investigation of 'coloured' maritime deserters as a starting point for reconsidering the usefulness of the terminology of migration, introducing a mobility framework as an alternative way of putting seafarers and their lives in perspective. Such a change of perspective allows her to demonstrate the complex interactions between restrictive forces of racially-specific employment contracts and immigration laws on the one hand, and self-directed or even resistant forms mobility on the other hand. Thatcher concludes that "[t]he archives of desertion show traces of people who enacted 'unruly mobilities' on various scales", thereby indicating a certain degree of autonomy and proving the insufficiency of laws to prevent undesired mobility.

Peri Sipahi investigates the dynamics, ambiguities and interrelations of necrologies and necographies depicted in Tara June Winch's 'The Yield'. Drawing particularly on the work of Dan Hicks, she demonstrates how death and loss become entangled with questions of materiality, alterity, complicity and (Indigenous) authenticity. The museum is shown to function as an agent of empire chronopolitics, creating ruptures and facilitating processes of othering. Sipahi argues that the struggle for restitution is closely linked to the question of land rights, concluding that reclaiming family history enables the main character to reclaim a (limited) form of sovereignty.

Katharina Frödrich scrutinises an episode from the Lingthusiasm podcast, focussing on one of the most widely-discussed linguistic features of Australian English: the phenomenon of uptalk. In addition to attesting several communicative functions which have been assigned to this phenomenon previously, she showcases how the intonation pattern is used to convey humour or irony in her data set. Having accepted the challenge of undertaking a linguistic investigation in the midst of COVID-19, Frödrich convincingly argues for novel avenues of (digital) data collection processes that are relevant beyond global pandemics and lockdowns.

Lucas Mattila closely examines representations of violence and conflict in Alan Baxter's slasher-horror novella 'The Roo'. Reading the text for Stimmung, Mattila argues that Baxter establishes competing cycles of violence which, together with elements of genre play and performative efficiency, generate attunement and presence, and yield the novella's potential for affective reader engagement. He concludes that 'The Roo' "presents [violence] in an over-the-top manner in order to trivialize, parody, and normalize it", but also to indicate convergences between domestic abuse and rural dispossession, which can both be understood as forms of slow violence.

Bettina Charlotte Burger provides a preliminary overview of contemporary queer Australian speculative fiction, showcasing how this versatile genre "is employed to experiment with new genders, or new ways of viewing one's own identity and sexuality." Collectively, these texts dispute normativities associated with sexuality and gender. Burger suggests that speculative fiction offers queer writers – similar to other marginalised writers – the possibility to inscribe queer people and their lives in worlds that are accepting or else grant them sufficient agency to flourish regardless of repressive or dismissive circumstances. They point out that these authors tend to experiment with depictions

of societal structures that influence interpersonal relationships. These fictional societies assume different positions towards gender expressions and sexualities, and attach various meanings to them. Burger concludes with a plea for further research into the perpetually evolving and multiplying representation of queerness in Australian speculative fiction.

Jointly considered, the articles in this special issue display astonishing synergies and coherences. They highlight the disruptive forces of violence and racism, the importance of community and relationships, the dynamics of identities and belonging, as well various connections between social, cultural and political spheres. In sum, then, the five authors featured in this special issue attest to the productivity and versatility of Australian studies, and to its refusal to be pressed into neat categories. This is precisely our hope for the future: That the discipline (if it can be called that) remains uncontainable and creative beyond bounds.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our co-organisers, Thomas Batchelor and David Kern, for sharing the load of organising, promoting and hosting the workshop. We are furthermore indebted to the German Association for Australian Studies for their financial support and for facilitating this publication. Finally, the special issue would not have been possible without the five dedicated contributors and an equivalent number of generous peer reviewers. We express our thanks and appreciation to all of them.

The Guest Editors

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Louise Thatcher

Maritime Workers, Desertion, Racism, and Labour Mobility in Early 20th-Century Australia

Abstract: Deserters – maritime workers who left their ships before the end of their contracts – make up the biggest group of 'coloured immigrants' who were known to have entered Australia without authorisation during the era of the White Australia Policy. Archival records show that some deserters sought to stay in Australia, while others soon left again as workers on different ships. Both of these forms of labour mobility went against Australian and global structures, including immigration and employment law, that regulated the mobility of non-white maritime workers. Immigration restriction and racially-specific employment contracts were interconnected; they worked together to facilitate and restrict Asian workers' movements along circumscribed channels. Despite this, the records of desertion show traces of people who were able to enact forms of autonomous mobility.

Prologue
The Travels of H. Nagano

In January 1914, H. Nagano, a 35-year-old Japanese national, was arrested while working as a cook at the Newmarket Hotel in Melbourne. Authorities had been tipped off by an informant that he was a prohibited immigrant.[1] While he initially told police that he had come to Melbourne after spending seven years in Western Australia, after questioning he admitted to having deserted from the 'Canadian Transport' at Adelaide in June of the previous year.

He gave a statement detailing an itinerant life of work in different countries and on ships that travelled between them. He was born in Yawatahama, a port city in southern Japan. When he was about 15, he left Japan for the USA, where he worked as a cook. He got a job on a steamer, went to London, and left the ship there. He worked on several other ships, before joining the 'Canadian Transport' at Calcutta as a second steward. The 'Canadian Transport' was a tramp steamer: it had no regular route, but took up cargo contracts wherever it was hired. In June 1913, when the ship arrived in Adelaide with a load of phosphate from Ocean Island (Banaba, Kiribati), Nagano jumped ship.[2] He went by train to Melbourne to stay with another Japanese person. While he relied on national connections for accommodation, he found work with the help of a registry office in the city, which sent him to a job at a boarding house.[3] When he left that job after a few months, he started working as a cook in a shearing shed in Gippsland, before coming back to work at a hotel in Melbourne, where he was arrested, working under the name Charlie Okado.

1 See H. Nagano – Japanese Deserter from the S.S. 'Canadian Transport'.
2 See Express and Telegraph, 5 June 1913, p. 1 (Shipping News).
3 See Seamus O'Hanlon: "All Found" They Used to Call It.

He could speak English well, so officials gave him a dictation test in German, which he failed, in order to declare him a prohibited immigrant.[4] He told officials that he did not want to go back on the 'Canadian Transport' and would "sooner go to America".[5] Despite his request, Nagano was taken out of Australia on February 26, 1914, on the 'British Transport', another tramp steamer owned by the Empire Transport Company. He was signed on as a cabin boy at a salary of £2 per month – a demotion from his previous position as steward. The 'British Transport' left for Barcelona via Durban, carrying Australian wheat.[6]

Introduction
Research Question and Methodology

Nagano's case is unusual in that he left such a detailed narrative of his life in the archives of Australian immigration control; but the desertion itself was not so unusual. Deserters – that is, maritime workers who left their ships before the end of their contracts – make up the biggest group of 'coloured immigrants' who were known to have entered Australia without authorisation. Despite this, there is almost no mention of them in histories of immigration and the White Australia Policy.[7] This reflects a more general absence of work on histories of clandestine migration, especially for the early twentieth century.[8]

I wondered if perhaps the lack of attention to deserters in Australian immigration history was due to the fact that they were not actually immigrants. After all, the statistics simply document entry: they do not show whether or not a person soon left again. As part of my wider research into immigration control techniques, which includes the question of how they were applied to maritime workers, I sought to answer this question of whether or not deserters stayed, or at least tried to stay, in Australia for some time. Were seamen deserting because they wanted to stay in Australia?[9] Was it perhaps a chosen method of migration, a way of avoiding the immigration restrictions that made it very difficult for anyone not white to buy a ticket for a ship to Australia, let alone be allowed to land on arrival? Was it a spontaneous decision, perhaps influenced by one of the

4 The dictation test was the means by which Australian officials legally made unwanted arrivals into prohibited immigrants. It was a legislative compromise between the Australian desire for racial exclusion and British demands for nominal racial neutrality, due to international treaties and pressure from India. Rather than explicitly excluding immigrants on racial grounds, the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act stated that any person could be given a dictation test of fifty words in any language. The test was then selectively applied: only travellers who were to be excluded were tested, and the test was given in a language that would ensure that they failed. For transnational histories of the dictation test as an instrument of racist exclusion, see Marilyn Lake: From Mississippi to Melbourne via Natal; Jeremy Martens: Pioneering the Dictation Test.

5 H. Nagano – Japanese Deserter from the S.S. 'Canadian Transport, p. 22.

6 See Geelong Advertiser, 27 February 1914, p. 2 (The Wheat Fleet).

7 An important exception is Heather Goodall, Devleena Ghosh, Lindi Todd: Jumping Ship – Skirting Empire.

8 Ruth Balint and Julie Kalman's recent book does an excellent job of challenging the demonisation of the figure of the 'people smuggler', but the cases collected start from WWII. Cf. Ruth Balint, Julie Kalman: Smuggled.

9 I have only encountered male maritime workers in the files.

nefarious labour recruiters who were said to trick sailors into desertion?[10] Or, were workers simply changing ships – perhaps to escape abuse, or in search of better conditions?

In this article, I outline how and why desertion was policed within the context of immigration control and the White Australia Policy. I then use files from the National Archives of Australia to provide a partial answer to the question of whether deserters were immigrants. I show that, while many deserters left Australia on a new ship soon after leaving their old one, a significant number of men established some kind of life in Australia after jumping ship; they should therefore be considered in migration history. To better understand the interconnection between controls on maritime workers and immigration restrictions, I draw on the theoretical framework of mobility. I argue that, whether maritime workers aimed to settle in Australia or not, immigration restrictions regulated their mobility, as one mechanism in a global web of regulation of the mobility of non-white labour.

This article draws on files from the National Archives of Australia. It is based on my visits to the Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra branches of the Archives as well as files that have been digitised and are available online.[11] The cataloging work of the Archives means that records can be searched by title, which allowed me to identify sources relating to 'deserters' and 'desertion'. I was able to find other relevant sources by further searches for the names of people and ships mentioned in these records and in secondary literature. Most of the records I use come from the series A1, the correspondence files of the Department of External Affairs, the Federal department responsible, among other things, for immigration matters. I also use files from police, Collectors of Customs, who were responsible for overseeing the policing of ports on a state level, and the Governor General, who was responsible for communication with the Colonial Secretary and with other British colonies including Hong Kong and Singapore. Further shipping information comes from digitised newspapers available through the invaluable Trove database.

Maritime Workers and Immigration Restriction

Seafarers who were merely passing through Australian ports were explicitly exempt from immigration legislation but this did not mean that they could move freely. Legislative, bureaucratic and policing structures were developed by Australian officials who wanted to ensure that non-white workers kept moving and did not try to settle in 'white Australia'.

10 For example, see Indian Deserters Budur Dean, Moota Fathaydean and Judda Elliabux – Correspondence of the Collector of Customs with the NSW Police Relating to Immigration Restrictions.

11 I am grateful to have been awarded a National Archives of Australia/Australian Historical Association Postgraduate Scholarship, which funded the digitisation of some necessary records.

Non-White Workers and White Australia

From Federation onwards, Australia enacted a racist prohibition on the immigration of people who were not classified as 'white'.[12] Officials had the task of enforcing this: preventing people whose migration was considered undesirable from entering Australia, and tracking down and deporting anyone who managed to sneak in. Although immigration restrictions are often referred to as a 'wall',[13] the Australian border was never the hard line suggested by this metaphor. There were always various exceptions and exemptions. Some of these were negotiated, such as the measures Chinese residents of Australia took to enable the entry of family members.[14] Other exemptions were allowances for the temporary entry of certain categories of workers under the responsibility of an employer. These include the primarily Japanese pearl divers admitted to northern Australia on short-term contracts up to the 1970s,[15] and domestic servants and childcare workers, such as those accompanying colonial families from India, Celyon, Singapore and elsewhere.[16] While these workers were permitted to enter Australian territory, their mobility was limited and placed under the control of their employer, who was also entrusted with ensuring their eventual exit from Australia. Non-white workers on visiting ships were another such managed exception to White Australia.

There were some attempts to prevent non-white sailors from participating in the workforce in Australia. In particular, the 1901 Post and Telegraph Act pushed non-white seamen out of the domestic shipping trade, by legislating that mail contracts would be granted only to ships with white crews.[17] However, realistically, Australia, like the rest of the British Empire and the world, relied on the labour of non-white maritime workers, who staffed the ships that enabled global connections.

In the interwar years, around 50 000 South Asian seamen made up a quarter of the workforce on British merchant vessels.[18] They were commonly referred to as 'lascars', a term that had specific legal meaning in British law, and which was also used to indicate difference and inferior status.[19] They were employed under particular contracts, known as the lascar articles, with lower pay and harsher conditions than European sailors. There was no formal regulation of working hours, which meant not only that workers would be called on to work long shifts,

12 I deal with 'race' as a legal categorisation, using 'white' to refer to someone who would be classified by Australian officials as 'white' and 'non-white' to refer to someone who would not be. The question of how these categories were defined was never entirely stable, but it was nevertheless effective.
13 For example, Charles Archibald Price: The Great White Walls Are Built.
14 See Kate Bagnall: Rewriting the History of Chinese Families in Nineteenth-Century Australia; id.: Potter v. Minahan.
15 See Julia Martínez: The End of Indenture.
16 See the work being done by the 'Ayahs and Amahs' research project: for example, Avantika Binani, Claire Lowrie: "For Nannie".
17 See Section 16, Post and Telegraph Act 1901 (Commonwealth).
18 See Ravi Ahuja: Mobility and Containment.
19 See Gopal Balachandran: Making Coolies, (Un)Making Workers.

but also that they could be expected to be on call at all times.[20] A lascar could not be employed for a single journey, only for a fixed period of time or a round trip. Shipmasters could discharge lascars only at ports within British India: shipping companies were held responsible for the repatriation of any lascars left at a foreign port. This was ostensibly to protect the lascar from being abandoned and left destitute. However, it kept them tied to their ship, and meant they could not claim discharge in order to move from a particularly harsh ship or to sign on under the more favourable European articles for higher pay. The only way they could do this was by deserting – thus committing a criminal offence and forfeiting all payments due to them.[21] Many thousands more South Asian workers were employed by German and other European shipping companies, who also serviced the Australian routes.[22] As well as lascars, a large number of Chinese maritime workers were part of the global shipping industry – they were also employed on specific contracts, with worse pay and conditions than European workers.[23]

In general, the maritime workforce was racially segregated. Non-white seamen were typically part of coloured crews, who were managed and employed under specific contracts. However, there were exceptions – individuals who found work as part of largely white crews. Nagano, for example, told officials that he was the only Japanese person on board the 'Canadian Transport'.[24] For the most part, although white and non-white workers did "the same work on deck, in engine rooms and saloons", they did not do it "side by side on the same ships".[25] Gopalan Balachandran describes this as "a racially and culturally modular structuring of work and the labour process on vessels".[26] Ravi Ahuja asks why not more lascars deserted, given their mobility as workers and their unequal pay and treatment. He argues that their freedom of movement was restricted by three interlocking and overlapping fields of regulation: British and British Indian maritime labour law; immigration laws in Britain and the white settler colonies, and extra-legal structures of recruitment, containment and social connection.[27] This interconnected regulation can be seen in the ways in which Australian immigration law interacted with other forms of control as authorities sought to ensure that non-white maritime workers, who could not be entirely excluded from Australia, did not stay.

'White Australia' could never be a solid wall: non-white people entered Australian waters and set foot on Australian soil because their labour brought them there. They were simply meant to leave again. The concept of mobility and its regulation can be useful in thinking about the lives of people who moved for work and the ways in which their movement was channelled.

20 See Ravi Ahuja: Mobility and Containment, pp. 116 f.
21 See ibid., pp. 118 f.
22 See ibid., p. 111.
23 See Lars Amenda: Chinese Quarters, p. 47.
24 See H. Nagano – Japanese Deserter from the S.S. 'Canadian Transport.'
25 Ravi Ahuja: Mobility and Containment, p. 140.
26 Gopal Balachandran: Making Coolies, (Un)Making Workers, p. 279.
27 See Ravi Ahuja: Mobility and Containment.

Mobility and Regulation

Mobility is a term used within Critical Border Studies to side-step the limits of the concepts of 'migration' and 'the migrant'. Ann McNevin provides a useful summary of the "mobilities turn".[28] Only certain people who move are understood as migrants: it is a categorisation connected to the borders of nation-states and to governmental classification. Thinking in terms of mobility allows for attention not just to arrival and departure but also to the processes of moving: "transit and motion and, conversely, stillness and waiting become objects of inquiry in themselves". It also brings together movements on different scales, "mass and large scale movements alongside the micro and molecular".[29]

McNevin also identifies risks and limitations of this approach: in particular, the risk of simply replacing a historical bias towards stasis with a bias towards mobility. In addition to this analytical problem, there is the danger of uncritically reproducing a vision of "mobility-as-freedom", which bears the risk of supporting neoliberal arguments for "flexibility, adaptation and self-innovation" within a global labour market, ignoring the economic imperatives and other forms of violence that compel some forms of movement, while blocking others.[30] Maritime workers were highly mobile, but this did not necessarily mean that they were free.

Rather than, as McNevin fears, uncritically reproducing ideas about 'mobility-as-freedom', the framework of mobility enables attention to all forms of regulation, not just those enacted through immigration law. The regulation of coloured maritime labour involved both the facilitation of mobility and its restriction. In this, I follow Radhika Mongia's important work, in which she argues that the British facilitation of Indian labour migration in the nineteenth century was itself a form of migration control, as well as constituting the cradle of the restrictive migration control of the twentieth century.[31] Thinking broadly about the regulation of mobility helps explain the contrast that Ahuja identifies: while a sailor's work involved "extraordinary mobility across territorial frontiers and cultural spheres", this mobility did not equal freedom in a labour market structured by rigid and racist hierarchies.[32] In her history of the Suez Canal, Valeska Huber argues that the period around 1900 was neither a time of "unhampered acceleration" of movement nor simply a time of the imposition of harder borders and increased control of movement. It was, rather, "characterised by the *channelling* of mobility, or to be more precise, the differentiation, regulation and bureaucratisation of different kinds of movement".[33] This concept of channelling meaningfully describes how authorities approached the mobility of maritime workers, particularly those who were not classified as white. Their mobility was essential, and was encouraged, but had to be contained and restricted to the necessary forms. The facilitation of mobility and its constraint were not opposed but

28 Anne McNevin: Mobility and Its Discontents, p. 2.
29 Ibid., p. 9 ('objects', 'movement').
30 Ibid.
31 See Radhika Mongia: Indian Migration and Empire.
32 Ravi Ahuja: Mobility and Containment, p. 112.
33 Valeska Huber: Channelling Mobilities, p. 3; emphasis in original.

connected. As Ahuja argues, the networks that facilitated mobility also worked to "exclude, insulate, and constrain the freedom of movement of seamen".[34] I will now look at how maritime labour was regulated: specifically at how Australian immigration restriction also mobilised older forms of maritime authority and maritime labour law.

Law and Policing of Desertion

Legally, as long as a sailor remained connected to his ship, he was exempt from the Immigration Restriction Act. Hence, non-white sailors could travel from port to port, and exercise their customary right to shore leave: they were not treated as (prohibited) immigrants unless they were reported by a captain as absent without leave or as having deserted, or if their ship left without them. Captains, shipping agencies, customs officers and police all worked to prevent non-white seamen from becoming prohibited immigrants.

One of the main ways that Australian officials prevented prohibited immigrant deserters was by delegating responsibility for policing to shipping companies. Captains were required to have regular 'musters' of their non-white crew members, to ensure that no one got away. Shipping companies were then fined £100 for any prohibited immigrant deserter, as they were for any other prohibited immigrant who entered Australia from one of their ships. Significantly, a fine issued for a deserter was refunded, in whole or in part, if a ship's agents could demonstrate that the man concerned had left the commonwealth. So shipping agents took on some of the work of tracking down deserters – offering rewards, putting out notices, and sometimes hiring private investigators – to ensure that they were deported. They also corresponded with shipping agents and captains around the world in search of evidence that a deserter had left on another ship, which would allow them to apply for a refund of the fine they had paid.

Australian customs officials and police also tracked down deserters. Unlike other clandestine immigrants, individual deserters were known to have entered. There was, at least, a name (from the ship's articles). There was also a description, and commonly a photograph, and even fingerprints, because of the records of crew members kept by ships. Regulations requiring ships' crew members to have identification cards served two purposes. Firstly, they provided a way for captains and customs officers to legally prevent sailors from disembarking. Secondly, the duplicate identification cards kept on board ships provided information, photographs and thumbprints to make it easier for police to track down and prosecute people who deserted.

In December 1912, the Immigration Restriction Act was amended to make policing easier. Crew members could be required to produce an identification card if an officer demanded it, before being allowed to land. From October 1913, this was enforced selectively: it was only applied to "*coloured* members of crews

34 Ravi Ahuja: Mobility and Containment, p. 127.

in cases where the crews consist wholly or partly of Chinese".[35] Captains were encouraged to use this regulation to prevent crew members from landing during a stay at port, if they thought it was necessary.[36] In theory, a captain who wanted to keep seamen on the ship could refuse to issue the required documents. In practice, it was not always so smooth. Despite the differences in power, and the backing of the state, captains could not always control their crews.

The United Kingdom Mutual Steamship Assurance Association complained to the Colonial Office in London in June 1913 on behalf of shipowner members. Their letter raised the case of the 'Frankby', which had recently been fined £800 for the desertion of eight Chinese crew members. The captain had told the insurers that

> he had watchmen on board from the shore and also European members of the crew specially told off to watch the Chinamen, but with extreme cunning and ingenuity the 8 Chinamen appear to have crawled past the watchmen on a dark night, and slid down a rope to a boat which had been brought for the purpose from the shore at Sydney.[37]

The captain said that authorities in Australian ports did not offer any assistance in preventing desertions, comparing this unfavourably with the US, where the authorities provided "special police or detectives" to stop Chinese sailors going ashore, and where ships were therefore fined much less often.[38] In August 1915, an amendment to the Immigration Regulations gave customs officers the power to prevent any crew member from coming ashore without first showing the required identification card.[39] This was in response to difficulties officers had faced with Chinese crews who "persist in landing without authority during the vessel's stay in port". It made coming ashore without identification an offence in itself, and meant that officers did not have to prosecute them as prohibited immigrants, or ask a captain to report them as absent without leave, which "would probably cause him trouble with the crew".[40] These measures reflect the difficulties authorities faced in restricting maritime workers' customary right to shore leave while in port.

