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Source: *MoveableType*, Vol.4, 'The Idea of the New' (2008)

DOI: 10.14324/111.1755-4527.033

MoveableType is a Graduate, Peer-Reviewed Journal based in the Department of English at UCL.

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 **UCLPRESS**

Postnational Hybridity in Sally Morgan's *My Place*

by Lizzy Finn

Sally Morgan's *My Place* is one of the best-known indigenous texts in Australia.¹ It was published just before the bicentenary celebrations in 1988: good timing considering that at this time Australia was keen to begin a national process of reconciliation with its indigenous population. The text was well received by the majority of white critics and readers. Examples of this positive reception can be found simply by referring to the back cover of the 1988 Fremantle Arts Centre Press edition. For example, Helen Daniel, writing for *The Age*, states: 'All Australians should read this'. A quotation from Mark Macleod from *Times on Sunday* calls the book 'A triumphant story that makes you glad it's at last been told'. Other quotations describe the text as 'the sort of Australian history which hasn't been written before, and which we desperately need' (Barbara Jefferis, *The Weekend Australian*) and 'a gift to the reader [...] [that] one feels privileged to receive' (Judith Brett, *Australian Book Review*).² This response became a point of contention for many of Morgan's Aboriginal contemporaries. Jackie Huggins, for example, wrote of *My Place*: 'It cannot be denied that among those who have read *My Place* are (usually patronising) whites who believe that they are no longer racist because they have read it.' In her criticism of Morgan, she goes on to pinpoint the reason for *My Place*'s success: 'It makes Aboriginality intelligible to non-Aboriginals'.³

The reconfiguration of white Australia's national morality as no longer predominantly monocultural was reliant on its recognition of its minority subjects. In order to emerge into a new era of multiculturalism following the bicentennial, it was necessary for non-indigenous Australia to attempt to understand the experience of being Aboriginal. There are, therefore, two competing expectations imposed upon *My Place* and other indigenous texts: the Aboriginal community desires portrayals of indigenous experience to be truthful and not whitewash any aspect of indigenous life for white readers; conversely, white Australia frequently expects subaltern subjects to conform to preconceived notions of Aboriginality. A white reader might desire the portrayal of indigenous life not to be so different as to be unintelligible, but to be distinct enough that the recognition of difference could warrant the denial of racist cultural practices. Texts such as *My Place* were marketed as a window into indigenous life. What Huggins finds problematic is not the idea that Aboriginality could be understood by non-Aboriginals, but the assumption by white readers that the complexities of indigeneity could be reduced to 300 pages: recognition of indigenous literature is not the same as an understanding of indigenous peoples, and it is this slippage that Huggins finds patronising.

Morgan's text was not the only indigenous work to emerge in 1988; it was not even the only indigenous autobiography. The same year saw Glenyse Ward's *Wandering Girl* and Ruby Langford's *Don't Take Your Love To Town*, among others. However, it was Morgan's text that held the spotlight while other Aboriginal writers were dismissed.⁴ One reason for this might be that *My Place* provides the kind of indigenous representation that is sufficiently non-threatening to white Australia. In other words, *My Place* might uphold Elizabeth Povinelli's argument that 'celebrations of new recognition of subaltern worth remain inflected by the conditional'.⁵ Morgan's text was recognised above other texts published at the same time, not necessarily due to literary quality, but because it meets the conditions of recognition: it provides a version of Aboriginality that is intelligible to non-Aboriginals, that is, as Povinelli describes, 'not, at heart, not-us', when 'us' is the majority culture.⁶

