

STORIED CITIES: GEOCRITICISM AND LITERARY CARTOGRAPHY FOR WRITING ABOUT REAL PLACES

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this discussion is to explore how a sense of place can emerge when narrative inclusions are aligned to topographical mapping to create literary cartography artefacts after a geocritical review of a real place: Walyalup/Fremantle, Western Australia. This discussion will explore the underlying methodology of geocriticism (Tally Jr. 2013; Westphal 2011) applied through experimental mapping processes (De Nardi 2014; Pearce 2008; Powell 2010) to construct narrative maps that offer perspectives on how Walyalup/Fremantle's districts have distinct thematic patterns emerging from the geocritical review and can be used to support the creative writing of real places. The district covered here is the West End, which also was the original location of the Swan River Colony and represents interesting collisions between the past and the present. This district is then used with an excerpt of creative writing to demonstrate the application of this model. The larger intention of this analysis is the development of literary cartographic maps to be utilised in a place-based creative writing project that intends to contribute to the storied history already in existence in Walyalup/Fremantle.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sarai Mannolini-Winwood (she/her) is a freelance writer and sessional academic living in Western Australia. As an avid reader she is an advocate for the importance of examining popular-culture literature as a lens to explore the social and cultural perspectives of modern life. She has a BA (Hons) and MPh in Literary Studies, and is currently working on her PhD in Creative Writing at Deakin University.

KEY WORDS

Geocriticism—Place-based literature—Literary cartography—
Creative writing—Fremantle, Western Australia

The city is a complex ‘composite of multiple worlds’, and geocriticism provides an approach to ‘attempt to probe the strata that both undergird and record history, that give it its story’ (Westphal, 2011, p. 139). Australia has a rich history of spatial theory with an understanding of land as an ideological product in literature (Stadler et al, 2016, p. 4; Turner, 1993, p. 32). How a sense of place is understood is influenced by the discourses not only of those who created the representations, but also by those who engage with them, including creative writers. Yet this does not diminish the inviolability that literature creates an *a priori* place, a place that can be read (P. Carter, 1987, p. 348) and written about. By engaging with these representations of place a writer can explore an account of constructed national culture (Gregory, 1994, p. 11; Turner, 1993, p. 107), and through this the discourses surrounding the concept of Australia as a place (Stadler et al, 2016, p. 1). There are numerous ways to approach spatial studies, however, geocriticism offers a shift away from ‘traditionally privileged sites of plot and character to setting’ (Stadler et al, 2016, p. 17), which allows a writer to examine how place is constructed across authors, separate to thematic or narrative restrictions. By mapping across multiple texts, geocriticism instead enables an interrogation of multiple perspectives of a place across time (Stadler et al, 2016, p. 99). This paper discusses the process of applying a geocritical sampling of literature in a real place, and then the use of the findings to develop narrative maps as artefacts to inspire and guide a creative writing process focused on the development of setting that reflects a deeper sense of place.

What is the appeal of place, both for writers and theorists? At the heart of my project lies a fascination with a specific place: Fremantle, Western Australia. Meg Mundell (2018, p. 1) wrote that “[p]laces and stories are innately entwined. The roots of this connection run deep: every story takes place somewhere – and every place is constituted, at least in part, by stories.” The study of spatial theory has a long history and there are many ways to explore how a text demonstrates a sense of place. A geocritical approach focuses on the actual place, “the spatial referent,” (Westphal, 2011, p. 113) rather than the author and their work. Such an approach is appealing as rather than exploring how a single storyteller may present a place, it looks to how the collective works set in the same place can create a true *sense of place*, as connected to Mundell’s (2018, p. 3) definition of it being “an emotional attachment to place, and its associated values, meanings and symbols.” An important project that attempts this is the *Cultural Atlas of Australia*, which uses geocriticism as a metacritical methodology to develop a socio-cultural collection of texts imposed onto a map of Australia (Stadler et al, 2016, p. 26-7). Such works act to increase an understanding of how places in Australia are more than locations, but are developed, storied landscapes that belong in the zeitgeist of Australian cultural identity. David Lynch (1977, p. 110), an urban planner and theorist, suggests that people engage with their city individually, and that although there is shared language about use and essence, their differing experiences shape the larger fabric of its sense of place. A

geocritical approach is about this “patchwork representation of the world” (Tally Jr, 2013, p. 49) that collects together these individual perceptions, as such the narrative cartographer in this way is also geocritically aware; they understand that a place is informed not only by phenomenological experience, but also by an awareness of the literature that already exists.