While sailors' identification cards were only partially successful in preventing crew members from going ashore, they did provide details that could be used to help track down anyone who deserted. Descriptions of deserters were circulated in the 'Police Gazette', on publicly distributed 'wanted' posters, and on Prohibited Immigrant (PI) Lists, which were distributed regularly to police stations across the country. Each contained a brief description of prohibited immigrants who had recently entered the county, usually with a photograph and sometimes a thumbprint. At the bottom of the list, information was given about previously featured migrants who had been captured and any increase of the reward offered by the shipping agents. The PI List stated that a reward of £10 would be given for

35 Desertion of Chinese Seamen in Australian Ports, p. 15.
36 See ibid., p. 12.
37 Ibid., p. 3.
38 Ibid., pp. 4 f.
39 See Regulation Under Immigration Act – Members of Crews Not Producing Identification Cards.
40 Ibid., p. 38 ('authority', 'trouble').

information leading to the arrest of any prohibited immigrant on the list. By July 1931 428 people had been listed.[41]

Immigration law was not the only legislation that applied to deserters. In most cases involving a prohibited immigrant deserter, a warrant was first issued for the crime of desertion. On his arrest, the desertion charge was dropped and he was charged with being a prohibited immigrant. Around the world, there were laws against desertion well before immigration restrictions came into the picture.[42] The maritime workforce was policed through criminal law in ways that had largely been phased out for terrestrial workers. This was enforced through reciprocal treaties: in return for assistance from other regimes in apprehending British deserters, British, and thus Australian, authorities tracked down foreign deserters in their territories.[43] The criminalisation of desertion had long been a reality for all maritime workers (except in US ports, where trade unions of white workers successfully fought against it).[44] Even stricter controls were imposed on the movement of non-white seamen employed under the lascar articles or other racially specific contracts. The way in which immigration restrictions and the enforcement of maritime authority through criminal law were used together can be seen in the case of the strike in 1923 by lascars on the 'City of Batavia'. Eight Indian men, who had gone on strike in protest of a breach of their agreement, were first imprisoned for disobeying the ship's master, before being charged with being prohibited immigrants and deported.[45] Control over the movement of sailors through maritime labour law, as well as extra-legal customs of shipboard authority, interacted with controls over the movement of particular workers through immigration law. The latter, as well as the financial and criminal penalties backing up their contracts, was mobilised to stop non-white sailors from jumping ship to get work under better conditions.

Were Deserters Immigrants?

The framework of mobility is a useful way of thinking about the various mechanisms that regulated how maritime workers moved around the world, and the possibilities that were available to them to change workplace, to keep moving, and to stay still. 'Mobility' works with a strategically broad definition, in order to think about a broad range of human (and non-human) movement through a single term. By stepping momentarily away from focusing only on immigration and immigration law, I have shown that the mobility of non-white maritime workers was restricted on various scales by interconnected forms of regulation, and that this applied whether sailors wanted to stay in Australia, change ships, or simply take shore leave.

41 See Tazoodin AMIRALI – Deserter, p. 3.
42 For example, see Charles R. Clee: Desertion and the Freedom of the Seaman; id.: Desertion and the Freedom of the Seaman (Concluded); Heide Gerstenberger: The Disciplining of German Seamen.
43 See New Provisions Regarding the Apprehension of Deserters from Japanese Ships.
44 See Charles R. Clee: Desertion and the Freedom of the Seaman, pp. 665 f.
45 See Indian deserters ex "City of Batavia".

At the same time, I am interested in the question of why deserters left their ships and what they did afterwards. One way of framing this is by asking whether or not deserters were immigrants. Historians of migration do not typically concern themselves with definitions of 'migration' or 'a migrant'. While the colonial context of Australian history means that there are ongoing discussions about the significance of who gets called a 'migrant' and who gets called a 'settler', in general the understanding of what counts as migration is otherwise taken for granted.[46] Legally, the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act defined "prohibited immigrant", but did not establish a definition of "immigrant".[47] In asking whether deserters were immigrants I am investigating whether they sought to stay in Australia. As well as being a matter of human interest in the lives of people we can catch glimpses of in the files, this approach draws attention to the question of what contribution histories of deserters, and of clandestine migration more generally, could make to the broader picture in Australian immigration history.

The control measures employed against maritime workers were only necessary because some seamen deserted, or tried to desert. My research is based on records of policing: there are limits to what can be read from them about the experience of people who moved. This is partly because certain forms of mobility were, when successful, invisible to authorities. It is also because Immigration and Customs officers who produced the files are invested in their own categories, not in the experiences of the people they write about. Nevertheless, there is some information about people's movements that can be found in these records.

Australian immigration records show that the number of deserters was relatively high, compared to other forms of non-authorised entry. Each year the Immigration Returns were presented to the federal parliament: detailed statistics, based on Customs records, on how many people entered Australia, and how many were refused entry. The Returns include notes on 'coloured immigrants' who entered, with the number of deserters of different racial classification noted. Based on Barry York's published compilation of the Returns, I calculated that 1190 deserters were listed between 1902 and 1929.[48] This number refers only to deserters who were classified as prohibited immigrants on the grounds of race. It does not include anyone whose desertion was not considered an immigration issue. It also does not include the much smaller number of white deserters who were classified as prohibited immigrants, either because of reported venereal disease,[49] because of war-time or post-war prohibitions on the entry of enemy nationals, such as Germans,[50] or because of interwar concerns about political radicals entering the country.[51] In comparison, in my research on stowaways, I have so far counted 410 prohibited immigrant stowaways (i. e. non-white stowaways) who were caught in the same period.[52] The files on stowaways only show people

46 See Ruth Balint, Zora Simic: Histories of Migrants and Refugees in Australia, pp. 379 f.
47 Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (Commonwealth).
48 See Barry York: Admitted: 1901-1946.
49 See White Deserters Suffering from Infectious Diseases.
50 For example, see SS Elleerfeld – Deserters; Record of Files and Orders [Box 1].
51 See Aliens Seamen Deserters – Vic. Passports Regulations.
52 This figure is based on extensive archival research conducted for my doctoral project. See Correspondence with Government, Hong Kong Re Illegal Introduction of Chinese with

who were found hidden on ships or were caught trying to sneak off ships; that is, they show unsuccessful attempts to enter Australia by people who were soon deported. A stowaway who succeeded in getting to Australia left no archival trace: the records do not show how many people actually came in by stowing away. For deserters, on the other hand, record-keeping on ships meant that we know when people entered: they were reported as having deserted. However, in the absence of other records, we do not know whether they stayed. There is a certain paranoia, or at least suspicion, inherent in the customs and immigration files that I am using. For officials, every non-white person was a potential prohibited immigrant. While there was very rarely as intense a concern about prohibited immigrant deserters as there was about rumoured stowaways, there was an assumption, at least in terms of bureaucratic practice, that unless a deserter was 'recovered', he was still in Australia.

Those Who Stayed

Many deserters have an individual file in the immigration control archives. These files are generally brief, detailing the report of a desertion and the fine issued against the ship. Others are longer and include information about attempts to track down a deserter and, when this was successful, details of his arrest and deportation. There is often, then, correspondence with shipping agents dealing with a request for a refund of the fine. For those deserters who were located, it is possible to make some assumptions about whether they intended to stay in Australia or not.

Wong Luing, for example, was arrested in a market garden in Sydney in 1932 – over seventeen years after his desertion in Melbourne.[53] Also known as Choy Fong, he was recognised by police from his picture on the Prohibited Immigrant list. Another deserter who stayed for a long time was Chong Kong, who was working as a fireman on the tramp steamer 'Batsford' before he deserted at Fremantle in November 1915. That he was intent on staying in Australia can be deduced from the fact that he successfully applied for a Certificate of Exemption from the Dictation Test in 1923, under the name Ah Pow, having grown a moustache, so officials would not recognise him. This certificate allowed him to travel to China and return. He was eventually convicted of being a prohibited

Commonwealth; Discovery of Chinese Stowaways; F.W.E. Gabriel Visit to Singapore & Hong Kong 1923; Governor General's Office – Correspondence – Chinese Stowaways Arriving in Australia from Hong Kong Singapore; Inspector F.W. Gabriel – Visit to Hong Kong, Etc; Investigations into the Illegal Entry into Australia of Chinese Stowaways; Japanese Stowaways – Tokiyiro Sugimoto, Jihizo Tahira, Kametaro Shiozaki, Genrokee Uipedd; (Memorandum Re Alleged Illicit Introduction of Chinese into the Commonwealth) Detection and Prevention of Illegal Entry of Chinese; Mon Shao Stowaway Ex. 'Garbeta.'; Questions in Parliament by Senator FINDLEY Re Chinese and the IR Immigration Restriction Act; Royal, J – Stowaway; S S ARENDSKERK – September 27 – Chinese Stowaways; Searching of Ships for Stowaways and Contraband – Procedure of Precautions to Be Taken against Illegal Entering of Stowaways; S.S. 'Charon' – 11 Stowaways; SS 'Charon' – Stowaways 16/2/13; SS 'Kumeric' – 5 Stowaways and 1 Deserter 1913; S/S 'Murez' – Chinese Stowaways; Stowaways on 'Levuka.'

53 See SS Tydens – Chinese Deserters.

immigrant in 1928. He successfully asked to be released on a bond for an extra month, so his crops could finish growing. After disposing of his garden business interests, he left Australia in June 1928.[54]

Chong Kong was one of six Chinese deserters from the 'Batsford'. The ship came from New York and stopped at multiple Australian ports to collect wool and timber before heading for London, via South Africa.[55] Along the way, two firemen and a sailor deserted at Newcastle, and two more firemen deserted at Sydney, before Chong Kong left the ship at Fremantle.[56] All of these men sought to stay in Australia for years, and two managed to get documents. This particular case fits with a general spike in desertion during the war, which was at least partly due to sailors who jumped ship rather than risk being mobilised into dangerous military shipping when their ships were requisitioned as troop carriers.[57]

Those Who Left

On the other hand, there are records of men who were found to have left on other ships. Captains usually said that they had stowed away and then, once found, had been taken on as crew members.[58] In these cases, it is clear that desertion was not an attempt to stay in Australia. For example, on New Year's Eve 1915, Foo Tong, a fireman, deserted from the 'Havre', a British Imperial Oil Company ship bringing oil from Singapore and returning with Australian coal. The ship's agents, facing a fine for his desertion, contacted other ships to investigate rumours that he had left. He was found to have left as a stowaway on the 'Queen Maud', carrying Australian wheat to San Francisco, and to have become a crew member, under the name Ah On. When the 'Queen Maud' returned to Melbourne in 1916, Foo Tong, then working as a firemens' cook was questioned. He said that he had left the 'Havre' because the second engineer had hit him.[59]

Files with such clear proof that a deserter left soon after entry are less common than those that show that someone was in the country for some time. However, evidence about other deserters suggests that they generally took up work on different ships. Records show that 80 German crew members deserted at Port Adelaide in 1928, while 58 German seamen were signed on at the same port that year. As only three seamen officially signed off, it can be assumed that most of the deserters signed on to work on other ships.[60]

54 See SS 'Batsfora' [sic] – Deserters, pp. 41 f.
55 See Sydney Morning Herald, 4 October 1915, p. 9 (Steamers Due Today); Fremantle Herald, 12 November 1915, p. 3 (Freighter Batsford).
56 See SS 'Batsfora' [sic] – Deserters, pp. 127 f.
57 See Chinese Desertions in New South Wales – Large Increase In. Balachandran attributes the increase in desertion in these years also to an increase in the self-confidence of Indian and Chinese workers, due to the anti-colonial and nationalist movements. Gopal Balachandran: Making Coolies, (Un)Making Workers, p. 283.
58 I suspect that this explanation might, at least sometimes, be a story that a captain told to cover up having taken on a worker in port in a not entirely legitimate way.
59 See Foo Tong – Deserter 'Havre' Newcastle; Daily Commercial News and Shipping List, 2 December 1915, p. 4 (Oil For Melbourne); ibid. 11 January 1916, p. 10 (The Week's Shipments)
60 See German Deserters Arriving in Australia.

While not every deserter case file available in the archives includes a resolution, it is likely that many people recorded as deserters simply left again soon after their entry. However, it is also clear that other deserters did stay, or tried to stay, in numbers significant enough to be considered in Australian migration history. For deserters who escaped (archival) capture, other archives are needed to tell their stories. As Heather Goodall, Devleena Ghosh, and Lindi Todd argue, these could include family histories and collective memory within communities that Indian seafarers may have become part of, in particular Aboriginal communities.[61]

Returning to Nagano and his story – this time not as a story of failed settlement in Australia but as a story of transnational mobility, it can be said that his wandering life is not too unusual. Similar tales of men shifting between work on land and at sea can be read in literature and biography across this era.[62] In moving around the world, Nagano was exercising a custom of mobility that brought many other workers to Australia, some of whom settled, while others kept moving. A deserter who was not classified as a prohibited immigrant – that is, a deserter who was classified as white – could still face prosecution by the shipping company for desertion. However, if he avoided this, he could live and work in Australia easily without any need to show official documentation (unless he was suspected of being an 'enemy alien' during war time). Nagano's deportation – his forced movement out of Australia via his classification as a prohibited immigrant – occurred only because of Australia's racist immigration controls. This may seem obvious. However, it is worth stating in order to be specific about whose mobility was facilitated, and which forms of mobility were blocked, by immigration control and other forms of regulation.

Mobility is a particularly useful framework for thinking about the work of seafarers and the controls on their movement. For sailors and deserters, mobility-as-migration cannot be easily separated from mobility-as-labour. For someone like Nagano, employment on a ship was both work and a means of travel. It is not necessary to know whether or not maritime workers were, or wanted to be, migrants in order to think about how their travels interacted with Australian immigration controls. It becomes clear that the regulation of non-white maritime workers aimed at preventing their autonomous mobility on any scale, be it moving between ships or settling in Australia. Attempts to prevent seamen from leaving the ship at all was a restriction of their mobility on a small scale, in order to ensure that they would continue moving with their ships when those left. Immigration control was just one mechanism among many for ensuring the correct circulation of labour. It was part of the network of governance that Ahuja identifies in his work on lascars.[63]

The movement and labour of so-called 'coloured' seamen enabled global connections, including connections between Australian ports and the world. Their

61 See Heather Goodall, Devleena Ghosh, Lindi Todd: Jumping Ship – Skirting Empire, pp. 57-60.
62 See Louis L'Amour: Education of a Wandering Man; Luke Lewin Davies: The Tramp in British Literature.
63 See Ravi Ahuja: Mobility and Containment.

mobility was channelled along particular tracks, namely the shipping routes along which they moved people and goods. Mobility away from these tracks was discouraged – whether it was movement from ship to shore or between ships in search of better employment conditions. All of this is not to deny that maritime workers were capable of self-directed, autonomous or resistant forms of mobility. As Goodall, Ghosh and Todd argue, the "archives of mechanisms for control" are not proof that these controls were successful.[64] The archives of desertion show traces of people who enacted "unruly mobilities" on various scales: asserting their right to shore leave, changing ships in breach of contract, and jumping ship to make new lives in Australia.[65]

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64 Heather Goodall, Devleena Ghosh, Lindi Todd: Jumping Ship – Skirting Empire, p. 47.
65 Valeska Huber: Channelling Mobilities, p. 328.

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Violent Temporalities, the Colonial Museum and the Fantasy of Terra Nullius in Tara June Winch's 'The Yield'

Abstract: In 'The Yield' (2021), Wiradjuri writer Tara June Winch challenges and problematises the necrologies, i. e. the histories of loss, of Aboriginal dispossession that are created in and perpetuated by the colonial museum. Focusing simultaneously on the Wiradjuri family history of the Gondiwindis that has been violently extracted from their land, Prosperous, in the form of cultural materials kept in a museum's archive as well as the threat of losing the land itself, the novel puts the restitution of museum objects and the reclaiming of land rights into dialogue. Drawing on Dan Hicks' term 'necrology' to discuss how museums enact chronopolitical strategies to frame colonially oppressed peoples as non-coeval and 'primitive', in this article, I expand his notion of museums as colonial weapons of time by integrating Goenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson's theorisation of the 'white possessive'. In doing so, I situate the discourse in the settler colonial context of Australia, which allows me to read the museum as a site of knowledge production that is complicit in upholding the myth of 'terra nullius' and thus Aboriginal dispossession of country. I demonstrate that reclaiming the material and immaterial Gondiwindi family history in the forms of Ancestral Remains, cultural materials and a Wiradjuri dictionary signifies the rewriting of an othered history and hence a reclaiming of sovereignty over country.

Introduction
Museums and Power

Museums have a complex relationship with power and time. As one particular form of archive, museums are located at the power nexus of cultural and national collective memories, and hence identity formation.[1] This often clashes wildly with the general public's perception of museums, and even with the self-perception of museum directories and staff, as performing neutral, objective and impartial science.[2] Yet, it has been abundantly theorised that there is power in recording events, in naming, in labelling, in preserving memory and writing history,[3] which are all acts that are performed in the museum. A defensive attitude of supposed objectivity is also evident in Australia's museum context. Scientists speaking out against the restitution and repatriation of artefacts and bodily remains that were violently extracted from Aboriginal communities delegitimised such efforts that were gaining visibility and urgency in the 1990s. For instance, a well-known Australian prehistorian, referred to Aboriginal leaders of restitution and repatriation movements as 'radical' and convincedly stated that favouring

1 Cf. Joan M. Schwartz, Terry Cook: Archives, Records, and Power, p. 2.
2 Cf. ibid., p. 1. In 2002, eighteen museum directories worldwide signed 'The Declaration of the Importance and Value of Universal Museums'. The declaration itself supported the myth of museums as sites of objective knowledge production for the greater good, warding off a supposed loss of knowledge through, for instance, restitution of cultural materials, cf. Dan Hicks: The Brutish Museums, pp. 195-198, 202 f.
3 Cf. Joan M. Schwartz, Terry Cook: Archives, Records, and Power, p. 5.

the claims for the return of Ancestral Remains risks to replace the colonial past with a supposed "black intellectual totalitarianism".[4] Other scientists referred to the growing public demands by Aboriginal communities as "current political fashion" that are intended to destroy a preserved settler past.[5] At its core these statements reveal the anxious fragility of whiteness triggered by these efforts. Although there is a growing awareness of ethical quandaries to hold on to Aboriginal Ancestral Remains and sacred objects which has led to certain changes, – the Australian government issued official statements in support of repatriation of Ancestral Remains, museums have developed handbooks on repatriation or work closely together with Aboriginal curators to display Australia's 'hidden history'[6] – similar problematic sentiments persist among museum researchers and scientists until today.[7] Overall, these statements continue to defame Aboriginal peoples' restitution and repatriation demands as transient, suggest that Aboriginal peoples cannot take care of their own cultures and also expose a continued belief that Aboriginal peoples were/are on the brink of extinction.[8] Paul Turnbull identifies the underlying notorious argument to be an argument of temporality: that the manner of acquisition has no relevance to the question of restitution or repatriation, "in short, that the past has no relevance to the present".[9] Yet, time is central to the case of Australia and its discourse of 'white possession', because it has great impact on Aboriginal identity construction and processes of legitimising Aboriginal ownership of land under settler colonial law.

Dan Hicks, who is a curator at one such colonial institution, the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, investigates the colonial legacies of ethnographic museums and their related temporalities in his thought-provoking monograph 'The Brutish Museums'. Hicks postulates that the narrative framing of cultural materials from colonially oppressed peoples exhibited in ethnographic museums establishes the related culture as non-coeval with the present, pushing them into a primitive past.[10] Similarly, the history of the Gondiwindi family in Wiradjuri writer Tara June Winch's novel 'The Yield' (2021) has been violently extracted from their land, Prosperous, in the form of cultural materials that are kept in a museum's archive and would otherwise allow them to claim Native Title. Threatened by eviction

4 Dr. John Mulvaney in an interview with 'Newsweek', quoted in Paul Turnbull: Science, Museums and Collecting the Indigenous Dead in Colonial Australia, p. 6.
5 Robert Foley, the director of the Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies, in an interview with the 'Sydney Morning Herald', quoted in ibid., p. 6.
6 The Australian Office for the Arts has dedicated a campaign to inform about the government's policy on Aboriginal repatriation, cf. The Australian Office for the Arts: Indigenous Repatriation. The National Museum of Australia, for instance, recently published 'A Repatriation Handbook', cf. Michael Pickering: A Repatriation Handbook. The Australian Museum introduced its exhibition 'Unsettled' which also includes contemporary Aboriginal art that deals with various themes such as genocide and healing, cf. The Australian Museum's Unsettled Exhibition. More information on recent changes implemented by some Australian museums is traced by Michael Pickering and Phil Gordon, both advisors to museums or Aboriginal communities on museum related issues, cf. Michael Pickering, Phil Gordon: Repatriation.
7 Cf. Paul Turnbull: Science, Museums and Collecting the Indigenous Dead in Colonial Australia, pp. 329-355.
8 Cf. ibid. pp. 7, 18.
9 Ibid., p. 30.
10 Cf. Dan Hicks: The Brutish Museums, p. 185.

because a tin mining company was awarded the land rights by the Australian government, the protagonist August Gondiwindi's task to reclaim the artefacts, in Hick's terms, means rewriting the archival necrography of an othered history. The novel challenges and problematises the necrologies, i. e. the histories of loss, of Aboriginal dispossession that are created in and perpetuated by the colonial museum. Focusing simultaneously on the dispossession of the Gondiwindi's Wiradjuri family history as well as the threat of losing the land itself, the novel puts the restitution of cultural materials and the reclaiming of land rights into dialogue and exposes that both forms of Aboriginal dispossession are informed by the same settler colonial chronopolitics. In this article, I argue that settler museum practices of narrative framing and performance of Aboriginal cultural materials is a form of necrography that participates in the myth of 'terra nullius' and thus inscribes Aboriginal country as settler land.

In order to examine the narrativisation and representation of the Gondiwindi's violent necrology, I first introduce Hick's terminology of histories of loss and death as well as reflect on the applicability of Hick's findings to an Australian settler context specifically. This will be done by expanding the notion of necrology to include an investigation of the discourse of Aboriginal dispossession of country that Goenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson entitles 'the white possessive'. After interrogating how the necrology of the land Prosperous and simultaneously of the Gondiwindis is written by means of the disruptive extraction of cultural materials and their labelling and display in the museum's fictional Falstaff Collection, I survey the different ways of rewriting the colonial archive presented in the novel. For the latter, I mainly focus on the accumulation of immaterial family history by August's late grandfather Albert Gondiwindi in the form of a Wiradjuri dictionary. Ultimately, rewriting the archive means writing herself and her ancestors back into existence and regaining sovereignty over their land. In this way, the novel provides extensive commentary on ongoing discussions of Aboriginal land rights as well as restitution and repatriation. It is important to note that as a non-Indigenous researcher based in Germany, I, too, am implicated[11] in the neo-colonial power hierarchies that largely exclude Indigenous perspectives, lived experiences and scholarship in academia to this day. As an outsider to Aboriginal cultures and communities, this perspective impacts my reading of the text.

Time and the Settler Colonial Museum

Hicks asserts that power over time lies at the core of the colonial violence inflicted by ethnographic museums.[12] Although he deals specifically with the British Empire and the theft of cultural materials from the kingdom of Benin,

11 I base my understanding of implication on Michael Rothberg's concept of the implicated subject. Implicated subjects are not necessarily "direct agents of harm" but "they contribute to, inhabit, inherit, or benefit from regimes of domination", cf. Michael Rothberg: The Implicated Subject, p. 1.

