The Second Stage of the Nullarbor Nymph

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This paper is an analysis of the Nullarbor Nymph hoax which occurred in the early 1970s. It proposes that the Nullarbor Nymph functioned then, and may continue to function today on an archetypal level. Various meanings and implications of this idea are explored with reference to their value to both men and women. Notions of Australian national character are examined and it is suggested that the relationship of the Nullarbor Nymph to the land is an important issue. There is an investigation into the symbolic potential of the Nymph and proposals made about the way this potential might serve people today.

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PROLOGUE

Eucla is a tiny town on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain just over the Western Australian border. It became the focus of world-wide attention twenty years ago with the claim that a semi-naked white woman was running wild with kangaroos in the local bush. By way of extensive media coverage the story spread internationally and was believed by many people to be true. After several days it was revealed that the Nullarbor Nymph did not exist at all. She was invented as a hoax with the intention of extending the identity of Eucla and Australia as a whole.

Ceduna: Sitting in the bar at Eucla one night, drinking a few beers to wash the Nullarbor dust out of their throats, a group of blokes cooked up what is still the greatest hoax ever perpetrated in Australia.

Twenty years ago they were sitting there, spinning yarns like they usually did and, from the bottom of their schooners, the Nullarbor Nymph was born.

Partly as a way to put Eucla on the map, but more in the waggish spirit of the bush, they decided to have a joke with tourists who passed through by dressing up a woman in 'roo skins and taking a photo of her.

Within days the story of this feral woman, blonde, beautiful and half naked who ran with the desert reds and had been spotted by kangaroo shooters out in the middle of nowhere, had spread like wildfire and the legend of the Nullarbor Nymph grabbed worldwide attention.

'It's incredible how easy it was to start up', says Laurie Scott, one of the shooters who started the hoax and who is now married to the nymph.

'We was just sitting down havin' a few beers and we cooked up a yarn around the table about this nymph bird out in the bush.

'A bloke called Geoff Pearce, who we didn't know from a bar of soap, happened to be in the pub that night and he wrote something for the papers and we went out and took some photos and it took off from there. Pretty soon we had plane loads of reporters coming into town and we were getting phone calls and telegrams from people around the world.

'It amazed us how it kept going and we got bloody sick of it in the end.'

By the start of 1972 the name of the nymph was known around the world with stories appearing in Time and Newsweek magazines and on the BBC and CBS international television networks. Everybody wanted to find the nymph and all the time she was there, right under their noses serving them tea and coffee.

'I'd be serving these reporters or just having a chat to them and they'd all be asking me questions about where they could find the nymph,' says the nymph, Geneice Scott, now a 45-year-old mother, housewife and nursing sister living in Ceduna, but still willing to strut her stuff as the nymph along with her daughter Jody and grandson Dean.

Geneice says she can still vividly remember the day when Laurie came to her and told her there was something he wanted her to do 'for a bit of a laugh'.

'He told me he wanted to get my gear off, slip on my bikini and dress up in these roo skins which he had just caught', she said.

'They'd also gone out and caught about five or six live roos and I was hanging on to one by the tail while they took pictures. There were a few blokes in the bushes nearby holding on to the other roos and they all let them go at the same time and there was roos going everywhere.

'I had no idea what would happen with the photos - no idea at all it would go so wide. It all got right out of proportion.'

> One memorable night Laurie organised with a bus driver to slow down as he entered Eucla and wake everybody up to look out for the nymph. 'Well, we had Geneice do this moonlight flit across in front of the bus and all the people on the bus saw the nymph,' he said.
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> 'The story spread like wildfire over to Perth after that. We never made a cent out of it, but, and nobody ever got hurt.'[1]

There have been many articles written about the Nullarbor Nymph hoax. After an analysis of these and the consideration of an interview with Laurie Scott[2], one of the kangaroo shooters who started the story, it can be said that this article is a close account of the events as they took place in the early 1970s.

[1] *The Advertiser*. 27 April. 1991 p.1.
[2] Personal interview with Laurie Scott, Ceduna, 27 September, 1992.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This analysis of the Nullarbor Nymph will be an investigation into the history and the nature of the hoax and a discussion from a feminist and psychoanalytic perspective about why the hoax might have been perpetrated and why the imagination of so many people seemed to be captivated. Who was the nymph to the men that started the hoax? What forces led to her creation? How was she portrayed by the media? What did she come to represent in the minds of the people who believed she was real? What aspects of her 'reality' appealed to the public and why? What mode of being did the Nullarbor Nymph disclose? What did she represent? What has she still got to offer, in particular women?

One of the objects of this paper is to suggest that the Nullarbor Nymph functioned on many levels, some of which are obvious, others which are deeper than can be immediately apprehended.

The Nullarbor Nymph relates in complex ways to aspects of recent art and cultural theory. It is not possible or necessary to read, digest and apply all the material available related to the construct of the Nullarbor Nymph for this dissertation. It is both vast and dense. It is necessary to carefully consider the differences in one's own perspective and that of the society. The interpretation of our society needs to be treated with respect and every effort needs to be made to understand the way this mytheme or narrative was experienced in the first instance.

> ...artistic images, like ...dreams and visions...,may become images accepted into shared usage also; indeed it is frequently the artist - whose images may conflict at first with the traditionally accepted interpretations - who provides the images and languages necessary to shape or to change cultural viewpoints.[3]

As a cultural and universal phenomenon, the Nullarbor Nymph needs to be explored as a manifestation of the unconscious as well the conscious.

Instead of trying to discover the 'truth' or definitive facts about these different facets of the story it is important to remember that everyone who analyses, writes, paints or makes sculptures about it will do it differently and therefore discover different meanings. The meaning of the Nullarbor Nymph is not fixed and will remain forever shifting.

One's task on a theoretical level may well be to ask relevant questions and expose the complexities of this phenomenon so that people will not rest with a superficial image and understanding.

Outlining what one does not know and what one might be able to perhaps find out through engagement with this narrative is valuable. Indeed it is important to note that this analysis and any projection into the Nullarbor Nymph by way of sculpture is done so in a spirit of enquiry and experimentation. Exploring the possibility that the space of the Nymph can be co-opted by women for their own use and examining the story from the position of the Nymph is the task.

The analysis will focus on the Nymph as a locus of identity for Australian women, with reference to the traditional status of woman as 'Other' to man. The creation of the Nullarbor Nymph lives very much in this place of 'Otherness'. Her role as object of desire for men and in this case dwelling very much in the domain of mythology is important in trying to decipher or decode some of her meanings. The more one reads the issues surrounding the Nymph the more elusive she becomes. She is difficult to frame in any one particular epistemology.