What is a geocritical review?

Firstly, it can be comfortably said that geocriticism is an interdisciplinary approach (Stadler et al, 2016; Tally Jr, 2013; Westphal, 2011). Secondly, as named, it privileges a geocentered approach to literary analysis. Geocriticism is based on a progressive history of spatial theory with a foundation in the works of Michel Foucault’s ‘Of Other Spaces,’ Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*, and Edward Soja’s *Thirdspace* (which is largely a continuation of Lefebvre’s work). Bertrand Westphal, considered a seminal theorist, devotes the first half of his text *La Géocritique mode d’emploi* to the discussion of the emergence of geocriticism as a methodological approach to examining place-based literature. Robert T. Tally Jr. (2013, p. 2), who translated Westphal’s work into English under the title of *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, first suggested the value of a geocritical approach for writers; he states that literature can provide a way to map spaces, encountered or imagined, to inform a writer’s perspective. At its heart, geocriticism is a spatial approach to exploring how a city can be represented through the literature that has been written about it. Westphal states:

By multiplying textual forays through a space and comparing the results obtained, we will know a little more about it. The fictional text brings out all the folds of time relating to a place. Or better, it imagines the form that a place can virtually adopt. It does not reflect only a past history, but anticipates what the city could be in a possible world that it haunts. Thereby, it ensures its survival in its own way. (Westphal, 2011, p. 143)

Westphal’s concept of exploring a multitude of texts invites us to question the reality of place, asking “what is this city but the paper on which I write, or that you read, at a given time?” He provides a foundation to geocriticism based on previous spatial theories, not to replace them, but as (Tally Jr.) indicates, to provide a uniting umbrella that reduces the need to approach spatial theory from a singular perspective. Geocriticism values a consideration of variety to avoid falling into egocentric understandings of place. For a writer, geocriticism offers a representation of place that can be richly layered (as Westphal [2011, p. 121] suggests: stratigraphically represented like a layered mille-feuille pastry) but is not reliant on a single perspective, period, or style.

A case study of Walyalup/Fremantle, Western Australia

Walyalup is the land of the Nyungar Boodjar, located where the mouth of the Derbarl Yerrigan meets the sea. For tens of thousands of years, the land was managed by the Whadjuk Nyungar people ('Whadjuk Boodjar'). Walyalup is named for the animal walyo and can derive its meaning from walyal (lungs) and up (place of) to signify it as a place of the lungs referring to the seasonal sea breezes ('Pre-Contact Indigenous Fremantle'). It was a meeting place of three major bidi or path ways allowing for trade between communities and corroboree ceremonial grounds ('Pre-Contact Indigenous Fremantle'). It is a place of living and cultural ceremonies.

Fremantle was first named as such with the founding of The Swan River Colony in 1829. It was established as a 'free settlement' with the arrival of the HMS Sulphur and Parmelia in June of 1829, settled on the unceded lands of the Nyungar Whadjuk people, an act that made no acknowledgement of the rightful owners of the land. The interactions between colonisers and the Nyungar Whadjuk people was fraught with violence and abuse, and has left a lifetime of scars on the people of Walyalup. The city was then named for Captain Charles Fremantle who was instructed by Surveyor-General Roe to establish a settlement there. Although initially considered to be the location for the capital, Governor James Stirling preferred the more protected lands further up the Swan River and declared Boorlo/Perth as the capital. When the Walyalup/Fremantle harbour was deepened in 1897 by engineer C.Y. O'Connor to allow for commercial shipping, the former colony become the main seaport, and, with convict labour, an established city.

Throughout its history Walyalup/Fremantle has experienced waves of migrants seeking work and new lives. Now the city operates still as the main seaport for the area, a business district, and a tourist location. Naming is important, and the use of the name Fremantle is indicative of the problematic history that it represents and is being used as a reference label for this complex place, hence the dual use throughout this paper of Walyalup/Fremantle. Walyalup/Fremantle is a place of many stories, but also of many silences.