This article will be an examination of the ways in which *My Place* negotiates the conditions imposed upon it by both indigenous and non-indigenous audiences. One further condition to consider is that placed on *My Place* by Morgan's family members, whose transcribed oral narratives provide a counterpoint to Morgan's autobiographical account.⁷ *My Place* interweaves autobiographical writing with oral narratives recorded and, we are led to believe, transcribed faithfully by Morgan. There are three transcribed oral narratives: the first by Morgan's uncle, Arthur Corunna; the second by Morgan's mother, Gladys; the third by Morgan's grandmother, Daisy. Each chapter preceding a narrative details the process leading up to the subject's agreement to speak; the chapter directly following usually deals with the consequences of the narrative's preceding revelations. Morgan frequently draws attention to the authenticity of her transcriptions, reminding the reader that she is recording the voice as spoken. Following her grandmother Daisy's story, for example, she writes: 'She could speak perfect English when she wanted to, and usually did, only occasionally dropping the beginning or ending of a word' (351). Thus, as the author, not only must Morgan meet the expectations of her wider readers, she must also ensure that her finished document meets the demands of her family, whose lives are so inextricably tied into the main body of the text.

The levels of narration at work in the text, and the competing voices, expectations, and desires, suggest that *My Place* might be better understood in terms of autoethnography. According to Mary Louise Pratt's definition, the terms 'autoethnography' or 'autoethnographic expression'

refer to instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms. If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are those constructed by the other in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations.⁸

The autoethnographic text is a framework for two or more

competing representations. As a form, autoethnography allows Morgan to negotiate the conditions placed upon indigenous texts: the autobiographical sections engage with non-indigenous readers and present an experience of Aboriginality that is, to use Povinelli's terms, 'not, at heart, not-us'; the ethnographic material contained within the autobiographical context, however, speaks to indigenous readers and provides three versions of indigenous experience that interrupt the main body of the text. Autoethnography is used as a means of unsettling the reader, never allowing them to remain in any one frame of reference for too long. Huggins' criticism of *My Place* is thus somewhat problematised by Morgan's use of autoethnography. Morgan's text can be read on one level as making Aboriginality intelligible; however, for readers who choose to look deeper there are different levels, different competing representations, that reveal more complex and problematic versions of indigenous identity that are not immediately recognisable.

I would like to relate autoethnography also to the concept of postnational hybridisation. Mikhail Bakhtin describes hybridisation as 'the mixing of two social languages in one utterance. It is the meeting of two different linguistic consciousnesses'.⁹ Morgan's polyvocal text clearly reveals layers of 'utterance': the text is one of split identities and dual loyalties. Morgan wishes to construct a story that is free from silences, yet her relationship with her grandmother, Daisy, prevents her from betraying certain trusts, or revealing certain secrets that Daisy feels cannot be written. The form in which Morgan articulates these fragments is also hybridised, itself a mix of autobiography, sociography, ethnography, and transcription. It is within these splits, fragments, and hybridisations that Morgan's version of postnational identity emerges.

A postnational identity, according to Habermas, requires hybridity in that it is a rejection of homogenisation:

Reacting to the homogenizing pressure of a material world culture, new constellations often emerge which do not so much level out existing cultural differences as create new multiplicities of hybridized forms.¹⁰

A postnational identity is not one that seeks assimilation into multiculturalist discourses or that seeks to appease a white majority. Morgan's representation of her family as postnational — that is, made up of multiple versions of indigenous experience — and in a framework of autoethnography both plays into the desires of her white readers, and attempts to meet the demands of the Aboriginal community. By representing Aboriginality as a hybridised form made up of multiple individual experiences, Morgan resists the homogenising pressure of the new multiculturally aware Australia through the representation of multiple versions of indigeneity.

My Place begins with a series of chapters concerning childhood, thus initially locating the narrative within an easily recognisable framework of universal shared experience. However, as a hybridised text, Morgan's narrative allows for two layers of utterance to be interpreted. For example, the first chapter of *My Place* remembers a trip to the hospital that the young Sally takes to visit her father. The first layer of utterance represents the scenes in the hospital in terms that are recognisable to white readers who may have had a similar experience as a child: the young Sally feels 'grubby' simply because the hospital is so clean; she feels out of place simply because children do not understand sickness. A second layer of utterance is evident that allows a correlation between the young Sally's sense of self in the hospital and her place in society:

The hospital again, and the echo of my reluctant feet through the long, empty corridors. I hated hospitals and hospital smells. I hated the bare boards that gleamed with newly applied polish, the dust-free window-sills, and the flashes of shiny chrome that snatched my distorted shape as we hurried past. I was a grubby five-year-old in an alien environment. (11)

The hospital becomes representative of 'whiteness', not just as a colour, but as a concept associated with national and cultural identity. Placing the young Sally in a hospital — a place that is *literally* whitewashed — allows Morgan as author to perform an interesting juxtaposition. It is possible to read beyond the literal and to extrapolate from these opening scenes a wider commentary on the way in which structures

of whiteness, both literal (the hospital) and metaphorical (the nation), might impinge on the cohesiveness of Aboriginal identity. Sally, in this space, is rendered as dirty or out of place. The young Sally's sense of self in the hospital can be read as a precursor to how she will feel when she finds out about her Aboriginal heritage. Her younger self feels 'distorted' and 'alien' in a sea of whiteness, just as the older Sally will feel distinctly other in the sea of white faces she encounters once she conceives of herself as black. The pervasive force of whiteness as a dominant context renders Sally's younger self voiceless: 'I felt if I said anything at all, I'd just fall apart. There'd be me, in pieces on the floor' (12). Whiteness is conceived of as oppressive, enforcing a negation of self: if Sally's younger self remains speechless, she remains absent. Her presence in this space is thought of as destructive: to be present, to speak and make her existence known, is to cause herself to fall apart. Silence maintains an illusion of composure. Sally's younger self is 'snatched' outside of herself in this space: she is only allowed to inhabit it momentarily. This is the space in which Morgan begins to write: one where whiteness (white literature, white culture, white history) is the foundation and framework; where to speak is to be dismantled and to dismantle.

It is in the hospital that the young Sally encounters the amputee soldiers sent home from the war and wonders how they 'could have so many parts missing and still live' (12). The second layer of utterance points to an association between amputation and the experience of Aboriginality: amputees and Aboriginal Australians have both had something forcibly taken away from them and, as a result, have been left feeling incomplete. The older Sally writes that her lack of knowledge concerning her Aboriginal past made her feel that 'a very vital part of me was missing' (12), which echoes this opening moment in the hospital. An amputee can find an artificial sense of wholeness through a false limb, and perhaps Morgan can find a self-created sense of completeness through writing, using the text as an extension of her self, something to adhere to her fractured identity and make it seem whole again.

Morgan's relationship with her white father is often overlooked by critics, yet it is central to her later configuration of herself and her family as fundamentally Aboriginal.¹¹ The young Sally's recognition of

the destructive impact her father's unspoken trauma has on his life is what prompts her to refuse any such silencing of her own identity. The text begins by establishing connections between the young Sally and her father.

'Your father's a clever lad.' Was that where I got my ability to draw from? I'd never seen Dad draw or paint, but I'd seen a letter he'd written once, it was beautiful. I knew he'd have trouble writing anything now, his hands never stopped shaking. (15)

Sally and her father are both artists, yet his sickness silences his creativity. This sickness is never explained but seems to be a combination of post-traumatic stress following the war and alcoholism. The young Sally feels at fault for her father's illness, writing: 'I blamed myself for being too young' (44). She believes that it is a failing in her that prevents him from healing and feels guilt at the sight of her father because she is unable to do anything for him. Her father also makes her uncomfortable because she sees herself in him; he also has something missing and does not know how to repair himself. The older Sally's desire to be a whole person stems, initially, from her recognition as a child of her father as incomplete. Morgan speaks because he cannot, and because she does not want to become the same sad, silent, broken figure trapped in a place where healing is impossible, and wholeness is unobtainable.

Despite the fact that this narrative is cursory and incomplete, the inclusion of her father's story is an indicator of Morgan's sense of her identity as hybridised: she is a product of her experience of her father as a broken man, and of her experience of her mother and grandmother as broken women (broken in the sense that their narrative history is broken, fragmented). In this way, her identity comes from both an indigenous and a non-indigenous foundation. Morgan's desire to complete her family history stems from a recognition of the damage that staying silent did to her father: he never escapes the trauma he experienced in the war, suppressing it through alcoholism and releasing it only through anger. The residue of guilt, and the understanding that from silence comes only

suffering, prompts Morgan to encourage her family to speak. By giving them the opportunity to overcome their own trauma there is the sense that she is attempting to save them from the fate of her troubled father.