12 Cf. Dan Hicks: The Brutish Museums.

his insights are useful in other contexts as well. After all, colonial infrastructures travel across and beyond the empire. Hick's insights are built on Achille Mbembe's understanding of the museum. Mbembe, who is, amongst others, a prominent scholar and figure of decolonisation movements, presents the museum as a tool that actively creates and naturalises the alterity it desires in his ground-breaking monograph 'Necropolitics'. He writes,

> the museum has been a powerful device of separation. The exhibiting of subjugated or humiliated humanities has always adhered to certain elementary rules of injury and violation. And, for starters, these humanities have never had the right in the museum to the same treatment, status or dignity as the conquering humanities. They have always been subjected to other rules of classification and other logics of presentation.[13]

Including this observation in his work on necropolitics is a powerful acknowledgement of that fact that museums are complicit in creating a people that are disposable and can be killed. In other words, ethnographic museums are a colonial tool to transform certain peoples into a living dead people.[14] According to Hicks, this is mainly achieved due to a "weaponization of time".[15] Combining Mbembe's observations about museal alterity with his notion of 'necropolitics', Hicks develops two terms that are central to the analysis at hand. Utilising the terms 'necrology', i. e. histories of loss, and 'necrography', i. e. the writing of these histories,[16] he discusses how museums create a space for othering the past through their desire to immobilise the passage of time.

This is, for instance, realised by forms of classification and of display. Hence, it is necessary to understand what a museum does on a more abstract level by classifying and labelling looted materials. This selective history writing − or necrography − is inherently mythical and unaware of its own subjective positionality. Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' definition of myth as an immobilisation of time, Hicks concludes that "myths are temporal devices".[17] It is crucial to apply this understanding to the museum archive and its related technologies such as the label. Museum studies scholar Susan Crane argues that "[c]lassification manages time"[18] and arrests the temporal alterity of individual objects, documents and remains inherently through identifying difference.[19] Cultural materials and remains are selected and ordered into a temporal sequence by the coloniser. These fragmenting technologies and methods reduce materials and bodily remains to a supposedly temporally fixed performance of history. The myth of the 'primitive' is created and time itself is turned into a weapon of colonial oppression.[20] Yet, ironically, as museum objects, thus, are performing a continuation of violence, they are not fixed in the past but are instead unfinished events imprinted by violence that constitute an uninterrupted process of taking life.[21]

13 Achille Mbembe: Necropolitics, p. 171.
14 Cf. ibid., p. 92.
15 Dan Hicks: The Brutish Museums, p. 7.
16 Cf. ibid., p. 153.
17 Ibid., p. 7.
18 Susan A. Crane: The Conundrum of Ephemerality, p. 101.
19 Cf. Hannah Turner: Cataloguing Culture, p. 10.
20 Cf. Dan Hicks: The Brutish Museums, p. 7.
21 Cf. ibid., pp. 153 f.

The way that cultural materials and remains are displayed alongside European colonial victory further consolidates 'the pastness' of 'the primitive'.[22] Essentially, this turns the materials and remains displayed into a necrology of extinction that provides the reason for looting them in the first place. More than that, the violent temporal fixation evident in the museum display dehumanises the cultures the materials and remains were forcefully extracted from. Since the nineteenth century, museums exhibit 'natural history' and 'human history' separately. Crane notes that "[m]useums of ethnography depicted 'primitive' (although contemporary) cultures as timeless entities, while museums of history established trajectories of modernization and industrialization that depicted the inevitable progress of Western civilization".[23] This reveals a clear divide between 'peoples with histories' and 'peoples without',[24] a divide between culture and nature. Thus "deprived of their breath and returned to the inertia of matter",[25] this form of 'mummification', 'statuefication' and 'fetishisation', in Mbembe's terms,[26] this 'non-coevalness', in Johannes Fabian's terms,[27] normalises the propaganda of race science, the material display of human culture and the violence of acquisition.[28] The colonial museum and each object therein become active agents in the chronopolitics of the empire.[29] The colonial museum is a tool for temporal alterity.[30]

What does it mean to understand the ethnographic museum in a necropolitical framework specifically in a settler colonial context such as contemporary Australia? Scholarly work has shown that the idea of Australian nationhood depended (and continues to depend) on "safeguarding the biological integrity of a supposedly evolutionarily advanced white social Australian body".[31] It follows that there are undesirable groups of people that 'need to be killed', in the terminology of necropolitics, in order to engender a white Australian nation: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-white migrants.[32] Moreton-Robinson argues that the white colonial project, Australia, is infused with a 'possessive logic' that presupposes the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples. This logic is concerned with "reproducing and reaffirming the nation-state's ownership, control, and domination"[33] and shapes a notion of belonging on the side of the colonisers with the "legal fiction of *terra nullius*"[34] at the core of this understanding of property. In order to affirm the colonial-national ownership of Australia, historically

22 Cf. ibid., p. 185.
23 Susan A. Crane: The Conundrum of Ephemerality, p. 101; cf. also Ivan Karp, Steven Lavine: Exhibiting Cultures.
24 Cf. Susan A. Crane: The Conundrum of Ephemerality, p. 101.
25 Achille Mbembe: Necropolitics, p. 171.
26 Cf. ibid., p. 171.
27 Cf. Johannes Fabian: Time and the Other.
28 Cf. Dan Hicks: The Brutish Museums, p. 180.
29 Cf. ibid., pp. 6, 180.
30 Cf. ibid., p. 4.
31 Paul Turnbull: Science, Museums and Collecting the Indigenous Dead in Colonial Australia, p. 13.
32 The Immigration Restriction Act 1901, which allowed only white migrants from Britain to settle in Australia, was a direct result of white possessive logic impacting Australia's immigration policy, cf. Aileen Moreton-Robinson: The White Possessive, p. xii.
33 Ibid., p. xii.
34 Ibid., p. 4.

a perception of ownership of any kind amongst Aboriginal peoples was simply erased[35] and a necropolitics of extinction was initiated. This involved, and to this day involves, the actual killing of Aboriginal peoples as well as what is sometimes referred to as 'cultural' genocide.

As previously detailed, ethnographic museums especially participated in the latter; that is the framing of Aboriginal peoples as extinct, turning them into living dead peoples. Viewing the history of 'Australia' which is grounded in a weaponisation of time through the lens of the 'white possessive' entails that the necrographies created, narrated and performed in ethnographic settler museums, too, are white property. Thus, museums are central to the discursive knowledge production of Aboriginal dispossession of both culture and land as part of the settler colonial project Australia. What ties in strongly with the settler logics of possession, property and Aboriginal extinction is, moreover, the consideration of the building of a settler museum. Who owns the land that the physical building is erected upon if Aboriginal peoples have been deemed extinct? The building of the museum itself becomes a symbol of 'white possession', suggesting that the land it stands upon uncontestably belongs to the Australian nation and government; as Moreton-Robinson emphasises, the land itself is marked by colonial violence.[36]

Walking through a Cemetery Necrography and the Weaponisation of Time

'The Yield' is a novel that presents, investigates and challenges different strategies on how to write as well as untangle a history of loss through a focus attention on the literary representation and narrativisation of the museum and exhibited materials. In the following, I mostly focus on chapter 35, in which Aunt Missy and her niece August visit the fictive Museum Australia. Searching for the Falstaff Collection, which contains objects that could potentially help them assert their land rights under settler colonial law, Aunt Missy hears the voice of her deceased father Albert. He whispers in her ear: "They didn't just take our land with guns and bullets; there were other ways just as lethal – look Missy. Look harder".[37] As the novel reveals, one of these lethal genocidal weapons is the ethnographic museum.

The novel emphasises the intricate connections between 'terra nullius' and the necropolitics performed in the museum. August only learns that the Museum Australia, which in name bears close resemblance to existing museums,[38] holds a key to saving her family's land through their white neighbour Eddie, who already accepted the compensation for his part of the land by the tin mining company. This course of events mirrors closely the Mabo decision from 1992,

35 Cf. ibid., pp. 112 f.
36 Cf. ibid., p. xiii.
37 Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 255.
38 Two museums come to mind, the National Museum of Australia in Canberra and the Australian Museum in Sydney.

which recognised proprietary Indigenous land rights. Mining companies felt heavily threatened by the fact that there could be potential legal insecurities about land rights in Australia, especially since the Mabo decision resulted in the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993, which granted some concessions to native titleholders. However, even that Act framed Indigenous peoples as trespassers until they can prove their native title. The burden evidencing a claim to the land thus is pushed onto the shoulders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.[39] It is clear that the tin mining company in the novel operates on the same assumptions of 'terra nullius' and Aboriginal trespassing.

In a cruel streak of anger, Eddie presents August with submission cards he found amongst his father's documents. Acting as proxy for the museum, one of these cards is of special interest here: "'*Submission*: Wooden shovel, intricately carved with brolgas, used for digging earth mounds. Number, 1. Dated 7000 years. Milling grinding stones, approximate number, 35; Anvil stones, 7; Fire stones, 30. Evidence of agricultural activity dated: circa, 10000 years'".[40] The submission card points to the extractivist, fragmentary and disruptive nature of necrography processes at the museum; ties to the creators as well as the histories of the objects themselves prior to white 'ownership' are severed. Eddie prefaces reading this specific card with the information that his own father donated the objects in 1980, "'just before we were born! […]'".[41] The submission date indicates that the process of colonial writing of the necrographies of Aboriginal peoples is a continued process in the narrated present. Furthermore, as Hannah Turner notes, such cataloguing systems represent practices "for sorting, classifying, and organizing people, their belongings, and their ancestors".[42] In this case, since the dates attributed to the objects seem to bear special significance by their position at the very end of the entries, the chronological nature of the sorting hints at the necro-chronopolitics of the museum. Simultaneously, the submission cards also provide the Gondiwindis with some hope because they, the necro-chronopolitical tools of the coloniser, provide written evidence to agricultural use of the land dating back to pre-colonial times, which is specifically required to contest the legal fiction of 'terra nullius' and acquire Native Title, as will be detailed further below.

These first disruptive impressions of Aboriginal dispossession are followed by another reading. This time, Aunt Missy starts reading the webpage of the Museum Australia to August prior to their visit:

> There are roughly 17000 collections, some consisting of only a single object, and largely the results of the pioneers of Australian archaeology; usually untrained, curious but dedicated people keen to understand Aboriginal prehistory and salvage material evidence of the past. The first artifact […] was […] donated to the Museum in 1896 and [is] held in the Falstaff Permanent Collection. Some of these collections – [43]

39 Cf. Aileen Moreton-Robinson: The White Possessive, pp. 68 f.
40 Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 211.
41 Ibid., p. 211.
42 Hannah Turner: Cataloguing Culture, p. 88.
43 Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 224, original emphasis removed.

This passage merits extensive attention. Firstly, the wording is strikingly similar to that used on the actual existing webpage of the Australian Museum in Sydney, thereby commenting on contemporary museum practices.[44] Secondly, the rupture in the reading flow by Aunt Missy implies the rupture, the loss and death of objects and people, that has been created by the narration and performance of such museum collections as past and 'primitive'. Further, the fact that it is not exactly clear how many collections there are and that the collectors were untrained and hence lacking cultural knowledge, demonstrates that museal necrographies consciously operate on the basis of a loss of knowledge. This links back to the disruptive nature of the submission cards, which obscure any knowledge about the objects prior to acquisition, and further establishes a close link to Eddie's family history through the word 'salvage'. With its primary association 'to save', the word hints at the previously mentioned racist argument that is still made by contemporary museum directories,[45] namely that they are protecting objects and remains from destruction.

Taking a closer look at Eddie's family history unveils further ties to museal necrologies and the Gondiwindis. The narrative present is interspersed with a second epistolary narrative that is set in the early twentieth century. This is written by Ferdinand Greenleaf, a German migrant to Australia, who turns out to be Eddie's grandfather.[46] Reverend Greenleaf himself had started the 'family tradition' of sending materials of Aboriginal origin to museums in an effort to 'protect' them.[47] When viewed in light of his motivation to save "these perishing Aborigines",[48] as he himself writes in his letter, the preservation argument is paired with the extinction myth and ironically puts museums into the role of protectors of a past that would otherwise be lost. The white saviour is alive and kicking, and museums wallow in his shadow. This epistolary narrative of the past permeates the present and disrupts the linear temporality of narrated time. In other words, the colonial museum and its archive are piercing the present lives of the Gondiwindi family.

While in the museum, August and Aunt Missy search for any label mentioning the Falstaff Collection, thus granting a detailed look at the exhibits and making the reader complicit to a certain degree in reproducing colonial violence. The following trigger warning is installed at the entrance to an exhibition room: "Warning to Aboriginal and Torres Strait visitors: This room contains images of deceased persons", demonstrating the literal level a manifestation of a history of death can have. Aunt Missy and August shiver and dare only a peek. This is sharply contrasted with a group of school children who "hustled past them into the room without glancing at the notice".[49] This indifference implies that, for them, the images of Aboriginal Ancestral Remains do not so much display deceased persons but are dehumanised, objectified relics of the past that mean

44 Cf. Australian Museum Collections.
45 Cf. Dan Hicks: The Brutish Museums, p. 142.
46 Cf. Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 47.
47 Cf. ibid., p. 189.
48 Ibid., p. 71.
49 Ibid., p. 252 ('warning' – original emphasis removed, 'hustled').

nothing in the now, harking back to Mbembe's mummification. This is further intensified by the fact that the exhibits are images rather than physical remains. Hicks writes on colonial photography that taking pictures of loot or colonially oppressed peoples, whether alive or dead, is a form of taking life, which, too, extends colonial violence and thus is a form of necrography in this context. The option of creating an infinite number of copies of photographs makes them, similar to materials and remains, not stills but "unresolved exposures of dispossession".[50] More than that, Aboriginal campaigns for restitution and repatriation such as those initiated by the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA) argue that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Ancestral Remains were taken in order to pseudo-scientifically examine them and propose a racial inferiority that could then justify the 'righteous' conquest of their lands.[51] It is valid to argue that the same can be said about images of the deceased, since colonial photography also sought to document and thus temporally 'fix' a people presumed to become extinct.[52] This process of dehumanisation fuelled by the extinction myth is tightly entwined with the concept of 'terra nullius' and Australia's white possessive.

A similar understanding of supposed non-coevalness of Aboriginal culture and life with the present is taking place in August herself. When August watches a video on display produced in the 1960s of a group of Aboriginal women, she experiences a cultural and temporal disassociation as if these images of Aboriginal women do not belong to her identity, or shape her history: "These were *real* Aborigines – not like Aunty and her".[53] This initial reaction by August opens up the space for problematic issues of knowledge production among disciplines such as anthropology that feed into the violent narratives of the museum. Munanjahli and South Sea Islander researcher Chelsea Watego in her notable work 'Another Day in the Colony' points out that imagined forms of 'pure' Aboriginality are "reference point[s] for knowing and erasing"[54] Aboriginal peoples, which is paramount to the pitfalls of discussions about supposed authenticity that, amongst others, also Kwame Appiah discusses specifically in a restitution context.[55] Any supposed 'authenticity' is further questionable due to the fact that images and recordings of Aboriginal people were sometimes staged "according to settlers' imaginative desires"[56] as 'primitive' to acquire the degree of 'authenticity' sought by settler photographers. In this moment, the necrology at work in the museum is successful in writing the history of Aboriginal culture and

50 Dan Hicks: The Brutish Museums, p. 13.
51 Cf. Paul Turnbull: Science, Museums and Collecting the Indigenous Dead in Colonial Australia, p. 5.
52 Cf. Jane Lydon: Introduction, p. 3. Despite documenting a history of loss and fuelling necrologies of colonialism, photography also connects families and helps to counter colonial amnesia, cf. Ibid., p. 10. Celeste Pedri-Spade (Ojibwe) brings forward an important reminder that limiting Indigenous peoples to being solely the object of the lens, discounts the appropriative practices of Indigenous artists, cf. Celeste Pedri-Spade: But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools.
53 Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 252.
54 Chelsea Watego: Another Day in the Colony, p. 32.
55 Cf. Kwame Anthony Appiah: Whose Culture Is It, Anyway, pp. 210 f.
56 Jane Lydon: Introduction, p. 3.

life as one that is past and incongruous with present modern life; only the past is authentically Aboriginal, while modernity cannot coexist with Aboriginality. However, August's awareness for the museum's necro-chronopolitics is growing. She walks through the museum

> as if she were walking through a cemetery, tombstones jutted. She'd realized then the purpose of […] the museum, how it felt like a nod – polite and reverent and doused in guilty wonder – of a time that had now passed. *Past* or *passed* she thought as she followed the arrow to the archaeology collections.[57]

The motif of the cemetery is an important sign for Aboriginal dispossession signifying a dead, uninhabited and most importantly unowned land. The walk through the museum, for August, becomes a first step towards the process of untangling the necrography of colonial Australia and understanding herself and her family not as a living dead people but as the contrary that even the colonial chronopolitical linearity narrated in the museum, symbolised by the arrow, cannot prevent.

Another important aspect that 'The Yield' discusses is the power over access[58] that bears further disturbing associations of white ownership. As I have previously detailed, the ethnographic museum under settler colonial law and the violent knowledge formation taking place therein are owned and perpetuate ownership by the colonial nation. The pictures of the deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people mentioned above and by abstraction also the cultures they belong to, are claimed as property by the Australian nation via the institutional means of the museum. August is not allowed to take a picture of a painting, although Aunt Missy tries to fight that by "giving her cultural permission to take a photo" in her position as an elder.[59] This form of accessing and claiming culture is presented as futile in the colony. When August shows the submission cards to the researchers at the museum, she is provided with papers to book a viewing of the items. This issue of access directly leads back to the problematics of display. August and Aunt Missy only have to go through this grueling bureaucratic process because the Falstaff Collection is not on display. In her work 'Cataloguing Culture: Legacies of Colonialism in Museum Documentation', Turner notes that the submission cards themselves are a measuring tool to determine 'object-worthiness'.[60] A curator made the active decision to consider these objects worthy enough to be included in the archive but unworthy when it comes to display; even 'the primitive' is a hierarchical category. Effectively, the museum refuses to narrate the sovereignty of the Gondiwindi family and the sovereignty over their land and instead, it has to be assumed, narrates the myth of 'terra nullius'. This hinders, of course, all research efforts to claim Native Title for Prosperous.

In an effort to untangle herself from the necrography of the supposed past primitiveness of Aboriginal life, August inwardly fights against the colonial fixture and the history of loss enacted in the museum:

57 Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 252.
58 Cf. Joan M. Schwartz, Terry Cook: Archives, Records, and Power, p. 5.
59 Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 253.
60 Cf. Hannah Turner: Cataloguing Culture, p. 124.

> August wanted to hand the papers back and to tell them everything, draw them close and whisper that […] something was stolen from a place inland, from the five hundred acres where her people lived. She wanted to tell them […] that she wasn't extinct, that they didn't need the exhibition after all.[61]

In this passage, the focus on extinction shows August's struggle against the necropolitical framework of the museum and against the status of Aboriginal peoples as that of a living dead. Moreover, ending the visit at the museum with an emphasis to 'tell them everything' foregrounds again the issue of proof. The burden of that lies with August and her family, which is a core mechanism of 'white possession'. Moreton-Robinson writes on this issue: "Since courts regard the written word as more reliable than oral testimonies, all claimants must be able to substantiate their oral histories with documents written by white people, such as explorers, public servants, historians, lawyers, anthropologists, pastoralists, and police".[62] Keeping in mind that these documents are written by non-Indigenous people and the fact that all related knowledge acquisition operates on an intentional loss of knowledge, as previously detailed, makes claiming native title seem impossible. However, it is not surprising that "patriarchal whiteness sets the criteria for proof and the standards for credibility [because it] is a direct manifestation of the law's legitimation of whiteness as a form of property".[63] At this point it is clear that August's internal 'whisper' about the history of her people and her own existence in itself is not going to gain her sovereignty under settler colonial law.

Bloodshed – 1788 to Yesterday Stay Tuned! – Rewriting the Archive

August's silent untangling of necrographies is complemented by Aunt Missy's angry outburst about how a 'true' museum of colonial Australia should label and display the past and confront its own coloniality: "'They should work out how many of us they murdered and have a museum of tanks of blood. There'd be signs that said '*Bloodshed – 1788 to Yesterday – Stay Tuned*'! That's what a museum of 'Indigenous Australia' should look like […]'".[64] The imagined exhibition title's in-yer-face quality manifests the temporal continuum of colonial violence. At the same time, giving a new title to an exhibit marks the power of labelling and, simultaneously, the power that resides in relabelling and thus rewriting the archive. It can be also read as a form of Mbembe's expression of haunting presences in the museum:

> The slave must continue to haunt the museum such as it exists today but do so by its absence. It ought to be everywhere and nowhere, its apparitions always occurring in the mode of breaking and entering and never of the institution. This is how the slave's spectral dimension will be preserved.[65]

61 Tara June Winch: The Yield, pp. 256 f.
62 Aileen Moreton-Robinson: The White Possessive, p. 69.
63 Ibid., p. 69.
64 Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 254.
65 Achille Mbembe: Necropolitics, p. 172.

Aunt Missy's vision of an exhibition in numbers and statistics and the visualisation of respective amounts of blood of murdered Aboriginal people are spectres of colonial violence in a 'true' museum of colonial Australia.

The title and its haunting qualities furthermore touch on what Narungga poet and scholar Natalie Harkin refers to as a 'spectropoetics of the archive'. She writes: "The State wounds and our records bleed".[66] Harkin employs the notion of 'blood memory'[67] so as to uncover the "ways in which the past still haunts […] and maintains its influence on the present".[68] The concept highlights the continuous presence of ancestral knowledge in descendants, signifying both loss and belonging, individual and collective memory. A spectropoetics allows to interrogate issues of, in this case, colonial knowledge production and historiography as well as the act of forgetting itself.[69] The "tanks of blood" that Aunt Missy invokes, challenge Australia's colonial amnesia and become not only commemorative testimony to Aboriginal dispossession and genocide, but also to the endurance of Aboriginal presence in the form of intergenerational memory. While the museum in the novel is unwilling to acknowledge the performed and narrated histories of loss, imagining a rewriting of the archive in blood simultaneously reveals and contests the necrography performed in the museum.

Just as Eddie's family has the tradition of fuelling the necrographies of the Museum Australia, the Gondiwindis, too, follow a 'family tradition' of archiving. Not only are Aunty Missy and August beginning to excavate the histories of loss and death but their father or grandfather respectively, Albert, was creating his own family archive. He researched the archive of the Aboriginal Mission at the Murrumby River and the local library.[70] Although he tried his best to locate the missing cultural materials, his main focus for rewriting the archive was very literal and tries to record immaterial knowledge. The book that Albert was most interested in is titled 'The First Australian's Dictionary' which he used as the basis for his own dictionary of Wiradjuri.[71] This indicates that rewriting the archive requires having the language to do so, which not only correlates with the issue of labelling in the museum but also harks back to the issue of written testimony and white ownership. Alfred's project sets up the colonial ethnographic museum as arbiter of supposedly universal and objective knowledge against a more local and, at least according to Western epistemologies, more subjective form of archive, the family history and intergenerational memory.