The creation of the Nullarbor Nymph came about almost entirely as a product of the media and hence she was described and articulated through language. The press took advantage of well established beliefs about women, the desert, survival in the wilderness, the feral child, woman's relationship with nature and its inhabitants, nudity and solitude to build an identity which would tantalise and could only succeed in evoking people's curiosity and imagination.

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[3]William G.Doty, *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals* (Alabama:Alabama University Press,1986) p.15

Language is a dominant force acting within culture to describe and articulate realities and was particularly active and significant in this case in pushing what started out to be a wild bush woman into the realms of mythology.

CHAPTER 2

MYTH

According to Levi-Strauss

> there needs to be a structural analysis of cultural phenomena analogous to the analysis of linguistic phenomena, and that cultural phenomena should therefore also be considered in terms of signs[1].

This type of analysis, he suggests

> will bring out the symbolic potential of a myth rather than ascribing it to a single structure[2].

There is no single definition of 'myth'. 'Myth' is defined as being

> a traditional story, usually concerning some superhuman being or some alleged person or event, which attempts to explain natural phenomena; especially a traditional story about deities or demigods and the creation of the world and its inhabitants.[3]

It is also defined as 'any invented story' or as 'an imaginary or fictitious thing or person.'[4]

The intention of this Chapter is to propose that the Nullarbor Nymph does indeed fit into this realm of story or belief and potentially has the same value and function as a 'living' myth, which will be outlined.

Myths differ enormously in their structure and social function. Change continues to occur and the forms taken on by myths will remain endless. Variations and new combinations of parts continually occur.

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[1]Howard Gardner, *The Quest for Mind* (New York:Vintage Books, 1973), pp.119.120
[2]Dan Sperber, *On Anthropological Knowledge* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.1985), p.79
[3]*The Macquarie Dictionary* (Sydney:Macquarie Library, 1981)
[4]*Ibid*.

Claude Levi-Strauss claimed that

> a mythic system can only be grasped in a process of becoming; not as something inert and stable but in a process of perpetual transformation.[5]

Myths do not concern trivialities but issues of substance for the whole society.

> Although many of them are started and subsequently told for their comic effect, telling them is regarded as symbolic participation in their own and the culture's own inner significance.[6]

According to a mono-mythic interpretation, for many societies and cultures myth is, or was, 'living', in the sense that it supplies models for human behaviour and gives meaning and value to life. In this traditional use of the word, myth has a sense of sacred expression, primordial revelation. Myths are often referred to as cosmological or cosmogonic and one of their basic functions is to express universals. They have a hidden meaning, not just the meaning of the story. Today there are also myths which belong to legendary tradition.

> Many people who are sceptical of the value of mythopoesis and make negative evaluations of myth do so from a perspective which assumes that there is somewhere an abstract body of truth or facts...Proceeding from the Cartesian subject/object dichotomy, any sort of sympathy for the myth maker will not be gained, because the structure of the argument is set in such a way as to deny validity to the observer (or artist) entering emotionally into the relationship and thereby bridging the dichotomy[7].

There is a growing movement of people who want myth to be interpreted and analysed in a multi-layered way which may include processes like semiotics and deconstruction as well as the more established, although not necessarily less valid processes of socio-functionalism and psychology. Deciding whether the Nullarbor Nymph qualifies as being

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[5]Doty, *op cit*. p.51
[6]*Ibid*. p.16
[7]Doty, op.cit. p.61 (Bracketed words added.)

'culturally important' is intended to differentiate it from private fiction and to suggest that it is a story that in some way uniquely represents our particular (Australian) society.[8]
Often the word myth is used to mean a fiction or non-truth in present day language and has a derogatory meaning, especially to many feminists. Social myths can be counterproductive by perpetuating unfair power relations between men and women. Social myths need to be seen as different and in direct contrast to cosmogonic myths or legendary narratives which many women recognise as being significant and positive.

> Mythology comprises a significant fibre of our lives. Stories, like dreams, can serve to relieve unconscious pressures. Seeking the legacy of the warrior, women constitute to the creation and the re-creation of a positive female mythology. The building of a vocabulary of images is an essential element in our political evolution. Imaging is a radical tool that can help us build inner confidence and dissipate crippling fears.[9]

Most of us growing up in Western culture have received images of women from our mythological past which have often served patriarchal aims. A deliberate selection process has determined who our female models are.

> By discovering our true mythological roots we can demystify, inspirit, and remythicize them; we can begin to fill the overwhelming need for female models of strength and wisdom so lacking in our contemporary culture.[10]

> Mythology can show us Woman's power.

In traditional mythology a nymph is described as a semi-divine being, imagined as a beautiful maiden inhabiting the sea, rivers, hills, woods or trees and frequently introduced by poets as attending a superior deity. She has also been described as a young and beautiful woman. Nymphs were considered to be immortal, or at least very long-lived.

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[8] *Ibid*. p.16
[9] Siew Hwa Beh. 1981. Quoted in Cheris Kramarae, and Paula A Treichler, *A Feminist Dictionary* (London; Boston: Pandora Press, 1985), p.289
[10] Bella Debrida,'Drawing from Mythology in Woman's Quest for Selfhood.' 1981. Essay in Charlene Spretnak,Ed. *The Politics of Women's Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power within the Feminist Movement* (New York: Anchor Press, 1982), p.142

They possessed an amorous disposition and were credited with many love affairs with gods and men, resulting in the births of many children.

Nymphs served as priestesses in ancient temples of Goddesses, especially in sexual ceremonies where they represented the divine principle of flowering fertility and were sometimes known as brides of God. As spirits of nature, the nymphs were believed to embed their souls forever in certain parts of the natural world. Their ancient connection with sexuality was more or less consistently maintained. Even now 'nymphomania' connotes sexual obsession like the moon-madness supposed to motivate the ancient nymphs in their seasons of mating.