It is only after the first third of the text that questions of indigeneity are openly confronted in *My Place*:

Towards the end of the school year, I arrived home from school to find Nan sitting at the kitchen table, crying. I froze in the doorway, I'd never seen her cry before.

'Nan...what's wrong?'

'Nothin'!'

'Then what are you crying for?'

She lifted up her arm and thumped her clenched fist hard on the kitchen table. 'You bloody kids don't want me, you want a bloody white grandmother, I'm black. Do you hear, black, black, black!'

[...]

For the first time in my fifteen years, I was conscious of Nan's colouring. She was right, she wasn't white. Well, I thought logically if she wasn't white, then neither were we. What did that make us, what did that make me? I had never thought of myself as being black before. (97)

Daisy's revelation comes after the suicide of Morgan's father. The death of her father is symbolic of the death of white paternal influence in Morgan's life. The concept of mateship, of the importance of men in society, is part of the foundational history in Australia. By moving beyond the story of her father, Morgan demonstrates the limitations of such an identity. When she realises that Daisy is black, Sally immediately assumes a black identity. It is arguable that, at this point in the text, her need to embrace her Aboriginality stems more from denial of her father than from a desire to 'face up to' being Aboriginal.¹² As a child, Sally's experience of her father leaves her desperate to conceive of a place where her self and her family are coherent and cohesive. It is for this reason that the role of her father cannot be discarded, as it is because of him that Morgan goes to such lengths to create a literary strategy that enables the construction of her history as complete.

In constructing the text, Morgan, as an author and narrator, cannot avoid the silences that are apparent in each story she records or constructs. When read separately, each narrative in the text is incomplete in some way. If the text is read as a hybridised autoethnography then it is possible to see that the silences of one story are completed in another. For example, going to school for the first time is a motif that recurs in the narratives of Gladys, Daisy, and Sally. Morgan relates her own awareness of this experience to the reader in a similar way to the moment in the hospital: it is a memory that she is able to share with indigenous and non-indigenous readers — a memory that transcends ethnicity and fosters recognition. There is nothing ‘not, at heart, not-us’ about this recollection: ‘The bell rang suddenly, loudly, terrifyingly. I clutched Mum’s arm [...] One little boy in front of me started to cry. Suddenly, I wanted to cry, too’ (18).

The next recollection is Gladys’s:

I have no memory of being taken from my mother and placed in Parkerville Children’s Home, but all my life, I’ve carried a mental picture of a little fat kid about three or four years old. She’s sitting on the verandah of Babyland Nursery, her nose is running and she’s crying. I think that was me. (241)

A layering of meaning is evident in this passage. Gladys’s sense of dislocation from her self facilitates the reading of this moment as hybridised with Morgan’s remembered experience. Gladys has no clear memory of this event, but a sense of what it might have been like can be found in Morgan’s recollection of her first day at school. Morgan begins with the familiar in describing this shared experience. Through the third layer of utterance, narrated by Daisy, she moves further towards the otherness of this experience:

They told my mother I was goin’ to get educated. They told all the people I was goin’ to school [...] Why did they tell my mother that lie? [...] They should have told my mother the truth. She thought I was coming back. (332)

Daisy's recollection is similar to that of Gladys and Morgan, but the difference in context is crucial. Daisy remembers being taken away from her family not only for one day, like Morgan, or for the school term, like Gladys, but permanently. Daisy is one of the Stolen Generation — a term used to describe an entire generation of Aboriginal children of mixed parentage who were taken away from their parents and placed into the care of white people. The removals were a racist and misguided attempt to assimilate Aboriginal peoples into the white community.¹³ The main telos of this layering of utterance in *My Place* is to undo some of the damage done to Morgan's family history by Daisy's experience: it is an attempt to go back and piece together a cohesive narrative from the fragments that remain. In order to fill in the gaps, each narrative builds on and is built upon by the next, creating layers of meaning in the form of hybridised utterance.

