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Queensland Review / Volume 22 / Issue 01 / June 2015, pp 75 - 84

DOI: 10.1017/qre.2015.7, Published online: 07 May 2015

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S1321816615000070

How to cite this article:

Jessica Gildersleeve (2015). ‘Ropes of stories’: Jean Rhys, Vivienne Cleven and Melissa Lucashenko. Queensland Review, 22, pp 75-84 doi:10.1017/qre.2015.7

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‘Ropes of stories’: Jean Rhys, Vivienne Cleven and Melissa Lucashenko

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Knowledge of land, knowledge of the spiritual world, knowledge of practical men’s or women’s business — these are what define us as adults. (Lucashenko 1998: 51)

We must cultivate our garden. (Voltaire 2006: 88)

In her keynote address to the recent BlackWords symposium, Melissa Lucashenko asserted:

We writers must weave blankets of stories to warm us from the coldness of Dugai (non-Aboriginal people’s) hearts; we have to weave ropes of stories that we can throw to each other across the canyons of Dugai ignorance and greed and hatred, so that we can find and guide each other across these chasms. (quoted in Kilner and Minter 2014: 1–2)¹

Cultural narratives also function as lifelines in the work of another Queensland Indigenous woman writer, Vivienne Cleven. Cleven’s novel, *Bitin’ Back* (2001), begins when Mavis Dooley’s son, Nevil, announces that he is no longer Nevil, but the writer Jean Rhys. Although Nevil eventually reveals that he has simply been acting as a woman in order to understand the protagonist of the novel he is writing, his choice of Rhys in particular is significant. Nevil selected Jean Rhys as a signifier of his female role because, he explains:

She’s my favourite author; she wrote *Wide Sargasso Sea* [1966]. She was ahead of her time; she wrote about society’s underdogs; about rejection and the madness of isolation. I know it sounds all crazy to you, Ma, but this is about who *I* am . . . [A] lot of people would never understand me and they wouldn’t want to. (2001: 184)

Much of Mavis’s evolution throughout the narrative is concerned with her coming to comprehend Nevil’s identification with Rhys as an outsider, and as someone who gave a voice to the oppressed. As Jeremy Hawthorn (2008: 59) puts it, since ‘People are defined, constituted, changed, enriched or impoverished by the spaces they live in and move through’, Rhys’s ‘experience of dislocation, loneliness and abandonment’ constitutes a ‘representative experience of female alienation in the early years of the twentieth century — and subsequently.’ For Nevil, Rhys is a kind of role model, a literary and social precursor to his life and his work. Moreover — and perhaps most importantly — in the sense that Nevil’s protagonist is also based

on his mother, Mavis's recognition of Nevil/Jean is simultaneously a recognition of herself. Just as race, gender and madness are used to oppress Rhys and her semi-autobiographical characters (often referred to as 'Rhys women'), so too Mavis has been silenced and oppressed by these means. Rhys's story is thus a 'rope' thrown to Nevil, a 'rope' thrown from Nevil to his mother and a 'rope' thrown from both Nevil and Cleven to the reader.

Cleven's explicit intertextual references to Rhys, and to *Wide Sargasso Sea*, also create resonances between Queensland writing and Caribbean writing, suggesting how Queensland women's writing figures within broader postcolonial theories about identity and belonging. For both Cleven and Lucashenko, it is precisely a relationship with literary, social and even geographical precursors that enables an understanding of the self in the present. Indeed, Elaine Savory (1998: 134) argues that, 'It is productive to compare Rhys with other writers both inside and outside the Caribbean who deal with race' because of the ambivalent identity and social position of characters like Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a woman who is both 'oppressor and oppressed'. Rather than simply recognising such states of being, however, writing back to Rhys becomes, for Cleven and for Nevil, a method of 'bitin' back' against the oppression they have suffered. Rhys thus also comes to authorise similar counter-aggressive tactics in Cleven's work.