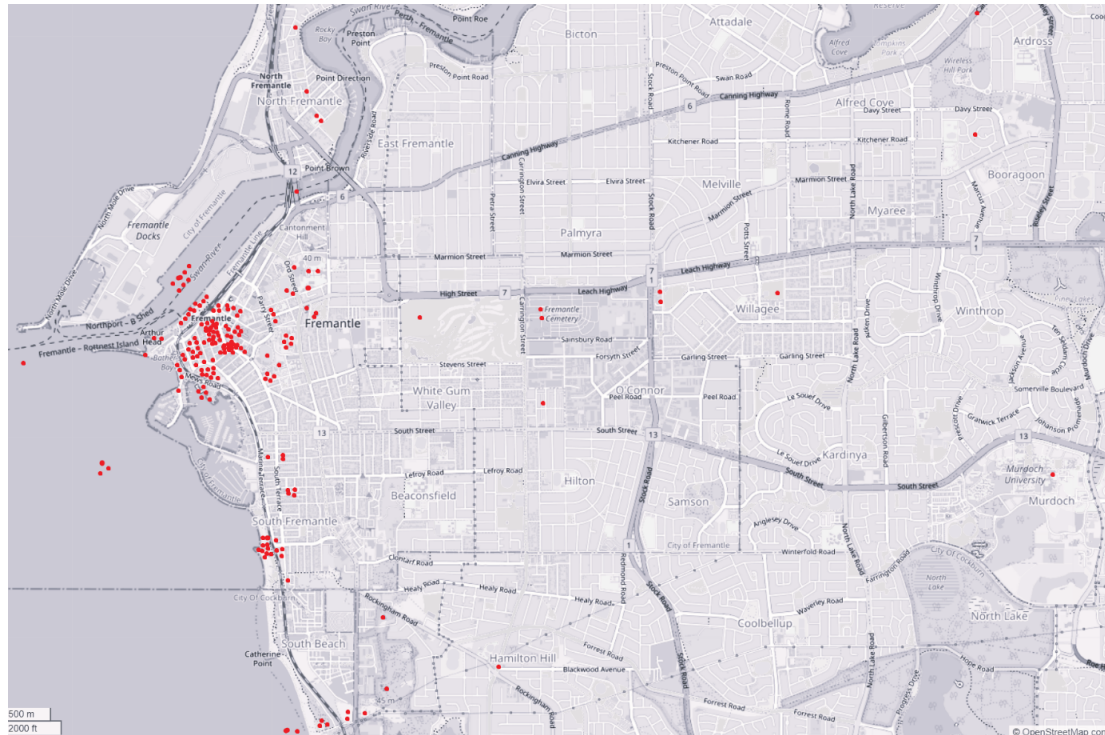


Figure 1. Allocations of identified locations from the geocritical review. Image developed using Open Street Map under the Open Database Licence from: openstreetmap.org

The process of geocriticism as applied to Walyalup/Fremantle literature was undertaken over a period of six months and focused on examining a selected fifty sources that drew from different time periods, authors, and groups of people, and focused predominantly on narratives of experience. Some of the categories included Indigenous voices, migrant experiences, contemporary dramatic narratives, autobiographies, accounts of early settlement experiences and poetry and songs. The geocritical review focused on, firstly a thematic analysis of the topics and experiences of the texts and, secondly, on the mapping of locations within the texts (Figure 1). From this mapping I was able to identify clusters of inclusions from across multiple texts (Figure 2), which I began to categorise as part of the first stage of my literary cartography process. This separation of areas into smaller districts departs from a traditional geocritical approach, and begins to bridge into what I have categorised as literary cartography for writers.

The artefact mapping process



Figure 2. Allocations of districts based on dominant groupings from the geocritical review. Image developed using Open Street Map under the Open Database Licence from: openstreetmap.org