Through such examination, we can see that *My Place* is not a haphazard collection of stories, but is a highly constructed document. Morgan negotiates the silences she is required to maintain by her family — especially by Daisy who does not want to share painful experiences — by creating a pattern of repeating experiences that speak to and for each other when read collectively. Because Morgan's story contains too many silences to be coherent as a linear narrative, autobiography is not an adequate form. Autoethnography becomes a framework for speaking through the self what the other has no words for in their own voice. It is a recuperative act of piecing together a collective memory across generations.

I would like to argue that, due to the hybridised nature of *My Place*, the text does not put forward any single definition of Aboriginality. It is true that Morgan attempts to define *herself*, but the inclusion of so many voices in her narrative prevents any one reading of indigeneity. Morgan's text is one of many that came to be known as a kind of 'resistance literature'.¹⁴ What was being resisted was the idea that there can be any authorised definition of Aboriginality.

Arthur Corunna's story, for example, presents Aboriginality as a split-identity. Arthur is the first to tell his story within Morgan's

text and seems keen to relate his indestructibility in the face of hardship. On one level his story fits well with other ‘Aussie-battler’ narratives; conversely, through the process of naming and asserting his relationship with specific places and people, he clearly locates his story in an indigenous framework. There are, therefore, contradictions at work in his narrative:

They [white Australia] say there’s been no difference between black and white, we all Australian, that’s a lie [...] There’s so much the whitefellas don’t understand. They want us to be assimilated into the white, but we don’t want to be [...] They say we shouldn’t get the land, but the white man’s had land rights since this country was invaded, our land rights [...] Most of the land the Aborigine wants, no white man would touch [...] Now, if I’d been born a white man, my life would have been different. (332)

Arthur’s statement highlights the hybridity at work in his narrative. As Aboriginal, he wishes to assert his difference by emphasising that indigenous land owners might operate under different knowledge systems: ‘no white man’ would touch the kind of land Arthur might want to own. Nevertheless, as a farmer, he resents being treated differently and even wonders how his life might have been easier had he been born white. These conflicting desires are difficult to negotiate and, rather than offer any answer or conclusion, Arthur ends his narrative by asserting: ‘I’m part of history, that’s how I look on it’ (213). Arthur does not want his story to be lost in the wider (white) narrative of Australia’s foundation, but wants his uniquely indigenous experience to be acknowledged — an experience that speaks not of certainties, but complications.

Gladys’s narrative is often overlooked in critical responses to *My Place* — which usually devote most attention to the narratives of Arthur and Daisy — yet it is arguably the most revealing. Gladys is caught between her mother’s fierce denial of any Aboriginal heritage and her daughter’s relentless questioning of the past. She does not consider her Aboriginality as limiting her identity or her ability to connect with majority culture. She marries a white man, thus creating links between two disparate communities out of choice not necessity. Unlike Morgan,

who glosses over her father's narrative as being too painful, Gladys does not deny her husband's story but includes it within her own. Gladys's sense of Aboriginality develops from a vision of loss and confusion toward one of widespread community and cultural inheritance:

I hope my children will feel proud of the spiritual background from which they've sprung. If we all keep saying we're proud to be Aboriginal, then maybe other Australians will see that we are a people to be proud of [...] All I want my children to do is to pass their Aboriginal heritage on [...] I like to think that, no matter what we become, our spiritual tie with the land and the other unique qualities we possess will somehow weave their way through to future generations of Australians. I mean, this is our land, after all, surely we've got something to offer? (306)

This is a beautifully optimistic passage and is the closest *My Place* comes to depicting a vision of what Aboriginal Australia is and what it has the potential to become. Postnational hybridisation is, perhaps, more clearly at work in the ideas expressed by Gladys than in Arthur's transcribed narrative and Morgan's broader autobiography. Gladys embraces the mixing of Aboriginal blood with other races; spirituality is more important to her than biology. This places indigeneity within an expansive framework of interrelated loyalties instead of visualising it within a limited concept of essentialism.