Indigenous writing — especially life writing — is often considered only in terms of the way in which it constructs identity and a sense of belonging. Tomoko Ichitani (2010: 186), for example, argues that 'through the practice of self-representation, Indigenous women writers have engaged themselves in embodying their subjectivity beyond the multiple subjugation of racial oppression, economic dispossession, sexism and masculine domination'. However, Stephen Muecke has criticised the expectation that something like a 'true Aboriginality' is 'express[ed]' in narratives by Indigenous writers (quoted in Huggan 2002: 42). The 'repressive hypothesis', as Muecke adopts the term, assumes that 'out of silence and absence comes the reconstruction of selfhood'; he adds that 'this effect is redoubled with the female Aboriginal subject' (quoted in Huggan 2002: 42). For Muecke, then, the expression of identity through storytelling becomes a burden for Indigenous (especially women) writers. In many ways, Muecke's point holds true for Cleven's *Bitin' Back* and Lucashenko's *Mullumbimby* (2013), the two novels that will be discussed here: both Mavis and Jo (*Mullumbimby*'s protagonist) do emerge from different kinds of loss and marginalisation (primarily poverty in the case of the former, divorce for the latter) by telling and understanding their own stories. However, Cleven and Lucashenko's novels are less interested in characters *telling* their own story than they are in underscoring how *hearing* a story and connecting with different kinds of traditions is central to both identity-formation and establishing a sense of belonging for their Indigenous female characters. To return to Lucashenko's metaphor, their interest lies in those who need to grasp the 'ropes of stories' — those lifelines thrown to them — rather than those who throw the ropes. For Cleven, that rope of tradition is primarily literary, while for Lucashenko it is more closely aligned with place; in both cases, however, it is coming to hear rather than simply to tell a story that underpins the development of community and subsequently individual identity.

This search for belonging is not unique to Queensland Indigenous women writers. Jeanine Leane has claimed that Australian writing in general can be seen to tell the 'story of a quest to belong to country', and to repeatedly 'play on the motifs

of boundaries, borders, frontiers, fringes, edges, unknowns and “unsettled places” (2014: 2). Cleven and Lucashenko also tell this story and engage with its accompanying motifs, but they do so in ways that take up concerns about the legacy of colonisation in contemporary Australia. Queensland’s ‘particularly savage’ history of colonial dispossession has been extensively documented (Evans et al. 1993: xxii). The trauma of separation from family, place and tradition is made vividly real in both novels. *Mullumbimby* and *Bitin’ Back* expose their female characters’ sense of separation from sites of belonging, but the ‘unknowns and “unsettled places”’ are also sites of trauma. They refer to places or communities that should be known, and should be settled, but are not. The ropes of story that connect place and identity have been severed.

The search for belonging identified by Leane might also be seen to take place within a historical framework, becoming a search for a place in time rather than in space. Emmanuel S. Nelson (1990: 30), for example, suggests that an ‘urgen[t] . . . preoccupation with versions of history’ in Australian Aboriginal writing is a product of the trauma of ‘postcontact dislocations’. By engaging with the traumatic past and its legacies, Nelson argues, such writers negotiate ‘racial self-retrieval’ and ‘forg[e] a valid and liberating sense of personal and cultural wholeness’ (1990: 30).² The separation from community, story and place thus constitutes a disruption to self-identity that plagues the characters of both *Bitin’ Back* and *Mullumbimby*. While such denigration of identity is overcome in Cleven’s *Bitin’ Back*, so that in the novel’s final sentence Mavis is able to recognise in the mirror of Nevil’s story ‘A woman I know’ (2001: 194), *Mullumbimby* is not so optimistic about the possibility of a simple (re)connection with community and tradition through story. Indeed, this novel concludes:

It is a fact universally acknowledged . . . that a teenager armed with a Nikko pen is a wonder to behold, a precious, precious thing that we all must keep close to our hearts, and protect by any means necessary. And if it isn’t, then it fucken well oughta be. (2013: 280)

This conclusion echoes the novel’s opening sentence: ‘It is a truth universally acknowledged . . . that a teenager armed with a Nikko pen is a pain in the fucking neck, and if it isn’t then it fucken well oughta be’ (2013: 1). However, Jo’s repeated admission that her ‘fact’ perhaps ‘isn’t’ one suggests that there is a longer way to go towards the reclamation of identity and belonging, towards the power of story, than Cleven’s novel might have us believe.