> She is not quite a goddess but is definitely idolised and immortal, an object of desire, frolicking and gambolling with the birds and the beasts. Wild and carefree, she is immersed in her natural surrounds. The Nullarbor Nymph is the ultimate symbol of Utopia - hence the Arcadian spectacle.[11]

Joseph Campbell, the well known authority on myth states

> Myth must be kept alive. The people who can keep it alive are artists of one kind or another. The function of the artist is the mythologisation of the world and the environment.[12]

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[11]Christine Trumble and Fiona Vandermark, 'The Nullarbor Nymph - Her Place in Popular Cultural Memory.' Unpublished essay, Sydney 1992

[12]Joseph Campbell, *The power of Myth* (New York:Doubleday, 1988), p.85

CHAPTER 3

THE NYMPH AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

One of the questions which continues to be unresolved about the creation of the Nymph is whether or not she was based on any fact. Was she a product of the imagination, the unconscious or mythological aspect of mind, or was she a product of local history, perhaps glorified and distorted to suit the needs of the men? Was there a yarn about a bush woman which went back perhaps some years prior to the hoax? If so, where and how did that yarn originate? It is well known that there were two people (a man and a woman) who lived in an old rusty car body on the outskirts of Eucla around the same time as the hoax.[1] This could have been an outside element which was the possible trigger for the men's imaginations. According to the newspaper there was an Adelaide woman artist who said she lived near Eucla in a car and a cave and it was thought at the time that she may have been the origin of the Nullarbor Nymph story.[2]

Another paper talked about

> a Sydney woman who had gone bush to get away from pollution and pseudo-living.[3]

Whether there was any historical basis to this story cannot be determined. It is significant to establish the fact that the exact origin of the wild bush woman is to this day unknown. It is very likely though that she was a product of the men's or a man's imagination. As far as Peter Struick[4], one of the four men that decided to put the story to the press, recalls, she was Laurie Scott's 'hallucination'.

It would be equally significant to suggest that the imaginations of the men who started the hoax would not have needed a lot of 'triggering' to create her. Especially under the influence of alcohol. According to Laurie Scott they all lived on the outskirts of 'civilised'

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[1]Personal interview with Sue Wagstaffe who was working at the Eucla motel with Geneice Scott (the 'real' nymph) at the time of the hoax. Adelaide, June 1993.
[2]*The Advertiser*, 12 Jan. 1972. p.9
[3]*The Sunday Times*, 26 Dec. 1971
[4]Interview Peter Struick, Sunday May 1st, 1994

reality themselves. The kangaroo shooting culture was semi-wild. Men and women lived in the bush for long periods, eight or nine months at a time, if not longer. For them, a woman living completely wild on the land was not that far removed from their experience.
Assuming that the idea did originate with four men drinking at the local pub, deciding which one of them started it is impossible as their stories vary. This is important as suddenly it is possible to suggest that the 'creation' came out of a collective imagination or unconscious. Its authorship becomes blurred. This condition was futher exacerbated once the press got hold of the story.

Although the men were obviously aware of the power of the media, it is easy to speculate that they had no idea of the different levels of visual and sexual semiotics in the popular imagination that they would be tapping into. According to the accounts of some of the men involved and to the article quoted in the Prologue, it is possible to further speculate that the perpetrators of the hoax had little conception of how successful their hoax would be and why. They were to a large degree unconscious of what they were doing and to the implications and power of their own actions.

> ...Modern psychology treats the products of unconscious fantasy-activity as self portraits of what is going on in the unconscious, or as statements of the unconscious psyche about itself.[5]

The collective unconscious is a term which we most readily connect with Carl Gustav Jung. To speak of the 'unconscious' at all is entering into complex ground and needs some explanation.

The term 'unconscious' is used in many different senses in both philosophic and psychoanalytic discourse. Although it is generally agreed that unconscious mental processes do exist, it would be naive to think all people agreed on their nature and function. Without entering into the debate, any reference to the unconscious is necessarily a simplification.
Freud's definitions and understanding of the unconscious differed over his lifetime. He did believe that there is always something hidden from our immediate conscious mind.

> The Sartrean unconscious is that which is comprehended but which escapes knowledge. The Freudian unconscious is radically other than consciousness, and Freud's individual can never fully grasp or comprehend all that s/he is or does.[6]

Jung also believed in a personal unconscious by which he means all those personal experiences which have become forgotten or repressed because they are of no use or because they cause pain.

> At its simplest, repression means that a wishful impulse cannot be acknowledged by consciousness and that the search for satisfaction of a wish is conducted according to the conditions imposed by the outside world.[7]

One can see the Nullarbor Nymph as a manifestation of the personal unconscious of the men, a manifestation of their repressed (sexual) desire or she can be described as a product of our collective unconscious, whereby the men, in their inebriated state, become merely the outlet.

Jung believed the collective unconscious exists at a level below the personal unconscious and is something we all share. He believed that myths are like the collective dreams of the human race, and reflect the collective unconscious of a culture rather than the personal unconscious of the individual. Material that stems from the imagination also originates from the unconscious. The imagination transforms invisible material into images the conscious mind can perceive. Only our ability to make images enables us to access the unconscious. These images are symbolic.

Jung's main contribution to the collective unconscious is his theory of archetypes and their relation to symbols. He demonstrates that archetypes appear in symbolic form.

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[5]C.G Jung, 'The Psychology of the Child Archetype.' Published in Dundes, Ed. *op.cit*, p.248
[6]David Archer, *Consciousness and the Unconscious*, (Illinois:Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1984), p.54
[7]*Ibid* p.25

Psychological archetypes are the 'primordial images' or pre-existing 'first patterns' that form the basic blue-print for the major dynamic components of the human personality.[8]

> Identifying an archetype is a matter of sensing that one is keyed into a universal energy system, seeing a powerful symbol that springs from deep within our collective human nature[9].

Archetypes, therefore, are universal to the species. They are collective and bind us together, they are autonomous and well up from inside, often as a compensation for imbalances in the conscious mind, and they are powerful or numinous and give rise to strong emotions and psychic energy.

There is a Post-Jungian school that rejects elements in Jung which speak of a real world out there as a primary reality. This Archetypal school stresses the interior world of archetypal images as the primary reality through which we imagine the world. They believe that the psyche has the ability to imagine realities around archetypal images, and that this world of the imagination therefore becomes the core of consciousness and the core of culture.[10]

There is common ground in the expression of the unconscious and the collective unconscious as an unknown, although not necessarily unknowable, aspect of the human condition. Unconscious desire seeks conscious expression and the Nullarbor Nymph may well have been just such an expression.

Lacan claimed that the unconscious and language are inextricably linked. The presence of unconscious wishes and thoughts are betrayed by the ways in which a speaker uses language. It could be argued that in this case the Nymph was articulated by the media in a way that exposed the unconscious desire of the men that created her.