Although 'The First Australian Dictionary' is not excerpted in the novel – which to the reader may exemplify the problematics of access again –, August finds out that it, too, was written by Reverend Greenleaf.[72] Via this connecting tissue, Greenleaf's dictionary is laden with the same uncomfortable associations of the white saviour trope that arise in his letter in combination with the word 'salvage' on the museum website. After all, during the instance where Eddie

66 Natalie Harkin: The Poetics of (Re)Mapping Archives, p. 4.
67 The term was first coined by Kiowa-Comanche author Scott Momaday, cf. ibid., p. 6.
68 Ibid., p. 5.
69 Cf. ibid., pp. 5-8.
70 Cf. Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 225.
71 Cf. ibid., p. 226.
72 Cf. ibid.

aggressively presents August with his family's submission cards, he yells at her: "'[…] *We* saved you! […]'"[73] In this context, 'The First Australian Dictionary' becomes an example of salvage linguistics, preserving the language of a people believed to be on the brink of extinction and working with the same set of tools and mechanisms central to the white possessive and the colonial museum. Yet, Albert uses it as a legitimate basis for his own dictionary, and he moulds his oral transmissions to the forms of a colonial tool, which could be interpreted as a submission of his words and his culture to white ownership.

This impression is, however, subverted at the beginning of the novel. There, Albert already points out the colonial tool of developing a linear chronology in direct relation to a dictionary:

> You could keep reading the dictionary that way – front to back, straight as a dart – or you can get to *aardvark* and then skip to *Africa*, then skip to *continent*, then skip to *nations*, then skip to *colonialism*, then skip over to *empire*, then skip back to *apartheid* in the A section […].[74]

This passage suggests that the order the entries are read in changes the (hi)story of events. Consequently, and most importantly, Albert reappropriates the dictionary in its form. He does not start his entries with the letter 'A' but he starts backwards with the letter 'Y'.[75] Fittingly, the first entry is 'yuyung' which translates as 'backward'.[76] In the context of the novel, his appended Wiradjuri dictionary can be read as yet another comment on the fixture of chronology established in the ethnographic museum. It disrupts the linearity presupposing a 'pastness' of Aboriginal existence and thus echoes August's identity crisis of coming to terms with herself as an Aboriginal person in the present.

Paralleling the disruption of the narrative by Reverend Greenleaf's letter, Albert's dictionary entries also disrupt the story at various intervals. Contrary to the letters, however, which perpetuate the myth of vanishing Aboriginal peoples, Albert's entries are proof that Aboriginal existence and life continues. This is evident when he firmly differentiates between 'church time' and 'deep time'. He writes:

> The story goes that the church brought time to us, and the church, if you let it, will take it away. I'm writing about the other time, though, deep time. This is a big, big story. The big stuff goes forever, time ropes and loops and is never straight, that's the real story of time.[77]

When applied to the museum space, this challenges the fantasy of eternal preservation and fixture of materials and remains in the past and instead reveals that their histories are continually unstable and changing. The fact that Albert's efforts ultimately lead to Wiradjuri being recognised "as a resurrected language, brought back from extinction",[78] renders visible the continued existence of Aboriginal lives in the present and simultaneously the rupture engendered by colonialism. Additionally, the entry links family history with 'deep time' − something

73 Ibid., p. 210.
74 Ibid., p. 11.
75 Wiradjuri does not make use of the letter 'Z', cf. ibid., p. 12.
76 Cf. ibid., p. 307.
77 Ibid., pp. 2 f.
78 Ibid., p. 301.

that even the museum is barely able to do − and hence breaks with the superficial spatio-temporal binary stereotypically attached to museums as narrating the history of the world (geographically and temporally) and family archives being limited in their spatio-temporal dimensions. Yet, both the Falstaff Collection and Albert's dictionary are ultimately necessary to claiming land rights and also rewriting the archive from one of loss and death to one of life.

Just as Winch presents the dictionary's ambiguity, she paints a more ambivalent picture of the museum. The novel problematises the simplified assumption that museum practices are nothing more than a time-centred necropolitics. Paul Sharrad points out that

> The plot turns on the fact that the station-owning family that had stripped people of their artefacts and exploited their labour had nonetheless kept the Gondiwindis in a house on country and had preserved those artefacts by sending them to a museum, thereby validating a land rights claim a century later.[79]

In the end, both the museum preserving the objects as well as Greenleaf's letter as testimony of the objects and Albert's dictionary give evidence for a Native Title that Prosperous so urgently needs for recognition in a settler colonial system of white ownership.[80] However, crucially, the eviction is neither prevented by the museum objects, nor by the written testimonies. Instead, during an early stage of digging by the mining company, bones resurface from the land; a scene highly reminiscent of the extractive practices of erasing culture from the land that are frequently implied in the novel. A cemetery is found and thus Prosperous is declared a sacred site.[81] This is an obvious allusion to August's recognition of the Museum Australia as a cemetery which, however, does not fixate on death but on the impact death has on life, the impact the past has on the present. In the eponymous dictionary entry of 'The Yield', Albert writes: "yield in English is the reaping, the things that man can take from the land, the thing he's waited for and gets to claim. A wheat yield", describing precisely the colonial extractivist process of looting materials and remains of the deceased and the resulting myth of 'terra nullius'. He translates this with the word 'baayanha', which is, amongst other things, associated with the bodies of the dead and with "the things you give to".[82] What ultimately stops the mine has never been extracted from land or community and is not unnaturally fixed in the past as the museum attempts with its exhibits. The bones were given to the earth and yielded themselves in the necessary moment in time. This interpretation, which also challenges the museum narrative of Aboriginal peoples as a living dead people, is strengthened by Albert's preface to his dictionary entries at the very beginning of the novel: "nothing ever really dies, instead it all goes beneath your feet, beside you, part of you".[83] In this instance, it becomes clear that the Gondiwindis never needed preservation in museum archives: the land itself is an archive.

79 Paul Sharrad: Indigenous Transnational, p. 12.
80 Cf. Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 243.
81 Cf. ibid., p. 299.
82 Ibid., p. 25 ('yield', 'things').
83 Ibid., p. 1.

Conclusion

The 'white possessive' at the core of the Australian settler nation has formed a complex link between settler colonial necropolitics and the museum. The reading of Hick's theorisations of colonial violence in the museum through the settler colonial lens of 'white possession' suggested by Moreton-Robinson reveals the museum in 'The Yield' as a site that weaponises time through extractivist and fragmenting violent tools such as cataloguing procedures, public communication, colonial photography, display and access in order to legitimise the fiction of 'terra nullius'. These tools enable the museum to narrate and perform Aboriginal materials and remains as non-coeval and testimony of a living dead people. This rupture has, initially at least, successfully influenced the protagonist August's identity formation. Critically engaging with and deconstructing the rhetoric of colonial violence in the museum is achieved by the use of comparisons to a cemetery or symbolic breaks in reading museum texts. Establishing intricate connections between historical documents such as submission cards and official letters, on the one hand, demonstrates that the past of acquisition is crucial to current museum practices. Obvious references to existing contemporary museums and their websites intensify the notion that colonial violence is continued in the presented histories of loss and death. On the other hand, this reiterates Turnbull's argument referenced at the beginning of the article: that the past of museal acquisition is crucial to the now and the continued future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander existences. More than that, as it is specifically a tin mining company that threatens the ownership of land by the Gondiwindis, the novel additionally entangles environmental extractivism with Aboriginal dispossession and the process of extracting Aboriginal history from the land.

'The Yield' critically engages with the life and death of Aboriginal peoples. As Watego writes: "In the colony, Blackfullas are forced to embody an illusory double-consciousness between existing and non-existing, human and non-human, real and unreal, traditional and modern. […] But it is via Indigenous sovereignty that we contest this false consciousness, most notably in our stubborn claim of 'still here'".[84] In order to break with the illusion of Aboriginal peoples as a living dead people and to challenge this 'double consciousness', the novel powerfully demonstrates that, as Ho-Chunk Nation member Amy Lonetree suggests, "[o]bjects in museums are living entities",[85] they involve "life, ancestors, culture, […] continued existence, and future generations".[86] Moreover, by envisioning and approaching the museum through a spectropoetics, as Aunt Missy does, materials and remains in museums, even in their narration of loss, haunt the present and thus remember and commemorate endurance. As the novel suggests, untangling museal necrologies and thus affirming Aboriginal existence in the present requires re-labelling, re-classifying and access to museum objects. This is most strongly illustrated through the theme of resurrection in one of Albert's dream

84 Chelsea Watego: Another Day in the Colony, p. 46.
85 Amy Lonetree: Decolonizing Museums, p. xv.
86 Ibid., p. 27.

journeys. Reconnecting with his ancestors, he is told: "You are resurrected, a man brought back from extinction! […]".[87] The novel demonstrates that indeed colonial tools can be reappropriated to claim Native Title by enacting the necessary language to write an archive of life, in this case Wiradjuri, that rejects the myth of extinction. Most importantly, rewriting the archive means reclaiming sovereignty over the land. In this way, the inherent temporality of objects and people is restored as continuous and coeval with modernity. 'The Yield' also suggests that, despite their violence, museum spaces may indeed protect histories to some degree due to the fact that according to the logics of white possession and under settler colonial law, evidence, either material or written, must be given in order to secure Native Title. At the same time, however, the resurfacing bones on Prosperous persuasively challenge that idea and instead imply that the land has never ceased being its own sovereign and is a living bearer of and witness to Aboriginal past and present.

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87 Tara June Winch: The Yield, p. 248.

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Functions of 'Uptalk' in Australian English

A Tool to Express Humor

Abstract: 'Uptalk' is a frequent intonation pattern in Australian English (AusE) and has been thoroughly researched. Previous studies showed that 'uptalk', i.e., a raised pitch at the end of an intonation unit that is realized on declarative utterances, where a lowered pitch would be expected, may fulfill several interactional and more general functions in AusE. Among these are keeping a turn, expressing positive emotions, reducing the social distance between interlocutors, and establishing common ground. In this paper, the functions of uptalk in the speech of two AusE speakers, who recorded a podcast episode, are examined. The results coincide with prior findings. Notably, uptalk was used to express humor, jokes, or irony, which is an additional interactional function that has not yet been discussed in previous studies. In this study, an auditive impressionistic analysis was conducted. The findings need to be interpreted under the premise that they are based on a subjective research method. Since few researchers have investigated the connection between uptalk and humor, irony, and jokes, and because the scope of this study is limited, further research on the functionality of uptalk is needed. Lastly, this study demonstrated that using podcasts as data is a valid alternative to other methods.

Introduction
Definition of 'Uptalk' and Article Overview

Throughout the past five decades, a specific rising intonation pattern commonly referred to as 'uptalk' has caught peoples' interest. In popular media, uptalk is described as turning statements into questions by adding a pitch raise at the end of an utterance, and it is often interpreted as a sign of uncertainty and nervosity and a lack of confidence.[1] A more adequate and descriptive definition was proposed by Paul Warren, a New Zealand professor of linguistics, who defined it as "[a] marked rising intonation pattern found at the ends of intonation units realised on declarative utterances, and which serves primarily to check comprehension or to seek feedback".[2]

Uptalk occurs in different contexts and under various names such as 'Valley Girl Talk, 'High Rising Terminal' (HRT), 'upspeak', and 'Australian Question(ing) Intonation' (AQI), but 'uptalk' currently seems to be the most widely accepted term.[3] As the different names already indicate, it is not restricted to one variety of English, but can be observed in Australian English (AusE), New Zealand English, Canadian English, and American English, among others.[4] With uptalk evidently being a very widespread phenomenon, it is unclear when and where it first appeared.[5]

1 Cf. Paul Warren, Janet Fletcher: Phonetic Differences between Uptalk and Question Rises, p. 148.
2 Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 2.
3 Cf. ibid., p. 21.
4 Cf. ibid., pp. 69-99.
5 Cf. ibid., p. 103.

The objective of this qualitative study is to verify previously identified functions of uptalk by using new data. This is done by investigating which functions uptalk takes in the speech of AusE speakers in a particular podcast episode. In the theoretical framework, definitions of uptalk are discussed, and an overview over uptalk in AusE and its different functions is provided. Following that, the data and the methodology used in the analysis are explained, and methodological considerations are stated. Thereafter, the results of the functional analysis of the instances of uptalk found in the data are presented. Subsequently, these results are discussed. In the conclusion, a summary of the study and suggestions for further research are given.

Theoretical Framework

The present study focuses on the functions of uptalk and only includes limited information on the speakers' backgrounds, which is why this is not a primarily sociolinguistic study. As uptalk is a feature of intonation and, essentially, a marked pitch change, this study may be classified as research in prosody and suprasegmental phonetics.[6] Previous research has also shown that the analysis of the functions of uptalk can be connected to certain aspects of conversation analysis, for instance the organization of turn-taking within a discourse.[7] In the following, the most common definitions of uptalk are discussed and a working definition is provided. Following that, the results of previous research on uptalk in Australian English are presented. Finally, the various functions that have been ascribed to uptalk are elaborated on.

Definitions of 'Uptalk'

As uptalk is not only a frequently researched intonation feature in linguistics, but also a widely discussed phenomenon in popular media, numerous definitions have been proposed. Paul Warren legitimately notes that "[i]t is important to remember […] that discussions of uptalk, HRT, upspeak, AQI and so on may not be discussions of precisely the same phenomenon".[8] Hence, when conducting research on uptalk (in any variety of English), it is crucial to consider the fact that various intonation features have been studied under the label 'uptalk' and that these may not be comparable.[9]

Since December 2016, uptalk has an entry in the Oxford English Dictionary (henceforth OED), which defines it as "[a] manner of speaking in which declarative sentences are uttered with rising intonation at the end, a type of intonation more typically associated with questions".[10] From a linguistic perspective,

6 Cf. Thomas Herbst: English Linguistics, p. 54.
7 Cf. Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation, p. 4.
8 Ibid., p. 69.
9 Cf. ibid., p. 70.
10 John A. Simpson: The Oxford English Dictionary.

this definition poses problems. The definition given by the OED, which resembles the one used in popular media, implies that uptalk simply means using question-like intonation with statements. However, prior research has shown that the term 'question' describes several types of utterances that may have very different functions and structures.[11] At least in varieties of English, questions are not necessarily marked by rising intonation,[12] as "[…] English intonation does not adhere to a [simple] model whereby statements have falling intonation and questions have [rising] intonation".[13] As mentioned in the introduction, the more accurate definition proposed by Paul Warren will be used as a working definition throughout this study.[14] His definition implies that uptalk may fulfill relevant functions in verbal interactions, all of which will be further discussed below, in the section Functions of 'Uptalk'.

'Uptalk' in Australian English

Because uptalk is perceived as a relatively frequent intonation pattern in AusE, a considerable amount of research has been conducted on the High Rising Terminal or Australian Question(ing) Intonation, as it is often called in the context of AusE.[15] Linguists noticed the presence of this intonational feature as early as the 1960s, but research really took off in the mid 1970s, when the evidence for uptalk in AusE increased.[16] Over time, numerous significant studies on the communicative functions, phonetic forms, syntactic environments, and structures of uptalk were conducted. As Warren provides an excellent critical summary and review of the most influential research on uptalk in AusE, the individual studies will not be elaborated on in great detail in this paper.[17]

The origin of uptalk in AusE is unclear. Guy et al. propose three theories but note that these are merely hypothetical.[18] Although they investigate instances of uptalk as an intonational change in progress in Sydney, they argue that it might not have originated there, but in another Australian metropolis or even a rural area, where it had simply not been recorded.[19] Their second explanation refers to work by William Labov who hypothesized that instances of immigration impact existing orders of group roles and identities, and may lead to the emergence of new group identities that are marked linguistically by a linguistic innovation.[20] Therefore, they argue that, after World War II, when countless groups of non-native speakers from countries such as Italy, Greece, Turkey, and, for instance, Lebanon immigrated to Australia, the rise of uptalk in AusE was

11 Cf. Paul Warren: Uptalk, pp. 1, 21.
12 Cf. ibid., pp. 21, 23, 25; id.: The Interpretation of Prosodic Variability, p. 17.
13 Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 25.
14 Cf. ibid., p. 2.
15 Cf. Janet Fletcher, Jonathan Harrington: High-Rising Terminals and Fall-Rise Tunes, p. 215.
16 Cf. Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 70.
17 Cf. ibid., pp. 70-74.
18 Cf. Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, pp. 48 ff.
19 Cf. ibid., p. 49.
20 Cf. William Labov: The Social Origins of Sound Change, pp. 533 f.

triggered.[21] Lastly, they conjecture that the immigrant groups' arrival may have caused a higher need to check for comprehension by means of intonation and therefore, uptalk became a frequently used feature.[22] What is noteworthy about uptalk in AusE is its distribution across different social dimensions such as age, class, sex, and ethnicity. Early research suggested that uptalk is mostly present in the speech of young Australian women.[23] Later studies partly refuted this claim and argued that uptalk is being used by both Australian men and women.[24] Generally, uptalk is widely considered characteristic of the speech of adolescent AusE speakers.[25] Moreover, research showed that, at least in the past, the usage of uptalk was associated with lower social class.[26] In the context of Australia, no specific ethnic group has been associated with strikingly high use of uptalk.[27]

Functions of 'Uptalk'

As in other varieties of English, uptalk in AusE is stigmatized and often interpreted as a sign of deference and uncertainty. However, linguists have found it to have more positively connoted meanings and so-called interactional functions. Among these are verifying the listener's comprehension,[28] establishing common ground,[29] asking for the listener's permission to continue one's turn in a given conversation,[30] and requesting minimal (non-)verbal feedback such as a nod, smile, 'okay' or 'mhh' from the listener.[31] Further research suggests that uptalk may fulfill even more interactive communicative functions such as jointly constructing narrative or descriptive texts, that is a personal account or a description of events or knowledge, while simultaneously checking and assuring the listener's engagement and comprehension.[32]

21 Cf. ibid., p. 49.
22 Cf. ibid., p. 50.
23 Cf. Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation, p. 5; Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, p. 39; Janet Fletcher, Jonathan Harrington: High-Rising Terminals and Fall-Rise Tunes, p. 216.
24 Cf. Janet Fletcher, Jonathan Harrington: High-Rising Terminals and Fall-Rise Tunes, p. 226; Janet Fletcher, Deborah Loakes: Patterns of Rising and Falling, p. 42.
25 Cf. Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, p. 24; Neil Courtney: The Nature of Australian, p. 27; Janet Fletcher, Deborah Loakes: Patterns of Rising and Falling, p. 46.
26 Cf. Keith Allan: The Component Functions of the High Rise Terminal Contour, p. 19; Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, p. 37.
27 Cf. Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, pp. 39 ff.; Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 120.
28 Cf. ibid.
29 Cf. Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 56.
30 Cf. Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation, p. 4; Joseph C. Tyler: Expanding and Mapping the Indexical Field, pp. 286, 293; Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 65; Julia Hirschberg: Pragmatics and Intonation, p. 533.
31 Cf. Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation, pp. 4, 12; Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, p. 44; Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 58; Keith Allan: The Component Functions of the High Rise Terminal Contour, p. 127; Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation, pp. 4, 12; Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, p. 44.
32 Cf. ibid., pp. 25, 43 f.; Janet Fletcher, Deborah Loakes: Patterns of Rising and Falling, p. 43; Jeannette McGregor, Sallyanne Palethorpe: High Rising Tunes in Australian English,

More general functions ascribed to uptalk, which might prove to be relevant for the present analysis, need to be taken into consideration. Due to its representation in popular culture and mass media, uptalk is often understood to signal uncertainty, insecurity, and lack of confidence on the part of the speaker,[33] because it sounds as if the speaker is questioning the truthfulness of their statement. Uptalk may also be falsely "[...] interpreted as a speaker's need for listener approval or acceptance [...]"[34] since declaratives begin to sound like questions.[35] Furthermore, speakers who use uptalk are sometimes perceived as aggressive and encroaching.[36] Contrary to the belief that it is an indication of insecurity, research has shown that uptalk may also be associated with authority and that confident persons in superior positions use uptalk as well.[37] Moreover, it is linked to the expression of excitement, clarity, and understandability.[38] Lastly, it has been argued that uptalk seeks to reduce the social distance between the hearer and the listener,[39] and that it "has an important [referential] component, acting as a means of signaling salient chunks of information, and thus [encouraging] the hearer's continued involvement in the discourse".[40]

Additionally, studies suggested that uptalk helps organize the informational structure of a discourse by distinguishing new information from information that is already shared by interlocutors.[41] Hence, speakers can shift the focus of attention and coordinate a conversation by means of uptalk. Lastly, scholars have noted that through uptalk, certain 'communicational norms' have changed: there appears to have been a shift from simply telling information to interlocutors to sharing it with them.[42] As demonstrated in the preceding paragraphs, scholars have acknowledged the fact that uptalk does not serve a single purpose, but may fulfill multiple functions simultaneously, which makes it a fascinating feature to conduct further research on. Based on the observations that were discussed in this subsection, uptalk is expected to primarily perform interactional functions in the data that is analyzed in this paper.

Material and Methodology

This study explores which functions uptalk fulfills in the speech of AusE speakers. As previously mentioned, the majority of instances of uptalk that were found in the data were expected to fulfill interactional functions. In order to verify this,

p. 174.; Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation, p. 4; Paul Warren: Uptalk, pp. 57 f.

33 Cf. John C. Wells: English Intonation. An Introduction, p. 37; Joseph C. Tyler: Expanding and Mapping the Indexical Field, pp. 288, 292; Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 51.

34 Joseph C. Tyler: Expanding and Mapping the Indexical Field, p. 304.

35 Cf. Billy Clark: The Relevance of Tones, p. 650.

36 Cf. Joseph C. Tyler: Expanding and Mapping the Indexical Field, p. 292.

37 Cf. Winnie Cheng, Martin Warren: CAN i help you, pp. 100 f.

38 Cf. Joseph C. Tyler: Expanding and Mapping the Indexical Field, p. 292.

39 Cf. Barbara Bradford: Upspeak in British English, p. 34.

40 Barbara Bradford: Upspeak in British English, p. 35.

41 Cf. Paul Warren: Uptalk, p. 62.

42 Cf. Gerhard Leitner: Australia's Many Voices, pp. 237 f.

an episode from the podcast Lingthusiasm, a podcast about linguistics hosted by the Canadian internet linguist Gretchen McCulloch and the Australian linguist Lauren Gawne, was chosen as the data for the analysis.[43] In this study, episode 21, called 'What words sound spiky across languages? Interview with Suzy Styles', which was published on Spotify on June 22 in 2018, was analyzed and the speech of two AusE speakers, namely Lauren Gawne, who functioned as the host, and Suzy Styles, an Australian developmental psychologist, was studied.[44] The particular episode has a duration of 37 minutes and the transcript consists of a total of 6 225 words and 206 turns. Each speaker had exactly 103 turns, which makes it a balanced conversation.