Vivienne Cleven and Jean Rhys: Women of no importance

Rhys’s 1960 short story ‘The Day They Burned the Books’ famously queries the power structures of race and gender through which the story’s children are socialised. Although Mr Sawyer is a strange man, he is nevertheless the voice of power and authority in this narrative. From his first introduction, we find that he hates the Caribbean — ‘he detested the moon and everything else about the Caribbean and he didn’t mind telling you so’ (1960: 2357) — and this hatred extends to his wife, whom he mocks as part of some ‘mysterious, obscure, sacred English joke’ (1960: 2358). He instructs the children to idolise strawberries and daffodils as signifiers of English culture, and Mrs Sawyer becomes an empty, even

zombie-like figure as her identity is reduced and defined by her husband. For example, she is criticised for her performance of Englishness, so that when Mr Sawyer calls, ‘Look at the nigger showing off’, and pulls her hair, to cries of ‘Not a wig, you see’ (1960: 2358), she is at once the victim of racism, accused of inauthenticity and mocked as an exaggerated clown. She is so denigrated that her name is erased by the patronymic sign of her husband, so that she is only ever called Mrs Sawyer in the story. Interestingly, it is precisely her performance that is then complimented by others at Mr Sawyer’s funeral: ‘everybody said how nice Mrs Sawyer had looked, walking like a queen behind the coffin and crying her eyeballs out at the right moment’ (1960: 2359). This performance allows her to mask her revenge against Mr Sawyer — when Mr Sawyer dies, his wife burns the books he loved, which enunciate the values against which he measured her worth. She is mute throughout this event, except for a terrible laugh in the face of her pleading son. As Peter J. Kalliney points out, literature is important in this story because it is ‘a shared love of books and distrust of the English that allows the children to put aside racial differences, at least temporarily’ (1060: 221).

But books also inescapably function as figures for the paradoxically unreadable, as finally attested by the books the children save from the fire. Since one book is damaged and one is in French, the children cannot read them. The reader can: we are given the titles of the books, Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1901) and Guy de Maupassant’s *Fort comme la mort* (1889). However, we also know these to be narratives that are ambiguous in their discussion of the relationships between race, gender and power. As in Maupassant’s novel, will the young, female narrator become a love object or an artist? Will her friend, Eddie, choose a path of pride or one of spirituality — will he become like his father or like his mother? Both *Kim* and *Fort comme la mort* are ‘ropes of stories’, which Rhys at once reaches for and bites back against.

‘The Day they Burned the Books’ certainly highlights Nevil Dooley’s contention that Rhys’s fiction is concerned with ‘rejection and the madness of isolation’. And in *Bitin’ Back*, too, books occupy an uneasy place as both signifiers of oppression and as opportunities for freedom. When Nevil first announces that he is now Jean Rhys, Mavis searches his room for an explanation of his strange behaviour. She locates a pile of books, and runs her ‘eyes over each one’, insisting ‘There must be somethin’ here. Some clue’ (2001: 7). She finds five books by Oscar Wilde:

A playwright, the cover says. *What the hell’s a playwright?*

I flick the cover open but there seems nothin outta place, nothin that would brainwash a man into thinkin hisself a woman. Just writin. Me eyes flick back to the other book, *A Woman of No Importance*. *Now that sounds a bit suss. Maybe the boy don’t think he important? A Woman of No Importance? Hhhmmm.* (2001: 7)

As in Rhys’s story, the books represent an unreadable code for the narrator, but for the reader the books raise questions about the relationships among literature, identity and heritage in colonial writing. Cleven’s novel fulfils a similar function. The logic of the outsider in Rhys is to do with ‘madness and isolation’ as well as race and gender; in the case of Oscar Wilde, it is sexuality. Mavis, too, feels that she is ‘being gently pushed into my predestined role, the role of victim’ (Rhys 1978,

in Frickey 1990: 35): ‘Ain’t worth dreamin when you an ol scrapper like me,’ she admits to a friend (Cleven 2001: 71). In writing back to Rhys and to Wilde, Cleven establishes a literary tradition for Queensland women’s writing that calls not only on this marginalisation, but on the ways in which both writers challenged social norms.

Mrs Sawyer’s self-definition through her performance aligns her in some ways with the typical ‘Rhys woman’: depressed, lonely and dependent on often-cruel men who demand that she behave according to their expectations. Nagihan Haliloğlu (2011: 4) notes that the ‘protagonists of Rhys’s stories are women who are on the margins, contemplating their own lives along with those of other peripheral characters whose stories do not usually get heard’. For Marguerite Nolan (2007: 277), Rhys functions in Cleven’s novel as a ‘symbol of the outcast’. Like Selina in ‘Let them Call it Jazz’ (Rhys 1995), where ‘Selina is robbed of her money, persecuted for her failure to conform to English social convention, and locked up in Holloway for being “drunk and disorderly” and “causing a disturbance”’ (Howells 1991: 127), Mavis is persecuted by the police and the white population of Mandamooka. Rhys’s narratives thus become a kind of precursor or rehearsal to the concerns of Queensland women’s writing.

