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The Isle of Refuse in Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria*: Reconstituting Heterotopic Space

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"And I'm holding that long turtle spear, and I feel I'm close now to where it must be"
Neil Murray, "My Island Home"[1]

In her series of digitally manipulated photographs "Sulu Stories" (2005), Sabahan artist Yee I-Lann explores cultural intersections and issues pertaining to identity within the "watery" and contested borders of the Filipino archipelago.[2] For I-Lann, the archipelago signifies the zone of the "not quite" where identity endlessly re-forms against a backdrop of shifting ideologies, myth and the sea. Islands are rendered spaces of cultural memory in I-Lann's work, where dynamics of difference are played out against an uncertain horizon. Like "Sulu Stories" – to which Alexis Wright refers in her essay "On Writing *Carpentaria*" – *Carpentaria* manipulates archipelagic sites to explore "what becomes of the islands we have created, of communities, our places and ourselves."[3] Wright claims that when she looks at *Carpentaria* "it is like seeing a myriad of ideas that have created the same thing: islands."[4] This analogy, which extends beyond the geography of the narrative to the "self-sufficiency" of the characters themselves, culminates in the subversive vision of "the floating island of rubbish."

The conflicting ancestral and social forces that Wright links to the dawn of "Armageddon"[5] in the opening pages of *Carpentaria* brew throughout the narrative – disrupting every day dwelling processes as well as national agendas – until, finally, cyclonic forces obliterate/instigate a "new reality" in the form of a peripatetic island of junk (491). Crowning the end of Wright's text, the floating island of rubbish is an interstitial space that is literally "born" from the nation's post-apocalyptic waste. Unanchored and drifting around Queensland's Gulf – much like its sole inhabitant, the perennially exiled Will Phantom – the island functions as an uncertain bridging space in the text; a site where the past, present and future jostle alongside each other. The spatial and temporal multiplicity of the floating island of rubbish aligns it with the "category of social spaces" Michel Foucault calls "heterotopias." Outlined by Foucault in his unpublished essay on architecture, "Of Other Spaces," heterotopias are spaces which function as "counter-sites" to more normative spaces in society.[6] Heterotopias are "threshold" spaces which, by revealing hidden ideologies and intricate alignments, can "inspire a new way of ordering" society.[7] By simultaneously

conflating and destabilising domestic, national and spiritual ways of being, Wright's floating isle of refuse motivates processes of "reconnection"[8] and reflection; processes which, in turn, prompt a reconsideration of the various ways in that we (both the characters and readers of the text) make ourselves 'at home' in the world. In light of the pervasive sense of un-belonging touted to be undermining national identity in Australia, the importance of developing a space from which to reimagine not only the parameters of nation but also the more intimate topography of home cannot be understated.

A a hybrid zone that refuses neat categorisation, the floating island of rubbish that forms in the wake of the novel's final and most devastating cyclone is a space which is simultaneously intrinsic to, and separate from, many of the other spaces and stories explored throughout the narrative. For instance, the architecture of the floating island of rubbish recalls the supposedly haunted "moving islands" of "the world's jetsam" Will Phantom saw "roaming" the Gulf as a young child on a fishing trip (386). Like these detrital and seemingly foreign "flotillas" which troubled the people of the Gulf years before, the floating island of rubbish is a space that collapses the boundaries between world and region. Representing a union between town and country, indigenous and non-indigenous architectures and infrastructures, and both modern and ancient ways of being, the floating island of rubbish is an intensely ambivalent space which fractures dreams of home and nation. In light of the island's ability not only to echo but also unsettle normative conceptions of space, this essay suggests that the isle of refuse benefits from being read as a form of heterotopic space.