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[8]Robert A. Johnson, *Inner Work* (New York: HarperCollins 1986) pp. 28,29
[9]Ibid. p.30
[10]Jack Cross, 'Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961): The Confrontation with the Unconscious.' Lecture notes. Studies in Education. University of South Australia. Underdale. 1991

Jungians still say that we must make our own myths to give significance to our lives. Jung also believed that humans couldn't live without some sort of mythological substratum of belief. He suggested that for a true description of ourselves we need the language of myths, a metaphor or a pattern to evoke significance. Freud on the other hand thought that this was all illusory and that reason should be our only guide.[11]

Illusion and fantasy, although fictional are not necessarily 'unreal', and therefore unempirical.

> ...the heavy burden of our cultural background lies upon the weighting of mythology with the sense 'unreal, fictional'.[12]

Myth has always had a tendency in our culture to be rationalised. Rational thinking is an extremely important phase of modern consciousness but may lack important ingredients that are necessary for the psychic balance and stability of the individual.

> Marshall McLuhan declares that 'print created individualism and nationalism in the sixteenth century' and established its characteristics of 'uniformity, continuity, and lineality' as the norm for human consciousness, hereafter known as 'rationality'. Any consciousness that did not conform to these principles was dismissed as 'irrational' and identified with 'illusion'.[13]

For many, the alertness of the waking state is the accepted norm in our culture.

> The fact that it alone is regarded as 'real' by most people - dreams, trance, and cosmic or collective consciousness being classified as 'mythical', is a sign of the devolution of our culture.[14]

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[11] *Greek Fire - Myth: The Gods Below*. SBS. Transatlantic Films Production, 1989
[12] Doty, *op cit*. p.4
[13] Beatrice Bruteau, 'The Unknown Goddess'. Article in Shirley Nicholson, *The Goddess Re-Awakening: The Feminine Principal Today*. (Illinois:Quest Books, 1989), p.74
[14] *Ibid*. p.74

Rationalisation should be used as a tool to uncover meaning but not necessarily as the tool which will disclose all meaning. There is a great deal of support for belief in mythology, fantasy or illusion as a means to self-knowledge and meaning.

> If
> you will
> practice being fictional
> for a while, you will understand
> that fictional characters are
> sometimes more real than
> people with bodies
> and heart beats.[15]

A discussion about the unconscious is best justified when one considers the possibility that the Nullarbor Nymph is archetypal. As well as the more obvious reasons for the success of the hoax, this possibility would help explain why the Nymph also seemed to appeal to women. It could be proposed that women also wanted to believe in some unidentified aspects of the Nullarbor Nymph.

The Nymph could be said to embody the 'Wild Woman Archetype', as first identified by Jungian analyst and storyteller Clarissa Pinkola Estes. It suggests that the Nymph may appeal to something in women's unconscious which transcends their annoyance at the predictable portrayal by the media.

> According to Estes,the condition that is sapping the creative strength and life fire of so many women these days is nothing less than a loss of 'deep instinctive psyche' - a malady brought on by a culture that subtly but systematically degrades women's ancient feminine instincts.[16]

Estes has written a best selling book in which she claims that women can regain their 'wildish natures' through myths and legends which have at their centre the archetypal

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[15]Richard Bach, *Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah*. (London:Pan Books, 1978), p.103

figure - the Wild Woman. Estes believes that women need to get to know this figure if they are to retain their integrity and vitality.[17] She is appealing to the humanist instinctive drive in women to find their innate, intrinsic nature. She is careful to point out that 'wild' here does not mean lacking in self control.

[16]Peggy Taylor, 'Rediscovering the Wild Woman' Article in *New Age Journal*, (Massachusetts:Rising Star Associates. Nov/Dec. 1992), p.60
[17]*Ibid*. p.60

CHAPTER 4

THE NYMPH AND GENDER

Estes, by way of the Wild Woman Archetype, raises the debate about the existence of an essence of femininity or gender, an ancient instinctive Self. Many people believe that gender identity is solely constructed by the environment, language and social conditioning. Perhaps women do have a deep, essential, intuitive Self which may either be enhanced or undermined by social conditioning, but then so might men.

Delegating essential characteristics to either men or women is dangerous and can ultimately only lead to a stereotyping of the sexes. Far better to suggest that men and women are composites of infinitely varying degrees of all human characteristics. Making value judgements about different human qualities also needs to be questioned, especially as many of the so called 'feminine' ones have strong negative implications. Labels like helpless, dependant, hysterical, fragile, timid, weak, submissive, etc. are not qualities that any human being would like to be connected with. Other adjectives like soft, emotional, tender and compassionate, which are also often associated with women, should perhaps be revalued and instated as qualities to be cultivated in both men and women.

Analysing women and men in terms of characteristics, however, evades the issue of whether or not there is a universal feminine or male principle. Is female sexual energy inherently different to that of men? Is there any value in identifying and defining a feminine principal? If one accepts the existence of a feminine principal, how might it best be defined to suit the needs of women today?

Humanist discourses presuppose an essence at the heart of individuals which is unique, fixed and coherent and which makes people what they are. On the other hand

> ...poststructuralism proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak.[1]

Gender acquisition and the construction of subjectivity and gender identity are complex and their theories are often contradictory. It is widely accepted that feminine and masculine characteristics vary from one culture to another. The position

> which ascribes virtually all sex-specific behaviour to cultural learning and almost none to innate biological differences between men and women, does not accommodate the idea that 'feminine' and 'masculine' principles are innate and archetypal,...[2]

This position thus challenges the ideas expressed by Jung and by Estes and subsequently the idea of The Wild Woman Archetype.

Some anthropologists go as far as to abandon the term 'gender' altogether, speaking only of masculine and feminine 'roles'.

> In general, the tighter the definition of sex roles and the more rigid the boundaries, the greater is the tendency for both men and women to express contrasexual tendencies symbolically, by projection, by fantasies about the opposite sex...[3]

The anima is a term originally used by Jung to describe the feminine archetype which exists in men.

> Men have been traditionally conditioned in our culture to identify with the thinking and organising side of life, to be heroes and doers. The unconscious often chooses a feminine figure, threfore to represent man's emotional nature, his capacity for feeling, appreciating beauty, developing values, and relating through love.

One of the functions of the anima is said by Jung to connect men to their emotions. It is possible to suggest therefore, that if the Nymph is an embodiment of a feminine archetype, then this archetype also exists within the psyche of men. The positive anima projection of the male is also a projection of his ideal woman. The Nymph might function as such for

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[1]Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. (Oxford:Basil Blackwell Inc., 1987), p.32
[2]Mary Ann Mattoon and Jenette Jones, 'Is the Animus Obsolete?' Article published in Nicholson, *op cit*. p.145
[3]*Ibid* p.159

men. Men may yearn for their own 'wildish natures' through the Nymph, and for their ideal mates. The Nymph consequently becomes their object of desire on an inner level and in the outer world.

