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Seeing through violence: a theological understanding of the relationship between East Timor and Australia 1941-1999, in the light of René Girard's mimetic theory

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SEEING THROUGH VIOLENCE

A theological understanding of the relationship between East Timor and Australia 1941-1999, in the light of René Girard's Mimetic Theory

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M.Ed (Australian Catholic University)

A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this dissertation have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the dissertation.

Signed: [Redacted]

Susan Connelly RSJ

Date:

1 November, 2017

PREFACE

This dissertation is the result of my interest in the people of East Timor (Timor-Leste) with whom I worked in a variety of situations for over twenty years. It is an attempt to come to terms with the history of a people with whom my own nation, Australia, was deeply involved.

My Religious Congregation, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, allowed me the time and resources to undertake this study, and I thank them sincerely. My principal supervisor, Dr Joel Hodge, has accompanied me with courtesy, diligence and a deep appreciation of René Girard, whose insights have enriched our shared Catholic faith. I am grateful to Dr Hodge for his steady supervision and guidance, his understanding of the Timorese people, and his suggestions and contributions to this work. Dr Terry Veling has been most supportive as my second supervisor and I am grateful for his questions and encouragement.

The Sisters in my religious community at Lakemba have provided me with stimulating conversation and questions that have heightened for me the extraordinary contribution to the world that René Girard made. I thank them for their companionship and prayer, shared agony for justice, and openness to the influence of Girard's insights.

I thank the Australian Catholic University and its agencies, particularly the library and librarians, for all the help I have received. I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to study, and to study at that Institution.

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between Australia and East Timor (Timor-Leste) from 1941 to 1999 is analysed in this dissertation. It focuses on the Australian-Japanese conflict in East Timor in World War II, the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, the Indonesian occupation of East Timor (1975-1999), and the Timorese independence process culminating in 1999. Various studies have explained the history of the Australian relationship with East Timor by examining the political forces that influenced the events. This dissertation applies the Christian anthropology of René Girard's mimetic theory to interpret those forces and provide a new historical and theological interpretation of the relationship.

The dissertation shows that East Timor occupied the place of the scapegoated victim during the events discussed. It argues that there were particular crises - addressed by scapegoating East Timor - which arose from the Australian government's desire to ensure "security" through alliances with larger powers. Through this policy position, the well-being of the Timorese people was actively ignored in the pursuit of Australian safety and protection. In World War II the threat of the Japanese thrust southward impelled an Australian invasion of the then Portuguese Timor. Australia later complied with the Indonesian invasion Timor in 1975 and upheld the consequent 24-year occupation as part of a strategy to retain a positive relationship with Indonesia, and thus fortify Australian security.

The relationship is analysed by using René Girard's mimetic theory. As a theologically-informed anthropology, mimetic theory culminates in an explanation of human society and relationships interpreted through Christ's life, death and resurrection. Three aspects of the theory are applied to the Australian-Timorese relationship: the scapegoat, texts of persecution, and conversion.

Girard presents certain features of the scapegoat process applicable to this study: the existence of a social crisis; a crime which is believed to have caused the crisis; an entity (the victim) which is arbitrarily accused of the crime and which displays certain criteria common to scapegoats; and finally, the violence done to the victim that restores harmony and peace. In Girard's analysis, human stories or myths invariably contain some or all of these features in order to justify scapegoating violence. Girard claims that modern-day attempts to obscure the victimisation of the powerless perform the same functions as myths and he describes them as "texts of persecution". Official Australian documentary records of historical links with East Timor are demonstrated in the dissertation to be texts of persecution that evade responsibility for the Australian policies which contributed to the violence done to the Timorese people.

In Girard's view, scapegoating as a completely effective basis for human culture has been undermined as a result of the biblical tradition, particularly the Christ-event. The Bible shows that the victim is not guilty of bringing threat to the group, but rather is innocent. In particular, Christ's identification with victims and his own death and resurrection reversed the efficacy of the scapegoating structure by demonstrating that it is a lie. Scapegoating victims is therefore a fundamentally unstable means of attaining social harmony. Girard describes the recognition of the lie of scapegoating

as a "conversion". The conversion towards the victim East Timor which occurred in Australia in the late 1990s is argued in the dissertation as a moment of national recognition of the innocence of the victim. It resulted from the inspiring resistance of the Timorese to their oppression and culminated in overwhelming Australian support for Timorese claims to independence. The dissertation shows that claimed Australian traits (such as fairness and independence) did not characterise official Australian policies during the historical periods discussed. Instead, it was the courageous resistance of the Timorese people that exemplified prized Australian values. The dissertation thus allows considerations of fear, suffering, nonviolence, forgiveness and conversion to form a different yet comprehensive analysis of the relationship.

"Crucify him!"
"Why?" Pilate asked them,
"What harm has he done?"

(Mark 15:13b-14)

INTRODUCTION

Background

One year after the Dili massacre, in which over 200 young people were shot down by the Indonesian military in East Timor's capital, I attended an event that moved me to the core. I walked around the room, looking at the photographs on the walls: lines of bloated bodies, mangled bodies, dead bodies. I saw the skeletons with eyes, the living dead children. And I saw the man with the barbed wire cutting into his skin, the flay marks on his buttocks. They were dead, all dead. How many dead? I knew very little of the story, so I went to the desk and bought the book.

This event, a book launch in December 1992, had brought together about seventy people of various political and religious persuasions, all earnest, all keen to know more and read Michele Turner's "Telling East Timor: Personal Testimonies 1942-1992";[1] a small band of Australians in sympathy with the Timorese people and wondering what could be done. Faces were upturned as Justice Michael Kirby spoke from the landing, the stairs to either side of him filled with the overflow of people. The venue was Callan Park at Rozelle in Sydney, full of its own history of heartache, bewilderment, schizophrenia, desperation; a deteriorating place earmarked for development.

The frenzied, arresting summons of the *babadook,* a small Timorese drum, accompanied the beautiful young man in the traditional dress of a warrior-king,

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[1] Michele Turner, *Telling: East Timor, Personal Testimonies 1942-1992* (Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1992).

dipping and weaving with his sword, his feet prancing high, his shoulders rippling in the light. There were speeches: mind-blowing, incomprehensible, their sorrow hanging heavily in the air. Applause. A question or two. Sorrow.

My dominant feeling was shocked anger. I could hardly believe that this was happening in Timor, the former Portuguese colony so near to Australia. In the next few months connections with the Timorese community in Sydney gave me some understanding of life under Indonesian rule. I caught glimpses of the history of East Timor, including its connections to Australia. Following this, my Catholic Religious Congregation, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, allowed me for many years to pursue this story of injustice as part of a ministry with the Timorese people in the preservation and promotion of their main local language, Tetun. Efforts to support the people's threatened identity brought me to the narrative of death, torture and destruction which was the Timorese story since World War II. I tried to make a difference and became involved with the Timorese people both in Australia and in Timor itself. Yet I was always confronted by the question: *Why?* What could account for the suffering of this small group of people, so closely aligned with Australia geographically and historically? How can one comprehend the scale of the suffering? What justification could there be for such experiences so close to my nation and within my lifetime?

As with many Australians, I am a witness: a witness from afar, not having suffered atrocity or the violent death of loved ones. Being a witness is an involvement, as one cannot see violence without decision.

In a sense, it is easy to be a prosecutor, to be against the Indonesian invasion and oppression, to oppose the Australian involvement. It is easy to start as a defender of the Timorese, to draw attention to their courage, their tenacity, their victimisation. But it is far more difficult to be a witness for humanity, a witness summoned to appear before a judgement in the mangled mess of human life and try to understand its complexity. Here the discovery of the work of René Girard opened for me a means of articulating the witness, providing me with an avenue through which to understand justice, violence, mercy, deceit, sorrow and death in relation to East Timor. Girard's theories allow for a fresh approach to seeing violence within the human condition, an approach that opens fresh theological insights, and which depends on the scriptural presentation of the Christ-event for the fullness of its premises. A Girardian perspective on the relationship between East Timor and Australia provides me, as a witness, with a means to understand and see through violence, all within the context of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Thus, as an Australian Catholic witness, I analyse the relationship between Australia and East Timor (now Timor-Leste),[2] attempting to understand the background and implications of Australian institutions, agencies, people and groups as forces affecting the Timor tragedy. Such a reflection entails assessment of historical actions arising from Australian policies and practice that affected the relationship.

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[2] The present Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste was known as "Portuguese Timor" until Portugal's withdrawal in 1974, and "East Timor" until 2002. These terms will be used during the relevant periods of time discussed in this dissertation.

Focus of the Inquiry

Numerous analyses and commentaries exist which detail the political and economic realities of the history of the relationship between Australia and East Timor. However, as Australia's small neighbour consolidates its recent hard-won independence, and as Australians become further distanced from the events, there is a need for an analysis which considers the deeper reasons behind Australian decisions and actions. This dissertation examines Australian involvement in the relationship as largely detrimental to East Timor. It considers the Timorese people's heroic responses to the violence they faced as pivotal to the ultimate Australian solidarity as the 21st century approached.

As a theological reflection in the light of the Christian Gospel, the dissertation is concerned with the underlying motivations of human actions, discerning the forces beneath a contentious series of historical connections which formed the relationship. The theological anthropology of René Girard provides the structure for understanding the events and the suffering which occurred. Applying Girard's insights into mimetic theory, violence and scapegoating to the relationship presents a current example of his perception of the victimage mechanism as the fundamental driver of human interaction. In particular, Girard's understanding is that the Bible, particularly the Gospel accounts of the death and resurrection of Christ, illuminates the status of the victim as innocent. This revelation unveils the deception found in ancient myths and in their modern-day counterparts, "texts of persecution", which are founded on the blame of victims and the exoneration of persecutors. The category of texts of persecution is a key feature of the dissertation. Investigation of certain official Australian documents concerning

each of the historical events finds that they contain high levels of distortion and omission. As documents issued with the authority of government but containing questionable content which ignores or belittles the situation of the Timorese people, they are accurately described as "persecutory". Applying Girard's anthropological approach to the Australia-East Timor relationship thus provides a basis for understanding violence and the efficacy of Christian revelation, especially in regard to violence.

Additionally, engaging in a case study such as that of the Australia-East Timor relationship can contribute to the discourse concerning Australian self-understanding. It can specify underlying contradictions in that self-perception and provide greater empirical evidence for deeper self-assessment. In these respects, a theological interpretation poses moral challenges concerning national truth-telling, honest dealing, and the value placed on the lives of non-Australians.

A significant moment in this analysis involves the increasing Australian concern for the Timorese people and eventual championing of their cause. It reflects on the solidarity movement that grew in response to Timorese persecution, where the suffering of the Timorese and the example of their courage and forgiveness called forth responses of compassion towards the vulnerable, illustrating Girard's concept of conversion. The record of Australian responses to the plight of the Timorese people in their experience of persecution is explored in view of values and ideas of identity traditionally claimed as "Australian". The reality of forgiveness as presented in the Christian gospel and interpreted by Girard as the fundamental resolution of victimisation is seen in the response of the Timorese to

the suffering they endured and, as such, constitutes a primary Christian challenge to the Australian people.

The Relationship

East Timor and Australia

The two parties to the relationship being studied in this dissertation, Australia and East Timor, can be described as "imagined communities". Benedict Anderson's phrase points to the limited yet sovereign status of nations, where no one member could ever know all the others, yet from its cultural roots the nation generates communities willing both to kill and to die for it.[3] Charles Taylor expands this idea, writing of the "social imaginary" which "enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society."[4] Far from fictitious, the social imaginary is present in large groups, if not the whole society, covering expectations between people, how they "fit together with others".[5]

Despite major differences of size, ethnicity, colonial history, culture and status as recognised nations, the social imaginaries of both Australia and East Timor have the common purposes of nurturing their respective societies, protecting and ennobling shared existence, and finding and expressing the meaning of human life. Bound together psychologically, socially and sometimes physically, and also

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[3] Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism,* rev. ed., (London: Verso, 2006), 7; Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 2.
[4] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 23.
[5] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 23.

with past times and with the dead, the recognisable unities of Australians and Timorese are constructed.[6]

Nevertheless, Taylor's "social imaginary" not only embraces essential if indefinable aspects of nations, but also allows for reflection on the possibility of a false imaginary.[7] He states, for example, that belief in the principle of democracy could lead people to imagine that it is already realised in their society, whereas the maintenance of this belief requires them to ignore or deny evidence of some of the people's exclusion.[8] The claiming of certain characteristics within a social imaginary, therefore, does not guarantee their actual existence. Thus Australian projection of national characteristics such as fairness or loyalty did not assure their practice in relation to the Timorese people any more than lack of political experience undermined the Timorese capacity for independence. Additionally, the existence of some oppositional forces within the Timorese people was incapable of negating the desire for independence which came to form the overarching Timorese imaginary, just as the false Australian social imaginary of Western superiority was not universal. It is in this sense the dissertation assesses, in particular, how the group which identifies as "Australian" related to that identifying as "Timorese", and how that relationship was influenced and changed.

Identity and Action

Identity is created through relationships with others upon whom we rely for constant re-evaluation of self. What is done in those relationships, especially

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[6] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 145.
[7] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 183.
[8] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 183.

concerning the vulnerable other, expresses who we are. It is therefore essential to an understanding of Australian identity to consider whether values generally claimed as "Australian" were demonstrated in the events which affected close neighbours in situations of poverty and oppression, such as the Timorese people. In this regard, the Australian government and people faced a choice that became starker, particularly over the course of the Indonesian occupation: to stand in solidarity with the victim, or to support the victimiser who was becoming increasingly violent and brutal in its suppression of a nonviolent resistance. This choice unveiled the victimised "other" that called for the demonstration of claimed Australian values. This dependency on the victimised "other" for Australian identity was stridently denied, but became increasingly difficult to resist.

Whilst the focus here is not to add to the various inconclusive efforts to define any Australian "identity", the documentary record shows that in its relationship with East Timor, Australia in many ways did not live up to the values it claims as its identifying features. As a result, I suggest that Australian involvement in Timor's history contributed to the formation of an Australian identity which has traits opposite to those claimed, that is, one where loyalty, the 'fair go', independence, and support for the underdog were neglected or betrayed. In this regard, the impact of a *realpolitik* foreign policy markedly influenced Australian identity. Australian responses to the East Timorese situation illustrate underlying contradictions between what Australian governments and agencies say and what they do.

Unpalatable aspects of history and the tendency to ignore or deny them illustrate the need for a continuing reflection and discourse about identity.[9] A willingness to accept the facts of a darker side to the history and culture of one's nation involves being able to discern the ethical value of attitudes and actions. This is particularly so in relation to the vulnerable, and through principled choice to determine possibilities for the future.[10] An honest appraisal of Australian values and their practice in both formal and informal history is required "to determine who we might be as much as who we think we were."[11] In particular, analysis of the Australian/Timorese relationship charts how a victimised people can pose a challenge to and provoke change in a politically stable and economically affluent neighbour. Because of the level of Timorese suffering and the substantial factors which remain unresolved, the relationship with East Timor provides an essential platform for such scrutiny.

History of the relationship

The dissertation investigates the three major historical periods during which the relationship between Australia and East Timor was formed, that is, during the Australian presence in Timor in 1942, the Indonesian invasion of 1975, and the 24-year Indonesian occupation, culminating in the definitive changes that occurred in 1999. As the matter of the Timor Sea resources was associated with the Indonesian invasion and occupation it also forms part of the discussion.

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[9] Miriam Dixson, *The Imaginary Australian: Anglo-Celts and Identity 1788 to the present* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), 30; Nelson, Gallipoli, Kokoda, 216.

[10] Dixson, *The Imaginary Australian,* 13; Gregory Melleuish, *The Packaging of Australia: politics and culture wars* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1998), 14.

[11] Hank Nelson, "Gallipoli, Kokoda and the Making of National Identity," in *The Australian legend and its discontents,* ed. Richard Nile (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press. 2000), 216.

World War II

The first feature to be investigated is Australia's presence in East Timor in World War II, which was the scene of substantial Australian connection with, and sympathy for, the Timorese. However, it is the subject of subsequent ambiguous historical treatment. In December 1941 several hundred Australian troops were inserted into what was then known as "Portuguese Timor" against the wishes of the Portuguese administration. Two months later Japanese troops arrived, their numbers steadily increasing over the next fourteen months because of the success of the Australians and their Timorese supporters. The Australians withdrew early in 1943 while the Japanese stayed until the end of the War. The loss of Timorese lives was extraordinary – estimated at 40,000 people – when compared with civilian losses in other theatres of the War. The positive relationship which developed between the Australians and the Timorese people was viewed as significant then and in later decades.

However, there is a dearth of reflection on the effects of the Australian presence in Timor, with the existing literature concentrating more on the unquestioned heroism of the Australians rather than on the courageous Timorese.[12] Unresolved matters connected with the Timorese/Australian World War II episode betray a tendency to acknowledge some historical facts and ignore others, and have implications for the veracity of Australia's claim on certain values. For example, there is a lack of recognition in the Australian media, popular literature and school curriculum of the importance of the Portuguese Timor campaign and the

[12] B.S. Callinan, *Independent Company: the 2/2/ and 2/4 Australian Independent Companies in Portuguese Timor, 1941-43* (Heinemann: Melbourne, 1953); Christopher C.H. Wray, *Timor 1942: Australian commandos at war with the Japanese* (Port Melbourne: Mandarin, 1990), 108-133; Paul Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground: a gripping account of Australia's first commando campaign Timor 1942* (Hachette Australia: Sydney, 2010), 122-137.

large loss of Timorese lives, despite the statement "Your friends do not forget you" printed on leaflets and dropped all over Timor by the Australian government in World War II. In a nation like Australia where war memories are important, and where loyalty to one's friends is claimed as a value, it is intriguing that this campaign has been neglected, and thus reflects a sense of shame at the abandonment and loss of Timor. Moreover, later political and economic interests with Indonesia seemed to override this war narrative. Given subsequent history, all of this has serious implications for how Australia and Timor each understood their relationship, and for later Australian government actions and purported Australian values and identity.

The Indonesian invasion

The second important feature is the Indonesian invasion of East Timor upon the withdrawal of the Portuguese in 1975, an invasion which Australia did not oppose. Within the first few years of the invasion between 60,000 and 100,000 Timorese people are reported as having been killed.[13] Histories of this conflict identify the interplay of forces prevalent at the time, such as the international pressures of communism and the upheavals in Portugal, as well as the domestic political situation of the Whitlam government. Views were expressed that East Timor would have been better served as part of Indonesia.[14] The Australian journalists known as the "Balibo Five" and another, Roger East, were murdered at the time of the invasion. Despite numerous inquiries, their deaths remain the

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[13] John G. Taylor, *East Timor: The Price of Freedom,* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 71; James Dunn, *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence,* 3rd ed., (Double Bay, NSW: Longueville Books, 2003), 268.
[14] Clinton Fernandes, "Clinton Fernandes on Flood's Memoir excerpted in Public Sector Informant" ADFA website, "School of Humanities and Social Sciences – East Timor" UNSW Canberra, accessed 3 June, 2014, hass.unsw.adfa.edu.au/timor_companion/.../CF%20on%20Flood.pdf

subject of conjecture, denial and official inaction.[15] It has been claimed that suppression of the truth regarding the murders characterised official Australian action and reports, and that in many respects, this incident and its cover-up became symptomatic of successive Australian governments' policies in relation to the Indonesian invasion and subsequent occupation.[16]

The Occupation

The third feature is the 24-year occupation of East Timor by Indonesia, which decimated the Timorese people and made the case of East Timor one of international concern.[17] Between 102,000 and 183,000 Timorese people out of a population of 650,000 died during the occupation through unnatural causes, such as extra-judicial killings, torture and politically-induced starvation.[18] The period was one of "deliberate State-sanctioned violence to achieve political outcomes."[19]

Significant commentary highlights Australian dependence on Indonesia's favour and the resulting effects on policy regarding East Timor.[20] Throughout the occupation, Australian governments gave succour to Indonesian desires. In 1979 Australia gave *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty and during the 1980s argued that the matter of East Timor be taken off the United Nations

[15] Jill Jolliffe, _Balibo_ (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2009); Pinch, D. *Inquest into the death of Brian Raymond Peters: Coroner's Report,* accessed 10 June 2014, http://www.etan.org/etanpdf/2007/Peterssinquest1.pdf

[16] Desmond Ball and Hamish McDonald, *Death in Balibo Lies in Canberra* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 122-145.

[17] Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR),* (Dili, TL: CAVR, 2005), 3.17. 430-469.

[18] Commission, *CAVR,* 6.1.1.

[19] Geoffrey Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here, We Will Die: How Genocide Was Stopped in East Timor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 230.

[20] Don Greenlees and Robert Garran, *Deliverance: The inside story of East Timor's fight for freedom* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 111; David Scott, *Last Flight Out of Dili: Memoirs of an accidental activist in the triumph of East Timor* (North Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2005), 347.

agenda: both matters being associated with the Timor Sea negotiations.[21]

Australia was implicated with other international actors in providing weapons, military training and passive complicity in the subjugation of the Timorese people.[22] Publication of the facts of the oppressive situation and the opposition of the Timorese to Indonesian rule resulted in increasing unease internationally and in Australia.[23] A pivotal moment had been the filming and broadcasting of the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre, also known as "the Dili massacre", in which more than two hundred young people were killed, increasing Australian and international concern. Many Timorese who survived massacres or feared for their lives after political activities came seeking refuge in Australia and were denied refugee status, but their presence as asylum seekers garnered support for their people through the growing conversion they facilitated in the Australian people.[24]

Throughout the occupation, successive Australian Government policy opposed the prospect of East Timor becoming free. This cast serious doubt on subsequent claims by former ministers, including Prime Ministers, that they were generally neutral or even gave covert support.[25] Moreover, levels of compliance, cooperation and material assistance indicate long-standing complicity with

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[21] Clinton Fernandes, *The 1982 General Assembly Resolution. ADFA website, School of Humanities and Social Sciences – East Timor,* UNSW Canberra, accessed 13 Nov. 2014, http://hass.unsw.adfa.edu.au/timor_companion/the_1980s/general_assembly.php

[22] Joseph Nevins, *A Not-So-Distant Horror: Mass Violence in East Timor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 13; Geoffrey C. Gunn, *Complicity in Genocide: Report to the East Timor 'Truth Commission' on international actors* (Geoffrey C. Gunn, 2006), 118-126.

[23] Hugh O'Shaughnessy, "Reporting East Timor: Western Media Coverage of the Conflict," in Paul Hainsworth and Stephen McCloskey, eds. *The East Timor Question: The struggle for independence from Indonesia* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2000), 31-40.

[24] Amanda Wise, *Exile and return among the Timorese* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Private collections.

[25] Gunn, *Complicity in Genocide,* 202-207; Stewart Firth, *Australia in international politics: an introduction to Australian foreign policy* (St Leonards NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999), 190-199; Jim Aubrey, "Jakarta's Trojan Horse in East Timor," in *The East Timor Question: The struggle for independence from Indonesia,* ed. Paul Hainsworth and Stephen McCloskey (London: I.B. Taurus, 2000), 133-147.

Indonesia to preserve East Timor's status. Additionally, the ongoing dispute

concerning the resources of the Timor Sea developed during the period, involving

complicated efforts to secure the resources in an unstable political climate. In

1989 Australia and Indonesia signed the Timor Gap Treaty which divided evenly

the resources of the Timor Sea between Indonesia and Australia. Claims of

unfairness and greed, and later of spying and duplicity, accompanied the history

of the disputes.[26] Thus, a variety of policies and practices of support for Indonesia

rendered Australia a partner in the victimisation of East Timor.

Nevertheless, significant popular opposition to government policies influenced

the Australian Government in the late 1990s to use political changes in Indonesia

to modify its stance. Internal Australian dissent and solidarity were inspired by

the Timorese people, and led to policy change and comprehensive national

support. The Australian-led military force INTERFET[27] was formed and

supported the transition to local rule, while the UN administrated the country in

preparation for the Declaration of Independence in 2002. Many ordinary

Australians actively supported the Timorese struggle to form an independent

Republic.

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[26] Paul Cleary, *Shakedown: Australia's Grab for Timor Oil* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2007); Frank Brennan, *Time to Draw the Line: Finding a Just Settlement between Australia and Timor-Leste* (Alexandria, NSW: Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, 2013); Kim McGrath, "Oil, gas and spy games in the Timor Sea" *The Monthly* (April 2014), accessed 10 July, 2014, http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2014/april/1396270800/kim-mcgrath/oil-gas-and-spy-games-timor-sea

[27] INTERFET - International Force for East Timor.

Methodology

Mimetic Theory

The lens through which this dissertation interprets these historical periods in the relationship between Australia and East Timor is found in key concepts within René Girard's mimetic theory that present insights into human violence. René Girard developed mimetic theory over the course of an academic career that ranged across a number of disciplines, beginning with literary-criticism and moving into anthropology, psychology, biblical studies and history. Mimetic desire is the fundamental premise on which Girard's understanding of humanity is built. Human beings, according to Girard, imitate each other in intense and sophisticated ways, and hence desire what others desire.

Girard traced how imitative human behaviour led to rivalry and violence, which is based in the misperception that one is autonomous, the originator of one's desires. In the work of certain modern novelists Girard perceived a growth towards an understanding of human beings as being dependent on the desires of others. They then projected such insights onto the characters in their novels. This change of perspective also manifested itself as a recognition of the motivating power of rivalry, and then a turning towards the other, which Girard described as a conversion.

Through further studies in ancient mythology, cultural anthropology and psychology, Girard perceived that violence resulting from mimetic rivalry in ancient societies was quelled by means of the scapegoating of one individual, or a group. Focusing violent responses on one person or group relieved the members

of the wider group from attacking each other, thus saving the community from itself. Belief in the actual guilt of the scapegoat was fundamental to the mechanism's success. The sacrifice of this "scapegoat" as a successful way of dealing with rivalry and violence became the basis for religious and cultural measures which allowed the communities to cohere. Girard's later work expanded his previous insights into the scapegoat mechanism, demonstrating the connection of myths to scapegoating. These supernatural, and often fanciful, stories were a disguise developed over millennia to conceal the guilt of those responsible for the violent sacrifice of victims.

Girard's insights into mimesis in literature and anthropology reached their zenith in his investigations into the Bible, particularly in the Gospel accounts of the passion of Jesus Christ. Here the innocence of the victim was displayed, and the crowd, alongside the political and religious leaders, were unveiled as guilty. Girard perceived fundamental similarity between the novelists' changed understanding of themselves as dependent on the "other" for their true identity and the Gospel's revelation of the innocent "other" made to bear the responsibility for social cohesion by being scapegoated. Recognition of the dependency of human desire on the desire of the "other" accompanies a realisation of the innocence of the scapegoated victim. The conversion inherent in both reversals challenged previous notions of the self in relationship with the world.

Girard argued that the Gospels are the reversal of mythic texts, and therefore the catalyst for humanity's ability to appreciate the innocence of the victim, despite such development advancing at a glacial pace. Modern-day myths, however,

known as "texts of persecution", continue to exonerate persecutors in present-day

scapegoating efforts through narratives which are attempts to conceal guilt and

deflect blame.

This dissertation utilises significant aspects of mimetic theory to analyse the

relationship between Australia and East Timor. It is primarily a theological

interpretation, applying to East Timor the status of "scapegoat" within an

understanding of that term arising from the Gospels' presentation of the innocent

Christ. The Australian documentary records are shown to be modern day myths,

described by Girard as "texts of persecution". Resulting from this investigation, I

believe that in the relationship with East Timor, Australians were, and still are,

presented with two interrelated challenges: an opportunity for a deeper

understanding of the Australian nation, and an opportunity for conversion, that is,

a growth towards a change of heart in relation to the victimised "other". The three

aspects of mimetic theory which particularly guide this dissertation are Girard's

understanding of the "victim" (or scapegoat), "texts of persecution", and

"conversion".

The Scapegoat

Girard maintains that the phenomenon of scapegoating, the killing or expulsion of a

victim, was designed to prevent or limit social violence. Human beings traditionally

used scapegoating to diffuse aggression by sacrificing either humans or animals as

victims, thus replacing wholesale violence of "all against all" with an "all against one" method of bringing peace and calm, however short-lived.[28]

The word "victim" is used in the dissertation in the technical sense in which Girard defined it, and which is central to his work. In this context "victim" means the "scapegoat", the one sacrificed by killing or expulsion by a crowd for social protection or order. Victimisation is the mob's response to its internal rivalrous and violent strife. While the scapegoat or victim may well be guilty of a crime or transgression, in Girard's usage the "victim" is structurally innocent, as it cannot be held responsible for all the rivalries and tensions that split a community and lead to mob violence. Furthermore, as Girard explains, unless the consciousness of the role of the victim is augmented by the willingness to forgive and to embrace nonviolence, violence can escalate, with those responsible for the scapegoating themselves becoming the "victim" through reprisal. In Girardian terms, the word does not have the pejorative or colloquial connotations of helplessness or passivity usually ascribed to it, though Girard does identify how victims are powerless before the mob. Throughout this dissertation, an application of the concept of scapegoating to East Timor as a vulnerable and inconvenient entity within global politics provides a different perspective to analyses based solely on political or economic considerations. It provides an avenue for anthropological and theological analyses, which provide a more fundamental way of understanding the reasons behind Australia's attitudes and actions. In particular, focussing on the record of major events in the light of Girard's insights brings to light key aspects neglected in the general literature. The literary and anthropological resources in Girard's theory allows for a more accurate identification

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[28] Michael Kirwan, *Discovering Girard* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004), 48-49; René Girard, *The Girard Reader,* ed. James G. Williams (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 104-106; 107-117.

of the status of East Timor in the shared history with Australia, Indonesia, the USA and others, and the depths of Australian complicity in its victimisation. This throws light on the relationship by reflecting on the way official Australian accounts understand past actions, and by considering external influences which affected Australian decisions. Furthermore, Timor's role as victim and its response to the violence and suffering inspired an Australian conversion towards the vulnerable other, thus affecting Australian self-perceptions and understandings of its historical actions.

Girard identifies "stereotypes of persecution" which are common to stories of victimisation. These stories usually involve social crises, a crime, the criteria for selecting a scapegoat, and finally the violence done to the victim.[29] Crises produce social disruption as a result of mimetic tensions, leading the group to identify a person to blame for the crisis. The powerlessness felt by the affected people impels them to explain the events through victimisation in order to solve them and return to normality. As harm has come to the society, the cause appears criminal, and so someone must be accused of the crime. These are chosen because they fulfil criteria which ensure that the blaming of them does not cause more problems or violence. So a known outsider, a foreigner, or someone without support or connections inside the group is suitable. East Timor can be seen as fulfilling these requirements as a weak party used to stabilise international relations which faced various major disruptions.

In this sense the theory of René Girard, especially as it focuses on the victimised "other", can throw light on the Australia-East Timor relationship. It illuminates the

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[29] René Girard, *The Scapegoat,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 14-19.

situation by applying the concept of scapegoating to the reversal of fortunes of a vulnerable people in relation to a rich and dominant neighbour.

Texts of Persecution

The second aspect of mimetic theory relevant to the notion of East Timor as victim is "texts of persecution". Girard's theory points out that violent acts towards scapegoated victims, committed by communities in order to prevent or limit greater violence, were accompanied by oral, and later written, accounts of the violent killings or expulsions which were often connected to ritual enactment. These accounts developed into what has been generally termed "myth" in the West. Girard interprets myths as accounts of violent events told from the point of view of the powerful but unconscious majority, which attempted to manage natural disaster or community unrest by ascribing responsibility to a scapegoat. Myths concealed the guilt of the community and its leaders and displaced it onto the victim.

Girard argues that the current dismantling of the scapegoating process as a valid and effective means of restoring peace and harmony came as a result of the Jewish scriptural defence of the victim and from the Gospel proclamation of the death of the innocent Jesus. Because of this, the meaning and efficacy of myths were undermined. However, scapegoating has persisted in diluted forms, producing accounts of persecutions which have the same structure and serve the same purpose as myths, that is, to present the situation entirely from the rationalising point of view of the persecutor, with the victims seen as guilty. Girard interprets such modern efforts to exonerate violent perpetrators, often with an intent to obscure efforts to bring the innocence of the victim to light, as "texts of persecution".

The concept of persecutory texts is a valuable tool with which to investigate official written accounts of the relationship between Australia and East Timor. The decision was made to limit the dissertation to important historical events recounted in the written record as it is copious and requires in-depth attention. For this reason interviews have not been undertaken.

In considering the role of "texts of persecution" I ask whether any Australian government accounts of the events could be fairly judged to be among the means by which Timor was scapegoated. In addition, I ask whether silence, misinterpretation, cover-up and refusal to release records could also be seen as elements of the phenomenon of persecution texts.

Conversion

The responses of the Australian people to the suffering of the Timorese people are considered in the dissertation in the light of the third major Girardian insight employed, that of human conversion towards the "vulnerable other". Girard regards the change from a self-centred notion of desire and identity to a recognition of the other-centred nature of desire as key to human conversion and maturation. The subject comes to realise his/her dependence on the other, especially the rival or the victim, for his/her own identity. This change generates relationship and solidarity in a new way, so that one's desire and identity can be formed explicitly with the other, rather than unconsciously over against the other. Girard's construction of "conversion" is integral to his theory and, as an interpretative category, is an appropriate and significant way to understand the Australian experience of the East Timor relationship, providing new insight into this experience.

"Conversion" is considered in relation to the unparalleled success of the movement supporting East Timor, especially against significant political forces. Important in this regard were the solidarity movements and the Christian churches, which demonstrated the growing gap between the responses of government and those of civil society groups and individuals. Taking the lead by challenging official Australian complicity in the victimisation of Timor and so gradually eroding dominant narratives based on lies and deception, many Australians underwent a conversion in the process of their own advocacy. This conversion influenced civil society and those in power, to the extent that official policies were changed and a large segment of the Australian populace then supported East Timorese independence. While this conversion did not always or usually involve an explicitly religious character, it did follow the pattern of conversion that Girard outlines and which he identifies with the content of Christian conversion: a movement from self-centred desire to interdependence with others, and accepting responsibility for the other, particularly the victimised. Assessing the success of the movement supporting East Timor, especially against significant political forces, is an important factor for understanding the solidarity that developed between Australians and Timorese.[30]

The call to Australia to practise the values it desires and proclaims became clearer as part of a collective experience of conversion provoked by the example of the Timorese people's forgiving responses to violence and suffering.[31] Intriguingly, as the events of Timor's oppression became known, the actions and attitudes of the

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[30] Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley, *Making Australian Foreign Policy,* 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 197.
[31] Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 5-6; 15; 19.

Timorese in facing overwhelming persecution showed that it was they, the victimised other, who embodied the values and characteristics traditionally claimed by the dominant Australian culture. Thus East Timor became the model to which Australia could aspire. The Timorese response to violence in large part imitated the non-retaliation and forgiveness of Christ as victim. In this regard, Robert Schreiter's insights into the power of the victim to restore the humanity of both oppressor and oppressed are discussed. James Alison's development of Girard's emphasis on the necessity of forgiveness is exemplified by the responses of East Timor to the violence inflicted on them. The relationship with East Timor, then, provided a Christian challenge to Australia to a deeper self-knowledge, to genuine and more generous responses to the poor and oppressed, and therefore a deeper commitment towards the values it claims.

The dissertation is in three sections which correspond to the aspects of mimetic theory used as the interpretive tool: the scapegoat, texts of persecution and conversion. Chapter One of the first section reflects on notions of Australian characteristics which were challenged by official policies regarding East Timor, and establishes the importance of the national relationships which affected Australian security. Chapter Two then outlines mimetic theory, while the third chapter reflects more deeply on the key category of interpretation – the scapegoated victim. The second section examines the three historical periods in which the relationship between Australia and East Timor was formed and throughout which East Timor occupied the place of the scapegoat. The section concentrates on the documentary record as texts of persecution. Chapter Four is devoted to World War II, Chapter Five deals with the 1975 invasion and Chapter Six investigates the 24 year occupation. The third and final

section reflects on the phenomenon of conversion. The concerns of relatively few supporters of the Timorese people are considered in Chapter Seven while Chapter Eight discusses the almost complete engagement of Australian government, agencies and population in the late 1990s.

Conclusion

Through the lens of René Girard's mimetic theory, this dissertation seeks to demonstrate that East Timor became the victim of Australian strategies for national security and gain in its relationships with regional powers, particularly Indonesia. This analysis is closely focussed on the history of the Timorese-Australian relationship, where regional powers joined forces in the "all against one" mechanism of sacrifice of the scapegoat East Timor, thus avoiding conflict, but endeavouring to benefit economically, and preserving the security afforded by alliances. Additionally, Girard's concept of "texts of persecution" demonstrates the myth-like structure of the Australian documentary record, a record that seeks to conceal the scapegoating of East Timor.

The aperture of a theological reflection based on Girard's insights into the Gospel finds the victim interpreting the history. Light is thus thrown on notions of Australian identity and, through this, an analysis of the conversion towards the victim in the Australian response to Timor can be made. In association with Christian teachings and insights into suffering and forgiveness, mimetic theory provides a way of understanding the relationship, and therefore the Australian identity, at a deeper level.

AUSTRALIA, MIMETIC THEORY AND THE SCAPEGOAT

Introduction

This section of the dissertation first describes aspects of Australian life which have a bearing on the relationship with East Timor. Generally accepted characteristics of being "Australian" such as fairness, independence and loyalty are discussed, followed by summaries of significant Australian relationships with other nations including Britain, the United States, Indonesia and East Timor. I argue that Australian characteristics which are broadly accepted by the dominant culture to describe an Australian "identity" are challenged in relationships with other nations, revealing fear and insecurity as significant Australian elements. This prepares for the major discussions in Chapters Four, Five and Six regarding East Timor, where the exercise of Australian independence, loyalty and fairness is found to be particularly questionable. The second chapter outlines René Girard's mimetic theory, through which the relationship between Australia and East Timor is interpreted in the dissertation. The focus is placed on three aspects of the theory: scapegoating, texts of persecution and conversion. In the third chapter the role of the scapegoated victim is then discussed more fully. Girard's perception that Christ's victimisation provides the ultimate interpretation of the scapegoating process is explained as the foundation for the analysis.

CHAPTER ONE

AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

The analysis of the relationship between Australia and East Timor in this dissertation is that of an Australian necessarily approaching the matter from an Australian's point of view. The cultural understanding afforded by that affinity, often unspoken and more often inexpressible, gives a certain authority to opinions, particularly in cases such as this, where death on a horrific scale forms part of the investigation. No opinion is absolute or infallible, but an Australian interpretation of the Australian side of such a consequential relationship has gravity. The relationship itself and its effects on Australians therefore require some contextualisation. This chapter attempts this task by research into those dominant Australian cultural values that were challenged by the Timorese relationship and the forces which formed them. The focus here is not to attempt to define an "Australian identity". Nonetheless, consideration of the dominant discourse and self-perceptions around "Australian" values and heroic archetypes, particularly as they operated within the Australia-East Timor relationship and affected it, is important for later assessment of this relationship. Thus, this chapter outlines some of Australia's dominant self-perceptions and how they have operated within significant Australian national relationships, including that with East Timor, as a preparation for reflection on ways in which they were challenged by that relationship.

Values, Self-Perceptions and Contradictions

Descriptions of Australian characteristics include values such as egalitarianism, loyalty, courage, self-confidence, independence, a certain disrespect for authority, freedom, and perseverance in adversity.[1] At the same time, the complexities of Australia's past and present relationships present an array of contradictions alongside these qualities. These considerations are integral to any scrutiny of the Australian-East Timorese relationship.

Australia is a nation comprising a mix of people from different ethnic origins within a highly structured state. It is a society extolling freedom which emerged from a penal colony, but a nation where the presence of its ancient Indigenous cultures was not legally recognised until 1992. The first immigrants from the British Isles established European settlements, and programs of immigration especially after World War II contributed to a strongly multicultural character. It is a nation-state which had a foundational Christian influence but which developed to be both secular and multi-religious, one with a strong military tradition yet without the experience of a modern war on its soil.

Contradictions are similarly found in characteristics seen by many as "Australian". For example, the popular values of "the bush" are often proclaimed as important in popular discourse despite the fact that most people live in urban settings. Similarly, irreverence and anti-authoritarianism have been championed as "Australian", while there is also a long history of paternalism and legalism. Freedom is prized, but is

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[1] John Thornhill, *Making Australia: exploring our national conversation* (Newtown NSW: Millennium Books, 1992), 5.

compromised by highly restricted ownership of media and business, and by these vested interests having marked influence on government. Australia is successful and rich but displays high levels of fear and insecurity in policy-making and social interaction. A long-standing sense of inferiority, a "cultural cringe", is amply matched by an abundance of celebrated heroes. Australians are descended from many racial and cultural groups making Australia one of the most multicultural nations on earth, yet it usually projects images of cultural homogeneity, particularly in popular media. Moreover, the relatively tolerant relationships in this rich diversity are held together successfully, in the main, by formal structures inherited from the British. But perhaps most paradoxically of all, a past military defeat – in Gallipoli during World War I – is presented as an iconic and central source of the nation's pride.

Independence and egalitarianism are values particularly important to Australian self-perception and therefore are relevant to any investigation of the history of Australia's relationship with East Timor. These values are often popularly expressed through the image of "the bush". In this imagery, grit, hard work and an independent streak are the hallmarks of "battlers" who eke out an existence from an unforgiving land, considering others as equals and treating them fairly without the compromises brought by class or status. Efforts to define "Australianness" in terms of "the bush" were fed by the growing nationalism which characterised Europe and its colonies in the 19th and 20th centuries. James Walter states that the focus on the bush served a sense of independence by "distinguishing colonial society in a positive way from the British mainstream."[2] He maintains that the uniqueness of the Australian bush made it "distinctive, not representative", but because of its accessibility through art and

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[2] James Walter, "Defining Australia," in *Images of Australia: An introductory reader in Australian studies,* ed. Gillian Whitlock and David Carter, (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1992, 10.

literature it "entered the Australian consciousness and *became* the Australian legend."[3] Nevertheless, despite their questionable status as true reflections of some innate quality of "Australianness", images of the dominant culture are promoted by authorities and opinion-makers in ways which reinforce stereotypes. The bush, Anzacs and mateship continue to be used to promote the particular views of advertisers and governments for their various political, cultural and financial interests.[4]

Blanket application of certain values as images of the "real" Australia, however, omits the balance of other views which also have resonances of fact without themselves necessarily being the complete truth. Humphrey McQueen, for example, refers to Australian racism being more fundamental than egalitarianism.[5] Referring to "contradictions in our performance as a responsible member of the international community", James Dunn mentions the opinion of Alan Renouf, a former head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, that "Australians have been a frightened and intimidated people."[6]

Significantly, the attitudes of cultural or political elites have the capacity not only to reflect the views of a multi-faceted people, but also to shape them. The image of the rugged independence of battlers in the bush, whilst seizing on aspects of reality, may have been rather a mental morality-play addressing the hardships and disappointments of industrialised cities and towns in the grip of drought and depression. Art and

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[3] Walter, "Defining Australia," 15.
[4] Australian Government, *Australian Identity*, accessed 18 June, 2014, http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-stories/australian-identity
[5] Richard White, *Inventing Australia: images and identity 1688 – 1980* (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1981), 168.
[6] James Dunn, *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence* 3rd ed. (Double Bay, NSW: Longueville Books, 2003), ii.

literature may have made a lasting contribution to the development of an Australian

ethos or myth, yet contrary realities, such as settlement at the rim of Australia rather

than in the outback, and acceptance of prevailing notions of inferior races rather than

egalitarianism, indicate some distance between the theories of privileged and talented

elites and the experience of ordinary people. The phenomenon of an appreciable

difference between the views and priorities of elites (including the intelligentsia) and

those of ordinary Australians arises again in considering Australia's relationships, and

is pertinent to the relationship with East Timor. Of particular relevance is the

contradiction between projected confidence and the demonstrated Australian fear

which substantially influenced decisions concerning East Timor from World War II

onwards.

 Efforts to understand these contradictions are assisted by Winton Higgins' reflections

on the effects of ethnicity in the development of nationalism in Europe.[7] Higgins

describes the emergence of nation-states over centuries as being associated with

national identity dependent on the cohesiveness contributed by race, religion, and

cultural similarities, which provided the evolving political entities with a dependable

core. This ethnic nationalism guarded itself carefully, tending to "suppress,

marginalise, assimilate and render invisible all groups other than the dominant one."[8]

Identity relied on the exclusion of others.

With these reflections on differences between civic and ethnic nationalism as a

background, Higgins maintains that Australian national development was a hybrid,

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[7] Winton Higgins, *Journey into Darkness* (Blackheath NSW: Brandl & Schlesinger, 2003).
[8] Higgins, *Journey into Darkness,* 50.

but one that "leaned more towards the ethnic side."[9] The early dominance of British

and Irish entailed the exclusion of the Indigenous peoples, but the massive influx of

immigrants after World War II changed the ethnic make-up of Australian society

irrevocably, with hundreds of thousands of Europeans impelled to find security away

from their homelands. Having signed the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention,

Australia presented many displaced people with the means to escape the War and its

aftermath. Between 1945 and 1965 assisted migration programs brought two million

migrants, who enjoyed the chance of employment and better living conditions and

boosted Australia's population and its agricultural and industrial progress. Although

non-Europeans were excluded from migration programs until the 1970s when the

White Australia policy was finally rescinded, the Colombo Plan established in 1950

was a step in countering adverse international opinions about Australian policy and a

means of providing regional neighbours with higher education opportunities. Greater

Asian migration occurred in the 1970s and 1980s with the final demise of anti-Asian

policies.

Despite strong European dominance, Australia's multicultural reality is becoming

increasingly diverse, and is generally harmonious and stable because of the strength

of the "civic nationalism" components of the inherited British Westminster

parliamentary system and the strong tradition of the rule of law. The balancing of

civic and ethnic nationalism is not a task that can be claimed to be complete, however,

particularly in a nation such as Australia. Here the European, and especially Anglo-

Celtic ethnicity, remains the underlying standard by which social and political

realities are judged with varying degrees of consciousness. Belief in white racial

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[9] Higgins, *Journey into Darkness,* 51.

supremacy and its attendant denigration or paternalism towards difference exists

within the Australian population, and constitutes "the malign legacy that survives

under the thin veneer of official multiculturalism."[10] Ghassan Hage makes an

insightful comment about the unconscious supposition inhabiting prevailing cultural

thought, one which suggests the existence of a "real" Australia which now has a

variety of cultures as a set of appendages:

> The "we appreciate" diversity, "we value" ethnic contributions, etc., attitudes
> which abound in the dominant political discourse in Australia create a gulf
> between the "we" and that which is appreciated and valued. In so doing, they
> work to mystify the real possibility, grounded in the very composition of
> Australian society, of a national "we" which is itself diverse. It is this "we"
> that is at the core of the multicultural Real: we are diversity.[11]

Thus in the assumption of an ethnic Australian core which sees others as apart or

lesser, there lies an expression of the ethnic nationalism which Higgins is at pains to

explain must give way in every instance to the hard-won civic nationalism.

A focus on the actions of "a nation" risks reification, where an abstract reality is

treated as a concrete thing: in this context to consider states, for example, "as

historical subjects capable of agency and of determining their own ends."[12] Aware of

the danger of confusing the substantive with the substance, reference to "Australia" in

this dissertation concerns particularly the government acting with the general

compliance of the population at a particular time and in a particular set of

circumstances, and not as a completely definable totality.

> The ways in which modern nations conceptualise and institutionalise
> themselves vary drastically. Forms of national identification vary with them.
> Since nation-states today stand for humanity's most basic political units, their

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[10] Higgins, *Journey into Darkness,* 18.

[11] Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White supremacy in a multicultural society* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 1998), 139.

[12] F. Vandenberghe, "Reification: History of the Concept," *Logos* 12:3 (2013), accessed July 3, 2015, http://logosjournal.com/2013/vandenberghe/

variations inform each national community's responses to morally significant issues.[13]

The response of the Australian national community to the situation of East Timor is one such moral issue.

The effort to understand a *nation's* past actions is intimately linked with the general population's perception of the nation, which in turn is influenced by the people's approach to history. "A nation's self-concept depends in large part on how it conceives of its history, its collective memory – the selection, inculcation and ritualisation of defining moments in its past."[14] Higgins emphasises the importance of facing history, however inconvenient or disgraceful, but more especially with the willingness to grapple with "the moral significance of the facts."[15] This thesis will claim that certain facts significant to Australia's official historical relationship with East Timor attest to denial, deceit, indifference and ignorance, undermining the self-images of fairness, equality and independence that many Australians accept as the reality.

"We Australians have trouble in identifying ourselves, in saying what we are, and what we are coming to be."[16] Manning Clark's insight reflects the number of published attempts undertaken since the 1950s to describe the "Australian identity", many concluding that if such an identity exists, it is impossible to define. It is possible, however, to demonstrate whether values such as equality and self-confidence, which are claimed by dominant groups, are applied in concrete situations

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[13] Higgins, *Journey into Darkness,* 21-22.
[14] Higgins, *Journey into Darkness,* 256.
[15] Higgins, *Journey into Darkness,* 20.
[16] Manning Clark, *The Quest for an Australian Identity* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), 4.

through which Australians establish and build relationships with other nations and peoples. In that way an assessment can be made as to the extent of adherence to claimed values.

A multiplicity of distinctive cultural traits operates within Australia, and has done so as long as people have inhabited this land, as demonstrated by the Indigenous cultures. The dominant cultural traditions have attempted to mediate different and sometimes competing cultures and groups, and has generally done it successfully, whilst recognising unresolved aspects of the relationship with the Indigenous peoples. However, claims to the independence which arises from freedom and courage, essential to the images of battlers and the bush, are challenged by the history of Australia's international relations and dependencies. This dissertation asserts that fear, insecurity and consequent dependency have characterised Australia in the modern world, and that the veracity of Australia's claims to independence and belief in equality for all can be tested by considering their practice in relating to others. Foremost among those relationships is that with the Australian Indigenous peoples, reflections on whose history raise matters of relevance to East Timor.

Relationships

Indigenous Peoples

The ideal of social equality featured increasingly in colonial Australia but was not applied to the Indigenous peoples. Thornhill refers to the concept of "mateship" as part of the egalitarian ethos, and demonstrates that it had no connection to Aborigines or to other races, such as the Chinese on the gold fields or Pacific islanders in the cane

fields.[17] Race was integral to the concept of nationality prevalent at the time. This ethnic nationalism held the belief that threat and conflict could be avoided through the exclusion of coloured races, hence Indigenous people were excluded by being dispossessed, ignored or assimilated.[18] The inability of the dominant groups to incorporate these peoples as contributors to society contradicts claims of egalitarianism, and demonstrates that the Australian interpretation of equality was limited and insular from the beginning of white settlement.

This exclusion of Indigenous people is connected to questions concerning the use of the historical record. The absence of a unifying narrative of the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia arises partly from the absence of comprehensive records, but also from interpretations of the available record based on commentators' differing world-views.

During the 20th century, awareness of the prejudice towards and mistreatment of Indigenous people grew, culminating in the overwhelming support for the 1967 referendum, which recognised the Aboriginal peoples' right to vote and charged the Commonwealth Government to legislate for Indigenous affairs, giving impetus to positive action and organisation at a national level. W.E.H. Stanner in his Boyer Lectures of 1968 voiced a growing recognition within the dominant Australian society of the time that Aboriginal people had suffered "the great Australian silence."[19] Stanner maintained that Aboriginal people had not been treated as integral players in Australian history, but rather had been reduced to subjects to be studied.

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[17] Thornhill, *Making Australia,* 106.
[18] Louise Metcalfe, "The impact of 'White Australia' on the development of Australian national identity in the period between 1880 and 1914," *History Initiates* (March, 2013): 3, accessed February 27, 2015, mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download.jsp?id=99535
[19] W.E.H. Stanner, *The Dreaming and other essays* (Melbourne: Black Inc. Agenda, 2009), 289-308.

Poignant descriptions of the initial attempts of the first Governor of New South Wales, Arthur Phillip, to obey the orders given him to "open an intercourse with the natives, and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all our subjects to live in amity and kindness with them" can, unfortunately, now be viewed in the light of the threat of near extinction subsequently experienced by the Aborigines.[20] The inability to establish a relationship of "amity and kindness" was a tragedy arising from numerous causes, not the least of which were the taking of the land by convicts and settlers, and the status of Indigenous peoples in the minds of 18th and 19th century westerners as a "stone-age" people. For example, as Bain Attwood states, they were valued by anthropologists as "artefacts of the human past."[21] In colonial art, Aborigines did not appear as "social actors", but were seen as part of nature whilst being deleted from the unfolding history.[22]

Alongside Stanner's insights, serious research into Aboriginal history accompanied growing international recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples and greater understanding of the effects of colonialism in the ensuing half-century. Aboriginal strength in political and cultural arenas accompanied increasing knowledge of their story by mainstream society. On the journey towards recognition and equality the nation expressed sorrow over the history of dispossession, massacres, child removal and assimilation.

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[20] Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia,* 2nd. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 31.

[21] Bain Attwood, "The Past as Future: Aborigines, Australia and the (dis)course of History," *Australian Humanities Review* (1996), accessed December 17, 2014, http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-April-1996/Attwood.html

[22] Martin Thomas, *The Artificial Horizon: Imagining the Blue Mountains* (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 66.

Despite such positive changes, there still remain many challenges to reconciliation and to improving the material position of many Indigenous communities. Conflicting and ongoing argument about the place of Aboriginal people in Australian society accompanies polarisation concerning the historical record of race relationships in modern Australian history. Stanner refers to the exclusion of Aboriginal people's experience from that record as arising not only indifference towards them, but also through deliberate forgetfulness and denial.[23] The silence cannot be seen as the unfortunate effect of simple misunderstandings but as a structural reality arising from colonial acquisition and particular views of racial and social superiority which gained strength in the 19th century. Attempts to redress the exclusion of Aborigines from the record of Australian history since Stanner's time were many and varied, but divisions among some historians, politicians and commentators remain.

These divisions coalesced around what has been called "the history wars", which involved prominent historians such as Henry Reynolds and Keith Windschuttle. Opposing views of the record of Indigenous history include the disputes concerning the 2002 publication of Windschuttle's work, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*. The Introduction to this work states: "It is a study of the historiography, the nature of the written history, of the relations between colonists and Aborigines."[24] Windschuttle maintains that there is a consensus among historians and intellectuals that Australia was "allegedly guilty of conscious, wilful genocide" of the Indigenous peoples. He claims that such assertions concern "the character of the nation and, ultimately, the calibre of the civilisation Britain brought to these shores in 1788."[25] He aimed to refute these opinions by writing "a series that examines the credibility of the received

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[23] Stanner, *The Dreaming,* 301.
[24] Keith Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Sydney: Macleay Press, 2002), 3.
[25] Windschuttle, *Fabrication,* 2, 3.

interpretation" of Aboriginal history.[26] The trilogy was received with acclaim in politically conservative circles.[27]

In response in 2003, Robert Manne edited *Whitewash,* a book of essays by fifteen historians, archaeologists, curators or lawyers who criticise Windschuttle's work as being rushed, superficial and inaccurate. In the collection, James Boyce sees *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* as seriously flawed because of the limited sources consulted.[28] Bain Attwood refers to Windschuttle's omission of available information and questions the premises on which he bases his conclusions.[29] Prominent historian Geoffrey Blainey however, writing elsewhere, supports Windschuttle's accusation that selective use of evidence underpins currently accepted versions of Aboriginal history.[30]

The Windschuttle debate is an element in the "history wars" in which government, media, historians and members of the public have been engaged, particularly since Stanner's unsettling phrase began to inhabit the Australian psyche. That highly-educated historians, opinion-makers, politicians and commentators continue to exchange accusations about selective use of sources and manipulation of evidence on Indigenous questions indicates fundamental unease and frustration at an academic level, thus weakening the ability of that stratum of knowledge to influence the

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[26] Windschuttle, *Fabrication,* 3.
[27] Windschuttle, *Fabrication,* back cover; Miranda Devine, "Truce, and truth, in history wars," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* April 20, 2006, accessed December 15, 2014, 2.
[28] James Boyce, "Fantasy Island", in *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History,* ed. Robert Manne (Melbourne: Black Inc. Agenda, 2003), 20-21, 25 and 68.
[29] Bain Attwood, "Contesting frontiers: History, memory and narrative in a national museum," *reCollections,* Vol 1 No 2 (Sept 2006), accessed December 15, 2014, http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_1_no_2/papers/contesting_frontiers - nav
[30] Geoffrey Blainey, "Native fiction: A review of The Fabrication of Aboriginal History, by Keith Windschuttle," *The New Criterion,* April 2003, accessed December 16, 2014, http://www.newcriterion.com/articles.cfm/nativefiction-1774

relationship more popularly. Pertinent to the matter in this dissertation, the fact that Australia is still grappling with the written record of its relationship with its Indigenous peoples, is significant to its relationships with others. The inability of the dominant culture over the years to understand, accept and then describe this fundamental historical relationship suggests that Australia's relationships in the region with other Indigenous peoples, including the Timorese, could have similar challenges. It must be asked what political, social and racial currents affect that later relationship, to what extent government, media and church silence contributed to East Timor's situation, and whether there are forces at work which continue to ignore, falsify or misinterpret the record of dealings with the Timorese people, as is still being claimed and counter-claimed regarding Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Britain

Self-images of Australian independence are challenged in some ways by Australia's relationship with Britain, a connection of singular importance to self-understanding and the development of its later relationships.[31] A kind of "love-hate" relationship exists between the British-influenced Australian culture and that of Britain in which feelings of loyalty and affection as well as of competitiveness and disdain arise. The closeness of the relationship since the beginning of colonisation in 1788 developed on the basis of the white population being predominantly made up of convicts and settlers from the British Isles, with administration by appointed British Governors, and all institutions being modelled on Britain's. There was a tendency in the colonies to judge everything by British standards which in some quarters remained well into the 20th century. Blainey states that even the values which Australians claimed as

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[31] David Walker, "Cultural change and the response to Asia: 1945 to the present," in *Australia and Asia,* ed. Mark McGillivray and Gary Smith (Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press, 1997), 23.

distinctive to them were recognised by others as British: courage, independence, self-reliance and loyalty.[32] Whilst the class system did not have the hold in Australia that it did in Britain, the use of the colony for the excess of convicts (many of whom settled in Australia) and the presence of the lower classes and a significant minority of Irish (among both the convicts and the free settlers) contributed to an opinion of the low status and lack of quality of the new venture. Where Australian was compared with British, it was always in the context of British superiority.[33] Richard White writes:

> ....the image of Australia as a haven for the second-rate was always strong in Britain, and was often shared by intellectuals in Australia. It helped justify their disdain for those they considered their social or cultural inferiors.[34]

Despite such comparisons, Australia remained dependent, "culturally and emotionally tied to Britain."[35] Strong ties held sway in political, diplomatic and trade matters, both forming and illustrating Australia's dependence on the coloniser. In 1901, when the Australian colonies became a Federation of States, the Commonwealth of Australia became a Dominion of the British Empire. Britain's declaration of war in 1914 automatically included Australia, with Australian troops being counted as British, and in fact all Australians were seen as British subjects until 1949.[36] Sports traditionally enjoyed by Australians for the most part were based on British models, e.g. cricket, versions of rugby, and boxing.