Whilst the floating island of rubbish has not been widely read as a heterotopia, a number of other critics have acknowledged its potential to function as an emblem of social transformation. Laura Joseph claims, for example, that *Carpentaria* "contests the continence of 'one Australia' on the level of spatiality through a shift from the singularity and coherence of the continent form towards the multiplicity and dispersal of islands."[9] Although Wright's floating island of rubbish is only one of many literary examples Joseph explores in "Dreaming of Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation in *Carpentaria* and *Dreamhunter*," its chaotic presence is palpable throughout her essay because it is a space that distinctly "refuses the terms of nation."[10] In keeping with Gaston Bachelard's idea that "the imagination must take too much for thought to have enough,"[11] Joseph argues that the "imaginative excess" of *Carpentaria* – which the outlandish archipelagic space of the floating island epitomises – allows for the nation's future to be "realised" beyond the confines of its "violent" history.[12] Joseph's comments resonate with what Wright herself says about the text. Wright claims that whilst *Carpentaria* is a "contemporary continuation of the Dreaming

story," it is also a text which – in response to the ongoing trauma of colonisation – attempts to "understand how to re-imagine a larger space than the ones we [in Australia] have been forced to enclose within the imagined borders that have been forced upon us."[13] The journey Will takes on the floating island of rubbish is a journey of self-awareness; towards reconnecting with community but *also* re-imagining the parameters of home, nation and identity.

Frances Devlin-Glass also explores the floating island of rubbish in her review of *Carpentaria*, describing the space as "an island of Western debris" that "challenges European hubris and ecological ignorance."[14] Whilst the island can, on the one hand, be said to symbolise a moral, as well as ecological, comeuppance – the island's strange architecture brings to mind, for example, the tangled mass of sea life and rubbish caught in the enormous "ghost nets" left behind by fishermen in the Gulf of Carpentaria[15] – it is also important to recognise that it is a space which intersects with ideas pertaining to the concept of home. "Waste," as Brook Collins-Gearing notes in her analysis of Warwick Thornton's 2009 film *Sampson and Delilah*, "is a subjective notion."[16] During his island sojourn, Will is cocooned within the detrital trappings of his former family dwelling; a space which, prior to the cyclone, sat squarely within the realm of "wasteland." Unlike Robinson Crusoe, the seminal Western figure of the castaway, Will Phantom remains within the fold of his tribal country (which embodies both land and sea)[17] whilst marooned on the flotsam of Desperance, his "home" town. Coming after two years of effective exile – spent following traditional songlines in a car-convoy pilgrimage – Will's arrival on the floating island is treated as an almost utopic homecoming in the text; a reclaiming of home/wasteland which upsets the dynamics of displacement typically associated with 'being elsewhere', and reconstitutes the ways in which heterotopic spaces tend to be conceived.

As a profoundly complex and multi-layered space, the floating island of rubbish resonates with a number of the six heterotopic "principles" Foucault outlines in "Of Other Spaces." The island can be read, for example, as a "heterotopia of crisis;" a space where Will's "coming of age" occurs beyond the prying confines of society. Foucault states that "crisis heterotopias" are "privileged or sacred or forbidden spaces" that are "reserved for individuals who are, in relation to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis," spaces such as the "honeymoon suite," or hotel.[18] The floating island of rubbish both physically and imaginatively evokes the social/spatial dynamics of the hotel. For example, its foundational "bulwark" is formed from the "monstrous" debris of the "Fishman Hotel," a space where Will takes refuge during the cyclone (492). As Yvette Blackwood recognises,

hotel spaces "point towards the idea of individual monads, individual worlds that sit together, and are sometimes forced to connect, like guests dwelling in hotel rooms."[19] The isle of refuse, like the Fishman Hotel, is represented as a parallel space in the text – a world apart – where Will becomes acutely aware of the haunting presence/absence of other beings, such as family, the folk of Desperance, and his "old people."