It is important to state that the way the Nymph's gender was projected by the media was critical to the success of the hoax. Her 'sex appeal' and 'feminine mystique' coded her for visual and erotic impact.[4]
There are many examples of this in the press:

> The story of the near-naked white blonde girl, spotted wearing only a kangaroo fur mini-skirt has gone around the globe.[5]

> Australian myths in the past have been lacking in sex appeal. Other countries have their sirens, sylphides, and mermaids. We have only been able to offer the bunyip and Ned Kelly. These haven't got the charms attributed to the Nullarbor Nymph'.[6]

> Eucla plans to run a Miss Nullarbor Plains contest early next year.[7]

It is interesting to note that during the peak in publicity over the Nullarbor Nymph, on at least two occasions the story was written up on the same page as the local glamour girl. Here the Nymph is associated with the obvious sexual signifiers projected by the models. Not to suggest that there is something inherently wrong with sexuality in itself. Not many women would want to abandon their sexuality, despite how it may have been acquired. On the contrary, a woman's sexuality should be seen as one of her greatest strengths. The positioning of the articles about the Nullarbor Nymph on the same page as the models is a direct example of the process that confirms and sustains sex roles in our society and therefore one that should be questioned. The language used in the articles and the images with which the Nymph was connected carry with them codes of control, objectification and 'to-be-looked-at-ness', common to the way women have traditionally been represented in the media. She was coded for the male gaze.

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[4] Trumble and Vandermark. *op cit.* 1992
[5] *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney. 30 Dec. 1971
[6] *The Bulletin*, Sydney. 30 Dec. 1971
[7] *The Daily Mirror*, 30 Dec. 1971

The story of the Nullarbor Nymph emerged in the 1970s, at a time when women were taking responsibility for their role on a global scale. This was a time when the world at large was becoming increasingly aware of its responsibilities towards the environment (nature), and at a time when societal structures were being exposed as fragile and under threat of breakdown. The invention of the Nullarbor Nymph could be seen as a response to these conditions. The Nymph represented corporate significances, meanings that transcended individual needs, desires and values. She was imaginary but made to seem real by the order of language and the network of meanings and values the media provided. What we should now be doing is looking in more depth at this phenomena so that we as a society can understand her full implications.

> Myths provide us with projective psyche models,...of roles, of aspirations towards becoming something other than what we are, of ways of imaging new possibilities as to who we are. They function particularly...to give us role models of masculine and feminine behaviour. They educate us in ways of acting out maleness and femaleness, in interrelating the two, in reflecting on the best traits of each sex, and even in ways of reconceiving the social manifestations of masculinity and femininity within particular historical periods.[8]

Historically a woman has been degraded, as men have been attributed with rationality and intellect and women have been associated with matter, with earth, with nature, leading to ideas of spirit being higher than matter, the body being the prison or tempter of the soul.[9] Thus the status of men was elevated above that of women and the culture/nature dichotomy came into being.

The Nullarbor Nymph can be described as a blending of spirit and matter. Her spirit is embedded into the trees, hills, etc. She is Spirit and Nature. As a cultural construct she becomes an intermediary between the powers above, humanity and the animal world. She

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[8]Doty, *op cit*. p.32
[9]Merlin Stone, Introduction to Nicholson, *op cit*. p.13

also acts as an intermediary between culture and nature and for men becomes a representative, bringing them closer to nature.

CHAPTER 5

THE NYMPH AND WOMEN IN THE BUSH

The relationship of the Nymph to the bush, land or desert is important and embodies the same dichotomy of everything/nothing as the landscape that she inhabits. A woman's body has been used for a long time as the metaphor for the Australian landscape.

> The bush functions as a locus of desire. Animated by man's desire, it takes on the seeming attributes of woman, whether described as a passive landscape or an alien force, a place of exile or belonging, a place of promise or of threat.[1]

The Nullarbor Nymph is an embodiment of this metaphor. As such she calls to our notice a common construction of the land as mother earth or as feminine in Western European tradition.

> this idea allowed many men to use and abuse women with as little conscience as they felt when they used and abused forests and rivers. This connection between woman and nature has since led to the concept within feminism that as we women challenge our own oppression, we also challenge the abuse of the entire planet, a concept that led to the development of ecofeminism.[2]

As men have wanted to control the land, so they wanted to capture the Nymph. All that is wild, free and untamed carries with it the burden of pursuit.

Women's sexuality is the dangerous 'wild' that men must bring under control.[3]
There are many examples of this attitude expressed in newspaper reports.

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[1]Kay Schaffer, *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition*. (Melbourne:Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.61
[2]Merlin Stone, Introduction to Nicholson, *op cit*. p.21
[3]Marilyn Strathern, 'No nature, no culture: the Hagen case.' Article in Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, *Nature, Culture and Gender*. (Melbourne:Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.175

> Mr. Struik said if he spotted the woman he would attempt to take aerial photographs of her.[4]
>
> The trouble with the unexplained in Australia, is that people will not let them be. They are determined to capture them...[5]
>
> ...this doesn't deter parties of men trying to locate her, photograph her and ...hog-tie her and drag her screaming into Eucla.[6]
>
> There was also a headline which read
>
> Hunt a Nymph -
> The internationally famous 'Nullarbor Nymph' is about to be chased from her home town of Eucla to Ayers Rock by a 10-man 'safari' in three vehicles.[7]

Estes believes that

> In psychological interpretation we call on all aspects of the fairy tale to help us represent the drama within a single woman's [person's] psyche.[8]

Applying this insight to the Nymph, as the prey and object of the symbolic hunt, she can be described as having survived the predators. In this case the predators were the media (voyeurs).

> When they tried to get close to her she sped off.[9]
>
> Mr. Marshall said she was seen quite clearly in the headlights of the bus but when he stopped the vehicle she sped into the bush.[10]

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[4] *The Sunday Times*. Perth. 26 Dec. 1971
[5] *The Daily Mirror*. Sydney. 7 Jan. 1972
[6] *Ibid*.
[7] *The Sunday Mail*. Adelaide. 22 Jan. 1972
[8] [8] Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Contacting the Power of the Wild Woman.* (London:Rider, 1992) p.44 (Bracketed word added)
[9] *The Advertiser*. Adelaide. 29 Dec. 1971
[10] *The Daily Telegraph*. Sydney. 29 Dec. 1971

In no account of the Nullarbor Nymph was she ever captured and this is significant. On a symbolic level she can be described as having survived the predator of her own psyche, the natural part of her psyche which inhibits growth, the killing aspect of her psyche whose job it is to see that no consciousness occurs. She has the necessary knowing to outsmart that to which she was prey, both on a physical and a symbolic level.