In Cleven’s narrative, however, the Rhys woman is revised through a confrontation with social expectations. Since it is most clearly Mavis, rather than Nevil, who aligns with the ‘Rhys woman’, it may be seen that in performing Rhys as assured and confident, Nevil instructs his mother how to transcend the role of the passive victim, endlessly passed over by men, employers and friends. Nevil has written a novel featuring a strong female protagonist, Lucinda Lawrey. ‘Lucinda’s different,’ he says, ‘not just by being bright and independent — but she’s black and she’s seeking a better life for herself and her kids. That’s what the book’s really about — Lucinda searching for a way to escape the constrictions of *her* town’ (Cleven 2001: 186). When Mavis learns that her son and his city publisher both consider her story worthy of telling, she starts to believe in her own agency, so that by the end of the novel Mavis is able to believe that her love interest, Terry, wants to pursue a relationship with her. Although Nevil then relinquishes the Jean Rhys role, ‘in her place,’ Mavis understands, ‘is another woman. A woman I like. A woman I know’ (2001: 194). Mavis is thus finally able to understand what many critics have not: that the Jean Rhys figure represents not just the vulnerable white protagonists of her narratives, but the black protagonists like Selina and Christophine in *Wide Sargasso Sea* who, Lucy Wilson asserts, ‘seem to thrive on adversity and to draw strength from their opposition to the prevailing power structures’ (1990: 67).

Selina ultimately ‘resumes power over her own life [so that] refusing to be a victim she becomes a survivor instead’ (Howells 1991: 127). Cleven’s intertextuality and negotiation with a matrilineal literary tradition also seek to counter her character’s victimisation and to figure a sense of community and reunion between mother and son as a model for similar relationships beyond the immediate family unit. Jean Rhys, through Nevil’s gender play, reminds Mavis of the potentialities of the mother–*daughter* relationship — which is associated with community and celebration — rather than maternal sacrifice — which in this novel is more clearly a product of the mother–*son* relationship. Writing back to Rhys is in this way a mode of liberation for the Indigenous woman writer, a reminder that others too have written and acted their way out of oppression and de-identification. Mavis’s

dialect, a voice that entirely narrates, can thus retrospectively be seen to constitute not only the hybridity and liminality of Indigenous women and the ‘particularisms’ of her community (Huggan 2002: 37), but more powerfully the freedom to tell her own story, in her own words. This telling is only possible, however, when she and Nevil grasp ‘the rope’ of Rhys’s tale.

Lucashenko: ‘Listening to the Land’

Story, tradition and intertextuality are also important in Lucashenko’s *Mullumbimby*. Just as Lucashenko has said that she goes ‘to learned authors, especially’ in order to comprehend her identity and her place (Lucashenko 2006a: 9), so too Jo’s understanding of the world is often expressed in language from the Western literary tradition — as in the opening, which echoes the first line of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), the reference to Walt Whitman a few pages later (2006a: 5) or her repetition of Molly Bloom’s ‘yes (oh yes I will)’ (2006a: 61) when she first makes love to her boyfriend, Twoboy. Ultimately, however, it is the story of the land, ‘really [knowing] the country she lived and worked on’ (2006a: 164) that informs Jo’s growing sense of identity.

In Lucashenko’s first novel, *Steam Pigs* (1997), Sue embarks on a journey to understand her Indigenous heritage, culminating in a move from Brisbane’s outer suburbs to the inner city. This shift permits her to ‘escape’ to a space of greater social and cultural freedom, but is also a move that, Nathanael O’Reilly argues, ‘perpetuates the anti-suburban tradition and dilutes the impact of the novel’s innovative and radical aspects’ (2006a: 1). Over the last few years, however, Lucashenko has built up a steady body of non-fictional work that both interrogates and seeks to illuminate the meaning of place, story and belonging, not just for Aboriginal people but (and increasingly so) for all Australians. In this respect especially, *Mullumbimby* is not quite so optimistic as Cleven’s, and her own, earlier novels.