Cartography today, when explored as it applies to literature, is a many headed creature with a wealth of opportunities for writers to engage with, including experimental or counter mapping processes that allow for abstract approaches to map-making practices. Eventhough Kimberly Powell (2010, p. 539) asserts that “maps are thought of, and used, as a directional tool, a graphic means of representing places,” and although I intend to use them as such, but they are also capable of presenting social, cultural, and historical meanings of place, even through traditional forms, such as meaning making from place names. Maps can also be constructed to be “personal and centred on the exploration of emotional meaning in the landscape” (Pearce, 2008, p. 18). It is this approach, which I am labelling as narrative mapping, that I have selected as a way to explore the geocritical data I have collected from the review. One way of using mapping is in line with a meaning-mediated model (Stedman, 2003, p. 674) that acknowledges the locations of a place do not directly create meaning but can influence the symbolic construction of a place. In this way people can incorporate the symbolic meaning as part of the place. For example, a city has a different meaning, or a constructed social sense of place, to a coastal town in Australian literature in how it is described, dominantly used, and lived in. Stephen Spencer (2022, p. 81) suggests cities are particularly complex as strands of representation evolve with “dynamic contrasts and contradictions.” The intention of the following crafted narrative mapping artefacts (presented in Figures 3 and 4) is to find a way to represent the stratigraphic (Westphal,

2011, p. 122) layers of meaning of particular places in Walyalup/Fremantle. As Westphal states, the actuality of spaces is disparate and require their representation to be complex and often asynchronous in use and meaning (Westphal, 2011, p. 139). This is the reason that the narrative maps do not include a deliberate balance of all the components equally meaning that some texts are represented more than others, and not all time periods are present in each district. Rather, the asynchronistic emergence from the sources themselves has been honoured. Also, as to do this with every part of Walyalup/Fremantle would be to devolve into a minutia of places to the point where patterns cease to present in the maps, I have instead focused on key districts and landmarks (Lynch, 1977, p. 47) to present a spatiotemporal view of place as shown in Figure 2. This is the categorisation of the clusters that I identified through my geocritical process, which I have now allocated into five dominant districts for closer examination through a narrative mapping process that will inform my creative writing.

The narrative maps of Walyalup/Fremantle

Figure 3. District A identified as containing Fremantle City, the Swan River Colony Settlement, and the West End. Landmarks of Ugly Land and the National Hotel. Image developed using Open Street Map under the Open Database Licence from: openstreetmap.org.

Colour coding corresponds to time periods: Red 1820-1850; Orange 1851-1900; Green 1901-1930; Blue 1951-1980; and Purple 1981-2014.

1. *The Merchant Princes of Fremantle: The Rise and Decline of the Colonial Elite, 1870-1900*, p.70.
2. 'Fremantle Town,' pp.49-50.
3. *A Place of Consequence: A Pictorial History of Fremantle*, p.5.
4. 'Chinese Labour and Capital in Western Australia, 1847-1947,' p.82.
5. *Journey Beyond Origin*, p.29.
6. *Emma*, pp.102 & 125.
7. 'Glimpses of Fremantle, 1829-1929,' p.21.
8. 'Plague "no imaginative scare",' p.42.
9. *Drunks, Pests and Harlots: Criminal Women in Perth and Fremantle, 1900-1939*, p.32.
10. *Elemental*, p.267.
11. *Heaven Sent*, p.62.
12. *City of Light*, p.33.
13. 'The Golden Town,' p.33.
14. *The Bookshop on Jacaranda Street*, pp.52 & 63-64.
15. *Eyrie*, pp.5-6.
16. *The Silence of Water*, p.168.

Figure 3. District A: Fremantle City, the Swan River Colony settlement, and The West End. Landmarks of Ugly Land and The National Hotel.

In 1901 it was said of Fremantle that it was too filthy to allow the royal visitors...Backyards were disgusting and drains overflowed with 'bedroom slops' which evaporated in the hot sun and left a 'stench'...There were also 'many houses of ill fame', including some where 'French women stand on verandahs to accost passing men and even boys'.¹

A bare, barren-looking district of sandy coast; the shrubs cut down for firewood, the herbage trodden bare, a few wooden houses, many ragged-looking tents...Although considered the chief port of the colony it is but a small unpretending little town.³

Run down, shabby and old. There were still a lot of wooden houses then, and not much had been done to the older stone ones.⁶

Fremantle had a reputation for uncleanliness and was considered 'not even a moderately sanitary town'.⁸