The island, however, is not only a "hotelized" space.[20] Wright's floating island of rubbish is an *über* heterotopia, inspiring a plethora of spatial readings. For example, due to the island's imprisoning dynamics, and Will's belief that he is "doomed to a hermit's life" (500), it is possible for the "life raft" to be read as a "heterotopia of deviation" – a zone set aside for "individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm" – the kind of space Foucault saw to be "replacing" the heterotopia of crisis. Furthermore, the "malingering" presence of other beings on the island also flags it as a site of burial and, therefore, aligns it with the shifting space Foucault uses to demonstrate his second principle of heterotopia, that of the cemetery. In keeping with Foucault's third principle, the island "juxtaposes" spaces that are usually "incompatible."[21] Like the space of the "Oriental Garden," [22] which Foucault offers as an example of the third principle, the floating island nurtures "many species" of vegetation (496) and it also brings together, in one space, the usually segregated elements of the Aboriginal fringe with the more "socially acceptable" architecture of the town. One of the key heterotopic interpolations the floating island of rubbish makes, however, is its ability to inspire "a break with traditional time," an attribute Foucault associates with his fourth principle which deals with "heterochronies."[23] On the island, Will's sense of time fluctuates. For example, although he claims to be "able to recall each day […] from the time he began living on the island" (496), he seems to be unable to conceive the passing of time elsewhere. It is only with the realisation that, on this strange vessel, the passage of time does not actually *lead* anywhere that Will returns to what Foucault calls "traditional time" and begins to re-evaluate his situation and his role in society (497). Like the "temporal heterotopia" of the fairground," a space that Foucault claims "is not oriented toward the eternal" [24] the island also becomes, for Will, a temporary – or outskirt – space, surrounded by a perverse and frightening "travelling sideshow" (501). Additionally, with his fifth principle, Foucault states that "heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable;"[25] a system which can also be inferred on the floating island through Will's futile obsession with guarding the vessel's entry points (498).

The time Will spends on the floating island of rubbish is underscored by his acute sense of ambivalence; his inability to reconcile his desire to remain isolated with his wish to be rescued or liberated. The argument put forward here – in light of the ambivalence the space inspires – is that the floating island of rubbish specifically benefits from being read in line with Foucault's sixth and final principle; as a heterotopia of "illusion" and "compensation." According to Foucault, these forms of heterotopia are sites which have, by "trait," a "function in relation to all other space that remains" in that their role is to either "create a space of illusion that exposes every real space […] as still more illusionary," or, conversely, "create a space that is other, another real space that is as perfect, as meticulous, as well-arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed and jumbled," the heterotopia of "compensation."[26] The floating island of rubbish echoes both of these enigmatic heterotopias. Initially, it appears to be a space of compensation, where Will is able to build a simulacrum of home out of the debris of his former life. However, as an innately fluid space, the island – like the world – will not sustain one settled mode of being; as soon as Will becomes comfortable with his new form of existence it is exposed as illusionary. Foucault provides two quite different example of these "extreme" types of heterotopias – suggesting, for example, "those famous brothels" can be seen to function in the role of heterotopia of illusion, whilst colonies such as the "Puritan societies the English had founded in America" during the seventeenth century could function as heterotopia of compensation – but, in the end, he links these apparently "polar" heterotopias via the "connecting" space of the boat, or ship.[27] Foucault claims that the boat is "a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea."[28] Like Foucault's boat, Will's floating island is a heterotopic space that is insular, contained and separate to the world; a seemingly private sanctuary. Yet, at the same time the island is also a detached vessel; essentially governed by the "will of the sea" and, thereby, open to boundless interactions and other ways of being and subsequently linked to the notions of "return" and "home."

The floating island of rubbish reconstitutes the purpose of heterotopic space by revealing the connections such sites may have to spaces of home and "processes" of dwelling.[29] Foucault is generally considered to have deemed heterotopias to be unlike "ordinary" home spaces, disassociating them with acts of dwelling.[30] Wright's re-imagining of heterotopic space, however, subverts these distinctions on a number of levels. For example, as the ensuing analysis reveals, the floating island of rubbish is *both* a heterotopia "par excellence"[31] (a boat) and an integral manifestation of "country," unsettling the ideal of