Lucashenko’s 1998 essay, ‘Gender, Genre and Geography’, explains the way in which Indigenous Australians experience a knowledge of place. Her emphasis here is on the intimacy between people and the land, and on a connection that transcends the European emphasis on ownership, and repeatedly confuses Jo in *Mullumbimby*. Geography, Lucashenko says:

... means land, systems connected to land. It means the way the earth meanders under your feet as you make your way over it. It means the taste of the soil and the nature of the trees and plants that grow there ... It means knowing these things as personally as you know your own family, and imbuing them with feeling in the same way that people are alive with emotion. (1998: 50)

These connections allow people ‘to experience healing and wholeness’. Intimacy with place ‘comes with the ability to teach us how to live correctly if we are humble enough to recognise our true significance in relation to it’ (2006a: 54). The need for connection and community between people, and between people and the land, also features in Lucashenko’s (2006a) essay ‘Country: Being and Belonging on Aboriginal Lands’, in which she writes:

We all need the land, as it needs us. We all need each other — Aborigines and whites and all other living creatures. That is what a family is — a group whose

members may squabble and disagree but who ultimately need each other to exist. (2006a: 66)

The concept reappears in another essay, ‘Not Quite White in the Head’ (Lucashenko 2006b), in which she points out that:

Regardless of their origins, Aboriginal peoples share a devotion to their own country ... It is indisputably where they belong. It is where a correct life is possible; your true country is the Good Life incarnate. (2006b: 27)

In ‘Listening to the Land’ (2009), this is explicitly claimed to be a central tenet of Indigenous philosophy, a body of knowledge that, Lucashenko argues, is ‘capable of regenerating a culture of compassion and belonging across most of the continent’ (2009: 14). This all adds up to an ideology central to Indigenous law, which for Lucashenko fundamentally emphasises a relationship between place and justice — the outcome of staking a claim, of knowing and belonging is, in all senses of the term, the ‘good life’. Referring to Voltaire’s *Candide* (1759) in her contribution to *Contemporary Australia: Optimism* (2008), Lucashenko suggests that understanding the Indigenous relationship between people and place is analogous to ‘cultivating our garden’. Her point emphasises the work that will now precede these connections, and the labour required to cultivate the story of place, and one’s identity within it. Importantly, *Mullumbimby*’s articulation of ‘an indigenous cosmological juridical imaginary which asserts sovereignty and belonging’ (Brewster 2014: 250) represents a move away from the naïve optimism that characterises many critical responses to Indigenous writing.

Mullumbimby, with what Brewster calls its ‘strongly articulated regional vision’, marks a more critical turn with respect to the themes raised in Cleven’s novel and in Lucashenko’s earlier work, engaging more closely with the violent loss of community and land than with their idyllic reclamation (Brewster 2014: 251). Recently divorced Jo has moved to the regional town of Mullumbimby with her teenage daughter, Ellen. She spends her time tending to her beloved horses, fighting the choking weeds on her large property and mowing lawns at the local cemetery. She is, for Lorien Kaye (2014), ‘an everywoman — an every-Goorie-woman. She longs for country, longs for connection with her culture and family, and longs most of all for belonging’ (2014: 27). Jo’s longing is figured in terms of a respect for the land — the kind of concentration on learning and knowing that Lucashenko describes in her essays. Animals, nature, the dead: each of these, for Jo, is an opportunity to understand her place — such as when, for example, she describes the river as her church (2013: 153), or when she greets the lilli pilli trees, past fruiting, ‘with a soft hand’:

No call to ignore someone just cos they don’t have a feed for you. Respect is a fulltime job, twenty-four seven. The way to behave in the world so that nobody’s pride gets trampled, so that anger doesn’t get a chance to ripen into disaster. Auntie Barb had shown her that: noticing that Jo had binung [ear] and mil [eye] that worked from time to time, she had taken Jo aside for instruction, not long before the accident. *You are a blackfella* 101. A lot of it forgotten now, or pushed aside in the daily grind of paying bills, but, ah, some things remained. Some things remained. (2013: 11)

In contrast to Twoboy, who is perpetually engaged in a fevered legal battle and a frustrated search for evidence of his claim to native title, Jo's sense of ownership and belonging is more keenly tied to her explicit care and respect for the land, suggested here as a legacy of knowledge that struggles for space alongside the demands of contemporary life. Indeed, it is when Jo behaves more like a '*dugai*' (white Australian) by putting up fences, and in particular attempting to control nature by separating her colt, Comet, from his mother, that further trauma occurs: Comet, caught in an unfamiliar fence on the edge of his new paddock, drowns in a flooding creek. In her grief, Jo begins to notice the imposition of so-called civilisation on the land. The 'fences, boundaries, impenetrable borders' and the sense that 'everything was locked up and claimed by other people' (2013: 133) make it difficult — even impossible — for both people and animals to read and understand the land.