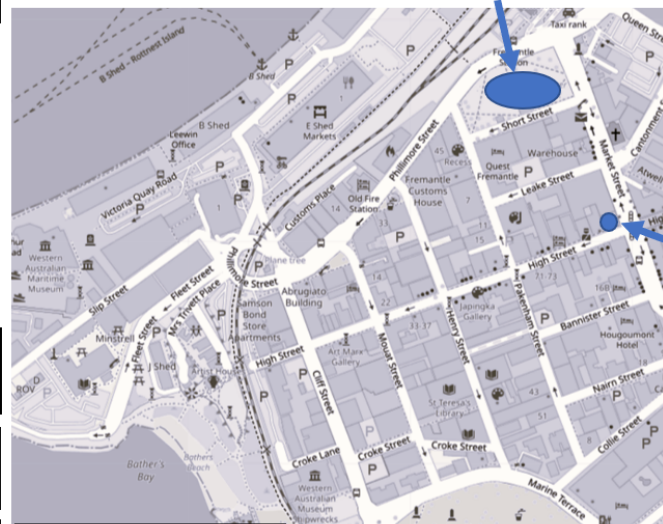
Fremantle was never of good repute as a sanitary town, and it is even of worst repute as a moral one.⁹

A small port town of lime streets and bicycles and horse-drawn carts. The public buildings were made of limestone hewed out of the ground by convicts in the century before, but everything else was flimsy and broken down – shops, cottages. There were sea baths between the jetties...Through open windows came songs and the sounds of smashing glass and horses' hooves, the aching cries of gulls that were smaller and bolder.¹⁰

Spray-painted obscenities spooled the brickwork, while each of the two large windows facing the street resembled a crazy network of spider webs.¹⁴

A place called Ugly Land...I'm told there was boxing and wrestling, concerts and plays and things.²

Merry-go-round and the chairplane and the roller skating.¹⁰



Down with the coolies.⁴

Things were bad and racism was racial discrimination was rife; prejudice, distrust and in some cases hatred of foreigners was aggravated by massive unemployment and widespread misery of workers.⁵

Perhaps because of this wave of migrants that we noticed local prejudice a bit more.⁶

It is a very bad place, owing to the idleness, roguery and thieving of those people brought out as servants.⁷

The pavements were all crowded with the laughing happy throng/ While from the front bar of the National, someone would give voice to a song.²

Dingy, old man's pub before economics and arson left it a neglected shell for many years. Now it was back, boasting black-suited bouncers with headsets, boutique beers and clientele with a healthy disposable income. The National was a microcosm of the transition from old Fremantle to new.¹¹

You got the beery atmosphere of small businessmen and wharfies too.¹²

Been given a significant facelift. Painstaking workmanship had brought it back to its former glory.¹⁴

It was a real town now, a place with meat on its bones.¹⁶

They spring cleaned that town until it was fresh.¹³

Good old Freo. Lying dazed and forsaken at the rivermouth, the addled wharfside slapper whose good bones showed through despite the ravages of age and bad living. She was low-rise but high-rent, defiant and deluded in equal measure, her Georgian warehouses, Victorian pubs, limestone cottages and lacy verandahs spared only by a century of political neglect.¹⁵

District A: Fremantle City, the Swan River Colony Settlement, and the West End. Landmarks of Ugly Land and the National Hotel

The first point to acknowledge is the absence of the context of pre-settlement Walyalup here. The sources that are identified around this area are focused in particular on buildings and the urban development of this part of the City of Fremantle from its origin as the Swan River Colony into, contemporarily named, the West End. As these sources are centred on presentations of the *urban* landscape this area is not mentioned in the Indigenous sources examined in this project, which tended to pre-date colonisation or were not focused on this area of Walyalup. This absence is worth noting as there is cultural significance for the Whadjuk Noongar people around the headland at the mouth to the Derbarl Yerrigan/Swan River (Reece and Pascoe, 1983, p. 28), however, I have categorised this under the district of the River Mouth and Wharf/Port rather than here, even though there is topographical overlap. This absence, however, does imply an imbalance in the understanding of this district based on the literature selected for the geocritical review and is an area that needs further consideration. The other noteworthy aspect of this district is the dominance of descriptions of this area that tended to be separate from the experiences of the people. Whether it was from the migrant or narrative sources, this district was one that was described in good physical detail, but then was absent in the inclusions of discussions of lived experiences. This absence could be due to the fact that this district predominantly contained shopping, offices, and later educational facilities, but was not a meeting place of open land or cafes as is seen in other districts.