The threats posed by distance, difficulty of communication, and the status of being a small population inhabiting a large land mass in Asia encouraged continued

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[32] Geoffrey Blainey, *A Shorter History of Australia* (North Sydney: Vintage Books, 1994), 170.
[33] White, *Inventing Australia,* 66.
[34] White, *Inventing Australia*, 40.
[35] Blainey, *A Shorter History,* 174.
[36] Michael Klapdor, Moira Coombs and Catherine Bohm, *Australian citizenship: a chronology of major developments in policy and law* (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, 2009), accessed September 4, 2017, http://www.aph.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/bn/sp/austcitizenship.pdf

dependence on Britain, so much so that Australian foreign policy was dictated by London throughout the 1920s and 1930s, with Australia only gradually moving towards the exercise of greater international diplomacy. Trade, security and diplomatic support from Britain was a matter of course until World War II when, with the fall of Singapore and the war in the Pacific, the reality of Britain's inability to provide expected levels of support forced Australia to look elsewhere for security. With Britain's decision to join the European Economic Community in 1973, economic relations declined, further weakening the traditional British-Australian relationship.[37] Nevertheless, while strong levels of migration, trade and investment continued, and military and intelligence sharing alliances were retained, Australia chose to retain the Union Jack in its flag and the British monarch as its head of State.

Such a strong history of dependence on the founding culture for institutions, symbols and protection indicates an insecurity requiring multiple levels of support. Ann Curthoys alludes to the experience of the early settlers, soldiers and convicts as being uprooted from Europe and believes that a sense of dispossession applied to them.[38] Gregory Melleuish discusses Simone Weil's belief that "a deracinated people can express its anguish by dispossessing others without in any way healing the wounds of its own dispossession."[39] Melleuish states that this can describe the experience of Europeans in Australia who, having dispossessed the Indigenous peoples, found themselves in a vacuum: "The actual occupation of the country was not succeeded by a sending down of roots – so that Australian nationalism grew out of a general

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[37] Stuart Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace: the demise of the imperial idea* (Carlton Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 11.
[38] Anne Curthoys, "Mythologies," in *The Australian Legend and its Discontents,* ed. Richard Nile (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 2000), 14 and 35-36.
[39] Gregory Melleuish, *The Packaging of Australia: politics and culture wars* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1998), 22.

environment of insecurity."[40] Australia's insecurity required dependence on greater powers, a phenomenon which characterises Australian modern history, providing constant challenge to images of rugged individualism.

The Australian relationship with Britain, with all its dependency and inferiority, raises questions. Given the tendency in Australia in the 19th and 20th centuries to measure itself in relation to Britain, what echoes arise in the relationship with East Timor? To what extent could it be claimed that the apparent backwardness, weakness and impoverishment of East Timor reflected Australia back to itself? Could the later demonstration that East Timor was of little account in many Australian eyes flow from the Australian sense of self in relation to Britain?

United States of America

Australian recourse to American protection in 1942 was a realistic response to Japan's expansionism and to Britain's inability to provide essential support. The ANZUS Treaty, which came into effect in 1952, cemented the Australian-New Zealand-American security alliance and became the bedrock of Australian foreign policy, influencing its other relationships.[41] Renouf states that it was Australia's need for security, fear of communism and inferiority complex which required the Treaty, a formality which was not the preference of the United States, given Australia's already demonstrated strategic importance to the US in its dealings in Asia.[42] In both its advantages and disadvantages the relationship can be seen as a continuation and then

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[40] Melleuish, *The Packaging of Australia,* 22.
[41] Commonwealth of Australia, "Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America [ANZUS]," *Australian Treaty Series 1952 No. 2* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1997), accessed February 20, 2015, http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1952/2.html
[42] Alan Renouf, *The Frightened Country* (South Melbourne: The Macmillan Company of Australia Pty. Ltd, 1979), 114-116.

replacement of the 'strategic dependence' which the former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser states described Australia's relationship with Britain.[43] Long after being prime minister, Fraser advocated terminating the alliance, especially because Australia has "significantly diminished our capacity to act as a sovereign nation by the way in which we have committed ourselves to American purposes."[44] Seeking protection and security through dependence on a greater power exposes Australia to the threats faced by that power, thereby heightening the very insecurity it sought to avoid.

The implications of Australia's efforts to engage with its regional neighbours whilst retaining a favoured position with the Americans were seen in regard to East Timor. The United States' thrust towards regional dominance accounted substantially for its decades-long support for Indonesia's anti-communist regime. The effects of that balance of power were felt in Australia which also had its own fears of communism and worked closely with the US to counter that threat, all of which contributed to the compromised Australian response to Indonesia regarding East Timor for many years.

Asia

Australian relationships with Asia have historically involved a degree of ambivalence, insecurity and fear, heightened by Japan's role in World War II, the Cold War and communism. These features reflected Australia's desire to receive support from Britain and the United States while at the same time strengthening defence and trade ties with Asia. The interplay of these forces had direct bearings on East Timor in its place as part of the Indonesian archipelago.

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[43] Malcolm Fraser (with Cain Roberts), *Dangerous Allies* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2014), 9.
[44] Fraser, *Dangerous Allies,* 433.

As a predominantly European culture with its geographical place in the Asian region far from Europe, Australia often saw Asia in negative terms.[45] Gary Smith alludes to a sense of isolation arising from the state of being a small number of people in a vast continent which produced fears of being "vulnerable, indefensible and desirable."[46] Lack of interaction and familiarity between Australians and Asians brought misunderstanding of mutual needs and perceptions, with suspicion and fear accompanying racial and cultural differences.

Political attempts to engage with Asia were not necessarily shared by large sections of the Australia population, forming a challenge to government and indicating that underlying fear and suspicion dominated the Australian psyche. D. Smith observes: "Public opinion polls throughout the 1990s consistently showed that the political and intellectual elites were considerably ahead of broader opinion in their enthusiasm for engagement with Asia."[47] This hiatus between popular and elite positions regarding Asia will be demonstrated as significant in relation to both Indonesia and East Timor.

An expression of the Australian deep-seated mistrust of Asian peoples, and perhaps a significant contributor to that position, were the early decades of the widely popular weekly newspaper *The Bulletin,* founded in 1880. Nationalistic, anti-Semitic and racist in its early issues, *The Bulletin* lampooned leaders in every field, supported Australian independence and took a hard line in favour of White Australia. Through *The Bulletin*, images of exclusion and violent opposition to people and ideas

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[45] Doug Smith, "Australia's images of Asia," in *Eastern Asia: an introductory history,* 2nd ed., ed. Colin Mackerras (Melbourne: Longman Australia, 1995), 495, accessed 10 February 2015, http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/245866/Doug-Smith-Asia-Australian-Relationships-Readings.pdf

[46] Gary Smith, "Australia's political relationships with Asia", in *Australia and Asia,* ed. Mark McGillivray and Gary Smith (Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press, 1997), 102.

[47] Smith, "Australia's images of Asia," 502.

considered alien were presented to a wide Australian reading public for many years.

The motto "Australia for the White Man" was part of its masthead until the 1960s,

testimony to Australian fear, insecurity and sense of racial superiority.[48]

The maintenance of difference and division had been strengthened by the White

Australia policy, introduced for a mix of economic and racial reasons. It passed into

Federal law in 1901 as a way of protecting white citizens' employment opportunities

from Asian and Islander workers, and to ensure a homogenous population similar to

that of Britain.[49] Post-war immigration remained solely for Europeans, with Asian

war refugees being deported.[50]

While the policy expressed ideas concerning race and nationalism current at the time

of its promulgation, it lasted in Australia into the 1970s. Its isolationism affected not

only the composition of the population and a protectionist economy, but nurtured the

defensiveness and sense of superiority which existed among many Australians. These

aspects of Australian life influenced decisions regarding East Timor over decades, not

only the political considerations thought necessary at the time of the events, but in

succeeding decades concerning official government presentation of the history.

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[48] See Gideon Haigh, "Packed It In: The Demise of The Bulletin," *The Monthly* (March, 2008), accessed September 2, 2017, https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2008/march/1268869044/gideon-haigh/packed-it

[49] Department of Immigration and Border Protection. *Fact Sheet 8 – Abolition of the 'White Australia' Policy,* last modified February 13, 2015, accessed February 20, 2015, https://www.border.gov.au/about/corporate/information/fact-sheets/08abolition

[50] Doug Smith, "Australia's relations with Asia," in *Eastern Asia: an introductory history,* 2nd ed., ed. Colin Mackerras, (Melbourne: Longman Australia, 1995), 485, accessed 10 February 2015, http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/245866/Doug-Smith-Asia-Australian-Relationships-Readings.pdf

Engagement with Asia

Threats to Australia, whether perceived or real, ensured that the nation's security within Asia remained a major concern. In particular, Japan's expansionism increased Australian belief in its vulnerability to aggression from the Asian north, underlining past fears of Asian nations generally. The sense of threat from Asia produced problems, neuroses and compromises which affected Australia and Timor for decades to come.

Interestingly, the experience of World War II and reliance on the United States rather than on Britain was accompanied by Australia's realisation of the importance of active engagement for its national interest in the South East Asian region. Australian governments endeavoured to ensure that all other considerations, including traditional fears, loyalties, and images of independence, were submerged by the main national interest, security.

The interactions of dominant world powers in the subsequent Cold War affected their interests in the region. With Australia in alliance with the United States, its approach to Asia was "constrained by the demands of anti-Soviet geopolitics in the region."[51] Furthermore, the communist ascendancies in many newly-independent Asian States heightened the sense of threat and linked Australia to the Cold War which was gripping Europe. The rise of Mao Zedong's communist China brought the impasse between the USSR and the West into the Asian region, presenting Australia with further reason to fear Asia through the 1950s and 60s, with the "domino" theory posing perceptions of serious threat. Indonesian accusations of Timorese communist sympathies in the 1970s made Timor's position in Australia's regard an invidious one,

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[51] Smith, "Australia's political relationships," 104-5.

given the breadth and intensity of Australia's wariness of communism within its own borders as well as in the region.

Thus, following World War II, Australia sought to engage with Asia as a way of protection. This was represented at an early stage by Australia's membership of the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954, where alliances were formed with Asian nations under the overarching relationships with the United Kingdom and the United States. While pursuing better relations in Asia, Australia also firmly retained its position of alliance with the United States, often cooperating on foreign policy in Asia and showing willingness to demonstrate such dependency regardless of its effects on relationships in the region. According to Renouf, this resulted in major disadvantages for Australia, as it was seen as retaining its dependence on colonial powers. He states that as SEATO enjoyed strong British influence, Australia's membership weakened the ANZUS alliance, while conversely, the continuing Australian dependence on the United States alienated Asian opinion.[52] Balancing its dependence on amicable relations between the United States with relationships within an increasingly powerful Asia therefore, Australia viewed East Timor as relatively unimportant, determining not to allow it to interfere with those other relationships, especially that with Indonesia.

Particularly from 1970s onwards, governments of both sides of politics were avid in pursuit of Asian trade, engaging with the region through regular multilevel visits, conferences, treaties, foreign aid, military cooperation, education and immigration. With the trade focus shifting from declining European markets to closer Asian ones,

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[52] Renouf, *A Frightened Country,* 161.

and with the restrictions on immigration lifted in the 1970s from the Whitlam

government onwards, greater cultural interaction was possible between Australia and

Asia, and involved immigration and tourism which brought a degree of greater

tolerance and mutual understanding. While economic prosperity increased in

Australia and Asia, the increasing wealth of the growing economies in the region

ensured that they could buy more and better weapons, thus increasing their potential

threat.[53] Greater ties with Asia brought questions as to what extent Australian

economic and strategic gains in the region should influence its approach to human

rights, given fundamental differences of approach between Western and Asian nations

to this matter.[54] This dilemma surfaced with full force as Australia juggled its

relationships with Indonesia, Britain, the US and the United Nations in the matter of

East Timor.

Indonesia

The Asian nation closest to Australia, just a few hundred kilometres to the north, is

the Republic of Indonesia. The most populous Muslim nation in the world, Indonesia

boasts a mix of languages and cultures. Its relatively stable democracy (following

more than 30 years of dictatorship under the former military general, Suharto) and

swiftly developing economy marks it as a success story of the post-war era. Its

proximity makes its relationship with Australia significant among Asian nations, even

more so in its integral connection with events affecting East Timor.

Historically, Australia has shown consistent support for Indonesia. The struggle of

what was the Dutch East Indies for independence after World War II saw military

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[53] Smith, "Australia's political relationships," 115.
[54] Smith, "Australia's political relationships," 115.

efforts by the Netherlands to regain control, a move which led the Australian

government to register complaints with the United Nations.[55] Australian trade union

blockades against Dutch vessels involved in the offensives continued until the

recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in 1949. Australia was among the first nations

to recognise Indonesia's new status.

When the first President, Sukarno, promoted policies viewed as verging on

communism, the concern of the United States was echoed by Australia. His

overthrow by General Suharto and Indonesia's subsequent rejection of communism

allied it to the United States and contributed to its status as a bulwark against China in

the region. Though authoritarian and controversial, Suharto's long presidency, from

1967 to 1998, developed the economy and consolidated Indonesia as a significant

Asian power.

Along with closer political and security ties, Australian governments secured trade

and investment opportunities with Indonesia, and partnerships of the 1980s and 1990s

recognised more fully the capacity for mutual economic benefits. These opportunities

included mutual exploitation of the oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea. Greater

benefits for Indonesia through these links accompanied the likelihood of Australia's

greater acceptance in the South East Asian region. Prime Minister Paul Keating

asserted in 1994 that "no country was more important to Australia than Indonesia."[56]

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[55] Allan Gyngell, "Australia-Indonesia," *Lowy Institute for International Policy* (16 October, 2007): 97, accessed March 10, 2015, www.lowyinstitute.org/files/pubfiles/Gyngell,_Australia-Indonesia.pdf
[56] Patrick Walters, "Australia and Indonesia," in *Australia and Asia,* ed. Mark McGillivray and Gary Smith (Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press, 1997), 157.

Popular perceptions and policy regarding Indonesia

While diplomatic and political interaction with Indonesia has remained a high priority of successive Australian governments, deeper cultural and social connections between the peoples of the two nations have taken far longer to be made.[57] Australia has long provided aid to Indonesia, however. Despite its highly significant democratic advances and economic progress, Indonesia remains affected by poverty, with 20% of Indonesians living below the international poverty line and another 40% hovering near it.[58] The economic disparities between Australia and Indonesia place Australia ahead in terms of current opportunities, but the relative youth and size of Indonesia's population provide the conditions for strong growth. While Indonesia's development benefits Australian prosperity, it can also cause insecurity. Indonesia was seen from the 1980s through the 1990s as the country most likely to threaten our national security.[59] Surveys show that ambivalence towards Indonesia remains in the Australian population. [60]

At government levels Australia and Indonesia have entered into a range of agreements and treaties since 1964 to build the relationship, including trade, seabed boundaries, investment and development, science and technology. Among the most significant is the 2006 Treaty on Security Cooperation, the Lombok Treaty, designed to maintain close cooperation for peace, prosperity and mutual security by the practical means of

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[57] Connelly, Aaron L. "Keeping expectations for the Australia-Indonesia relationship in check," *Lowy Institute: The Interpreter* (November 4, 2016)*,* accessed August 28, 2017, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/keeping-expectations-australia-indonesia-relationship-check
[58] "The World Bank in Indonesia - Overview," The World Bank, accessed September 2, 2017, http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/indonesia/overview
[59] Ross Tapsell, "Same old stereotypes of Indonesia – and our politicians aren't helping," *The Conversation,* accessed 13 January, 2015, http://theconversation.com/same-old-stereotypes-of-indonesia-and-our-politicians-arent-helping-17159
[60] Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australian attitudes towards Indonesia: A DFAT commissioned Newspoll report*, (May 2013): 41, accessed January 13, 2015*,* http://apo.org.au/node/35502; Connelly, *Keeping Expectations.*

combatting terrorism and transnational crime.[61] Decades of combined military

exercises and Indonesian officer training in Australia were designed to enhance the

relationship. Nevertheless, Indonesia's human rights record in East Timor (and in

other parts of the archipelago) contributed to accusations of Australian compromise

and complicity. Much controversy has centred on the Indonesian elite force,

Kopassus, which continued to receive training from Australia during the 1980s and

1990s, through the struggle for Timorese independence and beyond.[62]

The relatively weak relationship between Indonesia and Australia at the levels of

individuals and communities is in contrast to strong and positive aspects of the

relationship concerning mutuality between leaders, and government-to-government

initiatives, especially in defence, security, and trade. However, in the case of East

Timor, the reverse of this situation developed. As this dissertation details, the

strengthening of relationships between ordinary Australians and Timorese, with the

associated analysis and public presentation of a more complete version of the

narrative of East Timor's history, led to a change so major that it can be described as a

conversion. This conversion towards the Timorese eventually heavily influenced the

change in the position of the Australian government from support of Indonesia's

integration of East Timor to support for Timorese self-determination.

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[61] Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Agreement between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on the Framework for Security Cooperation* (November 13, 2006), accessed October 14, 2015, http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/nia/2006/43.html

[62] "SAS training with Kopassus despite rights concerns," *ABC News,* 28 September 2010, accessed 14 October 2015, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2010-09-28/sas-training-with-kopassus-despite-rights-concerns/2276586

East Timor

The Australian relationship with East Timor is characterised by certain extreme geographical and historical differences. The vast continent of modern Australia is basically European with growing multicultural elements, still grappling with the effects on the Indigenous peoples of the arrival of white settlers at the end of the 18th century. Conversely, indigenous Timorese comprise the greater part of East Timor's society, although with Portuguese and Chinese influence for at least five centuries. Australian sovereignty evolved from its status as a colony of Britain, whereas Timor-Leste, after a European colonisation twice as long as Australia's, has had recent experience of armed invasion and occupation, with its final independence declared as recently as 2002.

Situated in the Indonesian archipelago, the mountainous island of Timor was populated over millennia by a series of migrations which included both Melanesian and Malaysian people who developed strong and successful tribal societies. European influence came through Dutch colonisation of the western half of the island, while the Portuguese arrived on the eastern side in 1515 and established trading posts in the 1560s. Throughout the 16th to the 19th centuries, resistance to the Portuguese was quelled by military force or by playing off one tribal kingdom against another. Despite being recipients of over 450 years of Portuguese colonisation, the Timorese remained largely poor and uneducated until the 1970s. Some conversions to Christianity occurred during earlier times, especially among Timorese elites, increasing exponentially among the general population in the latter part of the 20th century. Internationally recognised boundaries were established in 1913 between Dutch West Timor and Portuguese East Timor.

The importance of oil to the rapid industrialisation of the world had a direct effect on the fortunes of the Timorese people in their dealings with Australia, and became an underlying element in Australia's actions regarding East Timor throughout the shared history.[63] Small but growing interest saw various British, Portuguese and Australian groups and individuals considering the oil potential of Timor through an array of consortiums and companies in the early to mid-20th century.

The majority of people in both nations identify as Christian. Despite this, animism and superstition remain strong in Timor while in Australia meaning is increasingly sought in material success. Strong political, judicial and legal frameworks based largely on the British system and Judeo-Christian principles provide Australians with stable regulatory processes to support social life while Timorese people's systems are evolving from Portuguese and Indonesian influences, with ancient customs and beliefs retaining underlying cultural significance.

As a developing nation, one which suffers the effects of recent military devastation, Timor-Leste experiences major hurdles alongside recent significant improvement in education, health and political stability. Australian social systems are far stronger; for example, on the 2015 UN Human Development Index (a

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[63] Paul Cleary, *Shakedown: Australia's Grab for Timor Oil* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2007); Frank Brennan, *Time to Draw the Line: Finding a Just Settlement between Australia and Timor -Leste* (Alexandria, NSW: Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, 2013); Kim McGrath, "Oil, gas and spy games in the Timor Sea" *The Monthly* (April 2014), accessed 10 July, 2014, http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2014/april/1396270800/kim-mcgrath/oil-gas-and-spy-games-timor-sea

measure to rank social and economic development) Australia is No. 2 whereas

Timor-Leste is at No.110.[64]

Alongside the disparities of wealth and stability, there exist certain Australian

cultural attitudes which tend towards attitudes of superiority towards Timor-Leste

and its people. According to Taylor, Western ethnocentrism has tended to

appropriate civilisation to itself, viewing any lack of European civilisation as the

lack of "the makings of what we think as a modern state."[65] He states that

ethnocentrism has misinterpreted differences between cultures as being the

difference between culture and nature.[66] He refers to non-Western cultures which

"have modernised in their own way and cannot be properly understood if we try

to grasp them in a general theory that was designed originally with the Western

case in mind."[67] He acknowledges a nation as a people "existing prior to and

independently of its political constitution."[68] Thus the "social imaginary" which

conceived that a small, oppressed and linguistically diverse group could become a

sovereign nation such as Timor-Leste contrasts with the "social imaginary" in

Australia and in other Western nations which thought such an outcome

impossible for the Timorese people. The dire effects on the Timorese people of

World War II and the later Indonesian invasion and occupation have been outlined in

the Introduction and are detailed further in the dissertation. These were devastating

events, giving the Australian involvement with East Timor an unparalleled

importance.

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[64] United Nations Development Programme, *International Human Development Indicators,* accessed 28 June, 2016, http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries
[65] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 36.
[66] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 38.
[67] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 1.
[68] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 156.

Conclusion

Historical dependence on Britain, the United States and increasingly on Asian neighbours has served modern Australia's need for security but challenges notions of Australian independence. Australia's dependence on Britain was not dissolved by choice, but by war-time realities, and was replaced by a dependence on the United States with increasing engagement with Asia. Additionally, Australian fear of Asia has accompanied long-standing attitudes of superiority and suspicion. Furthermore, Australian attitudes to people of different ethnicities or cultures, both Indigenous and others, have not always displayed the egalitarian ideals which have been traditionally claimed by the dominant cultural traditions in Australia. A major casualty of the desire for Australian security has been the Timorese people, whose fortunes have been negatively influenced in major regional events in which Australia was involved. A long-standing interplay of fear, dependence and hubris has demonstrably influenced Australian dealings with East Timor.

With major Australian political, religious and media institutions having engaged for decades with forces destructive of the small and weak Australian neighbour East Timor, honesty is required to describe the Australian relationship with that nation. Interpreting the political and moral choices in the history may contribute towards redressing official deceit and popular ignorance in regard to the relationship between the two nations.

CHAPTER TWO
MIMETIC THEORY

Introduction

The interpretation of Australian political and moral choices affecting the relationship between Australia and East Timor in this dissertation uses interrelated aspects of René Girard's mimetic theory. Girard's theory is conventionally divided into three parts: mimetic desire, scapegoating, and the conversion which arises from the Gospel's revelation of the innocence of the victim . Outlining these three aspects of mimetic theory prepares for the interpretation of the victim status of East Timor throughout its shared history with Australia, and for an appreciation of the Australian conversion towards the victim which eventually occurred.

Mimesis

Imitative desire

Girard's studies in literature, anthropology and scripture concern an articulation of what it means to be human.[1] He states that "mimetism defines humans."[2] For him, human behaviour flows from "mimetic desire", which means humans desiring according to the desire of another.[3] Aside from the appetites that arise from the need

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[1] Peter Stork, "An Introduction to the Work of René Girard," accessed September 5, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/6330149/An_Introduction_to_the_Work_of_Ren%C3%A9_Girard
[2] René Girard, *Battling to the End: conversations with Benoît Chantre,* trans. Mary Baker (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 100.
[3] René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning,* trans. J.G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 10.

for survival, Girard maintains that all human desire is essentially imitative, or "mimetic", the unconscious imitation of someone else's desire.[4]

Being imitative, mimetic desire is neither autonomous nor spontaneous; rather it is the attraction to an object because of another's possession of it or desire for it. Paradoxically, the desire of a person for an object signals to the other that the object is desirable, hence desire is mediated between persons, producing levels of interdependence. Fashion in dress and taste shows the power of mimesis. The height of fashion for men in the Western world in the 1970s included long hair and flared trousers, an indication of similarity of age, financial status and cultural affinity. Forty years later, trousers which hung from the hips rather than the waist were fashionable for a time for both young men and women – the desire to imitate others and follow the trend overriding the obvious discomfort. Personal and group identity is mediated by others because desire is *according to* the desires of others.

Rivalry and conflict

Girard maintains that the desiring person – the subject – imitates the desire of another – the model or mediator – who possesses or desires an object. With both subject and mediator desiring the same thing, rivalry is likely to arise. If both refuse to share the object, there is conflict, even physical violence. Girard uses interactions of children as illustrations. For example, Penny and Eva are playing in the toy corner. Eva drops her blocks when she sees Penny bouncing a ball and moves to take the ball herself. Penny wasn't particularly interested in the ball, actually intending to get a doll, but when she

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[4] René Girard, *The Girard Reader,* ed. James G. Williams (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co, 1996), 36.

realises that Eva wants the ball she hangs on to it and won't let Eva have it. Both girls

desire the same object, each pushing the other in their rivalry.

Metaphysical desire

It is not the object itself that is the only focus of the rivals however; each wants it

because of the other's desire for it. In the rivalry over possession, the object itself can

recede into the background as the antagonism and even violence intensifies between

those desiring it. Yet mimetic theory points to deeper motivation than merely the

desire to have something, or even to have it because someone else wants it.

Fundamentally, the person desiring the object wants to be what the other is, or to be

what the other could become when in possession of the object. Girard states:

"Imitative desire is always a desire to be Another."[5] On the surface, mimesis is

acquisitive, with two or more wanting the same object, but the deeper reality is that

the desire concerns *being*, with *having* seen as the means to that end.[6] This

phenomenon Girard terms "metaphysical desire", a desire or yearning for being that

underlies human relationships.[7] The basic structure of desire is the longing for being,

following from the belief that one's own experience of lack of being could be allayed

by that which someone else has, or what someone else desires.[8] As Peter Stork points

out,

> ...the theory proposes that the subject not only seeks to possess the object to
> which the model points, but also seeks to be "possessed" by it, for the
> acquisitiveness of desire is not primarily directed at the object itself but at
> what it signifies, namely the model proper.[9]

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[5] René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 83.
[6] Michael Kirwan, *Discovering Girard* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004), 22.
[7] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 290.
[8] Raymund Schwager, *Must there be scapegoats?: Violence and Redemption in the Bible* 2nd ed. (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2000), 2.
[9] Stork, "An Introduction," 5.

External and internal mediation

Girard used a triangle to symbolise the mimetic relationship between the desiring subject and the model.[10] The taller the triangle, the greater the relational distance between those involved, for example, in status or regarding geographical place or time. Girard calls this type of mimetic relationship *external mediation*, which involves great distance between the subject and model. It poses little threat to roles or relationships, making the chance of rivalry remote. One of Girard's examples is Don Quixote's desire to be a knight like Amadis de Gaul who was seen as the best of knights, the very identity which Don Quixote then desired for himself. Amadis existed only in the pages of fiction so therefore no challenge or threat was possible to him as the model, nor to Don Quixote, through rivalry. In external mediation the imitation is often recognisable. For example, Don Quixote freely admits he copies Amadis de Gaul; in Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary,* the main character Emma sings loudly of her adulation of characters she reads about.

While rivalry does not have the scope to develop in external mediation, it does have untoward effects. In the case of Cervantes' hero, the effect was on Don Quixote's identity, because of his desire to be as Amadis was. Michael Kirwan states, "By allowing this fictional character to choose for him all the things he should desire, Don Quixote effectively abandons any independent judgement of his own."[11] His desire for the trappings of Amadis was essentially a desire for the being of Amadis, thus weakening his own identity.

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[10] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 2, 9.
[11] Kirwan, *Discovering Girard*, 17.

If the distance between subject and model is diminished (in Girard's triangular depiction), the possibility of rivalry increases. The mediation is described in this case by Girard as *internal*. Internal mediation is that form of mimetic relationship which occurs more readily between persons or groups who share similar status, or age, or are neighbours or contemporaries. The triangle is flatter, as is obvious in the example of Penny and Eva recounted above. Moreover, Girard's interpretation of Shakespeare's works in his book *A Theater of Envy* presents internal mediation at work on various levels.[12] For instance, characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* demonstrate the workings of internal mediation. The device of Puck's magic potion enables Shakespeare to concertina four lovers' experiences of falling in and out of love with each other into one night, thus presenting through comedy the human tendency to desire someone, the object, because someone else, the model or mediator, desires them.

Unlike Don Quixote and Madame Bovary in their external expressions of mediation, "the hero of internal mediation, far from boasting of his efforts to imitate, carefully hides them."[13] Eric Gans comments: "The closer the mediator to the self, the less one is willing or able to admit his influence."[14] Girard maintains: "In our days (the imitative nature of desire) is hard to perceive because the most fervent imitation is the most vigorously denied."[15] Concealment, then, is a feature of internal mediation, and it is therefore easy to mistake its effects for self-motivated human action.

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[12] René Girard, *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
[13] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 10.
[14] Eric Gans, "External and Internal Mediation," *Chronicles of Love and Resentment,* No. 116 (November 8, 1997), accessed September 4, 2017, http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw116/
[15] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 14-15.

Girard's insights into mimetic desire have resonances for the Australian relationships with its own cultural history, its regional neighbours, and East Timor. The influence of mimetic desire on Australian identity is expressed in its inherent contradictions as a predominantly rich yet fearful European culture so close to Asia. Australian dependency on powerful friends for assistance and for the formulation of policy are concealed under claims of independence and strength. The understandable Australian desire for security has been its overarching focus, one which had dire effects on its relationship with the much smaller and more dependent East Timor.

From Romantic Lie to Novelistic Truth

A feature of Girard's mimetic theory with particular application to this dissertation concerns his exposition of the "romantic lie", a term which describes literary works which conceal or are ignorant of the mimetic influence in plots or characters. The "romantic lie" is discussed in Girard's first book, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* where he explores the works of Cervantes, Flaubert, Proust, Stendhal and Dostoevsky. According to Girard, these novelists presented characters early in their careers who displayed the autonomous and spontaneous features of the heroes and heroines which he terms "romantic". The actions and decisions of such characters display some distance from reality. They appear as people who operate wholly from self-motivation, displaying self-sufficiency and spontaneity to a high degree. An example from current popular literature might include Hercule Poirot, the Agatha Christie detective who exhibits total control of his chosen task of sleuthing, and whose foibles are presented not as human weaknesses, but as comic relief. He is always right, and the contributions of others to the resolution of the plot is trivial and accidental. However, his desire to be seen to be astute in the highest degree, to solve all cases

single-handedly and to present himself in extreme sartorial elegance betrays in Poirot the mediation of other people's opinions of him as the controlling factor in his behaviour. His identity is buffeted by the opinion of other people: when anyone expresses an ignorance of who he is, Poirot is crestfallen. In Girard's triangular schema, Poirot as the subject desires the good opinion of those whom he meets. Seizure of the object of his desire, that good opinion, is dependent on his ability to reveal the murderer, that is, on his fulfilling of the desire of the other characters to have the mystery solved, the killer brought to justice, and themselves exonerated. Undoubtedly, Poirot also wants good to prevail and criminals brought to justice, but the author presents the character as the single autonomous brain operating in the plot.

Hence the desires, thoughts and actions of characters like Poirot can be seen by readers to be derived from others, but in the narrative itself the character's own appreciation of that influence is non-existent. Reflection on the character can detect his or her dependence on others, but nothing in the narrative depicts any such self-knowledge. There is no movement in the character Poirot, neither in individual stories nor in his whole career. At the end of his career he voices a slight recognition of his peculiarities: "I have been too self-righteous, too conscious of rectitude."[16] Nevertheless, the climax of the plot of that final story finds him again completely in control, presented by the author as not only the omniscient sleuth, but as judge and executioner as well.[17]

In Girard's view such writing is deficient, where the model of desire appears but is not unveiled as such in the plot. Girard states: "we shall use the term *romantic* for the

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[16] Agatha Christie, *Curtain: Poirot's Last Case* (London: HarperCollins*Publishers* Ltd. 1975), 218.
[17] Christie, *Curtain,* 213-240.

works which reflect the presence of a mediator without ever revealing it."[18] This type of romantic literature so ignores the dependence of human desire on the desires of others that Girard adds the description "lie". He describes such fiction as "the lie of spontaneous desire."[19] At its worst, the characters are shown to be spontaneous actors, with little or no clues given to their mimetic dependency, deceiving the reader into believing that autonomous desire is real and normal.

Girard distinguishes between what he terms "romantic fiction" and "novelistic truth".[20] In the more mature works of the writers he discusses, Girard sees characters who showed a more realistic understanding of human relationships. In these books he detects a growing realisation that the usual characterisations of general spontaneity are false, and that humans are imitative, not original, at their core. For Girard, these writers' later works are true novels, demonstrating the ability of the writer to reveal the effect of the rival or model on the desires of the subject.

An example that Girard uses is derived from Stendhal's novel *The Red and the Black.* Two rich men in the town enjoy the prestige brought by wealth and breeding. One is the mayor, and the other an influential rival. The mayor wishes to engage a certain Julien Sorel to tutor his sons, but his desire arises from his knowledge that his rival is also looking for a family tutor. The mayor's desire for this particular tutor is based on the fear expressed to his wife that the other man "might very well steal this one from us."[21] When negotiating with Julien's father, the mayor shows he is willing to pay

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[18] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 17.
[19] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 16.
[20] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 17.
[21] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 6.

well, but is misled by the cunning old man who says: "We have a better offer."[22] This convinces the mayor that his rival has the upper hand, which in turn intensifies the mayor's determination to engage Julien. The mayor's resolve is not based on the merits of the tutor, but results from his imitation of his rival's desire. So the object of the mayor's desire is not so much the benefit a particular tutor may have been to his children's education, but to vanquish his rival. He wants what his rival wants, because his rival wants it. As Girard states: "The ever-increasing price the buyer is willing to pay is determined by the imaginary desire which he attributes to his rival."[23]

This episode of the book contains not merely a literary presentation of a small-town intrigue, but reveals the motivations of characters as dependent on others. This revelation, identified by Girard, is the result of the *writer's* own insight into the operation of human desire. Hence, for Girard, the difference between the "romantic lie" and the true novel is the ability of the writer to reveal the effects of mimetic desire. Through their later characters, the authors that Girard studies demonstrated an increasing capacity to express human motivation and behaviour as arising from the interdependence of desire. Black and white depictions of relationships gave way to more nuanced characterisations, with greater recognition of the dependence of the self on the other. This is described by Girard as "novelistic truth".[24]

Girard maintains that this growth in the novelists themselves occurred at varying degrees and at differing rates. As they undertook their own interior journey into understanding the nature of human desire they were gradually able to express it in

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[22] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 6.
[23] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 6.
[24] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 17.

their writings.[25] They realised that they themselves were subject, in Girard's terms, to mimetic desire: their progression from romantic fiction to great novels reflected their deepening understanding of their own dependence on others' desires. In this way, they recognised the metaphysical nature of desire. Girard describes this process as a form of conversion. Integral to a novel's greatness, for Girard, is its revelation of these underlying motivations. He states:

> So the career of the great novelist is dependent upon a conversion, and even if it is not made completely explicit, there are symbolic allusions to it at the end of the novel. These allusions are at least implicitly religious.[26]

Thus for Girard, the ability of great novelists to see through their artificial presentations of human relationships and to express that in their writing indicated a major personal conversion. They moved from "romantic" literature to true novels as they awoke to the previously unconscious influence of the rivalry and conflict inherent in their own metaphysical and mimetic desires. Their previous inability to see their dependence on the desires and the person of the other had generated a false sense of self. Once they recognised the influence of the other's desire the nature of rivalry and conflict with that other was apparent. This led to the insight that rivalry was undergirded by the impetus to claim the being of the other, which they then reflected in their novels. Girard states:

> ....under the influence of romanticism we attach too much importance to the individual hero. The novelist's fundamental concern is not the creation of characters but the revelation of metaphysical desire.[27]

Further to his analysis, the realisation that novelists expressed through their characters their personal interior revolution was a catalyst for Girard's own personal growth, a phenomenon which he admits he had simultaneously detected in himself. However, it

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[25] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 3.
[26] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 284.
[27] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 164.

was the evidence of the content of the novels coupled with his knowledge of the life experience of the novelists that formed the basis for the comparison with himself. He reflects:

> Like all novelists, Proust's narrator moves freely from room to room in the "museum without walls" of his existence. The novelist-narrator is none other than Marcel cured of all his errors, who has overcome his desires and is rich with novelistic grace. The great Cervantes is also a Don Quixote who has overcome his desires, a Don Quixote who can see a barber's basin as a barber's basin but who nevertheless remembers that he once saw it as Mabrino's helmet. This clear-sighed Don Quixote is present in the book only for an instant; it is the dying Don Quixote of the conclusion. Proust's narrator too dies in *The Past Recaptured* and he too is cured in death. But he comes to life again as a novelist. He reappears *in person* in the body of his novel.[28]

The insight into something of a similar movement in himself is described by Girard thus: "When I wrote the last chapter of my first book ... I realised I was undergoing my own version of the experience I was describing...."[29] The resolution of a potentially life-threatening health problem brought his intellectual-literary conversion to a deeper personal level, as described by Hodge: "Facing death led Girard to a crisis that stripped him of his notions of self-aggrandisement and intellectual arrogance."[30] Girard stated: "Conversion turned into something really serious in which the aesthetic gave way to the religious."[31] In this way his experience of his insight showed its personal implications – one that was changed by the realisation of mimetic desire, leading to a more genuine understanding of himself.

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[28] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 232-233.
[29] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 285.
[30] Joel Hodge, "Conversion, the Self, and the Victim: East Timor and Girard's Mimetic Theory in Dialogue," *Australian eJournal of Theology* Vol.18 No. 2, (2011), accessed September 5, 2017, http://aejt.com.au/2011/volume_18/issue_2/?article=374476
[31] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 286.

Existential downfall

As indicated, mimetic theory has at its base the contention that the desires humans appropriate from others fundamentally flow from a sense of "lack of being" that is behind the drive to possess or acquire.[32] Human beings can experience an inner emptiness which is perceived as remedied only by gaining the object of their desires.[33] The possible ensuing conflict is not only over possession but, at a deeper level, over identity, recognition and prestige which are distortions of the underlying desire for being.[34] Related to Girard's point, Robert Schreiter comments: "To withstand vulnerability and fear we need to construct a sense of self and safety."[35] Among the means employed for that purpose, humans "choose to draw boundaries....by exclusion, placing beyond that boundary those who are 'not us', those who are 'them'."[36] Yet these boundaries mask the underlying and on-going crisis of being and identity.

Mimetic desire, while focussing on externals such as objects or relationships, is therefore fundamentally a matter of identity. In Girard's view, the progression from romantic fiction to great novels indicated that the writers realised that the characters of their novels were, in effect, projections of themselves. Girard sees this as a humbling experience of self-knowledge, a type of collapse of previous understandings of the self. It becomes, in his words, an "existential downfall".[37] Honest appraisal allowed the novelists to refine their work out of the experience of this personal

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[32] Stork, "An Introduction," 5.
[33] Stork, "An Introduction," 5.
[34] Stork, "An Introduction," 7.
[35] Schreiter, Robert J. *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 32.
[36] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 52.
[37] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 284.

collapse.[38] Such a change of perspective is reflected in the fortunes of the characters such as in illness, reversal of approach and opinion, or death. In relation to these inversions, Girard states, "All the heroes, in the conclusion, utter words which *clearly contradict their former ideas*..."[39] Stepan, in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, illustrates this fundamental change of mind:

> I've been telling lies all my life. Even when I told the truth I never spoke for the sake of the truth, but always for my own sake. I knew it before, but I only see it now.[40]

Such collapse of one's perception of the self necessarily influences relationships. Hodge notes: "As Girard's experience attests, the experience of crisis, emerging from one's relation to the other, can provoke a change in one's self and how one thinks about and interacts with the world."[41] These changes in the relationship of the self to the world are not cosmetic but are so basic that they are appropriately named "conversion". Hodge describes the fundamental personal upheaval which such existential conversion affords as "the breakdown of the rivalistic 'romantic self' and the emergence of the relational other-centred self, out of which self-awareness, agency and responsibility properly emerge."[42] Hence conversion in the Girardian sense is the inner realisation of the lack of autonomy of the self, as a result of an existential crisis provoked by one's relation to the other. It has an irreplaceable role in the development of identity, as interdependence with others forms the growth of the self. Thus conversion and identity are interrelated. Girard states: "Metaphysical desire

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[38] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 3.
[39] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 293.
[40] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 290.
[41] Joel Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 19.
[42] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 46.

brings into being a certain relationship to others and to oneself. True conversion engenders a new relationship to others and to oneself."[43]

Nevertheless, even where true novelists present a person's desires as being dependent on the desires of others, there is no guarantee that the story will be read that way. The revelation of mimesis demands that the reader, too, is able to grasp the unfolding understanding of the central role of imitation in human desire. Not all are so able, and the general human appreciation of one's desires as unique and individual - the staple of popular writing - remains widely believed. More often than not, those who are satisfied by reading romantic fiction are often oblivious of the workings of mimetic desire when presented it by "true novelists" (as defined by Girard), and so miss the mimetic dimensions of such plots and characters. In these cases Girard warns: "the truth of the revelation remains hidden even at the heart of its revelation."[44] The reader needs the capacity to receive the revelation, to comprehend the operation of mimesis in the tale, and hence to appreciate it as an invitation to a humble acceptance of this reality of human existence. If they are taken in by the distortion however, they interpret their own lives accordingly, thinking that they are as independent of others as they imagine the subject whom they read about to be. Girard states: "The reader, who is usually convinced of his own spontaneity, applies to the work the meanings he already applies to the world."[45]

Thus, mimetic theory poses to both writers and readers intellectual and personal challenges regarding the fundamental reality of human desire. An appreciation of the dependence of one's desires on the desires of others, the tendency to rivalry, the

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[43] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 294.
[44] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 16.
[45] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 15.

constant possibility of blaming others and using various forms of violence to resolve

consequent crises, are essential elements of the self-knowledge which arise in

recognition of mimetic desire. As this thesis later discusses, elements of the "romantic

lie" and "existential downfall" are apparent in the historical record of the relationship

between Australia and East Timor.

Scapegoating

The second part of this chapter addresses the fundamental Girardian theme of the

scapegoat, a pivotal aspect of mimetic theory which has particular application to the

relationship between Australia and East Timor. While Girard's initial insights dealt

with mimesis within literature, he subsequently developed his theory through

anthropological investigations of archaic cultures and religions. The elements of

mimetic rivalry which he had found in great literature echoed the rivalry and violence

at the heart of ancient societies, though with a further element: that such rivalries were

culturally resolved by scapegoating a victim.

The persecution of the scapegoat was first investigated by Girard in his 1972 book

Violence and the Sacred.[46] In this and further works, he discussed societies that faced

violent internal disruption from accumulating mimetic rivalries which threatened their

existence. Illustrating this thesis from ancient and medieval history and literature,

Girard presented examples of crises during which the social fabric disintegrated and

hierarchical systems collapsed, and during which the social group attempted to find

and blame a cause.[47] In such social crises, human relationships were irrevocably

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[46] Girard, *I See Satan,* 8-9.
[47] René Girard, *The Scapegoat,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University
    Press, 1986), 2-3; 20.

changed, and the systems and institutions which make ordinary life possible were eroded or destroyed.

Girard showed that such threats to cohesion traditionally could be resolved (at least temporarily) in uniting against a common enemy, either internal or external, or apportioning blame for some crime to a member of the social group regarded as the cause of the uncontrollable threat. The identification of such a cause required a culprit, who became the scapegoat. Therefore, a single individual or group became the group's victim, killed or expelled as though guilty of the original conflict.[48] The "all against all" violence which threatened the survival of the group gradually began to be replaced with an "all against one"'process. Thus for Girard, there are certain identifiable features or stereotypes of scapegoating: a crisis; a crime; criteria for the choice of scapegoat; and the violence done to the scapegoat to solve the crisis and assuage its effects.[49] These stereotypes are discussed in this dissertation in relation to the Australian treatment of East Timor.

Girard perceived that escalations of violence were able to be avoided through the scapegoat effect, the blaming of a substitutionary victim. Girard states:

> By a scapegoat effect I mean that strange process through which two or more people are reconciled at the expense of a third party who appears guilty or responsible for whatever ails, disturbs, or frightens the scapegoaters.[50]

The violent despatch of the scapegoat to solve mimetic social crises constituted the unifying sacrifice which restored social peace. "The sacrifice serves to protect the

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[48] Kirwan, *Discovering Girard,* 48-49; Girard, *The Girard reader,* 104-106; 107-117.
[49] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 12-23.
[50] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 14.

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community from its *own* violence."[51] Girard thus proposes that the spread of violence is prevented by this violent sacrifice.[52] Significantly, the scapegoat is required to be one which could not perpetuate further violence in the form of vengeance, so the victim is by definition one without a defender.[53] Additionally, an important element in the process is the presence of "an eminently manipulable mass" of people who allow themselves to be orchestrated into believing in the guilt of the scapegoat.[54] With the problem of rivalry solved by way of the death or expulsion of the victim, communities experienced harmony again for a time, until rivalry and violence again arose, requiring another scapegoat.

The feat of solving social ills which the victim appeared to accomplish through his or her sacrifice resulted in the victim then being regarded as supernatural and divine. Through a "double transference", the social group also came to perceive that the same victim was responsible for the original crisis, as part of a plan to deal with the threat or crime and generate the harmony which resulted from sacrificial expulsion or murder. As the effect of this sacrifice was the restoration of harmony, victims were elevated to the status of gods, mysteriously causing and resolving violence.[55] Girard showed that the features of "the sacred" – as causing and resolving conflict – were present across a range of cultures.[56]

In the eyes of ancient communities the victim filled the position of both the one responsible for disharmony and the one whose extermination had brought peace.

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[51] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* trans. Patrick Gregory (London: Continuum, 1988), 8.
[52] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 18.
[53] Kirwan, *Discovering Girard,*49.
[54] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 40.
[55] Girard, *I See Satan,* xvi
[56] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 94-126; René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World,* trans. S. Bann and M. Metteer (Stanford, Cal: Stanford University Press, 1978), 3-47.

Harmony, order and prosperity were seen to come from the sacrifice of the victim, and hence grew practices of attributing supernatural or divine status to the victims. The violence towards the victim was sacralised, raised to a plane which concealed its fundamental barbarity.[57] Girard sees the beginnings of religions and thence cultures in these processes.[58] Sacrificial rituals with prohibitions and taboos developed to remember and re-enact the processes which saved the group from itself, keeping alive warnings against behaviours which risked descent into social chaos. Kirwan summarises: "The origin of religion, therefore, is to be found in 'sacrifice', which is none other than the violent extermination of the scapegoat."[59] Thus the violence against the victim which protected societies from themselves was perceived as "sacred".[60]

Hence Girard argued for what he called the scapegoat or surrogate-victim mechanism as the hypothesis which could account most satisfactorily for religion and culture.[61] The religion and culture generated from scapegoating a victim established social order, allowing communities to survive with some level of peace. Over time, the repetition in ritual of the sacrifice of the victim became the "sacred" act which caused the community to cohere. With attendant rituals, myths, taboos and prohibitions, it ceaselessly reminded the community of its precarious grip on harmony, and became the means of reinforcing the limitation of violence which the victimary mechanism was designed to ensure. Girard states: "the various 'scapegoat' phenomena are...the very basis of cultural unification, the source of all rituals and religion."[62] The religio-

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[57] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 174.
[58] Girard, *I See Satan,* xvi-xvii; Kirwan, *Discovering Girard*, 54.
[59] Kirwan, *Discovering Girard*, 53.
[60] Stork, "An Introduction," 3.
[61] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 94-97.
[62] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 317.

cultural institutions established from scapegoating were regarded as "sacred" because they enshrined and expressed the basis for the community's survival.

For Girard, the heart of religion and culture is the surrogate-victim mechanism and its resolution in sacrifice through which the human race seeks to protect itself from its own violence. Initial violence was quelled and peace restored by the sacrifice of a scapegoat. Seen at once blameworthy and salvific, the victim's power over the group through its extermination began to be ritually repeated, in efforts to retain its temporarily harmonising effects. Oral and then written accounts of such sacrifices and their effects on communities grew into myths, with prohibitions and taboos guarding the community from regressing into behaviours which generated the original crises. Thus sacrifice, myth and prohibition evolved into religious and cultural institutions, whose rites and norms channelled the violence, steadying the propensity of human beings to descend into mimetic crises.

Features of Scapegoating

Girard detected certain features of both scapegoaters and their victims. The unconsciousness and unanimity of the persecutors were significant, as were the credibility and marginality of the scapegoat.

Unconsciousness and unanimity

For the scapegoating process to provide a satisfactory solution to social problems, the scapegoaters needed to be oblivious of the innocence of their victim. They cannot see that their blame of the victim is arbitrary or unreasonable. In their view, the victim is

truly responsible for the conflicts causing the social crisis. They are unable to see how they transfer their own guilt, rivalries and tensions onto the substitutionary victim.[63]

Girard demonstrates that in ancient societies the replacement of 'all against all' by the violent act of 'all against one' depended on all the members of the social group being in complete agreement as to the cause of the crisis. As rivalry and discord had been experienced by the whole community, the resolution had to be found by the group acting in concert to eliminate the perceived threat. Only then could the desired effect of the restoration of complete communal peace be achieved. Girard describes how the unanimous performance of sacred rituals in Dinka societies and the requirement of unanimity in Greek and Hindu myths are examples of how the ritualistic repetition of sacrifice would be useless if not accepted by everyone.[64]

Girard identifies the contagion of mimetic desire, firstly, with the consensus of the group that one, not all, are to blame for the social crisis, and secondly, with the unanimous act of all acting as persecutors as they dispense with the scapegoat. In this unanimous act, the collusion of all in the death of the victim protected everyone from being subsequently blamed for the death of the victim, and in turn contributed to the resultant universal group harmony. Thus the most powerful force in society, the crowd, which was so recently threatened by its own reciprocal violence, turns that violence onto the victim distinguished by some difference interpreted as blameworthy and, by killing or expelling the victim, resolves the crisis through sacrifice. The victim is apprehended as the one responsible for the threat, but in reality that one is the

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[63] Girard, *I See Satan,* xii; *The Girard Reader,* 216.
[64] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 105.

scapegoat, the persecuted one, done to death by an unconscious crowd.[65] In a reversal of relationship, the different, isolated and powerless one bears the supposed guilt, while the perpetrators conceal their persecution.

Marginality and credibility

The selection of the scapegoat was dependent on the marginalisation and credibility of the victim. The victim needed to be familiar to the group (usually as an insider of some kind) but marginal and easily made an outsider. Girard demonstrates these elements of selection in the myth of the king, Oedipus.[66] The citizens of Thebes are desperate to find someone to blame for the social crisis occasioned by a plague affecting their city. Already marginalised because of a physical deformity and his foreign status, Oedipus is accused of the worst crimes imaginable – parricide and incest – and thus becomes a credible suspect. His persecutors act together against him in the hope of bringing harmony and health back to the city.

Moreover, Girard maintains that victims were sometimes chosen "because they belong to a class that is particularly susceptible to persecution rather than because of the crimes they have committed."[67] He cites ethnic and religious minorities in this category, but the situation of being disabled either physically or behaviourally also applies, as seen in Oedipus.[68] Any marginalised person, whether a known foreigner or one more on the inside such as a monarch or political leader could be in danger of being victimised.[69]

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[65] Girard, *I See Satan,* 14.
[66] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 25.
[67] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 17.
[68] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 18.
[69] Girard, *Things Hidden,* 56-57.

Another required element was the credibility or legitimacy of scapegoating the chosen victim. Such a one would have to be similar enough to the group to be an adequate substitution, but different enough to uphold a suspicion of guilt. For example, Oedipus was both insider and outsider. He was the king of Thebes, and so was well-known and revered. Yet, he was different from the common man, as well as being deformed and of foreign upbringing. Furthermore, the victim needed to be someone on the edges of the society who lacked (or would not activate) the support of family or powerful connections, thus lessening the possibility of even more revenge overtaking the community. In Oedipus' case, he lacked family support, with his own uncle ultimately usurping his position. Girard explains:

> The desire to commit an act of violence on those near us cannot be suppressed without a conflict; we must divert that impulse, therefore, toward the sacrificial victim, the creature we can strike down without fear of reprisal, since he lacks a champion.[70]

As this dissertation later shows, these features of scapegoaters and scapegoats are apparent in the shared Australian-East Timorese history.

Myth

Integral to his ground-breaking insights into scapegoating and of particular interest to this thesis, is Girard's exploration of myths. Girard posits that over millennia, myths developed from repeated scapegoating acts that established the harmony and survival of the social group. In Greek myths (such as those of Oedipus and Dionysus), in Indian and African tales, and those of North American indigenous peoples, Girard detects scapegoating as the common element.[71] Through oral recitation or in texts, myths pinpointed both the cause and the resolution of the community's mayhem.

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[70] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 14.
[71] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 8; 264; 318.

Myths initiated and developed the religious and cultural identity of the group by recording and enacting sacrificial events to which the group's survival was attributed.[72] Nevertheless, Girard recognises that through myths belief in the fault of the scapegoat was maintained, along with exoneration of the murderers. Thus they were the means of camouflaging sacrificial murder by justifying sacrificial rituals.

Through analysis of various myths, Girard demonstrates that these narratives of scapegoating were all told from the perspective of those who benefitted from the process – the mob. He declares: "Mythic systems of representation obliterate the scapegoating on which they are founded, and they remain dependent on this obliteration."[73] Referring to the myth of Oedipus, Girard states: "Oedipus is indeed the responsible party, so responsible that he frees the community from all accountability."[74] Girard's interpretation made sense of obscure phenomena in myths and cut through the often stylised externals to reveal a single uniform feature present in them all: myths are all presented from the perspective of those who benefitted from the process, those who blamed and then killed the victim and those who experienced the ensuing, if short-lived, peace.[75] In order to conceal the violence towards the victim, the myth needed to distort the facts in some way, so that the perceived guilt of the victim was paramount. Kirwan explains that myths are "rationalisations or disguised accounts of an original act of violence, the truth of which the groups needs to conceal or displace from itself."[76] In this way the victim's fate and the community's innocence were validated.

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[72] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 24-44.
[73] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 14-15.
[74] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 82.
[75] Kirwan, *Discovering Girard*, 54.
[76] Kirwan, *Discovering Girard*, 39.

From Myth to Jewish Scriptures

Girard's theses on the importance of myth to social identity and cohesion were expanded fundamentally through his insights into the Jewish and Christian scriptures. He argues that the Jewish and Christian scriptures unveiled for humanity the true status of the victim as an innocent scapegoat of the mob. This insight revealed the murderous character of societies, their religions and cultures, which were founded on and maintained by such practices.[77] Contrary to the myths of antiquity, the Jewish tradition gradually challenged ancient sacrificial cultures by telling its mythic stories not solely from the dominant perspective of the persecutors, but through the perspective and voice of the *victim*. Girard emphasises the distinctiveness of the Jewish scriptures as opposed to myths:

> the initiative of Jewish authors and their critical reappraisal must undoubtedly be credited with the affirmation that the victim is innocent and that the culture founded on murder retains a thoroughly murderous character that in the end becomes self-destructive once the ordering and sacrificial benefits of the original violence have been dissipated.[78]

The understanding of the innocence of the murdered victim and therefore of the evil of scapegoating found in the Jewish scriptures was a gradual revelation.[79] According to Girard, these texts began the journey towards "complete revelation of collective victimage as the founding mechanism of human culture."[80] The growing insight in the Jewish scriptures into the true nature of scapegoating is apparent in stories such as that of Abel who is the victim of Cain (called the founder of culture) and Joseph who is an innocent victim of his brothers and of Potiphar's wife (Genesis 37:1-50:26).

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[77] Girard, *Things Hidden,* 149.
[78] Girard, *Things Hidden,* 149.
[79] Girard *Things Hidden,* 157.
[80] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 18.

Moreover, many of the Psalms give voice to the victim:

> Show me a sign of your favour,
> so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame,
> because you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me. (Ps. 86:17 NRSV)

and

> Do not let my treacherous enemies rejoice over me,
> or those who hate me without cause wink the eye.
>
> (Ps. 35:19)

Further, the Suffering Servant in the Book of Isaiah is shown as the victim at the mercy of a mob. The text declares his innocence despite accusations: "They gave him a grave with the wicked, a tomb with the rich, though he had done no wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth" (Isaiah 53:9). The isolated and excluded one is shown in these texts as the victim of the powerful, and God is seen as favouring the victim, not the dominant group.[81] Girard states: "Throughout the Old Testament, a work of exegesis is in progress, operating in precisely the opposite direction to the usual dynamics of mythology and culture."[82]

Girard identified the phrase "hated without cause" as one of the many biblical insights into the plight of the victim. It occurs in Psalm 69, and Verse 4 reads:

> More in number than the hairs of my head
> are those who hate me without cause;
> many are those who would destroy me,
> my enemies who accuse me falsely.

The Psalm displays an understanding of the victim as the focus of the sacrificing crowd. The victim faces a multitude in the grip of a contagious process of blame. The Psalm holds no exoneration of those who hate, accuse and destroy, as their accusations are false. Therefore, the victim has no case to answer: he/she/they are not

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[81] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 17.
[82] Girard, *Things Hidden ,*157.

the cause of the machinations against them. The plaint of the victim is the reverse of the ancient mythic camouflage of the truth.

Raymund Schwager isolates three attributes of the persecutors of the victim in Psalm 69 which are repeated in other Psalms, that is, they are "numerous, deceitful and hate without cause."[83] These characteristics show the distinctive perspective of the Bible on scapegoating and parallel elements of mimetic theory. Schwager states:

> According to Girard, the tendency towards violence is effective everywhere. Thus the enemies are very numerous. Violence, furthermore, has no cause of its own. It grows almost unnoticed when the desire for life and fulfilment deteriorates, becomes mimesis, and generates the vicious cycle of rivalries. Finally, violence is always accompanied by falsehood and mendacity.[84]

The application of this Psalm to the Timorese people is apposite: they are small in number in the face of powerful enemies. The deceit and evasion accompanying their subjection is apparent in the documentation and clearly shows that their persecution was not as a result of any fault of theirs. They suffered the fate of the accused and the hated, but had done nothing to warrant accusation or hatred.

From Myth to Gospel

Girard regards the New Testament – particularly the Gospels – as the culmination of the Jewish scriptures' insights into the innocence of the victim and thus the reversal of myth. The Christian scriptures definitively unveil the scapegoat mechanism as the violent foundation of religion and culture that unconsciously dominates societies.[85]

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[83] Raymund Schwager, *Must there be scapegoats?: Violence and Redemption in the Bible* 2nd ed. (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2000), 99.
[84] Schwager, *Must there be scapegoats?* 100.
[85] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 117; 103; *The Girard Reader,* 262.