While the topic of the episode was, as usual, defined beforehand, the interview may be categorized as unscripted and as relatively natural speech. As for every podcast episode, a verbatim transcript is provided on the Lingthusiasm website, which, according to the website, is lightly edited from the original audio to ensure better readability. It provides the foundation for the analysis. Because not all interjections are noted in these transcripts, the missing minimal verbal feedback of the respective listener was added manually (in square brackets), and upwards arrows (↑) were added to mark perceived incidences of uptalk.

As the focus of this study is on functions of uptalk and not, for example, attitudes towards uptalk or its phonetic characteristics, methods such as guided speaking or perception tasks, statistical analyses, or acoustic analyses of pitch contours with programs such as Praat would not adequately answer this study's research question and go beyond the constraints of this paper. Hence, an auditory analysis, which involves close listening to the recordings as well as marking and counting instances of uptalk, was carried out. Only those examples of uptalk found in the data that were clearly distinguishable when listening closely will be presented and discussed. Instances of uptalk in both 'turn-medial' and 'turn-final' positions, with turn being "[…] any section of talk by one of the participants in the dialogue, excluding minimal responses",[45] will be considered and discussed in terms of their functions. For the classification and definition of functions, the ones discussed in the sections on 'Uptalk' in Australia and Functions of 'Uptalk' were used. The more general and the so-called interactive functions that have been identified in previous studies provide a large pool of potential functions to choose from, which is why they serve as the basis for the analysis. In the analysis, the function which, depending on the conversational context, was perceived as the most reasonable one, was assigned to an instance of uptalk.

It does not yet seem to be common practice to use podcasts as linguistic data, particularly when investigating uptalk. But this paper shows that using anglophone podcasts can be an interesting data source for linguists. Numerous podcasts are freely available online and many provide verbatim transcripts, which

43 All episodes are freely available on the Lingthusiasm website and new episodes are published once a month. Please visit https://lingthusiasm.com/tagged/episodes to view all episodes (accessed 9 October 2022).

44 Due to the study's limited scope, the AusE speakers' speech will not be classified as Cultivated, General, or Broad, a distinction frequently made between the varieties of AusE.

45 Jeannette McGregor, Sallyanne Palethorpe: High Rising Tunes in Australian English, p. 184.

saves researchers a tremendous amount of time as there is no need to find and interview participants and transcribe the data. Moreover, publicly available podcasts are usually recorded under ideal circumstances with high-quality technical equipment, meaning that there is little to no background noise, voices are not distorted, and the overall sound quality is good. The usual podcast setting is people coming together and having dialogues or group discussions in a friendly and relaxed setting, which does not resemble a classic interview but more so a casual conversation between acquaintances or friends. This potentially helps to reduce or prevent the observer's paradox and elicit natural speech. Lastly, considering the impact of a global pandemic or other factors that may inhibit researchers' mobility, podcasts are excellent alternatives to travelling and conducting linguistic fieldwork.

Methodological Considerations

Not only do the intonation features previously studied under the name of uptalk take different shapes and functions, they have also been investigated from numerous perspectives and by means of different methods, which makes cross-varietal comparisons even more difficult. In the context of AusE, some researchers relied on small datasets[46] whereas others used larger corpora of spoken language.[47] Depending on the aspect of uptalk that was of particular interest to the scholars, different methods such as sociolinguistic interviews,[48] matched guise subjective reaction tests,[49] questionnaires,[50] intonation analyses,[51] frequency analyses,[52] and map tasks were used.[53] Logically, as the research questions and focuses of individual studies differ, these diverse approaches and research methods yield quite distinct insights and results.[54] For instance, quantitative studies which use large corpora produce results that lend themselves for statistical analyses. On the contrary, studies that are based on smaller language samples may be better fit for in-depth analyses of the phonetic characteristics of uptalk and, for example, attitudes towards the phenomenon. Because this paper's scope is limited and the focus of this study is on the functionality of uptalk, a qualitative approach was chosen. By restricting the size of the language sample, a thorough analysis of individual instances of uptalk is made possible. As mentioned before, the analysis is based on a subjective research method, meaning that a single researcher

46 Cf. Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation, p. 6; Jeannette McGregor, Sallyanne Palethorpe: High Rising Tunes, p. 179.
47 Cf. Janet Fletcher, Deborah Loakes: Patterns of Rising and Falling, p. 43; Janet Fletcher, Jonathan Harrington: High-Rising Terminals and Fall-Rise Tunes, p. 221; Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, p. 33.
48 Cf. Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation, p. 6.
49 Cf. ibid., pp. 5, 8.
50 Cf. ibid., p. 7.
51 Cf. Janet Fletcher, Deborah Loakes: Patterns of Rising and Falling, p. 44; Janet Fletcher, Jonathan Harrington: High-Rising Terminals and Fall-Rise Tunes, p. 221.
52 Cf. Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress, p. 34.
53 Cf. Jeannette McGregor, Sallyanne Palethorpe: High Rising Tunes, p. 179.
54 Cf. Paul Warren: Uptalk, pp. 171, 185 f.

interprets the functions of the individual instances of uptalk. This was found the be the most suitable method considering the study's research question.

Analysis and Results

This section summarizes the results of the qualitative auditive analysis of uptalk in the speech of the two AusE speakers. The results are presented in Table 1, which contains the functions of uptalk that were found in the data as well as their absolute frequencies and the total number of occurrences. Relative frequencies of particular functions are given as percentages in the text. In total, 35 individual instances of uptalk were found. Overall, uptalk was found to perform a broad variety of functions, all of which could be classified as interactional functions. Additionally, a previously unmentioned interactional function, namely uptalk as an expression of humor and irony, was identified.
Arranged from highest to lowest frequency of occurrence, Table 1 illustrates which functions uptalk took in the speech of Lauren Gawne and Suzy Styles, and where the instances of uptalk are found in the transcript. Occasionally, the number of lines does not match with the number of occurrences, which is due to

Function	Number of occurrences	Lines
Checking whether the listener is still following	14	58, 75, 143, 171, 172, 234, 235, 242, 416, 458, 488, 494
Signaling salient chunks of information	12	53, 57, 143, 171, 172, 250, 251, 252, 261, 310
Requesting to hold the floor/continue speaking	6	75, 251, 261, 458, 460, 542
Requesting minimal (non-) verbal feedback from the listener	5	8, 155, 234, 235, 416
Constructing a narrative text	5	53, 67, 488, 494, 523
Expressing humor or irony	5	61, 122, 339, 513, 523
Expressing positive emotions (such as excitement)	4	7, 9, 540, 542
Checking the listener's comprehension	3	143, 242, 310
Establishing common ground	3	57, 58, 67
Inviting the listener to actively participate	1	155
Maintaining/keeping a conversation going	1	460
Total	59	

Table 1: Functions of Uptalk in the Speech of Two AusE Speakers. Instances of Uptalk with Multiple Functions are underlined.

the fact that in certain lines, various instances of uptalk occurred. In this sample, uptalk is mostly used as a checking mechanism (23,7%), the marking of crucial information (20,3%), and a floor-holding technique (10,1%). The low frequency of uptalk as a turn-extending-mechanism may be explained by the observation that there were very few overlaps and interruptions and a balanced speech flow. In 20 instances, which may be found in the lines highlighted in gray, uptalk could be argued to fulfill multiple functions. Because Gawne and Styles are well-acquainted colleagues, the fact that uptalk rarely served as a means of establishing common ground (5%), maintaining the conversation (1,6%), and inviting the listener to participate (1,6%) is rather unsurprising. They did not need to get to know each other as they already share knowledge based on their professional backgrounds, and they both willingly came on the podcast and, assumingly, wanted to actively contribute to a lively conversation.

Remarkably, the two AusE speakers used uptalk as an expression of humor and irony (8,4%), a function that has not been mentioned in previous papers. For instance, Lauren Gawne, one of the analyzed AusE speakers, used uptalk to create a humorous effect:

119 Lauren: I think it's worth, like, always making clear these things that the
120 kids are hearing these sentences long before they can clearly say,
121 "Yesterday, I saw a cat." [Mmm] You know, they're probably not saying it
122 [Mh] quite that sophisticatedly. ↑ [Laughter]
123 Suzy: Yeah.

Figure 1: Screenshot of a Passage from Episode 21 Showing Uptalk in Connection to Humor.

In this situation, the word 'sophisticatedly' is used to, in a way, mock toddlers for their not yet fully developed language production skills. The tentative, i. e., not blurted out, utterance of 'sophisticatedly' and the instance of uptalk are immediately followed by laughter, which shows that the intention to create a humorous effect was successful. Based on the fact that intonation constructs context and meaning,[55] it is not surprising that uptalk as an intonation feature may serve to create humor, jointly construct a joke, or convey irony.

Discussion

The results obtained in the analysis answer the research question, namely which functions uptalk takes in the speech of the two AusE speakers under investigation. The analysis demonstrates that the respective speakers predominantly used uptalk to generally structure the discourse and ensure a lively conversation. All the functions identified in the present data set may be classified as interactional, thereby corroborating the hypothesis that uptalk primarily performs interactional functions in the speech of the two AusE speakers investigated. Moreover, uptalk fulfilled more than a single function in the majority of cases. These findings further add to and confirm earlier investigations on uptalk and its functions

55 Cf. Jill House: Constructing a Context with Intonation, p. 1543.

in AusE.[56] Unsurprisingly, however, not all of the functions defined in the theoretical part of the paper were present in the data. For instance, the speakers did not use uptalk to reduce social distance between them. This is likely due to the fact that Suzy Styles and Lauren Gawne are well-acquainted colleagues.

Because the podcast is produced for a broad audience, it is questionable whether the instances of uptalk are directed at the current discourse partner or actually targeted towards the 'end user' of the podcast. Perhaps the speakers (subconsciously) deployed the functions with the thought in mind that others will listen to the podcast later. This would further explain the high frequencies of uptalk as a means to keep the conversation amusing and alive. The interlocutors want to pay attention to each other and actively engage in the conversation, not least because they are recording their conversation and will make it available to the public. As illustrated in the example given in the section above (Figure 1), uptalk is used to express humor and irony to make their content even more appealing and entertaining

The method chosen for this study, namely an auditive impressionistic analysis, clearly comes with some methodological limitations. In qualitative research where a single researcher analyzes a linguistic variable, perhaps even under time pressure and lack of resources, relying on subjective impressions and introspection is often inevitable. Hence, the results of the present study should be interpreted under the premise that they are based on a fairly subjective research method. However, the results obtained call for further research, which could verify the newly identified function of uptalk as an expression of humor, jokes, and irony. In a possible follow-up study, other, less subjective research methods could be used, and the quantity of data could be increased in order to yield statistically significant results. Analyses of larger quantities of data would help to determine whether the use of uptalk in this function was a onetime observation or whether there may actually be a pattern behind it.

Conclusion

The present study investigates the functions of uptalk, an intonation feature frequently found in numerous varieties of English, in the speech of two Australian English speakers. The results confirm findings of prior research on uptalk and its respective functions in Australian English (AusE). In that regard they confirm the study's hypothesis, namely that the instances of uptalk found in the data set chosen for the study – an episode of Linghthusiasm, an anglophone podcast about linguistics – mainly perform so-called interactional functions.

In addition, in this dataset, the speakers frequently used uptalk to express humor, construct a joke, or convey an ironical meaning – an additional interactional function that has not yet been mentioned or discussed in previous research.

56 Consider Gregory Guy et al.: An Intonational Change in Progress; Paul Warren: Uptalk; Gregory Guy, Julia Vonwiller: The Meaning of an Intonation; Keith Allan: The Component Functions of the High Rise Terminal Contour; Jeannette McGregor, Sallyanne Palethorpe: High Rising Tunes in Australian English.

This suggests that the creation of humorous effects may be an additional function of uptalk, which is possibly not limited to AusE. Hence, the present study contributes relevant insights into research on uptalk and its functions.

An additional significant contribution was made by using anglophone podcasts as data, which, considering the fact that podcasts have not been used as a data source for research on uptalk before, may be seen as a methodological innovation. In times of a global pandemic, when conducting fieldwork, especially on phonetic and phonological aspects of language, is severely hampered, it is highly recommended to resort to podcasts, which feature speakers from different anglophone countries and for which verbatim transcripts are available, as data sources for all kinds of linguistic analyses. In this article, the advantages and disadvantages of this research method are discussed in the section on methodology.

This study highlights the relevance of conducting further research on the functions of uptalk: further investigation is needed to confirm whether conveying jokes and irony can be added to the repertoire of the functions of uptalk. Other researchers could use the same data to investigate the functions of uptalk in the speech of AusE speakers by means of different research methods, or simply analyze other aspects of uptalk. However, subsequent studies should not be limited to AusE, since uptalk is an intonation feature characteristic of numerous varieties of English. Developing a more universal definition of uptalk that is more applicable to distinct varieties of English could be advantageous, as it would enable researchers to compare their findings more easily.

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Violent Vibes

'Stimmung' in Alan Baxter's 'The Roo'

Abstract: Alan Baxter's 2020 novella 'The Roo', which began as a social media joke in response to an article about an aggressive garden-eating Kangaroo, is a slasher-horror, self-described "gonzo" narrative. Unsurprisingly, gore and conflict are prominent fixtures in 'The Roo', and they quickly form a rhythm, a pattern of violence. The disruptive violence of the text, along with several of its other generative elements, constitute the text's 'Stimmung'. A reading for 'Stimmung' uncovers the capacities to which the novella can affectively engage with readers, by means of its genre play, performative efficiency, and especially its violent resonances. My close reading reveals the extent to which 'The Roo' takes up and takes on different forms of violence, whether it resonates with Rob Nixon's conception of slow violence or what Slavoj Žižek refers to as performative efficiency. The novel's cycles of violence put center stage the links between domestic abuse and rural dispossession. The article attunes to and consolidates these conceptions of violence and 'Stimmung' to gesture toward key elements producing presence and aesthetic experience, drawing from the scholarship of Rita Felski and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, amongst others.

Introduction
See You Outback

A massive kangaroo, clearly disproportionately so, rips off a man's arm and kills him with it. In another scene, the kangaroo is peppered with gunshots and run over by a truck, but it rises again, continuing its onslaught. Alan Baxter's self-published 'The Roo' is, according to the afterword, "blood-soaked gonzo mayhem"[1] and readers are certainly encouraged to agree. The novella affords its readers a chance to reflect on the genesis of generic conventions by isolating the way that violence supports the broader attunement and poetics of the text. It is no surprise that slasher-horror features violence, but it remains under-discussed how violence's features formulate the slasher-horror text and cultivate an aesthetic experience. The cinematic genre as novel genre is likewise undertheorized, assigned the most attention in film studies.

British-Australian author Alan Baxter, known for his dark fantasy and horror, began writing 'The Roo' during a Twitter exchange with several colleagues and friends. The novella garnered significant public attention, not only for its eponymous monster, but also as a 2021 Ditmar Finalist for Best Novella. The preface explains that the discussion began as a result of a news article titled: 'Australian Town Terrorised By Muscular Kangaroo Attacking People And Eating Gardens', put out by the LADbible news site.[2] The kangaroo, which had apparently injured three people, inspired conversations about the ridiculousness of but also the basis for fear and 'terror' instigated by the beloved Australian animal. Before long, the writers discussing the article pitched a pulpy Australian horror novella

1 Alan Baxter: The Roo, p. 123.
2 See Tom Wood: Australian Town Terrorised, n. p.

that centered around a monstrous kangaroo, and a mock-up cover was made by author and cover designer Kealan Patrick Burke. After that, the group urged Alan Baxter to take up writing it, as he was the Australian horror writer that most prominently engaged in the conversation.

The novella, set in a village named Morgan Creek, follows the rampage of a demonic killer kangaroo, summoned by a book that might be from Persia, might be made of human flesh, and that might have been purchased by a Transylvanian, or rather Romanian traveling aristocratic colonist to Australia, who decided to build his house on top of a mine. The rampage in 'The Roo' begins by killing off each character that it introduces in the first few chapters before it shifts to the investigation and discovery of the eponymous monster, led in large part by Patrick and Sheila McDonough, who are the closest characters to human protagonists that the novella offers. Ultimately, the narrative, which is polyphonic and frequently jumps between perspectives, culminates when the predominantly white village's men attempt to square off against the kangaroo armed to the teeth in a display of hyper-masculinity. Their efforts, supported and only made possible by the extensive communication network of the Country Women's Association, are futile, as the kangaroo is unable to be stopped even after being run over and shot repeatedly. Instead, the women discover the source of the kangaroo, and Pauline, a character who has been missing and assumed dead for most of the novella, is revealed to have summoned the creature by incorrect incantation. She sacrifices herself to put the killings to a halt.

In the following, I unpack the violent vibes emanating from 'The Roo' to demonstrate how its juxtaposition of cycles of violence produce a presence, following Felski and Gumbrecht, in two major steps.

First, I introduce the concept of 'Stimmung'. More specifically, I establish its relation to generic conventions and suggest that genre emerges from 'Stimmung'. Secondly, in a reading for 'Stimmung', I analyze the poetics of violence constructed by 'The Roo', which is central to the creation of its horror-soaked aesthetic experience. I demonstrate that the normalization of violence creates different spatio-temporal cycles, which, in their conflict, afford acknowledgements of slow violence, particularly in relation to domestic abuse.

Stimmung, Vibes, Attunement

More often than not, in genre theory, the concepts that are central to genre fiction are tied heavily to certain affective, emotion-laden responses. In Science Fiction, the 'novum' and the ensuing source of wonder are of key importance,[3] both in discussing earlier iterations of the genre and its supposed development or decay. The mystery and thriller genres are tied to gamification, suspense and tension, and cultivate a puzzling nature.[4] Suspense and tension can of course be cogni-

3 See Darko Suvin: Metamorphoses of Science Fiction, pp. 63-84, where he introduces the term.

4 See Charles J. Rzepka: Detective Fiction, p. 10; George Grella: Murder and Manners, pp. 30 ff..

tively distinguished to some extent, but their reliance on expectation, anxiety, and other emotional capacities are no doubt part of what distinguishes genres that put a spotlight on them. The language that readers and critics use in reviews frequently circles on the vibe of the text: the mood, tone, or feelings invoked by a text, without always referring to the readers' own feelings.

What readers reach toward when they communicate their responses to a text is comparable to the process that Rita Felski discusses in her work 'Hooked. Art and Attachment'. For Felski, this readerly act is one of attunement. "It is not a feeling-about but a *feeling-with*: a relation that is more than the sum of its parts".[5] Attunement is, thus, not only about the intersubjective feelings produced by a text, not the 'fear', 'shame' or 'anger' produced by a work, but rather it "is about things resonating, aligning, coming together".[6] This is a connective process for Felski, associated with the way a text's presence can be related to or accessed by the way art might let us be "captivated by a singular mood or a contagious atmosphere".[7] This form of response is one that is more intense, more affective, and more enchanting in its engagement than that of simple appreciation. Yet, texts produce a presence that can be attuned to by various actors (and in different ways), which concepts like aesthetic experience, mood, tone, or even the non-representational descriptions of affective potentials might communicate. The materiality of the text, along with interpretive elements and readerly experience, inform this presence. In so doing, these elements are thus implicated in genre formation, but also in the continued reification of genre categories, which are, of course, unstable and frequently changing.

While Felski chooses to orient attunement away from 'Stimmung',[8] I would rather like to emphasize their connection by placing it in concert with Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's work on presence and 'Stimmung'. In tandem, concepts of attunement elucidate means by which we might come to describe a text's 'Stimmung' in a way that extends beyond the often-elastic language of emotion and affect. Rather than subjective but passionate textual interpretations, approaches to attunement and 'Stimmung' prioritize the elements of generic formation. Such elements necessarily provoke attunement and cultivate affective responses.

On a basic translational level, the German term 'Stimmung' has been translated to 'atmosphere' or 'mood' most commonly – and sometimes both in concert, but also rendered as 'tone' or 'ambience'. One of its particular nuances is its capacity for connoting tuning, 'stimmen', and thus a harmonizing principle. Following Gumbrecht, I argue that 'Stimmung' is a term that can be used to address not the affective potentials and forces that emerge from a text, but rather the conditions by which aesthetic experiences themselves emerge. Gumbrecht argues in 'Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung' that specific moods and atmospheres, specific 'Stimmungen'[9] "present themselves to us as nuances that challenge our powers

5 Rita Felski: Hooked, p. 42.
6 Ibid., p. 42.
7 Ibid., p. 43.
8 See ibid., pp. 74-77.
9 I use the German plural 'Stimmungen' throughout.

of discernment and description".[10] These nuances might be found most apparently in the descriptive (but also rhythmic) uses of music and weather in a text, but the material presence of the text must not be ignored either. In this sense, by "paying attention to the textual dimension of the forms that envelop us and our bodies as a physical reality"[11] we can discuss the 'inner feelings' that materialize. The 'Stimmung' of a text does not require a representational approach, since, as Gumbrecht rightly notes, we can listen to a poem without understanding its language and still experience emotional responses.[12] However, departing from Gumbrecht, I would not go so far as to assign all elements of a text to 'Stimmung',[13] although I agree that a readerly response to a 'Stimmung' could do so.

While Gumbrecht focuses on the performative quality of textual practice, one that has moved beyond harmonization, I am more interested in the performative attunement and the stage-setting that are part and parcel of our interpretations of texts. I move beyond Gumbrecht to argue that the prosody of words, the activation of our speech tract and left inferior frontal gyrus as we read by means of subvocalization,[14] the way our eyes capture the page, and representation, form and our literary frames come together to produce a presence as a text, although empirical measures are not the focus of this article. In this reading, I particularly chime with Felski's reading of text attachment, which claims that one can just as easily be "drawn to what is disorienting, discordant, uncanny: to find oneself attuned with what is out of tune".[15] As a result, my approach is more formalist and methodologically grounded than Gumbrecht's, although I must exclude empirical affective approaches based on readerships. I have already hinted at the sense of presence and rhythm that is vital to this process by mentioning vibes. 'Stimmung', then, for me, is a spatio-temporal relationship constructed by a combination of representative and material elements, one that envelops us and with which we can attune to – elements which cultivate form.[16] This form exists both intra- and extra-textually. A 'Stimmung' engulfs on both levels, the act of aesthetic experience itself is situated within spatial-temporal relations, and so too are the spaces and times invoked intra-textually themselves refracted and attuned to. When I speak of the 'Stimmung' of a text, I am referring to the intra-textual level, one which is also pre-conditional in processes of multidirectional exchange with the extra-textual 'Stimmung'. In other words, if literary texts are understood as processes of world-making, 'Stimmung' is a palpable manifestation of that world and the ways in which it transmits its sense of presence, aesthetic experience and mood beyond those confines.