This district includes several descriptions ranging from historical sources of early documentation of the appearance of the colony settlement ranging from 1830 to 1901, migrant sources that outline their arrival at the wharf and initial observations of the town from the 1920s to 1950s, as well as contemporary representations in narratives of the dichotomous appearance of the modern city from the 1970s to 2021. The early descriptions of the colony are not positive: “a small unpretending little town” (Reece and Pascoe, 1983, p. 28), “run down, shabby and old” (Ciccotosto and Bosworth, 1990, p. 102), “worst repute as a moral one” (Straw, 2013, p. 32), and “everything else was flimsy and broken down” (Curtin, 2013, p. 267). This continued into the early 1900s with the “drains overflowed” (Reece and Pascoe) and “a reputation for uncleanness” (Quekett, 2022, p. 42) that was only addressed after the outbreaks of the bubonic plague that forced Fremantle to address its sanitation systems. However, the changes in sanitation did not address the wider social issues that continued to arise with the influx of new migrants. The town boasted an inordinate number of hotels and inns that served alcohol and often housed prostitution (Brown, 1996; Straw, 2013). The experience of migrants was one of racism and prejudice that increased with the impact of the world wars and the Great Depression (Atkinson, 1991; Ciccotosto and Bosworth, 1990; Reece, 2012; Srhoy, 1998). There is a distinct point in Fremantle’s history where some of the

decay of the town was addressed, which was in 1983 for the America's Cup race, when "they spring cleaned that town until it was fresh" (Crawcour, 1994, p. 33). This action rejuvenated the West End for a short period, and then with the development of the University of Notre Dame Australia in 1992 the area became a haven for overpriced cafes and gift stores for tourists. However, the contemporary narratives highlight that elements of Fremantle's past remain in the damaged, vandalised and abandoned sites mixed amidst expensively restored Federation limestone buildings and overpriced antique and art stores. Tim Winton, I feel perhaps summarised this area, and the wider essence of the history of Walyalup/Fremantle, best in *Eyrie*:

Good old Freo. Lying dazed and forsaken at the rivermouth, the addled wharfside slapper whose good bones showed through despite the ravages of age and bad living. She was low-rise but high-rent, defiant and deluded in equal measure, her Georgian warehouses, Victorian pubs, limestone cottages and lacy verandahs spared only by a century of political neglect. (Winton, 2013, p. 5-6)

The landmark of the National Hotel is a place that summarises this disjoint and transition best in the history of the hotel. Originally a bank, it then became a shop, before its development into a hotel in 1886, but redeveloped in the federation style in 1902. It then slowly degraded over time, once a place popular with local wharfies, and later with small businessmen (Warner, 1995, p. 33), until it was burnt down in 2007 and rebuilt in 2013 as a boutique hotel for "a clientele with a healthy disposable income" (A. Carter, 2018, p. 62). The other landmark indicated in this area experienced a similar process, but also illuminates the slow developmental changes to the city, which is why so much of its original character still remains. This space, which is now Pioneer Park, experienced a range of uses as basic sheds, storage, housing, all of an incremental nature. After World War 1 the development of Uglie/Ugly Land for the Uglie/Ugly Men Society (Reece and Pascoe, 1983) as a fundraising group to support returned servicemen occurred, operating mainly during the Great Depression for supplying some support and work for unemployed men. In this area of land Ugly Land was built, a carnivalesque venue that put-on shows, dances, and included games of skill and carnival rides, including a "merry-go-round and the chairplane and the roller skating" (Curtin, 2013, p. 126). However, in 1936 the site was closed as it had become rundown and was not in constant use. The area was cleared and sat unattended as barren space for a period before being developed as Pioneer Reserve in 1940 as a park (Reece and Pascoe, 1983).

This district was the first colonised area and was the first area built up by early settlers. It also includes the Round House at Manjaree/Arthur's Head, the initial jail and where early public hangings occurred until the larger Fremantle Jail was completed in 1859. It was at the Round House where John Gavin, aged 15, youngest and first European settler, was publicly hung for the murder of his employer's son (Reece and Pascoe, 1983). Below, tunnelled through the

limestone, is the ill-fated whaler's tunnel, which was constructed in 1837-38, and decommissioned in favour for the Albany port in 1850. There remain original buildings in the West End from the Merchant Princes of Fremantle, which represent the decision to develop and set up a permanent town in Fremantle even though it had been passed over by this time for the site of Boorlo/Perth, further down the river, as the capital (Brown, 1996).