displacement upon which heterotopic habitation is usually premised. Whilst the floating island is, on the one hand, an alien terrain – adrift on the world's seas – it is also, for Will, a space constructed from elements that are familiar to him, the detrital topography of his childhood home, and can therefore be read as a space which celebrates fringe dwelling. Rather than just juxtaposing multiple spaces, the floating island embodies them; inspiring a "new dreaming"[32] where the Aboriginal sacred and home making practices combine with elements of Western culture to force a 'coming of age' and contemplation of the world beyond the nation's shores. During the cyclone, "the bounty of everything man had ever done in this part of the world" is broken down by the wind, rain and tidal floodwaters and "crushed into a rolling mountainous wall" of debris (491). Forming the foundation of the floating island, this wall of rubbish is an amalgamation of old and new worlds; a realm enigmatically belonging to "the ancient spirits of the creation period" as well as Will Phantom's "thoughts of the future" (492). By reimagining nation from the perspective of the Indigenous fringe, Will's island sojourn initiates a new system of dwelling; a system which reflects an emerging world vision and recognises the need for ongoing and specified reconnections with community and country.

Like all of the spaces and places Wright conjures in *Carpentaria*, the isle of refuse is framed by the creational story of the rainbow serpent. An ancestral being common to numerous Aboriginal tribes (including the Waanyi people to whom Wright herself belongs), the rainbow serpent's movements create and influence the ever-changing topography of the land and conditions of the sea in Queensland's Gulf country:

> Picture the creative serpent, scouring deep into- scouring down through – the slippery underground mudflats, leaving in its wake the thunder of tunnels collapsing to form deep sunken valleys. The sea water following in the serpent's wake, swarming in a frenzy of tidal waves, soon changed colour from ocean blue to the yellow of mud […] When it had finished creating the many rivers in its wake, it created one last river, no larger or smaller than the others, a river which offers no apologies for its discontent with people who do not know it. This is where the giant serpent continues to live deep down under the ground in a vast network of limestone aquifers. They say its being is porous; it permeates everything. It is all around in the atmosphere and is attached to the lives of the river people like skin (1-2).

The frenzied tidal-conditions which create the monstrous island are an incarnation of the ancient creative forces used to describe the Gulf County early in the narrative. Will claims, for example, that "the macabre construction resemble[s] a long-held dream of the water world below ground where the ancient spirits of the creation period rested, while Aboriginal man

was supposed to care for the land" (492). Evoking the manifold links between ancient and modern worlds, the floating island represents not only the power of the "Great Earth Mother" – or "female Rainbow Serpent" – to continually destroy, rescue and renew, but also functions as a contemporary unearthing of "deep knowledge."[33] According to Wright, "deep knowledge" is way of describing the wealth of Aboriginal stories, or "ancient treasures," buried in this continent and intrinsic to its proper care.[34] The Rainbow Serpent not only "permeates," but embodies, the new hybrid space of the floating island, forcing a primary recognition of the Aboriginal sacred.

An innately revelatory space, the floating island forces all manner of cultural and personal excavations. For Will, the island's sole inhabitant – with whom its "destiny" is "intertwined" (494) – the space rouses a moving "return of the repressed."[35] Arriving on the "serpentine flotation" during the early stages development – as "its parts rubbed, grated and clanked together" until they became tightly enmeshed into a solid mass" (493) – Will briefly feels like an "intruder […] clinging to a foetus inside the birth canal, listening to it, witnessing the journey of creation in the throes of a watery birth" (494). His initial feelings of being-out-of-place, however, are mixed with an uncanny sense of the "familiarity" as he realises that the "embryonic structure's strange whines" are in fact familiar to him (494). The oscillation between feelings of familiarity and unfamiliarity, or strangeness, may also be understood as heterotopic effects. As Danielle Manning notes, for example, heterotopias are inked to Freud's concept of "the uncanny" because they "reflect a curious slippage between the familiar and unfamiliar."[36] "Heterotopic sites," she claims, "seem familiar, as they are subsumed within a society's conventional ordering system that links them to other sites, yet they are unfamiliar in that they simultaneously contradict the premises by which the relationships are sustained."[37] Due to its unusual architecture, the unanchored island simultaneously distances Will from the spaces and people he has left behind whilst constantly echoing them in endless and uncanny ways.