> To restrain the natural predator of the psyche it is necessary for women to remain in possession of all their instinctual powers. Some of these are insight, intuition, endurance, tenacious loving, keen sensing, far vision, acute hearing, singing over the dead, intuitive healing, and tending to their own creative fires.[11]

The Nymph lives in a landscape which in this case, although mysterious and unknown, is sympathetic to her survival. It could in many ways be described as an Aboriginal landscape, providing her with power and nourishment. Although by necessity white, she is very much at home there. She belongs. She thrives. This is unlike the land traditionally described by white people. Theirs has not been a land which sustains life but one which, although beautiful, has often been the cause of death due to starvation.

The land of the Nymph represents the land of the psyche of which she has no fear. The Nymph could be said to have investigated, lived on, mastered the worst, the barren, hostile and fearful as well as the best, the fertile, 'deep centre' of herself. As such she could be described as the object of desire, the promised land, the mystery and comfort in the emptiness for both men and women.

The relationship of the Nullarbor Nymph with the animal kingdom, in this case kangaroos, is important. In fact, the Nymph was first written up as 'Tarzan Girl' with headlines which read:

> Trappers See 'Tarzan Girl' on Nullarbor.[12]

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[11] Estes, *op cit*. p.44
[12] *The Sunday Times*. Perth. 26 Dec. 1971

She is like Tarzan who was always portrayed as having a dual nature - one human and one animal. Like Tarzan, the Nymph has been granted special abilities and sensitivities which make her survival in the desert possible.

> Eucla's world-spotlighted Nullarbor nymph still runs with her kangaroos...[13]

> She was only wearing a skirt of kangaroo fur and was handfeeding kangaroos.[14]

The kangaroos dissipate much of our fear and provide the Nymph with possible warmth and protection. They give us a possible explanation for her survival. They even make us wonder whether she may have been raised by them.

The identity of the Nullarbor Nymph, having been described in relationship to kangaroos, is like the widespread practice in some cultures called totemism. This involves the bestowing of animal or plant names upon individuals or clans. The prestige of the group or identity is directly related to the animal to which it is identified. The kangaroo is obviously a symbol for Australian identity. The giant red kangaroo is noted for its beauty and is one of the most spectacular of the marsupial species. It is strongly connected with speed and strength, and as marsupial, with nurturing and protection. It is also famous for its fighting spirit, and has often been represented in national imagery with gloves, as a boxer.

According to Kay Schaffer the bush is also an essential component of Australian identity, the central image against which the Australian character is measured. This idea has a long history in Australian literature.

> The bush is seeped in mystery, and passes on this quality to the Kangaroo girl; her allure lies in the very essence of her mystique...linking the Nymph with the timeless quality of mystery of the bush and of the feminine, albeit a mystery tinged with the fear of the unknown.[15]

Kay Schaffer questions the notion of a national identity and suggests it

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[13] *The News*. Adelaide. 31 Dec. 1971
[14] *The Age*. Melbourne. 28 Dec. 1971

> projects a set of ideas which coalesce into an ideal self - the 'real' Australian.[16]

The 'real' Australian is a national type. S/he does not exist. Schaffer goes on later to say that

> national identity can be understood within the terms of the imaginary and symbolic...It represents a construction of the self arising out of fantasies, memory and desire, and is given value through the symbolic order of language.[17]

Again, these concepts were introduced by Jacques Lacan and provide new ways of looking at our own identities living within Australian culture. Lacan challenges humanist ideas about the human subject being fixed. He insists that wo/man's identities are not something that we are born with but are instead something that are created by language and the social order.

To Lacan, believing in a true Self, a final place of knowing, is illusory. Identity and wholeness therefore remain at the level of fantasy.[18] The idea that mythic accounts embody ideas of wholeness remains faithful to this insight. The fact that they are often potent during times when fragmentation threatens social structures remains valid.

These concepts offer a possible framework for this investigation of the Nullarbor Nymph.

> The Imaginary refers to two phases in the formation of the self within culture. It refers to a state of being which is imagined as real but actually arises through fantasies, memories, illusory images of the self and the like...The Symbolic is the order of language and network of meanings through which the social self and social values are constructed, communicated and maintained.[19]

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[15]Trumble and Vandermark. *op cit.* 1992
[16]Schaffer, *op cit*. p.8
[17]*Ibid*. p.11
[18]Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, Eds. *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*. (London:Macmillan Press, 1982), p.32
[19]Schaffer, *op cit*. p.9

An analogy can be drawn between Myth and the Imaginary (in this case unconscious fantasy) and between Myth and the Symbolic (Nymph as metaphor in Australian tradition). The Nullarbor Nymph is an imaginary construct given meaning in Australia through discourse on national identity, in which the bush and women coalesce into the category of feminine Otherness.

The idea of her existence was given status, as her attributes reinforced popular or desirable notions about women, particularly in a masculine locus of desire, attached to an Australian cultural Imaginary.

If one accepts that 'the land, signified as woman, is a site of origin for national identity'[20], and that the Nullarbor Nymph is an embodiment of this metaphor, then it can be said that the Nymph, as signifier, becomes a possible site for Australian national identity.
One can only agree with Kay Schaffer when she suggests that

> Perhaps it is time to register the metaphor of Woman in the landscape and to rethink the authorial Man who comes to represent national character.[21]

[20] *Ibid*. p.79
[21] *Ibid*. p.79

CHAPTER 6

THE NYMPH AND OTHERNESS

According to Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, 'Otherness' is described in two ways. It is used in the sense that Woman has traditionally been defined in relation to Man, the Absolute. Man is the One, and Woman is that which is Other to him.

> Woman is necessary in so far as she remains an Idea into which man projects his own transcendence; but that she is inauspicious as an objective reality existing in and for herself.[1]

Otherwise, Woman has been idealised by Man to the extent that she cannot exist in her own right.

> In some instances, she was idolized as the source of spiritual values, the symbol of a higher life, the mediator between man and God...[2]

Lacan also speaks of 'Otherness'. When a humanist subject projects its desire for certainty outside itself to another 'this other becomes the fantasied place of just such a knowledge or certainty'. This challenge to the unity of the subject is also a challenge to the unity of the sexes.[3] It seems that Lacanian 'Otherness' is not unlike that of Simone de Beauvoir's. For him the woman is defined purely against the man (she is the negative of that definition), and this definition is designated fantasy.