A reading for 'Stimmung' can be arrived at by extending the work of Jonathan Flatley and Birgit Breidenbach, who both engage with the term in different ways. For Flatley, this effort to activate 'Stimmung' entails what he calls 'reading for

10 Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht: Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung, p. 4.
11 Ibid., p. 5.
12 Ibid.
13 See ibid., pp. 5 f.
14 See Keith Rayner et al.: Psychology of Reading, p. 189; Phillip. K. McGuire et al.: Functional Anatomy of Inner Speech and Auditory Verbal Imagery.
15 Rita Felski: Hooked, p. 75.
16 See Caroline Levine: Forms, pp. 1-23.

mood', a reading which attends to the historical and social situatedness of a text by means of a "speculative recreation of the understanding of the reader's mood embedded in a given textual practice, its theory-in-practice of the mood of its readers".[17] This is done by means of a 'structure of address', the manner in which the text constructs its own readership without explicitly addressing it, which can take forms ranging from the style of the writing itself to expression through generic conventions. For Breidenbach, on the other hand, 'Stimmung' is a means of discussing the presence behind aesthetic experience, one that is "dependent on […] the shared semiotic system it is based upon, aesthetic modes and genre conventions and established art forms".[18] Breidenbach makes use of a phenomenological approach to 'Stimmung', which splits its application into four levels, namely that of character-world relations in a literary text, reader-text relations and the attunement between them – an approach that conceives of generic and literary conventions as emergent from 'Stimmungen' – and lastly a 'Stimmung' of a given age.[19]

The two authors' common cause is found most explicitly in their shared interest in the relationship that generic conventions have with 'Stimmung'. One approach, seminal in particular to Gothic and Horror Studies, that of Alastair Fowler in his work on genre and modes, finds common cause with this work on 'Stimmung'. When Fowler identifies different characteristics of the kinds of literature, he argues, rather succinctly, that "[e]ach kind has an emotional coloration, which may be called 'mood', […]plays a specially vital part in gothic romance, where it often colors character, atmosphere, and natural description in an unmistakable way".[20] It is evident from the way he engages with mood that this is situated as part of a broader relationship to a text's location spatially as it "can be associated with local indicators of genre"[21] but also temporally, as Fowler's examples are situated and reserved to specific time periods.

In the context of this article, my approach is specifically oriented toward one of the conventions of the slasher-horror novella. As the term 'slasher' highlights, violence is the nexus of the genre, which is known for its over-the-top representations of violence as much as its particular penchant for humor, absurdity and misogynistic inclinations. Readerly attunement to the slasher-horror text involves the normalization of violence. By normalizing violence through repetitive action, it takes on its own rhythm and becomes form itself. These contours operate on different spatial and temporal scales and levels, notably through their engagement with different forms and cycles of violence which are noticeably inflected with specific temporal and spatial thrusts.

Since that intra-textual normalization extends beyond the confines of extra-textual reality, transmitting expectation to the reader, it allows for more acute juxtapositions, tension points, and resonances between actual acts of violence and their horrific, non-mimetic counterparts.

17 Jonathan Flatley: Reading for Mood, p. 150.
18 Birgit Breidenbach: Aesthetic and Philosophical Reflections on Mood, pp. 28 f.
19 See ibid., p. 29.
20 Alastair Fowler: Kinds of Literature, p. 67.
21 Ibid.

Violence in 'The Roo'

Violence functions as a generative and structuring principle to 'The Roo', which bumps up its status from mere content element to one that functions on a formal level. As a result, the interwoven poetics of violence as content and violence as form inflect 'The Roo' with vibes akin to those of the filmic genre and the cinematic pulp novels that it responds to by drawing on those genre traditions.

In this article, I explore three contours of violence in 'The Roo'. Firstly, I examine its relation to the broader traditions of horror and to slasher fiction more particularly. Thereafter, I elaborate on violence as it intersects with Slavoj Žižek's interpretation of the concept in relation to Lacanian understandings of the master-signifier, which entails what Žižek calls performative efficiency. 'The Roo' makes explicit, through its reliance on Australian tropes of danger and animal horror, how words can be transformed to better accommodate violence. Third and lastly, I consider slow violence within the text in two forms: domestic abuse and rural dispossession, which yield readings that suggest scales of violence far less instant and visceral than that typical of slasher fiction.

In 'The Roo', graphic violence emerges within the first chapter. Accordingly, the novella establishes itself as a piece of slasher fiction right from the start. Rather than writing against the grain of such texts, it embraces and holds up its relationship to them, and thus serves as a prototypical example of the ways that violence structures horror-slasher texts. Although 'The Roo' is not a classic slasher-horror, it takes on its character by means of its cover, which features wear marks and even parodies, and pays homage to the American pulp publisher Zebra books by mentioning ZEBAR books on the cover margin. This is of course intentional, since the initial cover (which differs significantly from the actual, published cover, save for the depiction of a massive kangaroo) was discussed by Charles R. Rutledge as giving off an impression "like something Zebra Books would have published back in the day",[22] and already invites readers into the complex spatial-temporal situation of the novella. The cover emulates earlier trade paperback covers that were common in the 1970s and 80s, perhaps not coincidentally the prime era for slasher-horror films, and the intentionally worn look adds to that impression. As this paratextual frame suggests, the novella embraces its pulpy roots, featuring an assemblage of popular tropes that fit into the slasher-horror genre, although with some notable changes.

The generic structure of 'The Roo' is dependent on violence precisely because slasher-horror genre history creates a generic requirement for the rhythmic annihilation of the majority of its cast. Part of the fun of 'The Roo' and in fact of horror in general is rooted in its cycle of familiar repetition,[23] which is here figured as the futile efforts of masculine forms of violence employed against the killer Kangaroo. The violent cycles regularly unleashed by horror at large can be witnessed on both micro- and macro levels in slasher works. In fact, an increased amount of violence is to be expected, and also misogynistic gender power structures, sup-

22 Alan Baxter: The Roo, p. 7.
23 Darryl Jones: Horror, p. 13; Andrew Tudor: Why Horror, p. 459.

ported by the poetics of the text – what some critics call 'torture porn'. However, 'The Roo' does not feature the 'Final Girl', a trope in which a woman, often a young one, survives the events of horror depicted in a slasher text,[24] nor does it victimize women in particular. This generic departure seems to imply that 'The Roo' is not necessarily a slasher, but more similar to the flavor of a slasher remake.

In Ryan Lizardi's work on exploring hegemonic power and misogyny in early twenty-first century slasher remakes, he concludes that they "have expanded on two themes of the original; the reaffirmation of the hegemonic normality and 'Othering' of the abnormal and the related theme of misogynistic torture that, coupled with the first theme, become all the more destructive to progressive cultural power structures".[25] On the micro level, we see repeated gruesome deaths at the hands of the central monster or threat, a transgressive Other, sometimes in ways that might be described as torturous. On the macro level, readers face a monster that "always escapes"[26] to return another day. In so doing, the monster's violence exceeds the narrative in its expectation, as is typical of the genre. The kind of violence that is inflicted by and which might be used to drive away monsters is thus normally universalized, unconditionally accepted as a part of restoring order to the disrupted horror text. 'The Roo' seems to confirm this expectation at first, as the climax builds toward the men of the village gathering together with weapons in an attempt to hunt down the monstrous kangaroo.

Yet, violence is here elemental in its construction, a generic facet that cannot be overlooked as mere content but rather should be considered as to how it might bolster the form of the novella. Each 'dead end' in the narrative – each scene that results in the death of its central perspective – ruptures any sense of futurity, while also demanding a materially delayed closure, which is evident from the fact that there remain pages to consume. By forcing the reader to frequently confront violence, violence which is at first unexpected in its volume and detail, it becomes a habit and rhythm. Over time it is anticipated – perhaps feared or enjoyed – and invites an attunement to a suspension of disbelief to the raw impossibility of the violence of the text, approaching and perhaps adhering to parody. As a pseudo-remake, 'The Roo' locates itself temporally within the tradition of slasher-horror fiction and relies on said tradition's rhythms to both upset and conform to its standards. In doing so, 'The Roo' activates attunement, speaking to earlier slasher-horror fiction, trivializing its violence yet also rendering it ineffective. The 'Stimmung' arises from its various deployments of violence since it juxtaposes different violent cycles against one another, which is apparent upon further analysis and from cultural context, specifically by drawing on the violent undercurrents of Australian horror fiction.

It is almost a given when considering Australian horror or the gothic, but also postcolonial studies at large, that horror is inescapably linked in some sense to a colonial past. This is perhaps why Australia is home to the contentious yet separate and distinct Australian and Aboriginal Gothics,[27] which engage with

24 See Carol J. Clover: Her Body, Himself, pp. 201-221, for an elaboration of the trope.
25 Ryan Lizardi: "Re-Imagining" Hegemony and Misogyny, p. 120.
26 Jeffrey J. Cohen: Monster Culture, p. 44.
27 For an overview of the Aboriginal Gothic, see Katrin Althans: Darkness Subverted.

Australia's colonial legacy and its ongoing ramifications. In this context, naming in particular carries great weight as an exercise of power that unfolds lasting impacts on discourse and the individuals engaged within or described by them. Regarding Australian horror, in which "*terra australis* balancing the northern hemisphere […] was banished to the margins of the *mappae mundi*"[28] by map-makers, it is evident that this has influenced European portrayals of Australia since it was termed Europe's Other by means of naming and mapping. The legal fiction of 'terra nullius' too has received attention for the part it plays in depictions of Australia's haunting landscape.[29] A range of exhaustive work has gone into the imperial project's desire to categorize and control – to name and to use 'education' to express colonial power and influence.[30] Frequently, horror narratives carry with them connections to Australia's past, in particular the colonial violences and stolen generations, as well as the concomitant haunting in their aftermath. Far too frequently, acts of discourse have informed and justified these real-world horrors, only to find representation in textual works.

To expand on that point, a discursive act, i. e., naming, according to Slavoj Žižek's reading of Lacan's concept of the master-signifier, is an act of violence. Master-signifiers are signifiers that do not point outward, but rather to themselves. Hence they are dependent on their own frame and reference themselves. Žižek claims that master-signifiers are part and parcel to the reductive tendency to weaponize language. To produce one is an act of discursive violence since the process of asserting them is violent and they are argued to uphold specific discourse fields, which, in their own self-referentiality, are imbricated in power relations. As he argues,

> [h]uman communication in its most basic, constitutive dimension does not involve a space of egalitarian intersubjectivity. It is not 'balanced'. It does not put the participants in symmetric mutually responsible positions where they all have to follow the same rules and justify their claims with reasons.[31]

The imposition of a master-signifier's linguistic standard, a 'because I said so' is, effectively, the highest order of violence. This is not to say that all linguistic standards *are* themselves violent, but rather that master-signifiers are asserted in a violent act. If the root of a master-signifier is traced, for instance, by an etymological history in a prescriptivist approach or in an observational descriptive approach to language, both ultimately are rooted in authority and normalization, but also the violent process of separation – a severance from material reality and imposition within a language system. Eventually language *is* imposed by cultural systems, which, though malleable, carry their own violent undercurrents. As a result, we should remain skeptical of language, particularly of master-signifiers, and their relation to violence. There is, to that end, one area where Žižek's reading holds

28 Ibid., p. 14.

29 For a detailed elaboration on how 'terra nullius' intersects with haunting in another context, see Robert Clarke: Travel Writing from Black Australia (specifically the chapter Dark Places, pp. 138-166).

30 See Edward W. Said: Orientalism; Homi Bhabha: The Location of Culture; Bill Ashcroft et al.: The Emperor Writes Back for an introduction to post-colonial studies as it engages with these concerns.

31 Slavoj Žižek: Violence, p. 53.

particular currency for contemporary approaches to violence. To elaborate his understanding of the danger of the violence of language, Žižek highlights how racist discursive acts, for instance, enforce themselves by defining specific people as inferior and then treating them as such. Discursive acts thus carry greater weight than might be assumed since these master-signifiers are weaponized to marginalize. Their targets, thus, are not Other but othered, not inferior but inferiorized. What emerges is a "performative efficiency",[32] a performed interpretation of an imposed master-signifier that unleashes devastating consequences.

In 'The Roo', performative efficiency emerges in large part due to its use of naming as a discursive act. Naming is introduced from the outset by the invocation of the non-standard form of kangaroo and the narrative construction of the roo as a monstrous threat. For readers outside of Australia (and this is important since 'The Roo' definitely targets an international market), the use of the term 'roo' is also far from common. The kangaroo is already made Other by the shortening of its name, shifting the kangaroo as animal to the roo as something more or perhaps less than a kangaroo. So too can roo be utilized derogatorily, as a means of infantilizing or degradation. As a result, the word displaces and alters the kangaroo, which is only further bolstered by the massive, red-eyed figure on the cover. What occurs, then, is an imposition of a master-signifier, to be supported by the poetics of the text. The uncanny term roo is given primacy for readerships outside of Australia and only can refer back to itself. By this imposition, the animal is defamiliarized and made into a not-kangaroo threat, one that must be put down, brought under control, etc. The use of language to create a sense of anxiety and border-crossing is a neat parallel to Cohen's idea of monsters as registers of cultural anxieties that need control to be exercised over them,[33] which is perhaps why many monsters depend on naming as self-reference.

Performative efficiency is encapsulated in the white villagers' attempt to cast blame onto the minority Aboriginal population. Billie Catter, an abuser and a source of violence – whose own domestic abuse motivates the revenge that triggers the mayhem in the narrative – intervenes verbally to direct and deflect responsibility onto the local Aboriginal population. Akin to colonial acts of violent justification, Catter peruses performative efficiency to assign blame to Aboriginal Australians, thereby creating targets for violence. By suggesting that the violence stems from them, Catter strives to draw lines between Aboriginal and White Australians. Fortunately, however, Catter is quickly dismissed by the subaltern who *does* speak. "Mawber laughed, 'Fire for eyes, sharp teeth, indiscriminate murder? Sound like whitefella business, you ask me [...] Mate, have you read your people's fucken bible?"[34] While Catter is unable to re-impose and re-define Aboriginal Australians as violent people, his effort surely qualifies as an attempt to do just that, if only to justify further acts of violence.

Later on, the language use as a form of violence is revealed to be the reason for the rampage, which was meant to only target Pauline's abusive husband, the aforementioned Bill. In order to exact her revenge, Pauline made use of the book

32 Ibid., p. 62.
33 See Jeffrey J. Cohen: Monster Culture, pp. 49-52.
34 Alan Baxter: The Roo, pp. 70 f.

written on (possibly) human flesh to invite otherworldly, seemingly demonic, power into the corpse of a kangaroo that she found. The text here is linguistic violence given substance, a material manifestation and representation of text inflected with violence in its own production, but also in its 'reading'. In spite of the fact that Pauline's ritual is not detailed in the novella, it does connect to summoning rituals and notions of demonic naming, going as far as requiring sacrifice in order to activate the book's magical properties. Although she can summon the avenging kangaroo ritualistically by a speech act, Pauline is unable to decipher the instructions to control it since she lacks the relevant language knowledge:[35] Her efforts to name her husband as its target are misunderstood, and the kangaroo kills and brings victims to her in an effort to appease her. Monstrosity emerges here from ignorance, from a lack of understanding and an attempt to name or control through language – an effort to establish performative efficiency. In this case, the imposition of a master-signifier depends on Pauline's challenge to assert control with language while lacking referentiality. Though such a form of control may apply in human-human relations, it falls apart in its articulation to the monster. Violence, the defining feature of slasher-horror, is thus reduced to a vulgar and ignorant approach, one that reveals the weaknesses of such violence.

Returning to the violence that is cultivated by the transformation of the kangaroo to the monstrous roo, animal horror scholars have considered the human element to be the key determinant in animal horror tales. Bernice Murphy writes:

> What remains constant is that the ways in which animals interact with humans (and vice versa) in horror fiction tells us about ourselves and about the ways in which we interact with the non-human intelligences whose presence, in one way or another, we must contend with every single day of our lives.[36]

It is the human element, the ways in which animals and humans interact, that allow not an elucidation of the animals, but rather that of the human subjects that must contend with animals in their lives. After all, the titular roo as monster only emerges as inspiration for the novella as a creature that terrorized human gardens. It thus evolves from a natural creature that upsets a human order, i. e., normative codes and expectations, into a threat to be met with possible destruction, as the news story indicates that police have been mobilized to track it.[37] Although far graver in its implications, the humans in 'The Roo' must also grapple with a threatening kangaroo. The monster is a form of embodied horror, even from its emergence as a destroyer of an imposed human order. It is aptly suited to disrupt anthropocentric society due to the kangaroo's status as an animal-monster, but also due to the performative efficiency I have shown to be on display.

The transformation of the kangaroo by means of various discourses is further buoyed by the animal's near-iconic cultural status. According to Catherine Simpson, Australian creatures are deeply implicated in nationalist identities, as they are privileged into a 'native' status which calls for their preservation and the extermination of outside others.<?>[38] While Simpson argues that eco-horror

35 Ibid., pp. 112 f.
36 Bernice Murphy: They Have Risen Once. They May Rise Again, p. 271.
37 Tom Wood: Australian Town Terrorised, n. p.
38 See Catherine Simpson: Australian Eco-horror and Gaia's Revenge, pp. 45 f.

in which animals are rendered agents points toward the "existence and agency of a 'more-than-human-world'",<?>[39] in 'The Roo', animal horror is still evidently human-centric, as I have established. In fact, the novella's horror is itself non-mimetic because of the denial of animals as agents to begin with. Although its human characters are presented in often flat or marginalized ways, with no single narrative voice dictating its story, the narrative spends little to no time on the agency of the kangaroo, which is driven by a magical ritual, rather than the kangaroo's own purpose. The ritual, in turn, is triggered by a human cause (domestic abuse) and manipulated by (misused) human language.

The kangaroo is transformed throughout the text by its status as a monster, which first needs to be established and shifted. It is worth mentioning that this is both a generic requirement but also necessary for the characters to confront the threat to their natural order. First, the kangaroo is hunted by the men of the village in an exercise of physical masculine violence. It is only the animal's status shift to that of a monster and the empathetic search for Pauline that showcases how the violence capable of exerting control is tied to 'language' – all the more since language summoned the kangaroo initially and misunderstood language caused its rampage. This transformative process, whereby the status of the kangaroo is elevated to monster, indicates a necessary dramatic slippage characteristic of horror of the non-cosmic variety.

The third and last layer of violence, in addition to the generic violence of slasher-horror fiction and language's role in violence, that I would like to draw attention to is Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence. The concept engages with violent forms that are enacted over long and slow-paced scales that are not measurable within a human lifetime. In ecocritical contexts, slow violence is often mobilized as a means of describing

> a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all […] a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales.[40]

The relation between 'The Roo' and Nixon's slow violence may at first seem to be negligible. I have elaborated on the interplay between the novella's surface-level pleasurable or horrific violence as it relates to generic conventions and the treatment of the kangaroo in 'The Roo', and these instances of surface-violence seem to be more immediate, even if the animal-horror narrative might at least resonate with the term slow violence's connection to ecocritical readings. Yet upon closer examination, there are also indications of anxieties that relate to such slow violences, brought to light by the novella's engagement with domestic violence.

The rhythm of horror-slasher violence initially touched upon in this article allows us to consider different cycles of violence alongside one another by foregrounding individual ones narratively. Since the root cause of the killer kangaroo is an attempt to take revenge on an abusive husband, domestic violence is quite literally the cause of the monstrous rampage. Accordingly, we must

39 Ibid., p. 52.
40 Rob Nixon: Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor, p. 2.

consider these two forms of violence, horror-slasher violence and domestic violence, with respect to one another. Alongside the horror cycle of the kangaroo's killings, there are various scenes where different focalized characters acknowledge the domestic violence occurring in their own community either in thought or conversation.[41] The familiar repetition of the kangaroo killings is fantastic, but the second cycle, which is often literally called the 'cycle of violence', is anything but. Research[42] indicates not only how these cycles are difficult to escape, but also how they are often interlinked with greater cycles of financial and emotional struggle, an inability to reach out for help, and shame. The juxtaposition between these competing cycles is a point of disturbance and uncanny harmonization in the text, one that places a burden of shame on the reader, who, by reading, must confront the complicit thoughts that frame and justify abusive cycles, writing them off as common occurrences and seemingly pushing domestic abuse to the background.

There are, then, at least two instances of slow violence to consider in 'The Roo'. First, slow violence enters the picture when it becomes apparent that domestic abuse frequently includes a multigenerational chain of abusers and victims that stretches back and is also expected to continue. Since this form of violence is first placed in the background of the narrative, it manages to infiltrate it and function as an element of worldbuilding rather than stand out as explicitly connected to the horrific events unfolding. Each time it is brought up, characters make terse comments at most and no instances of domestic abuse are described. A scene near the end of the novella stands out since it explicitly addresses domestic abuse, while in other cases it is only mentioned offhandedly. In the scene, three of the women address the abuse, its intergenerational impact, and their missing friend Pauline and her abusive husband Bill. As the women discuss Bill, Sheila notes that she "knew Bill's father and that man was a few sangers short of a picnic too. Rough as a mile of country road, all the Catter men".[43] Even here, in the midst of the conversation about domestic violence and the Catter family history, the connection is made implicitly when Sharon, referring back to her husband breaking a cycle of domestic abuse, responds by saying "[i]t's a good reminder to teach our sons to be better than their fathers".[44] The later revelation of its direct connection to the ongoing rampage showcases the oft-overlooked form of slow violence, tacitly nodding to the failings of masculine violence at every corner of the narrative.

Far from permitting a happy and effortless ending, where the most obvious abuser in the village is killed and domestic abuse ends forever, readers instead are left with Sadie, a minor character, picking up the book which summoned the kangaroo to exact her own future revenge. This is a powerful moment, as Sadie, in that earlier conversation with her friends about domestic abuse, states that her husband "Josh might look like the south end of a north bound camel, but he's a

41 See, e. g., Alan Baxter: The Roo, pp. 18, 40, 68.
42 See, e. g., Holly Bell: Cycles within Cycles; Ruth Nadelhaft: Domestic Violence in Literature; Jess Hill: See What You Made Me Do.
43 Alan Baxter: The Roo, p. 96.
44 Ibid.

good man too".[45] It certainly could be argued that she is not a victim of abuse, even if she bears a "self-satisfied smile"[46] when she stows it and walks away. In fact, it's just as easy to read her retrieval of the book as motivated by potential revenge for women in the village since there are "many more living with violence and abuse".[47] While her motivations are not stated, it is evident that the return of the monster, in this case, is paired to the slow and unspoken violence of domestic abuse.