The floating island of rubbish – or "birthing wreck" (497) – is intimately associated with Will's mother, Angel Day; and by extension his family's home, the "Number One House." As Carole Ferrier recognises, "the huge pile of floating rubbish" that is born from the cyclone can, in fact, be read as a "strange displacement of the material of which Angel's [and Will's] home was made."[38] Will grew up in a "a rattling corrugated-iron shanty fortress," built by his mother "from sprinklings of holy water, charms, spirits, lures […] and discarded materials pinched from the rubbish dump across the road" on the town's fringe (12). Like the floating island, the Number One House is an embodiment of the rainbow serpent; a space that

is disturbed by "haunting spirits residing in the smelly residue" from whence the structure came, the "slime-dripping serpentine caverns of the dump" (16). It is also an "excessive" space which, like the island, is prone to intrusion and filled with overflowing and often conflicting energies (41).

The process of dwelling Will enacts whilst marooned on the floating island of rubbish is largely informed by the homemaking practices he learns from both his parents whilst growing up in the Number One House. Like his mother fossicking at the dump and seemingly using "magic to erect the house from scraps" (14), Will creatively salvages what he can from the wreckage "tunnelling down into the depths of the pontoon island itself" to find "boxes of precious hooks [and] nails" to build himself home and shelter (496). Like his father, whose process of dwelling incorporates tending to country. Will is also instinctively aware of how the floating island of detritus is a part of the serpent dreaming and linked with the ancestral spirits of the sea. To survive in this new world, Will quickly realises that he needs to reconnect with his sea country and the seafaring lessons he was taught as a child; a challenge he welcomes:

> Come hither fish, come sea spirits, demons, marine monsters. He would have
> to learn all about them if he were to survive. He would have to chart nautical
> routes in his mind. He would have to start remembering the journey of the
> heavens, all of the stars, breezes, just like his father, Norm Phantom. (494).

By self-consciously modelling Norm's distinctive dwelling practice, Will's "life raft" is rendered an environ of home. Michele Grossman claims that it is the "oceanic space where key characters" of *Carpentaria* "are most truly at home, deeply themselves and meaningfully linked with their world."[39] Out of the flotsam, Will creates what he thinks to be a predictable and intensely ordered, miniature world; becoming "a practical man in a practical man's paradise" (496). However, the floating island of rubbish motivates a concentric process of (re)connection that progresses outwards, from the private and familiar to the public and unfamiliar. And the orderly realm of compensation Will creates is revealed to be unsustainable, and essentially based upon fantasy.

As a veritable heterotopia of illusion, the floating island of rubbish appears, at first, to fulfil Will's every wish. For example, "if he went looking for driftwood, his hand only had to reach down into the shallow water and as though a magical spell had been cast, the treasure would be his to hold" (497). However, what Will refuses to acknowledge during the early months of his castaway – the island's "golden days" – is that on the island it is not just wishes

that are granted as "any fear had a reality too" (497). Having immersed himself in the innate escapism of his survivor narrative, Will struggles to face up to the fears he has supressed since being washed up on the island's strange shore: the possibility that no-one is steering the island and he is "caught in a sphere of oscillating winds and currents" on a sinking ship of ghosts (497). Once Will realises that his fantastical "island home" is not actually going anywhere, "other places" quickly begin to grow "more fabulous" in his mind (499), revealing the ways in which heterotopic space can highlight the "illusionary" perceptions governing imaginative constructions of even the most normative environments.