The New Testament's reiteration of a verse from Psalm 118 is a case in point: "It was the stone rejected by the builders that proved to be the keystone." In Matthew's Gospel Jesus quotes this verse after relating the parable of the tenants who violently dispose of the servants and even the son of the landowner (Mt 21:42). The verse occurs again in Acts 4:11 in Peter's speech to the rulers and elders in which he proclaims the saving death and resurrection of Jesus. The victims in both situations display the reversal of innocent/guilty, inside/outside. The act of rejection constitutes them as victim, but the recognition of that fact – accomplished by the Gospel – capsizes the edifice of meaning previously built upon their victimisation. Thus the shift from mythology to the Christian scriptures results from the single major divergence between the two forms of text, that is, the differing interpretation of the victim.

The reversal of the perception of the victim, argues Girard, was completed by the Passion of Christ. He states: "the control exercised by persecutors and their accounts of persecution over the whole of humanity are at stake in the Passion."[86] Contrary to the content of myths, the Passion accounts "express the denial of magic causality and stereotyped accusations."[87] The show trial, the torture, the manipulation by religious and political leaders, and the fickleness of the crowd expose the event as one more in an incalculable number of scapegoating events. Yet the singular difference which collapses the whole victimary structure, in both its previous and future manifestations, is the narrative which places the blame squarely where it lies: on the perpetrators of the victim's death or expulsion, not on the victim.

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[86] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 102.
[87] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 103.

The Gospel of John contains a particularly cogent demonstration of scapegoating that reveals the movement of the process, even while the participants are unaware of what they are doing. It occurs in the meeting between the Pharisees and the chief priests where they expressed their frustration and fears concerning Jesus (Jn 11:47-54). The High Priest Caiaphas states: "it is better for one man to die for the people, than for the whole nation to be destroyed" (11:50). In this sentence Caiaphas expresses the traditional purpose of the scapegoat: to limit communal violence by the violent dispatch of one member.[88] This Gospel scene thus unveils the unconscious operation of scapegoating.

Furthermore, the Gospel illustrates the reversal of myth in the depiction of Jesus as the "Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29). Girard points out that while the Gospels do not expressly mention "scapegoat" the reality exists in the image of the lamb.[89] John the Baptist's identification of Jesus as the Lamb of God shows the Gospel's designation of Jesus as victim from the beginning of his public ministry.

Christ's death reveals the truth that the violent act of killing a surrogate victim produces a false harmony which is incapable of providing a permanent and life-giving foundation to society. The Passion of Christ exposes the lie of scapegoating and therefore condemns the false bases of religion and culture.[90] The power of cultural and religious violence to unify humanity begins to disintegrate as the truth of this narrative is understood. Stork summarises:

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[88] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 113.
[89] Girard, *The Scapegoat*, 117.
[90] Paradoxically therefore, the undermining of the violent basis of both religions and cultures occurs in *religion* itself, though in a religion of a very different kind from the archaic. It is religion, the putative home of the sacred, which unmasks the "sacred" violence on which it is based.

> The Gospels proclaim an undermining of that false peace and the fragmentation of a society built on violent unanimity. In other words, the New Testament completes the process of desacralisation by revealing the mimetic genesis of scapegoats and their founding and structuring function in human culture.[91]

The collapse of the efficacy of scapegoating as a divinely-approved and successful means of building and maintaining human society had further implications. The "otherness" of victims as marginal, weak and expendable was unveiled as a baseless excuse for the blame heaped upon them. The revelation of the Gospel of the innocence of the victim meant that the "many against the one" could now no longer apply without the many being recognised as the culpable ones.

Texts of Persecution

Girard regarded myths as the record of scapegoating events. Their distortions concealed both the violence done to the victim and the guilt of the persecutors. The Jewish and Christian scriptural texts gradually unveiled the violence and instability of scapegoating and so demonstrated the lie at the basis of myth.

Girard's earlier insights into mimetic rivalry and associated violence in literature unveiled the similarly false basis of human relationships which resides in notions of individual autonomy. He described the self-sufficiency and independence of characters in popular novels as the "romantic lie". It is apparent that ancient myths and "romantic lies" share commonality as textual records or expressions of human interaction. Integral to both is the element of falsehood. That element is considered in this dissertation as substantial in relation to the Australian relationship with East Timor.

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[91] Stork, "An Introduction," 15.

Efforts to conceal the truth of present-day scapegoating resemble myths, and are termed by Girard as "texts of persecution". However, they are also different from myth, according to Girard, in that the victim is not sacralised or divinised (or is only vaguely sacralised). Texts of persecution are therefore easier to decipher than mythology. They represent an "intermediary zone between mythology and the more radial demythification" of the scriptures.[92] According to Girard, this intermediate phase can be very violent as humans struggle to cope with the undermining of the victimage mechanism but continue to try to deploy it in increasingly ineffective ways (as was the case in East Timor in which victimisation was rife but ultimately futile).

This dissertation demonstrates that official Australian documentary records attempt to soften the circumstances of the scapegoating of East Timor, to distort the facts and to exonerate those responsible. They are thus described as texts of persecution. In the analysis of these texts, the effects on the Timorese people are stated, but it is the Australian involvement which is the major focus. Available Australian government resources are used, although there remain documents which are not available or where access is denied on the basis of "national security" (a fact which is relevant to this dissertation).[93] The CAVR report, presented to the United Nations by the Timorese government in 2005 are also used for matters from the 1970s to 1999 for clarification and as factual material. Newspaper and church reports detail the increasing concern of civil society and ordinary Australians as the solidarity movement grew in a process of change and conversion that made a just Australian response possible.

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[92] Girard, *Things Hidden*, 127.
[93] Philip Dorling, "Attorney-General George Brandis tries to keep East Timor war crimes secret," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* January 28, 2014, accessed July 12, 2015, http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/attorneygeneral-george-brandis-tries-to-keep-east-timor-war-crimes-secret-20140127-31iyb.html

The record demonstrates that official Australian actions regarding East Timor were characterised by insecurity, deceit and passivity arising from a perception of the "national interest". Investigation shows that actions of successive governments were designed to ensure protection of various Australian interests at all costs, culminating, after the traumas of the Second World War, in acquiescence with Indonesian priorities, regardless of the effects on a smaller and weaker neighbour. In this way, the Australian documentary record witnesses to Australian complicity in historic persecution. Its attempted justification and cover-up forms it as "texts of persecution".

Conversion

Girard saw important similarities in his early work on literature and his later work on the relationship of myths and the Bible. The movement from the lie of self-sufficiency to the truth of interdependence that he found in literature is mirrored for him in the replacement of myth by the Bible. It is a type of "conversion". The conversion of the writers whom he saw as true novelists was a turning away from separation from the "other" (which is inherent in fantasies of self-sufficiency) to recognition of dependence on the "other" for the discovery of one's identity. The crucial element that Girard clarified in relation to mythology and the Bible was that this conversion must involve the recognition of violence towards the victimised and innocent "other" that results from self-sufficient notions of desire.[94] Biblical conversion resists the repudiation of the other that leads to victimisation, and results in knowledge of one's complicity built on false notions of identity and relationality. It requires the

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[94] Joel Hodge, "Overcoming Violence and Death in East Timor: the foundations for a new nation," *Australian eJournal of Theology* Vol.16 No.1 (2010): 9, accessed September 3, 2017, http://aejt.com.au/2010/issue_16

acceptance of the culpable self. It rejects the establishment of identity on the basis of separation, rivalry and violence.

Girard also identified the influence of biblical imagery and stories on the novelists, seeing in their recognition of mimesis a movement similar to the unveiling of the violent separatism operating in myths. He states:

> I recognised the importance of the Gospels in the individual experiences of the novelists who came to grips with mimetic desire and came to a knowledge of mimetic desire. In fact, they have a kind of conversion experience, and this conversion is of the same nature as the shift from mythology to the Gospels.[95]

The reversal of position towards the self and the other contained in the novelists' turnaround from "romantic lie" to "novelistic truth" was described by Girard as "existential downfall".[96] A similar collapse of meaning is evident in the comparison between myth and Bible, with the biblical texts locating such a change around the victim. For example, in unveiling the innocence of Jesus and the guilt of the scapegoaters of Jesus, the Gospels reveal the violent and false basis of myth, of which scapegoating is the hidden, generating principle.[97] Existential downfall brings a revelation of the truth of human interdependence occasioning a disintegration of systems of meaning. Just as the false self of the writer gives way to an acknowledgement of dependence on the other, so the unstable foundations of society are discovered to be built on the violent victimisation of the other.

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[95] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 262-263.
[96] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 284.
[97] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 263.

Theological Criticism of Girard's theses

Despite the growing influence of Girard's theories in various academic fields, there have been major criticisms levelled against it, including its scope and method. Girard has been accused of presenting a theory which purports to explain all aspects of human nature. Furthermore, it is claimed that his theory lacks scientific rigour as it is unable to be verified by scientific controls.[98] He is said to discard larger methodological frameworks in favour of historical particularities and reference to a limited number of novels to construct his proposals.[99] Because of the focus of this dissertation, I will focus on major theological criticisms.

It is claimed that Girard's work it is not consistent with traditional theological positions, in that it diminishes the traditional Christian understanding of God's salvific work. In this regard, John Milbank questions social theories based on notions of human conflict, such as Girard's.[100] He maintains that Christian theology is itself a social theory, one that is revealed by God and based on peace. Drawing on Milbank's and Girard's insights into anthropology and revelation, Alison maintains that while God's perspective on humanity has indeed been revealed, it has also to be discovered in the practicalities of human life.[101]

Furthermore, Girard's earlier works did not include positive mimesis, the imitation of goodness, nor did he make room for deeper understanding of sacrifice in the Christian sense, particularly in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. In this regard a major contribution was made by Raymund Schwager, whom Girard found a valuable

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[98] Gabriel Andrade, "René Girard," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* accessed 30 September 2017, http://www.iep.utm.edu/girard/#H6

[99] Jeramy Townsley, *René Girard's Theory of Violence, Religion and the Scapegoat* (December 2003), accessed October 1, 2017, http://www.jeramyt.org/papers/girard.html

[100] James Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 22-24

[101] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 24

interrogator and interpreter.[102] He maintained that Girard presented a knowledge of

human desire which appears to be beyond the writings of anthropologists and

psychologists. Instead, states Schwager, he discovered a "profound psychology that is

closely related to Christian faith."[103] As a result of his interactions with Schwager,

Girard changed his mind and expanded his understanding of traditional theological

doctrines, such as on Christ's sacrifice. He explained this in an interview:

> I now accept calling this 'sacrifice' in a special sense. Because one person did it,
> God the Father pardons all, in effect. I had avoided the word 'scapegoat' for Jesus,
> but now I agree with Raymund Schwager that he is scapegoat for all - except now
> in reverse fashion, for theologically considered the initiative comes from God
> rather than simply from human beings with their scapegoat mechanism.[104]

Additionally, Neil Ormerod questions Girard's emphasis on desire as mimetic.

Distinguishing between elicited and natural desire, he maintains that Bernard

Lonergan's appreciation of the desire for God as natural to human beings provides a

"necessary complement" to Girard's view of desire as mimetic.[105] He points to

Lonergan's recognition of human desire for the good as providing "an alternative

account of the origins of culture distinct from mimetic rivalry and the way of

sacrificial violence suggested by Girard."[106] In response to at least some of this

criticism, Girard has affirmed mimetic desire as intrinsically showing that humans

have a desire for God.[107]

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[102] Kevin Mongrain, "Theologians of Spiritual Transformation: a proposal for reading René Girard through the lenses of Hans Urs von Balthasar and John Cassian," *Modern Theology* 28:1 (January 2012):106, note 10, doi:10.1111/j.1468-0025.2011.01726.x; James Alison, "We didn't invent sacrifice, sacrifice invented us: unpacking Girard's insight", *Concilium* (2013/4): 7, http://www.jamesalison.co.uk/pdf/eng73.pdf
[103] Schwager, *Must there be scapegoats?* 2.
[104] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 280.
[105] Neil Ormerod, "Desire and the origins of culture: Lonergan and Girard in conversation," *The Heythrop Journal,* Vol 54, Issue 5: 784, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2265.2011.00697.x
[106] Ormerod, "Desire and the origins of culture," 795.
[107] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 62-65.

Other criticism includes that voiced by Kevin Mongrain, who compares the thought of Girard with that of Hans Urs van Baltasar, showing certain deficiencies from Baltasar's point of view about Girard's position on human nature and God.[108] Mongrain states that Balthasar was writing in the 1970s and concentrated mainly on *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World.* He found there that Girard did not seem to give enough credence to the action of God in the life of humanity, as though God were sitting on the sidelines. Even the death of Christ appeared to be solely from the human point of view. After reading Balthasar, however, Girard made some concession to his thought as he developed his own theories over the next thirty years. Mongrain notes that Girard developed his theory of mimetic desire with an increasing emphasis on good mimesis leading to the following of Christ.[109]

I believe that Girard's willingness to learn through his interactions with theologians indicates that he saw his work as a process rather than a fixed set of theories. When applied to the relationship between Australia and East Timor, as attempted in this dissertation, his insights appear to me to present a comprehensive and coherent schema with which to consider the suffering which occurred. Based as they are in human experience and knowledge in many areas, Girard's theories provide release from the limitations of solely political or solely spiritual explanations. Furthermore, interpretation of the historical events in the light of the victimage mechanism challenges the duality which characterises most present-day historical investigation, including that concerning Australia-East Timor history. To propose the Christian revelation as the interpreter of the human sciences was not only ambitious, but proves both satisfying and successful, even if unfinished. Girard's work links literary

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[108] Mongrain, "Theologians of Spiritual Transformation," 81-111.
[109] Mongrain, "Theologians of Spiritual Transformation," 100-105.

criticism, anthropology, philosophy, ancient historical and literary studies, scriptural studies and theology in a *tour de force* which honours the human endeavour of each discipline to find meaning, while at the same time revealing their interdependence.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the fundamentals of mimetic theory in order to lay the groundwork for this dissertation's analysis. The outline is expanded in the following chapter by means of a closer examination of Girard's concept of the scapegoated victim. The dissertation then shows how mimetic theory is a valuable means of reflection on the relationship between Australia and East Timor. The violence characterising the historical situations affecting both nations can be seen as the violence of the dominant group towards the weaker, in order to protect and maintain security. In succeeding chapters I draw on Girard's thought to demonstrate how official Australian actions towards East Timor were those of violence towards the victim, sacrificed on significant occasions to ward off external threats and strengthen relationships with larger neighbours.

CHAPTER THREE
THE VICTIM INTERPRETS HISTORY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach taken in the dissertation to the interpretation of the history of the relationship between Australia and East Timor. It does this by showing how a methodological framework can be deployed using Girard's notion of the "victim" as the main interpretive category.

Girard's precise definition of "victim" is applied to East Timor throughout the dissertation. In Girard's terminology, "victim" is a technical term which designates a person or group scapegoated by others to achieve release from fear or threat. The term is applicable to East Timor which was adversely affected by the desires, rivalries and conflicts of larger powers and which suffered widespread death and destruction as a result. A review of historical facts shows East Timor as small, weak and expendable, fulfilling the requirements of Girard's designation of "victim". The dissertation concentrates mainly on Australia's involvement in that process. It demonstrates the Australian role in the relationship as that of persecutor, but one which ultimately underwent a conversion and supported the victim.

In Girard's view, the falsity of the scapegoat mechanism was unveiled by the Gospel revelation of the innocent victim Christ. Girard declares: "The Crucifixion is what

highlights the victimary mechanism and explains history."[1] Thus an interpretation of

the history of East Timor using Girard's concept of victim as its pivotal instrument is

necessarily Christian.

Two discussions emerging from this Christian theological approach are employed to

explain the interpretive power of the victim as demonstrated by East Timor. The first

concerns the identification of the innocent victim Christ with all victims throughout

his life and death. East Timor exemplifies the "innocent victim" its recent history.

Secondly, the understanding of Christ as the innocent victim has implications for the

response of Christ's followers to victims. As the church is the "body of Christ" formed

by the Eucharist, the Christian identity is that of being one with Christ, willing to

pattern themselves on him. This is expressed by imitation of Christ's values and

priorities, among which his concern for victims is the paramount expression of his

love and imitation of the Father. As a result, the response of the church to the violence

inflicted on victims such as the Timorese people is of the essence of Christianity. This

is of particular importance to me and receives strong emphasis in the dissertation. The

requirement of the church to imitate Christ in order to identify with his concerns is

juxtaposed in this chapter with occurrences of its historical neglect and victimisation

of others. Such historical facts point to the gradual, even imperceptible, nature of the

revelation of the victim.

While the involvement of the Australian nation was not that of a Christian entity, the

recognition of the victim identified by Girard as influencing the modern world had

significant and continuing Australian effects. Among these are the tendency for

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[1] René Girard, *Battling to the End: conversations with Benoît Chantre,* trans. Mary Baker (East
Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 196.

parties in a conflict to each claim to be victim, a feature of the history that can be detected in Australia's relationship with East Timor. Furthermore, concern for human rights, also an effect of the revelation of the victim, emerged and prevailed in Australians as they recognised the victimisation of the Timorese people.

Thus the relationship between Australia and East Timor in this dissertation is interpreted through Girard's exposition of the innocence of the victim, which in turn is dependent on the Gospel revelation for its completion.

The "victim" - a Girardian structural term

The contemporary understanding of "victim" as passive and helpless is almost universal and presents dangers when employing it regarding East Timor and its history. The suggestion of weakness in popular usage does nothing to honour the Timorese people's responses to their experiences nor to the way they see themselves. A new institute of memory in Timor-Leste, *Chega! National Centre – Through Memory to Hope,* demonstrates this awareness. It declines to use the word "victim" and replaces it with "survivor".[2] As signalled in the Introduction to this thesis, the concept of "victim" as Girard uses it is different from popular associations such as the self-styled martyr and other demeaning connotations.

In Girardian theory, the "victimage mechanism" is a structural term which refers to the sacrifice of a scapegoat, whereby an entity is burdened with the responsibility for some social threat or ill. Internal violence was traditionally avoided by the community

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[2] Pat Walsh, "Growing Flowers in a Prison: Timor-Leste's new hub of post-conflict best practice," *Herb Feith Foundation Seminar Series* (2017), accessed August 23, 2017: 8, http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/herb-feith-foundation/seminar-pat-walsh-growing-flowers-in-a-prison-timor-lestes-new-hub-of-post-conflict-best-practice/

by placing the responsibility for the threat upon a scapegoat.[3] For Girard, the role of the victim was pivotal to the development of cultures and religions. Societies were dependent on victims for their very existence. Without the convenient and unprotected scapegoat onto which the pent-up rivalries or fears of a community could be focused, violence had the capacity to weaken the group, even to extinction.[4] Furthermore, mimetic theory shows that the victim was not seen as passive or self-absorbed. On the contrary, the achievement of being responsible for the return of harmony and cohesion in the group led to the victim's being considered as "sacred".[5]

The application of Girard's concept of victim to East Timor allows the history to be interpreted in a particular and insightful way. That interpretation necessarily affects the way that the Australian involvement is viewed, as Australia participated in the persecution. The Timorese people held what is termed the "epistemological privilege" of the victim.[6] Being the subject of oppression, victims have a particular insight into the situation which is denied their persecutors. In their poverty and friendlessness they can see and understand from a unique angle. This does not necessarily endow them with superiority in either morality or insight, but it does mean that their view is different from that of their oppressors.[7] Their perception can lack the distortion that is inherent in being part of the mob, and thus carries a unique authority.[8] Alison expresses this concept as the "intelligence of the victim" which he defines as "the discovery of the sort of human beings we are, and how we tend to build our personal

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[3] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* trans. Patrick Gregory (London: Continuum, 1988), 4.
[4] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* 8.
[5] Michael Kirwan, *Discovering Girard* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004), 52.
[6] Quoted in Joel Hodge, "The Transubstantiated Word," *Australian eJournal of Theology* Vol.13 No.1 (2009): accessed December 4, 2014, 3-4, http://aejt.com.au/2009/issue_13
[7] Melissa Browning, *Epistemological Privilege and Collaborative Research: A Reflection on Researching as an Outsider* (Chicago: Loyola University, 2013), accessed 10 August, 2017, http://practicalmattersjournal.org/2013/03/01/epistemological-privilege/
[8] Browning, *Epistemological Privilege.* 7.

and social identities on a series of exclusions."[9] The victim reveals that the exercise of

retaining power and privilege by way of scapegoating is a distortion of humanity. In

the Timorese case, the influence of Christian faith augmented this perception with a

belief in their identification with the suffering Christ.[10] Thus through Girard's

exposition of the victim mechanism, a means of "seeing through violence" has been

made available.

Effects of the biblical revelation

The Gospel reveals the truth of the victim

Of paramount importance to mimetic theory is the concept of the *innocence* of the

victim, revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ. Alison states:

> ...the resurrection brings a completely new perception of what Jesus' life and death
> had been about: the Father's interpretation of Jesus' life as hated without cause. By
> giving him back, the Father permitted a fresh rereading of the death of Jesus, and
> of his life and self-interpretation leading up to it, and thus affords a completely
> new perspective on human victims.[11]

As Jesus' passion approached, the Gospel quotes Psalm 118 to point to the revelation

which he was about to achieve through his death: "The stone which the builders

rejected has become the cornerstone" (Mt 21:42). The guilt for Jesus' death was

placed on the shoulders of those to whom it belonged, so eroding the violent culture

of sacrifice. As the gradual revelation of the innocence of the victim shown in the

Jewish scriptures reached its climax in the death and resurrection of Christ, the

premise on which societies and their religions and cultures had been built – the guilt

of the sacrificial victim – was revealed as false.

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[9] James Alison, *Knowing Jesus* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1993), 45.
[10] Joel Hodge, "Overcoming Violence and Death in East Timor: the foundations for a new nation,"
Australian eJournal of Theology Vol.16 No.1 (2010): 22, http://aejt.com.au/2010/issue_16
[11] James Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes* (New York, The
Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 77.

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the innocence of the victim is revealed and, with it, the instability of human cultures which are built on the lie of the guilt of victims. Girard states: "The Passion unveiled the sacrificial origin of humanity once and for all. It dismantled the sacred and revealed its violence."[12] The proclamation of the Gospel enabled in a powerful way humanity's journey away from sacrificial scapegoating, and revealed the mendacity of the basis upon which societies were built and maintained. Christ's death and resurrection subverts sacrificial scapegoating by revealing the victim as innocent. Girard's insights into this phenomenon have application in the Timorese instance, and introduce concepts which have far-reaching consequences, particularly in the way forgiveness and the revelation of the victim are importantly linked.

The biblical revelation of the innocence of the victim has made gradual but fundamental changes in human relations. Conspicuous among these is the growing concern for human rights, a reality that accompanies ambit claims for the status of victim. Paradoxically, violence has simultaneously increased.

Human rights

Girard demonstrates the relentless advance of concern for victims which, from small beginnings in the Christian message, has now become a distinguishing aspect of the modern world, without parallel in antiquity.[13] Christ's unveiling of the victim mechanism has brought a comprehensive, if gradual, change towards victims. Girard

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[12] Girard, *Battling to the End,* xi.
[13] René Girard, *I see Satan Fall Like Lightning,* trans. J.G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 161.

notes that concern for victims "is unifying the world for the first time in history."[14] He states that it "is the secular mask of Christian love" and that "there is no doubt that it stems from Christianity."[15] Girard claims that this concern evolved as more and more focussed and that "in no other culture has anything even remotely similar ever existed."[16] He refers to the vindication of victims becoming more apparent, with "new hidden victims of society" continually being discovered.[17] Despite appalling backsliding, for example in the Nazi era, the concern for victims is a dominant value, even a "calling" in today's world.[18] I argue that this concern for the victim was the main driver in the conversion of Australians to the Timorese cause. Significantly, it is this value that assisted the Timorese in making claims for their independence and freedom, but was also ironically used as a justification for their oppression (as will be shortly discussed).

Increase in violence

Parallel to the growth in awareness of the victim and human rights however, has been a paradoxical increase in violence. As scapegoating could no longer claim divine approbation, the "sacred" religious and cultural protections for society, based on the violent sacrifice of a victim, began to disintegrate.[19] On the surface, this situation may appear to be beneficial, with humanity privy to the forces which condemned the innocent. One effect of the collapse of this previously successful means of social

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[14] Girard, *I See Satan,* 167.
[15] Girard, *I See Satan,* 165.
[16] René Girard, *The Girard Reader,* ed. James G. Williams (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996)*,* 208.
[17] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 208.
[18] Girard, *I See Satan,* 171.
[19] Peter Stork, "An Introduction to the Work of René Girard," accessed September 5, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/6330149/An_Introduction_to_the_Work_of_Ren%C3%A9_Girard, 3.

control, however, is an increase, not a decrease, of violence.[20] Societies can no longer

quell their own violence by scapegoating because they cannot maintain the fiction of

the victim's guilt. As a result, violence rises because of humanity's failing efforts to

seize the former effects of the mechanism: calming crises by blaming and punishing

satisfactory victims. But as the resumption of harmony can no longer be counted on,

more and more violence is seen as necessary to achieve the original result. Girard

states: "As in the case of drugs, consumers of sacrifice tend to increase the doses

when the effect becomes more difficult to achieve."[21] Clear evidence of such

accelerating violence towards the Timorese people during their recent history is

presented in this dissertation.

Claiming the status of victim

Wolfgang Palaver writes of the increasing concern for victims which accompanies

this world-wide increase in violence as the double-edged effect of the desacralisation

of scapegoating. He refers to:

> ...the ambiguous cachet of victimhood that marks, on the one hand, the biblical
> overcoming of the scapegoat mechanism leading to modern human rights and the
> temptation of vengeful lament typical of modern terrorism, and many more
> distortions connected to the biblically enabled recognition of the victim, on the
> other.[22]

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[20] Girard, *I See Satan,* 184;

[21] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 17. Interpretation of the present increase in violence worldwide is the
subject of current studies, e.g. Joel Hodge, "War, Terrorism and Cultural Crisis: The escalation of
mimetic rivalry and re-sacralising violence in modernity," (Melbourne: Australian Catholic University,
2015), accessed September 5, 2017,
http://www.acu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/762283/War,_Terrorism_and_Cultural_Crisis_2_-
_Hodge.pdf.

[22] Wolfgang Palaver, "The Ambiguous Cachet of Victimhood: On Violence and Monotheism," in *The
New Visibility of Religion: Studies in Religion and Cultural Hermeneutics*, eds. G. Ward and M. Hoelzl
(London: Continuum, 2008):68, accessed June 16, 2017,
http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/10.5040/9781472549471

He then traces the effects of the perversion of concern for victims when it is expressed as "a violent exploitation of the claim of being victimized."[23] He cites radical Islam, and the West's recent "war on terror" as examples of extreme justification of violent response to a sense of victimhood, either personally or on behalf of others.[24] Girard indicates that the perversion that claims the status of victim can be used for power over others and even persecution.[25] Aggressors are loath to admit to aggression and easily apply to themselves the condition of victim. Even a cursory reading of humanity's current situation shows the truth of Girard's statement: "The aggressor has always already been attacked."[26] The modern phenomenon of people's appropriating the title of victim to themselves is a result of certain effects of the growing understanding of the victim's innocence revealed by the Bible.

The evidence presented in this dissertation establishes that there was a tendency for Australians to consider themselves to be the victim in the historical circumstances discussed. The threat to Australian security and the fear it engendered gave Australians the basis for considering themselves as the victims, a role which then allowed the victimising of another. It is in this sense that Australia's actions towards Timor can be interpreted as scapegoating for the purposes of Australian security. As will be discussed, Australia initially acted out of fear for its own protection, thus becoming involved in the invasions which decimated the Timorese during World War II. Some decades later, Australia complied with the Indonesian invasion and occupation not from fear, but from a calculation that its overall security would be enhanced by such complicity. Moreover, Australian financial gain from the resources

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[23] Palaver, *The Ambiguous Cachet,* 76.
[24] Palaver, *The Ambiguous Cachet,* 76.
[25] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 209.
[26] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 18.

of the Timor Sea also gave motivation for supporting Indonesia. Material gain and the desire for security resulted in violence towards a weaker neighbour. While Australians certainly did not actively kill or maim Timorese, the responses to a number of Timorese situations can be demonstrated to be among Palaver's "many more distortions" of the concern for victims quoted above. This victimisation suffered a hiatus when the reality of the Timorese people's suffering became clear to the Australian population, and a moment of conversion towards the victim overtook the nation as a whole.

Christ identifies with victims

Growth in human rights, increased violence and claims to victimhood are notable results of the revelation of the victim which have some bearing on this dissertation. But the category of "victim" to explain East Timor's history is more fully demonstrated through the biblical witness that Christ's innocence as victim applies to "all analogous victims."[27] Christ, in fact, identifies with victims and is, in some way, in and with all victims. Before going to his death as victim at the hands of the authorities and the crowd, Jesus championed the poor and oppressed, the victims of society. He consistently demonstrated in his human interactions that God favours the reproachable or oppressed "other". Jesus willingly conversed with the Samaritan woman who was considered the "lesser other" because of her nationality as well as her gender – an engagement which left his disciples perplexed (Jn 4:27). He was criticised for eating with sinners (Mk 2:16) and defended the woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:1-11). He taught that the poor widow who put in the least actually contributed the most (Mk 12:41-44). His parables reversed prevailing notions of

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[27] Girard, *Battling to the End,* xiv.

goodness; for example, it was the humble sinner who found God's favour, not the paragon of virtue (Lk 18:9-14), and the repentant, ingrate son was forgiven and loved by God as much as the dutiful son (Lk 15:11-32). Furthermore, in the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:3-7) God as shepherd shows a willingness to leave the ninety-nine, the community, "in the wilderness" in order to pursue and tend the lost one, thus presenting a complete reversal of the accepted norm of sacrificing the one for the good of the many.[28]

Christ's whole human life showed him bestowing on society's victims the full outpouring of his compassion. His final recorded parable in Matthew, that of the Last Judgement (Mt 25), places those victims at the centre of his concern. Of ultimate importance, however, is the declaration in that parable, that what is done to them is done to him. This identification with the oppressed is depicted again where Saul, on a mission of vengeance against those who followed the way of Jesus, is confronted with that same Jesus identifying himself with those being oppressed. "I am Jesus, and you are persecuting me" (Acts 9:5). Convicted as a blasphemer and a criminal, Jesus died as a social outcast. His identification with victims was complete.

The Eucharist forms the Church as Christ's body

The apotheosis of Christ's identification with victims at his death continues to be made present in the Catholic Church. This is accomplished through the Eucharist where Christ's self-giving death is re-presented in obedience to him, "This is my body which will be given for you; do this as a memorial of me" (Luke 22:19). The

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[28] James Alison, *Raising Abel: the recovery of the eschatological imagination*, 2nd ed. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2010), 35.

fundamental self-understanding of the church as Christ's body existed from earliest times: "Now you together are Christ's body" (1 Cor. 12:27). St Augustine states: "When you hear 'The body of Christ' you reply 'Amen'. You are saying Amen to what you are."[29]

But to be the body of Christ in the world is to be the body of the victim Christ, with all the identification with victims which that status entails. It is through the Eucharist that the church is formed as the body of the *victim,* Christ. The Eucharist makes present the sacrifice of Christ on the cross through which he undermined sacrificial scapegoating, revealed the innocence of the victim, and made possible a new way of being in relationship. While the human rights discourse is important as an expression of this concern for the victim, Hodge notes that such discourse "requires a socio-political body to make it effective."[30] The church's "authentic promotion of the innocent victim, as socio-political body in history, enacting its faith in ecclesial solidarity with the self-giving victim, Christ", has the capacity to provide this effectiveness.[31]

Robert Daly makes clear the fundamental purpose of the Eucharist as forming the body of Christ and influencing human sociality, stating:

> The transformation that brings about the Eucharistic presence happens *for us*, that *we* may become more fully and more truly the Body of Christ. *The whole purpose is the eschatological transformation of the participants.*[32]

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[29] Early Church Texts, "Augustine on the nature of the Sacrament of the Eucharist Sermon 272," accessed 12 October 2017,
http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/public/augustine_sermon_272_eucharist.htm
[30] Joel Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 199.
[31] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 199.
[32] Robert J.Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: the true meaning of Christian sacrifice* (London: T&T Clark International, 2009), 20. Original italics.

William Cavanaugh expands further: "our assimilation to the body of Christ means that we then become food for the world, to be broken, given away, consumed."[33] In becoming the body of Christ the church says to the world: "This is my body which will be given for you" (Lk 22:19).

Such a claim has weighty consequences. As practical examples, Hodge and Cavanaugh trace the fortunes of the church in two societies where the state had become the enemy of the people, victimising them for its own preservation and ideology: East Timor and Chile. Cavanaugh describes the Chilean church's initial acquiescence to the state, and its Eucharistic journey towards championing the victimised people. He presents the integral links between Christ, victims of the state and the church's liturgy: "a Christian practice of the political is embodied in the Eucharist, the remembering of Jesus' own torture at the hands of the powers of this world."[34]

Further, Cavanaugh explores the Eucharist as producing "a communion stronger than that of any nation-state."[35] A threat is posed to victimising regimes by the counter-politics formed in the people through the Eucharist.[36] As Hodge explains in relation to East Timor, the human reality which can be formed through the Eucharist is one which exposes victimisation and enables people to work in solidarity for the oppressed.[37] In both Chile and East Timor the church grew into exemplifying Christ's identification with the victim, willing to become the self-giving Eucharist with and in

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[33] William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 232.
[34] Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist,* 2.
[35] Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist,* 18.
[36] Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist,* 120.
[37] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 173.

him. Growing concern for victims among Catholics in both countries demonstrated

the authenticity of their celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice.[38] In the case of

Australia this witness was crucial for the growing solidarity with Timorese people and

for the integrity of the church as it moved towards supporting the victimised people.

Imitating Christ

The implications of being the body of Christ for Christians and for the church as a

whole are fundamental. If Christ identifies with victims, then the Christian's and the

church's project of following Christ, patterning oneself on him and imitating him,

means similar identification with the world's victims. Girard underlines the depth of

that identification:

> The entire edifice of culture rests on the cornerstone that is the stone the builders
> rejected. Christ is that stone in visible form. That is why there can be no victim
> who is not Christ, and no one can come to the aid of a victim without coming to
> the aid of Christ.[39]

In the neighbour, especially the vulnerable, the Christian now sees the face of Christ,

the loving and forgiving victim.[40] Daly agrees:

> We, who are affluent, know instinctively that if we want a comfortable, secure,
> safe life, we must insulate ourselves from victims. But if we are Christians, when
> we are doing that, we will be isolating ourselves from Jesus Christ, the victim. We
> can't have it both ways.[41]

Clearly, Christ's revelation of the victim mechanism has profound consequences for

Christians. I argue that the victimisation of the Timorese people constitutes the

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[38] John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine,* 2004, accessed 2011.
https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2004/documents/hf_jp-
ii_apl_20041008_mane-nobiscum-domine.html

[39] René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World,* trans. S. Bann and M. Metteer
(Stanford, Cal: Stanford University Press, 1978), 429.

[40] Terry Veling, *For You Alone: Emmanuel Levinas and the Answerable Life* (Eugene, Oregon:
Cascade Books, 2014), 4.

[41] Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled,* 222.

victimisation of Christ, and became an issue that challenged the comfortable, affluent Australian identity.

The interpretation of history through the eyes of the victim entails for Christians the responsibility of imitating God incarnated in Jesus Christ. Girard states:

> Recognising imitation and its ambivalence seems to be the only way of feeling that it is still possible to go from reciprocity to relationship, from negative contagion to a form of positive contagion. This is what the imitation of Christ means.[42]

The imitation of Christ in East Timor was crucial in formulating a nonviolent response to oppression and violence. The content of the imitation of Christ has been comprehensively discussed by Hodge in relation to the Timorese people influenced by their Catholic faith in *Resisting Violence and Victimisation.* In particular, he discusses the willingness to renounce revenge, the acts of forgiveness and willingness to be forgiven, and the attempts to build positive relationships despite the violence of neighbours and of state oppression.[43] The response of the Australian populace was greatly influenced by the Christ-like positions that the Timorese took in response to violence which showed them to be both innocent and morally upright. Moreover, the responses of the Catholic Church in Australia to the situation of East Timor, to be discussed further, comprised sincere efforts to respond to the victim in the manner of Christ, but contained instances where the challenge of the imitation of Christ proved overwhelming.

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[42] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 109.
[43] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 195, 190, 142.

Concealment of the revelation

The formation of the church as the body of Christ identifying with victims is, however, incomplete. The revelation of the innocence of the victim can be concealed even by Christianity itself. Cavanaugh muses on whether "the unfaithfulness of the church in the present age is based to some extent precisely on its failure to take itself seriously as the continuation of Christ's body in the world, and to conform itself, body and soul, not to the world but to Christ (Rom 12:2)."[44] Girard's claims that Christianity is the means through which humanity can approach an understanding of the violent foundations of human societies, including religions, is challenged by the spectacle of violent Christian history. Referring to the alignment of church and state under Constantine, the Crusades, the Inquisition and forced conversions as examples of Christian violence through the centuries, Stork demonstrates that Girard's argument cannot be used "as an apologetic for historical Christianity."[45] The exposition of the victim mechanism can never minimise atrocities by Christians or authorised Christian leaders or churches.[46] Similarly, Hodge acknowledges that the Church constantly faces the danger of the return of sacred violence "through exclusion, exploitation, authoritarianism and repression."[47] Christianity, therefore, has shown that it does not do away with violence on the level of culture, but rather undermines its ability to use violence to control violence. As previously discussed, the breakdown of the victimage mechanism has seen extreme violence increasing, showing that Christian communities are as susceptible to the contagion of violence as any others.[48]

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[44] Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist,* 233.
[45] Stork, "An Introduction," 15.
[46] Chris Fleming. *René Girard: Violence and Mimesis* (Cambridge: Polity Press Ltd, 2004): 145, accessed 11 December 2015, www.academia.edu/3396209/René_Girard_Violence_and_Mimesis_Long_Excerpt
[47] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 207.
[48] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 49; Stork, "An Introduction," 14.

Christian violence, however, does not pose some type of proof negating the message

of Jesus. On the contrary, if somewhat startlingly, it proves its truth. Fleming clarifies:

> That Christians would mistake terribly Jesus's message, in fact, tends not to undermine this message but to corroborate it in important respects by attesting historically to the insidiousness, pervasiveness, contagiousness, and seeming intractability of violence in culture.[49]

He further states that "one might say that historical Christianity became ... *one of the*

principal mechanisms for hiding its own revelation."[50] Such concealment is shown,

for example, in the reversion of Christianity to previous sacrificial structures.[51]

Certain atonement theories such as the penal substitution theory, common in the

Western Church and which influence preaching and practice in some local churches,

owe much to archaic forms of sacrifice.[52] Similarly, the concealment of the Gospel

message of love by the Christian victimisation of millions of people blatantly echoes

historical victimage. Hence the explanation of human history provided by the

crucifixion is not an automatic cure, as though the mere knowledge of the victim

mechanism would bring it to an end. Not only does the crucifixion reveal the lie of a

peace built on violence, but highlights what *exists,* that is, the human tendency

towards that very violence.

Regardless of the slowness of human stumbling towards recognition of the victim,

Girard contends that the source of the demythologisation of religion, through which

the genesis of religion is discovered to be violence against an innocent person, has

come from the Christian religion itself.[53] However, he warns: "Christianity

demystifies religion. Demystification, which is good in the absolute, has proven bad

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[49] Fleming, *René Girard,* 145.
[50] Fleming, *René Girard,* 144. (Original italics.)
[51] Stork, An Introduction, 15.
[52] Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled,* 100.
[53] Girard, *Things Hidden,* 138.

in the relative, for we were not prepared to shoulder its consequences. We are not Christian enough."[54] The consequences of the revelation include the knowledge that as violence stems from the reciprocity inherent in mimetic rivalry, the choice of whom we imitate has profound implications for humanity. Being "not Christian enough" is an indictment of relationships between individuals and within groups. The only relationship not subject to negative mimesis is with God, the one who is not subject to rivalry or violence, the totally "other" who identifies with victims and stands with them.[55]

Conclusion: East Timor as victim interprets the history

Employment of Girard's concept of "victim" to throw light on the Australian-East Timorese relationship thus requires deliberate contemplation of the Christian revelation. Christ's identification with victims and his repudiation of violence towards them erodes humanity's usual apparatus for attaining peace. It unveils the structures by which the security of one depends on discrimination against another. As a result, a Girardian analysis of the troubling historical relationship between the peoples of East Timor and Australia presents an uncomfortable and dark side to Australian government policies and actions. A choice needed to be made about whether the Timorese people were to be viewed as a security threat or enemy, for example as a base for communist operations, as a rival with others for resources, or as a victim of the politics of larger powers. Moreover, that Australians may have unconsciously seen their own relationship as a nation to the US, communist USSR, and Indonesia reflected in the weakness and vulnerability of East Timor, and wanted to avoid it, is also possible.

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[54] Girard, *Battling to the End,* x.
[55] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 79; Girard, *Things Hidden*, 218.

Nevertheless, all these factors point to the Australian government's preoccupation with the Australian place in the competitive security, political and economic realities of their region. Through the Australian strategies of gain and dominance, and of perceiving itself as a victim, Australia ignored its own complicity. Hodge states: "For Girard, the perennial human problem is the cycle of violence that blinds people to their own place in distorted social relations."[56] Thus it is apparent that merely political explanations of the basis for the relationship between Australia and East Timor are inadequate. They are incapable of analysing human experience in ways which give due regard to the forces which move people through fear, desire and love.

The use of the concept of "victim" to gain meaning from historical events presents choices as to where one stands. Hodge expresses this by stating that Girard's central existential question is "in whose desire will I dwell and find direction for being. In biblical terms, where will I pitch my tent? On top of the victim (with the mob), or alongside the victim (on the Cross)?"[57] Making that choice and embracing the responsibilities which accompany it confront us with Levinas's questions concerning ways in which, as Veling states, "I can be responsible for that which I did not do, and take upon myself a distress which is not mine."[58] But the confrontation takes on a particular character in the Australian-Timorese case: recognising that for which I am responsible as part of a complicit political body. The Australian tendency to claim positive aspects of one's history (as other nationalities do) requires also the willingness to shoulder the more negative past. In that sense I am responsible, we are responsible, for the doing and for the distress.

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[56] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 17.
[57] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 87.
[58] Veling, *For You Alone,* 172.

SECTION TWO

SCAPEGOAT FOR AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS

Introduction

Application of Girard's theories to the history of the relationship between Australia and East Timor presents an interpretation which arises from the revelation of the innocence of the victim in the Gospel. The value judgements applied are connected to characteristics traditionally claimed by Australians, and as such, are fair measures of the Australian side of the relationship.

This research shows that Australian insecurity was expressed by dependence on traditional patrons such as Britain and the United States, and increasingly on the large and developing neighbour, Indonesia. Australian resolutions of the dilemmas posed by its small population, distance from cultural partners, and indefensible coastline caused untold suffering to the Timorese people. They were used as expendable pawns in the regional events perceived as threatening to Australians. In Girardian terms, East Timor became the scapegoat of Australian fear, sacrificed for Australian protection.

The three chapters in this section have similarities in that the historical events and their official Australian documentary records are investigated to ascertain to what extent East Timor could be described as Australia's "scapegoat". The similarity of organisation of content ensures that both Australia and East Timor are discussed fairly. Isolation of one historical period in which East Timor was scapegoated could

risk applying the concept on a limited scale, whereas analysis of the three historical periods which saw the greatest connection between the two nations allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the Timorese position in relation to Australia. In each of the chapters, Girard's formulation of "texts of persecution" is applied to the official record.

Chapter Four considers events of the Second World War. East Timor was scapegoated by Australia and Japan in the pursuit of their mimetic and conflicting desires: Japan for expansion and Australia for security. East Timorese people befriended Australians, but were victimised by the presence of Australian troops (which drew the Japanese to Timor), by the success of the Australians (which caused continual increase in Japanese troops) and by the subsequent official disregard, or even disdain, of the wartime history. The declaration "Your friends do not forget you" testifies to the official relationship being characterised by Australian self-interest, one which did not reciprocate the friendship of the Timorese. Despite traditional Australian celebration of wartime exploits, for which the Australian action in Timor qualifies as highly successful, the Timor campaign is generally ignored. The documentary record is fairly described in Girardian terms as "texts of persecution".

Chapter Five deals with the Indonesian invasion of 1975 when East Timor was again scapegoated by powerful neighbours, as Indonesia and Australia attempted to protect themselves from communism. The shared mimetic desire of the two large nations caused mutual dependence which was also influenced by shared dependence on the United States. Relationship with the East Timorese people was considered of lesser value than that with the Indonesians, despite the wartime connection between

Australians and Timorese. Indonesia's expansionist desire for the whole of the island of Timor was supported by Australian governments through deceit and complicity, to the extent that those who murdered six Australian-based journalists in East Timor as the invasion drew near have not been brought to account.

Chapter Six examines the 24 years of the Indonesian occupation. The official Australian documentary record is again explained by Girard's concept of "texts of persecution", as they consist of bias, embellishment and exoneration concerning Indonesian actions and policies. In particular, official Australian statements on the Santa Cruz massacre show concern to strengthen the relationship with Indonesia at the expense of that with East Timor. A case study exemplifies the victimage mechanism occurring at macro and micro levels in the Australia-East Timor relationship: the case of Monsignor da Costa Lopes and former Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. The study shows the four attributes of scapegoating identified by Girard: crisis, crime, criteria for the scapegoat, and violence towards the victim

CHAPTER FOUR
WORLD WAR II

Introduction

The first situation which calls for focused attention is the Australian relationship with

East Timor (Portuguese Timor) in World War II. This episode was the first major

connection between the Australian and Timorese people and was highly significant in

the formation of the relationship, influencing subsequent historical periods. This

chapter demonstrates that East Timor had the hallmarks of the scapegoat, but that it

was Australia that predominantly perceived itself as the victim. Furthermore, the

chapter shows that readily available texts, including those of government, can be

described fairly as "texts of persecution".

The protection of Australian security in the face of Japanese aggression was attempted

by means of an Australian invasion of Portuguese Timor in December 1941. This

move contained features of scapegoating as described by Girard: a group perceiving

itself as under threat and thus a victim; the willingness by that group to protect itself

by sacrificing another; and the sacrificed party being vulnerable and experiencing

suffering. The distortion of the Australian record completes the Girardian

interpretation, showing that readily available Australian documents are "texts of

persecution", that is, modern day myths.

Summary - World War II

The Australian intervention in Portuguese Timor was in response to fears that the

proximity of Timor may pose a threat should the Japanese incorporate it into its

expansionary plans during World War II. As a result, Australia sent a few hundred commandos of the 2/2 and 2/4 Independent Companies to Dili, the capital of Portuguese Timor in December 1941, against the express wishes of the Portuguese administration.[1] Two months later the Japanese also invaded East Timor. The Australians, assisted by many Timorese, conducted a guerrilla campaign over 14 months against Japanese troops. The highly successful Australian commandos assisted by the intrepid and friendly Timorese harassed the Japanese even though they were far outnumbered for the whole operation. Towards the end of 1942 thousands more Japanese troops were inserted in response to the Australians' success and the general unwillingness of the Timorese to capitulate. The exploits of the Australian commandos in resisting a much larger Japanese force have been documented. Dunn refers to the operation as "one of the few success stories in a rather bleak year."[2] Cleary notes that "when all other Allied resistance in Asia had ceased to exist, this small group of Australians showed that the all-conquering Japanese could be matched and beaten.[3] Returned Australian soldiers (men who were deeply affected by their Timor experience) and relatives of the returned Australian soldiers (in acknowledgement of the effect on their fathers of the loyalty of the Timorese) also produced material to recount their experiences and their appreciation of their Timorese allies.[4]

The withdrawal of the Australians in 1943 left the Timorese without support. It allowed the Japanese complete control, contributing to further death and

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[1] Paul Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground: a gripping account of Australia's first commando campaign Timor 1942* (Hachette Australia: Sydney, 2010), 31-32.
[2] James Dunn, *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence,* 3rd ed. (Double Bay, NSW: Longueville Books, 2003), 102.
[3] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* xviii.
[4] For example, B.S. Callinan, *Independent Company: the 2/2/ and 2/4 Australian Independent Companies in Portuguese Timor 1941-43* (Heinemann: Melbourne, 1953); Christopher C.H. Wray, *Timor 1942: Australian commandos at war with the Japanese* (Port Melbourne: Mandarin, 1990).

destruction, as the Japanese remained on the island until the end of the War. A conservative estimate of consequent Timorese deaths at that time is 40,000 (all civilians) as a result of starvation, Allied bombing, and Japanese reprisals.[5] Substantial Australian sympathy for the Timorese has remained a cause of dissension in Australia as the death and destruction experienced by the Timorese formed a backdrop to events in subsequent decades.

Australian fear of invasion

Discussion of Australian presence in Timor begins with analysis of the perceived threat of invasion of Australia in World War II. It underlines the bitter poignancy of the Timorese experience as victim of the mimetic rivalry of larger powers.

At the beginning of his comprehensive treatise on Australian foreign policy entitled "The Frightened Country", Alan Renouf (a former head of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs) stated the aims of national foreign policy as "preservation from attack and threat of attack" and the safeguarding of "the independence of the sovereign state."[6] It is undeniably true that every nation shares these common objectives. But as World War II approached, major obstacles to the maintenance of Australian security were apparent, including the size of the population relative to that of the continent.[7] Isolation was a double-edged factor, supplying both the protection and the risks of distance. Consequent fear and insecurity contributed to the Australian

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[5] Dunn, *East Timor,*22.

[6] Alan Renouf, *The Frightened Country* (South Melbourne: The Macmillan Company of Australia Pty. Ltd, 1979), 1.

[7] David Horner, "Australia in 1942: A pivotal year," in *Australia 1942: In the Shadow of War*, ed. Peter J. Dean, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 12, accessed April 5, 2017, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781139540681.003

dependency on larger powers, particularly the United States.[8] Australian fear centred on the possibility of invasion, and thus the seemingly impossible task of protecting the Australian continent constituted one of the crises facing Australia at that time, a crisis which was a catalyst for the Australian incursion into Portuguese Timor.

Two factors which initially heightened the concern in both the population and government were the existence of a genre of popular literature called "invasion fiction", and Japan's interest in commercial possibilities in the half-island of Portuguese Timor, geographically close to Australia's north.

Invasion Fiction

Fear of invasion had inhabited the Australian psyche for many years. Dr Peter Stanley, previous Principal Historian at the Australian War Memorial and author of many books on the military history of both World Wars, states: "For more than a century Australians have frightened themselves repeatedly with stories and novels depicting imaginary invasions."[9] Catriona Ross has shown that up until 2009, there had been thirty such books published.[10] From popularity as novels in the late 19th century, a steady stream of similar writings on invasion has continued to be written as articles, books and websites. Urgent and didactic, novels of the Australian invasion fiction genre emphasise the imminence of disaster and seek to shock readers into an

[8] Renouf, *The Frightened Country,* 519 and 528.
[9] Peter Stanley, *Invading Australia: Japan and the battle for Australia 1942* (Camberwell, Vic.: Penguin Group, 2008), 25.
[10] Catriona Ross, "Paranoid Projections: Australian Novels of Asian Invasion," *Antipodes* (23, no.1, 06, 2009): 11-16, accessed 6 August 2015,
http://search.proquest.com/docview/211338937?accountid=8194
[10] David Walker, "Invasion Narrative," in *Anxious Nation: Australia and the rise of Asia 1950-1939,* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1999), 98-112.

acceptance of the perceived danger.[11] The basic plot is reshaped to fit the times, but the fundamental story remains the same, and is constantly repeated. The threatening character, the "other", is traditionally Asian. At base, this collection of fiction is the textual expression which Ross describes as the "historic and deep-seated cultural contention that Australia is at risk from Asian invasion."[12]

Portuguese Timor and fear of Japan

Fear of Japan featured in this literary style in the early twentieth century, mirroring political wariness of the time. Japan's growing industrial power and military strength, its successful wars against China, Korea and Russia, and its 1902 alliance with Britain formed an integrated backdrop both for fiction and for political responses to Japanese expansionism.[13] Stanley states: "Australian diplomacy from 1901-1939 saw the threat of Japan its central issue."[14]

The geographical position of Portuguese Timor and its proximity to Australia made it strategically important to security hence it became a focus of Australian wartime deliberations. By the mid-1930s there had been signs of Japanese interest in Portuguese Timor. A 1939 government submission noted that Japan had interests in two major companies in the territory, was gaining concessions in Portuguese Timor for oil and crops, was cornering that island's coffee trade, and was making efforts to control the pearling trade and strengthen its shipping services.[15] These moves

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[12] Ross, "Paranoid Projections," 2.
[13] Ross, "Paranoid Projections," 2.
[14] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 38.
[15] H.V.C. Thorby. 38 *Cabinet Submission*: *Proposed Air Service Darwin to Dilli (Portuguese Timor)* (Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1939), accessed 27 January, 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-02/38-cabinet-submission-by-mr-hvc-thorby-minister-for-civil-aviation.aspx

bolstered the belief that Japan's real objective in its interest in Portuguese Timor was its inclusion in the expansion southwards. There were fears of the "possibility of Japanese penetration and infiltration into the Netherlands East Indies and Timor."[16] With Australian foreign policy still being dictated by London, and keen to establish British interests in the face of Japanese penetration into the area, in 1937 the British Government had suggested the establishment of an air service to Dili, advising the Commonwealth Government of Australia to develop closer contacts with Portuguese Timor "for strategic reasons."[17]

Australia's traditional reliance on Britain eroded swiftly in the face of the political and military disaster that was the fall of Singapore in 1942.[18] With Japan's southward advance, the Australian chiefs-of-staff were convinced of invasion and advised cabinet that such was likely by April 1942, with a landing in the east coast in May.[19] Political and military leaders realised that the Australian defence services were too ill-equipped and inexperienced to counter any threat of invasion.[20] Therefore the government withdrew the 2nd AIF from the Middle East to shore up the defence of Australia. In doing this, Australian Prime Minister John Curtin resisted Winston Churchill's attempt to divert two of Australia's divisions to Burma.[21] Military strength and war effort were increased in Australia in view of the perceived threat by Japan.

Undoubtedly, only those who experienced the deep-seated fear and the expectation of a Japanese invasion could properly appreciate the situation in Australia in 1942.

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[16] Thorby. 38 *Cabinet Submission.*
[17] Thorby, 38 *Cabinet Submission.*
[18] Bob Wurth, *1942: Australia's greatest peril,* 2nd ed. (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 2010), xi.
[19] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 1.
[20] Wurth. *1942,* xi.
[21] National Archives of Australia, "Australia's Prime Ministers: John Curtin," accessed April 3, 2017, http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/primeministers/curtin/in-office.aspx

Australians were embroiled in a World War and their traditional support by Britain was weakened. They inhabited a vast and undefended landmass and believed it would be engulfed by Japan's southward march. Australians feared for their nation and for their lives. Wartime Australian citizens and government, seeing a formidable Japanese force moving south – and lacking information to the contrary – understandably believed that an invasion was imminent. The nation was in the crisis of war, in which all the fears of the past intensified.

Japanese intentions

It is now almost universally accepted that the primary reason for Japan's expansionist push southwards was to establish the "Great Southeast Asia Co-prosperity Sphere".[22] This scheme was proposed as a Japanese economic, industrial and political empire stretching from Manchuria to the Dutch East Indies and through to New Guinea and the Pacific. Retaining this 4,000 mile sphere of influence was believed by the Japanese to guarantee a flow of oil from the Dutch East Indies and be a bulwark against invasion of Japan herself.

While Japan's designs on Australia and the region have been matters of some dispute, there is now consensus among reputable historians that the Japanese did not intend to invade Australia.[23] Stanley has concluded that an invasion of Australia by Japan was

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[22] John Costello, *The Pacific War 1941-1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1981), 472; Steve Bullard, "Japanese strategy and intentions towards Australia," in *Australia 1942: In the Shadow of War*, ed. Peter J. Dean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), accessed April 5, 2017, 124-139, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781139540681.003

[23] Ian McPhedran, "Historians Professor David Horner and Ashley Ekins question World War II Kokoda campaign's iconic status," *News.com.au,* September 6, 2012, accessed April 3, 2017, http://www.news.com.au/national/historians-professor-david-horner-and-ashley-ekins-question-world-war-ii-kokoda-campaigns-iconic-status/news-story/f24aa6bc525df9760fb9070f57e8ad31; Frank Jacobs, "Is This Map Australia's Clumsy Attempt at Fabricating a Japanese Invasion During WWII?" *Big Think,* accessed 03 April, 2017, http://bigthink.com/strange-maps/australias-invasion-paranoia

not planned by the Japanese High Command.[24] His views have been supported by English military historian Sir Antony Beevor.[25] Australian David Horner, who was professor of Australian defence history at the Australian National University and has authored many books on defence matters, also concurs.[26] A government paper from 1992 details the reasons for the realisation that Japan was not intending to invade.[27] Significantly, such historians are building on the evidence of the lack of invasion plans which the Australian Official War History had detailed as far back as 1957.[28]

Suggestions of including an invasion of Australia in the push southward did surface however, but only in Japanese naval ranks. The organisation of the Japanese armed forces is relevant to this point. While the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters had operational command of the armed forces, the army and navy had administrative control, each operating their own extensive departments and generating plans and strategies. Bullard comments on the long-standing rivalries between the army and navy that could even result in contradictory policies being presented to General Headquarters and to the final authority, the emperor.[29] It appears that the general staff of the navy considered that an invasion of Australia was warranted and that three armed divisions would suffice.[30] The army staff disagreed, however, maintaining that

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[24] Peter Stanley, "Dramatic Myth and Dull Truth: Invasion by Japan in 1942," in *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History: The Ten Myths That Will Not Die*, 140-160. (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010).

[25] David Ellery, "WWII battle for Aust questioned," *Canberra Times.com.au,* (September 6, 2012), accessed 03 April, 2017, http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/wwii-battle-for-aust-questioned-20120905-25eoy.html

[26] Horner, "Australia in 1942: A pivotal year," 18-21.

[27] Gary Brown and David Anderson, *Invasion 1942? Australia and the Japanese Threat,* Background Paper Number 6, 1992 (Canberra: Parliamentary Research Service, 1992), 4-10.

[28] G. Hermon Gill, "Royal Australian Navy, 1939–1942," 1st ed., Series 2 – Volume I – Navy, Chapter 17 - Prelude to Victory (Australian War Memorial, Second World War Official Histories Australia in the War of 1939–1945, 1957): 643, accessed September 5, 2017, https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG1070207/

[29] Bullard, "Japanese strategy and intentions towards Australia," 126-127.