> As negative to the man, woman becomes a total object of fantasy (or an object of total fantasy), elevated into the place of the 'Other' and made to stand for its truth. Since the place of the Other is also the place of God, this is the ultimate form of mystification.[4]

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[1]Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*. (London:Pan Books, 1988), p.218
[2]Dane Rudhjar, 'Toward the Companionate Man-Woman Relationship.' Article in Nicholson, *op cit*. p.171
[3]Mitchell and Rose. *op cit*. p.32
[4]*Ibid*. p.50

A comparison between these two different perspectives is difficult as Simone de Beauvoir's ideas work within a humanist, existential tradition while Lacan works within a French continental post-modern epistemology. Both can be related successfully to the Nullarbor Nymph construct and seem to provide strong evidence for the fact that the Nymph often functions as Other for many observers and almost undoubtably did for the men that created her.

> It is not always women who occupy the imaginary and symbolic space of Other. Objects which stand in a desired or despised relation to man - the land, the Chinese, migrants and Aborigines - can also be so marked. Within the male imaginary they mirror masculine identity by posing a threat to the wholeness of the self. Cultural objects placed in the position of otherness take on the properties of inferiority in relation to Man. Women speak and locate themselves through and within the metaphors of femininity. Australians view the land through the imaginary constructions set up in discourse. It could be otherwise. This analysis proceeds not in order to reconstruct and reinforce the tradition but to question it, and the questioning forms a first stage toward the evolution of a new epistemology, a new space of articulation, and possibilities of meaning new for the land, women (and men).[5]

Traditionally, many men have been able to accept that women exist above them or below them but not as their equal. Having established the value of myth in providing powerful models for women, how then does 'Otherness' relate to myth? If myth is classified as Other, how can Otherness function in a negative way for women and Myth function to her benefit?

The Nullarbor Nymph was invented by kangaroo shooters. It was they who held the guns (or cameras) and it was she who had to play the part. It was the men who were the creators of the story and the active perpetrators of the hoax and she who was the passive actress in the play. As the wife of one of the men, she participated because she was asked to and for the fun of it. As far as can be ascertained, she had no say in who she was or how she would be described. This may have just been a personality trait. Perhaps a more

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[5]Schaffer, *op cit*. p.23

forceful, inventive personality would have had a greater input. Nevertheless, her role in the creation was secondary.

The media then elevated this woman into the status of a Nymph, which, as revealed, lives very much in the domain of mythology and very much out of the realm of the real person.

When related to the Lacanian schema, the Nymph seems to bear testimony to Man placing Woman as the basis of his fantasy. She is either denigrated to the level of animal, creating the precondition for Man's belief in his own soul or she is elevated into the position of an Absolute whereby she serves to secure for Man his own self-knowledge and truth. Whether she functioned like this on a conscious level for the men that created the hoax is very doubtful. The attention this hoax and this construct received by the media, and the response it evoked in the public, suggests that it did function on a deeper level than that for which the men at the bar can be held responsible.

It has traditionally been thought that part of the role of an artist is as a model for autonomous identity. To build up alternative imagery for women is perhaps an aim, to tread the path of 'becoming'.

> Can we forgo will without dying? It seems impossible. One has to want something. It is vitally, not morally, necessary to want something. It is the condition of our becoming. To have a will, it is indispensable to have a goal. The most valuable of which is to become. Infinitely.[6]

> ...Her [Luce Irigaray's] concern with God, and the status of her conception of God and the divine needs to be seen in the context of her projects to create an ideal for women. This is an ideal to which they may aspire, and through which they may create cultural products...[7]

Does this suggest that Otherness can serve women in the same way that it serves men? As women also need ideals, does myth, although Other, function for women? More

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[6]Luce Irigaray, 'Divine Women' in *Local Consumption*. Occasional Paper 8. Sydney. 1986
[7]Liz Grosz, 'Irigaray and the Divine' in *Local Consumption*. Occasional Paper 9. Sydney. 1986.

specifically, can the space of the Nullarbor Nymph come to operate in a positive way for women?

Perhaps the world as composed of 'Others' and 'Otherness' needs to be reordered. Perhaps a shift towards seeing the world and its interconnectedness is appropriate.[8]

[8]Beatrice Bruteau, 'The Unknown Goddess'. Article in Nicholson, *op cit*. p.77

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This dissertation is the basis to practical work which is in process. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions or define a personal position on many of the questions raised by the Nullarbor Nymph. The issues remain active. Time, experience, continuing research and public response will lead to further understanding.

The fact that the Nullarbor Nymph started as a hoax is significant in that it reveals something about our society - to think that we are so easily seduced by the media. The desire of a gullible public to believe and to be entertained is an issue.

> Hoax was a popular nineteenth century form of entertainment that tested the intelligence of the audience; it was less a form of deception than a form of interrogation, and an invitation to find the flaw in an apparent natural truth.[1]

Hoax, as a form, was the vehicle, the tool, which successfully spread the narrative. The Nullarbor Nymph is now connected in people's memories with this form. She is the essential element of what is now a bigger story. However, it is critical to note that people loved her because they could believe in the possibility of her real existence. They were disappointed when she was revealed as a hoax. This in itself indicates that it was not due to the fact that the story was a hoax that the Nullarbor Nymph became such a lively part of people's imaginations. She became famous in her own right, not because she was a hoax.

> Within days of her reported sighting, the Nullarbor Nymph was publicly revealed as a lie and exposed as a hoax and PR stunt. She never existed, except in the popular imagination. It is in our memory that she still exists today as a semi-devine temptress, weilding a mystical power over mortal man, of both fear and longing, and still casting her own magical spell.[2]

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[1]D.Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. (New York:Routledge, 1989), p.279, quoted in Trumble and Vandermark. 1992

The fact that the Nymph lives on in our memories and has appealed to levels in our consciousness that are collective and archetypal is evidence of the possibility that she may continue to live on indefinitely, perhaps 'mythically'. Recent headlines are further evidence of this possibility.

> After 20 years, nymph legend lives on.[3]

A film proposal based on the Nullarbor Nymph has received two successful grants for script development. A production agreement to make the movie has been signed and is waiting on the presently uncertain future of the South Australian Film Corporation. The co-producers of the script also see themselves as myth makers. They too believe that the Nymph is archetypal, although they acknowledge this is not something which is easy to quantify or communicate visually.[4]

According to many references in Doty's *Mythography*, myth forms in stages. The first stage, in this case, was obviously the hoax, the spreading of the story, the humour. The second stage, the analysis and deconstruction, the reconstruction and retelling of the story in different ways, providing new meanings and new levels of appreciation.