Secondly, slow violence is always in the backdrop of the novella by virtue of the contemporary issues facing rural villages in Australia. As in other industrialized nations, the rural population has been increasingly displaced by dispossession due to economic woes. Rachel Pain and Caitlin Cahill have identified this form of dispossession as slow violence, which they view as intertwined with and supported by "neoliberalism, racial capitalism and patriarchy",[48] all of which align to sustain it. The novella further provides evidence of how economic pressures weigh heavily against rural living and livelihoods. "The land out here had a way of breaking people",[49] Stu Stred, a minor character, notes as he reflects on discovering a farmer that had committed suicide in one of the "pisspot outback town[s]" that he visited,[50] and goes as far as considering that "[t]he legacy of farming families was dying out like the drought-stricken grass in Country Australia. Big farming conglomerates were taking over, or the industry was simply drying up like an outback creek bed".[51] Another perspective, that of the owner of a local store, Shane Keene, describes life in Morgan Creek as tough "in every way" and points out that "there were plenty of women in town who wouldn't be in town if they could afford to leave".[52] Although nowhere near as thoroughly thematized as the domestic abuse throughout the novella, the text clearly evinces the decline of rural village life in Australia, caused by the slow economic violence against rural farmers.

Conclusion

'The Roo', by positioning itself as a slasher-horror text, as 'gonzo mayhem', actively normalizes violence for attuning readers. By doing so, it situates the serious issue of domestic abuse alongside the less serious issue of kangaroo rampages. The effect produced by means of juxtaposition is that of disruption. The competing cycles of violence on different temporal scales of the slow violence for abuse and the attacks of the kangaroo – initiated by slasher-horror pacing, and informed by language's capacity for violence – create a fault line for readers. These complicating poetics allow 'The Roo' to join the current of Australian horror films like

45 Ibid., p. 93.
46 Ibid., p. 122.
47 Ibid., p. 94.
48 Rachel Pain, Caitlin Cahill: Critical Political Geographies, p. 364.
49 Alan Baxter: The Roo, p. 35.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., p. 36.
52 Ibid., p. 25.

'Cargo' (2017) and 'The Babadook' (2014), which yield "a compelling admixture of gore and Gothic, commercialism and nationalism, exploitation and art".[53]

The novella offers a departure from the slasher-remakes of the early twenty-first century, in that it does not offer what Lizardi notes as conventional, i. e., progressive social power structures which are subverted even though the future is rendered hopeful and progressive.[54] The novella does not glorify violence but rather presents it in an over-the-top manner in order to trivialize, parody, and normalize it. In doing so, it is able to draw a neat parallel between the slow violences of domestic abuse and rural dispossession since both frequently escape human focus, even while they marginalize in different ways. In 'The Roo', the normalization of domestic abuse in rural communities, a real issue in contemporary Australian life, is brought center stage, highlighted by the violent vibes of the novella, which can be interpreted by an approach that focuses on the 'Stimmung' it produces. To elevate readings for 'Stimmung' to a methodological approach, more firm developments in the studies of attunement, presence and their various inflections are necessary – especially in work on genre and periodization.

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53 Jessica Balanzategui: The Babadook and the haunted space between high and low genres, p. 30.

54 See Ryan Lizardi: "Re-Imagining" Hegemony and Misogyny, p. 121.

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Warrior Monks, Sentient Robots, and Plant People

Queerness in Australian Speculative Fiction in the 21st Century

Abstract: Australian speculative fiction abounds with queer-identifying writers, queer protagonists, and queer minor characters, but so far, critical attention to this kind of literature has been small. This article highlights the inherent suitability of speculative fiction for telling queer narratives and provides a tentative overview of Australian queer speculative fiction published in the 21st century. The developments are traced through analytical spotlights on key texts published since the early 2000s, starting with the queerness of side characters in Australian fantasy novels in publications by Trudi Canavan and Lian Hearn. The article subsequently covers increasingly prevalent representations of gay and lesbian romance in speculative fiction, focusing especially on C.S. Pacat's Captive Prince series against the background of the author's own identification as genderqueer. A more recent trend is noted, namely the discussion of non-normative gender identities and expressions in speculative fiction. Shelley Parker-Chan's 'She Who Became the Sun' serves as a final example for a very recent case of genderqueer fantasy that has been commercially successful and award-winning. All in all, the article seeks to provide an extensive but not exhaustive overview of queer Australian speculative fiction, showcasing the vibrancy of the genre in the 21st century.

Introduction
Speculative Queerness

Warrior monks, sentient robots, and plant people may seem to be an odd assortment of characters with little to nothing in common, except perhaps that the last two are firmly rooted in speculative fiction. What does connect them is their queerness, both inherently and in the context of the specific narratives in which they are placed. Warrior monks are probably the least unexpected, ill-fitting, and therefore queer of the lot, since they did historically exist in both China and Japan, yet they still tend to appear out of place to Western readers due to a firmly established conceptual connection between (European) monastic life and peacefulness. Sentient robots and plant people, however, are decidedly nonhuman, strange, and queer, even though they are staple figures in speculative fiction, as showcased by characters such as Star Trek's Data, Star Wars' C3PO, and The Lord of the Rings' Ents; they remain queer within their respective narratives and thus often prove effective focal characters for queer readers.

This is also the case for the specific warrior monk, sentient robot, and plant person referred to in the title of this article: they feature as queer characters – both in the usual sense of non-normativity relating to sexuality and gender, but also in the broader sense of resistance against normative society – in three relatively well-known texts of Australian speculative fiction, which is a first indication that at least queer side characters have a firm place in this Australian literary tradition, if not queerness in general. The characters in question – warrior monk Makoto and, to some extent, warrior lord Takeo in Lian Hearn's Tales of the Otori series, the AI (Artificial Intelligence) Leo in Ambelin Kwaymullina's The Tribe trilogy,

and Larapinta in Ellen van Neerven's 'Water' – are thus illustrative examples for the ever-increasing presence of queerness in Australian speculative fiction.

In their introduction to the recent 'gender forum' special issue, Gender and Sexuality in Australian Speculative Fiction, the guest editors Bettina Burger, David Kern, and Lucas Mattila observe that Australian speculative fiction abounds with queer-identifying writers, queer protagonists, and queer minor characters; and, indeed, three out of five articles in this particular issue make considerable contributions to the study of queerness within the genre.[1] Still, Burger, Kern, and Mattila's claim that "[q]ueer perspectives and theoretical discussions of queerness are underrepresented in Australian Speculative Fiction scholarship"[2] remains true.

One reason for such a lack of queer scholarship explicitly focusing on Australian Speculative Fiction may be that the genre itself has a complex relationship with queerness. There is a significant subset of people – academics and casual readers alike – who associate speculative fiction and especially fantasy literature with conservative values, even going so far as to tweet that "[t]he cultural domination of fantasy over science fiction that we are currently living through just seems to be symptomatic of the broader turn towards fascism".[3] This is hardly a new take, nor is it restricted to the social media sphere. In 'The Impulse of Fantasy Literature', Colin N. Manlove claims that fantasy novels'

> frequent looking to the past is conservative in itself: and the order to which they look and seek to re-create is usually a medieval and hierarchic one, founded on the continuance of the status quo. Many of them portray the preservation of an existing state of things as their central subject.[4]

Helen Young also acknowledges the preconception that fantasy-as-a-formula is "safe, conservative, unthinking acceptance of existing order",[5] while Kim Wilkins remarks that "the medieval European past continues to dominate"[6] Australian fantasy literature in particular.

Young and Wilkins are right in pointing out that some fantasy literature is 'looking backwards' and thus has the potential of being conservative to the point of being inimical to queerness. However, while all speculative fiction, including the allegedly conservative fantasy genre as well as the more future-oriented science fiction genre, may be used to promote oppressive conservative values,[7] the genre also "leaves open a great deal of room for queerness in all its forms",[8] as Wendy Gay Pearson puts it in her Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication entry on 'Speculative Fiction and Queer Theory'. Thanks to its broad reach as "a super category for all genres that deliberately depart from imitating

1 See Bettina Burger, David Kern, Lucas Mattila: Introduction, p. 5.
2 Ibid.
3 Jason Read: The cultural domination of fantasy, n. p.
4 Colin Manlove: The Impulse of Fantasy Literature, p. 31.
5 Helen Young: Race and Popular Fantasy Literature, p. 6.
6 Kim Wilkins: Cutting Off the Head of the King, p. 135.
7 Helen Young draws attention to the fact that "[t]here is a conservative – and often very vocal – element in any culture that views any change as inherently destructive" (190). Speculative fiction has its fair share of queerphobic authors, including dominating household names of fantasy literature, such as the openly transphobic J. K. Rowling.
8 Wendy Gay Pearson: Speculative Fiction and Queer Theory, p. 1.

'consensus reality' of everyday experience",[9] speculative fiction resists normativity by providing spaces for a variety of queer characters. In fact, many works of speculative fiction depict not only "possible and impossible futures speculated by and for oppressed populations and deviant individuals, who have been marked as futureless or simply left out by dominant imaginaries",[10] but also imaginary pasts, thus writing queerness back into the public imagination of pasts, futures, and also presents.

Queerness becomes increasingly prominent in contemporary speculative fiction, and – as previously indicated – Australian speculative fiction is no exception. Indeed, there seems to be a considerable tradition of queerness in Australian genre works, starting at least as far back as Trudi Canavan's 2001 'The Magicians' Guild' as an observable trend, though earlier examples can certainly be found. This includes Catherine Helen Spence's 'Handfasted' (1879), which, while still focused on a heteronormative society, queers the concept of marriage by (re)introducing 'handfasting,' a ceremony through which temporary marriages are officiated. Another example from the late 20th century would be Melissa Lukashenko's 1998 'Killing Darcy', which, while explicitly queer, falls on the softer side of speculative fiction, containing only some magical realist elements. A closer look at early Australian speculative fiction texts would surely reveal further instances of implicit or even explicit depictions of queerness that predate the 2000s. However, this article focuses on the 21st century and aims to provide a tentative overview of queerness in newer Australian speculative fiction, since the presence of queerness in this genre has significantly increased in the last twenty years, creating a vast and varied corpus.

Instead of in-depth analyses of individual examples of queer Australian speculative fiction, this article seeks to chart the field and to serve as a starting point for future research that investigates the directions queer Australian speculative fiction has taken in the last twenty or so years by highlighting select examples. While there are, of course, fanmade lists of LGBTQ+ speculative novels by Australian authors online,[11] this article differs from those cursory overviews by including short exemplary analyses of key texts, chosen both for their relative prominence amongst readers and for the way in which queerness is included. For the purpose of this article, 'speculative fiction' denotes, as previously stated, all texts that go beyond 'consensus reality', that is, texts belonging to a variety of subgenres such as fantasy, science fiction, alternate history, zombie fiction, to name but a few.[12] "Queer theory is not only applicable to texts with 'queer' characters: it serves as more than a hermeneutic for reading nonnormative gender, sexuality, and sex",[13] but the texts covered in this article were selected for explicit inclusion of characters that can be considered queer due to their non-normative sexuality

9 Marek Oziewicz: Speculative Fiction, p. 1.
10 Alexis Lothian: Old Futures, p. 2.
11 See Nikky Lee: Mega list of LGBTQ+ fantasy, sci-fi and horror books by Australian and New Zealand authors, and, to a lesser extent, Michael Earp: Australian LGBTQ YA (misspelling in original title).
12 See Marek Oziewicz: Speculative Fiction, p. 1.
13 Lilith Acadia: Queer Theory, p. 1.

or gender expression. They serve as spotlights for various queer trends in Australian speculative fiction that deserve more detailed research in the future.

Queer Australian Speculative Fiction in the 21st Century

Queerness on the Sides

An early and prominent example of speculative fiction in the 21st century which explicitly includes queerness in a positive manner is Trudi Canavan's Black Magician series, a fantasy series that has become extremely popular outside of Australia as well, though it is perhaps not always perceived as Australian.[14] The series revolves around the so-called Magicians' Guild located in Imardin, the capital city of Kyralia, where young nobles are educated in the use of magic. The series' main character is Sonea, who, as the prototypical Chosen One, is extremely adept at magic despite being a pauper who, according to the rules that govern Kyralia's society, should not be magical. Once her magic prowess is revealed, the eponymous Guild sends out magicians to capture her lest her magic become uncontrollable. One of those looking for her is young Dannyl, who first features as a good friend of Sonea's eventual mentor but gains importance throughout the series as an ambassador for Kyralia. He is a focaliser in some chapters of Canavan's novels.

Dannyl's queerness is hinted at early on in the narrative, when his youth is discussed as follows:

> Years before, when Dannyl was a novice, Fergun had circulated rumors about him in revenge for a prank. Dannyl hadn't expected anyone to take Fergun seriously, but when the teachers and novices began treating him differently and he realized he could do nothing to regain their regard, he had lost all respect for his peers.[15]

While this scene remains deliberately vague on the exact nature of the rumors that had been circulated, later interactions between Dannyl and his bully Fergun confirm that it is his queerness which alienates Dannyl from his peers. During his search for Sonea, Dannyl arranges to meet an informant in the slum areas of Imardin. While waiting, he encounters Fergun, who immediately insinuates that Dannyl is in the slums to visit the brothels. The male informant leaves as soon as Fergun arrives, causing him to further interrogate Dannyl:

> 'Oh, was he the one then?' Fergun asked, glancing behind. 'A bit rough looking. Not that I have any idea what your *specific* tastes are.'[16]

14 This is, in fact, an enduring problem for Australian speculative fiction (by which I mean speculative fiction written by authors who are situated in Australia on a long-term basis). Once a text, particularly in the fantasy or science fiction genre, becomes popular internationally, it is often seen as de-localised, global fantasy, despite the fact that the authors' Australianness or their Australian surroundings often influence even their most fantastical speculations, albeit often in a covert manner. C.S. Pacat's Captive Prince series is another example of queer speculative fiction whose Australianness might not immediately be obvious to international readers.

15 Trudi Canavan: The Magicians' Guild, p. 144.

16 Ibid., p. 222.

The 'specific' tastes Fergun refers to are clearly meant to indicate homosexual attraction, hence the interaction frames the society in which Dannyl lives as an intolerant one. There are also scenes in the novel where friends of Dannyl's note that he has not yet found a wife and express concern that he will be lonely, suggesting deeply ingrained heteronormativity.

Dannyl's sexuality does not stay between the lines, nor does Kyralia's heteronormative society remain unchallenged. In the second novel of the series, 'The Novice', Dannyl meets Tayend, a young noble, while in a neighbouring country as ambassador. Dannyl's first reaction to meeting Tayend is reflected in an internal commentary about "the elaborate, *close-fitting* garb [which] suited *this handsome* young man" (emphasis added),[17] which may be interpreted as an early indication of Dannyl's attraction to Tayend, though he does not immediately act on it since he presumably expects similar social consequences for queerness to the ones he experienced in Kyralia. Indeed, another Guild ambassador to Elyne opens a conversation with Dannyl by sharing gossip about "a man of dubious associations",[18] which are later insinuated to be homosexual relationships. While Dannyl is at this point still closeted, both to the reader and himself, he does voice sympathy for queer people and the oppression they face: "To have inclinations that are unacceptable, and to have to either deny them or undertake elaborate measures to hide them, would be a terrible way to live".[19]

Though Tayend reassures Dannyl that Elyne is not as strict as Kyralia, since "a few interesting or eccentric habits"[20] are almost expected, it is clear that Elyne still regards queerness as strange and Other. Dannyl and Tayend later travel to Lonmar, a country in which queerness is persecuted in a far more extreme way than in both Kyralia and Elyne. The two men arrive just in time to witness an execution, whose victim "has earned the ultimate punishment for corrupting the souls and bodies of men"[21] with what are deemed his 'unnatural lusts'. Canavan, then, showcases three societies that deal with queerness negatively, ranging from mere othering, but no criminalization, to "dishonour and shame"[22] for the so-called crime, to the death penalty. The narrative choice to include discriminatory and punitive views on homosexuality runs the risk of portraying the queer experience as a tragic one, but ultimately Canavan stays clear of this danger: Towards the end of the novel, Dannyl admits to himself and to Tayend that he is gay, inspired by Tayend's "certainty in [himself] about what is natural and right for [him]".[23]

At the beginning of the third volume, 'The High Lord', the two men have become a couple. Far from following the infamous 'Bury your gays' trope,[24]

17 Trudi Canavan: The Novice, p. 84.
18 Ibid., p. 98.
19 Ibid., p. 108.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., p. 176.
22 Ibid., p. 177.
23 Ibid., p. 511.
24 'Bury Your Gays' refers to a long-standing literary trope: "The pattern of this trope's usage states that in a narrative work (novels especially), which features a same-gender romantic couple, one of the lovers must die or otherwise be destroyed by the end of the story. Many instances of this trope draw a direct correlation between the couple confessing their

Canavan has Dannyl and Tayend spend at least twenty years together, though the couple separates in the sequel series, The Traitor Spy Trilogy. While Dannyl is not the latter series' main character, he is one of the focal characters and crucial to the broader storyline. Such representation in a popular fantasy novel, as early as 2001, must have been of great importance to young queer readers, and likely continues to be so, especially since queerness is still far from universally accepted or understood. Even ten years after publication, queer representation in Canavan's speculative fiction continues to be seen as controversial by certain groups of readers, as evidenced by comments on the website goodreads.com. On March 13, 2012, for instance, goodreads user Aliased commented on an interview with Trudi Canavan, writing that they "find the ratio of gay/lesbian main characters to straight ones to be off-putting and beyond [their] willing suspension of disbelief",[25] despite the fact that at least the original trilogy only has two queer main characters – Dannyl and Tayend. While individual comments such as the one quoted above may not be representative of the novel's dominant reception (a larger, quantitative study would be needed to determine this), it serves as an indication that queerness in speculative fiction at least to some readers was not a matter of course in 2012.

Lian Hearn's Tales of the Otori series, also published in the early 2000s, represents queerness in a more understated manner than Canavan's novels. The series portrays femininity and masculinity in a nuanced and complex way – and the fact that its protagonist Takeo has sex with a man in the first volume of the novel and sees no need to agonise over it in the slightest is certainly part of Hearn's construction of a kind of masculinity that allows for softness, vulnerability and open displays of emotion. This is most visible in the relationship between Takeo and the warrior monk Makoto, with whom he develops a deep and intimate friendship. After the death of Takeo's adoptive father, Makoto attempts to comfort him and the latter's tender admission "I notice everything about you"[26] already indicates his romantic feelings for Takeo, yet the sexual act itself is only hinted at, which may be attributed to the fact that it is a young adult series:

> Now Makoto drew me into his embrace and held me closely. […] His affectionate words, his touch, made the tears flow again. Beneath his hands I felt my body come back to life. He drew me back from the abyss and made me desire to live again. Afterwards, I slept deeply, and did not dream.[27]

The scene is fairly vague and could be interpreted differently. Cathy Sly, for example, describes the same scene as a religious experience during which "Takeo abjects all that is not 'clean and proper' in himself".[28] The queer interpretation, however, is confirmed in the second novel of the series, where Takeo states that Makoto had "held [him] until grief had given way to desire".[29] Though central

feelings for one another, kissing, having sex for the first time and the character's death; they often die mere moments or pages after their relationship is confirmed for the audience". (Haley Hulan: Bury Your Gays: History, Usage, and Context, p. 17)

25 Aliased: Message 1, n. p.
26 Lian Hearn: Across the Nightingale Floor, p. 284.
27 Ibid., p. 285.
28 Cathy Sly: Re-membering the Self, p. 47.
29 Lian Hearn: Grass for His Pillow, p. 206.

to the plot of the initial Otori trilogy, Makoto is only a supporting character to the protagonist Takeo, who is ultimately married to Kaede, seemingly confirming heteronormative relationships, albeit with a gender role twist, considering that Takeo is the softer of the two, whereas Kaede is more used to their warrior society. Still, Makoto's love for Takeo is never portrayed as harmful, but rather as the tender root of Makoto's intense loyalty. It provides a necessary counterpoint to the "sadistic, fetish-loving, Fu-Manchu-style homosexual Lord Fujiwara",[30] who, as a queer-coded villain, would otherwise be the only queer presence in the novels.

Gay Princes, Lesbian Plants, and Human/Nonhuman Love in the Balance

The years following these two examples have seen the publication of the occasional queer speculative fiction novel or short story – both in regular journals and online – and, of course, a plethora of queer fan fiction has also been published. They not only satisfy the queer fanbase's desperate desire for good representation but also contribute to the eventual print publishing of queer speculative fiction. One such romance series that "prompt[s] re-evaluations of common assumptions about the many connections between fanfiction and romance" and clearly belongs within the field of queer Australian speculative fiction is genderqueer author "C.S. Pacat's 2008-2012, 2014-2016 'original slash' series *Captive Prince*".[31] It is "an erotic M/M [male/male] romance series […] set in the fantasy kingdoms of Vere and Akielos".[32] Though the series is not without controversy due to its portrayal of sexual slavery, it did play an important role in proving to mainstream publishers that a gay romance fantasy trilogy could be successful – first through an avid readership on live journal, then through conventionally published books.

Indeed, the series, which first followed a fanfiction-like format, as it was published "in serial updates that readers could access and comment on freely", was, to many readers, "their first introduction to the possibilities of M/M romance"[33] and thus by extension likely also their first introduction to queerness in fantasy literature. This corresponds directly to Pacat's intention of writing queer content into genre fiction that was missing in her own youth.[34] Pacat criticises that fantasy "can be a really conservative genre at times",[35] speaking of a nostalgia that often excludes queer people or other minorities, which reflects the aforementioned concerns about fantasy being a backwards looking genre that is potentially hostile or at least indifferent to queer people. The Captive Prince series provides a fantasy influenced by history (and is, thus, as nostalgic in tone as more mainstream fantasies), but with a specific focus on queer characters. Rather than drawing from medieval Europe – as many fantasies worldwide still do – Pacat

30 Sheng-mei Ma: Zen Dog, p. 169.
31 Maria Alberto: Original Slash, Romance, and C.S. Pacat's Captive Prince, p. 216.
32 Ibid., p. 217.
33 Ibid.
34 Natalie Ng: SEXtember, n.p.
35 Ibid.

draws from Ancient Greece, a period and place, in which homosexual relationships were generally permitted and which is perceived as more open than the so-called Dark Ages,[36] which allows her to construct a world where queerness is normal. In Pacat's example, then, it is society itself that becomes queer by virtue of being unlike what we are used to, thus rendering the queer characters normal and even placing them in positions of power. Although it is considered as 'original slash' and M/M romance by Alberto, for example, the series departs from M/M romances as covered by prominent scholars in the field, such as Lucy Neville and Jonathan Allan. Allan claims that "male/male romance novels, which tell the story of two men falling in love […] are written, like most romances, 'for women, by women'"[37] and Neville considers "[i]ssues raised by the prospect of women intruding on the 'sexual territory' of 'The Other' and the fetishization of gay male sexuality".[38] However, this does not do justice to the Captive Prince series since it is written by an openly genderqueer author, who uses both 'she/her' and 'he/him' pronouns, though Pacat may well be read as female by scholars unaware of his identity. This may be true for other writers in the genre as well, including those not yet openly 'out' in terms of their sexuality and/or gender, which is why the focus of this overview article is firmly on queer characters, not (just) queer authors.