Daisy Corunna's voice is the final one to be recorded. Her narrative begins, in a similar fashion to Arthur's, with the stating of her real name, which has so far been absent from formal records: 'My name is Daisy Corunna, I'm Arthur's sister. My Aboriginal name is Talahue. I can't tell you when I was born, but I feel old' (325). Although Daisy begins with the same authority as Arthur, her narrative is less trusting of the written word. Daisy is fearful of saying too much: 'I got to be careful what I say. You can't put no lies in a book' (325). There are many reasons why Daisy is reluctant to share her story. A crucial factor is her need to avoid painful losses, such as that of having to give up her first child: 'I wasn't allowed to keep it. That was the way of it, then [...] I never told anyone I was carryin' Gladdie' (340). Daisy's experience has taught her that if she shares anything that is important, it is taken

away from her; as a result she is fearful of the consequences telling her story might entail. Daisy's narrative is a reminder of the difficulties in determining indigeneity when so many older Aboriginal people are reluctant to speak:

Well, Sal, that's all I'm gunna tell ya. My brain's no good, it's gone rotten. I don't want to talk no more. I got my secrets, I'll take them to the grave. Some things, I can't talk 'bout. Not even to you, my granddaughter. They for me to know. They not for you or your mother to know. (349)

Morgan and her mother view Daisy's stance here as stubborn, but there are, perhaps, some things that are better left unrecorded. Daisy's silence suggests a past of severe trauma and pain that she understandably does not want to revisit.

Despite Gladys's vision of Aboriginality as spirituality more than biology, Sally still feels that when Daisy dies so too will her link to the past:

'Well, we're only just coming to terms with everything, finding ourselves, what we really are. And now, she's dying. She's our link with the past and she's going.' I couldn't look at Jill. She sighed, 'With her gone, we could pass for anything. Greek, Italian, Indian...what a joke. We wouldn't want to, now. It's too important. It'd be like she never existed.' (354)

The older Sally's need to hold on to the image of her grandmother explains the prominence of Daisy in *My Place*. Sally fears the loss of her link to her newfound identity, and her text is, in many ways, an attempt to hold on to her grandmother's memory. Daisy's death is a reminder that there are many things that the older Sally will never know, many secrets that Daisy has taken to her grave.

Morgan's text records her quest to find her place culturally, spiritually, and historically in the world, as well as her realisation that this place cannot easily be defined. Like the painting by the author that illustrates the cover of the 1987 edition, there is no one place where identity is rooted. This image — a map of Morgan's life and family that traces from

birth, to the creation of her own family, and back again in a continual circle — is suggestive of the journey the text undertakes. The figure in the painting can be understood as mother and daughter, sister and wife, part of both a family and a community. These aspects of identity are shown to be intricately linked, and lead from one to the other in a natural progression. The cover of the 1987 edition is provocative for the reason that it negates, even before we encounter the written text, any attempt by the reader to homogenise or essentialise the identities contained within its pages; the blue eye at the bottom right of the image becomes symbolic of the watchful eye of the author, subtly reminding the reader to resist preconceived notions of Aboriginality, and instead to embark upon the journey that the painting begins.

Inclusion, rather than assimilation, then, is what *My Place* strives for: inclusion in a family; inclusion in a community; inclusion in a nation. Through its portrayal of conflicted subjects — who are at times angered at their treatment by white society, and at other times welcoming to the members of white society who reach out to them — *My Place* neither condemns nor forgives Australia's racist past. By including as many Aboriginal elements in her text as she has access to, Morgan creates *My Place* as a text that is indicative of the hybrid possibilities of modern Aboriginal *and* white Australian writers; as such, it is a text that can not be completely removed from white literary codes and practices. By focusing only, as some critics have done, on whether the text represents a true Aboriginal identity or a true Aboriginal form, it is possible to lose sight of the importance of its hybridity. *My Place* was the catalyst for a renewed interest in indigeneity in Australia and, as a result, for a new negotiation of the terms of such cultural representation and recognition. *My Place* explores the potential of a postnational identity — an identity that is hybridised to include different histories and representations, and that attempts to meet multiple requirements within one coherent narrative of self. *My Place* is representative of a new way of thinking about indigeneity, one that is interested in the problems of being recognised by a white society, while also celebrating such a recognition's possibilities.