[30] Horner, "Australia in 1942," 19.

such an invasion would require ten divisions or more.[31] They argued that the size of the continent precluded the transportation and supply of an invading force of that size, and was impossible given that their forces were already stretched by offensives on a number of fronts including Burma and China.[32] Stanley states that the Japanese army and navy commands constantly argued among themselves and lacked "clear direction from a single strategic body."[33] Even in the navy, states Horner, "there was no unanimity about the need to invade Australia."[34] Stanley quotes the Army Imperial Headquarters war diary: "We expended much effort restraining the Navy's simplistic....dash to Australia."[35] As quoted in Australia's official War History, Japan's wartime Prime Minister Tojo Hideki said (before his execution in 1948) that Japan had no plans to invade:

> We never had enough troops to do so. We had already far out-stretched our lines of communication. We did not have the armed strength or the supply facilities to mount such a terrific extension of our already over-strained and too thinly spread forces. We expected to occupy all New Guinea, to maintain Rabaul as a holding base, and to raid Northern Australia by air. But actual physical invasion – no, at no time.[36]

Nevertheless, while an invasion was not planned, there were attacks against the Australian mainland. These were designed to isolate the nation from its Allies and to prevent the use of Darwin's strategic position by the United States. The first bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942 killed over 240 people and wounded up to four hundred, with most civil and military facilities destroyed.[37] Sixty-four more attacks on Darwin followed in following weeks, as well as air attacks on inland towns in the

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[31] Horner, "Australia in 1942," 19.
[32] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 155.
[33] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 154.
[34] Horner, "Australia in 1942," 19.
[35] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 155.
[36] Gill, "Prelude to Victory," 643.
[37] Wurth, *1942,* 136.

Northern Territory through to November 1943.[38] The destruction of Darwin was a preliminary strike "to disable its potential as a threat" to the invasion of the Dutch half of Timor.[39] Occupation of the islands to Australia's north-east would cut links to US, Commonwealth and Dutch interests, thus neutralising threats to the Japanese expansionist designs.[40] The Japanese generals were confident that Australia could be bullied into submission through such isolation and by associated psychological pressure.[41]

Contributing to fears of a Japanese attack on Australia was the Papua New Guinea campaign, particularly the Battle of Kokoda fought between Japanese and Australian forces from July to November 1942. The Kokoda Track and the exploits of the Australian soldiers subsequently filled Australian imaginations as proof of imminent peril to the mainland.[42] In the years following, stories have abounded that the invasion plan was thwarted by the Australians at Kokoda.[43] Nonetheless, the moral triumph of the Australians at Kokoda was not the sole reason for victory in the south-west Pacific nor can it be seen in isolation, as the American victories in the Solomons were crucial and more costly than the Papua campaign.[44] The Australians who bravely and skilfully fought against the Japanese in New Guinea did so against an enemy who was attempting to cripple Australia, not invade it.[45]

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[38] "The Bombing of Darwin," National Archives of Australia, Fact Sheet 195, accessed April 5, 2017, http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs195.aspx
[39] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 108.
[40] Horner, "Australia in 1942," 20.
[41] Henry P. Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia. From the Sixteenth Century to World War II* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991), 172.
[42] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 186.
[43] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 1.
[44] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 188 and 191.
[45] Horner, "Australia in 1942," 20.

Thus the threat posed by Japan was real and had fatal consequences for parts of Australia, but it was largely a threat of isolation rather than invasion, although the Australian population did not know that at the time. Nevertheless, by May 1942 Australian authorities had received information that there were no Japanese plans to invade. Allied intelligence reports and code-breaking had clarified the matter beyond question.[46] These reports were confirmed by diplomats who relayed to their superiors that the Indian Ocean, and not Australia, was the Japanese focus.[47] The Australian Government did not make Japan's lack of intention to invade Australia known to the population, preferring instead to encourage the Australian people to continue to "work, fight and save" as their war effort.[48] It was a decision compounded in its intricacy by Curtin's realisation that Australia's security lay with the United States and not with Britain, and his insistence on the use of Australian troops to bolster the security of the homeland.[49]

The consensus among historians remains that there was not at any time a threat of Japanese invasion of Australia, though there was a real threat of aerial attack and isolation. Nevertheless, the situation was perceived as desperate by the small and fearful Australian population. The subsequent tragedy, however, was not primarily felt by Australians in their own country but by the Timorese in their homeland.

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[46] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 158; 196
[47] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 186.
[48] David Black, "Menzies and Curtin in World War Two," in *John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library,* accessed 20 July 2017, http://john.curtin.edu.au/ww2leaders/war.html
[49] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 227.

The invasions of Portuguese Timor

The larger drama of the Second World War in this region saw the foreign powers of Australia, Britain, the Netherlands and Portugal operating in competition with Japan for the possession and control of territory and in pursuit of national stability. A mimetic principle stated by Girard applies: "the ultimate object of attack is not fighting: rather, it is possession."[50] The resulting violence towards each other resulted in invasions of Portuguese Timor by both Australia and Japan. Both nations breached Portugal's neutrality by entering its colonial territory against the wishes of the Portuguese authorities. Such illegality placed both incursions in the category of invasion.

The bald facts of the initial incursions are these: The Dutch East Indies, which included the western half of the island of Timor, was included in Japan's expansionary focus.[51] The eastern half of Timor was a possession of Portugal, whose neutrality throughout the war was a significant element affecting Japanese plans, as is discussed later in this chapter. On 12 December 1941 the Australian "Sparrow" Force consisting of about 1,400 men joined Dutch defence troops in the area of the capital of Dutch West Timor, Kupang. The decision was then taken to land 155 men of the Australian 2/2nd Independent Company, part of Sparrow Force, along with 260 Dutch troops, in Portuguese Timor on 17 December 1941. Just over two months later, on 19 February 1942, the Japanese military invaded Kupang on the Dutch-administered western end of Timor with two battalions of the 228th Infantry Regiment of the 38th Division. On the same day one battalion from that regiment landed at Dili, the administrative centre

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[50] René Girard, *Battling to the End: conversations with Benoît Chantre,* trans. Mary Baker (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 16.
[51] Wurth, *1942,* 136.

of the eastern Portuguese region.[52] The date is significant for Australia, as the date of the bombing of Darwin.

While it is true that the Australian invasion was not of the same type as that of Japan – in that the Australians did not deliberately kill Timorese people as Japanese soldiers did – the Australian action placed Portuguese Timor at risk and vulnerable to the actions of Australia. Though there may have been reasons to protect the Australian mainland from aerial or infantry attacks, the Australian decision to go into Timor set in train massive loss of life in which an expendable entity was sacrificed for the good of the stronger. Certain features of Girard's designation of the scapegoat are apparent in Portuguese Timor's predicament. It was not the focus of blame for any part of the escalating conflict in the region, but it occupied a geographical position which became the focus of warring rivals. Its structural insignificance made it marginal and therefore superfluous, to the extent that the death and damage inflicted on it has received little if any official Australian consideration. The victimisation of Portuguese Timor thus took the form of collateral damage in the interests of Japanese expansionism and Australian protection.

Protection of Australia

The Australian incursion into Portuguese Timor in December 1941 was seen as necessary to protect Australia, but it became the catalyst for the Japanese advance. Australian dependence on Britain for military decisions dictated actions regarding Portuguese Timor as the cables to and from Lord Cranborne (the U.K. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs) and John Curtin (the Australian Prime Minister) indicate.

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[52] Wray, *Timor 1942,* 42.

These cables detail the official strategy of the Australian incursion: to assist the

Portuguese in the defence of their territory and by safeguarding the colony in the

event of a Japanese attack, thus protecting it against Japanese aggression.[53]

Nevertheless, the cables also reveal that the main consideration was the protection of

Australia. Wray comments on the "utmost concern" of the Australian War Cabinet at

the swift advance of the Japanese and the undefended airfield and flying-boat base in

Dili.[54] Curtin wrote to Cranbourne that the defence of Timor as a whole was closely

bound up with the defence of both Darwin and the Netherlands East Indies.[55] He

stated that any occupation of Timor by Japan would seriously prejudice the defence of

Darwin.[56] Portuguese Timor was seen as "the entrance door to Australia."[57]

Cranbourne had earlier stated that the object of the "necessary action" of sending

Australian and Dutch troops was to safeguard vital interests by denying Portuguese

Timor to the enemy.[58] Significantly, as early as September 1941,[59] the Australian War

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[53] Document 195, Commonwealth to Lord Cranbourne, 16 December, 1941, Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy, Historical Documents 1941, July - 1942, June - Volume 5 (DAFP),* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/195-commonwealth-government-to-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs.aspx
[54] Wray, *Timor 1942,* 23-24.
[55] Document 258, Curtin to Cranborne, 6 January 1942, *DAFP,* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/258-mr-john-curtin-prime-minister-to-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs.aspx
[56] Curtin to Cranborne, 6 January, 1942, Document 258.
[57] Document 153, Commonwealth Government to Cranborne, 2 December 1941, *DAFP,* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/153-commonwealth-government-to-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs.aspx
[58] Document 234, Cranborne to Curtin, 28 December 1941, *DAFP,* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/234-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs-to-mr-john-curtin-prime-minister.aspx; Document 82, Cranborne to Curtin, 28 December 1941, *DAFP,* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/82-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs-to-commonwealth-government.aspx
[59] Document 62, Fadden to Cranborne, 8 September 1941, *DAFP,* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/62-mr-a-w-fadden-prime-minister-to-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs.aspx
Document 202, Fadden to Cranborne, 8 September 1941, *DAFP,* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/202-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs-to-mr-john-curtin-prime-minister.aspx;

Cabinet had positively discussed the preventive occupation of Portuguese Timor by the Australian and Dutch forces. It is notable that Cranbourne wrote that the aim was to "liquidate" the Japanese, yet Japan had not invaded the island when that particular cable was written.[60] Thus official communications of the time saw incursion into Portuguese Timor as crucial to the protection of Australia.[61] How the small Australian force of a few hundred men was meant to accomplish that feat was not clear.[62]

Australian breach of neutrality

Australian troops entered the territory administered by Portugal without invitation, thus breaching Portuguese neutrality. The incursion was met with vehement written and verbal opposition by Portugal and by the local authority, Senõr Manuel Ferreira de Carvalho, the Governor of Portuguese Timor.[63] He rejected the suggestion that Portuguese Timor required the protection which the Allies said they were offering.[64] That offer came via the Honorary Consul David Ross, acting for Britain and Australia, who was told to deliver a message to Governor de Carvalho on the day after the landing. The message expressed the Commonwealth of Australia's regret:

> We assure you Portuguese sovereignty will not be impaired and in fact it is to defend that sovereignty as well as to prevent Japanese aggression that our forces have co-operated with Netherlands Government in taking this action.[65]

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[60] Document 186, Cranborne to Curtin, 11 December 1941, *DAFP*, accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/186-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs-to-mr-john-curtin-prime-minister.aspx

[61] Document 19, Cranborne to Commonwealth Government, 26 July, 1941, *DAFP,* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/19-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs-to-commonwealth-government.aspx

[62] Thomas Keneally, *Australians: A Short history* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2016), 723.

[63] Henry P. Frei, "Japan's reluctant decision to occupy Portuguese Timor 1 January 1942 - 20 February 1942," *Australian Historical Studies*, 27:107, (1996): 286, accessed September 5, 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10314619608596014

[64] Dunn, *East Timor,* 19.

[65] Document 201, Commonwealth Government to David Ross, 18 December 1941, *DAFP*, accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/201-commonwealth-government-to-mr-david-ross-uk-consul-in-dili.aspx

The message included the statement that "in order defend against Japanese aggression it has been found necessary to prevent Japanese breach neutrality in Timor"(sic).[66] Thus the Commonwealth of Australia claimed to uphold Portuguese neutrality by itself violating that status, blaming a possible future breach by Japan. The Australian logic thus follows the mimetic reciprocity identified by Girard: "people always have the impression that the other is the first to attack, that they are never the ones who begin."[67]

The Allied troops landed despite the governor's strongly worded protest: "Under these circumstances, every disembarkation of forces will be considered as a breach of the neutrality of our territory."[68] Further reports in the cables describe the reaction of the government in Portugal to the entry of Allied forces as "a violation",[69] "most serious",[70] and "violently unfavourable",[71] thus presenting Australia and Britain with a major crisis in their relations with Portugal. The Governor remained steadfastly against the Australian arrival: his obstructive attitude even suggesting to the Allies that he could possibly assist the Japanese.[72]

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[66] Commonwealth Government to David Ross, 18 December 1941, Document 201.

[67] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 18.

[68] Document 200, Carvalho to Commanders of Australian and Netherlands Forces, 17 December 1941, *DAFP*, accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/200-mr-m-de-a-ferreira-de-carvalho-governor-of-portuguese-timor-to-lt-col-w-w-leggatt-and-lt-col-w-detiger-commanders-of-au.aspx

[69] Document 300, Ross to Department of External Affairs, 25 January 1942, *DAFP*, accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/300-mr-david-ross-uk-consul-in-dili-to-department-of-external-affairs.aspx

[70] Document 233, Cranborne to Curtin, 27 December 1941, *DAFP*, accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/233-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs-to-mr-john-curtin-prime-minister.aspx

[71] Document 234, Cranborne to Curtin, 28 December 1941, *DAFP,* accessed 9-12 September 2015, http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/234-lord-cranborne-uk-secretary-of-state-for-dominion-affairs-to-mr-john-curtin-prime-minister.aspx

[72] Lionel Wigmore, "Chapter 21, Resistance in Timor," in *Volume IV, The Japanese Thrust* 1st Edition, (Canberra, Australian War Memorial, (1957): 470, accessed September 5, 2017, https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1417309

Japanese breach of neutrality

Neutral Portugal played an important political role in the international community during the war. Its capital Lisbon was a base for operatives on all sides to collect information.[73] The mimetic rivalry of the European powers is demonstrated in their fears concerning Portuguese neutrality and any threat to the advantages they gained from that status.

One of Portugal's concerns was their belief that the Dutch might have used any invasion as a means of extending their reach by taking over the whole of the island of Timor.[74] Britain, on the other hand, was fearful that the Portuguese, offended by any incursion into their territory, might allow the Germans into the Iberian Peninsula.[75] In a similar way, but for different reasons, the Japanese administration opposed breaching Portugal's position in case of repercussions in Europe, choosing therefore not to target the Portuguese colonies of Macau and Timor.[76] Dunn writes:

> Evidently the Germans were apprehensive that any Japanese move against a Portuguese territory would provoke Lisbon into offering the Allies base facilities in the Azores, a move that would deal a severe blow to U-boat operations against Allied shipping.[77]

The Allies worried that an Australian advance may have caused the Portuguese to retaliate by allowing the Germans to use their territory, while the Japanese were concerned that any foray of theirs into Portuguese lands may have caused Portugal to favour the Allies. Thus while the British and the Australians had used a possible assault by Japan as a reason for their plans for invading Timor, there had been no indication that Japan would infringe the status of Portugal and its possessions.

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[73] Ken'ichi Goto, *Tensions of Empire: Japan and Southeast Asia in the Colonial and Postcolonial World,* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003), 33.
[74] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* 19.
[75] Document 233, Cranborne to Curtin, 27 December 1941,
[76] Frei, "Japan's reluctant decision," 281.
[77] Dunn, *East Timor,* 19.

Concerning the Japanese quandary regarding violation of neutrality, Frei presents the "agonising debates" undertaken by the Japanese from the beginning of December 1941 which involved the army, the navy, legal experts, the foreign ministry, the prime minister and the emperor.[78] But finally the decision was made for the Japanese to enter Portuguese Timor, two months after the Australians. Frei summarises: "Since Australian and Dutch troops had been the first to take up positions in Portuguese Timor, Japan was now free to attack."[79] Thus the Australian move into Portuguese Timor breached Portuguese neutrality, but was claimed to be necessary to offset a Japanese incursion. The subsequent violation by Japan was claimed to be in response to the Australian breach of neutrality.[80]

Regardless of Japanese anguish over whether to invade Portuguese Timor, the protection of their proposed Sphere of Co-Prosperity finally overrode their reluctance to risk repercussions in Europe. Their desire for expansion coupled with Australian fear produced an unforeseen and violent tragedy. Both nations demonstrated a fundamental mimetic concept, expressed by Girard as: "the aggressor has always already been attacked."[81] Each blamed the other for neglect of international law, each depicted the other as the aggressor, and thus each appropriated the role of victim. In doing this, they each imitated what the other perceived to be the desire and threat of the other.

Control of Portuguese Timor appeared to the antagonists as a way of providing an advantage over the other, and therefore each desired to possess it. While possession

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[78] Frei, "Japan's reluctant decision," 289.
[79] Frei, "Japan's reluctant decision," 289.
[80] Clinton Fernandes, 'Two Tales of Timor," in *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History: The Ten Myths That Will Not Die*, (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010), 222.
[81] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 18.

was the underlying reason for the mutual invasion of Timor, the outcome was the violence done to the Timorese people. As Girard states: "The ultimate object of attack is not fighting: rather, it is possession."[82] Possession appeared as the salve for the concerns of each, the expansionism of Japan and the Australian anguish to protect itself. The mimetic rivalry in this situation exemplified the "romantic lie", each party grasping for possession in the mutual imitation of desire.[83] Neither wished to shoulder the responsibility of breaching Portugal's neutrality (thus risking possible repercussions elsewhere) so each blamed the other for the situation. Each nation claimed the high moral ground of priority: Australia for protection, and Japan for innocence of breaking an international convention until forced into such an action by the pre-emptive incursion by Australia. Each then blamed the other for the ensuing violence, while imitating the other.

A further element in Girard's understanding of mimesis applies - that of the "stumbling block". It denotes "a situation that comes about when a person or a group of persons feel themselves blocked or obstructed as they desire some specific object of power, prestige, or property that their model possesses or is imagined to possess."[84] In their mimetic rivalry, Japan desired to possess further territory while Australia desired to possess freedom from that Japanese expansion. It was a situation of intense competition, yet it led to thorough-going imitation, as both advanced into Portuguese Timor. Australia and Japan showed that they were rivals imitating each other at the same time as competing.[85] In their mimetic competition they were faced with

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[82] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 16.
[83] Jeremiah L. Alberg, *Beneath the Veil of the Strange Verses: Reading scandalous texts* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), xvi.
[84] René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning,* trans. J.G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), xi.
[85] Girard, *I See Satan,* xi.

Portuguese Timor, into which each felt they must intrude to gain their purposes. However, its nature as a colony of a neutral power meant that each needed to mount an illegal invasion in pursuit of their desires. Australia and Japan found Portuguese Timor an obstacle which first ensnared them. The territory became a means of further expansion for Japan which absolved itself by blaming Australia.

The Timorese people, however, were not passive in this process and were the subjects of activity both as friends and rivals. Timor frustrated the desires of both Japan and Australia and became a mimetic obstacle, though in different ways. In Japan's regard, the East Timorese proved most unhelpful, their lack of cooperation requiring a whole Japanese division to occupy the territory until the end of the war when those troops could well have been effectively used in Papua New Guinea. In regard to Australia, many Timorese were true friends and allies in supporting and giving their lives. The Australians withdrew in early 1943, but the devastating effects on the Timorese people continued until 1945, as the Japanese remained until the end of the War. However, subsequent events show the lasting influence of Timor in later Australian history. Australian forgetfulness of the friendship of the Timorese has remained a stumbling block of conscience against which the proclamation of Australian values constantly trips.

Scale of Timorese Suffering

Australians in Timor

There was, of course, an actual victim in all this turmoil. The element missing from the deliberations of Japanese and Australians, as well as the Portuguese, the British, the Dutch and the Germans was the welfare of the local people in Portuguese Timor. There is no evidence that anyone considered what the Timorese people may have thought or desired. There are no thoughts expressed in the documents about their fears and anxieties, and no reflection on the possible effects of armed foreigners coming into their ancient tribal society. The Japanese advance southwards ignored the welfare of all peoples it encountered, including the Timorese. Similarly, the Australian government's insecurity and fear in the face of an expected invasion by Japan rendered it insensible to the probable effects on Timorese society of the invasion of their territory. Dunn comments: "Had the Allies not intruded into the territory and transformed it into a war zone the Timorese may have escaped the ordeal they were subsequently to endure."[86] In order to consider the enormity of the effects of the incursions into Portuguese Timor, the events of the following fourteen months when the Australians were present is summarised here.

The few hundred Australians who had moved into Portuguese Timor in December 1941 lacked their own radio equipment until they constructed a wireless and made contact with Australia on 19 April 1942.[87] They were then supplied by air drops which augmented their living off the land and their dependence on the Timorese people. The commando force was able to conduct a rear-guard action against the Japanese, employing with success the guerrilla tactics in which they had been trained.

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[86] Dunn, *East Timor,* 19.
[87] Wray, *Timor 1942*, 98.

Apart from direct hit-and-run attacks, establishment of communication with Australia meant provision of valuable intelligence on ship and troop movements and identification of targets which were then attacked by RAAF Hudson bombers.[88]

In May 1942 the Australians were ordered to keep harassing the Japanese forces since there was no possibility for them to be evacuated. In June, the Australian government argued for US involvement to assist with the guerrilla campaign in Timor, but were rebuffed because of General MacArthur's conviction that the greatest danger would come from the Atlantic.[89] The Japanese increased their numbers in August with specially trained troops as a result of the Australians' success in killing or eluding them. The 2/2nd Company was reinforced by the 2/4th Independent Company in September 1942 although the number of Australian men was never more than 700 at any one time. That month, the original Japanese garrison was withdrawn from Portuguese Timor, replaced by units of the 48th Division, one of the elite Japanese formations. Thus the few Australians were engaging, evading and frustrating thousands of men in four or five Japanese battalions along with their tank, engineer and artillery supports.[90] In November 1942, seven further battalions from the 48th division were inserted.[91] Cleary cites Japanese documents which put final Japanese troop numbers at 20,000, the standard strength of a Japanese infantry division.[92]

Support by the Timorese

The Australian troops who conducted the Timor campaign attested to the general support of the East Timorese people as the pivotal reason for their success. That

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[88] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* 323.
[89] Costello, *The Pacific War,* 310.
[90] Wray, *Timor 1942*, 134 and 138.
[91] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* 246.
[92] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* xi; 368.

testimony illustrates the quality and depth of the relationship which the Australians

and Timorese developed. Cleary alludes to the attitudes of the Australians which was

essential to good relationships:

> After entering the neutral territory uninvited, and then luring the Japanese there,
> the Australians pulled off a remarkable feat in bush diplomacy and mass
> mobilisation, despite having little advance knowledge of the people and their
> language.....The result was a rag-tag army of professionals and volunteers that is
> unrivalled in Australian military history.[93]

Further, Cleary comments: "The (Australian) men were friendly and engaging and,

unlike the colonials, treated the people with respect and were particularly courteous to

the women."[94] The "criados" (in the 21st century more correctly referred to as

"veterans") were the young Timorese men who, with the active cooperation of their

families, provided the Australians with shelter, shared their food, helped them during

their bouts of malaria and tropical diseases, relayed information on Japanese troop

movements, pointed out the best observation and ambush positions, and protected and

carried the commandos' equipment whilst they were engaging the Japanese. Such

assistance was essential to the success of the Australian mission in fighting the

increasing numbers of Japanese and those West Timorese whom the Japanese used as

militia. Up to forty men of the Independent Companies died in Portuguese Timor, but

only ten of these in combat.[95] The deaths of Japanese are calculated as many

hundreds.[96]

Shockingly, many Timorese deaths were also the result of Australian success. Allied

bombing of Japanese positions wiped out villages and crops, so causing starvation.

Added to this, the sustained and ferocious Japanese retaliation against the Timorese

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[93] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* xi.
[94] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* 34.
[95] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* 277, 353.
[96] Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground,* xi.

because of their support of the Australians added to the grievous toll. Yet the words of

the Australian men indicate the levels of loyalty they found among the Portuguese

Timorese. For example, describing a youth who undertook to pretend to sell produce

to a Japanese troop section as a way of spying on them for the Australians, Archie

Campbell of the 2/2nd Independent Company wrote:

> It is almost incredible that he is willing to risk torture and death for the
> Australians who are indirectly responsible for all the misery the Japs have
> heaped upon the Timorese: the burning villages, the killings, the terrified
> women carried into slavery and defilement. Yet there he goes – no fanfare, no
> drama – just a casual wave and a smile, and he is gone.[97]

Lance Bomford, of the 2/40th Battalion which joined up with 2/2nd in September

1942 wrote:

> Each of us had his native, called a criado. They carried our packs so we were
> free with our guns, and without them we just couldn't have fought like we did...
> The natives would spot when the Japs were making a move and relay the
> message to us so we could set up ambushes. Even at the end when it was tough
> we were dependent on them to keep one jump ahead of the Japs. It wasn't just
> the criados, there were lots who helped us..... Early in December we got orders
> to move to the coast. It was a great feeling to be going home but it was a sad
> parting from the Timorese boys who'd done so much for us. Quite a few of us
> had tears in our eyes. I'd have loved to have taken my little fella back with me.
> He cried when the time came to leave. I gave him a note [praising him], what a
> good lad he was, gave him a few odds and ends. What happened to him Lord
> knows.[98]

Lt-Col. Sir Bernard Callinan became the leader of the 2/2nd in May 1942.

Interviewed by Michele Turner, he said:

> It was upsetting what the Japs did towards the end. They'd move into an area
> where the natives were loyal and say, "Look, if you help Australians we'll come
> and burn your villages and destroy your crops." And they did it. Then the Japs
> would go to another area and say, "Over there they're helping Australians,
> wouldn't you like to go down and take all their pigs and goats?" – playing on
> greed and old antagonisms, not just releasing them from the restrictions of the
> Portuguese, but really encouraging them to do it.

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[97] Archie Campbell, *Double Reds of Timor* (Swanbourne WA: John Burridge Military Antiques, 1995), 82.

[98] Michele Turner, *Telling: East Timor, Personal Testimonies 1942-1992* (Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1992), 11-12.

> So after a while our natives thought, "Well, we have to look after ourselves." That's only realistic. But many would stand up to beatings by the Japanese, still saying they didn't know where we were or where we'd gone or anything, and they would get badly beaten. When the natives were getting more restless towards the end none of the *creados* was affected; they stuck right to us.[99]

Exhausted, the 2/2nd was evacuated to Australia in December 1942 with some Portuguese civilians, while the 2/4th was withdrawn in early 1943, which meant that their Timorese companions were left to return to their homes, finding that their support of the Australians was to be brutally repaid by the Japanese who remained in their thousands in Portuguese Timor until the end of the war.

Effects of the Timor Campaign

Wartime Australian society experienced fundamental disruptions caused by the military mobilisation of many in the population, the rationing of food and clothes, the uncertainty of the world situation, the focus of the government on protecting security, the absence of loved ones, and the fear which centred on the possibility of invasion from the north. Like so many societies through the ages, threat to life and well-being resulted in disruption of civil and family life and a sense of liminality not experienced in times of peace.

Nevertheless, the number of Timorese deaths is extraordinary in comparison to the Australian and world-wide death count. James Dunn stated:

> The census of 1947 showed that the population of the colony had declined from 472 221 in 1930 (the year of the previous census) to 433 412. From these figures it has often been estimated that 40 000 Timorese died as a result of the war, but the real figure must have been much higher, probably more than half as high again, even if a minimum natural growth rate is taken into account.[100]

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[99] Turner, *Telling,* 21-22.
[100] Dunn, *East Timor,* 322.

Using this calculation, a figure of between 40,000 and 70,000 Timorese who died during the War, all civilians, finds general acceptance. Between 8% and 14% of Portuguese Timor's 1939 population died between 1941 and 1945, despite Timor's status as the colony of a neutral power. This figure is startling when compared with the numbers of deaths in the populations of those nations officially at war. The percentage of British military and civilians who died is calculated at 0.8% of the pre-war population, and that of United States deaths at 0.3% of their population.[101] Australian deaths are calculated at 0.4% of the 1939 Australian population.[102]

The enormity of the effects of the War on East Timor is further seen when comparing its fortunes with those of Papua New Guinea. The support of the local people of PNG for Australian soldiers is well-known. It is estimated that 15,000 Papuan civilians died during the conflict.[103] Australian responsibilities towards its New Guinea territories required the payment of compensation for the destruction which the local people endured. Therefore, between 1942 and 1948, the Australian Government's War Damages Commission paid £6,710,799 to villagers to cover death, injury and destruction.[104] Conversely, minimal payment was made by the Australian government to local Timorese helpers by way of silver coins, and small amounts repaid for material assistance. There was no reparation for injuries, even when requested by

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[101] "Chart: World War II Casualties as a Percentage of Each Country's Population," *Top Foreign Stocks.com,* accessed 11 June 2017.
http://topforeignstocks.com/2016/04/19/chart-world-war-ii-casualties-as-a-percentage-of-each-countrys-population/

[102] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *100 Years of Australian Lives, Second World War 1939-1945,* accessed 11 June, 2017,
http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2071.0main+features952012-2013

[103] Brij V. Lal and Kate Fortune, eds, *The Pacific Islands: An Encyclopedia* (Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 244.

[103] Hiromitsu Iwamoto, "Patrol Reports: sources for assessing war damage in Papua New Guinea," in *The Pacific War in Papua New Guinea: Memories and Realities,* ed. Yukio Toyoda and H. Nelson, (Tokyo: Rikkyo University Centre for Asian Area Studies, 2006), 350.

[104] Turner, *Telling,* 61.

Portuguese authorities after the war.[105] No other compensation has been paid to the Timorese people for their extraordinarily large World War II losses.

The mimetic aggression of Japan and Australia is seen in the context of Girard's explanation of the measures which societies take to protect themselves. He states: "Everywhere in the world, even today, any natural or man-made disaster intensifies the appetite for victims and causes accusation to proliferate."[106] In World War II, the threatening disorder required the apportioning of blame which was accomplished relatively easily by identifying the aggressors – the Japanese. Thus Japan was the focus of Australian anger and fear. The proximity of Portuguese Timor to Australia involved that territory in matters of Australian security however. Its use by Japan to attack Australia was seen as a possibility, and hence Timor's very existence rendered it a probable threat to the interests of Australia. Girard notes that present-day victims need not necessarily be seen as a culpable cause of social ills and disruption. The Timorese people were not blamed by the Australians for the crisis, but their territory was seen as desirable to the enemy, and even more than this, as somehow morally culpable in potentially becoming a base of operations for the Japanese. In this way, it needed to be neutralised as a threat, and so became a victim of Australia's security interests. Australia, seeing itself as victim of the Japanese, prepared to strike at the aggressor, and in the process sacrificed the Timorese to their security. Though the Timorese were not scapegoats in one sense (except when the Japanese blamed them for assisting the Australians), by virtue of their land, they became the real victims of the Japanese and Australians as the voiceless, vulnerable other sacrificed by both for their own ends.

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[105] René Girard, *The Girard Reader,* ed. James G. Williams (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 124.

Texts of Persecution

The effects of the Timor campaign do not end with the close of the Second World War, or with the passing away of returned Australian soldiers and their Timorese friends. The scapegoating of East Timor has been enshrined in the written record of the campaign which further suppresses the interests of the Timorese and justifies Australian action.

As discussed earlier, Girard's mimetic theory enshrines insights into ancient myths as being disguised accounts of scapegoating incidents. Victims in the ancient world, sacrificed for defence or social harmony, were not honoured, or even remembered. Myths buried their victimisation, weaving gilded fantasies of their persecutors and the communities they protected from their own violence. In a similar way, the victimisation of Portuguese Timor by Australia in World War II has received textual treatment with myth-like resemblances. Girard termed modern day myths "texts of persecution", though these texts increasingly lack divine justification and put other transcendent entities in their place (e.g., the nation-state). The chapter now details significant examples of the textual evidence which has successfully minimised the importance of the Timor campaign.

Texts concerning the fear of invasion of Australia

First to be considered are texts generally available to the public in libraries and on the internet concerning the supposed Japanese invasion of Australia. The history of this episode has direct bearing on the perception of Australia as victim and, as will be seen, on the presence of an unconsciousness among Australians as to the actual victims in the saga.

Despite evidence to the contrary, belief in an impending Japanese invasion in World War II remains in some influential circles in Australia. Many available texts continue to suggest, and even at times specifically to declare, that Australia was in danger of invasion. The opinion of eminent historians that any Japanese naval suggestions of invasion were never countenanced as official strategy have often been ignored or challenged. For example, some of Paul Keating's speeches as Prime Minister used the phrase "invasion of Australia" repeatedly.[107] A current website devoted to the theory of invasion by Japan attacks opinions which question Japanese invasion plans.[108] Peter FitzSimons' best-selling 2004 book *Kokoda* makes clear the fear of invasion in 1942 but does little to present any information that it was a misplaced fear.[109]

Admittedly, in a growing number of cases there is recognition that Japan was not intending to invade, for example, the website of the Department of Veterans Affairs correctly states:

> The Japanese had no plans to invade Australia during the Second World War but they did plan to cut Australia's supply line with America by establishing bases in the south-west Pacific islands.[110]

Popular belief in an impending Japanese invasion was strengthened in 2008, however, when the "Battle for Australia" became a Commemorative Day to be celebrated on the first Wednesday of September annually. It ranks third in importance after Anzac

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[107] David Stevens, "'Australia's Thermopylae?' The Kokoda Trail," in *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History: The Ten Myths That Will Not Die* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010), 161-162.
[108] James Bowen, *Battle for Australia,* accessed 16 August 2015, http://www.battleforaustralia.org/battaust/JapdebAustinvade.html
[109] Peter FitzSimons, *Kokoda,* (Sydney: Hodder Australia, 2004),
[110] Department of Veterans' Affairs, "Australia's war 1939-1945," accessed August 18, 2015, http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australia-and-second-world-war/events/coral-sea-kokoda-and-milne-bay-mayseptember

Day and Remembrance Day.[111] Thus the erroneous notion that Australia was the object of Japanese invasion plans has been recently cemented officially. The idea of Australia being "victim" is unavoidably connected to this version of events. The idea that Australia was to be invaded appears to be fuelled by a continuing fear of invasion from the north. The notion underlies the precarious nature of a small population in a large continent. It also acts as a justification for actions during WWII and subsequently, for example, that Australia is justified to use smaller territories, such as East Timor, to achieve its own security interests.

There appears to be difficulty in some quarters in distinguishing between opinions understandably held in the past and historically accurate statements based on recent evidence. To be able to acknowledge that Australia was not going to be invaded does not diminish the people of the time who genuinely thought that invasion was imminent. The task of those with the present benefit of historical evidence is to concentrate on what did, in fact, happen. Australia was not invaded by the Japanese military, and as has been shown, there was not a credible plan to undertake such an invasion.

Texts concerning the Australian campaign in Timor

In light of a prevailing erroneous view that Australia was to be invaded by Japan, it is not surprising that the facts and significance of the Timor campaign itself can be lost. Internalisation of fear in large sections of society alongside relatively simplistic notions of an ideal Australian "character" and a suppression of the treatment of the Timorese in WWII contribute to the minimisation of Timor's role in the war. The

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[111] "Battle for Australia Association", accessed 17 September, 2015,
http://www.battleforaustralia.org.au/index.php

tendency among some Australians is to forget this unique wartime narrative. This is particularly the case when its complexity and evidence of moral complicity mean that notions of exceptional diggers, battlers and heroes need to be applied as much to the Timorese as to Australians.

The Official Australian War History, documents in the National Archives and the War Memorial, as well as books, commentaries, articles, education curricula and websites comprise the record available to the Australian public concerning the events of the Second World War in which Australia and Portuguese Timor were linked in what is known as the "Timor Campaign". This material demonstrates that not only did East Timor itself become a victim sacrificed for Australia's protection, but substantial elements of the documentary record remain ignored, are incomplete in interpretation, or retain distortions which are unchallenged. Thus the memory of the campaign itself is suppressed and becomes a means of continuing to victimise the Timorese. The accounts of the history currently available in Australia are almost without exception written from the Australian perspective. They extol Australian virtues, ignore Australian errors, and are oblivious of the Timorese. They are well described as "texts of persecution" that justify military action that took no account of the Timorese people. In contrast, in those cases where the Timorese story is told with due recognition of the Timorese people, light is thrown on the victimisation process, requiring a deeper Australian reflection on the experience.

The presentation of the history of the Timor Campaign in books, films, the Australian War Memorial and on the internet usually ignores facts or fails to make the connections required to influence Australian people's understanding of the place of

Timor in the War.[112] Such imbalance suggests an Australian ignorance which resembles the unconsciousness required in the victimage mechanism. Tempered and challenged somewhat by the testimony of some returned Australian soldiers and by a constant, if muted, *ostinato* narrative of the debt owed to the Timorese since the War, it is clear that the unconsciousness is not total. The available record, however, both reflects and feeds the general ignorance, thus distorting the facts, maintaining romantic illusions of autonomous Australian heroism, and forgetting the Timorese.

Some grassroots Australian efforts have seen photograph exhibitions mounted and Australian sightseeing in Timor to promote the Timorese War involvement.[113] These accounts of this remarkable campaign combine to present the narrative of a feat which has few parallels in that the resourcefulness, courage and resilience of the Australians, with the sustained support of the local people, ensured that they were the only Allied fighting force which remained viable in South East Asia at that time. "In the island archipelago to Australia's north, the only place where shots were still heard was on the island of Timor."[114] Informative as they are, these works are specialised and have not yet affected popular general knowledge about Timor's wartime role. At its best, this narrative presents the dependency that Girard argues as integral to conversion: that we

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[112] Specialist collections on Timor refer to the 1942 events, and some books deal with the Timor campaign in detail. For example, James Dunn's book *East Timor: a rough passage to independence*; Paul Cleary's *The Men Who Came Out of the Ground*; Sir (Lt-Col) Bernard Callinan's *Independent Company*; C.H. Wray's book *Timor 1942*, and the memoirs, letters and interviews of John "Paddy" Kenneally (private collections).

[113] For example: Radford College ACT in Timor Leste - Send Me on My Way, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKSJX22gTnM; Western Australian Museum – Debt of Honour Exhibition, http://museum.wa.gov.au/whats-on/debt-honour; Timor Adventures – 7 Day Tour, http://www.timoradventures.com.au/tours/timor-1942/; Timor Awakening, http://veteranscare.com.au/timor-awakening-experience/

[114] Stanley, *Invading Australia,* 172.

are not autonomous individuals, but relational beings dependent on others, which this campaign showed.

In contrast to these resources, most current Australian general history books have little on Timor and even less on the Timorese-Australian connection during World War II. Recent Australian war histories ignore the Timor Campaign, mention it only minimally, or are focused only on the Australians.[115] These omissions and emphases make the record incomplete and in some cases, misleading.

There is one printed document from World War II, however, which has come to symbolise the complex and ambiguous nature of the relationship between Australia and East Timor and its textual record. As was the practice world-wide at the time, the Australian Government produced and distributed a large number of propaganda leaflets designed to lower enemy morale or to encourage civilian populations in theatres of war. One leaflet dropped over Timor declared "*Your friends do not forget you.*"[116] The leaflet invites the trust of the Timorese people, promising that Australians would remember their assistance, the small print going so far as to state that Australians would return to oust the Japanese. Unfortunately, the participle of the Portuguese verb in the heading ("do not forget") was misspelled as "nõa" instead of

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[115] Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (eds), *The Cambridge History of Australia* (Port Melbourne, Vic.: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Mark Peel and Christina Twomey, *A history of Australia,* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 265; David Day, *Claiming a continent: a new history of Australia* (Pymble, NSW: Harpercollins Publishers, 2001), 437; Geoffrey Bolton, *The Oxford History of Australia: Volume 5, 1942-1995: the middle way 1942-1995,* 2nd ed., (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1996); Frank Welsh, *Great Southern Land: a new history of Australia* (London: Allen Lane, 2004); C.D. Coulthard-Clark, *Where Australians fought: the encyclopaedia of Australia's battles* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 207-208; A.K. Macdougall, *Australians at War: a pictorial history,* 2nd rev. ed. (Rowville, Victoria: The Five Mile Press, 2007), 245-246; 352.
[116] Australian War Memorial, *Far Eastern Liaison Office (FELO) Leaflet Collection* "PG 9: Your friends do not forget you," accessed September 3, 2015, https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/accessing-records-at-the-memorial/findingaids/special/cards/felo#s34
Image found at: https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/timor; Australian War Memorial. *Fighting in Timor - 1942,* accessed 3 September 2015, https://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/timor/

não, and rendered the sentence meaningless at best, thereby negating its original intention.[117] On another level the badly presented document symbolises the Australian hubris and forgetfulness that has characterised the subsequent history, and represents much of the current written record of the wartime relationship: inaccurate, self-serving, and oblivious of the meaning of the war experience for the Timorese people.

The leaflet remains a challenge to Australians and expresses underlying unease in many Australians concerning subsequent treatment of East Timor. The nagging sense of betrayal and victimisation both in World War II and during the Indonesian occupation is evoked by the leaflet's wording, with all its mistakes. The mention of "friends" places the relationship above simple regional connections. Denis Kevans' poem "Never Forget You" picks up something of the betrayal, not only of Timor by Australia, but (with some poetic licence) of government betrayal of something dear to the ordinary Australian:

> For a promise made by the soldiers
> that their leaders never kept.[118]

The promise has not been kept by the Australian nation as a whole, and yet the keeping of it is daunting. How does one nation remember another when it was that other which lost tens of thousands of people as a result of the friendship? How can the remembering happen in the face of further betrayal, as in Australia's role during the Indonesian occupation from 1975? The facts of Australian involvement in Timor's World War II history affect the relationship significantly and have been remembered at key moments to provoke the Australian conscience.

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[117] I heard the author Paul Cleary detail this point in an interview for a documentary in 2010.

[118] Denis Kevans, "Never Forget You," in *Praying for Peace on Anzac Day,* Catholic Religious Australia, accessed 11 June 2016, http://www.catholicreligiousaustralia.org.au/index.php/resources/spirituality-prayer/item/2460-praying-for-peace-on-anzac-day

Standing as witnesses to the diplomatic anxieties, claims and counter-claims, breaches of neutrality, accusations, justifications, invasions, reinforcements, and bombing were 480,000 Timorese people. The omission of their suffering from the bulk of the Australian written record in preference to the relentless promotion of a threat to Australia and the courage of Australians contrasts with the poignancy of the Official History's recording of the reception which the Australian soldiers received on the afternoon of the day they arrived in Timor, December 17 1941. It relates that the men "were agreeably surprised to find the inhabitants apparently friendly towards them."[119] One can imagine the brash, open-faced Australians somewhat buoyed by the attitude of the locals. One can also imagine the curious relief of the Timorese at meeting people who appeared to lack the superior disdain of many Portuguese. The friendliness of the Timorese was not solely a result of their character, but was a response to the easy-going camaraderie with which the Australians treated them. The mimetic relationality was initially positive, which could be remembered to challenge later negative actions. That friendliness was to be tested by the later dire choices which awaited them.

Given that so much material continues to downplay or to challenge the evidence that Australia itself was not to be invaded, is it sadly unsurprising that so much material similarly continues to ignore the invasions endured by the Timorese. The absence of adequate reference to the Timor campaign in history books belittles the relationship, and in so doing, is testimony to the victimisation of the Timorese people for Australian protection.

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[119] Wigmore, "Resistance in Timor," 470. https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1417309

The Timor Campaign and the Australian School Curriculum

The general lack of written material about East Timor and the often skewed emphases in favour of Australia in material about the relationship in World War II is echoed in the school curriculum. There is no mention at all of East Timor in connection to World War II in the 2013 Australian curriculum.[120] While teachers and schools with an interest in Timorese history are known to use resources to help students understand some of the current and historical realities affecting the two nations, the exclusion of the regional neighbour Timor from the even a range of choices within that section of the curriculum is extraordinary, given the loss of Timorese life as a result of Australian presence on their land. The absence of this topic from the 2013 Curriculum which is designed serve the nation for a number of years echoes the exclusion of any realistic treatment of Indigenous peoples in Australian schools during past decades. Along with the paucity of material available to the general public on Timor in the Second World War, such denial of information to the next generation can be said to constitute a "text of persecution" in its own right.

Conclusion

In the "all against all" turmoil of the World War, where nations fought for supremacy, possession and self-protection, the defenceless entity of Portuguese Timor was sacrificed as a victim of Australian fear. The welfare of the Timorese people was ignored in the Australian effort to prevent conflict – whether real or imagined – from reaching Australian shores. The paradoxes of the events are vast: that Australia – the larger, richer nation which feared invasion – remained secure, while Portuguese

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[120] "Australian Curriculum," in *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority*, accessed September, 2017, https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Search/?q=Timor

Timor - the smaller, weaker territory - became the victim, suffering an invasion and a four-year occupation by the Japanese.

Furthermore, the popularly available record is well described as "texts of persecution". It maintains the distortions which accompany a narrative told from the perspective of a victor or a persecutor: in this case, a foreign power mounting an invasion in order to protect itself. The reiteration of the fears of the past concerning an "invasion of Australia" ignores current historical research. Accompanied by little acknowledgement of the actual locus of invasion, Portuguese Timor, it indicates a displacement of the status of "victim" onto Australians instead of those who endured the invasions, the Timorese people.

While documents written at the time of the invasions would naturally reflect the political and military constraints on the dissemination of factual material of those times, the passage of decades now demands more clarity and a wider perspective. Currently available material stocked by libraries, accessible on the internet, and mandated for use in schools, however, continues to present a narrative almost entirely from the Australian viewpoint. Traditional images abound of courageous Australians (victorious in the face of defeat), the victim under threat and the hero battling to the end. This Australian self-focus distorts the facts, belittling the enormity of the suffering of the Timorese people and ignoring their courage and service in Australia's regard.

The honouring of war heroes and the celebration of Australia's role in numerous world conflicts is of major importance to the Australian community. Nevertheless, the forgetfulness of material relevant to East Timor's devastation testifies to an Australian

national unconsciousness concerning a friendly neighbour. A high degree of ignorance exists in Australia about the suffering of the Timorese, the death and destruction wrought by both Japan and the Allies, and the promises of remembrance which the Australian government delivered in writing to the Timorese population. Thus the documentary record is not a thing of the Australian past, but remains a collection of the myth-like "texts of persecution" that continue to have power to distort memories. It is evidence that East Timor, through Australian neglect of the history of the Timor campaign, continues to be sacrificed as a victim for Australian interests.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE INDONESIAN INVASION OF EAST TIMOR

Introduction

Mimetic theory insights into scapegoating and violence throw light on the history of the relationship between Australia and East Timor. In the previous chapter, the extremity of Timorese suffering in World War II was described as a particular type of scapegoating, using mimetic theory. The official Australian documentary record was shown as a collection of "texts of persecution", that is, modern day myths which recount the episode entirely from the point of view of successive Australian governments, as the dominant and victorious players, exonerating their actions and excluding appropriate recognition of the Timorese people and their suffering. Further aspects of mimetic theory can be applied when considering the next major event in the relationship between the two countries, that of the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia in 1975 and the involvement of Australia. In this infamous incident, Australian governments participated in the scapegoating of East Timor consistent with the actions and attitudes present in World War II. The outworking of the WWII attitude shown by Australia to sacrifice East Timor for its own security were reinforced and put on public display before, during and after the invasion. In this scenario, the communists were now perceived as the external threat that needed to be opposed. The great powers of the region – Indonesia, Australia and the US – agreed

that Timor had to be sacrificed in order to prevent this enemy from threatening any of these allies.

In particular, this chapter asserts that the record of the Australian involvement in the Indonesian invasion contained in the Australian government's publication *Australia and the Incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1976* almost completely exemplifies Girard's "romantic lie". These documents portray an imagined autonomy of policy and action, which is consistent with Girard's notion of false autonomy in the romantic lie. Yet the authors' unconsciousness of the influence of others is unveiled by slavish imitation of their desires. In this case, the "romantic lie" reveals Australian inability to recognise its mimetic dependence on Indonesia (and other world powers) and the resultant sacrifice of East Timor to ensure security with Indonesia.

From the documents, the chapter shows the dependence of Australia and Indonesia on each other to achieve security. A singular threat perceived by both nations was the growing communism in Asia. The actions of Indonesia in quelling its internal communists brought it a favoured position in the eyes of the United States, with consequent economic and military support.[1] Perceptions of East Timor as courting communism made its position in relation to Australia and Indonesia precarious.[2] Indonesian tactics capitalised on political divisions in Portugal, broadcasting suggestions of Timorese communism in a process of subversion.[3] Australian compliance with Indonesia was to thwart communism through the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia, that is, through the sharing of a common scapegoat.

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[1] James Dunn, *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence,* 3rd ed. (Double Bay, NSW: Longueville Books, 2003), 115; 306.
[2] Dunn, *East Timor,* 161-162; 187.
[3] Dunn, *East Timor,* 139.

The threat of social destabilisation, seen by Indonesia and Australia to be promised by communism, was met by their combined channelling of fear onto a common enemy.[4] In this way a type of unanimity between the two nations was produced, within which the violence inflicted on the enemy, Portuguese Timor, was justified. Furthermore, Australia also sought to maintain and develop mutual regional protection and trade resulting from Indonesian control of the whole archipelago. Australia thus became willingly compliant with Indonesia as the Timorese people became the sacrifice required to repudiate communism and achieve the benefits of Indonesian expansion.

The entanglement of Australia at this time flowed from unconscious Australian dependence on Indonesian desires, manifesting as politically astute decisions which sacrificed the weaker neighbour, Portuguese Timor. A particularly vivid example of the depths to which Australian governments descended in pursuit of Indonesian favour is discussed, that is, the matter of the deaths of the journalists, the "Balibo Five" and Roger East.[5] Thus Indonesian desires became the model for Australian desires, engendering mimetic dependence, the record of which in official Australian documents remains a "romantic lie" that obscures this reality.

Summary - The Indonesian Invasion

The Indonesian annexation of Portuguese Timor was a result of long-held expansionist desires of Indonesia, evident in its acquisition of West New Guinea in 1962 and its opposition to the creation of Malaysia up to 1966.[6] In 1963 the US

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[4] Michael Kirwan, *Discovering Girard* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004), 38.
[5] For uniformity, the name of the town "Balibó" is spelled "Balibo" in this dissertation.
[6] Wendy Way, ed., "Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor, 1974-1976," (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2000): 19, accessed August 9, 2014, https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Australia+and+the+Indonesian+Incorporation+of+Portuguese+T

advised Canberra that Indonesian desire to control Portuguese Timor was obvious.[7]

This ambition was seen as caused by dissatisfaction with the amount of territory that

Indonesia gained at independence.[8] It also suggests the Indonesian view that Timor

required rescue from the European coloniser Portugal.[9] The withdrawal of Portugal

and the threat of communism provided a proximate context for the realisation of those

desires. The importance of Indonesia to Australia's political and economic prospects

was demonstrated when, faced with Indonesia's intention to subsume East Timor upon

the withdrawal of the Portuguese, Australia was careful not to oppose it.

The establishment of the Democratic Republic of Indonesia in 1948 had drawn

together peoples from a range of disparate cultures on the archipelago under one

political umbrella, all of whom had experienced Dutch colonisation. The historical

anomaly of the Portuguese colonisation of the eastern half of the island of Timor,

however, prevented complete Indonesian control of the archipelago. In 1974 the

Armed Forces Movement in Portugal overthrew the Salazar-Caetano regime, and

Portugal began processes for the decolonisation of its overseas possessions –

including the under-developed East Timor which it had administered for nearly 500

years. A number of political parties emerged in East Timor. The UDT[10] proposed that

Portugal remain in control during preparation for independence, while FRETILIN,[11]

advocated immediate independence as a republic.

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imor%2C+1974-1976&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-
b&gfe_rd=cr&dcr=0&ei=uQOuWfLIBIbr8wfRh4GwCQ
[7] Way, ed., *Beale to Barwick,* 25.
[8] Bernard K. Gordon, "The Potential for Indonesian Expansionism," *Pacific Affairs* 36 (4), (1963): 378, Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia, accessed 15 December, 2015, doi:10.2307/2754684.
[9] Gordon, "The Potential," 381.
[10] *União Democrática Timorense* – Timorese Democratic Union.
[11] *Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* – Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor.

In the face of the threat of the growth of communism in South-East Asia, accusations were directed at the unfolding political consciousness in Timor, particularly against Fretilin. Dunn states that there was not "a shred of evidence" to support any insinuations of communist influence in Portuguese Timor.[12] Unfavourable judgements concerning the ability of the Timorese to govern themselves were voiced by both Indonesia and Australia.[13] Division of opinion was apparent in Australia between government geo-political interests and a level of popular concern for the welfare of the Timorese people, resulting in the Australian government vacillating between upholding Timorese political rights and siding with Indonesia. Australian authorities remained on the sidelines, expressing the view that it would be easier to negotiate the resources of the Timor Sea with Indonesia, rather than with Portugal or an independent East Timor.[14] Australian Prime Minister Whitlam signalled to Indonesia that integration of East Timor into Indonesia was inevitable.

Covert Indonesian operations destabilised East Timor using accusations of communism as an excuse for infiltration and border attacks as Indonesia prepared to annex the territory by force.[15] The two main Timorese political parties united in a pro-independence coalition early in 1975. The alliance was fragile as internal differences as to how independence was to be achieved were not resolved. It proved susceptible to Indonesian subversion based on accusations of Fretilin's supposed communist leanings.[16] The parties split and a two-week war (August-September 1975) resulted in

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[12] James Dunn, "Communist Influence in Fretilin prior to the 1975 invasion," East Timor Action Network (ETAN), July 29 1998, accessed October 30, 2017, https://etan.org/et/1998/july/july29-31/29communi.htm
[13] Dunn, *East Timor,* 93.
[14] Richard Walsh and George Munster, *Secrets of State: A detailed assessment of the book they banned* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1982), 78-79.
[15] Dunn, *East Timor,* 53.
[16] Dunn, *East Timor,* viii; 141-142.

the deaths of at least 1,500 people. The victorious Fretilin party declared East Timor

an Independent Republic on 28 November 1975.

US President Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger had been in Jakarta for meetings with

President Suharto on 6 December 1975, and discussed the impending invasion.

Successive Australian governments validated the invasion as they worked to

strengthen Australia's relationship with Indonesia (and with Asia generally). The

policy of supporting Indonesian government policy continued with increasing

determination at diplomatic levels, and the provision of arms and training to the

military further underscored Australia's position. The following years saw repeated

calls by the UN for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops. The record shows that

Australia repeatedly voted against such withdrawal.[17]

Some Australians were also victims of the invasion, about which subsequent

Australian governments have made little effort to protest or find the truth. On 16

October 1975 five Australian based journalists were killed at Balibo, a border-town in

East Timor, by Indonesian troops in order to prevent them from reporting on

Indonesian military operations preparing for the invasion.[18] Another Australian

journalist reporting on the situation, Roger East, was murdered on the day after the

invasion, 8 December 1975. The deaths received wide coverage in Australia and were

the subject of much public disquiet and conjecture. Denial and inaction characterised

the official response to the killings during the Indonesian occupation and despite

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[17] United Nations, *UN General Assembly Votes on East Timor* (General Assembly Resolutions 1975-1982), accessed 19 March, 2015, http://etan.org/etun/UNvotes.htm__http://etan.org/etun/genasRes.htm
[18] Dorelle Pinch, *Inquest into the death of Brian Raymond Peters: Coroner's Report 2007, Executive Summary,* accessed September 5, 2017, http://www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/brian%20peters%201975%20(balibo)%20-%20inquest%20finding%20summary.pdf

numerous inquiries over the subsequent thirty years.[19] In 2007 a NSW Coroner's

Inquiry found that the five in Balibo were murdered by the Indonesian military.[20] As

will be discussed, the Australian Federal Police were given the task of pursuing those

named as responsible, but have since determined that there is not enough evidence to

take the matter any further.[21] Consequently, dissatisfaction and suspicion remain.

Australian Documents

"Romantic Lie"

The Australian Government's 2000 publication *Australia and the Incorporation of*

Portuguese Timor 1974-1976 contains many of the relevant documents concerning

the events at the time of the invasion, and presents the government's rationale for its

decisions and actions. As will be shown, with few exceptions the record neglects or

obscures negative Australian actions towards East Timor regarding the invasion of

East Timor and the prior deaths of the "Balibo Five". In so doing, it obscures

Australian complicity in Timor's persecution and betrays the unconscious influence of

mimesis in the relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

Understandably, the history of this fraught period was one of enormous complexity

for the Australian government because of foreign policy difficulties faced at that time,

especially the Vietnam War. Difficult choices had to be made between conflicting

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[19] See Government website listing reports and inquiries http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs238.aspx.
Ben Saul, "Prosecuting War Crimes at Balibo Under Australian Law: The Killing of Five Journalists in East Timor by Indonesia", in Sydney Law Review, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 83-120, 2009, accessed 02.03.15. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1485251
[20] Pinch, *Inquest,* 18.
[21] "Australian Federal Police drop investigation into the murders of the 'Balibo Five'," *News.com.au,* October 21, 2014, accessed March 11, 2015.
http://www.news.com.au/world/asia/australian-federal-police-drop-investigation-into-the-murders-of-the-balibo-five/news-story/a9af0adb251342c3f7e93070c084985f

interests, and the Australian response to these world problems was compounded by the internal political upheaval of the removal of the Labor Prime Minister towards the end of 1975, and the installation of a caretaker Coalition government, followed closely by a general election. Nevertheless, the written record of Australian involvement in the events concerning Portuguese Timor must be subject to scrutiny. This is required because Australian decisions and actions resulted in complicity with the forces which brought to the neighbouring Timorese people suffering and death on an horrific scale.

The importance of *Australia and the Incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1976* consists in its status as a collection of major government documents with a Foreword by Alexander Downer, the Foreign Minister at the time of its publication. Its purposes are stated in the foreword:

> to provide readers...with a clearer understanding of the development of Australian foreign policy during this critical period and to go some way towards answering the many questions of those who have been concerned to obtain the truth about Australian official thinking and action in relation to the Indonesian incorporation of East Timor and the deaths of the Australian-based journalists there.[22]

The book is composed of nearly 500 government documents which were released in 2000, before the usual 30 years had expired for the publication of Commonwealth files. Its introduction is a concise summary of the events of 1974 to 1976, but it also contains the reasons for the selection of the cables and other primary source material within it, and explains their early release. Furthermore, the book contains a section titled *Australia, Indonesia and Portuguese Timor 1945-1974*, containing unnumbered notes, reports and memoranda from those times, prefaced by an overview.

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[22] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* v.

The reasons given for the early release of the documents are stated as the desire to counter possible leaks from the Department of Foreign Affairs which the Introduction to the collection claims could have given an inaccurate picture of events.[23] The writers explain the criteria for their selection of documents as their "significance to policy formation or key issues", and to demonstrate the historical complexities.[24] In this regard, there is emphasis on the great volume of material, the layers of debate, and the limitations of documents to convey clearly the intricate nature of the events. Mention is made of intelligence material not released, missing files and promises of the availability of further files through the National Australian Archives. The human emotions (such as frustration and fatigue) of government officials at the time are described. There are mentions of accusations and demands by Indonesian officials,[25] the pressures of changes in staff of Embassies and outbursts of angry relatives of the Balibo Five.[26] Indications appear of the dilemma of attempting to balance human rights, such as self-determination, with the "desire to maintain close relations with an Indonesia willing to subvert those principles in Portuguese Timor."[27]

Nevertheless, the abundance of careful and comprehensive explanations of the Australian position suggests that justification for decisions was seen to be required for reasons other than explanations for the early release of the documents. Clearly, the book serves as an effort to vindicate the Australian government's position on the Indonesian invasion and the events concerning the Balibo Five. Indeed, the Introduction states:

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[23] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 1.
[24] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 2.
[25] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 10
[26] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 11
[27] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 20.