The sources collected in this district, each with their own style, inclusions and genre-influences, offer a patchwork of perceptions that together develop a sense of place particular to this part of Walyalup/Fremantle. This district presents an urban landscape that has weathered changes of economic and political influences, but still retains the bones of the buildings the first settlers built. Although, sadly, much of the Whadjuk Noongar heritage of the place has been lost, the landmark of Manjaree looms over the West End. Through the literature, this district is shown as a place of prejudice, capitalism, roguery, and disrepute, and although it may include high-rent property today, this general miasma of an area of ill repute has not changed. It can be read as a place that is passed by, stopped into, and lived around but it does not present in the sources as an area that captures the experience of living within or among. From the narrative map I believe it is a district that evokes a sense of the city's history, and although it is full of landmarks of significance it is not a node where people deeply live their daily lives. All of which influence how a writer could approach this district: its inclusions and its absences.

An application to creative writing

This process of applying a geocritical review onto an overlay of a topographical map has yielded what I consider a series of narrative maps of different districts of Walyalup/Fremantle. Although the use of mapping is not new to approaches to writing, this process has not been utilised from the data collected from geocriticism in this manner. As a writer, I found this emergence of such specific senses of place in the various districts to evoke a fascinating way to approach the creation of a landscape for my narrative to occur within. Not only in the use of setting descriptions, but the historical changes and the perceptions that are common or contrasted by different sources that give an essence to a place beyond its physical features. The selected excerpts from the sources above not only describe a place, they provide a snapshot into how it is lived in, what it means to different people, how it is valued (or devalued), how it is voice or silenced, and ultimately how a place is more than topography or street names in writing.

Applying these findings, in the form of the narrative maps, to my writing allows for the thematic perspectives of a real place to emerge to the foreground. In this way I am utilising not only my own perceptions, but I am also drawing on a rich storied history of this city. I am not intending to write a personal memoir, but a

narrative that is embedded in a city full of the stories that have come before, as such a geocritical approach with narrative mapping has allowed me to deeply draw from these other voices in a practical manner when shaping my own scenes in these settings. An example of my own writing that was informed by this specific district:

Outside it was still hot, the air thickening as the sun shifted towards the ocean, and the remaining locals and tourists slowed down to an amble in the syrupy heat. The Doctor had not yet blown in and the sun was still hours from sinking. I was meeting friends across the park at Little Creatures before heading to dinner with Nanna, but I had enough time to visit the National quickly.

Stepping into the revamped hotel I had a moment of nostalgia for the old place, when it had been dark inside, smelling of yeast and full only of the murmur of men's voices. Grampa had often brought me in here while Nanna rushed about the markets, too busy to have a slow-moving child clutching at her hem. Now it was brightly lit, spilling out the side to a patio seating area and trendy music pulsed between shouted conversations. I swayed gently between the groups, trying to give the impression of someone just passing through to the bar.

Here I have drawn on the sensory information I collected through the thematic geocritical review: of the weather, the heat, the common references to the westerly afternoon breeze known colloquially as the Freo Doctor; but also, of the recognisable changes that have occurred in this area as it has risen, fallen, and been revamped multiple times throughout its history. Few buildings are a better demonstration of this than the National Hotel, which was raised and rebuilt twice and has experienced a wide range of stylistic changes as well as demographic cliental changes. But I am also drawing on the movement between places; that a city is not a static place, but one full of pathways and transitions. I am also drawing in the people who are using these spaces, both those present and absent, but whose actions are what determine the purpose of a place. The protagonist is not just in a setting, but part of a larger experience of this place that draws, and alludes, to others who are also present as well as those who came before. Although this is a very small example from the larger geocritical process, it does give a demonstration of the practicality of using this type of approach to writing about real places, especially when writing in historical or alternative-history spaces.

The geocritical analysis was useful not only in identifying aspects of a sense of place, but also in providing a greater understanding of how a place has evolved beyond the factual framework that can be discovered through historical research. The process of creating the narrative maps further allowed me to explore the thematic topography of Walyalup/Fremantle and learn how one city full of stories can contain a multitude of perspectives, and with this, districts that have distinct and identifiable flavours all their own. Geocriticism offers

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much, not only to researchers, but also to writers who wish to immerse themselves into the stratigraphic history of the narratives of real places.

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