In her essay "A Question of Fear," Wright claims that "one of the great lessons" she has learned from "important Aboriginal thinkers" is that "fear comes with our dreams, and if you learn how to conquer your fear, you will learn how to become a fearless dreamer and an instrument of possibility."[40] However, despite his growing awareness Will refrains from taking self-determined action. Rather than working through his fears and taking charge of his own destiny with the courage he has shown throughout the narrative, Will begins to while away his time on the island first ignoring, and then – after killing the turtle – indulging, his fears and suspicions. The death of the turtle functions as an important nexus in the novel.[41] As the song lines from "My Island Home" evoked in this essay's epithet suggest, turtle hunting is a ceremonial activity integral to Indigenous practices of being-in-country. By killing the "huge green turtle" as it pulls "its heavy body onto his island" (498), Will is demonstrating his connection with the traditional ways of the saltwater people to whom he belongs.[42] However, as soon as Will eats from the turtle's flesh, the illusion of his wish-fuelled, pre-colonial utopia collapses. Whilst Will's island continues to shine "brightly with happiness" he starts to feel "stranded and claustrophobic […] like a prisoner grown old with incarceration" (498) whose nightmares become all encompassing. Although Will has the skills and perseverance to survive on the island, he lacks the motivation (or self-determination) to actively take control of his destiny and, therefore, remains trapped in a viscous cycle of self-fulfilling prophecy.

The killing of the turtle is Will's "albatross" and symbolises the burden of *authentic* being-in-the-world.[43] Authentic being-in-the-world – being based upon and/or inspiring a sense of belonging – stems from processes of self-actualisation.[44] Although Will's knowing performance of being a castaway is one of genuine reconnection with country and traditional ways of being, his illusion of returning to a time of pre-settlement is not sustainable. According to Grossman, one of the results of reading *Carpentaria* is that the "doppelganger effect of indigenous and settler ways of being and knowing is fully, furiously, sustained as

tandem stories and lives variously intersect and diverge, yet remain haunted by the shadows of the others' truths and lies."[45] Like his mother – who on the fateful day she found the statue of the Virgin Mary at the town dump, is startled when other peoples begins to emerge from their "ensconced positions […] under cardboard boxes, pieces of corrugated iron, inside forty-four gallon tar barrels" (23) – Will becomes precipitously aware of the other bodies, both the entangled mass of familiar and unfamiliar beings whose rotting core fertilise his island heterotopia and the tortured faces of the nameless masses who, like him are "jettisoned" offshore and cast adrift (501). As Will begins to increasingly rely "on the idea of being saved," he shifts from his position of insularity and moves his gaze outwards, to the uncertain horizon (501). From his virtual vantage point, however, Will struggles to make any kind of connection with either the inner or the outer world and feels "asphyxiated," as though "there was not enough air in the atmosphere for them all to share" (501).

The journey Will takes on the isle of refuse is a journey of self-awareness. "Surrounded by the mirrors of a travelling sideshow" (501), the "floating island of junk" (502) is a heterotopic space designed for meditation and reflection upon the collective plight of humanity as well as self. McMahon claims that island spaces represent "a condensation of the tension between land and water, centre and margin, and, relative to national perspective, between reflective insularity and an externalising globalisation."[46] Through its ability to embody other spaces and oscillate between different locations, the floating island of rubbish allows Will to not only reconnect with his ancestral heritage, knowledge and skills but also to bear witness to the plight of other displaced people in the world seeking shelter on Australia's shores and, thereby, enhance his capacity to make global, as well as regional, connections. Throughout *Carpentaria*, Will Phantom is represented as a man who is not afraid to act, regardless of the consequences. Yet whilst he is repeatedly shown to possess the skills required to be a hero, or leader, wisdom is not a quality that is attributed to him (494).

Unlike his father Normal Phantom, who, as Devlin-Glass recognises, eventually "reclaim[s] his family and cultural heritage,"[47] Will seems to spend little time considering the plight of his wife Hope and son Bala (who are on a parallel journey in the same oceanic space) and the narrative leaves him fastidiously scanning the horizon; apathetically waiting to be rescued. Yet whilst this parting vision seems to be one of "hopelessness," perhaps what Will is seeking cannot be *actively* found. Hetherington claims that the horizon, as the ultimate heterotopia, is "a boundless space of connections […] into which social relations are extended beyond their own limits."[48] Although he recognises that the horizon is "impossible" to ever actually locate, Hetherington also suggests that it is an "obligatory point of passage."[49] Whilst

Will's life raft is indeed a space which exemplifies John Donne's famous claim that "no man is an island," [50] in the end it only gestures towards the need for a "collective" approach to being-in-the world via the unreachable space of the horizon, and Will's desire to hear the sound of a "stranger's voice" (502).