> The purpose of this action is not to challenge strongly held views, nor to blunt criticism. Rather the hope is that publication of this volume, together with early public access to all the relevant material, will permit a more measured appreciation of the bases on which recommendations on policy and decisions were made, provide a fuller context for material which has hitherto been made public, and in general replace speculation with greater knowledge.[28]

Thus the publication seeks to explain the Australian position and policies surrounding the Indonesian invasion. It hopes that, as a result, readers would understand the complexities more completely. Interpreting this material from a Girardian perspective, however, provides a way of "seeing through the violence" but not in a form intended by the publication itself. Instead, the documents can be understood as an expression of what Girard terms the "romantic lie", material which presents the events in a way which "reflect the presence of a mediator without ever revealing it."[29] As discussed in Chapter Two, the "romantic lie" describes texts oblivious of their own mimetic dependence and rivalry. Relationships, decisions and actions are presented as though from autonomous self-sufficiency. The writers of the Australian documents demonstrate their ignorance of the influence which the mediator, in this case Indonesia, wields. "The mediator remains hidden precisely where his revelation is of the utmost significance, in the existence of the author himself..."[30]

Using this text, the chapter now proceeds to an overview of events, and then to a discussion of the Australian involvement in the Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor. The record of decisions and policies is interpreted as a "romantic lie".

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[28] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 1.
[29] René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 17.
[30] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 20.

Australian knowledge of Indonesian desires

The Indonesian expansionist mentality and desire to control the whole archipelago

was apparent for decades, and was known by Australian governments. It took no great

leap of imagination for Australia to reflect on the attractiveness of Portuguese Timor

to Indonesia in the light of that nation's acquisition of West New Guinea in 1962, its

hostility towards Singapore and its opposition to the creation of Malaysia between

1962 and 1966.[31] Consequent Australian dilemmas regarding Portuguese Timor were

summarised in the introduction to *Australia and the Incorporation of Portuguese*

Timor 1974-1976:

> From 1962 to 1965 the Australian Government faced the difficulty of resisting
> Indonesian aggression against Portuguese Timor without being seen to support
> Portuguese colonialism, or alternatively, trying to encourage an end to
> Portuguese rule in Timor without encouraging any precipitate action by
> Indonesia.[32]

In 1962 an internal submission entitled *Australian Attitude in Event of Indonesian*

Aggression determined that Australia could not help Portugal should a situation of

Indonesian incursion arise, and proposed United Nations intervention.[33] In 1963 the

United States advised Canberra that Indonesian activities were already in train,[34] and

that there was no doubt that President Sukarno wanted control of Portuguese Timor.[35]

Canberra stated that there was "no practicable alternative to Indonesian sovereignty"

but that the use of arms would be unacceptable.[36] Thus in the early 1960s there was a

level of Australian realisation of Indonesian aspirations.

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[31] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,*19.
[32] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,*19.
[33] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Submission to Barwick,* 22.
[34] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Rowland to Waller,* 23
[35] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Beale to Barwick,* 25.
[36] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Cabinet Minute,* 26.

Nevertheless, in March 1963 the Portuguese Prime Minister António Salazar wrote to Prime Minister Menzies that the Indonesian government had on more than one occasion indicated that they "do not entertain any desire to possess Portuguese Timor" and that they declared lack of interest in securing Portuguese Timor.[37] Menzies answered in October 1963 that such a denial of claims on the territory should no doubt be seen alongside Indonesia's declaration of support for all anti-colonial movements, including any which may occur in Timor.[38] Menzies also commented that he had "no illusions about Indonesian tactics."[39] Suspicions concerning Indonesian intentions were not allayed by Indonesian assurances, so Australian officials observed that involvement of the United Nations would make it more difficult for Indonesia to take "unilateral, violent action."[40]

Adding to the intrigue, in 1963 there was reference to "a continuing expansionist sentiment among Indonesian leaders" and the opinion was reported that Timor's eventual "recovery" by Indonesia was a common belief among Indonesian leaders.[41] Such attitudes suggested Indonesian disappointment with the amount of territory apportioned to it upon independence, and its opinion that neighbouring regions contained oppressed and enslaved peoples awaiting the independence which Indonesian support could bring.

In November 1964, Canberra advised Washington of evidence that Indonesia may have been on the verge of taking some form of action against Portuguese Timor, but by way of "only covert operations, the framework for which has already been

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[37] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Salazar to Menzies,* 29.
[38] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Menzies to Salazar,* 36.
[39] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Menzies to Salazar,* 36.
[40] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Report,* 30.
[41] Gordon. "The Potential," 378 and 381.

established."[42] It was thought that Indonesia may attack "in response to a trumped-up plea for help."[43] The cable contains the phrases "aggressive anti-colonial policy" and "likely attack."[44] The Introduction to *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor* comments that by the early 1970s Indonesia was no longer seen as a threat, and yet alludes to Indonesia's willingness to "subvert" the principles of self-determination in Portuguese Timor.[45]

Both Indonesia and Australia adopted ambiguous positions on East Timor during the time when Suharto was President from 1967 to 1998. In May 1974 Australian Ambassador Richard Woolcott stated that the Indonesians wished to avoid any appearance of having designs on Portuguese Timor which they feared could make neighbours suspect any political action as a desire to expand their territory.[46] But just one month later, the appraisal of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta was "that Indonesian thinking on the possibility of taking over Portuguese Timor is well advanced, to the point of ascertaining likely local Indonesian reactions in the immediate area."[47] Four weeks after that, it was known that a recommendation was to be made to President Suharto to "mount a clandestine operation in Portuguese Timor to ensure that the territory would opt for incorporation into Indonesia."[48] Australian officials were concerned that President Suharto might circuitously indicate to Prime Minister Whitlam that Indonesia was thinking of "guiding developments in Portuguese Timor through covert activities,"[49] thus making Australia complicit.

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[42] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Cablegram to Washington,* 39.
[43] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Cablegram to Washington,* 39.
[44] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation*, *Cablegram to Washington,* 39, 40.
[45] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 20.
[46] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc.3, *Policy Planning Paper,* 51.
[47] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 11, *Memorandum to Canberra,* 61.
[48] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 12, *Furlonger to Feakes,* 62.
[49] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 17, *Furlonger to Feakes,* 73.

Officials also knew that official Indonesian thinking entailed the belief that it would "not be difficult to influence the result of a plebiscite in Portuguese Timor."[50]

Thus the Indonesian desire to incorporate Portuguese Timor strengthened in resolve over two decades, despite its many disclaimers. The purge of communists from Indonesia in 1965 and the heightened fear of communism in Indonesia and Australia fuelled this desire further, and finally gave it justification. From the early years of the Indonesian Republic, therefore, Australia faced the dilemmas associated with opposition to a take-over by force, yet maintained the desire to comply with what appeared the only way forward, given a *realpolitik* reading of Indonesian intentions. Australian authorities showed awareness of this situation but demonstrated the approach that was to characterise Australian responses in the decades to come. That approach was a reluctance to challenge Indonesian expansionism despite suspicions as to the probable manner of attaining it.

The Australian connections with the Indonesian invasion had thus been remotely established through prior realisation of Indonesian desires since the 1960s. Occasional diplomatic reports and conjecture had not elicited from Australia any clear denunciation or warning about any consequences of Indonesian movement against the rights of the colonising power Portugal. There was no statement concerning the possible effects of change, violent or otherwise, on the Timorese people, except for occasional references (in the context of worldwide decolonisation) to self-determination. Australian knowledge of Indonesian desires was evolving into support

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[50] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 18, *Report by Fisher,* 76.

for the seizure of Portuguese Timor, an expression of the dependence on Indonesia which was to characterise future decades.

Indonesian covert operations before invasion

Lack of any Australian challenge to the increasing clarity of Indonesian intentions indicated the existence of Australian compliance with Indonesia which deepened in succeeding decades. Such willingness to agree in action with Indonesian desires – despite statements of opposition to the use of force – compromised Australia markedly as Indonesian authorities strengthened plans to incorporate Portuguese Timor. In the 1970s the Indonesian government furthered the cause of its desired integration of the territory through a two-edged programme of political and military intrigue. This programme progressively embroiled Australia.

Indonesian diplomatic overtures to Australia and Portugal in late 1974 and early 1975 accompanied a simultaneous but covert program of destabilisation of Portuguese Timor, taking advantage of internal Portuguese upheaval and its rapid withdrawal from its colonies. Having done little to prepare the Timorese people for these swift and extensive political challenges, Portugal was unable to address the unrest as the Timorese began to deal with the problems and possibilities which faced them. James Dunn comments:

> Indonesia was two-faced. Publicly, the Indonesian government was calling on Portugal to restore order in East Timor, while privately, having encouraged the disorder, they were pressing Lisbon to allow them to intervene. The Indonesians were also quietly obstructing Portuguese attempts to restore the situation through mediation.[51]

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[51] Dunn, *East Timor,* 151.

After meetings between Portugal's President Costa Gomes and an Indonesian delegation in Lisbon on 14-15 October 1975, the Indonesian government reported that they had reached a consensus with the Portuguese on integration as the best outcome, while referring to the East Timorese people's right to a voice on their future.[52] At the very same time the Indonesian government's process of destabilisation to influence Timor's new politicians to support incorporation was underway.[53] When it was apparent in early 1975 that Timorese resistance to that idea was too strong, plans for a military solution were set in train. The resulting campaign named *Operasi Komodo* included covert military preparations, complete with a rehearsal for an invasion on the beaches of Sumatra in February, and the spreading of disinformation, particularly through Indonesian and foreign media.[54] An associated intelligence campaign, *Operasi Flamboyan,* was devised and directed within the Department of Defence and Security from October to December 1975.[55] The Indonesian government lied about the presence of its troops on the border, claiming that any military in that area were Timorese fighting other Timorese. In truth, Indonesian troops were assembling in preparation for an invasion.[56] This Indonesian duplicity was echoed by Australia, as discussed below.

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[52] Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR),* (Dili, TL: CAVR, 2005), 3.119-121.
[53] Commission, *CAVR*, 3.117-118.
[54] Commission, *CAVR*, 3.114.
[55] Commission, *CAVR*, 3.116.
[56] Dunn, *East Timor,*196.

Australian involvement

Political compliance

Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's influence on the invasion of Portuguese Timor
displayed a style of leadership which demonstrated a lack of discernment and
consultation and left a legacy which remains controversial. When elected in 1972 he
took the role of Foreign Minister as well as Prime Minister. Despite relinquishing the
lesser portfolio in November 1973 he continued to control foreign policy closely and
acted as Foreign Minister when his appointee Don Willesee was overseas.

An impossible Australian position regarding Portuguese Timor was formulated by
Whitlam when he stressed a preference for integration, with "obeisance" to self-
determination[57] (later expressed as "lip-service" by the Ambassador to Indonesia,
Richard Woolcott).[58] Foreign Affairs Minister Willesee, on the other hand, was more
in favour of actual self-determination, and worked to convince Indonesia that the
outcome of such a process could be lived with and need not imply instability. Urging
caution and the importance of giving time to resolve the difficulties Willesee stated:
"Their (Portuguese Timor's) future should be decided by an act of self-determination
recognised by the world."[59] Nevertheless, Whitlam's approach prevailed so
comprehensively over Willesee's that the Timor policy was not discussed formally,
even in the Labor Cabinet.[60]

The extent of Australian involvement in the preparations for the invasion is clear in
the record of two meetings between Prime Minister Whitlam and President Suharto in

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[57] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc 37 *Woolcott to Renouf,* 111.
[58] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 357 *Woolcott to Feakes,* 597.
[59] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 147 *Statement by Willesee,* 279.
[60] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 13.

Indonesia, on 6 September 1974[61] and in Australia on 4 April 1975.[62] During these meetings Suharto emphasised his concern for Indonesian and regional security and claimed that Indonesia, having "no territorial ambitions" would not seek to colonise others and "would never contemplate" such a thing as an invasion.[63] He told Prime Minister Whitlam that there were two alternatives: either Portuguese Timor became incorporated with another country or it became independent. The latter option was problematic in his view, as he felt the territory was not economically viable and would have to enlist external support. He voiced the fear that as the territory's only possible interest to others would be political, communist countries such as China or the Soviet Union might intervene. In that case, he said, Timor would become "a thorn in the eye of Australia and a thorn in Indonesia's back."[64] This attitude was the public rationale and private motivator for Indonesia to act, supported by Australia and the US.

Whitlam was of the opinion that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia, while stating the view, as did President Suharto, that the incorporation should happen in accordance with the properly expressed wishes of the Timorese people.[65] Both leaders expressed the principles of decolonisation. At the same time, both knew of the covert methods underway to ensure Indonesian aspirations were realised.

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[61] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 26 and 27 *Records of Meetings between Whitlam and Suharto*, 6 September, 1974, Yogyakarta, 10:00 a.m. and Wonosobo, 8:00 p.m. (Canberra: DFAT, 2000) 95-98 and 99-100.
[62] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 123 *Record of Conversation between Whitlam and Suharto*, 4 April, 1975, Townsville, 1:00 p.m. (Canberra: DFAT, 2000) 244 - 248.
[63] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 26 *Record of Meeting,* 96.
[64] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 26 *Record of Meeting,* 97.
[65] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 26 *Record of Meeting,* 95.

Contradictory policies

It was believed that Australia's fundamental desire for security would be fulfilled by cooperation with the Indonesian quest to solve its problem with Timor. The question arises as to the effect this dependence on Indonesia had on Australian policies and operation. It is apparent from *Australia and the Incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1976,* as well as in subsequent historical commentaries, that the Australian policy of acquiescence to the Indonesian desire for control of the territory had two contradictory features. In the first place, Australia echoed Indonesia's proclamation of acceptance of the Timorese right to decide their future, and publicly stated its belief in the right of all people to self-determination, in accordance with the international thrust towards decolonisation and independence which became the norm after World War II. At the same time, however, the obvious desire of Indonesia to assimilate Portuguese Timor outweighed the importance of the principle of self-determination under Labor and Liberal governments alike. Prime Minister Whitlam's personal opinion was that East Timor should become part of Indonesia, on the proviso that the people would choose that course of action in a process of self-determination. He told Suharto that he expected his view to prevail in government.[66]

Government cables indicate the Australian officials' belief that the public interest was best served by the pragmatism of aligning policy with that of Indonesia.[67] This was expressed as: "there are circumstances in which our principles need to be tempered by a realistic assessment of our long-term national interest."[68] Thus it was seen that there

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[66] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 26 *Record of Meeting,* 95.
[67] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 250 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 444-446.
[68] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 255 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 456.

was importance in "weighing carefully Australia's long term interests against short term frustration and disappointment."[69]

Balancing these interests meant that the incorporation of Timor with Indonesia was found preferable to allowing the possibility of Timorese independence. This was based on a biased, pragmatic and ultimately incorrect judgement of Australia's long-term interests. It was the support of a larger power given to a colonising power victimising a smaller group. Australian dependence on Indonesia exemplifies the process of mimesis, that is, that desire is not autonomous but rather arises in relation to the other. In this case, the Australian support for Timor's integration increased as Indonesia asserted itself, mutually reinforcing each other's desire for "security" despite the detrimental effects on Timor. The strategic reasons given to justify this support were a cover for this mutually reinforcing relationship, which solidified both parties' over-arching desires for security and territory (which themselves had been imitated from each one's colonial models, UK, USA and The Netherlands).

To maintain support for Indonesia, the Australian position was composed of two irreconcilable elements: that the Timorese people should be allowed to determine their future but that they should choose integration.[70] This contradictory reasoning appears in Woolcott's April cable to Foreign Minister Don Willesee:

> While we support the principle of self-determination and while we certainly could not condone the use of force, the prime minister still does not want to encourage the emergence of an independent East Timor and he believes that continuing public emphasis on self-determination, at this stage, is likely to strengthen pressures for independence.[71]

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[69] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 365 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 613.
[70] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 28 *Background Paper,* 101.
[71] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 127 *Woolcott to Willesee*, 253.

Testimony to the impossibility of meeting both requirements, neither Whitlam nor Suharto raised the problem of which objective would prevail in the likely event that the two opposite aims could not be reconciled, although both leaders voiced distrust of a process of self-determination.[72]

Such a weak policy burdened Australia with further dilemmas concerning the means which Indonesia was prepared to use to gain its desired outcome. In June 1975 Ambassador Woolcott voiced awareness of the extent of the force which Indonesia was considering when he alluded to "the seeds of further trouble."[73] Australian officials thence juggled an official policy of supporting self-determination while hoping for Timor's integration with Indonesia. This stance resulted in a position that when Indonesia invaded, the government would condemn the force used, but accept the outcome. The fence-sitting indicates Australian dependence on Indonesian desires and friendship. Contradictory policies were preferable to challenging the dependent relationship.

Placating the Australian public and Indonesia

As well as trying to balance contradictory policies, the Australian government also had to balance Australian domestic expectations with Indonesia's preferences in the lead-up to the invasion. Whitlam stated that proceedings towards Indonesia's desired option take place "in a way that would not upset the Australian people."[74] Woolcott wrote to the head of the Department of Foreign Affairs Alan Renouf:

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[72] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 123 *Record of Meeting,* 245.
[73] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 137 *Dispatch to Willesee,* 268.
[74] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 123 *Conversation between Whitlam and Suharto,* 245.

> It is worth recording-for limited distribution only-that the Prime Minister put his views on this subject frankly in the following way: "I want it incorporated but I do not want this done in a way which will create argument in Australia which would make people more critical of Indonesia".[75]

Whitlam's nod to self-determination was an empty gesture and nothing more, yet such double talk was echoed when the Coalition formed government in December 1975. Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock expressed "deep regret" at the Indonesian invasion, while in the same message acknowledging the "gravity of the problems posed for the Indonesian government."[76] Ultimately Canberra had to acknowledge that its policy of support for self-determination was incompatible with forced integration, so further manoeuvring was required. The Introduction to *Australia and the Incorporation of Portuguese Timor* summarises the decisions officials took to play a double game.[77] They chose to pursue a course of outward non-involvement rather than openly favouring incorporation with Indonesia, while at the same time operating behind the scenes to moderate Indonesian fears of an independent East Timor. They also promised Timorese leaders that Australia would accept any result of a genuine act of self-determination.[78] Australian officials discussed alternatives with Indonesia,[79] and enticements for Portugal to remain,[80] and considered the effects of any invasion on relations with Australia.[81] Yet, none of these actions mitigated the implicit support given to Indonesia.

One of the most infamous phrases associated with Australia's dilemmas regarding East Timor was written by Ambassador Woolcott. He acknowledged that his support

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[75] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc 37 *Woolcott to Renouf,* 111.
[76] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 360 *DFAT News Release,* 604.
[77] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 4-5.
[78] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 67 *Submission to Willesee,* 148.
[79] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 83 *Record of Conversation,* 181-183; Doc 85, *Joseph to Feakes,* 184-186.
[80] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 66 *Policy Discussion,* 147.
[81] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 81 *Barnard to Willesee,* 176-180.

for the inevitable takeover by Indonesia leaned towards pragmatism rather than

principle:

> Basically, this situation is Portugal's – not Indonesia's – fault. Given this Hobson's choice, I believe Australia's interests are better served by association with Indonesia than by independence. I know that what I am writing is pragmatic rather than principled; but that is what national interest and foreign policy is all about, as even those countries with established ideological bases for their foreign policies have acknowledged. Let us not play the role of the naive conscience of Asia, seeking to preserve our virtues by placing the fig leaf of self-determination - when we know it is unlikely to happen anyway - over the geopolitical realities of the situation. Inevitably Timor will be part of Indonesia.[82]

The statement is a supposedly hard-headed statement of foreign affairs policy but

indicates the belief that the national interest is best served by values only when they

are unchallenged or serve economic or political objectives. In other words, Woolcott

advises subjecting cherished Australian independence to agreement with Indonesia for

the sake of the "national interest". The same reference to pragmatism over principle

was also used by Woolcott in a cablegram to Canberra one month beforehand, again

preferring association with Indonesia rather than exercising independence, but in the

context of the greater ease of negotiations over the Timor Sea border.[83] Australian

independence was thus secondary to gaining the security believed to be afforded by

such association, and the benefits which would follow maritime border negotiations.

Despite qualified support for the Indonesian desire to subsume East Timor, the

Australian government was subjected to some indignity. It endured the ignominy of

Indonesian accusations while endeavouring to support the Indonesian position.

Indonesian government officials summoned Foreign Minister Woolcott on 7

September 1975 to protest alleged reports of Australian assistance to Portugal which

they said, erroneously, was tantamount to recognising Fretilin as a *de facto*

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[82] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 241 *Letter Woolcott to Juddery,* 433.
[83] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 170 *Woolcott to Canberra,* 315.

government, claiming that Australia was acting "contrary to Indonesia's interests."[84]

Australia was accused of being the only country in the region "acting in a way which could be unhelpful to Indonesia and the region's long term interests" and were "victims of a Portuguese plan", referring to that nation's "duplicity."[85] Just days later, Australia was said to have refused to co-operate with Indonesia to restore law and order in Timor.[86] Thereafter further complaints were issued by Indonesian officials to their Australian counterparts with anger and agitation. They referred to Australian street demonstrations as illustrations of Australian opposition. They accused Australians of fighting with Fretilin. They denounced attitudes of the Australian media and lack of concern for refugees in Indonesian Timor.[87] Australian officials were reduced to discussing the political implications of food aid to Portuguese Timor.[88]

Such responses by Indonesia suggest a sense of paranoia in its desire to acquire the territory, and an irrational perception that Australia may pose obstacles to its acquisition, in this way becoming a mimetic rival for the possession of the island. The Australian mimetic response was to agree, acquiesce and cooperate. The result was a policy direction distinguished by duplicity, compromise and complicity that caused disagreement in government and division in the population. It fundamentally indicated the domination of Indonesia as the model for the Australian desire for security. Ultimately, Australia's 1975 pragmatism brought serious challenges to the relationship with Indonesia when Timor-Leste eventually gained independence.

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[84] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 219 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 394-396.
[85] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 229 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 410-412.
[86] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 243 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 435-437.
[87] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 275 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 488-491.
[88] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 306 *Submission to Willesee,* 526-528.

Complicity

Further complications ensued from the Australian lack of resistance to Indonesian desires. Australia was being drawn into complicity with Indonesia through Australian officials' knowledge of what was happening. Indonesian officials were informing Australians at the Embassy in Jakarta by July 1974 that covert operations were underway in Portuguese Timor to manipulate Timorese opinion. Robert Furlonger, the then Ambassador to Indonesia, wrote regarding the provision of such sensitive information: "We are, in effect, being consulted."[89] Ball and McDonald detail how Australia was repeatedly told of sensitive Indonesian actions by Indonesian officials as well as by persons in the Indonesian Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).[90] Furthermore, Australia was receiving information from the United States on the situation. Toohey and Wilkinson show that documents which were the accounts of the situation given to the US President Gerald Ford each day revealed "that the US knew that Indonesia had been conducting a covert paramilitary campaign against East Timor for over a year before the full-scale invasion in late 1975."[91] In September the US knew that there was to be a three-pronged attack on the north coast involving two battalions attacking Dili and supported later by 6,000 infantry who would drive in from West Timor.[92] On 14 October Indonesia planned to have the units move into Portuguese Timor in uniform but without insignia and using old Soviet weapons to evade recognition as Indonesian military.[93] Advice to President Ford clearly stated the

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[89] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 12 *Furlonger to Feakes,* 63.
[90] Desmond Ball and Hamish McDonald, *Death in Balibo Lies in Canberra* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000).
[91] Brian Toohey and Marian Wilkinson, "The Timor Papers 1987," in *Tell Me No Lies: Investigative Journalism and its Triumphs,* ed. John Pilger (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 175.
[92] Toohey & Wilkinson, "The Timor Papers," 178.
[93] Toohey & Wilkinson, "The Timor Papers," 181.

Indonesian duplicity of denial of intervention, placing responsibility on Portugal and the Timorese, while increasing its covert operations in Timor.[94]

Australia was privy to much of this information. Toohey and Wilkinson comment: "Under intelligence-sharing arrangements with Australia, a large part of this information was passed on to Canberra."[95] Reinforcing advice from the United States, Ambassador Woolcott relayed to Canberra his knowledge of the planning for the invasion, including numbers of troops, time and place of attacks, and the fact that the Indonesians would be dressed as Timorese.[96] Dispensing with official reports of widespread Fretilin control of Timor,[97] Woolcott wrote of Indonesia's determination to incorporate Portuguese Timor, regardless of any international criticism.[98] Official Australian imitation of Indonesian desires was clearly stated by Woolcott:

> An example of the Indonesian Government's confidence that the Australian Government understands and is sympathetic with its objective of integration is the extent to which it keeps us informed of its secret plans.[99]

The Minister for Defence in 1975, Bill Morrison, later said that Australia:

> ...had received too much detailed information, thus creating a situation that the Australian Government knew more about these events than the Indonesian Foreign Minister or the Indonesian Ambassador. Hence, as a matter of protocol, they kept up the pretence of not knowing.[100]

Australian mimetic dependence on Indonesia and corresponding complicity in its actions was comprehensive indeed.

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[94] Toohey & Wilkinson, "The Timor Papers," 180-181.
[95] Toohey & Wilkinson, "The Timor Papers," 175.
[96] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 262 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 468.
[97] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 257 *Canberra to Jakarta,* 460.
[98] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 262 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 468.
[99] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 262 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 469.
[100] Pinch, *Inquest,* 106,

Australian Mimetic Dependence

Australian imitation of Indonesian desires

Shared complicity in the invasion, even acknowledging the vastly different roles taken by Australia and Indonesia, indicates mutual dependence. Both nations reinforced each other's desires through imitation in the operation of mimetic attraction and dependency, Australia complying with Indonesia, and Indonesia displaying the need for Australian acquiescence to its plans. Each nation also desired the economic benefits to be gained by an Indonesian takeover: Indonesia would control of more of the archipelago, and Australia would enjoy easier negotiations regarding the resources of the Timor Sea.[101] The Indonesian desire to subsume Portuguese Timor became the desire of Australian governments as a means of maintaining a positive relationship with Indonesia and benefitting from consequent political and material security.

Crucial Australian decisions and actions during the invasion of Portuguese Timor not only betrayed the Australian imitation of Indonesian desires, but consequent imitation of Indonesian procedures. As has been outlined, Australian and Indonesian judgements on the future of Portuguese Timor were comparable, with both leaders voicing identical concerns. At the same time, each nation undertook positions which were internally contradictory. Indonesian diplomats pronounced on the necessity of international involvement, while covertly destabilising the situation. Similarly, Australian officials declared support for Timorese self-determination but compromised that position with the precondition of integration. Thus, the 'rational' policy positions of each country were in effect merely complex cover for underlying desires for security and territory.

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[101] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation*, 314.

The Australian government's dilemma consisted in mitigating public opposition while trying to give least offence to Indonesia. Choosing both positions resulted in ineffectual pronouncements about the violence of the Indonesian incorporation alongside declarations of understanding and support for Indonesian problems. In Girardian terms, these public Australian positions functioned unconsciously as "myths". They were used by the government to justify to the population the maintenance of support for the Indonesian desire to acquire Timor in the hope of possessing resulting security. At the same time they attempted to legitimise the means of that possession – the violent take-over of Portuguese Timor.

Moreover, the subversive Indonesian operations preceding the invasion were known to Australian officials via United States' intelligence and as a result of Indonesian disclosures to Australian Embassy staff in Jakarta. In spite of that, the Australian government allowed matters to take their course. One of the effects of this passivity in the face of Indonesian determination involved the deaths of the Balibo Five, a matter which has not yet attained resolution, and which is detailed further in this chapter. The overarching Indonesian desire to incorporate Portuguese Timor, as well as the duplicitous methods used, was imitated by Australian docility and agreement, which assured the desired strategic, economic and political security. The act of violent acquisition of Portuguese Timor produced a victim sacrificed to those ends: the Timorese people.

Mutual mimetic dependence

The similarity of desire between Australia and Indonesia resulted in a reciprocal relationship which blurred the distinctions between them. The CAVR report summarises: "It ...seems to have been Woolcott's view that it should be the overriding objective of Australian policy simply because it was the overriding objective of Indonesian policy."[102] Girard's insight applies: "Internal mediation triumphs in a universe where the differences between men are gradually erased."[103]

Subsequent historical interpretations generally agree that Whitlam gave Suharto "the green light" to invade Portuguese Timor.[104] In this respect the CAVR Report comments: "For all his reservations, there is evidence that the views Whitlam expressed do seem to have strongly influenced the Indonesian decision that there was no alternative to incorporation."[105] His reasons for supporting the integration of Portuguese Timor were the territory's supposed lack of political and economic viability, and its vulnerability to the designs of more powerful states. In other words, his opinions were almost identical to Suharto's, indicating the extent of official Australian agreement with Indonesian desires.

But despite evidence of Indonesian designs on Portuguese Timor over decades, Indonesian officials indicated that it was *Australia* which was the catalyst for their decision to invade. In October 1974 the Australian Ambassador to Portugal, Frank Cooper, reported that Ali Moertopo, the head of the covert Special Operations project for Timor, had told him that a meeting between President Suharto and Prime Minister

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[102] Commission, *CAVR*, 3.129.
[103] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 14.
[104] Commission, *CAVR*, 3.6.126.
[105] Commission, *CAVR*, 3.6.128.

Whitlam in September had convinced Indonesia that integration of Portuguese Timor was the only solution:

> Ali said that until Mr Whitlam's visit to Djakarta, they had been undecided about Timor. However the Prime Minister's support for the idea of incorporation into Indonesia had helped them to crystallise their own thinking and they were now firmly convinced of the wisdom of this course.[106]

These claims of "crystallisation" of the thinking of Indonesian officials after Whitlam's visit – and the contention that incorporation of Timor had dawned upon them as a result – demonstrate the relationship of mimetic dependency between the two nations. While these comments seem at odds with evidence of prior Indonesian desires, they serve to show the fluid state of the relationship. "Crystallisation" is a sophisticated way of saying that Australia had further stimulated the Indonesian government officials towards integration and that Australia would not act as a block (or scandal) to the achievement of such a desire. The comments may well have served to allay Indonesia's concerns of negative reaction to an invasion, but they also constituted a further subtle means of involving Australia, with the suggestion that the determination to incorporate Portuguese Timor was a result of Whitlam's attitudes and words. By claiming that, having previously been undecided, the Australian Prime Minister's "support for the idea of incorporation" had helped the Indonesians to see "the wisdom" of such action, Indonesia reversed the roles of model and subject in mimetic dependence. It situated itself in the place of the desiring subject, with Australia as the mediator.

Thus the Australian mimetic dependence on Indonesian desires was complete enough to reflect itself back to the Indonesians, strengthening the mutual mimetic

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[106] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 45 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 119.

dependence. Girard refers to such reciprocity in stating that it is "synonymous with the ability that humans have to increasingly imitate one another while at the same time completely misapprehending the fact that they are doing so."[107] Both Australia and Indonesia became models for each other, their similar attitudes to the take-over of Portuguese Timor reflecting the shared desire for the mutually perceived good of shared political and economic interests. In the case of both nations the influence of the other resulted in similar effects on judgement: "From the moment the mediator's influence is felt, the sense of reality is lost and judgement is paralysed."[108] While Indonesia was the perpetrator of the physical invasion, Australia was deferential to its designs. Shared desires manufactured a shared judgement as to the future of the eastern half of Timor and its people.

The die was cast. The invasion of Portuguese Timor began at dawn on 7 December 1975. Indonesian troops launched a massive attack on the capital Dili from sea and air, looting, raping and killing indiscriminately. Many civilians were killed and many fled with Fretilin forces into the mountains. Simultaneous attacks occurred in Baucau to the east and Liquiça to the west of Dili. Thus began the occupation of East Timor by Indonesia which lasted for twenty-four years. Apart from some subdued initial comments opposing the invasion which soon lapsed from official commentary, the Australian position on the Indonesian invasion grew steadily into one of support, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

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[107] René Girard, *Battling to the End: conversations with Benoît Chantre,* trans. Mary Baker (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 57.
[108] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 4.

The "Romantic Lie"

The servility of the Australian support of Indonesian desires occurred in the events themselves, and is mirrored in official accounts which the Australian government has made available for public consumption. As discussed, the official record in *Australia and the Incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1976* supplies evidence for these conclusions in the cables and other primary source material contained therein, exemplifying Girard's theory of the "romantic lie". Australian governments and their officials believed they were acting autonomously on behalf of the Australian people, taking independent decisions for national security, balancing the many and varied competing influences, and thus ensuring Australian sovereignty and security. The communications express the policies of the Australian Government as though they were the incisive and dispassionate product of policy realists.

Yet the text of the official record betrays a largely unconscious imitation of the model Indonesia. In *realpolitik* terms, while Australia was aware that it needed Indonesia and the US for security in the face of the unfolding communist influence, in its historical record that dependency is veiled. The official record resembles the tale of *Don Quixote* who "effectively abandons any independent judgement of his own."[109] Girard's interpretation of Cervantes' story shows Don Quixote basing all his desires on a fictional knight, Amadis, imitating knightly exploits in a vain attempt to become something which he was not, the epitome of chivalry. Girard recognised that Cervantes understood the human surrender of mimetic dependence, expressing that realisation in the character of his novel who relinquishes the choice of his own desires: "the individual's fundamental prerogative."[110] Significant Australian historical

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[109] Kirwan, *Discovering Girard,* 17.
[110] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 1.

documents demonstrate a similar Australian surrender of independent judgement in regard to historical decisions and actions. The policies and actions through which Portuguese Timor was sacrificed to regional concerns are recorded in a way which betrays the Australian inability to comprehend the scale of its dependence on the desires of Indonesia, and the terrible suffering in which it became complicit as a result. The Australian documentary record of its involvement in the Indonesian invasion is an example of the "romantic lie".

Balibo

Overview

Identification of the Australian documentary record as a "romantic lie" is particularly demonstrated by investigating the record of Australian deaths during the invasion. Again, the events demonstrate the dependence of Australian governments on Indonesian good favour, and the record illustrates the lack of Australian perception of that dependence. The presence of Australian-based journalists in the border town of Balibo introduced the problem of the murders not only of Timorese, but of Australian residents and nationals. The deaths of the so-called "Balibo Five" exemplify how the Australian government sacrificed the lives and truth of the deaths of its own citizens, alongside the many Timorese who died, for its coveted security and relationship with Indonesia. Discussion of the inquiries and the documentary record concerning the events at Balibo demonstrate the incapacity of Australia to acknowledge the force of its mimetic dependence on Indonesia.

Briefly, two of the journalists attempting to report on the Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor in 1975 were Australian citizens, Greg Shackleton and Tony

Stewart. The other three were Australian residents, Gary Cunningham from New Zealand, and Brian Peters and Malcolm Rennie from Britain. All were working for Australian media companies. The five were murdered and their bodies burned by Indonesian military on 16 October 1975 in the Timorese border town of Balibo, to the west of Dili. A journalist operating independently, Roger East, was shot on the Dili wharf on 8 December, the day after the invasion. There was no Australian government challenge to Indonesia over the deaths of its residents and citizens, murdered while carrying out the tasks of their employment. Moreover, the record indicates increasing rather than diminishing Australian compliance, as can be seen in the outcomes of the investigations which occurred in subsequent decades. The responses of Australian governments and their agencies to the evidence complete the picture of abject subservience to Indonesian desires and the mob mentality of the invasion. The extent of that chosen subjection has resulted in a culpable variant of "romantic lie", where Australian governments ignore and defy the outcomes of their own legal processes. Girard's concept of the romantic lie presupposes some level of unconsciousness of mimetic dependency (as has been outlined in the Australia-Indonesia relationship). The case of the Balibo Five, however, provides evidence for some awareness of this dependency in the strategic way that the Australian government sought to protect Indonesia and the official relationship between the governments of each country. This awareness came about because of complicity in the invasion – both governments knew they had to obscure and minimise anything that could cause the invasion to be questioned. Thus, the awareness only operated on a certain level – on the level of moral complicity that threatened the attainment of desire and the relationship that enabled this attainment. Each government still thought they were pursuing a "rational" policy, although each was heavily dependent on the other

for such policy. The way in which the Balibo Five deaths were handled signalled the tenor of Australian dealings with Indonesia in the subsequent twenty-four year occupation: neglect and obscuration of evidence to deflect attention from a burgeoning moral insight, the innocence of the victims of Indonesian violence.

Inquiries into the deaths of the Balibo Five

Inspired by this moral insight, there have been major inquiries and reports on the deaths of these men in attempts to determine accountability.[111] In 1976 there was a report from the Australian Embassy in Indonesia, followed two decades later in 1996 and 1999 by two reports by Tom Sherman, Chairman of the National Crime Authority. The International Commission of Jurists held a Colloquium on the matter in 1997 and there was an investigation by the United Nations in 2000. A classified report by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security was submitted to the Australian government in 2002. In 2005 the CAVR stated "the five journalists were not killed in crossfire or as an unfortunate side-effect of the Indonesian operation to take Balibo." It announced "that its own findings support the case for further investigation of the elusive truth of this matter."[112]

Subsequently in 2007 the NSW Coroner held an inquest into the death of Brian Peters which interviewed new witnesses, revealed previously unseen intelligence information, had the power to compel evidence, and demonstrated a high level of judicial independence and impartiality.[113] The inquest found that Peters (and by association his four companions) was murdered by the advancing Indonesians "to

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[111] National Archives of Australia, "The 'Balibo affair,' East Timor, October 1975," Fact sheet 238, accessed December 9, 2014, http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs238.aspx
[112] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.2.105.
[113] Saul, "Prosecuting War Crimes at Balibo," 85.

prevent him from revealing that Indonesian Special Forces had participated in the attack on Balibo."[114] The journalists were not accidentally killed, as had previously been offered in official explanations. The perpetrators of the murders were named as members of the Indonesian Special Forces, including Major-General Benny Murdani, Colonel Dading Kalbuadi, Cristoforo da Silva and Yunus Yosfiah.[115] Murdani died in 2004 after a career as ABRI Commander from 1983 to 1988 and in government.[116] Kalbuadi died in 1999, having been significant in the invasion and in his subsequent military career. Of the lower level officers, Silva and Yosfiah returned to normal life, the latter having been promoted in the military and gaining high government positions in civil life.[117] After an eight-month inquiry by the NSW State Coroner, the matter was formally referred to the Attorney-General's Department, which charged the Australian Federal Police (AFP) to launch the investigation which began on 20 August 2009.[118]

For the next five years the AFP conducted the investigation. In the latter part of that time period discussions concerning jurisdiction,[119] progress of the case,[120] the status of witnesses,[121] and instances of Indonesian refusal to cooperate,[122] were undertaken in Australian Senate Committees. Then suddenly on 20 October 2014, the Australian

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[114] Pinch, *Inquest,* 129.

[115] Pinch, *Inquest,* 129.

[116] David Jenkins, "Charismatic, sinister Suharto man," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* September 10, 2004, accessed 17 January, 2016, http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/09/09/1094530768057.html

[117] Commission, *CAVR,* "Careers of Selected Officers," 8.4.

[118] Australian Federal Police, *Balibo Five Investigation,* (September 9, 2009), accessed January 17, 2016,
http://www.afp.gov.au/media-centre/news/afp/2009/september/balibo-five-investigation
(September 1, 2017: This material has been archived but can be accessed through Freedom of Information application.)

[119] AFP Disclosure Log FOI - CRM No 2015/198: 284; Parliament of Australia, Senate Estimates, 34.

[120] AFP Disclosure Log FOI - CRM No 2015/198: 83-84.

[121] AFP Disclosure Log FOI - CRM No 2015/198: 287.

[122] Parliament of Australia, *Senate Estimates, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee,* 30 May 2013: 33, accessed 17 January 2016,
http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id:%22committees/estimate/b65d6111-3180-4362-b98c-96bf25cbcb65/0004%22

Federal Police, in a statement made in answer to a question asked by a reporter in the context of the 39th anniversary of the murders, announced that its investigation had ceased.[123] The statement read:

> The AFP has exhausted all reasonable avenues in investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of the journalists....The AFP intends closing its investigation into this matter.[124]

Thus the policing body of the Commonwealth of Australia decided to end the investigation despite the comprehensive and conclusive findings of the latest of the many investigations and the naming of persons of interest. While harm to the relationship between Australia and Indonesia may have been minimised as a result of this decision, the Indonesian nationals responsible for the murders of Australian civilians committed in the name of the Indonesian military outside a theatre of war have not been brought to justice.

Behind the decision of the Australian Federal Police to cease investigation lies the same spectre of offending Indonesia which lay at the back of the Australian position regarding the invasion and occupation. Seen in the context of the extraordinary lengths to which Australian governments and their agencies have gone to ignore the findings of the coronial inquest, and in the clear lack of justice applied to the Balibo Five, their families and the Australian public, it is clear that the subjection of Australia to the mediation of Indonesia is very strong. The Balibo Five saga shows that Australian actions, as well as the official documentation of those actions, reflect the presence of the mediator, Indonesia, and the complicity of Australia in support of Indonesia in violence. Successive Australian governments' failures to these residents,

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[123] Sara Everingham, "Balibo Five: Investigation into deaths of five journalists dropped by Australian Federal Police," ABC News, 21 October 2014, accessed 17 January 2016, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-21/Balibo-five-investigation-dropped-by-afp/5828814
[124] AFP Disclosure Log FOI - CRM No 2015/198: 284.

a situation which persists to the present day, indicate the depth of the Australian enthralment by the model, Indonesia.

Claims to independence as well as concern for truth and justice regarding the deaths of its own citizens and residents were eroded for Australia in the face of the need to imitate its model and partner in security. An interpretation based on Girard's mimetic theory draws the veil away, showing the strength of the influence of mimesis. Australia is shown to be Indonesia's dependent partner, endeavouring to protect Indonesia from accusations that could threaten its moral standing.

Challenges to the Australian "Romantic Lie"

Munster and Walsh

The efforts of writers, activists, journalists and others to present honest interpretation of the facts have challenged the official Australian attempts to conceal government dealings in the invasion of Portuguese Timor. One major early episode of truth-telling occurred in late 1980. George Munster and Richard Walsh drew together selections of the written advice to governments given by senior Australian public servants in a variety of international situations, including that of Portuguese Timor. They attempted to publish them in a book called *Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1968-1975.* Within 24 hours of the publication of extracts in newspapers, the Commonwealth of Australia issued injunctions against the authors and distributors, and succeeded in denying further publication via Copyright Law. Two years later Walsh and Munster published an abbreviated version as *Secrets of State* which

contains the Introduction to the banned book.[125] In it they comment on some advice given to government as "widespread pretensions to official expertise" which caused them relief on occasions when such advice did not become policy. They stated, however, that "this was because the Australian government had neither the capacity nor the opportunity to intervene in the course of events."[126] The truth of this judgement is borne out by the Australian unwillingness to confront Indonesia over its invasion of Timor. Australia did not intervene even when Indonesian plans were obvious, as has been discussed. Australia's lack of capacity or opportunity to mediate was not absolute. Its potential and possibility for diplomatic challenge – at the very least – was overridden by its mimetic dependence on Indonesia which drove policy in regard to East Timor.

The government hoped that its 2000 publication of *Australia and the Incorporation of East Timor* would allay the population's concerns at government decisions and actions regarding East Timor. Walsh and Munster had demonstrated that Australian policy as an episode "when misleading analysis was associated with misdirected action."[127] Referring to the invasion of East Timor they state: "The Australian part fell somewhere between ineffectuality in heading off the invasion and complicity in encouraging it."[128] They mention a Foreign Affairs paper written in October 1975 which termed the Timor problem "essentially trivial compared to the importance of retaining good relations with Indonesia's rulers."[129] The document in which the Timor question is described as "essentially trivial" is not included in the government collection discussed in this dissertation.

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[125] Walsh and Munster, *Secrets of State,* vii, viii.
[126] Walsh and Munster, *Secrets of State,* viii.
[127] Walsh and Munster, *Secrets of State,* viii.
[128] Walsh and Munster, *Secrets of State,* ix.
[129] Walsh and Munster, *Secrets of State,* ix.

Munster and Walsh's books join those of other Australians critical of the Australian position on East Timor that show Australian government actions to have been unprincipled, self-serving and complicit. These publications demonstrate Australia's accommodation of Indonesian desires, decisions and actions, demonstrating a complicity which was directed against an innocent victim, the Timorese people.

Moral insights in documents

Intriguingly, there are some slight allusions to a more realistic appreciation of the Australian dependence on Indonesia and to alternative policy approaches in the very collection of documents under discussion. These illustrate Girard's reference to "chinks and cracks" in texts of historical persecution, through which the face of the victim was seen.[130] Among the most notable are comments by the Australian Ambassador to Portugal at the time, Frank Cooper, who wondered whether government officials had all been so mindful of the overriding importance of our long-term relations with Indonesia that it had "inhibited us too much in what we have said to the Indonesians."[131] When considering the Australian government's move towards recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over Portuguese Timor two years later, he referred to his belief :

> ...that our policies should not merely promote our national interests, but that they should also be based on certain moral principles such as respect for human rights and the settlement of disputes by negotiation rather than force. If the Government now decides to recognise what it has previously condemned the question many people will ask is not whether we can live with it but whether we can live with ourselves.[132]

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[130] René Girard, *The Scapegoat,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 37.
[131] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 371 *Cablegram to Canberra,* 621-622.
[132] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation, Cablegram,* 834-836.

Ambassador Cooper thus allowed the face of the scapegoated victim to emerge from behind the mask with which Australian governments attempted to cover their complicity, inadequacy and dependence.

Furthermore, a summary of the events in East Timor up to the UN ballot in 1999, in the Introduction to *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation*, includes a distinctive paragraph which hints at some recognition of the enormity of the results of Australian dependence on Indonesian desires:

> Almost twenty-five years after its integration with Indonesia, and after a formal vote to end that integration, East Timor remains a divisive and emotive issue in the history of Australian foreign policy. The complex and difficult policy issue has been overlain by individual tragedies: first the deaths of six Australia-based journalists in circumstances never fully nor satisfactorily explained; later the broader tragedy of a people suffering under a more repressive regime than the policy-makers of the 1970s could reasonably have envisaged; and, most recently, by acts of post-referendum brutality and destruction. The issue is further overlain, for many Australians, by guilt: a belief that a people close to Australia's doorstep have had their wartime kindnesses and suffering on Australia's behalf repaid by betrayal.[133]

The use of such words as brutality, emotive, destruction, divisive, deaths, repressive, tragedies, suffering, betrayal and guilt in this one short passage give it a flavour not found anywhere else in the source materials in this book. It may be argued that the nature of government cables and policy statements are not the place for reference to human suffering. It is certainly the case that the vast majority of communications presented in these documents follow that lamentable line. But the fact that the Introduction to *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation* has referred to these human realities, even if in one paragraph only, expresses an unease with the general rationalising tone of the remainder of the book. Moreover, it succinctly describes the failure of the Australian government and its policies regarding Timor: that Australian

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[133] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* 1.

and Timorese lives were sacrificed to an immoral foreign policy that betrayed Australia's weaker neighbours and which did little to serve Australia's integrity and good standing. The paragraph itself is a chink, a crack in the Australian mimetic mask.[134]

Conclusion

Australian government actions comprise one element of the events of the Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor, and documents which recount the episodes are another. Both are subject to mimesis. Both demonstrate the Australian inability to see that its desire for security mirrored Indonesia's desire for security. The possession of a positive relationship with Indonesia echoed Indonesia's desire for expansion across the archipelago. The shared desire gave strength to opposition to the common enemy of communism. At the same time, however, the threat of communism was used by both powers as an excuse for the scapegoating of their inconvenient neighbours, the Timorese people, who could be blamed for providing the conditions for a potential incursion of communism in the region, and so, could be justifiably invaded and colonised.

Australian government actions leading up to the Indonesian invasion testified to contradictory policies, undue influence of Indonesian Embassy officials, secrecy, passive compliance with aggressive Indonesian intentions, and actions which are imitative of those of Indonesia. Coupled with a fear of upsetting the lucrative markets and cultural sensibilities of its neighbour, Australia operated with ambivalence towards Indonesia, prizing the relationship which was perceived to guarantee

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[134] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 37.

Australian security and stability. The obstacle to the achievement of Australian desire was Portuguese Timor. The half-island appeared as a political and geographical anomaly within the Indonesian archipelago and was perceived variously as a communist problem, an unstable threat, and an economic opportunity. The challenges to regional and global security at that time, as well as domestic problems such as the dismissal of Whitlam as Prime Minister, markedly influenced decisions affecting Portuguese Timor. The effects of communism in the post-war period were significant in the development of this situation. Indonesia believed its security could be assured only if Timor did not become independent – a view fundamentally influenced by its perception of communism.[135] It was agreed by Indonesia, Australia, the US and other powers that a victim – Timor – had to be sacrificed to ensure order over against communism in the region.

The authors of the Australian written record selected, reported and omitted material with similar trust in their individual and collective independence. The result shows Australia in thrall to Indonesia in the events of the Timorese history, and ignorant of the force of mimesis operating in the relationship, thus displaying the documents as examples of the "romantic lie". The documents try to present Australian governments as autonomous entities, but they end up showing Australia as dependent, lacking in the independence and fairness so honoured and prized as Australian characteristics. There is little appreciation of the effects of Indonesia's mimetic influence on Australian identity. There is no appreciation of the effects of that Australian dependence on the Timorese people. Indonesia's presence as mediator of the Australian desire for security is therefore reflected in the documents, but is not

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[135] Commission *CAVR*, 3.6.113.

revealed.[136] The following chapter deals with the situation of mimetic dependence which continued for the next twenty-four years, as Australian governments complied with Indonesian attempts to absorb the Timorese people, displaying and perpetuating the sacrifice of the Timorese people as victims.

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[136] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 17.

CHAPTER SIX
THE OCCUPATION
OF EAST TIMOR

Introduction

Previous chapters have shown that East Timor fulfilled the conditions of scapegoating as described by René Girard, being considered expendable in relation to the conflict between Australians and Japanese during World War II and to the expansionism of Indonesia in the post-war years. In the latter case, prospects regarding the Timor Sea resources contributed markedly to the decisions taken by Australian governments.

In this chapter, the twenty-four year Indonesian occupation of East Timor is discussed in the light of the policies embraced by successive Australian governments which continued to support the Indonesian government's desire to control the territory. Throughout this time Australian actions demonstrated a dependency on Indonesian desires regarding East Timor. These were expressed in a series of measures which included the continuation of contradictory policies. Hopes of consolidating regional supremacy and stability were coupled with the prospect of financial gain from the resources of the Timor Sea. The pursuit of both advantages was argued to coincide with Australian "national interest". The Timorese people were therefore abandoned by official Australian policies in favour of what was perceived as the greater good in the achievement of a desire for security (initially against communists), and sacrificed to that end. Yet, in their refusal to acquiesce to the Indonesian takeover, the East

Timorese people became an obstacle to the realisation of the desires and designs of their neighbours – a "scandal" in Girardian terminology, though in a positive moral sense, that prevented the achievement of the violent sacrifice of the Timorese to the desires of Indonesians and their allies.

This chapter demonstrates that Australia's initial mimetic dependency on Indonesia at the invasion developed into an abiding complicity during the occupation. Furthermore, East Timor was not only the scapegoat of its neighbours at that time, but it has continued to be the scapegoat of the texts presented as the official Australian history. The focus of the chapter is on official versions of events during the occupation, with an analysis of the most well-known massacre, the Santa Cruz massacre that occurred in 1991. In the second part, a case study concerning Monsignor da Costa Lopes and ex-Prime Minister Whitlam is undertaken. It demonstrates the nature and extent of the scapegoating of East Timor during the occupation. Drawing on Girard's criteria for scapegoating, this case study is an example of attempts to address ongoing crises besetting Australia's relationship with Indonesia through its deflecting blame for the upheavals onto convenient and credible scapegoats.

Summary - Indonesian Occupation (1975-1999)

The Indonesian occupation of East Timor lasted from the invasion on 7 December 1975 to the weeks following 30 August 1999, the date when the Timorese people voted overwhelmingly for independence rather than for the offer of special regional autonomy within the Republic of Indonesia. Throughout this twenty-four year period the territory was under Indonesian control, primarily through the presence of the

Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (ABRI) which consisted of the army, navy, air force and the police. In 1999 the police force was separated from the armed forces, leaving the military as the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, or TNI), whose purpose was to achieve "the political objectives of pacification and integration."[1] The methods used were designed to subjugate the population and to overcome its resistance to Indonesian control, a regime of violence affecting every level of Timorese society. Falintil[2] – the armed wing of the resistance – withstood by means of a guerrilla campaign against ABRI/TNI during the occupation. There was a clandestine network throughout the countryside, towns and villages that covertly resisted the occupation, funnelled information to the international solidarity movement, and supported the armed resistance.

Subjected to numerous forms of state-sanctioned violence, the majority of the Timorese people lived in fear. The presence of Timorese informers brought suspicion to relationships and interactions, sowing discord in communities large and small.[3] Further, the ABRI/TNI paid and trained Timorese militias as an extension of its reach, terrorising the population. Consistently supported by ABRI/TNI, these groups exercised violence with impunity, thus depriving the people of the protection of law and the exercise of justice. The civil administration was also subordinate to the purposes of the Indonesian government via the military and the police, becoming another means of social control.[4]

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[1] Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR)* (Dili, TL: CAVR, 2005), 4.1.1.
[2]*Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste* – The Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor.
[2] Max Stahl, *Massacre among the graves,* Tapol Bulletin, No 108, (December 1991): 6, 8, accessed April 6, 2016, http://vuir.vu.edu.au/26096/
[3] Commission, *CAVR,* 4.2

Among the many studies of the recent history of East Timor, the Report of the

Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR) is the

most comprehensive with regard to the occupation. It was commissioned by the

United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and presented

its findings to the Timorese government and the United Nations in 2005.[5] As part of

its thorough investigation of all parties to the conflict in East Timor, it reports on the

deaths and other violations committed by Timorese against Timorese from 1974 as

well as on the Indonesian violence through to 1999.[6]

The CAVR Report advises that the number of conflict-related deaths from 1974 to

1999 was between 102,800 and 183,000, comprising an estimated 18,600 killings,

most of which occurred between 1975 and 1980, with over 2,500 killings in 1999.

The deaths of 84,200 people were due to hunger and illness caused directly by

occupation-related events.[7] Using a variety of estimates, however, Staveteig proposes

a higher death toll to that of the CAVR, stating:

> My best estimate of excess mortality in East Timor during the Indonesian
> occupation is 204,000 persons (± 51,000) either due to direct violence or else
> indirectly, perhaps as a result of hardships encountered when they were
> forcibly displaced by the Indonesian army.[8]

It is unlikely that the actual death toll will ever be known. What is clear, however, is

that a significant proportion of the Timorese people died violently and from unnatural

causes under the regime. President Suharto held office for twenty-three of the twenty-

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[5] Commission, *CAVR,* 205, 46.

[6] This even-handed approach strengthens the report's claim to impartiality and opposes claims that investigations into Timor's suffering are anti-Indonesian. The findings are presented in measured tones, focussing on the facts as far as they could be established systematically and scientifically.

[7] Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), Executive Summary.* (Dili, TL: CAVR, 2005): 44.

[8] Sarah Staveteig, *How Many Persons in East Timor Went 'Missing' During the Indonesian Occupation?: Results from Indirect Estimates, Interim Report IR-07-003* (Laxenburg, Austria: International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis [IIASA]), 23.

four years of the occupation. Serious violations occurred during the first years after

the invasion followed by a pattern of relatively low-level but consistent violence for

the next two decades. The CAVR Report discusses the extra-judicial killings,

intimidation, torture, arbitrary detention, sexual violence and political trials which

were used to quell opposition, punish victims and terrorise the population.[9] Human

rights abuses affected both individuals and groups. Furthermore, massacres

accounting for the deaths of hundreds of people each at Lacluta (1981), Kraras (1983)

and at the Dili Santa Cruz cemetery (1991) have been documented, and – in the case

of the Dili massacre – filmed.[10] Indonesian military personnel, either acting alone or

in collaboration with Timorese militias and auxiliaries, were found to be responsible

for the overwhelming number of killings, rapes and incidents of torture.[11]

The early years after the invasion saw tens of thousands of people fleeing to the

mountains, but the military assaults against them as well as the impossibility of

maintaining a food supply caused many deaths and eventually surrender.[12] Massive

dislocations organised by ABRI prevented access to farms and gardens and caused

illness and starvation. Over half of the Timorese people experienced one or more

displacements from their homes, lasting for short periods of one month to extended

periods of time, with the average displacement time of nearly four years.[13]

The famines of 1978-1979 caused the deaths of thousands of people and ensured that

food production and distribution remained precarious throughout the 1980s. Annual

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[9] Commission, *CAVR Executive Summary,* 45.

[10] Joseph Nevins, *A Not-So-Distant Horror: Mass Violence in East Timor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) 30; Geoffrey Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here, We Will Die: How Genocide Was Stopped in East Timor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 57; James Dunn, *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence,* 3rd ed. (Double Bay, NSW: Longueville Books, 2003), 333-334.

[11] Commission, *CAVR Executive Summary,* 44-46.

[12] Commission, *CAVR Executive Summary,* 77.

[13] Commission, *CAVR Executive Summary,* 44.

forced marches by the military known as the "fence of legs" continued for at least four years, beginning in 1981.[14] This exercise was designed to flush out the resistance by forcing tens of thousands of Timorese males to march in lines ahead of soldiers. The Timorese returned to their villages debilitated after days and weeks in the human chains. Adequate crops were not planted during these times, resulting in widespread food shortages in the succeeding months.[15] Clandestine resistance against the occupation continued, however, renewing itself with new generations of Timorese youth and being supported by the general population.[16] The armed resistance engaged in combat with the Indonesian military, remaining a viable guerrilla force for the whole of the occupation.

Australian policy during the Occupation

With this brief summary, I turn to examine the Australian government's position with regard to the occupation, particularly the Santa Cruz massacre. Australian government documents stated that Australia's consistent official position was to uphold the Timorese right to self-determination.[17] This is countered by voluminous evidence to the contrary, as discussed throughout this chapter.