Comet's death also functions as a commentary on the relationship between Jo and her daughter. Though *Mullumbimby* is primarily limited to Jo's perspective, it frequently makes clear Ellen's growing resentment in response to her mother's lack of interest in, and affection for, her. Just as Comet's death was in some ways a product of an unnatural intervention in his bond with his mother, so too Ellen suffers as a result of the emotional barriers Jo has put up between herself and her daughter. However, whereas her error with Comet was to seek too much control, Jo expects too much independence from her young daughter. Just as when, in a moment of rebellion, Jo attempts to free a cockatoo from its pet shop cage, thinking 'Let nature take its course . . . Let the rivers run free, and the cockies fly high' (2013: 200), allowing Ellen a degree of freedom for which she is not ready leads to Comet's death and to Ellen's devastating injuries.

In some ways, Ellen can be read as a figure of hope for the future: in a symbol of the fundamental connection between the family and the land, she has the contours of Mullumbimby and its surrounds mapped onto the lines and creases in her hands: 'Ellen's been carrying the entire valley around with her for thirteen years, unknowing, Jo thought wildly. *I gave birth to the valley*' (2013: 246). While Jo's response suggests how the land is fundamentally a part of the body of those who belong there, it also reveals her failure to recognise the burden now placed upon the young girl. While the land has become increasingly legible to Jo, she is unable to read her daughter, and agrees to leave her alone at home despite her distress. Left unsupervised, Ellen attempts to erase the legacy placed in her hands, and plunges them into a fire. Jo's lesson, then, is not as simple as she had thought. It is true that, as Brewster (2014: 250) notes:

Ellen's tragedy propels [Jo] into a deep compassion and care for her daughter and allows her to reassert her strong conviction that it is care for kin and lived experiential relations with the material world that constitute belonging on country rather than legal ratification through white courts.

However, it is also true that Jo's revelation includes an understanding that fences and barriers are not just ways of imprisoning, but can also act as a form of protection. Her role is shown to be one of responsibility and custodianship; in line with her job at the cemetery, Jo must ultimately recognise herself as a caretaker rather than an owner of the land and its story.

While both *Bitin' Back* and *Mullumbimby* place the opportunity for reclaiming the past firmly in the hands of the younger generation, they also show that these characters require the support of their elders, their knowledge of story, and a place in a community. The same point is made in Lucashenko's story, 'Sissy Girl' (2001), in which the teenage protagonist is able to move away from an easy slide into the criminal justice system by turning to the 'dreaming' which is '[i]nside our bodies, still in our blood' (103). In this way, both Cleven and Lucashenko suggest that a reclamation of identity and place can only come from a recognition of one's kinship ties and the influence of stories of the past, no matter what form these might take.

Nolan (2007) points out that Indigenous women's writing in Queensland is often concerned with the 'struggle to produce coherent identities, families and communities out of the practices of assimilation, segregation and separation'. But we should not forget that 'Indigenous life narratives are acts of testimony and remembrance in the face of a state-sanctioned campaign of forgetting and fragmentation: as such, she says, 'they resist co-option into a comfortable narrative of redemption' (2007: 267). I do not want to overstate the effect narratives like Cleven's and Lucashenko's can have on reconciliation and redemption in Australia for women and for other marginalised peoples. However, it is necessary to recognise Cleven's and Lucashenko's novels as a means of thinking through post-colonial politics on a scale that positions Queensland women's writing as a necessary part of broader national concerns. It is, says Lucashenko (2006b: 31) the 'small stories' of place 'which might help us find a way through'. By taking responsibility for listening to these stories, we will learn to cultivate our gardens and live the 'good life'.

Endnotes

- 1 Parts of this article were first presented at the 2014 Contemporary Women's Writing Association conference. I thank audience members there, as well as the anonymous reviewers of *Queensland Review*, for their comments on earlier drafts of this piece.
- 2 Anne Brewster (2014) has recently discussed Lucashenko's examination of the systematised violence conducted against Indigenous children of the Stolen Generations, and the legacy of that trauma, in the novel *Hard Yards* (1999).

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