Entering the narrative and exploring the potential of the Nymph as a space where women might be able to extend and expand her 'identity', rather than assume she is fully developed (or departed), has been the basis of this investigation. Art is very much a place for developing and building realities and is therefore an ideal place to extend and develop the Nymph, (through film, dance, painting, sculpture etc.). In this way it is possible that women might seize the narrative and possess it for their own ideological, spiritual and political ends.

Entering the narrative in any way necessarily brings to bear a continual changing of the object/subject position.

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[2]Trumble and Vandermark. *op cit.* 1992
[3]*The Advertiser*. Adelaide. 27 April. 1991
[4]Personal discussion with Jeffrey Bruer and Michael Bau, co-producers of 'Nullarbor Nymph' film script. Adelaide, 9 Aug. 1993

> Myth study is never disinterested, objective; perhaps Freud's main contribution is this insight. The analysis of myths ...is always in part self-analysis, and self-analysis is also self-creation...[5]

> Myths convince the believer of their relevance and lead one to participate in them, when they are seen as part of oneself, when one recognises how the personal mythostory or narrative is fused with the cultural or archetypal - or perhaps more acutely, when one discovers the presence of mythemes within one's own story or within the lives of those around us.
> We are what we myth, and we are always in the process of becoming another realisation of our potential selves, another enactment of the deities within.[6]

Women were not the original mythologisers of this myth and therefore the Nullarbor Nymph already carries with it a meaning that is part of masculine desire/imagination. Without doubt, the Nullarbor Nymph was presented by the media in a stereotypic way. The main concern, therefore, is to build works which do not reinforce this stereotypic image.

The Nullarbor Nymph might be better described as archetypal and her value at this level needs to be determined. If the work is left undone, the Nullarbor Nymph will remain in history forever as the creation of men, and through masculine domination and manipulation of the media, be perpetuated in this superficial, stereotypic mould.

It is important to be aware of the coded messages in language and image-making when trying to extend her meaning in culture. A critical position can be useful in extracting some of the meanings of the narrative but it need not mean that one cannot remain open to the possibilities that might exist for women within the narrative.

Although nymphs have existed for thousands of years, and have even existed in Australian visual history, as in the work of McCubbin, Long and Conder, the Nullarbor Nymph, with her own particular niche in cultural heritage, could be seen as being in an embryonic state of development. She is in an early enough stage in Australian cultural history to feel that

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[5]Christine Downing, Quoted in Doty, *op cit*. p.140
[6]Doty, *op cit*. p.24

one might indeed make some contribution to her formation and to the way that she might be perceived in the future.

On a symbolic level the Nymph assumes a central position in relation to the land. With current concerns for the environment, this should be seen as being particularly important. Connected with the kangaroo she represents speed and strength.

The Nymph should be described as being self determining and powerful. She is a symbol of freedom, endurance and survival. This survival is of the spirit, the instincts and intuition. The Nullarbor Nymph overcomes the fear of the bush and the unknown and symbolises the conquering of the destructive aspects of the inner self. To have thrived on the land, in the conditions that she did, the Nymph required characteristics which are not normally attributed to women. To have survived, her role must have stretched far beyond the traditional male/female boundaries.

The Nullarbor Nymph symbolises a coming together of spirituality and sexuality, two domains which have traditionally been mutually exclusive in our culture.

> Some of us have been...developing fantasies of the future, inventing new images of women, in the hope that they will be there for the women of today and tomorrow. These efforts and contributions are of immense value to the building of a body of positive female role models...[7]

The Nullarbor Nymph bridges the essential tension between Being and Not Being, a duality which has structured Western thought throughout its known history. It is significant that this analysis is taking place in a milieu of current psychoanalytic theory and semiotics which questions the nature of reality and the formation of meaning through language.

The Nymph could be described as a manifestation of the dialectic between humanist and postmodern concerns. She can be seen as the Australian embodiment of the Wild Woman Archetype, thereby carrying with her the humanist values already outlined. As an imaginary construction she is evidence of the postmodern or post-Jungian stance that

suggests that our primary reality exists only in the Imaginary, and that the Imaginary becomes the core of consciousness, the core of culture.[8]

> In dealing with stories, we are handling archetypal energy, which is a lot like electricity. It can animate and enlighten, but in the wrong place and wrong time, and in the wrong amount, like any medicine, it can have no desired effect...Archetype changes us; if there is no change, there has been no real contact with the archetype.[9]

Again, only time will tell.

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[7]Merlin Stone, 'Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood'. Essay in Spretnak, *op cit*. p.92
[8]Refer Chapter 3 of this dissertation 'The Nymph and the Unconscious' pp. 13,14
[9]Estes, *op cit*. p.463

EPILOGUE

In 2004, just over 10 years since my original investigation into this archetypal story, it's interesting to note the changes. The movie has not yet been made although it is still in the pipeline! A significant amount of money ($100,000) was offered for a half hour documentary about many aspects of the story - both historical and contemporary - but the person applying for the money wanted to do an hour. They had integrity and felt that half an hour was a compromise. So no documentary has yet been made. A website has been developed and over the past 10 years the links have been growing. Other artists have done artworks and several exhibitions have been shown. The most significant thing for me is the synchronistic timing of an interested gallery owner Colin Burgin, and a bronze casting specialist Bill Glasper, more interested in the work than the money. For the past 6 months we have been working together to make a rubber mould, cast into wax, invest and cast into bronze the life size running figure made in 1993 as my interpretation of the archetypal energy inherent in the Nullarbor Nymph. An exciting project with limitless possibilities.

The bronze was exhibited during the 2004 Adelaide Festival of Arts, and later selected to be part of Sculture by the Sea 2004. At Tamarama Beach the work was exposed to in excess of 350,000 people. Upon its return to Adelaide the sculpture was offered to the South Australian Museum, on an 'on loan' basis and was mounted in front of the Museum for four months, from June to the end of September. Despite the perfect location for this work and lots of very positive feedback, the Museum is apparently not in a position to purchase it and the work is likely to be relocated to the front of the Flinders Medical Centre where the Nullarbor Nymph will become part of their Art for Health Program.

Having the sculptures cast in bronze is a direct way of immortalising some of the ideas expressed in this dissertation so that the narrative will indeed live on forever, giving it a truly mythic dimension. The story will continue to be told in a multitude of ways, with a multitude of different interpretations, ensuring the meaning and value of the narrative mutates to suit the needs of the time.

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