Australian speculative fiction also contains more liminal experiences, featuring figures who are both marginalised and revered, depending on the perspective from which they are viewed. Ellen van Neerven's short story 'Water' and Ambelin Kwaymullina's Tribe series engage with queerness both in terms of queer ecological thought and individual queer identities from their respective Mununjali and Palyku perspectives. Scholarship on 'Water' has already acknowledged this, as is showcased by Samuele Grassi's analysis that it "is concerned with the connections of sexual freedom and environmental justice, and with the political import of feminist knowledges for contemporary queer theories and the struggle against patriarchy, compulsory heterosexuality, anthropocentrism, and colonialism".[39] Ellen van Neerven's 'Water' does indeed touch on all of the above through the relationship between the main characters Kaden and Larapinta, which crosses "dualistic notions of sexuality, gender, race, and human-ness" and which culminates in "a powerful call to engage with, as opposed to merely acknowledging difference, thus shaping unforeseen pedagogies for living with and loving others".[40] Aside from the queer relationship at the heart of van Neerven's short story, the latter is also significant in its portrayal of gender as well as transgender and non-binary experiences. Crucially, even though Grassi speaks of Kaden's lesbianism, Kaden refers to her identity as "[q]ueer, I guess".[41] Her

36 Whether this is indeed true or rather based on medievalist assumptions and popular perceptions of both periods, is a different question, explored in Queer Medieval and Queer Antiquity Studies.
37 Jonathan Allan: Men, Masculinities, and Popular Romance, p. 69.
38 Lucy Neville: Girls Who Like Boys Who Like Boys, p. 37.
39 Samuele Grassi: Queer Natures , p. 178.
40 Ibid., p. 181.
41 Ellen van Neerven: Water, p. 95.

comment that "hair is the least of it"[42] when it comes to feeling like a woman – or not – indicates potential fluidity in terms of gender identity. This is related to Kaden's previous discussion with Larapinta, the plant woman with whom she later forms a relationship, since Larapinta asks "if [Kaden] feels like a woman even though [she has] short hair".[43]

Such deliberate blurring of Western notions of the gender binary is reinforced through the story's arguably most speculative element, the plant people, who are "ungendered; see, their gender is not predetermined and is only communicated".[44] Bundjalung scholar Madeleine Clark sees herein a refusal to use the Western language of queerness, and a presentation of "an unresolved relationship to gender and sexuality",[45] which I also recognise in the text's refusal to name a specific label for Kaden's identity that goes beyond the broad term 'queer'. Queerness as a concept is certainly a part of 'Water', but absolved of the need to define precisely what is meant by the word and which (micro-)categories are or are not a part of it. I agree with Emily Yu Zong, who states that 'Water' as well as other speculative fiction stories featuring queerness "render the familiar world strange to allow for queer spaces and non-normative narratives",[46] and that this is one of the reasons why speculative fiction might be especially useful for portraying queerness. Speculative fiction is capable of imagining

> fantastic scenarios, alternate corporeality, and multispecies subjectivity to challenge readers' expectations regarding reproduction, gender roles, and racial and more-than-human otherness. Stylistic elements of fantasy, myths, and science fiction offer these writers a unique artistic landscape in which to unsettle the biological discourse of race, gender, and sexuality and to re-examine subaltern pasts and envision alternative futures.[47]

Zong adds that stories such as 'Water' make "a case for queering the nonhuman as a creative response to social marginalization of diasporic, Indigenous, and queer experiences".[48] Van Neerven's 'Water' and its refusal to make a definitive statement about Kaden's and Larapinta's gender and sexuality can also be seen as a rejection of "the colonial project of denying difference in gender and gender diversity within Indigenous peoples".[49]

Ambelin Kwaymullina's The Tribe series similarly delves into human-nonhuman relationships, though it is for the most part less overtly queer than 'Water'. For a more thorough discussion of how the novel "brings together discourses of queerness and the more-than-human",[50] I recommend Christina Slopek's article Aboriginal Speculations. Queer Rhetoric, Disability, and Interspecies Conviviality in 'The Interrogation of Ashala Wolf'. I, however, would like to focus on the queer couple that features in the second and third volume of the series. We meet Leo in 'The Disappearance of Ember Crow' (2013) as an important political figure who

42 Ibid., p. 95.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., p. 78.
45 Madeleine Clark: Noone Will Touch Your Body, p. 150.
46 Emily Y. Zong: Dragon Lovers and Plant Politics, p. 3.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Sandy O'Sullivan: The Colonial Project of Gender, p. 1.
50 Christina Slopek: Aboriginal Speculations, p. 12.

goes by the name of the Lion; ironically, this is not a signifier of power, but rather an early indication of Leo's strangeness. Ashala, the protagonist, has never seen a lion before, as they became extinct long ago, and assumes that they are "giant lizards, sort of the same as saurs".[51] He is described as "tall, broad shouldered, and a little overweight",[52] which is a deliberately embodied, 'fleshy' and organic description, considering that Leo is later revealed to be one of the 'sentient robots' referenced in the title of this article, or rather an artificial intelligence. There is also a considerable focus on his emotions. At one point, he is described as looking "more than sad. *Bleak*"[53] because he is mourning his partner Peter. While this could easily have been attributed to the 'Bury Your Gays' trope, Kwaymullina uses the tragic couple in a very different manner. Their relationship is never questioned because they are both men, but rather because Peter is human and Leo is not – Peter aged and died peacefully of old age after nearly sixty years of being with Leo, while Leo himself is functionally immortal. Even though Leo does not struggle with his homosexuality, his struggle with his own nature – is he a sentient, feeling being or just a machine? – may resonate with queer people, too, who have frequently been called 'unnatural' themselves. This allows the narrative to present relatability for queer readers, who are still struggling in contemporary heteronormative society, without replicating discrimination based on sexual identity in the futuristic setting.

Ultimately, Kwaymullina resoundingly confirms that there is no essential difference between Peter and Leo despite Leo being "synthetic instead of organic";[54] instead, Starbeauty, one of the creation spirits, dispels Leo's fears that he may not have a "spirit to go to the Balance" and confirms that "[y]our end is not your end",[55] thus renewing Leo's hope for a possible reunion with his loving partner after death. Peter and Leo's love is shown as romantic and spiritually fulfilling as well as intricately connected to the novel's concept of the Balance, an epistemology based on Aboriginal belief systems, since both are on different sides of the Balance while still being connected through their love. The queer couple is explicitly a part of "[t]he world the ancestors made […] in which all life is joined in a web of relationships",[56] which also provides a counterpoint to any worldview that might see homosexual relationships as 'unnatural'.

Interlude
The Babadook as a Queer Icon

In Australian speculative fiction, then, writing about queer characters often goes together with writing about characters that are othered, strange, and outside of what is broadly considered to be 'normal'. Sometimes, this can lead to characters who are othered from Australian society in different ways to be read as queer,

51 Ambelin Kwaymullina: The Disappearance of Ember Crow, p. 232.
52 Ibid., p. 237.
53 Ibid., p. 240.
54 Ibid., p. 322.
55 Ibid.
56 Ambelin Kwaymullina: Introduction. A Land of Many Countries, p. 10.

even if this was not the original intention. In Jennifer Kent's 2014 Australian psychological horror film 'The Babadook', a single mother is struggling with grief for her husband, who died while she was giving birth to their son. Mother and son are soon tormented by a sinister-looking creature, the Babadook, which is first introduced as part of an eerie children's picture book. Due to a mistake by the Netflix algorithm that put the movie in the streaming service's Pride collection, joke memes started appearing on social media websites, especially 'tumblr', insisting "that despite heterosexual society's inability to see it, the Babadook was indeed queer".[57] According to various academics and journalists, the Babadook's queerness is, however, not merely an accident. The Rolling Stones journalist E. Young remarks, for example, that

> the Babadook represents queerness itself, an invisible threat made real through denial and oppression. Queerness is often cast away into small corners of society but never completely destroyed, often coming back bigger and stronger and more visible, more of a perceived threat to heteronormative society.[58]

The Babadook is certainly not the first creature of horror to be adopted by the queer community, not least because many Gothic villains and monsters have traditionally been used to express anxiety over queer identities. However, with the Babadook's lair being a quiet Australian suburb and with the movie's eventual resolution of the mother simply accepting the Babadook's presence, it seemed remiss not to address this oddity of queer Australian speculative fiction for the overview at hand.

Becoming Queerer
Gender and Sexuality in Recent Australian Speculative Fiction

A closer look at examples of more deliberate queer representation in Australian speculative fiction reveals an enduringly vibrant space for explorations of queerness by authors as diverse as the queer spectrum itself. In the last ten years, multiple queer speculative stories have been published by reasonably well-known Australian writers via traditional publishing opportunities as well as by virtually unknown writers who publish independently. Amongst recent young adult (YA) publications, the most famous example of queer speculative fiction, especially outside of Australia, is undoubtedly Jay Kristoff's Nevernight series and its "bisexual (anti)heroine"[59] Mia Corvere. Other traditionally published queer and speculative YA novels include Alicia Jasinska's 'The Dark Tide' (2020) and 'The Midnight Girls' (2021) (lesbian representation), Lili Wilkinson's 'After the Lights Go Out' (2018) and 'The Erasure Initiative' (2020) (bisexual representation), as well as Will Kostakis' 'Monuments' (2019) and 'Rebel Gods' (2020) (gay representation).

Certainly, the option of independently publishing e-books for relatively little money has contributed to more diverse offerings in genre fiction than

57 Michael J. Faris: The Queer Babadook, p. 403.
58 E. Young: Why Babadook Is the Perfect Symbol for Gay Pride, n. p.
59 Marthe-Siobhán Hecke: But You Will Be a Girl Heroes Fear, p. 49.

Pacat would have been able to find as a teenager. Additionally, the option of e-publishing makes queer Australian speculative fiction more accessible to interested readers and scholars outside of Australia. One such example is Stephanie Gunn's novella 'Icefall' (2018), a science fiction story about a mysterious mountain on a distant planet and the mountain climber who wants to conquer it, watched over anxiously by her wife in orbit. 'Icefall' is an atmospheric example of cosmic horror and the portrayal of the central lesbian couple focuses on their love for one another rather than on their queerness, which allows for a text that is explicitly queer but is not solely defined by its queerness.

Claire G. Coleman's dystopian anti-war novel 'The Old Lie' (2019) features an openly lesbian protagonist, Romany "Romeo" Zetz, who regularly gets in trouble for her dalliances with other pilots – mostly women or non-binary people – not because of the queer nature of these trysts, but rather because "[a]pparently you were supposed to wait until shore leave before fraternizing with the other pilots".[60] Her later relationship to the radio operator and hacker Harper is accepted without much comment; the only concern seems to be that Romeo is technically Harper's superior, which Romeo downplays by stating that they are "different services, different chain of command, nothing to stop [them] being friends".[61] The couple's eventual reunion after a successful military operation certainly fits the tone of the epic space opera and positions them as a central romantic couple: "Romeo lay with Harper in her arms; finally, Harper in her arms, she was building dreams for the first time in her life, building a life for the first time".[62] Significantly, two of the protagonists, Shane and Romeo, are both women in non-stereotypical military positions – foot soldier and fighter pilot – and have names more frequently associated with male characters, which allows Coleman to play with gender expectations as she leaves Shane's gender ambiguous for a considerable part of the narrative, noticeably avoiding using her pronouns until later in the novel.

Coleman's novel attempts to present a gender diverse world, though to varying levels of success. There is, for example, a "five foot three height requirement for pilots", resulting in most pilots being either "women or enbies".[63] This runs the risk of suggesting that 'enbies' (non-binary people) are naturally or at least predominantly people who were assigned female at birth, which not only erases non-binary people assigned male at birth but also may suggest that non-binary people are just 'women lite' or simply 'confused women', which is a common allegation that AFAB (assigned female at birth) non-binary people face. The grouping of 'women and enbies' is not challenged in the narrative, which is at least partly due to the fact that non-binary people only play minor roles in the novel. The only exception is a friendly alien encountered by two children on the run from the authorities. Professor Speech, when questioned by Jimmy, the older of the two children, about their gender, replies that "[t]hat is important to you humans, isn't it? It's even embedded in your languages so you have difficulty

60 Claire G. Coleman: Sweet, p. 36.
61 id.: The Old Lie, p. 158.
62 Ibid., p. 237.
63 Ibid., p. 52.

talking to someone when you don't know their gender", implying that the focus on gender is far from universal. From that point onward, Jimmy consistently refers to Speech with 'they/them' pronouns. Speech is certainly not an ideal representation of human non-binary identities not only due to being alien and thus inherently Other, but also because they are part of a species without "extreme sexual dimorphism".[64] "Yes, we are hermaphrodites," Speech asserts at one point, while also claiming that "hermaphrodite species are less warlike".[65] Nonetheless, Speech can be read as a sympathetic character with a relatively prominent role in the narrative.

Despite some awkwardness around the representation of non-binary identities in 'The Old Lie', the novel's explicit inclusion of enbies and nonhuman conceptions of gender does hint at an ongoing trend in queer Australian speculative fiction. In recent years, explorations of gender and genderqueerness certainly have become more and more prominent on the Australian speculative fiction scene. This is noticeable in recent publications such as #loveOZYA's short story anthology 'Kindred – 12 Queer Stories', which contains a fair share of speculative fiction. At least four of the stories combine gender diverse narratives with speculative fiction, even though speculative elements were not a requirement for contributing to the publication, suggesting once again that speculative fiction is particularly suited to depictions of queerness.

Coleman's short story in this anthology, for example, depicts a future society in which gender is outlawed and a "most perfectly agender-looking"[66] appearance has become the beauty ideal. Ultimately, Coleman's story underlines the idea that gender is a highly individual category that cannot be assigned from outside forces, neither as a binary system nor as a complete absence, since the story's title character Sweet eventually comes out as gendered. The words she uses explicitly mirror the languages used in our contemporary society by non-binary or transgender people when coming out:

> 'To be precise, I am a woman, female', she said. 'I have felt this for a while, felt different, felt like I must be gendered for some time but just couldn't put it into words, didn't know the right words. The only words I knew for what I am were foul, disgusting, terrible. Those words make me sick. […] Then I met someone […] and she told me about being gendered. It put a word to the concept and I know now what I am.'[67]

Coleman makes use of the speculative fiction trope of an alternative reality, in which current conditions are almost reversed, thus allowing cisgender people a glimpse into the experiences of people whose gender is not currently considered 'normal'.

Gender also plays an important role in Alison Evans's children's and YA novels. 'Ida' (2016), 'Highway Bodies' (2019), and 'Euphoria Kids' (2020) all explore diverse gender identities and especially non-binary and genderfluid identities, which reflect the author's own experience. "My gender didn't exist in fiction when I

64 Ibid., p. 165 ('important', 'dimorphism').
65 Ibid., p. 166.
66 Claire G. Coleman: Sweet, p. 122.
67 Ibid., p. 126.

was growing up – so I wrote myself into existence",[68] they said in an interview with The Guardian. 'Euphoria Kids' is especially important in that it focuses on the too frequently neglected joy of transgender children. In an article focusing on non-binary characters in YA fiction, Alex Henderson states that "[t]he novel lacks any transphobic bullies or characters who enforce or represent transnormative ideals, leaving the three trans protagonists to experiment playfully with their gender presentations without fear of social repercussions".[69] Evans' work is thus a vital contribution to a discourse often determined by dysphoria and social oppression, rather than joy and playfulness.

Last but not least, I would like to touch on a novel that was a finalist for both the 2022 Lambda Literary Award for Transgender Fiction and the 2022 Hugo Award for Best Novel and has been described as "an important entry in the LGBTQ [sic] fantasy canon",[70] namely Shelley Parker-Chan's 'She Who Became the Sun' (2021) since the novel is not only indicative of increasing representation of genderqueerness in speculative fiction, but its success also speaks to increasing acceptance of genderqueer narratives. The novel is a creative reimagining of the rise to power of the Hongwu Emperor in 14th century China. It is also, at least partly, a rewriting of Hua Mulan, not so much via references to the original folktale, which was set several centuries earlier, but through various plot elements that will seem familiar to viewers of the corresponding Disney movie. At the beginning, two children are the last remaining survivors of a peasant family, a boy, Zhu Chongba, and a nameless girl. The boy is prophesied to achieve greatness, the girl – nothing. But then the boy seems to simply give up on life and dies, prompting his sister to take over his life, fate, and gender.

At first glance, this may seem like a common 'girl dresses up as boy to survive in a patriarchal society' story, and while nothing would be wrong with such a storyline, 'She Who Became the Sun' is much more nuanced in its depiction of gender identity. Zhu Chongba is more than just a disguise for Zhu, as the protagonist usually refers to herself. While Zhu maintains the pronouns 'she/her' in her personal narration – perhaps also due to the time period in which the novel is set[71] – she constantly insists that she is not a woman.

During an attempt to take over an enemy city, Zhu makes use of her body, which can be perceived as female, to gain entrance into the women's quarters of the governor's palace, where men are not allowed, to speak to the former governor's widow, Lady Rui. She is motivated by her greater understanding of female perspectives because she realizes that the pregnant widow will be desperate to

68 Alison Evans: My gender didn't exist in fiction, n. p.
69 Alex Henderson: From Painters to Pirates, p. 13.
70 Eliot Schrefer: Review, n. p.
71 Similarly, Zhu never employs terms such as 'genderqueer' or 'non-binary' to refer to herself, which is reflective of the concept of trans*historicity. Trans*historicity allows contemporary scholars and writers to "stake a claim in *trans* as a sign for corporeal practices that have existed outside or across interrelated binaries […] without making definitive or appropriative claims about what counts as a trans past (or present), but also without dismissing the investments that shape our relations to historical subjects, and their effects on both identity and community" (Lea Devun and Zeb Tortorici: Trans, Time, and History, p. 534). Shelley Parker-Chan's Zhu is undeniably queer, but there is no narrative need to identify her any further.

assure her own safety and that she cannot return to her "birth family to whom [she]'ll be nothing but a shame and burden".[72] Zhu's insight into a female perspective even prompts the widow to suspect that Zhu is not a monk disguised as a woman but a woman disguised as a monk – a suspicion Zhu fervently denies. While in the widow's chambers, Zhu is struck by "the smell of a woman's inner sanctum, as alien to Zhu as a foreign country". I would argue that her estrangement from womanhood is not so much due to the fact that she spent most of her childhood and youth as a monk among other monks; instead, it is part of her identity as a person who is neither man nor woman. Zhu experiences an intense disdain for her disguise as a woman that allows her entry to Lady Rui's rooms: "[W]ith every moment her feeling of suffocating wrongness mounted. A violent litany repeated inside her head: *This isn't me*". When part of her disguise, the scarf hiding her ordination scars, is removed, she "fe[els] a burst of relief to have it gone" because "the indelible mark of her true identity: her monk self" is revealed. She refers to her female body in multiple other situations, but always with an intense loathing akin to gender dysphoria. This is also evident in her reactions to being called a woman: "'*I'm not*,' she said violently",[73] as if reacting on instinct because her very identity is being called into question.

The protagonist consistently insists on her identity as both and neither, confirming that Zhu is a genderfluid, genderqueer character, emphatically outside of the gender binary. Eventually, she becomes more comfortable in her identity as neither man nor woman and embraces her fate as her own. After her and her dead brother's fate irreparably drift apart, she "dive[s] deep into the mutilated body that [i]sn't Zhu Chongba's body, but a different person's body – a different substance entirely",[74] which she accepts joyfully. Zhu's new-found confidence allows her to have a more sexual relationship with Ma Xiuying, whom she married in order to keep Xiuying safe and also to fortify her own position within the group of rebels she joined to achieve greatness. Their marriage is made possible by the fact that Zhu is perceived as male by most people, but Zhu becomes comfortable enough to tease her wife with her own ambiguity:

> 'I'd wondered why you chose me instead of Sun Meng, since I'm so much uglier than he was, but now I know the truth: it's because I have breasts,' Zhu said. She'd found that the more she said such things, the easier they were to see. 'You took one look and knew I was the man for you.'[75]

'She Who Became the Sun' questions normative understandings of gender, while taking into account both bodily and mental experiences. "What difference does it make to me?", asks Xu Da, Zhu's fellow monk. "You're my brother, whatever's under your clothes".[76] Thus, without referring to modern queer language, Parker-Chan manages to capture genderqueer and non-binary experiences, all the while telling the exciting story of an outsider-outcast's unlikely rise to power.

72 Shelley Parker-Chan: She Who Became the Sun, p. 177. The following quotations can be found ibid. on p. 175.
73 Ibid., p. 183.
74 Ibid., p. 339.
75 Ibid., p. 344.
76 Ibid., p. 65.

Concluding Remarks

As this cursory overview shows, queerness has been an integral part of Australian speculative fiction published in the 21st century – be it in the form of queer side characters, gay or lesbian protagonists, characters questioning their gender, characters celebrating their transgender identities or other queer contents –sometimes written by straight (or not overtly queer) authors, sometimes by authors who seem to have wished to write their own queerness into the speculative fiction genre. It is more than likely that queerness in Australian speculative fiction will not be a temporary fad but that queer identities will continue to be explored in a genre that is particularly suited to it.

The novels discussed in this article are, of course, only examples. The wide array of Australian speculative fiction means that a significant number of works have not yet been explored academically with a focus on queerness. Writers such as Foz Meadows and Will Kostakis have consistently written queer speculative stories, but there are also numerous notable recent publications, with varying degrees of queer representation. They include Krystal Sutherland's 'House of Hollow' (2021), Freya Marske's 'A Marvellous Light' (2021), 'A Restless Truth' (2022), and 'A Power Unbound' (to be published in 2023), C.S. Pacat's newest publication 'Dark Rise' (2021), Omar Sakr's 'Son of Sin' (2022), Georgina Young's 'Bootstrap' (2022), Vanessa Len's 'Only a Monster' (2022), Kate Murray's 'We Who Hunt the Hollow' (2022), and many more, also often published as short stories in online magazines or 'only' as e-books.

These texts, in addition to the ones touched on in this article, provide ample opportunity for studying how speculative fiction is employed to experiment with new genders, or new ways of viewing one's own identity and sexuality. Speculative fiction provides spaces for imagining worlds in which queerness is accepted, worlds in which heteronormativity is a marginal position, or worlds in which queerness is still unaccepted but the queer protagonists flourish regardless. Furthermore, speculative fiction enables writers to dissect societal conventions, expectations and beliefs. The weird and queer outcasts, both within and without the fiction, are able to fashion spaces for themselves within speculative fiction while not denying their queerness, which continues to be outside the norm in the world we currently live in, since speculative fiction itself is always, by definition, not the norm, not the consensus reality of every-day life, but something special, outside, weird, Other. As the diversity showcased in this article aptly demonstrates, Australian speculative fiction would benefit from increased scholarly attention in general, and the application of queer theoretical frameworks in particular.

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