To begin with, the Australian voting pattern on the issue at the United Nations and continued military assistance to Indonesia indicated support for the Indonesian annexation. The Australian support for the annexation continued from 1975 to 1999. Gough Whitlam, the Labor Prime Minister in 1975, tacitly endorsed Indonesian

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[14] John G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The hidden history of East Timor* (Leichhardt: Pluto Press, 1991), 204.
[15] Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War,* 117-119.
[16] Commission, *CAVR,* 4.1.1.
[17] Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (DFAT), *East Timor in Transition 1998-2000: An Australian Policy Challenge* (2001), 13.

claims to sovereignty. The Liberal-Country Coalition Government under Malcolm

Fraser (1975-1982) that succeeded the Whitlam Government publicly supported

Indonesian claims.[18] Despite the Labor Opposition's earlier condemnation of the

annexation,[19] its government under Bob Hawke (1983-1991) maintained the

Australian government's support of Indonesia.[20] The next Labor government under

Paul Keating (1991-1996) actively sought to strengthen the relationship with

Indonesia and pursued closer ties with the Indonesian military. Keating spoke of

President Suharto's New Order government as "beneficial"[21] and opposed allowing

human rights to get "in the way of the relationship between Australia and

Indonesia."[22] The succeeding Coalition government led by John Howard (1996-2007)

continued the policies of the previous decades. Howard described Suharto as a "very

skilled and sensitive national leader,"[23] while his deputy Tim Fischer said that Suharto

"was perhaps the world's greatest figure in the latter half of the 20th century."[24]

A major political disruption of this consensus came when the Opposition spokesman

on Foreign Affairs, Laurie Brereton, was successful in bringing a change to Labor

Party policy regarding East Timor. In 1998, the Labor Party reversed its policy to one

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[18] Clinton Fernandes, *Fracturing the bipartisan consensus* (UNSW Canberra: ADFA website, School of Humanities and Social Sciences – East Timor), accessed 13 November 2014, https://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/school-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/timor-companion/fracture

[19] John Waddingham, "Australia's new Labor government, March 1983," *Timor Archives: Clearing House for Archival Records on Timor,* accessed 30 May, 2016, https://timorarchives.wordpress.com/2013/03/05/hawke-labor-march-1983/

[20] Michelle Grattan and Russell Barton, "Switch will spark row in Labor Party," *The Age* (June 6, 1983), accessed September 2, 2017, https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=ey5VAAAAIBAJ&sjid=npQDAAAAIBAJ&pg=2658,2661700

[21] Peter Hartcher, "Jakarta leaves Keating at the altar," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* April 24, 1992: 15.

[22] Tony Wright, "Jakarta joy as PM backs off human rights," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* October 27, 1993: 3.

[23] Michael Millett and Louise Williams, "PM defends soft line on Indonesia," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* September 18, 1996: 1.

[24] Gordon Fenney, "Soeharto a 20th century great," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* May 15, 1996: 9.

of support for self-determination for the East Timorese people.[25] The resignation of

Suharto in May 1998 and the accession of his replacement B.J. Habibie accompanied

growing agitation for change in East Timor itself. Increased international support for

the Timorese people, particularly after the Santa Cruz massacre, included massive

Australian resistance to government policy. The Coalition government moved towards

accepting the increasing international consensus on the need for significant change,

with John Howard's writing to the Indonesian President at the end of 1998 suggesting

a development of the President's recent offer of autonomy which would include

discussions with the East Timorese leaders. Howard emphasised in the letter,

however, that "Australia's support for Indonesia's sovereignty is unchanged",[26] and

declared that an autonomy package "would allow time to convince the East Timorese

of the benefits of autonomy within the Indonesian republic."[27] Even after Suharto's

resignation, Australia's official position of favour towards the Indonesian annexation

of East Timor was constant. Nevertheless, President Habibie reacted unexpectedly to

Howard's letter and to the increasing international pressure by allowing an act of self-

determination in East Timor. Finally, after the Timorese comprehensively rejected the

option of autonomy within Indonesia in favour of independence in the August 1999

referendum, the Australian military undertook leadership of the United Nations'

peace-keeping force as the Indonesian military withdrew.

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[25] Clinton Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 183-188.
[26] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 181.
[27] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 182.

The relationship between the scapegoat and the text

As demonstrated in previous chapters, narratives of East Timor's recent history display its role as the scapegoat of its neighbours. Girard's insights into scapegoating have a double application, as victims inhabit the role of scapegoat both in the circumstances of their sacrifice and in the myths recounting the process. As discussed, Girard describes the scapegoating process as existing in the mythic representations of ancient persecutions and in cases of collective violence in more recent times. Though they lack the supernatural element that guarantees unanimity, modern texts of persecution mirror the ancient tales in that these texts have the same fundamental principle: the exoneration of the actions of those who participated in the killing or expulsion of the scapegoat – either as the mob or its supportive spectators. In Chapter Four the World War II record was seen as a collection of texts of persecution. Chapter Five demonstrated that Australian texts were expressions of the "romantic lie" through which the Australian mimetic dependence on Indonesia was obvious. This chapter focuses on Girard's claim that not only are the fortunes of scapegoats described in texts, but that texts *themselves* can be the means of scapegoating victims. Girard distinguishes between narratives in which scapegoating is clearly present in the plot and those in which the scapegoating principle is concealed:

> Before invoking the scapegoat in connection with a text we must first ask whether we are dealing with a scapegoat *of* the text (the hidden structural principle) or a scapegoat *in* the text (the clearly visible theme). Only in the first case can the text be defined as one of persecution, entirely subjected to the representation of persecution from the standpoint of the persecutor.[28]

Girard's designation of a scapegoat *in* the text applies to the range of publications produced by most authors on the subject. The narrative of death and destruction clearly conveys the victimisation of East Timor. Such commentators identify that the

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[28] René Girard, *The Scapegoat,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 119.

Timorese people were being persecuted by the Indonesian regime and present them as innocent victims, displaying the requirements of the traditional scapegoat. They incurred the blame apportioned to all scapegoats, but not because of any crimes as such, except that of resisting the interests of the powerful. In Girard's terms the role of scapegoat applied because East Timor possessed the "characteristics of a victim."[29] Portuguese Timor fulfilled the physical criteria of one that is small and vulnerable.[30] Its supposed susceptibility to the influence of communism and the consequent threat to the region strengthened the case against the Timorese people, delivering them as a scapegoat to be sacrificed for the greater good. It is clear in this range of texts that in the interplay of geo-political realities, the Timorese people were violently subjugated to the interests and fears of more powerful parties.

East Timor: the scapegoat *of* the text

However, Girard's designation of scapegoat *of* the text is apparent in documents and commentaries issued by the Australian government. Texts that undertake the task of scapegoating have the concealed character of traditional myths, described by Girard as "rationalisations or disguised accounts of an original act of violence, the truth of which the group needs to conceal or displace from itself."[31] The Australian official need to ignore or disguise the violence done to the Timorese required the production of texts written from its own standpoint: that of a persecutor. The structure of such texts does not report the reality of the victim, but becomes itself a means of victimisation.

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[29] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 26.
[30] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 18.
[31] Michael Kirwan, *Discovering Girard* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004), 39.

An example of East Timor as a scapegoat *of* the text appears in the government's account of its statements and actions at the end of the occupation. The narrative in question is *East Timor in Transition 1998-2000: An Australian Policy Challenge,* published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.[32] Its significance lies in its presentation to the Australian public of an official account of the Australian government's involvement in matters concerning East Timor from 1998 until August 2000. It devotes 160 pages to the changes in East Timor after the fall of President Suharto and the accession of President Habibie in 1998, and discusses the role of the Indonesian military and their Timorese militias. It is concerned with the Australian role in the referendum of 1999 and the United Nations Mission in East Timor, particularly with the humanitarian response and the establishment of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) which oversaw the initial restoration of peace and accompanied the United Nations in the preparation for independence in 2002. A further 112 pages of *East Timor in Transition* are Annexes comprising selected Australian government and United Nations documents and letters.

Although brief, an initial chapter entitled *The Historical Context* is the government's historical analysis of the Australian involvement in events prior to the referendum, and forms the background for the remainder of the book. It is presented by the government to the Australian public in a readable and accessible form which requires little research capability or access. It can therefore be regarded as the government's preferred vehicle for popular information concerning the official Australian position. While information from other chapters in the book is used in this dissertation where appropriate, concentration on this chapter is required for a detailed appraisal of the

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[32] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition.*

government's own summary of its historical policies and actions. An examination

finds that it is composed of material and interpretation that is often characterised by

lack of balance, and where embellishment, omission and deflection of blame are used

to justify successive Australian governments' policies of support for Indonesia's

occupation of East Timor. The chapter exemplifies Girard's designation of the

scapegoat *of* the text, as is now discussed.

It must be acknowledged that, contrary to the greater part of the content being

discussed, there are two sentences in the *Historical Context* chapter which recognise

in a positive way the role of the East Timorese people in the last years of the

occupation, namely:

> It (the separation from Indonesia) called for enormous discipline and restraint
> on the part of East Timor's pro-independence leaders in the face of serious
> provocation. Above all, it required the East Timorese people themselves to
> demonstrate inspirational courage and determination, in the face of violence
> and intimidation, to insist upon their right to exercise a choice about their
> future.[33]

Similarly, the Foreword acknowledges that the Timorese people "achieved self-

determination and have taken the first steps on their path to nationhood."[34] These two

instances are notable for their positive commendation of the Timorese people.

Authorship and balance

Regrettably, the remainder of *The Historical Context* raises serious questions, the first

of which concern the writers' conflicts of interest, and the lack of balance brought to

the document as a result. The Foreword to the complete book *East Timor in*

Transition is signed by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer who gave the research

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[33] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 1.
[34] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* vi.

task to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Dr Ashton

Calvert. According to Downer, Calvert "put together a strong team of departmental

officers who had worked on East Timor over the period."[35] As Clinton Fernandes

points out, the book therefore was not produced by DFAT's Historical Documents

Project, but by officers who had worked on the East Timor issues. He comments:

> In other words, those who had implemented policy were assessing their own
> performances within the covers of a book they themselves had written, using
> material they had themselves selected.[36]

As East Timor issues have affected Australian foreign policy in diverse and

compromising ways, it is obvious that more independence and historical expertise in

its authorship would have benefitted the production of this official Australian

document. Those generating this document had personal experiences with the issue

under examination which seems to have contributed to the bias, distortion and lack of

balance which places it in the category of a "text of persecution".

The statement of the aim of *East Timor in Transition,* signed by Alexander Downer, is

similar to that of *Australia and the Incorporation of East Timor* discussed in the

previous chapter. This document was written "to make available a full and balanced

account of Australia's response to the extraordinary foreign policy challenge of East

Timor in the past two and a half years," with "a balanced analysis of the major

thematic issues" of the situation.[37] Underlining the assertion that balance was a main

aim, it is stated that the writing team drew from public sources as well as "in a

representative and balanced way" from key diplomatic reports, including "extensive

reporting from our diplomatic missions and official records of the high-level

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[35] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* v.

[36] Clinton Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour: Australia, Indonesia and the Independence of East Timor* (Carlton North, Vic.: Scribe Publications, 2004), 1, 2.

[37] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* v, vi.

exchanges that were pivotal in informing and implementing Australian policy".[38]

While a single chapter could not be expected to comment on all the challenges which Australian governments faced during that period, the claims of balance which apply to the whole book should surely apply also to the presentation of the historical background. As the following evidence shows, the claim of balance is questionable, and the credibility of the authors, including the government, is weakened.

Features of "The Historical Context"

The account of the Australian involvement in recent Timorese history in *East Timor in Transition* is a vehicle for the continued scapegoating of East Timor by the Australian government. In trying to justify the government's actions, East Timor is subtly positioned as a scapegoat *of* the text, deserving of the Indonesian regime's repressive behaviour. This is shown in the extent of distortion and bias in descriptions of the events, and embellishment and exoneration regarding Indonesian and Australian policies. The chapter's treatment of the Santa Cruz massacre of 1991 is outrageous in its bias and distortion of facts. Events of 1999 are presented in ways which soften or absolve the Indonesian military and their militias.

The account of the Santa Cruz massacre

The event during the occupation that brought international exposure to the occupation was the Santa Cruz massacre. On 12 November 1991, a Catholic Mass was said in the parish church of Motael in Dili in remembrance of independence supporter Sebastião Gomes who had been killed two weeks previously. Hundreds of mainly young Timorese attended the Mass, and immediately afterwards made their way to the Santa

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[38] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* v.

Cruz cemetery in a customary funeral procession, joined by others on the way. They displayed banners which they had been making in anticipation of a visit by Portuguese officials, calling for freedom and the intervention of Portugal, and denouncing the Indonesian regime. At the cemetery, the Indonesian military fired on the crowd in a sustained attack, leaving many dead and wounded. Film of the incident was smuggled out to Britain, and its broadcast across the world became a catalyst for eventual Timorese independence at the end of the decade. The Indonesian government admitted to 50 dead, while the CAVR Report puts the death toll at 271, with 250 listed as missing.[39] Hundreds of people were subsequently arrested and detained, and execution of the wounded was reported to have occurred over the following days.[40] There were trials of those involved in the massacre, but the penalties imposed on the perpetrators were minor in comparison to those given to organisers of the demonstration.[41] Many families were unable to find the remains of their loved ones.[42]

Distortion

The treatment of this event in *East Timor in Transition* is an example of the historical background chapter's distortion through embellishment, deflection of blame, and omission. From the outset the facts are distorted. The chapter states:

> When the much-anticipated visit of a Portuguese parliamentary delegation was cancelled by Portugal at late notice in October 1991 in protest over restrictions on their party, youths from pro-and anti-integration groups clashed in Dili,

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[39] Commission, *CAVR,* 3.18.483.
[40] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.2. 610-612.
[41] Arnold S. Kohen, *From the Place of the Dead: The epic struggles of Bishop Belo of East Timor* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 171.
[42] Sixteen bodies identified by relatives were found in a mass grave in Hera near Dili in 2012 showing evidence of killings by weapons issued to Indonesian soldiers. Stephanie March, ABC Radio Australia, *Mass grave could resolve Santa Cruz mystery,* 6 January 2012, accessed 13 April 2016, http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/onairhighlights/mass-grave-could-resolve-santa-cruz-mystery

leaving one dead on each side. They were Sebastião Gomes from the pro-independence group and Alfonso Gomes from the pro-integration side.[43]

The "restrictions on their party" refers to Indonesian displeasure at the presence of certain journalists of whom it did not approve.[44] The comment evades the problem of Indonesian strictures on journalistic freedom, and responsibility for the cancellation is placed (at least in part) onto Portugal. There is no mention of the role of the military or of provocateurs – of whom the anti-independence youth was one. These relevant details do occur, however, in the CAVR document which reports:

> Towards the end of October the military's harassment of activists in Dili escalated, culminating in a raid on the Motael Church on 28 October. The raid left two dead, an East Timorese "intel" and a clandestine activist, Sebastião Gomes Rangel whose funeral was held the next day."[45]

The account in *East Timor in Transition* of the actual massacre that occurred two weeks after this incident consists of five paragraphs. In the first two there is mention of two soldiers being stabbed by the demonstrators on the way to the Santa Cruz cemetery, but a similar (relatively minor) assault on one of the independence supporters by a man in camouflage uniform during the march is omitted.[46] There is reference to the military's subsequent account and that of Indonesia's National Commission of Inquiry, which detail a report of the demonstrators engaging in rock throwing, firing a shot, waving knives and throwing a grenade. At the end, the account adds the qualification, "there is no independent corroboration of this."[47] Nevertheless, the relatively lengthy inclusion of these minor unverified accusations

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[43] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 7; The pro-integration youth's name was Afonso Hendrique, not Gomes. See Tapol Bulletin, No 108, (December 1991): 14, accessed 6 April 2016, http://vuir.vu.edu.au/26096/
[44] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.2.600.
[45] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.2.600.
[46] Clinton Fernandes, *Santa Cruz* (UNSW Canberra: ADFA website, School of Humanities and Social Sciences – East Timor), accessed 13 April, 2016, http://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/school-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/timor-companion/santa-cruz
[47] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 7.

against the demonstrators in the brief Australian account raises questions about the balance stated as one of the aims of the document.

There is a pattern in the chapter of giving similar significant space to minor details while omitting more important features. Comparison of the document's treatment of the Santa Cruz massacre with that of the 1994 report of a United Nations' Special Rapporteur, Mr Bacre Waly Ndiaye, demonstrates this distortion.[48] Ndiaye considered all available accounts, including those provided by the Indonesian military, police and Commission of Inquiry.[49] Contrary to the Ndiaye report, the Australian document omits the non-compliance of Indonesian authorities to supply requested military reports on the incident.[50] It omits that security agencies knew about the demonstration days beforehand,[51] that the military persons who were injured were not in uniform,[52] and that their injuries were sustained one kilometre from the cemetery and one hour before the killing of the demonstrators.[53] *East Timor in Transition* relates that gunfire was heard for two or three minutes, and then sounds of gunfire for another twenty minutes, while the Ndiaye Report states that "sporadic shooting was heard throughout the city and in neighbouring villages during the rest of the day, and possibly during several days."[54] A major conclusion of the Ndiaye report was:

> The procession that took place in Dili on 12 November 1991 was a peaceful demonstration of political dissent by unarmed civilians; the claims of some officials that the security forces had fired in self-defence and had respected the

[48] "Report by the Special Rapporteur Bacre Waly Ndiaye, on his mission to Indonesia and East Timor from 3 to 13 July 1994," in Geoffrey C. Gunn, *East Timor and the United Nations: The case for intervention* (Laurenceville NJ: The Red Sea Press Inc., 1997): 139-171. (The Ndyiae Report is referred to in *East Timor in Transition* on page 7 but is omitted from the Index, pages 304-312.)
[49] Gunn, *East Timor and the United Nations,* 145 and 147.
[50] Gunn, *East Timor and the United Nations,* 150.
[51] Gunn, *East Timor and the United Nations,* 151.
[52] Gunn, *East Timor and the United Nations,* 143 and 151.
[53] Gunn, *East Timor and the United Nations,* 151.
[54] Gunn, *East Timor and the United Nations,* 152.

principles of the necessity and the proportionality of the use of lethal force are unsubstantiated.[55]

The inclusion in the Australian version of the few minor instances of disruption by the demonstrators may have been an attempt to give the "balanced" account claimed as one of the aims of the document. Such emphasis on these unsubstantiated events alongside omission of others, however, is clearly unbalanced.

The Ndiaye Report presents a comprehensive sequence of facts, giving appropriate weight to the actions of both demonstrators and military during the procession and on arrival at the cemetery, whereas the Australian account merely summarises the police and military accounts, mentioning the Ndiaye report only in reference to the numbers killed.[56] In the interests of the balance which the Australian publication was designed to address,[57] it is unfortunate that details which excuse the military's response are included, while the greater number of details testifying to their disastrous over-reaction are omitted. Such omission serves to lessen the Indonesian responsibility for the violence in the eyes of readers unfamiliar with the facts. It contributes to the overall tenor of the chapter as being a text of persecution which confuses responsibility and deflects blame from Indonesia.

The third of the five paragraphs in the historical background chapter of *East Timor in Transition* detailing the Santa Cruz massacre is an account of the killings, arrests and subsequent deaths over following days, while the fourth paragraph relates the problem of ascertaining the exact number of deaths and gives a fair summary of the various opinions. Neither of these paragraphs attempts to soften the facts.

[56] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 7, 8.
[57] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* v.

The fifth paragraph, however, continues the generally indulgent approach to the

perpetrators of the violence. It maintains that the Santa Cruz massacre caused a

reversal in an otherwise improving situation where "goodness, tolerance, liberality,

self-expression, a better deal and peace" were now unfortunately lost.[58] The chapter

states:

> The shock and anger caused by the tragedy refuelled the resentment felt by
> ordinary East Timorese towards the security forces and the failures of
> Indonesian rule. It extinguished the hopes of many that some good could come
> from Indonesia's administration. It marked the end of a relatively tolerant
> period in East Timor and the loss of influence of those who had championed
> the more liberal regime. It meant that the newfound right to self-expression
> was again lost and that the prospect for achieving a better deal for the East
> Timorese through peaceful means was as remote as had ever been.[59]

It was not the "shock and anger" that refuelled resentment among the people. It was

the massacre of at least 271 young people at a peaceful demonstration. The assertion

of a breakdown of progress resulting from the killings insinuates some blame on the

part of the Timorese. There appears to be no sense of irony in the statement that "the

newfound right to self-expression was again lost", when the massacre occurred at a

demonstration found by the United Nations Special Rapporteur's report to be orderly.

There were trials of those involved in the event, but the penalties imposed on the

perpetrators were minor compared to those given to organisers of the demonstration.

Ten Indonesian military persons were tried for disciplinary offences and were

sentenced to prison for up to eighteen months. Most served time under house arrest

and were released before the expiry of their sentences. East Timorese organisers of

the protest, however, were jailed for at least five years, and some were given life

sentences.[60] Strangely, *East Timor in Transition* omits any reference to these

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[58] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 8.
[59] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 8.
[60] Kohen, *From the Place of the Dead,* 171.

sentences imposed after the Santa Cruz massacre. Instead, the 1995 trial of Indonesian soldiers who killed six civilians in Liquiça and who received prison terms of up to four and a half years is cited. *East Timor in Transition* presents this as proof that progress towards justice was underway in cases of human rights offences by TNI personnel.[61] Hence the Australian document extols Indonesian human rights progress some years after the Dili massacre, but omits the unjust treatment of Timorese connected to the massacre that is the actual subject of the passage. The focus is clearly to put Indonesia in the best possible light. It also suggests an effort to present evidence of improvements which might justify the political and diplomatic approach towards Indonesia taken by Australia over many years.

Bias and Embellishment

The section following the account of the Dili Massacre continues to read as an apologia for Indonesia.[62] One paragraph points to the "oppressive military presence" as the cause of the Jakarta administration's inability "to win the minds and hearts of the East Timorese people." Yet there is a sense of frustration and a suggestion of blame in the mention of the antagonism of the young towards the incorporation of Timor into Indonesia, and the loss of hope that they would have been the generation which "embodied the benefits of Indonesian association".[63] The paragraph continues, "the post-1975 generation became arguably (Indonesia's) single greatest liability."[64] The unwillingness of the youth to be "a vanguard of Indonesia's aspirations in the territory" is then linked to "Fretilin's decision to take advantage of youth sentiment in

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[61] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 8.
[62] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 9,10.
[63] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 9.
[64] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 9.

the development of its clandestine front."[65] The thrust of these statements puts the blame on the Timorese. The paragraph applies *effort, goodwill,* and *benefit* to the Indonesian involvement, while *antagonism, liability* and *clandestine* are used of the Timorese youth and *taking advantage* is used of Fretilin, clearly a biased use of language.[66]

There follows the statement that in the early part of the 1990s it was recognised that "a new and more sensitive approach" was needed.[67] A lengthy list of Indonesian proposals is described as designed so that the Timorese "could exercise a greater degree of influence over their own affairs" which, the paragraph states, were finally vetoed by President Suharto. The failure of the administration in the 1990s to advance any "creative solutions" is linked to the assertion that it was the security approach which "in the final analysis, lay at the heart of Indonesia's policy failure in the territory." This summation of the problem in the document is only partially true. Surely, more fundamental to the problem than lack of "creative solutions" was the very existence of Indonesia as an illegal administering power in East Timor, ruling with brutality and impunity. Thus the official Australian account of a highly significant event in the history of East Timor emerges as one which manipulates facts to put those responsible for the killings in a positive light and to insinuate blame on the part of Timorese youth. East Timor is a scapegoat *of* the text.

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[65] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 9.
[66] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 9.
[67] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 9.

The account of the 1990s

Exoneration

In presenting the background to the final stages of East Timor's gaining of independence in 1999, *East Timor in Transition* embellishes or dilutes accounts of the operation of Indonesian agencies. There is a suggestion of heroism in the reference to "the Indonesian leadership's courage to accept international assistance to restore order."[68] Yet the CAVR Report describes the same situation thus: "Frantic diplomatic activity took place.....to put pressure on Indonesia to fulfil its security obligations or consent to an international force to restore security."[69] Furthermore, while *East Timor in Transition* states it was obvious that the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) directed and supported the Timorese militias,[70] it maintains that "the extent and nature of TNI's collusion with and support for the militia is impossible to determine" and that "there was no clear indication whether the abuses were sanctioned or ordered by headquarters or other commanders."[71] Nevertheless, when UN Security Council members visited Dili on 11 September 1999, their finding the situation to be calm indicated a high degree of overall control by the TNI, and demonstrated that security could be maintained when required.[72]

The influence of the TNI on the militias is documented in the CAVR report.[73] It notes that militia groups had existed before Indonesia invaded, but were increasingly recruited and controlled by the TNI, sometimes under duress, but often with the promise of money, drugs and prestige. Training intensified in 1998 and 1999, with the

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[68] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 1.
[69] Commission, *CAVR,* 3.21.626
[70] In 1999 the Indonesian Police Force was separated from ABRI.
[71] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 61.
[72] Commission, *CAVR,* 3.21.649.
[73] Commission, *CAVR,* 3.19.537.

military attending militia inaugurations and providing arms. Australian claims that the level of Indonesian military oversight of the militias was "impossible to determine" are therefore questionable. Nevins claims that through agreements for intelligence sharing with the United States, Britain, Canada and New Zealand, the Australian government knew "that the Indonesian military - including the senior command structure - was responsible for organising, arming and directing the militia violence."[74] Both Toohey and Wilkinson's exposition of government knowledge of the invasion, and Collins and Reeds' revelations of pro-Indonesian bias in Australian intelligence services underline the knowledge which Australian governments have had over the decades concerning the East Timor situation.[75] Fernandes demonstrates that not only were the militias part of the Indonesian government's systematic campaign to deflect onto the Timorese blame for the mayhem, but that the Australian government's repeated excuses and denials provided the military with welcome support.[76] That *East Timor in Transition* understates official Indonesian connections to the militias and omits the international pressure on Indonesia in favour of mention of its "courage" are examples of the document's general tendency to portray the Indonesian government and its agencies in a positive light.

Similarly, the chapter highlights any positive actions of the Australian government. Nevins comments that states are usually selective in the facts they present, preferring exaggeration of the good while ignoring poor decisions and outcomes.[77] *East Timor in Transition* is an example of this tendency, presenting Australia and particularly its

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[74] Nevins, *A Not-So-Distant Horror,* 120.
[75] Brian Toohey and M.Wilkinson, "The Timor Papers 1987," in *Tell Me No Lies: investigative journalism and its triumphs,* ed. John Pilger (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 174-190; Lance Collins and W. Reed, *Plunging Point: Intelligence failures, cover-ups and consequences* (Pymble, NSW: HarperCollins, 2005), 324-346.
[76] Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour,* 47-50.
[77] Nevins, *A Not-So-Distant Horror,* 145.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer as "increasingly concerned" about deteriorating conditions in East Timor,[78] initiating consultation with East Timorese leaders,[79] and applying "consistent pressure" to Indonesia.[80] Even as late as 1999, however, Downer was maintaining the traditional Australian government support for Indonesia, claiming that connections between the Indonesian military and the Timorese militias were not Indonesian government policy. He stated that any involvement by the military in abuses was the fault of "rogue elements", and declared that the Indonesians "will behave in a responsible way. They have made that clear to me."[81] While Downer's statements may have been judged to be politically important to maintain Indonesian support of the referendum at the time, there is no admission in *East Timor in Transition* of this, or that any historical Australian action, seen in hindsight, was deficient. There is nothing which approximates to the statement made by Gareth Evans, Australian Foreign Minister from 1988 to 1996, on the continued Australian training of Indonesian military: "I am one of those who has to acknowledge...that many of our earlier training efforts helped only to produce more professional human rights abusers."[82]

Australian support for the Indonesian position on East Timor (and its continued desire for Indonesian favour) is reflected in the Australian official record of the events. It is clear that the record exemplifies "texts of persecution", where those responsible for scapegoating are exonerated and the victim continues to be blamed. *East Timor in Transition* makes East Timor a scapegoat *of* the text.

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[78] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 24 and 61.
[79] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 26.
[80] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 62.
[81] Rodney Tiffen, *Diplomatic Deceits: Government, Media and East Timor* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001), 61.
[82] Nevins, *A Not-So-Distant Horror,* 247, n.39.

Australian Complicity in the Scapegoating of East Timor

Examination thus far of an official Australian history of the background to the end of the Indonesian occupation has found that Australian policy leaned consistently towards support of the Indonesian position. An apparent tendency to distort the record in Indonesia's favour has been demonstrated. The Australian documentary record shows that East Timor was considered as a dispensable entity in the pursuit of other interests. Greenlees and Garran express the general consensus: "Remaining on good terms with Indonesia was crucial to Australia's interests"[83] In relation to the treatment of East Timor, Scott points to the Australian tendency "to protect its relations with Indonesia as it had done instinctively for twenty-five years."[84] James Dunn states that the violence in East Timor "is a shameful story of conspiracies against a small and vulnerable people, an account marked by deceit, hypocrisy, mendacity, and plain irresponsibility."[85]

Challenging Indonesia and Australia's determination to pursue and protect their interests, East Timor was found to be an obstacle to the realisation of their desires. In this way, East Timor became a scapegoat to the extent that the people resisted efforts to conform to the Indonesian agenda. The people of East Timor were sacrificed by Indonesia, with Australia's tacit cooperation, in *realpolitik* decisions taken to gain favour, wealth and security. East Timor was the victim of Australian desire for the security offered by its compliant relationship with Indonesia. The text of the official Australian history continues the scapegoating.

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[83] Don Greenlees and Robert Garran, *Deliverance: The inside story of East Timor's fight for freedom* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 111.

[84] David Scott, *Last Flight Out of Dili: Memoirs of an accidental activist in the triumph of East Timor* (North Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2005), 347.

[85] Dunn, *East Timor,* vii.

Key aspects of the Australian support for Indonesia are now discussed as examples of acts by which Australia followed the lead of Indonesia and participated in the scapegoating of East Timor. The subsequent record needed to be obscured by the government because Australia clearly participated in the marginalisation and scapegoating of East Timor in support of Indonesia. For example, the swift bestowal of Australian *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty, support of Indonesia in the United Nations, continuance of military ties, and negotiations over oil and gas resources in the Timor Sea show this complicity. Significantly, the maintenance of two contradictory positions by Australian governments – that they claimed to support Timorese self-determination while concretely supporting Indonesian sovereignty – throughout the twenty-four year occupation of East Timor underscores that complicity by trying to cover up it with reference to principle.

Recognition of Indonesian Sovereignty

Added to its attempts to exonerate Indonesia and by association, Australia, *East Timor in Transition* emphasises the claims of Australian authorities that humanitarian concerns were the basis of the support of the Indonesian position. It states:

> In January 1978, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, announced that the Government had decided to accept East Timor as part of Indonesia. Peacock said that the Government, like most Australians, deeply regretted that the events in East Timor since August 1975 had caused so much suffering, noting that humanitarian issues arising from the issue continued to be of major concern. Peacock said that the basis for this position was that Indonesian control was effective and covered all administrative centres.[86]

Following the internal discussions of the authorities of the time as contained in relevant cables, further reasons are advanced for Australian recognition of Indonesia's

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[86] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 11.

control, such as family reunion for Timorese refugees[87] and the re-building of East

Timor. It was claimed that these issues required Australia to deal with Indonesian as

the administering power. Therefore, Indonesian sovereignty was "a reality with which

Australia had to come to terms."[88] The document states:

> Both Coalition and Labor governments regarded Indonesia's control of East
> Timor as a reality that needed to be managed and considered that this was best
> done in the context of a strong bilateral relationship with Indonesia. With such
> a relationship, it was more likely that Indonesia would listen to Australia on
> the hard issues, including East Timor.[89]

East Timor in Transition depicts Australia as pursuing "its concerns for the human

rights and economic development of the East Timorese" in a "constructive and

effective manner" as a result of the relationship with Indonesia.[90] Moreover, the

document claims that Australia championed the human rights of the Timorese people

to the extent of making concerns known at every level of the Indonesian

administration, stating:

> ....the government's concerns over human rights violations were conveyed
> clearly and consistently to Indonesian officials at all levels, from the President
> down to the local military and police commanders on the ground in East
> Timor. So too was Australian pressure for troop reductions in the territory.[91]

Further:
> In the context of development assistance, Australia consistently urged the
> Indonesian authorities to adopt policies in East Timor that would promote the
> welfare of the East Timorese and, in particular, to promote and protect
> internationally accepted standards of human rights.[92]

Unfortunately, there is no evidence supporting these claims in *East Timor in*

Transition. There are no references to any ministerial letters, statements, reports or

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[87] Between 1976 and 1981, 2447 Timorese came to Australia by air, some under humanitarian schemes.
See Amanda Wise, *Exile and return among the Timorese* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of
Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 44-45.
[88] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 12.
[89] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 12.
[90] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 12.
[91] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 12.
[92] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 13.

discussions with the Indonesian authorities concerning these claims of efforts to protect human rights. On the contrary, the Australian voting record at the United Nations, the recognition of Indonesian sovereignty and the government's embellished historical account indicate that the human rights of the Timorese people were not a high priority, as discussed below. Significantly, Australian governments' singular failure to achieve any successes regarding the human rights of the East Timorese people is finally deflected onto Indonesia, with the statement: "Australia had hoped for more influence than it was ever able to achieve."[93]

United Nations: Australian voting and argument

Australian governments consistently upheld the Indonesian incorporation of East Timor in the United Nations. Between 1975 and 1982 the United Nations General Assembly annually condemned the violence and called for an act of self-determination to be held in East Timor. Australia voted in favour of the resolution in 1975, abstained for the next two years, and voted against the resolutions for the following five years.[94] *East Timor in Transition* omits to mention the Australian voting record. Instead there is a statement which places responsibility onto other states and the United Nations itself: "The General Assembly 1975-1982 adopted resolutions on the question of East Timor each year from 1975 to 1982, although by a declining majority of votes."[95] Admission of the Australian government's lack of support for East Timor was thus minimised and deflected onto others.

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[93] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 12.
[94] United Nations, *UN General Assembly Votes on East Timor* (General Assembly Resolutions 1975-1982), accessed 19 March, 2015, http://etan.org/etun/UNvotes.htm
[95] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 3, 4.

In March 1982, ex-Prime Minister Whitlam visited East Timor for three days, reporting on his return that all was well in the territory.[96] Later that year and a few days before the annual United Nations General Assembly vote on resolutions regarding East Timor, he appeared before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation, and stated: "It is high time that the question of East Timor was voted off the United Nations agenda and ceased to preoccupy and distract the nations of South-east Asia and the Pacific."[97] Thus the man who had been Prime Minister and in control of the Foreign Affairs portfolio in the time leading up to the invasion attempted to conceal the effects of actions for which he had more responsibility than any other Australian. In his status as a high profile ex-Prime Minister held in great esteem by large sections of the population, he had the means to influence the Labor government of the time. Instead, he chose to continue to support the policy that disregarded the rights of the Timorese people, treating their concerns as a distraction.

Military assistance to Indonesia

Australian government claims of concern for the human rights of the Timorese people in *East Timor in Transition* are further challenged by the continuing military assistance provided to Indonesia by Australia for the greater part of the occupation. The CAVR Report notes the Whitlam Government's initiation of a defence co-operation program with Indonesia in July 1972 (providing aircraft, training and intelligence cooperation), which was renewed and increased by the Fraser government in 1975. That aid was provided on condition that it not be used in East Timor nor for

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[96] Australian Information Service, *Transcript of Whitlam/Hastings press conference, Jakarta, 5 March 1982,* accessed 15 April, 2016, https://timorarchives.wordpress.com/2012/03/01/whitlam-hastings-1982/
[97] UN Press Release, Department of Public Information Press Section, GA/D/2334, November 9, 1982, quoted in *CAVR,* 7.1.380.

internal repression.[98] It is intriguing that such a stipulation was made, and that it was seen to be necessary to make it. Apparently the weaker partner in the relationship, Australia proved to have little control over Indonesia's use of aid and military hardware and training.[99]

After the Dili massacre the United States and some members of the European Union introduced partial embargoes on the provision of arms and military training to Indonesia.[100] Despite suspending some forms of aid at this time, Australia still emerged as the Indonesian military's leading provider of training.[101] For the years 1994-2000, an average of 200 Indonesian defence personnel received training each year. In 1993 Indonesia's Special Forces Command (Kopassus) began training in Australia.[102] Gunn notes that Australian claims that such training helped to sensitise trainees to human rights was proved wrong in East Timor.[103]

Regrettably, *East Timor in Transition* makes no mention of the levels of military aid to Indonesia during the time that East Timor was under Indonesian military control. On the contrary, it is stated that there was "Australian pressure for troop reductions in the territory."[104] Even accepting that this occurred, there are again no references provided, nor any indication as to the content of such "pressure".

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[98] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.1.126.
[99] Geoffrey C. Gunn, *Complicity in Genocide: Report to the East Timor "Truth Commission" on international actors* (Geoffrey C. Gunn, 2006),125 n.2.
[100] Gunn, *Complicity in Genocide,* 125; Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War,* 214 and 217.
[101] Gunn, *Complicity in Genocide,* 118.
[102] Gunn, *Complicity in Genocide,* 121.
[103] Gunn, *Complicity in Genocide,* 124.
[104] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 12.

Contradictions

One of the more astounding tasks of *East Timor in Transition* was that of explaining the contradictory Australian position of support for the principle of Timorese self-determination while facilitating its opposite – agreement with Indonesian sovereignty. *East Timor in Transition* maintains that "through to 30 August 1999, Australia's position was that the people of East Timor had yet to exercise their right to self-determination."[105] That assertion of constant Australian support for the East Timorese people's right to decide their own future was not supported by Australian government practice throughout the twenty-four year occupation, as has been detailed. It was also not supported by the letter of Prime Minister Howard to President Habibie dated 19 December 1998 which appears later in the book. In this letter, Howard states: "It has been a long-standing Australian position that the interests of Australia, Indonesia and East Timor are best served by East Timor remaining part of Indonesia."[106] The Australian government's claim in *East Timor in Transition* that Australia consistently upheld the Timorese people's right to self-determination is obviously false.

Clearly, government efforts to maintain two opposite positions simultaneously are a feature of the history. Such efforts were on display at the time of the 1975 invasion, as discussed in Chapter Five, when Australian lip-service to self-determination accompanied support for the seizure of East Timor. Little change from that position appears in this 2000 account of Australian involvement in East Timor's fortunes. The maintenance of such a contradictory position resembles that of the Indonesian government's claim of statement of support for a peaceful Portuguese decolonisation

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[105] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 13.
[106] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 181.

of Timor.[107] This claim was made three days before the invasion, with its troops

standing ready for attack. Similarly, the Australian government claimed it had always

supported the principle of Timor self-determination while actively facilitating

Indonesian sovereignty.

Timor Sea resources

Australian recognition of Indonesian sovereignty was closely bound up with

negotiations over the Timor Sea resources. *De facto* recognition of Indonesian

sovereignty occurred after the invasion and was followed by official *de jure*

recognition in January 1979.[108] In 1985, official acceptance of the sovereignty of

Indonesia over East Timor was confirmed.[109]

In 1974, the Australian Government considered the "geo-political sense" of having

Portuguese Timor incorporated into Indonesia, which would "help confirm our seabed

agreement with Indonesia...and induce a greater readiness on Indonesia's part to

discuss Indonesia's ocean strategy."[110] At the same time, it was stated:

> we should be careful not to be seen as pushing for self-government or
> independence for Portuguese Timor or for it to become part of Indonesia, as
> this would probably be interpreted as evidence of our self-interest in the
> seabed boundary dispute rather than a genuine concern for the future of
> Portuguese Timor.[111]

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[107] Way, Wendy, ed., "Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor, 1974-1976," (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2000), Doc. 358: 599, accessed August 9, 2014, https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Australia+and+the+Indonesian+Incorporation+of+Portuguese+Timor%2C+1974-1976&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b&gfe_rd=cr&dcr=0&ei=uQOuWfLIBIbr8wfRh4GwCQ
[108] Nevins, *A Not-so-distant horror,* 63.
[109] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.1.130.
[110] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 9 McCready to Feakes, 59.
[111] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc. 3 Policy Planning Paper, Canberra, 50.

In August 1975, on the eve of the invasion, Richard Woolcott stated that the closing

of the gap in the sea border (which had been agreed in 1972 with Indonesia) could be

more easily negotiated with Indonesia than with Portugal or an independent

Portuguese Timor.[112]

Following the invasion, *East Timor in Transition* reports the motivation of Australian

authorities to recognise the Indonesian incorporation of East Timor. Although the

invasion is lamented, the recognition of the incorporation was connected to maritime

boundary negotiations:

> On 15 December 1978, Peacock signalled that Australia would give *de jure*
> recognition to the Indonesian takeover, with the commencement of
> negotiations over the delimitation of the seabed boundary between East Timor
> and Australia early the following year. Peacock said that Australia had to face
> the realities of international law in conducting seabed negotiations and that
> this did not mean the Government condoned Indonesia's method of
> incorporating East Timor.[113]

It must be recognised that the Timor Gap Treaty signed with Indonesia in 1989 was a

breach of the obligation for states to not recognise territory acquired by force.[114] Yet

Simone King quotes a legal opinion that reference to East Timor in the Treaty as "the

Indonesian Province of East Timor" constituted one of the highest forms of *de jure*

recognition.[115] *East Timor in Transition* defends the Australian position by pointing

out that some thirty other nations also recognised Indonesian sovereignty over time,

either explicitly or by signing treaties which recognised the entity "Indonesia" as

defined in Indonesian law.[116] Nevertheless, none of these nations negotiated with

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[112] Way, *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation,* Doc.169 Canberra from Jakarta, 314.
[113] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 12.
[114] Roger S. Clark, "Timor Gap," in *East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation,* ed. Peter Carey and G. Carter Bentley: 73-94, (London: Cassell, 1995), 75.
[115] Simone King, "The Fate of Occupied Territory: Recognition, Non-Recognition, Self-Determination and Prolonged Occupation," 2005: 29-30, accessed June 2, 2016, http://www.wsrw.org/pa126x1750
[116] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 12.

Indonesia over material benefits relating to East Timor as did Australia. The force of Australia's legal recognition of an annexation constantly regarded as illegal by the United Nations is thus cushioned in *East Timor in Transition* by association with other nations' lesser acts of recognition, all of which, however, lacked the particular legal ramifications of Australia's *de jure* recognition. It is ironic that Australia was concerned to observe international law in relation to the Timor Sea while accepting the illegal occupation of East Timor.

The dependency of Australia on the Indonesian desire to subsume East Timor extended to imitation of tactics and willingness to present inconsistency and contradiction as acceptable policy. The voting record at the United Nations and continued military assistance demonstrate Australian subservience to Indonesian desires, serving Australian need for regional security. The negotiations over the Timor Sea signal the Australian awareness that complicity in persecution and dependency on large power can be profitable.[117]

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[117] Another instance of Australian dependence on Indonesian favour is shown in the case of approximately 1500 Timorese people who sought asylum in Australia after the Santa Cruz massacre. All were subjected to a protracted legal stalemate. Initially, the Australian government argued that as they were Portuguese citizens, they could apply to Portugal for protection. However, Australia had already argued that Portugal could not act on behalf of East Timor regarding the over matter of the Timor Sea, and it had argued from 1985 that the Timorese were Indonesian citizens. The Full Bench of the Federal Court ruled against the government in May 1997. After the referendum of 1999 the Australian government then argued that the Timorese could safely return to their homeland. This was again successfully challenged but for most asylum seekers it was a full 12 years after their application for asylum before residency in Australia was granted.

Features of Scapegoating in Australian Complicity

Crisis, Crime and Criteria for the Scapegoat

In order to demonstrate Australia's role regarding East Timor in greater detail, and with regard to Girard's insights into scapegoating, a case study is analysed. It concerns Monsignor da Costa Lopes, the Catholic Church's Apostolic Administrator of East Timor from 1977 to 1983.

Girard identifies consistent features, or stereotypes, that recur in the mythic representations of ancient persecutions and in modern cases of collective violence. Firstly, in these accounts of persecution, there are social crises which threaten the peace and stability of communities. Secondly, accusations are made against a person or group to identify a crime, which is interpreted as the origin or exacerbation of the crisis. Thirdly, some person or group displaying suspect features is blamed, becoming the scapegoat upon whom is heaped responsibility for the crime. Scapegoats are usually chosen because of their credibility as victims, and whose marginality serves to protect the accusers. Since the scapegoat caused the crisis, he/she/they must then be held accountable to restore equilibrium. The three initial stereotypes of persecution are the *crisis,* the *crime,* and then the *criteria* for the selection of the victim. The killing or expulsion of scapegoats is the fourth of Girard's stereotypes, that is, the unanimous collective *violence* done to the victim to reinstate communal stability, and the fifth is the peace or order that is established or restored following the scapegoating violence.[118]

In a general sense, one can identify these features in the East Timor situation:

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[118] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 82.

1) a security crisis caused by communism and Portuguese colonisation had arisen;

2) accusations were made that the East Timorese could not be self-governing and were supportive of communism;

3) certain features about East Timor (marking it as marginal and blame-worthy) were identified or supposed, such as its small size, communist leanings, and inability to be politically and economically self-sufficient;

4) violence was perpetrated against East Timor by the Indonesian government, supported by Australian and the US, supposedly to prevent a communist threat; and,

5) following this violence, a type of order or control was given to East Timor and international relations regarding East Timor although this order was protested against and resisted.[119]

More specifically, Girard's categories of *crisis, crime, and criteria for the choice of the victim* are observable when considering the high profile public incident in Australia relating to East Timor which involved Monsignor da Costa Lopes. In this case, the crisis being experienced by Australian governments was the possible destabilisation of the relationship with Indonesia resulting from Australian people's opposition to policies favouring Indonesia at the expense of East Timor.

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[119] Joel Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 19; 93-101.

Case Study: Monsignor da Costa Lopes

Crisis

Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopes had been appointed to administer the diocese of Dili in 1977.[120] Rather than include the diocese in the Indonesian Bishops' Conference upon the resignation of Bishop José Ribeiro, the Vatican undertook direct control, and appointed Lopes as Apostolic Administrator.[121] He held the post until his forced resignation in 1983.[122] During his tenure, famine took hold in Timor in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the Indonesian military attempted to gain control of the territory.[123] In efforts to weaken their resistance, ABRI forcibly moved people and deliberately destroyed their crops, livestock and food stores, thus depriving them of the means of subsistence.[124] The CAVR report notes that the people "were positively denied access to food and its sources."[125] In particular, forced displacement into crowded resettlement camps (where restriction on movement to find or grow food was enforced by the military) resulted in starvation and death of "horrendous proportions" especially in 1978 and 1979.[126]

International aid agencies received reports of famine as early as April 1977 and a visit by foreign ambassadors in September 1978 raised further awareness. Humanitarian relief was controlled, however, solely by the Indonesian military which refused entry to agencies until September 1979.[127] Such access was granted once the military believed that the bulk of the population was under control and that the resistance was

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[120] Rowena Lennox, *Fighting Spirit of East Timor: The Life of Martinho da Costa Lopes* (Annandale NSW: Pluto Press, 2000), vii.
[121] Lennox, *Fighting Spirit of East Timor,* 130.
[122] Commission, *CAVR,* 3.15.401.
[123] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.3.20.
[124] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.3.114.
[125] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.3.20.
[126] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.3.203.
[127] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.3.209.

significantly weakened.[128] By that time, 300,000 people (55% of the population) were found to be seriously malnourished.[129] Delegates from the International Red Cross described the situation "as bad as Biafra."[130] News and photos of the starvation stirred Australian agencies into action which included ongoing discussion of Australian policy.[131] While the ensuing aid program relieved the famine considerably,[132] the long-term effects on the Timorese population were immense. The huge death toll in such appalling circumstances brought further individual and communal sorrow and trauma. The social upheaval of continual displacement, threat and starvation for political purposes violated the people's rights, traditions and lifestyle.[133]

Subsequently Bishop John Gerry, the Secretary of the Australian Bishops' Conference, wrote a letter to Monsignor Lopes on 11 November 1981 asking for information and advice concerning the situation in East Timor.[134] Bishop Gerry specifically enquired about the social and political situation, types of assistance required, and what stand the Australian Church agencies should take, referring to the "expected famine over the New Year."[135] Lopes' reply on 19 November 1981 described the Timorese situation as "tragic", wrote of atrocities committed in Lacluta where he claimed that five hundred Timorese were killed, and referred, as Bishop Gerry had done, to the "expected famine".[136] The publication of the contents of Lopes' letter moved Australian and international agencies to prepare to gather and send aid to

[128] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.3.231.
[129] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.3.236.
[130] Commission, *CAVR,* 7.3.238.
[131] Peter Rodgers, "East Timor: a continuing game of face-saving?" *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 7 November, 1979, 7.
[132] Commission *CAVR,* 7.3.509, 52, 53.
[133] Commission *CAVR,* 7.3.502, 4-6.
[134] J.J. Gerry, *Letter to Mgr Lopes* November 11, 1981, accessed 2 May 2016, https://timorarchives.wordpress.com/?s=John+Gerry
[135] Gerry, *Letter to Mgr Lopes*.
[136] Monsignor da Costa Lopes, *Reply to Bishop Gerry* November 19, 1981, accessed May 2, 2016, https://timorarchives.wordpress.com/?s=John+Gerry

the territory as they had done so recently in the late 1970s.[137] Dormant popular

opposition to the Indonesian invasion surfaced again in large sections of Australia in

the face of further news of famine, fuelling antagonistic sentiment to government

policies.

It was in this context that Gough Whitlam and the journalist Peter Hastings undertook

a three-day visit to East Timor to survey the situation. They gave a press conference

in Jakarta on March 5, 1982, before returning to Australia. As will be detailed,

Whitlam then launched a ferocious campaign of attack against Monsignor Lopes

which lasted for months.

The genesis of the visit illustrates the crisis inherent in the Australia-Indonesia

relationship in regard to East Timor. During the interview, Whitlam refused to say on

whose invitation he had made the trip, claiming that while he and Hastings travelled

with the Jakarta representative of the International Red Cross, he didn't know "how all

the arrangements were made."[138] Whitlam later admitted, however, that he was

briefed by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and that he called

on President Suharto and the acting Foreign Minister in Jakarta before returning to

Australia.[139] Pat Walsh (later an advisor to the CAVR) maintained that the visit was at

the invitation of the Indonesian government as a way of weakening an Australian

Senate Inquiry into East Timor which was to be conducted around that time. He

referred to reports that "Indonesian Embassy officials in Canberra expressed their

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[137] "Backing for Timor plea", *Northern Territory News,* January 11, 1982, accessed June 1, 2016, https://timorarchives.wordpress.com/?s=John+Gerry
[138] Australian Information Service. *Transcript of Whitlam/Hastings press conference, Jakarta, 5 March 1982*: 12, accessed April 15, 2016, https://timorarchives.wordpress.com/2012/03/01/whitlam-hastings-1982/
[139] Gough Whitlam and Richard Andrews, "Frontline," *ABC Radio,* March 26, 1982: 2.

extreme sensitivity about the forthcoming Senate Inquiry."[140] Such sensitivity no doubt signalled to the government that the desired equilibrium in the relationship with Indonesia could again be at risk. Walsh also maintained that a further reason for the visit was to discredit Lopes, designed to throw doubt on the adverse reports on the situation emanating from the Catholic Church and to erode the Timorese people's confidence in the Church and its "focus for nationalist sentiment."[141] A weak Senate report and doubtful accounts of the situation in East Timor would lessen the newsworthiness of Timor, thereby averting a further crisis in the relationship with Indonesia. As a self-styled "elder statesman"[142] Whitlam would also benefit from a reduction in negative accounts of the outcome of the Indonesian incorporation in which he had played an influential part. Such a social crisis required a resolution with an appropriate scapegoat, thus diverting attention from the complicity of the Australian state in the outcomes of the Indonesian annexation.

Crime

Australian governments had already failed to address the real crime - the treatment of the Timorese people - demonstrating that the maintenance of the relationship with Indonesia remained more important than Timorese lives. Along with the media, the government was satisfied to comment on the tragedy of a possible impending famine without reference to the cause.

Whitlam, too, averted his gaze from the system which had already decimated the people and which threatened another famine. He had evaded the consequences of his short-sighted approach to the Timorese question when in office, neglecting to use his

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[140] Pat Walsh, "Timor Report: Whitlam and Hastings Observed," *Arena,* No. 60, (1982): 136.
[141] Walsh, "Timor Report," 141.
[142] Australian Information Service, *Transcript,* 11.

considerable political strengths and the international standing of Australia to attempt

to mediate. In this instance he chose to address the mention of famine and atrocity in

the letter by Monsignor da Costa Lopes rather than the cause of the problem. The

tenacity of his denunciation ensured that, far from being a catalyst for further

investigation of the possible famine, public focus was pointed towards the letter and

its writer, who was painted as villainous and malign.

At the press conference in Jakarta on 5 March, Whitlam discussed Lopes' reply to

Bishop Gerry's suggestion of an expected famine. Throughout the interview Whitlam

repudiated the claim of such an event and accused Lopes of knowing about

negotiations for adequate Australian assistance when he wrote to Bishop Gerry.

Whitlam stated: "I cannot understand or explain how the Monsignor came to send that

misleading and cruel letter, or why in a word the Monsignor perpetrated this wicked

act."[143] In an ABC interview later that month Whitlam repeated his claim that

Monsignor Lopes was a liar, and declared his view that Lopes suffered from an

identity crisis upon realising that "Indonesia is now doing much more for the people

of East Timor than the Portuguese ever did."[144] Whitlam signalled the real cause of

the crisis as he apportioned blame:

> this alarmist, inaccurate letter to the Australian Bishops.... has done a great
> deal of harm to relations between the Australian and Indonesian governments,
> and the Australian and Indonesian peoples.[145]

Further, he alluded to social disquiet as a result of the letter in Australia, and blamed

Lopes:

> The Monsignor has distressed hundreds of thousands of Australians who
> responded generously when the last news came out over two years ago about a

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[143] Australian Information Service, *Transcript,* 2.
[144] Whitlam and Andrews, "Frontline," 2.
[145] Australian Information Service, *Transcript,* 2.

famine in East Timor and the effect that that had on the health, now and for the future, of so many of the population. And one expects that humane, charitable people in Australia would have responded to his assessment.[146]

Thus Whitlam attributed to Lopes the crime of falsely warning of starvation, thereby precipitating damage to the relationship between Australia and Indonesia and causing Australians distress. The fundamental crime of the atrocities against civilians committed by the Indonesian military was ignored.

The language Whitlam used in the series of interviews and in an article he wrote for the Bulletin in March 1982 is extreme. Describing Lopes' letter as "cruel" and "wicked", and its writer "malicious" and "mendacious" as well as using the unqualified designation "liar", is extraordinary.[147] Such language is not only immoderate or intemperate; it is *irrational* when seen in the context of the actual state of peril, prolonged suffering and violent deaths of people to whom the letter refers. Whitlam's actions and statements are aptly summed up with a statement from Girard: "It is undeniably and universally true that the less rational the persecutors' conviction the more formidable that conviction becomes."[148]

For months Whitlam pursued the matter. His denouncement of the Bishop's supposed crime was equalled only by his lavish praise of the system responsible for the situation of the Timorese people:

> I am convinced that what the Indonesian Government is doing in East Timor ... is visibly beneficial ... There's no denying the evidence of one's eyes. There are new schools, including secondary schools, there are new or reconstructed hospitals and dispensaries. There are now many more kilometres of asphalt road, and there is proper provision for increasing the amount of food.[149]

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[146] Australian Information Service, *Transcript,* 2.
[147] Gough Whitlam, "The Truth about Timor," *The Bulletin,* March 30, 1982, 79-81.
[148] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 35-36.
[149] Whitlam and Andrews, "Frontline," 3.

Despite the effort to extol the Indonesian occupation and thereby redeem his own part in its genesis, Whitlam's excessive language of accusation betrays him as collaborating with persecution. As Girard explains: "in historical persecutions the conviction is not so overwhelming as to conceal its character and the process of accusation from which it stems."[150]

Whitlam was embroiled in a crisis in which he had played a leading role. He attempted to diffuse the crisis by diverting attention away from the famine and occupation with the accusation of the crime of false reporting. His visit to Timor and consequent statements denying the oppression reveal him to be compromised by his own past, producing a series of texts of persecution found in the transcripts of the interviews he gave and in his writings.

These texts are not important simply in regard to Whitlam's record, but because they became the means of diverting attention away from Australian complicity in the main cause of the famine – the illegitimate coloniser, Indonesia. For instance, while admitting some Indonesian "bungling", a Sydney Morning Herald editorial in January 1982 extols Jakarta's "enormous and largely unremarked efforts...in the fields of health, education and agriculture."[151] It refers to the danger posed by "Australia's nagging, relentless criticism of the Timor affair."[152] The editorial declares that the "real point at issue is that East Timor has become a running ulcer in Australian-Indonesian relations."[153] Thus Monsignor Lopes' claims about possible starvation became a vehicle for media support of government policy on East Timor, exoneration

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[150] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 35-36.
[151] "Timor trench," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* January 12, 1982: 6.
[152] "Timor trench," 6.
[153] "Timor trench," 6.

of Indonesian rule and belittling of public criticism. No doubt such reports were comfort for Mr Whitlam and for those who fully accepted the incorporation of East Timor as being the best situation for all concerned. Gunn refers to sections of the Australian press and government who were willing, as Whitlam was, to champion Indonesian rule in Timor. As evidence they broadcasted their limited experience gained in rare and brief visits.[154] Thus, with the media focus on the credibility of Monsignor Lopes' claims, any Australian responsibility regarding the underlying causes of the problem was ignored while East Timor was again blamed for causing disruption to the Australia-Indonesia relationship.

Criteria for the selection of victim

The third of Girard's features of persecution is that of the reasons for the choice of a particular victim. The credibility and marginality of traditional scapegoats are fulfilled in the selection of Monsignor da Costa Lopes. While foreigners, the poor, someone with a physical abnormality such as colour of skin, or ethnic or religious minorities are obvious targets for scapegoating, Girard adds another marginal group to the list: a rich or powerful person, or a leader.[155] Monsignor da Costa Lopes matches well some of these criteria. He was the leader of a marginal group, while also being a non-white foreigner to a mostly white Australia. He was a *de facto* spokesman for the Timorese while also being the official leader of the Catholic Church in East Timor, the only institution which existed there besides the Indonesian military and government agencies. His was a place of privilege and power, which he used to advocate for a beleaguered people facing extraordinary threat to their culture and their lives. Under

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[154] Geoffrey C. Gunn, *A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor* (Manila: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1994), 218-219.
[155] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 18.

Monsignor Lopes' leadership, the Church symbolised succour and hope to the Timorese. As its increasingly outspoken leader, he became a focus for the Timorese and a target for the Indonesians and their supporters, including Australians. His stand for his people and their welfare in the exercise of his office marked him out as a threat, one who would not comply with the accepted norms of behaviour required by the Indonesians or the political expediency of Australian governments.