In the introduction to "Of Other Spaces," Foucault suggests that the human "experience of the world" has shifted from the linear perspective of "a long life developing through time" to a distinctly spatial comprehension; "a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein" (22). Like Foucault, Wright shifts the ways in which we think about being-in-the-world. By successfully re-imagining the debilitating borders – or "broken line"[51] – of colonisation, *Carpentaria* reveals some of the ways in which "ancient beliefs sit in the modern world" and exposes "the fragility of the boundaries of Indigenous home places of the mind" (places that Wright claims are "often forced into becoming schizoid illusions of our originality)."[52] The floating island of rubbish, therefore, like I-Lann's archipelagos, never quite conforms to either a utopian or dystopian model but instead functions as a "cathartic"[53] in-between space where ideas about home, nation and identity can be boundlessly reconstituted.

Notes

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[1] Neil Murray, "My Island Home" song lyrics, from the Warumpi Band album *Go Bush* (1987)

[2] Gina Fairly interview with I-Lann, "Not Drowning … Waving: Intersections in the Sulu Sea" *Nafas Art Magazine* (2006). http://universes-in-universe.org/content/view/print/6386

[3] Alexis Wright "On Writing *Carpentaria*," *Heat* 13 (2007), 94

[4] Wright (2007), 93

[5] Alexis Wright, *Carpentaria*. Artarmon: Giramondo Publishing Company (2006) 1 (hereafter parenthetically in main text)

[6] Foucault "Of Other Spaces" *Diacritics*, 16.1 (Spring 1986), 24

[7] Kevin Hetherington *Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering*. Routledge, London (1997), 42, 40

[8] Kim Scott, in his analysis of representations of indigeneity in Australia's national narratives, suggests that alongside stories which focus on "disconnection from country, language, and family" exist narratives of "reconnection" that "tell of the struggle to reconnect individuals and small groups of people to one another, and to a sense of history and heritage derived from a specific place."[8] Whilst "reconnection" is primarily concerned with strengthening traditional bonds and recovering language within Aboriginal cultures, Scott claims that the concept "can mend some of the damage done by colonisation and restore relationships within a [wider] community," and suggests that it "is one way a relatively young nation state […] can be rooted in its continent and prior societies" (122). "Covered Up With Sand" *Meanjin* 66.2 (2007)

[9] Laura Joseph, "Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond nation in *Carpentaria* and *Dreamhunter*" *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature Special Issue: Australian Literature in a Global World* (2009), 7

[10] Joseph (2009) 1

[11] Gaston Bachelard *Water and Dreams- an Essay on the Imagination of Matter* 1942. Trans. Edith R. Farrell. Dallas: The Pegasus Foundation (1999), 253

[12] Joseph (2009), 9

[13] Wright (2007), 82

[14] Frances Devlin-Glass "Review of *Carpentaria*" *Antipodes* 21.1 (2007), 83

[15] "AM" on ABC Radio National AM - Tuesday, 18 May, 2004 08:20:00 (Reporter: Ian Townsend). http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2004/s1110367.htm

[16] Brooke Collins-Gearing "Reclaiming the Wasteland: *Samson and Delilah* and the Historical perception and Construction of Indigenous Knowledges in Australian Cinema" *M/C Journal* 13.4 (2010). http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/viewArticle/252

[17] According to the 2004 Government consultation report "Living on Saltwater Country: Southern Gulf of Carpentaria Sea Country Management, Needs and Issues" prepared by Paul Memmott and Graeme Channells in association with the "Aboriginal Environments research centre" at the University of Queensland, "sea country extends inland to the furthest limit of saltwater influence – includes beaches, salt pans, mud flats, beach ridges (which become islands in very high tides, additional wet season effects) etc. land and sea is inseparably connected" (8). http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/publications/north/pubs/losc-capentaria.pdf