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Endnotes

¹ Subhash Jaireth writes the following of *My Place*'s success: 'In less than ten years since its first publication, *My Place* seems to have found its place in the list of canonical texts studied in departments of Literature and Australian and Cultural Studies in Australia and abroad'. For more information on *My Place*'s sales and reception see Arlene A. Elder, 'Silence as Expression: Sally Morgan's *My Place*', *Kunapipi*, 14 (1992), 16–24 (p. 16); Sue Thomas, 'Positioning Sally Morgan', *Meridian*, 12 (1993), 170–73 (p. 170); Subhash Jaireth, 'The "I" in Sally Morgan's *My Place*: Writing of a Monologised Self', *Westerly*, 40 (1995), 69–78 (p. 69).

² Sally Morgan, *My Place* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1988), Jacket notes. Further references are to this edition of *My Place* and where possible will be given in the text.

³ Jackie Huggins, 'Always Was Always Will Be', in *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians*, ed. by Michele Grossman (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), pp. 60–65 (p. 61).

⁴ See, for example, Helen Dakin, 'A Departure from Interpretation: Glenyse Ward's *Wandering Girl*', *Southerly*, 48 (1988), 110–112, and Mary Rose Liverani, 'From Outside Without Insight', *The Weekend Australian Review*, 28 May 1992, p. 6. Dakin dismissed Glenyse Ward's *Wandering Girl* because of its failure to 'offer any kind of explanation of its significance' (p. 112). Liverani is equally dismissive of Ruby Langford Ginibi's *Don't Take Your Love To Town*, stating: 'Ginibi can't write. Lacking formal education [...] she has difficulty making sense of her life or offering any insight into it'.

⁵ Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (London: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 17.

⁶ Povinelli, p. 17.

⁷ *My Place* is a complex text containing many voices, and many versions of Sally Morgan. I will, from this point, be referring to Sally Morgan, the author/narrator, as Morgan; I will refer to the younger version of Sally Morgan – the version of herself that is a character within the text – as the younger Sally; I will refer to the older version of Sally as the older Sally.

⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 7.

⁹ Quoted in Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 170.

¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays*, trans. and ed. by Max Pensky (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 75.

¹¹ Eleanor Hogan's study of *My Place* is particularly guilty of overlooking Sally's father, choosing instead to focus on Arthur as the primary male influence in Sally's life. See 'A Little Bit of the Other Side of the Story': Genealogies in Sally Morgan's *My Place*, *Meridian*, 11 (1992), 15–16.

¹² Morgan, p. 99. Refusal of her father's identity can be seen in several comments; for example, Sally states: 'I decided that, when I grew up, I would never drink or marry a man who drank', p. 51.

¹³ This was a practice that continued well into the late 1970s. An official investigation into the effects of decades of family upheaval in Aboriginal communities was not conducted until 1997, when the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children From Their Families published its findings as *Bringing Them Home*, listing suggestions for the reparation of damage done. An official apology was not extended to the Stolen Generation until Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's recent apology in 2008. For more information on Stolen Generations testimony, see the following articles: Gillian Whitlock, 'In The Second Person: Narrative Transactions in Stolen Generations Testimony', *Bibliography*, 24 (2001), 197–213; Lester Irabinna Rigney, 'Native Title, The Stolen Generation and Reconciliation: The Struggles Facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia', *Interventions*, 1 (2000), 125–130; Chris Cuneen and Terry Libesman, 'An Apology for Expressing Regret?', *Meanjin*, 59 (2000), 145–154.

¹⁴ See Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1987).