Further, the process of scapegoating Lopes included discrediting his opinion and experience as well as attacking his authority. For example, Lopes' comments from the pulpit on the people's suffering were denigrated by Whitlam as "what he described as a homily."[156] Whitlam always used inverted commas when referring to him as "the Bishop", thus underlining his lesser status as an Apostolic Administrator despite his work and responsibilities being identical to that of a Bishop.[157]

Violent Scapegoating and Peace Restored

The continuing disturbance in Australia over the Lopes affair points to substantial underlying guilt and anger concerning the Timor situation. Distracted by Whitlam's attacks, the media concentrated more on the words of Monsignor Lopes than on the issue of possible famine to which he was referring, to the extent that the Australian Council for Overseas Aid requested a retraction by the Sydney Morning Herald concerning claimed misreporting of the Monsignor's words.[158] Australian unease was thus sublimated into more academic questions concerning the truth or otherwise of particular statements. Nevertheless, Lopes' warnings about famine were vindicated,

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[156] Australian Information Service, *Transcript,* 4.
[157] Whitlam, "The Truth about Timor," 79-80.
[158] "Letter: Timor Bishop defended," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* April 5, 1982, 6.

with, for example, a 1984 report that stated "the threat of widespread famine...is intensifying."[159] Yet after Whitlam's criticism of him and the adverse publicity given to Indonesia as a result of the Monsignor's words, Indonesian military personnel pressured the Papal Envoy to Indonesia to advise the Vatican to remove Lopes and in 1983 he was forced to resign.[160] Girard's fourth feature is here evident: the scapegoating of Monsignor da Costa Lopes was complete. The accusations were primarily conveyed through the media and back-room politics, but the effect was a coerced and violent expulsion. As a result, the relationship between the Australian and Indonesian governments was rescued from a crisis, and was restored, for a time, as harmonious and ordered. Lopes' experience clearly demonstrates Australian complicity in scapegoating East Timor, particularly in the government and media, to support Indonesian occupation.

Conclusion

The bedrock of Australian policy in the region for the 24 years of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor was the desire to cement a positive relationship with Indonesia, to the detriment of both the Timorese people and to Australian claims to fairness and independence. The policies required Australian official responses to massacres, famines, asylum seekers, the Timor Sea resources and UN resolutions that are now seen as unprincipled and culpable. Australian government publications on the events sought to minimise negative opinion of Indonesia and Australia. They are "texts of persecution" and thus continue to scapegoat the Timorese people.

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[159] "East Timor beset by famine," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* January 6, 1984, 4.
[160] Commission, *CAVR,* 3.16 415.

Conclusion to Section Two

In this section of the dissertation, an interpretation of the history of East Timor from 1975 to 1999 using the insights of René Girard demonstrates the victimisation of a small and relatively powerless people. Chapter Four demonstrated that East Timor was sacrificed by Australia to larger security goals against its enemies, beginning a pattern of behaviour that would extend to the end of the 20th century. Furthermore, the role of texts in Girard's theories of scapegoating has shown East Timor to be written out of the much-cherished war history of Australia, as discussed in Chapter Four. The Australian performance at the time of the invasion, investigated in Chapter Five, allows for Girard's designation of the "romantic lie" to show the extent of Australian mimetic dependence on Indonesia. In Chapter Six, investigation of the government document *East Timor in Transition* demonstrates also that a text can itself be an instrument of persecution. Through the distortions brought by bias, omission and embellishment, this official government account of history has continued the scapegoating of East Timor.

Australian involvement in this history raises questions about Australian self-perception, and stands in contrast to Australia's later support of East Timor. The next section considers the change in the Australian position in relation to East Timor in reference to Girard's insights into conversion, showing how the relationship between Australia and East Timor as well as Australia and Indonesia changed as popular advocacy for East Timor gained traction.

SECTION THREE

CONVERSION TOWARDS THE VICTIM

Introduction

The previous section applied a Girardian interpretation to the record of significant

Australian policies, decisions and actions during historical events concerning East

Timor. This last section of the thesis uses Girard's insights to interpret the responses

of Australian civil society and government at the close of the occupation in 1999. The

relationship between the official Australian change of policy in the late 1990s which

enabled a practical government response, and the influence on that change exerted by

domestic response to the suffering of the Timorese people invite investigation as they

display a major and rapid change in the Australian relationship with East Timor.

This change provokes important questions: How did an issue which had been of

constant concern to relatively few for many years evolve into comprehensive

Australian government intervention? To what extent did the actions of civil society

affect change of government policy? What influence did the Timorese people have on

Australia? How does a Girardian analysis throw light on Australian actions?

The section discusses the political and moral influences that caused change, and refers

to the lack of accountability for the crimes against humanity which had been

committed throughout the occupation. Most importantly it sees the inspiration given

by the Timorese people as the catalyst for the Australian conversion which

accompanied the events of the end of the decade of the 1990s. Through lack of

revenge, nonviolence and forgiveness, the Timorese people demonstrated the response to violence which Girard sees as the only way that violence can be overcome.

CHAPTER SEVEN
AUSTRALIAN CONVERSION

Introduction

Chapter Seven describes ways in which Australian civil society influenced and was affected by events concerning the Timorese people. First, the principled and long-standing efforts of Australian solidarity groups, to which the inspiration provided by the Timorese people was crucial, are considered as part of the international movement of support of East Timor. The contribution of the Catholic Church is considered here. Second, the advocacy of civil society is seen to have reached a critical mass as the violence against the Timorese people became the focus of media and government attention, revealing the Timorese people as victim, not only of the military regime, but of decades of Australian collusion. Third, discussion then focuses on the influence of civil society on government decisions, concluding that political manoeuvring merged with popular outrage to cause momentous regional change. This indicated a movement towards the victim by the Australian government and people that contributed to a major change in the relationship with East Timor.

The end of the Indonesian occupation

The vote for freedom

The conclusion of the long sacrifice of East Timor occurred in the final months of 1999. Following Indonesian President Habibie's announcement in favour of a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the Timorese people regarding their status, an agreement between the UN, Portugal and Indonesia on the process was signed in New York on 5 May 1999. After formal establishment by the Security Council in June, the United Nations Assistance Mission for East Timor (UNAMET) received enthusiastic international support, including from the Australian government.[1] Preparations for the referendum were undertaken swiftly, accompanied by increasing military-inspired militia violence within the territory, as it became apparent that the vote would likely be in favour of independence from Indonesia.[2] International diplomacy tried to balance justice and appeasement as reports of intimidation and massacres filled news reports.

On 30 August 1999, the Timorese people voted for freedom from Indonesian rule with a registered voter turn-out of 98.6%. Despite intimidation and violence they delivered a result of 78.5% in favour of independence. Once the result of the vote was announced on 4 September, violence against the population increased, resulting in the withdrawal of the unarmed UN staff to the UN compound in Dili, while Timorese across the districts who had worked for the UN were left to the mercy of the militia.[3] The fury of the Indonesian military and their Timorese proxies resulted in over 1500

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[1] James Dunn, *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence,* 3rd ed. (Double Bay, NSW: Longueville Books, 2003), 347.
[2] Dunn, *East Timor*, 354.
[3] Dunn, *East Timor*, 360.

deaths and the decimation of the infrastructure.[4] Killings, looting and burning

accompanied the forcible removal of 150,000 people to West Timor. Difficult

international diplomacy accelerated – involving Australia and the United States. After

weeks of destruction, these negotiations resulted in a UN intervention which took the

form of the International Force for East Timor (InterFET), authorised and despatched

under the leadership of Australian Major General Peter Cosgrove. InterFET arrived in

East Timor on 20 September 1999, three weeks after the ballot, and at its height

comprised 5,000 Australian troops among 11,000 from across the world. On 25

October, the Indonesian Parliament annulled the 1976 incorporation of East Timor as

its 27th Province. The UN then established a Transitional Authority (UNTAET)

charged with the task of guiding East Timor towards building itself as a nation.[5]

There were no Australian InterFET deaths as a result of the military aspects of the

intervention. Residue of the diplomatic tensions between Australia and Indonesia

remained, including some distrust (although trade, investment, education and military

cooperation continued or resumed) and Prime Ministers and Presidents subsequently

engaged with each other on state visits. The alliance between the governments of the

two nations weathered the storms of 1999, the relationship re-established itself. In

contrast, the effects on the Timorese people were devastating, adding to the numbers

of people tortured, murdered or traumatised throughout the previous decades.

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[4] Bob Breen, *Mission Accomplished: East Timor* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, no date), 18-19.
The InterFET assessment of damage ranges from minimal (Lolotoe) to 50% (Remixio) with most
places upwards of 60%/ Los Palos in the east (70%), Suai (south) and Balibo (west) both at 95%, and
the capital Dili assessed at 100%.
[5] Dunn, *East Timor*, 362.

Political motivations for change

After a twenty-four year occupation, Indonesia relinquished control of East Timor. Complex international and internal political realities contributed to this reversal of Indonesian policy. In turn, those changes required major shifts in Australian policy in Timor's regard.

Chief among the causes of the Indonesian change was the demise of the Suharto regime in 1998 in association with the Asian financial crisis. The democratic reforms of Suharto's successor President B.J. Habibie then introduced major changes affecting the status of East Timor. Compliance with Indonesian preferences had been the hallmark of the Australian side of the relationship, which suggests that in whatever way Indonesia chose to deal with East Timor, either by giving special autonomy to the territory or jettisoning it, then Australia would feel obliged to agree. The Australian government seemed largely to follow Indonesia's lead, a move which had the added political benefit of addressing a situation which had been causing Australian domestic dissent. Thus, in noting new policy openness in Indonesia under Habibie, the Australian government was able to subtly shift policy in favour of East Timor while avoiding overt destabilisation of its relationship with Indonesia.

Changes in Australian policy

Prime Minister John Howard had written of his realisation early in 1998 that the new President Habibie looked on Timor as "a costly drag."[6] This realisation influenced

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[6] John Howard, *Lazarus Rising: A personal and political autobiography* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2011), 340.

subsequent Coalition policy.[7] Howard was also aware of the growing appetite of the

Australian population for a resolution to this problem:

> There was a new president, with a new attitude on an old and troubling issue
> for many Australians; taking advantage of such opportunities to pursue change
> was what practical advances in foreign policy was all about.[8]

Whether the "old and troubling issue" would have been addressed had there not been

a new president with new attitudes is a matter of conjecture. The situation was fraught

with political and regional dangers for Howard's government. On the one hand was

the desire to continue to build a positive relationship with Indonesia, and on the other,

the increasing "domestic dissent" over Timor was offering electoral provocations.

Hugh White reported the government's key policy objectives regarding East Timor

which were enunciated in the first part of 1999:

> the relationship with Indonesia was more important to Australia than the future of
> East Timor, so that we should avoid outcomes which damaged or jeopardised that
> relationship,[9]

and

> the relationship with TNI was especially important, because of its expected role in
> Indonesia's political future, so special care should be taken to protect that
> relationship.[10]

Retaining the advantages of the friendship of Indonesia, however, regardless of

Timorese matters, was complicated by the new challenges of relating to a changing

government under President Habibie. Additionally, Australia had to consider its

relationship with the powerful military bloc which retained many seats in the

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[7] Howard, *Lazarus Rising*, 340.
[8] Howard, *Lazarus Rising,* 341.
[9] Hugh White, "The Road to INTERFET: Reflections on Australian Strategic Decisions Concerning East Timor, December 1998-September 1999," *Institute for Regional Security* Vol. 4 No. 1 (Autumn 2008): 74, accessed September 5, 2017,
https://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/Resources/Files/vol4no1White.pdf
[10] White, "The Road to INTERFET," 74.

Indonesian parliament and exerted major influence.[11] In fact, the Australian government's own preference was for East Timor to remain part of Indonesia, a desire expressed as late as 1998-1999, which indicated official willingness to allow the occupation to continue. This was illustrated when President Habibie offered an autonomy package to East Timor in July 1998 that signalled an impending change. Howard wrote to Habibie in December of that year, reiterating Australian support for Indonesia's sovereignty, and stating that the interests of all concerned "are best served by East Timor remaining part of Indonesia".[12] Howard had suggested that Habibie avoid "an early and final decision" on self-determination by arranging for the deferral of a referendum on East Timor's status "for many years."[13] Interestingly, Howard's mention in the letter of the Matignon Accords in New Caledonia may have suggested "the implicit correlation drawn between French colonialism and Indonesia's occupation of East Timor."[14] Thus it could well have been judged by Habibie as an affront to Indonesia's long-claimed opposition to colonial rule, and thus an insult. One month later, Habibie announced the startling decision that the Timorese would be offered a choice between autonomy within Indonesia or independence.[15]

In keeping with past practice Australia attempted to maintain the appearance of support for Indonesia. At the same time it endeavoured to avoid anything which might jeopardise the means by which East Timor could repudiate Indonesia, thus honouring the other prong of the Australian contradictory stand, that of support for Timorese

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[11] White, "The Road to INTERFET," 74.
[12] Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (DFAT), *East Timor in Transition 1998-2000: An Australian Policy Challenge* (2001), 181.
[13] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* 182.
[14] Grayson J. Lloyd, "The Diplomacy on East Timor", in *Out of the Ashes: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of East Timor,* ed. James J. Fox and Dionisio Babo Soares, (Adelaide: Crawford House Publishing, 2000), 88.
[15] Don Greenlees and Robert Garran, *Deliverance: The inside story of East Timor's fight for freedom* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 103.

self-determination. Such a position required similar duplicity to that of previous years,

where excusing, explaining or ignoring Indonesian practice in East Timor occupied

Australian governments. This was accomplished, for example, in relation to the

attacks by the Indonesians and their militias against independence supporters, where

the Australian government repeated its constant excuses for Indonesian actions.

Nevins states:

> Publicly the Howard government – despite overwhelming evidence to the
> contrary – continued to pretend that the violence perpetrated by pro-
> Independence forces was not the result of official policy in Jakarta or within
> the military high command but, instead, was the work of 'rogue elements'.[16]

Australian government support for Indonesian policies and actions continued,

ensuring that the position of East Timor was consistently seen as that of the obstacle

to the Australian-Indonesian partnership. East Timor was the "pebble in the shoe",[17]

the problem to be solved, and thus, the victim.

A major development which influenced government and emboldened the solidarity

movement was the reversal of Labor Party policy. Labor changed its position in

January 1998 in favour of "a process of negotiation through which the people of East

Timor can exercise their right of self-determination."[18] Thus the government had to

juggle its compromised policy in the face of two challenges: that of the speed of the

Indonesian changes with which the Australians officially did not agree, and that of

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[16] Joseph Nevins, *A Not-So-Distant Horror: Mass Violence in East Timor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 121.

[17] The phrase "pebble in the shoe" was used by Ali Alatas, Indonesia's Foreign Minister 1988-1999, who subsequently wrote the book *The Pebble in the Shoe: the diplomatic struggle for East Timor.* The phrase has also been associated with Gareth Evans, Australian Foreign Minister (1988-1996), regarding his comments about the Santa Cruz massacre and his role in the Timor Gap agreement. See https://newmatilda.com/2010/02/02/pebble-gareths-shoe/

[18] Clinton Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 174.

political and popular championing of the Timorese cause. White maintains that Howard's change of tactic:

> was to ensure that Australian policy was not 'left behind' by moves in Jakarta, especially as the Labor opposition had already started to move away from the old consensus on that policy and was more actively advocating changes in East Timor's status.[19]

Kelly comments that both the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, "did not seek East Timor's independence by accident or mistake – their aim was to remove the main obstacle to better ties with Indonesia."[20] Thus changes of policy did not indicate any fundamental change in the relationship with East Timor. Officially, that relationship continued to be an expression of Australia's dependence on Indonesia, regardless of reversal of the measures taken to implement that dependence.

It can be seen that the change in Australian policy was in large part a *realpolitik* set of decisions made to ensure the continuance of a positive relationship with Indonesia in view of the immense political developments in Indonesia itself. The Australian decisions involved calculations that the best way to remain in favour with Indonesia in the long term was to steer alongside the shifting political and economic landscape, and to manoeuvre policy in line with changes in Indonesia, even if that meant risking short-term relational strain. Thus the victimage mechanism which had governed the Australia-East Timor relationship for decades was played out to the end. The plight of the victim East Timor was subordinate to the status and good name of the perpetrators of the violence. The Australian desire had been to secure its relationship with Indonesia, a desire which had required complicity in the occupation of East Timor.

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[19] White, The Road to INTERFET," 73.
[20] Paul Kelly, *The March of Patriots: the struggle for modern Australia* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2011), 514.

Australia was now embroiled in a complex situation in which, again, it was the Timorese people who suffered.

The question arises as to what extent the Howard government desired a just outcome for East Timor. Publicly, government pronouncements consistently upheld the practice of supporting Indonesia's position. Nevertheless, it is true that in the name of Australia, the Howard government responded to the changing circumstances in Indonesia in a manner which was positive towards East Timor's prospects of freedom. Such support was viewed by many in Indonesia as unwarranted interference and put some pressure on the relationship, as has been noted. However, there was no initiative on East Timor's behalf on the part of the Coalition government, even by way of mild diplomatic challenge, as is clear from official historical documents. Instead, political manoeuvring in the late 1990s was largely in response to changes which the Indonesian administration had themselves set in train so unexpectedly.

Nevertheless, I argue that both the Labor Party's break with bipartisan tradition and the Coalition's policy change was influenced heavily by the unrelenting campaign of ordinary Australians to see justice done. The growth of significant features of Australian support - advocacy and welfare- influenced more and more Australians who pressured both government and opposition for change. Media interest and improving communications revealed the extent of the mayhem. As the image of the victim East Timor became clearer, Australian people's pressure increased to an extent that past political certainties could not withstand it. A consideration of this successful Australian support for East Timor as victim is now discussed.

Civil Society

The popular support for the Timorese cause – expressed, for example, in Australian domestic dissent concerning the Indonesian occupation - was motivated by the actions of civil society groups and actors who kept the Timorese cause alive in the public imagination through consistent advocacy. International civil society's support for the Timorese people took many years to grow and consisted of the efforts of a small number of dedicated citizens across the world who worked to make the suffering of the Timorese people known.[21] Australian solidarity movements were integral to this support. The influence of civil society was a crucial element in the changes which occurred.

Naidoo and Borren summarise civil society as "the arena, outside the state and the market, which is created by individual and collective action to advance shared interests."[22] Such shared interests can serve the general good or be designed to benefit a minority. These groups can contain a variety of ideological positions, such that they do not necessarily "speak with one voice."[23] Ciobanu states that the diversity of vision and values in these groups gives them strength. "This diverse spectrum of associations points toward one of the essential features of civil society, its pluralistic nature, since no group claims to represent the interests of the whole."[24]

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[21] Carmen Budiardjo, "The International solidarity movement for East Timor: a weapon more powerful than guns," *Tapol,* 17 May 2002, accessed 5 October 2016, http://www.tapol.org/news-and-reports/press-statements/international-solidarity-movement-east-timor-weapon-more-powerful; Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor,* 91-97.

[22] Kumi Naidoo and Sylvia Borren, "Civil Society," in *International Development: Ideas, Experience, and Prospects*, ed. Currie-Alder, Bruce, Ravi Kanbur, David M. Malone, and Rohinton Medhora, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2014): 6, accessed 30 September 2016, doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199671656.003.0047.

[23] Naidoo and Borren, "Civil Society," 2.

[24] Monica Ciobanu, "Civil Society," in *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice,* ed. Gary L. Anderson & Kathryn G. Herr, (Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, Inc., 2007): 2, accessed September 29, 2016, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412956215.n185

Sets of shared values give civil society its "normative character", enabling people from various geographical and group bases to transcend their limitations for the common good.[25] Motivated by concepts of justice, civil society can exercise the key democratic function of challenging the structures of power, particularly on behalf of those who suffer disadvantage.[26] In the context of shared appreciation of universal human rights, both "religious" and "secular" groups and people can unite for common purposes.[27] International support for East Timor demonstrated these values. The CAVR report also identified particular characteristics of the civil society solidarity with East Timor, which included nonviolence, favouring principle over strategy, cooperating with government and business when appropriate, being non party-political, and welcoming contributions from many people.[28]

International support for East Timor

While the civil society movement of support for East Timor was consistent (though it waxed and waned), the 1990s saw a resurgence of concern. The international publicity surrounding the Santa Cruz (Dili) massacre in 1991 brought the issue of Timor forcefully into the public domain. Seminars and conferences linked people from a range of nations who worked together and established solidarity groups to share information and devise strategies for the support of East Timor.[29] Gatherings of some influential persons continually called on Indonesia to observe the United Nations resolutions on East Timor and challenged governments to cease the arms trade with Indonesia. Support groups were established and strengthened in various nations,

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[25] Ciobanu, "Civil Society," 2.
[26] Naidoo and Borren, "Civil Society," 8; Ciobanu, "Civil Society," 2.
[27] Ciobanu, "Civil Society," 3.
[28] Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR),* (Dili, TL: CAVR, 2005)*, 7.1.6.430. 526.
[29] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.487.

including Portugal, Britain, the United States, Japan, The Philippines, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland and Indonesia itself. Amnesty International and other NGOs consistently issued reports about the human rights situation in East Timor, while solidarity groups such as the influential East Timor Action Network (ETAN) continued support for East Timor for decades.[30] In 1994 the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET) was established, coordinating solidarity across Asia, despite opposition from Indonesia and some other ASEAN nations.[31] Importantly, it challenged the notion that East Timor had no support in Asia.[32] Despite limited memberships, networking among such groups increased their effectiveness.

Inspired by the nonviolent resistance of the Timorese people (to be discussed in detail in Chapter Eight), an increasing number of people across the world organised to support them and protest against the repressive Indonesian occupation. The growing international support was substantially motivated by the moving evidence of the victimisation of the Timorese which gradually began to seep out of the territory.[33] There was also a shift in official government positions during the 1990s. For example, the US administration finally took a sympathetic interest in Timor in the late 1990s, acknowledging its tardiness in providing the leverage which its position in the world could have given had there been the political will.[34]

The organisation of international solidarity to raise awareness of the Timorese situation was pivotal in its eventual success. The response to the Santa Cruz massacre

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[30] See http//:www.etan.org
[31] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.485.
[32] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.485.
[33] For example see Tapol Bulletin, No 108, December 1991, accessed April 6, 2016,
  http://vuir.vu.edu.au/26096/
[34] Arnold S. Kohen, *From the Place of the Dead: The epic struggles of Bishop Belo of East Timor*
(New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 290.

is the most significant example of this awareness-raising, and is often discussed as a turning point in public consciousness regarding Timor, influencing the international solidarity movement markedly. The filming of the atrocity by Max Stahl was crucial to international understanding of the situation as it was the first time that visual evidence of the Indonesian military oppression victimisation of the Timorese people was broadcast.[35] The testimony of two American journalists present, Allan Nairn and Amy Goodman, also helped to bring the facts to light.[36] The world-wide transmission of the images of the Timorese fleeing the bullets in the cemetery vividly displayed the victim targeted by the persecutor. The stark horror of the incident recorded on film is a faithful presentation of persecution and attests to the ingenuity of Girard's analysis of the victim mechanism.[37] The subsequent denials and minimisation of the massacre were incapable of concealing the truth of the unadorned film: the violent persecution of the victim.

One of the most notable international acts of civil resistance to the violence in East Timor occurred in Britain in 1996, where four women disabled a British Aerospace Hawk aircraft.[38] They prepared their action over months and, after damaging the aeroplane, they left a statement of opposition to the use of such equipment in East Timor, providing a video of the bombing of Timorese villages using British-made aircraft and weapons. They then surrendered to the authorities. Significantly, at their trial they were found not guilty by reason of destroying property in order to prevent

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[35] Greenlees and Garran, *Deliverance,* 22.

[36] Rodney Tiffen, *Diplomatic Deceits: Government, Media and East Timor* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001), 45.

[37] René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World,* trans. S. Bann and M. Metteer (Stanford, Cal: Stanford University Press, 1978), 138; René Girard, *The Scapegoat,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 27.

[38] Angie Zelter, "Civil Society and Global Responsibility: the Arms Trade and East Timor," in *International Relations* vol. 18 no. 1, (March 2004) 25-140, accessed September 30, 2016, http://ire.sagepub.com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/content/18/1/125

worse destruction. This incident and trial again showed the intensifying recognition of East Timor as the victim of powerful forces, particularly among Western nations.

Describing civil society's contributions to the resolution of the conflict over Timor-Leste at the independence celebrations in May 2002 in Dili, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that such support was "critical."[39] The culmination of the involvement of international civil society was seen in the oversight of the UN sponsored ballot undertaken by nearly 2,300 observers, the majority from non-government organisations. The CAVR Report notes that they:

> represented a multitude of citizens in many countries for whom the ballot, as for the East Timorese people, climaxed a struggle of epic proportions and demonstrated again the importance and capacity of principled people's power in world affairs.[40]

The growing international consensus on the status of East Timor as victim underlay this triumph of principle. Girard contrasts the present-day preoccupation with victims with the disregard towards them detected in previous societies. "Examine ancient sources, inquire everywhere, dig up the corners of the planet, and you will not find anything anywhere that even remotely resembles our modern concern for victims."[41] It is true, states Girard, that the modern world makes more victims than ever before, but at the same time it is one that saves more victims than ever before.[42] He attributes the solicitude for victims to the dawning realisation of the innocence of the scapegoat resulting from the Gospel account of Christ's life and death. The very reproaches human beings now make towards themselves because of continual scapegoating are evidence of the success of the Gospel message of appreciation of the victim. The

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[39] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.430.
[40] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.499.
[41] René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning,* trans. J.G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 161.
[42] Girard, *I See Satan,* 165.

concern for the victim unleashed by Christ is universal and is in the process of overtaking the world. It was this "timeless moral imperative"[43] that was evident in the response of so many people worldwide to the victim, East Timor.

Australian solidarity as expression of conversion

Australia's unique relationship with East Timor

While part of the international movement of solidarity, Australian support of East Timor took on a particular significance and tone compared to that of other nations, especially given the proximity and connection to East Timor. It was often remarked that Australian government involvement had contributed to the widespread death and suffering of the Timorese people in two different historical eras. The realisation that tens of thousands of Timorese died as a result of their harbouring of a few hundred Australian soldiers during World War II remains a heartfelt and singularly poignant element which can evoke feelings of shame and guilt. Understandably, the subsequent complicity of Australian governments in the Indonesian invasion and occupation were interpreted by many as a complete betrayal of proven friends. Australians therefore had an unparalleled responsibility towards the Timorese people, one which was highlighted by the solidarity movement and was an on-going point of sensitivity amongst many Australians, and was evidenced in the protests of 1990s in favour of the Timorese.

The shared history of the two peoples motivated a growing number of Australians to take the Timorese situation to heart. Many personal links were established between Australians and Timorese, including the almost 10,000 people born in East Timor

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[43] Girard, *I See Satan,* 168.

who were living in Australia towards the end of the 1990s. Almost all of those had

escaped from the Indonesian regime.[44] With such a strong Timorese presence in the

community, Australians had further cause to play a prominent role among the

international supporters of East Timor, and rose to the occasion. The CAVR Report

states that Australia was "the principal centre of civil society support" at the time of

the invasion.[45]

Thus the gradual yet relentless appreciation of the revelation of the victim mechanism

influenced Australians regarding East Timor. Political bipartisanship and public

apathy could not withstand the truth of the victim, and fell away as the collective

awareness of the victim grew. This awareness and the compassionate actions arising

from it in Australia are now briefly described.

Solidarity groups

Of the dozens of solidarity groups operating in Australia during the occupation, there

were some that were specifically formed to address the East Timor situation, while

others were existing associations that took up the East Timor cause, in keeping with

their rationale.[46] The people involved were characterised by their determination to

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[44] Amanda Wise, *Exile and return among the Timorese* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 45-47.
[45] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.437.
[46] **Australian Groups specifically for East Timor included:**
2/2 Commando Association; Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor; Australia-East Timor Association; Australians for a Free East Timor; Australia East Timor Friendship Association; Brisbane East Timor Office; Campaign for an Independent East Timor; East Timor Action Coalition; East Timor Campaign; East Timor Foundation; East Timor Human Rights Centre; East Timor International Support Centre; East Timor Justice Lobby; East Timor Relief Association; Friends of East Timor; Hobart East Timor Committee; Christians In Solidarity With East Timor; Christian Sanctuary Network Australia; Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies; Parliamentarians for East Timor; Timor Aid; Timor Aid for Children; Timor Information Service; University Students for East Timor.

uphold the right to self-determination of the Timorese people and to raise awareness of the unjust situation in Timor. The cause demonstrated that people could work with others across cultural, political and religious divides for a greater good. Nonviolence was taken as a given.

Solidarity groups emerged from different experiences and backgrounds, demonstrating the broad nature of the movement. An important group was the 2/2 Commando Association. Remembering the loyal service of the Timorese people towards them in 1942, its members worked to support the people materially and to advocate for justice. Another was the Australia-East Timor Association (AETA) which was formed in 1974 to support self-determination for East Timor. Active in Melbourne and Sydney, its members lobbied governments on behalf of the Timorese people for decades. Additionally, certain trade unions lent valuable and consistent support, as well as the group *Parliamentarians for East Timor* which continually expressed the concern of members of both government and opposition about Australian policy.[47] A variety of other partnerships and circles across Australia established themselves as years passed, also calling for justice and providing succour.[48] Some of the associations continued for years, while upon independence others ceased operation or were subsumed into other groups.

Australian Groups that included a focus on East Timor included:
APHEDA - Union Aid Abroad; *Action for World Development*; *Australian Campaign against the Arms Trade*; *Australian Catholic Relief (later Caritas)*; *Australian Coalition for East Timor*; *Australian Council for Overseas Aid*; *Australian Council of Churches*; *Australian Forum of Human Rights Organisations*; *Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad*; *Campaign against Militarism*; *Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (replaced by Australian Catholic Social Justice Council)*; *Community Aid Abroad*; *International Commission of Jurists - Australian Section*; *Minority Rights Group International*; *National Council of Major Religious Superiors of Australia*; *Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors; numerous Trade Unions including CFMEU, MWUA; Australian Education Union; Young Christian Workers; Young Christian Students.*
[47] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.439.
[48] Patrick A. Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow: The Catholic Church and the East Timor Issue* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004), 102, 115 and 133; Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.487; David Scott, *Last Flight Out of Dili:*

Those who were members of such groups and supported East Timor reflected the

diversity of Australian society: activists, teachers, taxi drivers, nuns, academics,

journalists, housewives, bishops, aid workers, human rights advocates, lawyers,

priests, nurses, politicians, ministers, trade unionists, students, soldiers and others.

The strength of these advocates was that they were involved in a variety of ways on a

diversity of fronts, many networking and lobbying in Australia and internationally.[49]

Practical compassion towards the victim was expressed particularly through advocacy

for justice, aid and welfare, and efforts to heighten communication between the

Timorese and the outside world.

Advocacy

The support groups across Australia worked diligently to influence political decisions

relating to the Timor question during the occupation. Letters to newspapers strongly

criticised government policy from the beginning. Four returned soldiers of the 2/2

Commandos wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* a few months before the invasion in

1975 expressing "grave concern" at the events unfolding in Portuguese Timor, fearful

that Australia would "turn tail and allow avoidable disaster to occur."[50] Similar

opposition to government policies continued to be expressed throughout the next

quarter century, mainly by private citizens. Articles for newspapers and journals, and

the production of newsletters and periodicals became sources of information and

education for sections of the community, although they were rarely pursued by the

mainstream media. Access to information increased in the 1990s and significant

materials was published by organisations such as the Melbourne-based East Timor

Memoirs of an accidental activist in the triumph of East Timor (North Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2005), 63-70.
[49] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.450.
[50] D. O'Connor, A.C. Thompson, G.C Hart, A.D. Stevenson, "Australia's debt to the Timorese," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 16 September 1975.

Human Rights Centre, Oxfam, Caritas Australia, AETA, the East Timor Relief Association (ETRA), Minority Rights Groups International, and Diocesan Catholic Commissions for Justice and Peace. Support groups also lobbied politicians and church leaders. These groups developed opportunities for public speaking at schools, church and civic groups, service clubs and rallies to raise awareness. Particularly towards the end of the Indonesian regime they were involved in the organisation of large demonstrations, marches, and prayer vigils and services.

A number of individuals were outstanding in their support during the occupation years.[51] For example, one covertly entered the territory to interview people including Timorese resistance fighters.[52] The opposition of others to the Australian government made them subjects of ASIO surveillance.[53] Moreover, members of the families of the Balibo Five mounted consistent advocacy on behalf of the Timorese and against the Indonesian invasion and occupation, which gave Australians their own collective connection to the destruction of life in Timor.[54]

Welfare and Aid

As well as advocacy, the material needs of the Timorese people were of concern to their supporters. Among the first examples of solidarity was that undertaken by the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) which negotiated shipments of food

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[51] "Jude Conway," *Companion to East Timor,* UNSW Canberra: ADFA School of Humanities and Social Sciences – East Timor, accessed 22 October, 2016, https://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/school-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/timor-companion/jude-conway

[52] Robert Domm interviewed Xanana Gusmão, see Mark Aarons and Robert Domm, *East Timor: A Western Made Tragedy* (Sydney, The Left Book Club, 1992): 55-60.

[53] For example: Rob Wesley-Smith. See John Izzard, "Crumbs of Compassion," *Quadrant* March 1, 2010, accessed January 27, 2015, http://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2010/03/crumbs-of-compassion/

[54] Shirley Shackleton, *The Circle of Silence: a personal testimony before, during and after Balibo* (Millers Point NSW: Murdoch Books Australia, 2010).

aid to the territory a few days before the invasion.[55] Church agencies such as

Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace (CCJP) gained valuable information

through its networks and disseminated it to raise awareness. Difficulty of access to the

territory after the invasion prevented sustained welfare projects, as the whole of East

Timor was closed to the world for fourteen years from 1975.[56] International assistance

was provided for a time, however, when news of the famines of the late 1970s was

broadcast. The 1990s saw greater opportunity to provide material assistance, and

especially after independence some Australian groups implemented beneficial

programmes, many of which continued for years. Such assistance paved the way for

current focussed programmes of support in which Australians continue to engage

through official aid channels and through local government, NGOs, and civic and

church groups with Timorese partners.[57]

Although Australian governments began to contribute to the Timorese people's

welfare after independence, the most critical Australian assistance to the Timorese

population was provided when they needed it most – that is, during the occupation. It

was civil society which provided that succour, through personal support, political

advocacy and welfare. Australian civil society cooperated to alleviate human

suffering and attempted to educate others as to the injustice of the situation, but it

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[55] Scott, *Last Flight Out of Dili,* 19.

[56] Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace, *Just Reading No. 2 The Church and East Timor: a collection of documents by National and International Catholic Church agencies* (Melbourne: Catholic Archdiocese, 1993), v.

[57] Some activists, accompanied by returned soldiers of the 2/2 Independent Company, attempted to get food and supplies into East Timor in the early years of the occupation. A Customs vessel intercepted them in September 1976, and they were found guilty of attempting to take guns and drugs into East Timor. One described the guns as "four Darwin-registered shotguns" while the drugs consisted of Vegemite and a large amount of the anti-malarial Camoquin, paid for by Community Aid Abroad. Malcolm Fraser was the Prime Minister at the time and personally ordered that the charges be laid. See Rob Wesley-Smith, "Radio Maubere and Links to East Timor," in *Free East Timor: Australia's culpability in East Timor's genocide* ed. Jim Aubrey (Milsons Point: Random House, 1998), 84.

often seemed insignificant in the face of the control of the Indonesian regime, and was conducted in defiance of their own government.

Communication

Alongside material support and agitation for justice, important Australian civilian communications efforts occurred early in the occupation. A few communists and trade union members, a parliamentarian and a couple of other intrepid Australians (including some of those who had tried to deliver food) assisted the Timorese by receiving and transmitting Fretilin radio messages.[58] This communication was the Timorese Resistance's only link to the outside world, as the Indonesian military prevented entry into and departure from the territory. Through the radio, the Timorese resistance begged for support and described the deteriorating situation of the Timorese under Indonesian rule. As a result, broadcasts from the mountains of Timor reached Darwin via a radio with two crystal-controlled frequencies, one for reception and one for a two way link.[59] These *Radio Maubere[60]* messages were relayed for two years to Fretilin members internationally, as well as to the United Nations, the media, other support groups and governments. Although members of the public came to listen to the broadcasts, including a Catholic Bishop, a future Governor-General, various Darwin residents and some Timorese people, support was not forthcoming from visitors in positions of power.[61]

In 1976 the Australian government began to seize the privately owned equipment on a regular basis. The activists countered by replacing it and continuing to send abroad

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[58] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.439.
[59] Wesley-Smith, "Radio Maubere," 92-93.
[60] "Maubere" was a derogatory term used by the Portuguese to describe the poorer sections of the Timorese people, and subsequently was used by the Timorese with pride.
[61] Wesley-Smith, "Radio Maubere," 84.

the reports of the people's situation, for the next two years evading Australian authorities to maintain the links with the suffering Timorese. The Indonesian military gained control of the Timorese end of the radio link in 1978, thus bringing to an end valuable support which allowed the voice of the Timorese people to be heard.[62] The courageous and sustained effort to make public the dire situation of the Timorese had the effect of providing some information to the outside world, and remains testimony to the lengths to which both Indonesian and Australian authorities were willing to go to conceal the truth.

Solidarity groups and, indeed, the whole Australian population, were denied reliable information on the Timor situation not only by being prevented from communicating with those in Timor, for example via *Radio Maubere*, but by government silence about the atrocities and destruction to which it was privy as a result of significant technological capabilities.[63] The Australian Broadcasting Corporation, through its avenue *Radio Australia* which transmitted beyond Australia, was pressured by government concerning news on East Timor. Scott relates that Ambassador Woolcott had indicated to Radio Australia "to moderate its coverage of East Timor in a way that would minimise offence to Indonesia."[64] He also describes the level of pressure exercised by government envoys. For example, that the Australian Ambassador Thomas Critchley in Jakarta advised that it was better to say on radio "since East Timor became part of Indonesia" rather than "the invasion of East Timor."[65] Thus

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[62] Wesley-Smith, "Radio Maubere", 83-96; Clinton Fernandes, *The Illegal Radio Project* (UNSW Canberra: ADFA School of Humanities and Social Sciences -East Timor), accessed March 11, 2015, https://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/school-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/timor-companion/illegal-radio-project
[63] Nevins, *A Not-So-Distant Horror,* 120 and 240 n.25; Geoffrey C. Gunn, *Complicity in Genocide: Report to the East Timor "Truth Commission" on international actors* (Geoffrey C. Gunn, 2006), 118-122.
[64] Scott, *Last Flight Out of Dili,* 59.
[65] Scott, *Last Fight Out of Dili,* 59.

efforts of ordinary Australians to assist the Timorese by making the facts of their victimage more widely known were impeded by government departments and policies.

Political Action in 1999 and Australian solidarity

As Indonesia reeled from its political, social and economic upheaval in 1998-99, the Timorese people capitalised on the signals of imminent change. Large peaceful gatherings in East Timor itself in the latter half of 1999 were broadcast widely as the world's media gave more time and space to the Timor question. Danger existed in these displays, as Timorese leaders were more easily identified. Religious gatherings too were risky, but expressed the unity of the people and contributed to their strength.[66]

In the wake of the referendum and its brutal aftermath, there was a large Australian outpouring of anger, grief and support of the Timorese. Comment on the immorality of the decades-long situation accompanied the news of atrocities. Unremitting pressure by Australian individuals and groups evolved into massive demonstrations across the country in early September 1999, demanding that government do something to prevent the horror which threatened to engulf the Timorese people. The large protest rallies in Australia following the referendum were in response to the injustice and violence again being visited on the East Timorese, expressing the growing discontent of Australian civil society with established government policies.

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[66] I was present at the Corpus Christi procession in Dili in June 1999 where thousands of people lined the streets as hundreds of religious and priests walked with the Blessed Sacrament, with the military standing by. The laity did not walk in procession, such an action being considered too dangerous. The procession ended at the park in Lecidere, where Bishop Belo spoke of human dignity in the context of the self-giving of Christ in the Eucharist. The people then left for their homes in relative silence.

Media

The recognition of East Timor as victim in the last months of its ordeal was heightened by the focus on events of all sections of the media. The terrible situation in East Timor in the dangerous days after the announcement of the outcome of the UN-administered ballot dominated news and commentary outlets. Images of the capital's burning, footage of people being killed by machete-wielding militia, and stories of desperate escape to the mountains or to the UN compound presented graphically the revenge being meted out to the Timorese who had had the temerity to vote for freedom. Members of the public took to the Letters pages of both conservative and liberal newspapers to express the height of the general concern as well as the recognition of responsibility that had played on the Australian conscience for years. On Tuesday 7 September 1999 *The Australian* ran eleven letters with the headline "Time to Get Tough with Indonesia".[67] On the same *day The Sydney Morning Herald* published twenty-four letters under the heading "Act to Stop the Slaughter".[68] Many letters called for the Australian government to intervene militarily while a few opposed that view. Most letters placed the responsibility for the deaths in Timor onto the Indonesian military and accused the Australian government of cowardice and complicity not only in the wake of the referendum vote but throughout the occupation. Widespread voice was thus given to the case which the solidarity movement had kept alive for decades.

On Monday 13 September 1999 *The Sydney Morning Herald* in its *Postscript* column described the public's reaction to the bloodbath in Timor when the result of the referendum was announced on 4 September:

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[67] "Time to get tough with Indonesia," *The Australian,* September 7, 1999.
[68] "Act to stop the slaughter," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* September 7, 1999.

The letters response to East Timor last week was quite overwhelming. To date there have been something like 1,000 responses. The only way to give vent to the feeling was to run extended sections of letters on the issue every day, including today.

Readers were shocked, angered, saddened, appalled by the terrible, terrible story. But what was almost palpable was the frustration and impotence expressed by so many. Correspondents wanted something, anything, done to relieve the suffering they were exposed to through daily news reports from Dili. And there appeared nothing much they could do at all. Letters attacked the Government, specifically the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, for what the writers saw as hand-wringing inaction. Others concurred with their caution and restraint. ...But what angered readers most, it seemed, were the policies and the politicians whom they saw responsible for a quarter of a century of "appeasement" that they saw as leading to the events of today.[69]

The extremity of the Australian response was reported similarly through all major media outlets, indicating that the media's usual political leanings were put aside in deference to the unparalleled surge of feeling for the Timorese. The moral and political superiority of the victim over all other considerations was thus exemplified. On 9 September 1999, *The Australian* printed a list of actions by which some Australians expressed their anger and frustration at the carnage. They included a petition from prominent institutions calling for an armed peace-keeping force; damage to the Perth Indonesian consulate requiring police guard; graffiti on the Melbourne Indonesian consulate; protesters on the streets in Melbourne, demonstrations in Darwin with flag burning; invasion of the DFAT offices in Brisbane; plans for a national day of protest; trade union actions disrupting movements of goods by sea and air, and delaying of passengers; and plans to ban Indonesian goods.[70] A photograph of the words "Shame Australia !! Shame" written on the front of Parliament House Canberra appears.[71] Interestingly, information on rallies and prayer services in every

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[69] Kerry Myers, Letters Editor, "Postscript," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* September 13, 1999.
[70] "Australia's anger," *The Australian,* September 9, 1999: 2.
[71] An account of this action appears at Gareth Smith, "Shame Australia Shame – Appeal for Donations," in www.etan.org, accessed December 8, 2016, http://www.etan.org/et2001a/january/01-06/01shame.htm

capital city is given, as well as the contact information for protest to the Indonesian President, heads of Indonesian military, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, indicating that the media had taken an unprecedented role in supporting civil society efforts.[72]

The influence exerted by the Timorese people's faith, courage and nonviolence was demonstrated vividly as the popular Australian support for them grew. Girard's notion of the concern for the innocent victim seemed to be on widespread and passionate display during September 1999. An essential stimulus for this response was the increased access of the population to information concerning the situation. The visual and descriptive accounts of the atrocities being visited on the Timorese introduced a relatively new reality: access of the people to information about what was happening. As the extremity of Timorese suffering was more widely seen, Australians responded with anguish. The moral imperative of responding to the suffering of the victim was coupled with the sense of responsibility arising from the historical relationship with East Timor, particularly the memories of Timorese service and loyalty in World War II, the resentment at the unresolved Balibo Five question and the shame of the unacknowledged betrayal of Timor since the invasion. Australian feelings of guilt at the injustices brought upon the victim enabled the population to identify the perpetrators of the scapegoating, and they denounced their government accordingly. The Australian people thus made the choice of standing with the victim rather than engaging in forms of vacillation or apathy which would have rendered them as part of a persecuting mob.[73]

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[72] "The tide of protest swells," *The Weekend Australian,* September 11-12, 1999: 5.
[73] Joel Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 87.

The Catholic Church

Dilemmas and Challenges

As a powerful institution within Australian civil society, one with fundamental international bonds and natural religious affiliation with the Timorese people, the Catholic Church played a major role in the fortunes of East Timor. Two dimensions operated in the church regarding East Timor. Within each of the church sections of hierarchy and laity there were people who championed the cause of the Timorese people, and those who did not. These differing responses were significantly affected by the political and philosophical influence of communism, and the role it played in East Timor's fortunes. Nonetheless, the strength of the church's relationship with East Timor provided it with particular opportunities and responsibilities towards the people and was a major contributor to the success of the movement.

While some significant division existed between hierarchy and laity, such division was also found within each of those sections of the church. There were bishops and priests who consistently supported the Timorese people, working with lay persons and groups to drive the response of the church towards greater practical compassion and advocacy. Some hierarchy were wary, however, just as some ordinary church members were split between those in favour of Timor and those who were not. Hilton Deakin highlights one of the church's institutional deficiencies as the absence of clarity about the extent of authority of Bishops' Conferences until as late as 1998. A bishop was responsible for comment and action from his diocese, but for the bishops to speak as a group before then was another matter entirely.[74]

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[74] Hilton Deakin (with Jim and Therese D'Orsa), *Bonded Through Tragedy United in Hope: The Catholic Church and East Timor's struggle for independence - A memoir* (Mulgrave, Vic.: Garratt Publishing, 2017), 137.

Smythe summarises the Church's approach thus:

> As an institution the Church in Australia cannot be said to have had a coherent and unified policy in respect of the people East Timor at any stage. The bishops themselves had different viewpoints, and various perceptions were evident within the ecclesiastical agencies that addressed the matter on their behalf or independently of them, and among the laity as a whole. Thus segments within the Church aligned with Australian government policy, some remained idle, while others were highly committed to a just and peaceful resolution on the issue.[75]

The church can be seen as a microcosm of the society, displaying something of the same need to balance institutional realities with ideological ones. Just as the inspirational aspects of a nation (with all their efforts to express cherished ideals and values) can be challenged and even thwarted by structures originally established to further such ideals, so churches can also be constrained by the same problems. In regard to internal or external relationships which involve danger, as that between Australia and Timor-Leste, Robert Schreiter's comments are apt:

> Because the church mirrors society, it may find that the lines dividing society run right through the centre of the church....some members of the church choose to collaborate with an oppressive regime in order to allow for some public activity on the part of the church. Others choose the path of resistance and utter opposition to the regime, paying for their stance with imprisonment, exile, and even death. Sometimes church leaders side with an oppressive government for the sake of 'peace', while some of their own clergy and members choose opposition.[76]

One of the major causes of divisions was the threat of communism. A highly significant influence on the Catholic Church regarding that ideology (and subsequently on the fortunes of East Timor) was the prominent Catholic layman, Bartholomew Augustine (B.A.) Santamaria.

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[75] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow,* 106.
[76] Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 67.

Communism and "The Movement"

Communism's aggressive atheism met fundamental philosophical opposition in the Catholic Church worldwide. With support from the Australian bishops, in 1941 B.A. Santamaria established the "The Movement", the main aim of which was to oppose communism. While his ideas and methods were ultimately rejected by many Catholics, his influence contributed to bitterness and disunity in the church at that time.[77] The effects on the Catholic Church were serious, demonstrating substantial division between the bishops, on the duties concerning practical application of the Gospel. Questions integral to the nature of the church arose concerning its operation in secular society, particularly regarding advocacy for justice and the oppressed, and on whose authority political action by the church should take place.[78]

Santamaria's 1957 establishment of the National Civic Council (NCC), an evolution of "The Movement", proved detrimental to the Timorese people. Ormonde notes: "In the latter half of the 1940s The Movement judged that the internal danger of communist revolution had receded, but that a new, more potent communist threat to Australia was posed by events in Asia."[79] Particularly damaging was the NCC's regular publication *News Weekly*, which exerted influence on the opinions of some bishops and laity in relation to East Timor during the 1970s and beyond.[80] Its strident anti-communist platform mirrored that of Santamaria whose views "were very influential in conservative political and church circles, and damaging for Timor-Leste."[81] He is reported to have used "every opportunity to attack Fretilin and those he

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[77] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 105.
[78] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 105.
[79] Paul Ormonde, *The Movement* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson [Australia] Ltd, 1972), 4.
[80] Scott, *Last Fight out of Dili,* 63; Dunn, *East Timor,* 135.
[81] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.451.

portrayed, often wrongly, as communist fellow-travellers."[82] Walsh notes that the

journal consistently attempted to discredit any criticism of Indonesia, to support

unquestioningly the relationship between Australia and Indonesia, and to accuse

Fretilin of being a virulent communist organisation.[83] According to Smythe, the

archives of *News Weekly* in Melbourne reveal that there was no change in the policy

of the journal from 1974 to 1997 towards supposed connections between East Timor

and communism.[84]

Significantly, Santamaria had association with Father Josephus van Beek S.J., a

Dutch-born Jesuit missionary in Indonesia, who exerted a profound influence on

Indonesian Catholic political activists during the Suharto era. Tanter reports that Beek

believed that the two great threats to Indonesia and the church were communism and

Islam, and therefore he involved himself in preparations for an underground Catholic

movement, conducting training courses for youth using disciplinary techniques

approaching brutality.[85] Trainees became devotedly loyal to him and were keen to

report on their organisations when they gained employment. Tanter notes that Beek

was a regular visitor to Australia, worked with Santamaria, and would have received

funding from the National Civic Council as a sympathetic foreign source of support.[86]

There were strong links between Santamaria and those responsible for or supportive

of the invasion and occupation of East Timor. Attending Beek's Catholic Action

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[82] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.451.
[83] Pat Walsh, *Australia's support for Indonesia's takeover of East Timor: Testimony of Patrick Walsh before the Permanent People's Tribunal* (Lisbon, 19-22 June, 1981):14-16, typed foolscap photocopy.
[84] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 113.
[85] Richard Tanter, "The structure of non-military intelligence and security organizations," *Intelligence Agencies and Third World Militarisation: A Case Study of Indonesia, 1966-1989, with Special Reference to South Korea 1961-1989* (1991): 319-321 accessed August 8, 2016, nautilus.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Chapter-8.pdf
[86] Tanter, "The structure of non-military intelligence," Appendix 1, 321.

groups were Harry Tjan Silalahi and Jusuf Wanandi, both of whom were instrumental

in establishing the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in 1971 with

the assistance of prominent Indonesian Catholic military men such as General Benny

Murdani. The connections of this group to the Indonesian regime are demonstrated,

for example, by their access to information. Ball and McDonald concur with Tanter

that important information between Indonesian and Australian intelligence over

Timor came through the links between the Australian Embassy in Jakarta and CSIS.[87]

The resulting Australian knowledge of Indonesia's plans is described as "astonishingly

detailed" causing "unease" in Canberra.[88] The possession of such information placed

Australia in the position of being privy to Indonesian plans prior to the invasion.[89]

Thus an influential and ideologically-driven group in the Australian Catholic Church

was closely connected with the vehemently anti-communist Indonesian regime whose

targeted sharing of information on East Timor compromised the Australian

government.

The official Catholic Church's initial response

The confusion and disorientation in the Catholic Church as it attempted to reconcile

its social doctrine with the political challenges of the time affected its response to East

Timor. Differing views existed within bodies established by the bishops to advise on

social justice matters and to advocate in accordance with the social doctrine of the

church. Internal church divisions were exacerbated by Santamaria's accusations that

some of the agencies were influenced by communism.[90] The difficulty of balancing

divergent views, particularly in disagreement over government policies, engendered

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[87] Desmond Ball and Hamish McDonald, *Death in Balibo Lies in Canberra* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 68-69; Tanter, "The structure of non-military intelligence, 321.
[88] Ball and McDonald, *Death in Balibo Lies in Canberra*, 68-69.
[89] Ball and McDonald, *Death in Balibo Lies in Canberra*, 70-71.
[90] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 107 and 109.

the tendency to concentrate more on alleviating suffering than on addressing the causes of injustices.[91] Quoting its 1997 executive director, Smythe notes that Caritas Australia avoided involvement with campaigns "which would only inflame the Bishops' Conference and enrage the government."[92] Despite these difficulties, Caritas and other church groups increasingly collaborated with other associations which were contributing to systemic change, and adopted policies encouraging movement towards change.[93]

The Australian Catholic Church shared in one of the most common reactions for churches in matters of the application of justice: that of remaining silent and unwilling to confront the causes. Schreiter states:

> Churches fall easy prey to this, since they are rarely the direct violators. It is often their silence, not their words, that makes them participants in the violation of those who suffer. The voices of those who suffer then become a very unwelcome sound to their ears because they are made uncomfortable.[94]

Unfortunately, some church bodies acquiesced with government policy in the 1990s. Surprisingly, some were content to present the oppression as the fault of the Timorese refusal to submit.[95] Smythe details the visit of a church delegation in 1998 whose members reported to him that they believed integration with Indonesia was in the best interests of the Timorese and that cooperation between the Indonesian and Australian militaries would have the effect of heightening the Indonesians' upholding of human rights. They concluded that things would be better for the Timorese if they weren't so

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[91] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 104, 112, 122.
[92] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 108.
[93] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 108-109.
[94] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 23.
[95] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 112.

disruptive.[96] This echoes the previous statement of the Apostolic Nuncio to Jakarta in 1993 who had addressed an Australian Catholic Relief visit with similar sentiments: "It would be better for the Timorese to co-operate with Indonesia and become part of the Republic, then their troubles would end."[97] Similarly, Xanana Gusmão complained that in 1986 he had received a proposal from the Vatican to accept safe departure from the country for himself and the guerrillas. Xanana had then asked the authorities whether the chance to leave the country extended to all the Timorese. Two years later he again expressed his regret that the Vatican was advising surrender.[98] Accusations of being disruptive and uncooperative again displaced the burden of guilt onto the victim, the Timorese people.

The Catholic Church - turning towards the victim

Despite internal deficiencies and instances of retrogression, the recognition of the victim is ingrained in the church's life and doctrine. The Catholic Church's response to East Timor as victim was substantial, making the church an important part of the solidarity movement. There was consistent support for the Timorese people from church members and groups, including from the Vatican itself, support which became increasingly potent towards the end of the occupation. Amanda Wise lists the Australian churches' contributions to East Timor during the oppression as assisting the formation of Timorese-Australian communities, being politically neutral, becoming a "conduit" for information, and providing advocacy and welfare.[99] In these ways

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[96] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 111. Smythe notes on this page that the report of this visit was received only by the Indonesian and Australian governments, and by the United Nations.
[97] Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 118.
[98] The Church in East Timor - voice of a silenced people," in PeaceNet, accessed August 8, 2016. https://www.ewtn.com/library/ISSUES/TIMOR.TXT; Secret Vatican Timor Diplomacy?" in *apakabar@igc.apc.org* 16 March 1991, accessed August 8, 2016, https://www.library.ohiou.edu/indopubs/1991/03/16/0008.html
[99] Wise, *Exile and return,* 72.

church members exercised the power of listening to and acting on the situation to which the Timorese testified.[100] Protestant and Anglican Churches made consistent efforts to uphold the Timorese cause, including the many Uniting Church initiatives and advocacy actions.

In the Catholic Church, individual lay members, religious, clergy and bishops demonstrated committed advocacy for East Timor, resisting the policies detrimental to the Timorese people. These were responsible for the church services and prayers which were integral to the support of the Timorese people and their cause. Important among these were the prayer services across the nation to mark the anniversary of the deaths of the young people in the Santa Cruz cemetery in 1991. The capacity of these liturgies to unite communities was demonstrated among both the Timorese residing in Australia and Australian supporters. Additionally, the maintenance of neutrality towards Timorese politics was important for the furtherance of the Timorese cause. Australian church members demonstrated that they were not partisan and were comfortable with any and all of the Timorese political groupings. Timorese people felt their divisions deeply, particularly because of the unresolved civil conflict in 1974-75 but, as the vast majority of them shared in the Catholic faith and worked alongside church and civil groups, they were able to mediate some of the differences and focus on the wider Timorese cause. In the same way, Australian party political issues were generally avoided. Observance of the generally accepted position of the church's being apolitical opened a space where differences were accepted but were not allowed to undermine a shared Christian allegiance and the greater good of the common cause for Timor's rights.

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[100] Wise, *Exile and return,* 119.

Initiation of ventures to support the Timorese people accompanied cooperation with others in the Catholic Church's response. The Australian Council of Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI)[101] worked together with other church groups and networked with people in the wider community. Church and civic cooperation modelled and expressed a movement focused on a just cause, over and above divisions and self-centred motivations. As a result, reliable information was shared widely and all were able to focus on solutions and strategies rather than competing with each other. Moreover, the Catholic Church cooperated with many non-religious groups and helped to facilitate their actions. For example, Bishop Hilton Deakin was the Chair of the East Timor Human Rights Centre, a body which monitored the situation and published well-documented accounts of the effects of the occupation.[102]

Church networks between East Timor and Australia were significant, capitalising on the almost identical structures of ecclesiastical organisation. Some Catholics had a certain ease of access to information, and therefore a responsibility to use these networks. While no information from East Timor was easy to transmit or receive, church structures enabled the sharing of information which was used to augment knowledge of the situation. The scope and resources of church networks facilitated occasional international visits of bishops, priests and members of religious congregations to and from East Timor, which provided significant first- hand information which could be used to advocate for the victims. The position of the Catholic Church as a "religious" organisation in Indonesia and as a significant international body afforded it some protection and freedom in its advocacy, although

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[101] Now known as Catholic Religious Australia (CRA).
[102] *Breaking the cycle of human rights violations in East Timor: annual report of human rights violations in East Timor 1997* (Fitzroy, Vic.: East Timor Human Rights Centre, February 17, 1998); *Human Rights in East Timor: Indonesia defies UN and the International Community* (Fitzroy, Vic.: East Timor Human Rights Centre, August 13, 1999).

its leadership had to act carefully as the regime became increasingly willing to punish the church (especially in the later stages of the occupation). In 1993 the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace in the Melbourne Archdiocese aligned with Christians in Solidarity with East Timor (CISET) to publish a collection of letters and statements from the East Timorese church, and which included responses made by Catholic groups, dioceses and commissions across the world.[103] The publication of such material provided further solid evidence upon which to argue Timor's case. The contacts made by church personnel and the information thus gained augmented the networking of other groups and strengthened the efforts of civil society in general.

Internal difficulties experienced by many Catholic dioceses in interpreting the Gospel in favour of the downtrodden had caused some silence and inaction. However, particularly as the 1990s wore on, bishops, priests and people became increasingly vocal in supporting the Timorese. Resources of the Catholic Church were employed across the country in wholehearted efforts to educate Australians as to their suffering, to challenge governments to act, and to support the victimised Timorese people through practical aid.