[18] Foucault (1986), 24

[19] Yvette Blackwood, "Parallel Hotel Worlds" *Moving Pictures Stopping Places: Hotels and Motels on Film*. Eds. David B Clarke, Valerie Crawford Pfannhauser and Marcus A Doel (2009) 279

[20] Blackwood (2009), 280

[21] *Ibid*

[22] *Ibid*

[23] Foucault (1986), 24

[24] Foucault (1986), 26

[25] *Ibid*

[26] Foucault (1986), 27

[27] *Ibid*

[28] *Ibid*

[29] According to Hetherington, "Heterotopia have an ambivalence within them that allows us to focus on the idea of process rather than structure" and consider alternative and ever-vacillating modes of "social ordering" (139).

[30] Marietta Rossetto, "Heterotopia and its role in the lived experiences of resettlement" *International Education Journal* 7.4 (2006), 446

[31] Foucault (1986), 27

[32] Wright, "Deep Weather" *Meanjin* (2010) http://meanjin.com.au/articles/post/deep-weather/

[33] *Ibid*

[34] *Ibid*

[35] The "return of the repressed" is an influential psychoanalytic theory – introduced by Sigmund Freud in his early essay "Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence" in 1896 – which refers to the process by which memories of seemingly forgotten events or incidents psychologically manifest, or return.

[36] Danielle Manning, "(Re)Visioning Heterotopia: The Function of Mirrors and Reflection in Seventeenth-Century Painting" *Shift: Queen's Journal of Visual and Material Culture*, 1 (2008), 1

[37] *Ibid*

[38] Carole Ferrier, "'Disappearing Memory' and the Colonial Present in Recent Indigenous Women's Writing", *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* (Special Issue 2008), 49.

[39] Michele Grossman, "Risk, Roguery and Revelation". [Review of *Carpentaria*.] *Australian Literary Review* (4 Oct. 2006), 10

[40] Alexis Wright, "A Question of Fear" in *Tolerance, Prejudice and Fear: Sydney Pen Voices* Sydney: Allen and Unwin (2008), 149

[41] In her essay "Rethinking emplacement, displacement and indigeneity: *Radiance, Auntie Rita* and *don't take your love to town*," Ceridwen Spark suggests that the space of the island in Rachel Perkin's film *Radiance* is treated as a "contested rather than an ideal of authentic place" and can be read as

"heterotopic" because it "connote[s] an Aboriginal past as well as a more brutal postcolonial history" (99). *Journal of Australian Studies* 26.7 (2002)

[42] Note that Spark also claims that Nona's inability to kill the turtle in *Radiance* demonstrates that "disconnection [as well as reconnection] comprises Aboriginal people's relationship to past rituals and ways of being-in-the-world" (98).

[43] See Coleridge poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798)

[44] Linn Miller, in her article "Belonging to Country — A Philosophical Anthropology," explores self-actualised approaches to being-in-the world, suggesting that "authentic" belonging is only possible when people know every aspect of themselves (220). *Journal of Australian Studies: Voicing Dissent.* Ed. Kelly McWilliam, Peta Stephenson and Graeme Thompson. St Lucia API Network and University of Queensland Press, 2003.

[45] Grossman (2006) 10

[46] Elizabeth McMahon, "Encapsulated Space: The Paradise-Prison of Australia's Island Imagery" *Southerly* 65.1 (2005), 21

[47] Devlin-Glass (2007), 84

[48] Hetherington (1997) ,140

[49] *Ibid*

[50] John Donne "No man is an Island/ Entire of itself./Each is a piece of the continent,/A part of the main." From *Meditation XVII* (1623)

[51] Wright cited by Ferrier (2008), 44

[52] Wright (2007), 81-82

[53] Rossetto describes heterotopic space as potentially "cathartic" (2006), 447