Convergence of the political and moral

Critical mass

The decades of determined championing of the Timorese people, which had been supported by the investigations and commentary of some media, had prepared the

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[103] J. De Groot, Louise Crowe, Christians in Solidarity with East Timor and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, *The Church and East Timor: A Collection of Documents by National and International Catholic Church Agencies* (Melbourne: Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace, 1993).

way for the heightening of public outrage through the increased comment and reporting in the late 1990s. While the numbers of Australians who properly understood the Timor story had remained relatively low over the years, those who had awareness were often highly motivated, enabling them to respond swiftly and with credibility at moments of crisis, particularly during the events of 1999.

The advocacy of the solidarity movement contributed to and built on the growing outpouring of anger, sorrow and compassion of ordinary Australians as the plight of the Timorese became more apparent in the 1990s. This increased popular feeling was accompanied by the turnaround of the Australian government as it grappled with the swift changes in regional politics. Constant reports of the intimidation and killings of the Timorese people before the referendum, and the slaughter and deportations afterwards, were seen in the context of the inspiration given by the Timorese people, their nonviolent responses and the outrage generated internationally as the situation deteriorated. The Timorese were seen to be truly innocent victims - both as scapegoats sacrificed for the "good order" of the Indonesian regime and as morally upright persons who acted peacefully and virtuously against enormous injustice – which served to heighten their appeal to the consciences of Australian citizens. The frustrated impotence of the Australian population was expressed forcibly in the media and in the streets as the Timorese people were clearly seen for what they were, the victim of powerful, self-interested forces.

The consistent claims of activists of the brutality of the repression were then revealed in 1999 as credible, leading to an increase in the numbers of those repudiating the treatment of the Timorese and critical of government policy. The *tipping point* was

reached, where the opinion of a "consistent and inflexible minority" overrides an initial majority opinion.[104] Studies propose that when 10 per cent of a population are committed to a cause, persuasive and invulnerable to opposing views, they form a critical mass which permeates the whole.[105] Studies of non-violent resistance movements show that when a critical mass is reached (5-10%) that acts to oppose a regime (or policy) and results in the withdrawal of key supporters for that regime and the mobilisation of mass opinion and action, it causes major change.[106]

Thus, influenced by a cohort of persistent activists and armed with ever-increasing information, the numbers supporting the Timorese cause grew exponentially. Chenoweth and Stephan comment on this phenomenon:

> Courage breeds courage, particularly when those engaged in protest activities are ordinary people, who would be conformist, law-abiding citizens under normal circumstances. Media coverage amplifies the demonstration effect of their acts of defiance.[107]

The scale of the support of ordinary Australians was attested by Paul Kelly, who notes the opinion of Foreign Minister Alexander Downer's advisor Greg Hunt: "Public opinion probably ran at 90% that Australia had done the wrong thing by East Timor."[108] Downer himself stated: "During my time as Foreign Minister, no foreign policy issue has captured the public interest in Australia more than East Timor."[109]

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[104] J. Xie, S. Sreenivasan, G. Korniss, W. Zhang, C. Lim, and B. K. Szymanski, "Social Consensus through the Influence of Committed Minorities," Physical Review E 84, 011130 (April 25, 2011), accessed September 5, 2017, Doi: 10.1103/PhysRevE.84.011130

[105] Xie et al., "Social consensus."

[106] "Minority rules: Scientists discover tipping point for the spread of ideas," (www. Phys.org, 25 July 2011), accessed December 6, 2016, http://phys.org/news/2011-07-minority-scientists-ideas.html

[107] Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why civil resistance works: the strategic logic of nonviolent conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 36.

[108] Paul Kelly, *The march of patriots: the struggle for modern Australia* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2011), 488.

[109] DFAT, *East Timor in Transition,* v.

Accounting for change - political or popular pressure?

There are various assessments of the influence of popular pressure on the Australian government's decision to intervene in East Timor in 1999, even so far as to lead the International Force for East Timor (InterFET) in September 1999. Some commentators see government action arising primarily from public pressure while others discount such influence. For example, Fernandes states that the Australian troops were "not sent in because of the goodwill of the Australian government, but because of massive protests that increased rapidly in both size and fury."[110] Pietsch contradicts that position, stating that Australian involvement "was not forced on a reluctant government by popular pressure."[111] This opinion claims that the movement in favour of East Timor independence lacked the strength to force a change of policy, given Howard's demonstrated ability to withstand public opinion. The example of the 2003 public opposition to the invasion of Iraq is cited, which saw not tens of thousands, as with East Timor, but hundreds of thousands of Australians taking to the streets in vociferous but ineffectual condemnation of going to war.[112] However, this comparison can be misleading as public opinion was more divided on the Iraq War, while it was unprecedented and nearly unanimous in its support for East Timor (as Alexander Downer attested).[113] This large-scale support - in the midst of overwhelming violence in East Timor in September 1999 - demonstrated the Australian population's clear identification of the Timorese as innocent victims who deserved liberation.

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[110] Clinton Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour: Australia, Indonesia and the Independence of East Timor* (Carlton North, Vic.: Scribe Publications, 2004), 113.

[111] Sam Pietsch, "Australian Imperialism and East Timor," *Marxist Interventions,* Volume: 2,(May, 2010): 7, accessed 25 October, 2016, http://sa.org.au/mi/2/mi2.pdf.

[112] Pietsch, "Australian Imperialism and East Timor," 17.

[113] Moreover, there was a long-running and multi-pronged campaign for East Timor's independence, while the protests against the Iraq War were the result of short-term political action.

Geoffrey Robinson sees a fundamental link between political and moral motivations

for action in regard to East Timor. He argues that the international intervention,

including that of Australia, was "the result of an unusual conjuncture of historical

trends and events."[114] Indonesia's financial collapse and heightened dependence on

international agencies was coupled with the end of the long Suharto era and the

weakening of the military hold on Indonesian institutions and agencies. These

developments were essential to the change of policy on East Timor. Referring

specifically to the mayhem after the 1999 ballot, however, Robinson cites "the

presence of a good many observers and journalists" as crucial in bringing to

international attention credible and widespread evidence of what was occurring, thus

highlighting the role of civil society actors.[115] These are included by him among those

who "profoundly influenced the course of events" by "keeping the spotlight of media

attention on Timor" and "making a compelling case for intervention."[116] Robinson

cites as pivotal to the intervention "the credibility and strength of international non-

government organisations and church networks that exerted influence on their

governments, and mobilised popular demonstrations around the world, most notably

in Canberra and Lisbon."[117] He attributes to international solidarity at least as much

importance as political concerns for the decision to allow the ballot.[118] He also lists as

pivotal the courage of the East Timorese people, the personal commitment to the

process of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and the fact that Habibie's proposal for

a referendum served his desire to win the much needed support of the international

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[114] Geoffrey Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here, We Will Die: How Genocide Was Stopped in East Timor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 19.
[115] Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here,* 19.
[116] Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here,* 186.
[117] Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here,* 19.
[118] Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here,* 95.

community in addressing the mounting Indonesian financial crisis.[119] The

international community's desire to intervene in Timor - given the recent humanitarian

disasters of Rwanda and Srebrenica - was also vital.[120]

Robinson's thesis therefore concerns the conjuncture of civil society action with the

"trends and events" with which they were intertwined. The situation in East Timor

was indeed a matter of morality to which people world-wide and in Australia

responded with courage and compassion, actively affecting government decisions.

Yet the view that humanitarian concerns were responsible for moving the people and

the government is countered by asking why such concerns did not triumph when they

were made known in previous decades.[121] For example, the death toll in East Timor

was far greater during the starvation of 1977-1979 than in 1999 and was attested by

the photographic evidence of journalists.[122] The Santa Cruz massacre of 1991 had

been filmed and was seen world-wide, yet that information in itself did not cause

sufficient condemnation as to bring about change of policy.

It can be concluded that the boiling point arose from the wider geopolitical realities of

upheaval and instability in Indonesia and the international community's willingness to

act (in a post-Cold War and post-Rwanda world) combined with the response of civil

society through the solidarity movement that prepared the ground for a political

response to the suffering of the Timorese people. Together, these finally broke

political will and forced change. Moral considerations linked with an uneasy historical

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[119] Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here,* 94.
[120] Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here,* 19.
[121] Pietsch, "Australian Imperialism and East Timor," 9.
[122] "Agony at our doorstep," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 1 November, 1979: 1.

conscience, driven by concern for the Timorese as innocent victims, worked with extraordinary geopolitical realities to bring resolution.

Girard's anthropological insights revealed the victim mechanism as the foundation and bulwark of societies. As demonstrated in the case of East Timor, the revelation of the innocence of the victim has an opposite and unprecedented effect: recognition of the victim has the capacity to erode political power and structures and to bring about unimaginable change.

Conclusion

The inspiration for the Australian solidarity movement within the world-wide support for East Timor was the Timorese people themselves. Subject to the fear and machinations of its neighbours, the Timorese people were eventually recognised as innocent victims, and a majority of people actively supported them. An extraordinary movement of advocacy gathered momentum in the 1990s, involving people from all walks of life, and of radically different political and religious persuasions. The morality of championing the victim was seen as more important than other considerations, leading to influence on a changing political scene which those in power were unable to resist. Despite the fact that avenues of accountability became the norm internationally, the Timorese situation has not been the subject of the application of law and justice. Instead, Australians have witnessed the extraordinary nonviolent resistance and forgiveness of the Timorese people as their response to persecution.

Of particular importance to this dissertation is that the Timorese witness to Christ's nonviolence and forgiveness in their status as victim became the catalyst for a major change in the Australian perspective and approach to East Timor. Whether or not overt Christian symbolism, language or affiliation was present, Australian people were changed by the presence of the victim in their orbit – a result of the Christian revelation of the victim.[123] They were challenged by the knowledge that they, as part of a persecuting nation, were persecutors. As a result of this revelation of the victim within Australia's own history and relationships the people played a crucial and irreplaceable role in changing government policy from that of persecutor to champion. A Girardian analysis of that response and how it effected a fundamental change in the Australian people is the subject of Chapter Eight.

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[123] René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning,* trans. J.G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 161-169.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REVELATION OF THE VICTIM

Introduction

This chapter reflects on the inspiration given by the Timorese people to the movement of solidarity in civil society worldwide and in Australia particularly. It discusses the eventual success of the core of supportive Australians and their resistance to government inaction and acquiescence as the movement reached a moment of critical mass in the engagement of tens of thousands of others. The moral considerations forming the basis of this solidarity converged with the political realities of the late 1990s, forcing changes in Australian government policy on East Timor.

The chapter interprets the major change in Australian support of East Timor in the light of Girard's insights. The unconsciousness and blindness which Girard detected in traditional scapegoaters were overcome, and increasing numbers of Australians saw through the violence in which their nation was complicit. This revelation elevated political concerns and popular anguish into a moment of national conversion.

Two theological conclusions are drawn about the relationship between Australia and East Timor. First, the suffering of the Timorese gave them the position of "judge" with the innocent and victim Christ. The Timorese judgement on the violence done to them was characterised by the nonviolence and forgiveness of their Christian faith. As a consequence, the humanity of all involved was offered the capacity to be restored.

Second, the example of "positive mimesis" (in Girard's terms) provided by the Timorese posed a challenge which led many Australians to a more humble and realistic view of their nation. In the light of these conclusions, the chapter shows how the Australian-Timorese history can be fruitfully understood through the Gospel revelation of the victim, in which the forgiving victim provides a truthful lens to interpret violent relationships.

Timorese inspiration

The inspiration provided by the Timorese people to the rest of the world was crucial to their eventual freedom. The CAVR Report states: "(Civil society's interest) developed and acted in response to East Timorese initiatives, not the opposite."[1] Kohen refers to the importance of the courage of the Timorese people and their political and religious leaders in providing the leadership by which many nations were finally inspired to act.[2] Timorese youth movements worldwide were notable in initiating large, decentralised networks of activists. Particularly after the Santa Cruz massacre of 1991 nonviolent international protests, including in Indonesia itself, became formidable.[3] Some of the actions were peaceful sit-ins or protests in the view of visiting dignitaries or in foreign embassies.[4] The leadership of Timorese expatriates contributed significantly to these movements and to the final resolution.

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[1] Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR),* (Dili, TL: CAVR, 2005), 7.1.6.432
[2] Arnold S. Kohen, *From the Place of the Dead: The epic struggles of Bishop Belo of East Timor* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 189.
[3] Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why civil resistance works: the strategic logic of nonviolent conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 4.
[4] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why civil resistance works,* 3.

Significant to the cooperation between the Timorese and their supporters was the greater accessibility of East Timor from 1989 when Indonesia considered that the people were sufficiently "Indonesianised" to allow an opening of the territory.[5] The CAVR Report notes:

> Concerned individuals and organisations from civil society seized the opportunity to visit and, despite restrictions and danger, to make contact with the Resistance, provide material support, act as couriers both ways and to kindle renewed interest in their respective countries. Some 3000 foreigners are estimated to have visited between 1989 and 1991.[6]

Far from advancing Indonesia's claims however, this relative openness provided more evidence of the oppression of the people, and the Timorese resistance movement therefore received greater support internationally. The refusal of the Timorese to capitulate ensured that worldwide support, while small, was never extinguished. The Timorese people's long years of suffering and their relentless resistance provided the impetus for the stirring of the world's conscience. The situation was seen for the unjust oppression it was, and the people were increasingly recognised as the innocent victims of immoral political alliances and intrigue.

Nonviolence

One of the most crucial aspects of the Timorese resistance was its nonviolent nature. This feature was consistent across the civilian population and lasted throughout the occupation. As the situation became better known, the Timorese nonviolent and non-retaliatory stance demonstrated their position as innocent victim.

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[5] Commission, *CAVR*, 3.17.465.
[6] Commission, *CAVR*, 7.1.6.475.

In their study *Why Civil Resistance Works,* Chenoweth and Stephan investigate 323

violent and nonviolent campaigns between 1900 and 2006, finding that: "Nonviolent

resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as

their violent counterparts."[7] The authors cite the liberation of East Timor as an

example.[8] However, they state that East Timor's nonviolent resistance "grew out of its

failed violent campaign", and further, that it "was ultimately successful in achieving

independence from Indonesia after decades of futile violent insurgency."[9] While it is

true that the armed Timorese resistance was not successful in military terms,

Chenoweth and Stephan's conclusion omits the symbolic role played by those

Timorese who remained in the mountains as a fighting force, thus assisting the hope

of freedom to inhabit the Timorese imagination. Neither do the authors refer to the

extraordinary events of 1999 where, on the advice of the United Nations, Falintil

fighters were ordered by their leader Xanana Gusmão to remain in cantonment areas

even while they could see the capital Dili burn. Without any means of ascertaining the

fate of their loved ones, the soldiers displayed the discipline that allowed the

international community to recognise that the violence of 1999 was all coming from

the Indonesian military and their militias, and indicating that Falintil was not

responsible for that conflict.[10]

While violent action was employed by the armed wing of the resistance throughout

the oppression, the overall East Timor story remains a significant example of the

power of nonviolence, and even within the armed resistance itself at the climax of

Indonesian occupation. Surely one of the proudest claims the Timorese people are

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[7] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why civil resistance works,* 7.
[8] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why civil resistance works,* 10.
[9] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why civil resistance works,* 78,79.
[10] Richard Tanter, Mark Selden and Stephen R, Shalom, eds, *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia and the world community* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2001), 123.

able to make is that during the 24-year occupation not a single Indonesian civilian was murdered by a Timorese.[11] This fact takes on extra significance in the light of the official transmigration program beginning in 1980 through which the government sought to resettle people from densely populated areas of Indonesia.[12] Explanation of these extraordinary features of the Timorese resistance necessarily entails understanding the intersection between the Christian faith practised by a growing number of Timorese during the occupation, and the dogged resistance to that occupation staged by the Timorese over nearly a quarter of a century. This was expressed through and within the growing Timorese membership of the Catholic Church.[13] Referring to the church in East Timor, Hodge states:

> ...the Catholic Church helped to provide discursive, liturgical, pastoral, ideological and spiritual means by which to confront the experience of oppression, violence and loss and develop resistance to Indonesian occupation.[14]

The church had the capacity to present a comprehensive and unifying rationale which went to the heart of the people's experience, individually and communally. This was acknowledged by José Ramos-Horta in his acceptance speech when receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996. He spoke of the personnel and work of the church as pivotal to the people's ability to live with "the daily threats to their very existence."[15] He commented: "The people of East Timor owe almost everything to their Church."[16]

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[11] "Former East Timor President José Ramos-Horta's Advice For Syrian Rebels," *The Daily Beast,* (July 18, 2012), accessed August 8, 2016, http://www.thedailybeast.com/former-east-timor-president-jose-ramos-hortas-advice-for-syrian-rebels

[12] John G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: the hidden history of East Timor* (Leichhardt: Pluto Press, 1991), 124; 159.

[13] The numerical growth of the church was huge during the occupation, increasing from about 30% to 95%, see Hilton Deakin (with Jim and Therese D'Orsa), *Bonded Through Tragedy, United in Hope: The Catholic Church and East Timor's struggle for independence - A memoir* (Mulgrave, Vic.: Garratt Publishing, 2017), 13; 114.

[14] Joel Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 59.

[15] "Former East Timor President."

[16] José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Lecture, *Nobelprize.org.* Nobel Media AB 2014, accessed November 17, 2016, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1996/ramos-horta-lecture.html

As the Timorese people embraced Christianity in increasing numbers during the occupation, the church formed them more and more into the body of the crucified and risen Christ. The Timorese increasingly identified with Christ in their sufferings, as a sign of hope in their struggle. They recognised God was with them and alongside them in their sufferings, understanding their pain, working to bring consolation and always faithful to the truth of their persecution. One of the most poignant examples of this attitude was related to me at the time. An Australian Sister who had shared dangerous times with a group of church workers told me that one of the women had quietly said to her: "Why is Jesus turning his face away from us?" This question hangs in the air as a thoroughly Christian response to suffering and fear, echoing the words of the same Jesus himself as he hung on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matt.27:45-46) It is a question filled with faith amongst devastating bewilderment. It salvages meaning within suffering through being in relation with Jesus, the fellow victim, while honouring the fundamental question associated with violence: "Why?"

As the only local institution operating among the Timorese, the Catholic Church witnessed to Christ by its solidarity with the people and embodied for the people the focus of resistance to the other main institution, the Indonesian military. Refusing to leave the people to the mercies of the invaders by withdrawing to some other-worldly realm, the church endeavoured to support them in their endurance and nonviolent patience. In so doing, in William Cavanaugh's words, the church developed an "ecclesial counter-politics."[17] As a result, people found within the church the depth of meaning which enabled them to unite themselves with the passion and resurrection of

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[17] William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 120.

Jesus, recognising themselves as victim with their risen Lord. This was particularly exemplified in the church's Eucharistic practice in which solidarity with the victim, Jesus, is made real. In making Jesus really present, Daly's explanation of the purpose of the Eucharist is that it exists to effect an "eschatological transformation of the participants."[18] In this eschatological reality, violence has no ultimate power. The eschatological perspective of God becomes what is truly real: the kingdom of love overcoming the regime of violence. In their nonviolent resistance to oppression the Timorese people exemplified this reality.

Lack of revenge

The nonviolent nature of the Timorese resistance was accompanied by a willingness to forego revenge. While Timorese people have shown little appetite for retaliation against the Indonesian people, neither Australian use of Timor for its own protection during the Second World War, nor its compliance with the Indonesian occupation, has resulted in widespread calls for Timorese revenge. This is not to deny that the Timorese harbour strong feelings about foreign occupiers. It expresses once again the courageously nonviolent resistance movement which flowered both within East Timor and among those who had escaped the territory. It was not abuse and threats which the Timorese took to Australian rallies, but doves of peace and calls for freedom.

The international community has not pursued the normal channels of justice which have applied in other circumstances.[19] The actions of the Timorese people are thus all

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[18] Robert J. Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: the true meaning of Christian sacrifice* (London: T&T Clark International, 2009), 20.

[19] No one guilty of crimes against humanity or gross human rights violations, whether Indonesian or Timorese, has been brought to account. Timor-Leste has not pressured Indonesia for redress, but neither has any other nation, nor any international body. See Commission, *CAVR*, 9.4.103, Table 3 Result of CRP program by District; 8.3, Table 1 Perpetrator responsibility; Clinton Fernandes,

the more remarkable. Whether the international and Australian responsibility for the crimes against the Timorese people will be shouldered, and regardless of how much time that may take, Timorese decisions have already had the consequence of absorbing and restricting violence. In this way the people have ensured that possible vengeance has been curtailed and that the spiralling nature of revenge and aggression has not been allowed to take control. Given the mimetic nature of humans, Schwager comments that it is absolutely necessary not to resist evil with evil (which the New Testament particularly emphasises).[20] Girard maintained that this highly ethical command points to "the only way possible to break out of the vicious circle of mimesis and violence."[21]

The reciprocal nature of revenge exemplifies its mimetic character. The mechanism involves the blaming and punishing of another, with the likely result that the other will retaliate, only to be met by an answering violent response. In regard to East Timor this cycle of revenge has not eventuated. This has occurred not only because of Timor's weak geopolitical position, but also because of the hard spiritual lessons learned over 24 years of Indonesian occupation and 400 years of Portuguese colonisation. The willingness of the Timorese to suffer in the cause of justice and their unwillingness to avenge themselves were key. This contrasts markedly with the capitulation of nations to violent mimesis which is apparent in history, of which the 20th century is a devastating example.

"Indonesia and East Timor: Against Impunity, For Justice," APSNet Policy Forum, April 24, 2008, accessed 25 October 2016, http://nautilus.org/apsnet/indonesia-and-east-timor-against-impunity-for-justice/
[20] Raymund Schwager, *Must there be scapegoats?: Violence and Redemption in the Bible* 2nd ed., (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2000), 173. Cf. Mt 5:39, Rom 12:17, 1 Thess 5:15, 1 Pet 3:9.
[21] Schwager, *Must there be scapegoats?* 172.

Mimetic theory, according to Girard, claims that rather than violence being part of politics, it is politics which is part of violence.[22] It is the endemic nature of violence in the human approach to relationships which is misunderstood, resulting in its constant use. Despite the outcomes of violence over millennia, that is, the deaths and destruction arising from it, the human race has yet to learn that violence begets violence. Summarising Girard, Hodge notes that "political rationality has failed to comprehend the nature of violence in its reciprocal, unpredictable and escalating character."[23] Girard's insight in his final book describes the path taken by the Timorese people. Though difficult in the short-term, the most effective and long-lasting solution is "to adopt the behaviour recommended by Christ: abstain completely from retaliation."[24]

The victim is judge

Australian recognition of the victim

Recognising the influences that led to the significant changes in East Timor's fortunes and to the involvement of Australia provides a partial understanding of the history of the relationship. Nevertheless, application of Girard's insights adds significantly more clarity, by identifying in the Australian response the mimetic components of what Girard calls "conversion".

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[22] René Girard, *Battling to the End: conversations with Benoît Chantre,* trans. Mary Baker (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 109.
[23] Joel Hodge, "War, Terrorism and Cultural Crisis: The escalation of mimetic rivalry and re-sacralising violence in modernity," (Melbourne: Australian Catholic University, 2015), accessed September 5, 2017, http://www.acu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/762283/War,_Terrorism_and_Cultural_Crisis_2_-_Hodge.pdf.
[24] Girard, *Battling to the End,* xiv.

James Alison states, "mimetic anthropology is par excellence an anthropology of conversion."[25] As has been discussed, Girard's initial insights into mimetic desire concerned certain novelists who saw that human desires are borrowed from others, leading to rivalry and conflict. He realised that it was growth in the novelists' understanding of themselves which was reflected in later novels. Such perception of mimesis was described by Girard as a "conversion".[26] The ability of the great novelists to recognise the previously unconscious influence of relationship, rivalry and conflict in their own mimetic desire indicated a growth in self-knowledge, a type of collapse of their prior understanding of themselves as autonomous individuals who possessed control over their object-orientated desires.[27] This major personal conversion was a reversal of inaccurate notions of themselves: in Girard's term, an "existential downfall".[28]

Girard then identified mimetic rivalry in ancient myths, which he interpreted as accounts of the resolution of social conflict by scapegoating. In the Jewish and Christian scriptures, however, he found that victims are presented as innocent. In the Gospel accounts of the Passion particularly, the sacrificial foundations of cultures and religions are revealed as lies. Girard saw that the Gospels are thus a fundamental growth and revolution in humanity's understanding of itself, similar in structure to the conversion he witnessed in novelists.[29]

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[25] James Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes* (New York, The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 62.
[26] René Girard, *The Girard Reader,* ed. James G. Williams (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 284.
[27] René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 3.
[28] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 284.
[29] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 262-3.

Foundational to this growth and revolution is the Gospel witness to the death and resurrection of Christ. It is the resurrection of the sacrificed victim, Christ, which is the foundation of the insight into the victim. Alison states;

> The resurrection is the possibility of a completely new and previously unimaginable human story, a rereading of all human stories from a radical perspective that had previously been hidden. It had previously been hidden by the reality of death. So the resurrection brings a completely new perception of what Jesus' life and death had been about: the Father's interpretation of Jesus' life as hated without cause. By giving him back, the Father permitted a fresh rereading of the death of Jesus, and of his life and self-interpretation leading up to it, and thus affords a completely new perspective on human victims. Thus, when Paul has his vision on the road to Damascus, he is perceiving exactly the same new regard on human life as previously had been experienced in a public way by the disciples: this is the revelation of God as human victim.[30]

It is the crucified and risen Christ who provides an opportunity for humans to live in a new mimetic way with insight into their own violence and liberated from its absolute power, through a new model. The conversion that Girard sees as fundamental to human survival and flourishing has its goal and model in Christ. Girard regards Christ as the perfectly mimetic being who, as the victim of human violence, is able to love completely in giving himself for the good of the other.[31]

In the Girardian perspective, the recognition of the basic lies of novels and ancient myths, and insights into the associated deficiencies of religious, cultural or personal foundations, can transform the perception of the self and the foundation of culture. The change in understanding of the basis of identity and culture leading to change in behaviour constitutes the conversion of which Girard writes. I argue that the events of the late 1990s can be perceived as an Australian conversion in regard to East Timor that significantly affected changes to official government policy and action. A

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[30] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 77.
[31] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 122.

Girardian interpretation of the relationship at that time reveals the presence of the cardinal structure of mimetic theory, that is, the recognition of the victim. The extraordinary about-turn, politically and socially was brought about by the perception of the vast majority of the Australian community that the East Timorese nation and people were the persecuted victims of violence – violence which was enabled by Australian policy – and were virtuous and even Christ-like in their reactions to such violence. This perception permeated Australian civil society and politics with ever-increasing urgency, through the inspiration of the Timorese and the advocacy of the solidarity movement, as discussed above.

Seeing the victim and realising the Australian position of victimiser are the two sides of the conversion process which Australians embraced. Many showed the capacity not only to see the victim, but to see through the violence and the cover-ups and lies which supported it, and which had brought the Timorese to their knees. In recognising that reality, the deficiencies of Australian history and self-appraisal were obvious. Instead of the "loyal mate" of popular lore, Australians recalled that they had abandoned those who had been loyal to them. The images of courageous battlers and diggers gave way for a time to the realisation that Australian fear of losing the patronage and security of larger powers contributed to the sacrifice of their weaker neighbours. Independence was seen as the dream, and dependency the reality. In 1998 Hamish McDonald quoted former diplomat Bruce Haigh: "We think that we're so terrific, but in terms of moral courage inside the bureaucracy...it's non-existent."[32] In parliamentary speeches as Australian InterFET troops entered East Timor a few politicians acknowledged the betrayal, the appeasement, the "grave and tragic

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[32] Hamish McDonald, "Failure of the Inevitable," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* August 29, 1998.

mistakes", the "timid acquiescence" of previous Australian policies.[33] Paul Kelly described as "multiple delusions" the Australian ignorance of Indonesia, misplaced trust in America and underestimation of the East Timor challenge.[34] In Girard's terms, this "existential downfall" was the catalyst for turning towards East Timor, and recognising the victim. Australians saw through the violence, and knew victim and victimiser more keenly than ever before.

The authority of the victim as judge

The victimisation of the innocent is a human construct upon which has been built all religious and cultural systems.[35] The recognition that such a basis for human systems is now unveiled as a lie by the death and resurrection of Christ is a moment of significant insight. That recognition requires change in one's perception of the world. The criterion for relating to the world can therefore no longer be human institutions and their value judgements, but must be the recognition of the victim. In other words, this criterion carries greater weight than the authority of political institutions claiming to ensure national security or national interests. I have shown that giving due weight to the moral claim of the victim was the fundamental struggle that occurred in Australia during World War II and over 24 years of Indonesian occupation. It still remains a scar on the psyche of the Australian body politic and political class that has been sought to be suppressed by revisionist histories like those examined in Chapters Four, Five and Six of this dissertation.

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[33] Alan Ramsey, "Timor: a debt dishonoured," *The Sydney Morning Herald,* September 25, 1999.
[34] Paul Kelly, "Shattered myths," *The Weekend Australian,* (September 11-12, 1999): 25.
[35] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* trans. Patrick Gregory (London: Continuum, 1988), 94-97; 317.

This scar has come about because of the challenge that the recognition of the victim represents: it fundamentally undermines and upends conventional morality, politics and cultural logic. The logic of politics – which generally involves sacrificial judgements to maintain order and security – are fundamentally challenged. In this regard, Alison refers to the subversion of the idea of judgement throughout the Gospel of John, culminating in the realisation that "it is by being crucified that Jesus is the real judge of his judges."[36] An obscure scriptural debate of little apparent importance provides an entry into reflection on this concept in regard to the Australian-East Timor relationship.

At one point in the Greek text in the nineteenth chapter of St John's Gospel a curious enigma occurs. The scene is the judgement seat of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Jesus of Nazareth stands before him, having been scourged and crowned with thorns. The process of unconscious scapegoating is underway, with the political and religious leaders joining with the crowd in baying for the blood of the innocent; a unanimous chorus of condemnation. Even Jesus' companions, infected by the contagion of blame, have denied him and fled.

The text reads: "Pilate had Jesus brought out, and seated himself on the chair of judgement at a place called the Pavement, in Hebrew Gabbatha" (John 19:13). In the Greek text there is a grammatical anomaly concerning the object of the verb "to sit". There has been debate over interpretation of this word among a minority of scholars, who point to the possibility of the verb being transitive, so making Jesus the one who is seated. Observing that the syntax is inconclusive, Andrew Lincoln asks: "Does

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[36] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 121.

Pilate sit or does he seat Jesus on the judgement seat?"[37] He notes that some scholars

suggest that the biblical narrator may have been deliberately ambiguous, so that either

interpretation of who sat down is possible.[38] Regardless of the cause or intention of

the minor grammatical oddity, the irony of the scene suggests a theological reflection,

and gives an insight into the meaning of Jesus' power, authority and judgement. It is

linked to Jesus' earlier response (in the same scene) to Pilate's assertion of power over

life and death, where Jesus had indicated that authority comes from God. "You would

have no power over me if it had not been given you from above..." (Jn 19:11). Thus

the whole trial is given a "cosmic perspective."[39] Jesus then proceeds to make his own

judgement as to the relative guilt of those involved: "that is why the one who handed

me over to you has the greater guilt" (Jn 19:11b). Lincoln concludes:

> So Jesus as the witness who has been put on trial not only points to the one
> with ultimate authority in the cosmic trial but also again becomes judge
> himself as he hands down his own verdict of guilty on the earthly judge and on
> those who have brought him to trial.[40]

Thus in the Gospel narrative, the hasty trial of a perceived rabble-rouser in a

provincial backwater is inverted to reveal its universal application as the trial of the

innocent victim who reveals the innocence of all victims. As Girard states, "The

protective system of scapegoats is finally destroyed by the Crucifixion narratives as

they reveal Jesus' innocence, and, little by little, that of all analogous victims."[41] A

single verb ironically contributes to a larger theological and anthropological

perspective that John has been building to with reference to Jesus' "hour" of glory:

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[37] Andrew T. Lincoln, *A commentary on the Gospel according to St John* (London: Continuum, 2005), 469.
[38] Lincoln, *A Commentary,* 469.
[39] Lincoln, *A Commentary,* 468.
[40] Lincoln, *A Commentary,* 468.
[41] Girard, *Battling to the End*, xiv.

that the accused victim, Jesus, is divine judge and, from his place as victim, passes judgement on the court.

However unlikely the moment, the incongruity between victim and judge throws light on the meaning of the Timorese people's place in the relationship with Australians. They, as victims, ironically came to be the judges of Australia's complicity with Indonesian persecution. Their claim on the conscience of Australians challenged the Australian political mythology that led Australians to believe that supporting Indonesia was the only politically effective and expedient action to pursue. Occupying the place of the victim, they possessed the credibility to be able to see through the violence which had decimated them and which unveiled the craven inhumanity of their persecutors. Through the magnitude of their suffering the Timorese people took their place on the judgement seat, with complete authority to judge.

Scourged and crowned with thorns, sacrificed to concerns which were considered of greater importance to their neighbours, they interpreted and judged the history of their relationship with Australia and the world. Throughout the invasions by Australia, Japan and Indonesia they were ignored insofar as their desires or interests were concerned. They were the subject of intense speculation only insofar as their geographical placement afforded their neighbours some material prospects or strategic advantage. They were treated as pawns in political games of rivalry and the pursuit of security. Their contributions to the welfare of Australian soldiers were treated with a silence bordering on contempt. Their murderers were cajoled and fawned upon. They were abandoned, excluded, belittled or ignored. They suffered the classic treatment

meted out to scapegoats, and for decades "lacked a champion."[42] Having done nothing

to merit such treatment, the Timorese people displayed the single feature which marks

the scapegoat, and which they shared with Christ: innocence.

Such treatment gives to the victim the status of judge of the society whose insecurity

and fear arose out of the mimetic dependency inherent in the brutal game of

international politics, which led to the scapegoating of East Timor. As Alison states, it

is the very position of the victim *as victim* which bestows the authority to judge.[43]

The forgiving victim

Imitating Christ as the victim who forgives

But in what does this judgement consist? Alison argues that in Christ, it is the

approach of the *forgiving* victim towards the perpetrator that is the ultimate

judgement. This is so because Christ, the quintessential victim, forgave, and he

enjoins forgiveness in and with him. The risen Christ approached his weak and fearful

disciples with words of love and forgiveness. The status of East Timor as a victim of

larger powers - but one which has demonstrated forgiveness - is rare in the world

arena. Reflection on the Timorese response with Christ as the "forgiving victim" is

important for understanding the conversion that occurred amongst Australian people

and government officials.

James Alison has written extensively on Jesus as divinity becoming the forgiving

victim, basing his insights on Girard's mimetic theory. Apprehending God as the

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[42] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* trans. Patrick Gregory (London: Continuum, 1988), 14.
[43] James Alison, *Raising Abel: the recovery of the eschatological imagination*, 2nd ed. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2010), 141-142.

totally "Other", that is, outside of human violence and cultural projection, Girard and Alison both argue that God – through revealing himself in the midst of human violence – offers the possibility to see through the illusions of mimetic violence by exemplifying the full potential of mimesis in relationships of love. Thus, a human being can desire according to God's desire for the total good of the other, and can want what God wants. In the Christian understanding, God as Father loves and is love, so to imitate God is to love. But the bestowal and imitation of love cannot exist simply between the Father and the human person, as it were in a twosome. It requires a concrete manifestation and incarnation for humans to truly experience and receive it. God the Father points to the Son as the one that he loves and the Son incarnates this love in relationship with humanity, so the human being's act of imitation of the Father must be to receive the love of the Father manifest fully in the Son and to imitate the Son. The Spirit of love shared between the Father and Son is thus shared with humanity.[44]

A vast expanse of meaning arises from this, as the Son identifies himself with humanity. In particular he identifies with the least, the oppressed, the poor, the victim (Matt. 25). Drawn to desire what God desires and to imitate the love found in God, a person discovers that "the Father can produce in us the same love which he has for his Son and the same love which he and his Son have for the human race."[45] Alison explains further:

> ...the Son himself, as risen victim, points out to us and enfleshes for us, precisely in his role as risen self-giving victim, what the Father's love for humanity looks like and is, so that we may imitate it.[46]

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[44] Alison, *Raising Abel,* 186.
[45] Alison, *Raising Abel,* 187.
[46] Alison, *Raising Abel,* 186.

The consequences of imitating this love are uncompromising, and almost

incomprehensible. They are consequences which entail the forgiveness of the

perpetrators of evil, in imitation of the Trinitarian love. Alison states:

> That love is in no way marked by any desire for vindication...for turning the
> tables on this world, and all that might seem to us to be just and proper, given
> the horror of the violence of our world.[47]

Jesus, as the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), demonstrated forgiveness as the

fundamental expression of divine love in his life, teaching and death. In his teaching

he linked divine forgiveness to human willingness to forgive others, even innumerable

times (Mark 11:25; Mt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Luke. 6:37-38). He personally associated

with sinners such as the woman who anointed him (Lk. 7:36-50), and a corporate thief

(Lk. 19:1-10). He declared that people's sins were forgiven (Mk 2:5; Lk 7:48), told the

adulterous woman that he did not condemn her (Jn 8:11), and the repentant criminal

that he would join him in paradise (Lk. 23:43). Luke's account of the crucifixion

contains Jesus' prayer for those responsible for his death, "Father, forgive them, for

they know not what they do" (23:34). Jesus' prayer to the Father is a response to the

Father's love and is offered as forgiveness given freely out of love to those who willed

his death.[48]

Therefore, it is not only as victim that Jesus is resurrected, but in continuation of his

life and teaching, as a victim who forgives his tormentors rather than blaming them.[49]

Alongside the forgiveness displayed on the cross, the Gospel accounts of Jesus after

the resurrection contain no reprimand, no calling to account and no blame by Jesus

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[47] Alison, *Raising Abel,* 187.
[48] Alison, *Raising Abel,* 188.
[49] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 75.

towards his disciples who had so recently abandoned and denied him.[50] In this way, Jesus offers true peace and harmony to humanity in their mimetic relations with God and each other: "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:19) are Jesus' first words to his disciples as they relax into his loving forgiveness after the resurrection.

In the Gospel texts of the appearances of the dead and risen Jesus, however, there is neither concealment of the truth, nor attempts to gloss over or disguise the cowardice which accompanied the disciples' betrayal. This willingness to display the situation as it was, without any deception, is the reverse of the treatment of the victimage mechanism in myths. The disciples' acts were recognised for what they were: the treachery of the fearful leading to the death of an innocent man, yet that same man returned, calling out to these same men that breakfast was ready (Jn 21:12). The resurrection introduces the possibility of a complete reversal in human relationships. As Alison states, the presence of the crucified and risen Lord "permitted a manner of looking upon reality that had previously been impossible."[51] That manner of looking upon reality entails being able to see from the perspective not only of the victim, but of a victim who *forgives*. It is this perspective that the Timorese appropriated and enacted during the Indonesian occupation. Hodge illustrates that their faith in Christ moulded their identity together as members of his body, a body attacked and done to death, but living in hope of the resurrection in their totally loving and nonviolent God. Immersed in the selfhood of the victim Christ, and continually formed and strengthened as such in the Eucharist, they recognised that imitation of Christ required

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[50] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 74.
[51] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 77.

them to forgive as he did. Despite the difficulty of that calling the Timorese efforts to

embrace it permeated their response to violence.[52]

As discussed, the forgiveness demonstrated by the Timorese was specifically

expressed in their nonviolent resistance and lack of revenge. The scapegoating of East

Timor would appear to be a minefield for revenge, yet the general tendency in the

Timorese people has been to demonstrate a willingness to forego retaliatory violence.

The Timorese forgiveness can be seen not only as an alternative to the non-existent

application of justice to the criminality they endured, but as a response of an entirely

different order.[53]

Timorese Forgiveness - Expressions and criticisms

This distinctive response received the commentary of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the

UN's Special Representative during East Timor's transitional administration (1999-

2002). António Guterres, a past President of Portugal (who assumed the role of

Secretary-General of the UN in 2016), stated in 2010 that de Mello:

> described the Timorese people's capacity to forgive as the most surprising thing he
> encountered there, something he had never seen elsewhere, despite having
> witnessed a wide variety of conflicts.[54]

The orientation towards forgiveness evident in the attitudes of the Timorese people

has been demonstrated by significant leaders. Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta,

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[52] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 114; 154.

[53] It could be argued that there were mixed motives behind such forgiveness, for example, evasion of responsibility for the unaddressed violence of the civil war prior to the invasion, and the serious crimes committed by Timorese in 1999. Nevertheless, the complicity of geographical neighbours over decades caused greater destruction of Timorese life and property than Timorese internal problems and divisions.

[54] Felix Neto, Maria da Conceição Pinto and Etienne Mullet, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation in an Inter-group Context: East Timor's Perspectives* (Hauppauge: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2011), accessed October 20, 2017, ProQuest Ebook Central. viii.

both of whom have had the roles of President and Prime Minister, have introduced

concepts of forgiveness into the political dilemmas associated with their recent

history.[55] They have advocated publicly for amnesties and have spoken of

reconciliation.[56] They have presented concepts of reconciliation and forgiveness,

rather than retributive and adversarial justice, for the restoration of peace and

harmony and of assisting the people to embrace once again their own dignity and

identity.

Yet this immensely difficult task has serious risks. Where a wrongdoer refuses to

acknowledge the wrong done, the effort to forgive can seem useless.[57] It can also be

interpreted as a forgetfulness, even a betrayal of the past and of those who suffered.[58]

While acknowledging these threats, Robert Schreiter discusses forgiveness as both a

gradual process, and a decision.[59] Forgiveness can hardly be an immediate response to

violence, but the arrival at a decision to forgive signals that the violated one intends

not to be controlled by the past. "Forgiveness is an act of freedom."[60]

This effort towards forgiveness was captured in a 2006 film made about the life of

Xanana Gusmão who became President upon the restoration of Timor-Leste as a

Democratic Republic in 2002.[61] In the film an attitude of openness and willingness to

forgive is shown in his reception of Eurico Guterres, notorious leader of the Aitarak

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[55] John Braithwaite, Hilary Charlesworth and Adérito Soares, "Networked Governance of Freedom and Tyranny: Peace in Timor-Leste," *ANU Press* Vol. 35 (2012), accessed 23 September, 2016, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/497810

[56] Gusmão, Kay Rala, *Challenges for Peace and Stability,* Chancellor's Human Rights Lecture, (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 2003), accessed 21 January 2017, www.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1727572/**2003**0407-gusmao.pdf

[57] Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 55-56.

[58] Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation,* 55.

[59] Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation,* 58.

[60] Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation,* 58.

[61] Grace Phan, *A Hero's Journey,* (Singapore: Madmax Films, 2006) DVD.

militia, whose trial in Indonesia was shown footage of him calling for independence

supporters to be killed. Additionally, there were scenes showing Xanana embracing

Wiranto, Commander of the Indonesian Military during the last two years of the

occupation. The film also shows Xanana greeting his Indonesian jailers

enthusiastically, and opening his arms to the Timorese man who betrayed him to the

Indonesians in 1992[62].

In the film, Xanana says:

> Forgiveness, to me, means peace of mind. If we can forgive, we liberate
> ourselves from all bad sentiments of revenge of self-flagellation. If we forgive, we
> stop a part of our life. We say, "No, now I am entering a new phase of my life." If
> not, I live every day the sense that I am the worst victim in the world. God, why
> me? Why it happened to me and not to other people? Where is the justice in this
> life? We are every day trying to understand why, and we don't live in peace of
> mind. We don't live in peace. We are always trying to be selfish. "Me, me, why
> not him?" When we don't forgive, we don't free ourselves from thinking on
> ourselves. Forgiveness is the way to live in peace. Peace not with other people but
> firstly, with him or herself.

Both Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta have spoken of the criticism they have

received as a result of their public appeals and personal example that urged the

Timorese people to engage in forgiveness for the decades of oppression.[63] Pampalk

sees the decision to forgive as an effort by Timor-Leste to promote bilateral relations

with Indonesia "by means of ceding prosecutorial processes."[64] She states that any

accountability which had already been achieved in Timor-Leste was undermined by

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[62] Phan, *A Hero's Journey.*
[63] Xanana Gusmão, "His Excellency Xanana Gusmão accepts Honorary Doctorate and acknowledges Balibo House Trust," Balibo House Trust (2015), accessed January 25, 2017, http://balibohouse.com/his-excellency-xanana-gusmao-accepts-honorary-doctorate-and-acknowledges-balibo-house-trust/
Sara Everingham, "Horta says no to war crimes tribunal," ABC Radio National, The World Today, 28 August, 2009, accessed 25 January 2017, http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2009/s2669794.htm
[64] Madalena Pampalk," Accountability for Serious Crimes and National Reconciliation in Timor-Leste: Progress or Wishful Thinking?" *Australian Journal for South-East Asian Studies,* Issue 3(1), 2001:18, accessed January 16, 2017, http://www.seas.at/aseas/3_1/ASEAS_3_1_A2.pdf

political decisions such as to commute sentences and release people from prison, putting at risk the rule of law and necessary confidence in the judicial and political systems.[65] Similarly, Linton voiced criticism of Timor-Leste for not pursuing violators and for granting amnesties in the light of the commitments it undertook in signing all the core UN human right conventions. She states:

> There are few who deny the importance of a good relationship with the deadly giant next door, or that one has to be realistic. But the prevailing position within the NGO community and critics of the official approach is that the price of the bilateral relationship with Indonesia should not be justice for victims.[66]

Nevertheless, the recognition of forgiveness as essential to the future existed not only in the view of the Timorese leaders. In the absence of judicial processes during and immediately after the occupation, and in order to begin to respond to the violence and trauma of the occupation, many Timorese communities responded with their own efforts at truth, reconciliation and forgiveness. Hodge details an event at Suai on Christmas Eve 1999, where the residents re-enacted the massacre of 6 September, just after the announcement of the result of the vote for independence. The central element in the re-enactment was the opportunity for the survivors to tell the victims' story. [67] It was not used as an opportunity to call for vengeance but rather to begin a process of truth-telling and healing. It was an example of Xanana Gusmão's explanation that the Timorese seek reconciliation before justice. While not forgetting the past, reconciliation is seen as pre-eminent. "We advocate a reconciliation process whereby there is justice but which eschews revenge, resentment or hatred."[68] Additionally, Hodge details a number of instances of Timorese responses to extreme violence which

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[65] Pampalk, "Accountability for Serious Crimes," 25 and 23.
[66] Suzannah Linton, "Putting things in perspective: the realities of accountability in East Timor, Indonesia and Cambodia," *Maryland Series in Contemporary Asian Studies* No. 3, 2005 (182): 65, accessed September 4, 2017, http://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/mscas/vol2005/iss3/1/
[67] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,*190.
[68] Gusmão, *Challenges for Peace and Stability.*

illustrate a general pattern of a forgiving attitude among the Timorese people. He observes:

> This mood for forgiveness can be regarded as not just a strategic calculation but the out-working of the solidarity, faith and resistance that allowed the Timorese to survive and outlast the occupation.[69]

This capacity of the Timorese people for forgiveness was acknowledged at the Dili Massacre Commemoration Mass in St Mary's Cathedral Sydney on 12 November 2000, in the presence of a Timorese choir which was in Australia at the time. Father Tony Doherty, then Dean of the Cathedral, said: "The response of the Timorese people to violence has been beauty and grace."[70] This statement was a poetic expression of a major Timorese accomplishment. In saying all this there is no attempt to idealise the Timorese people or to try to give the impression of the existence of an entirely pacific or positive situation. There were isolated actions of vengeance after 1999, and there remain long-term effects of trauma and the prevalence of domestic violence, which witness to the complex situation that still exists among the Timorese people.[71] Moreover, before and during the Indonesian occupation, violence was committed by Timorese against Timorese, necessitating Community Reconciliation Programs conducted in the first years of independence by the CAVR Commission.[72] However, it must be acknowledged that the actions and attitudes of the Timorese people have also provided startling contrasts to this legacy and to the calls for the application of international justice which, although right and just, remain in the realms of the future. They have already succeeded in the extraordinary achievement of

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[69] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 195.
[70] I was present in the Cathedral when Father Doherty made this comment, and I have spoken with him about it since.
[71] Cf. Annika Kovar and Andrew Harrington, "Breaking the cycle of domestic violence in Timor-Leste: access to justice options, barriers, and decision-making processes in the context of legal pluralism," (October 2013), accessed September 4, 2017, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/timorleste/docs/reports/DG/Domestic%20Violence%20Report%20_with%20cover%20FINAL.pdf.
[72] Commission, *CAVR,* 9.1.1.2 and 9.4.1.103.

emerging from an unjust and brutal oppression in a forgiving manner, refusing to focus solely on the wrongs done to them. They have sought what Girard has advocated in the conclusion to his book *The Scapegoat*: "The time has come for us to forgive one another. If we wait any longer there will not be time enough."[73]

In engaging in a process which values and enacts forgiveness, the Timorese people have given witness to the abstinence from retaliation which Girard sees as the only solution to violence in the world, a violence which if not renounced "will lead straight to the extinction of all life upon the planet."[74] Demonstrating in detail the disastrous nature of human violence in modernity, Girard identifies the "escalation to extremes" as the tendency for human beings to imitate the violence with which they are confronted, resulting in more and more violence.[75] What the Timorese have done by refusing to retaliate and choosing to forgive is to go against this violent trend. Admittedly with some mixed results following independence, they have attempted to release themselves from its worst consequences with singular success.

Reconciliation

A further reality to be explored in relation to the forgiveness demonstrated by the Timorese people is that of reconciliation, a possible outcome of forgiveness. Reconciliation can occur as a result of the forgiving victim's capacity and willingness to restore not only their own humanity, but that of their persecutors.[76]

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[73] René Girard, *The Scapegoat,* trans. Yvonne Freccero, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 212.
[74] Girard, *Battling to the End,* xiv.
[75] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 13.
[76] Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 45-46.

Examples of attempts to incorporate forgiveness as a major element towards restoring

harmony through reconciliation are discussed by Robert Schreiter concerning South

Africa at the end of the apartheid era. In Schreiter's experience, forgiveness given

freely is an invitation for the wrongdoer to repent so that a new relationship can

emerge. The reconciliation needed to restore harmony is not a substitute for liberation

from the evil done; rather, it requires an end to the oppression.[77] It cannot be done in

haste, or by glossing over the enormity of what was done. There must be recognition

that perpetrators of evil usually whitewash their actions in order to evade the

consequences.[78] Neither does true reconciliation resemble a programme of mediation

or negotiation, nor of other tools of management.[79] In its essence, reconciliation is a

gift – in the Christian understanding, firstly it is a gift of God, whereby the victim is

being brought by God to forgive. In God a victim can discover the existence of his or

her capacity to forgive, and the willingness of God to enable such forgiveness.

In response to this, the perpetrator of the evil has the opportunity to repent and

thereby to begin rebuilding his or her own humanity.[80] A lengthy quote from Schreiter

explains this point:

> What makes the suffering coming from violence so difficult is that it tends to
> rob us of our humanity. The victim is threatened in the act of violence, and
> engaging in an act of violence robs the perpetrator of some measure of
> humanity. How else can one murder or torture another human being? ...It is
> out of the welling up of God's grace in the victim's shattered life that humanity
> can be offered to the perpetrators of violence. For there to be reconciliation,
> the victims must forgive; the perpetrators cannot forgive themselves. And that
> forgiveness must carry something of the unboundedness of grace that God
> gives. We must not "count trespasses" any more than God has.
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> Anyone who has ever experienced violence knows how difficult that can be.
> But precisely herein lies the point: to undo the violence that has been done,

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[77] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 21-23.
[78] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 19.
[79] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 25.
[80] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 45.

only this kind of forgiveness can bring the perpetrator to repentance. Those who commit violence can be punished but punishment does not guarantee repentance. Punishment can fulfil a need for redress or vindication, but does it restore the humanity of the evildoer? In the reconciliation process, then, because the victim has been brought by God's reconciling grace to forgive the tormentor, the tormentor is prompted to repent of evildoing and to engage in rebuilding his or her own humanity.[81]

Thus Schreiter presents the insight that in the process of reconciliation, *forgiveness precedes repentance*. While people normally expect that evildoers repent and make reparation, he states that the Christian understanding works the other way around: "We discover and experience God's forgiveness of our trespasses, and this prompts us to repentance."[82] And further:

We are prone to see repentance as proof of sincerity for seeking forgiveness - it is earning forgiveness. But the graciousness of God discovered in reconciliation also makes us aware that forgiveness is not something to be earned. It is given freely out of that same graciousness.[83]

It is this perspective that helps to give a deeper understanding of the approach of Xanana Gusmão and other Timorese leaders towards their enemies. Theirs was not merely a political or strategic move, but also expressed a deeply-held religious and cultural imagination towards reconciliation.

Furthermore, just as forgiveness cannot be earned, neither can it be required.[84] The extreme difficulty entailed in the human embrace of forgiveness was expressed by a Religious Sister in the documentary *A Hero's Journey* when she stood in the aisle of the church at Suai, still red from the blood of those who had been massacred there in 1999.[85] She spoke of how hard it is to forgive, and that no one has the right to tell the

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[81] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 45-46.
[82] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 45.
[83] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 60.
[84] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 60; 20.
[85] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 60.

Timorese people to forgive.[86] Despite such essential caveats, the recorded actions and sentiments of the Timorese people are evidence of the possibility of human beings giving the gift of forgiveness to their persecutors and becoming "forgiving victims". In their Christian faith and experience, they discovered an ability to forgive that opened a space for nonviolent resistance that sought to convert and reconcile with their oppressors, including the Australian government in its complicity during the Indonesian occupation. This willingness to advocate for the truth and to seek the conversion of their oppressors, rather than to destroy them, was a key to the success of the Timorese solidarity movement.

Challenges to Australians

This dissertation has sought to investigate the reasons for the Australian treatment of the Timorese people between World War II and 1999. Girard's insights assist in an understanding of Australian actions as demonstrations of the effects of mimesis on humans. National insecurity and fear in reference to external "enemies" – which manifest what Girard identifies as a deficiency of or yearning for being – fed into and arose as a result of unhealthy forms of mimetic dependencies on others which entailed the sacrifice of a near neighbour and wartime friend. The unveiling of the suffering victims in East Timor being "hated without cause", and in whose oppression there was Australian complicity, gradually brought about an Australian conversion towards the victim. In order to explore this process in more depth, three related challenges to this conversion are now discussed in the context of Girard's insights into the victimage mechanism: unconsciousness, blindness and re-mythologisation.

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[86] Phan, *A Hero's Journey*.

Unconsciousness and blindness

In Girard's analysis, unconsciousness is a characteristic of victimisers.[87] The unconsciousness of characters governed by mimetic rivalry in literature is a product of the weak self-knowledge which allows them to think of themselves as independent of others. The process is mirrored in all cultural myths, where those who exonerate themselves of the killing of victims do so oblivious of the fact that they are guilty of blaming the innocent. Girard underlines that the sincere belief of the persecutors in the guilt of their victims is essential to genuine scapegoating.[88] In many ways the Indonesian regime believed their own mythologies which the Australian government and a major segment of its public were willing to believe and support because of the accusations (such as that of communism) levelled at the Timorese.

When analysing the phenomenon of unconsciousness Girard discusses one of the last words of Jesus from the cross: "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Girard does not believe that this is simply the prayer of a saintly dying man willing to forgive his torturers. Instead he points to "its almost technical role in the revelation of the scapegoat mechanism."[89] He continues: "It says something precise about the men gathered together by their scapegoat. *They do not know what they are doing.* That is why they must be pardoned."[90] According to Girard, the fundamental recognition must be that scapegoaters do not know what they are doing. They are largely or fully unconscious of the way mimetic rivalry and violence has taken hold of their desires, and therefore must be forgiven.

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[87] René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning,* trans. J.G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), xii; Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 216.
[88] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 40.
[89] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 111.
[90] Girard, *The Scapegoat,* 111.

In opposition to the unconsciousness of mimetic violence, the Judeo-Christian scriptures, particularly the Gospel accounts of the Passion, unveil the power of scapegoating and its mythology in human cultures. Girard states: "The Crucifixion is what highlights the victimary mechanism and explains history."[91] The Gospel accounts of the death and resurrection of Christ revealed the innocent victim and demythologised human violence such that human groups could not divinise their victims (and so complete the justification and projection of violence onto victims). In different places, humanity has been gradually exposed over twenty centuries to the truth of scapegoating and, to differing degrees, is coming to realise that the victim is indeed innocent, and that victimising others exists for the protection of the self and the mob. The scapegoating mechanism is unmasked, as a result of which post-resurrection societies are now unable to fully claim an "innocent" unconsciousness.[92] Nevertheless, such societies retain a level of unconsciousness when perpetrating violence, which is later disrupted by a moral realisation or remembrance of the innocence of the victim that is then supplemented by efforts to suppress or cover-up the truth of victimisation.

During the Indonesian occupation, particularly in the late 1990s the Australian society struggled with the truth of victimisation. Overcoming the lies and political arguments that were used to justify and suppress Australia's official complicity with Indonesian oppression and acts of violence meant facing down the powerful and being willing to oppose unjust laws. The ability to see through the mythology attached to the Indonesian regime's violence came as a result of the recognition of the Timorese as victims and scapegoats. The Timorese and the international solidarity movement

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[91] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 196.
[92] Alison, *Raising Abel,* 204.

painstakingly sought to cultivate this recognition through the advocacy and awareness-raising activities discussed earlier. That recognition expanded to a degree that there was an almost complete Australian championing of East Timor as victim in the late 1990s. The Australian public sentiment in 1999 described earlier demonstrated an acute awareness of the persecution of the Timorese, which was on display in appalling detail. This awareness was the basis for the appeal to the Australian public and government to act on their behalf. Australian society, including government and media, turned towards the victims and excelled itself on their behalf. Thus the thin veil of unconsciousness was pulled aside, and Australians demonstrated a consensus around the plight of their very close neighbour and the enormity of the Australian collusion in their misfortune. The fact that the conversion happened at all points to involvement in a process set in motion by the Bible, particularly the accounts of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Gospel interprets Australian texts both in their complicity and conversion.

Thus, alongside the unconsciousness which generated much of the Australian approach to East Timor there existed the possibility of culpable blindness. The exposure of widespread violence against the Timorese in 1999 unveiled the innocence of the Timorese to wider sections of the Australian public, such that more people than ever before became acquainted with the situation. There was a revelation of the complicity of successive Australian governments and the apathy of much of the population. After that, the Australian nation was incapable of returning to the innocent unconsciousness of the past. Any continuation of the scapegoating of East Timor would necessarily be influenced by wilfulness. The truth of the scapegoating of East

Timor having been demonstrated, further manipulation or exclusion of the Timorese people by Australia was the result of refusal to see – of culpable blindness.

In this regard, John 9 provides some important insights into culpable blindness. The cure of the blind man in John 9 is the setting for Jesus' teaching on blindness in which he differentiates between the unconscious and the culpable. Towards the end of the narrative the Pharisees asked:

> "We are not blind, surely?" And he replied:
> "Blind? If you were, you would not be guilty, but since you say "We see," your guilt remains. (John 9:40-41)[93]

In Alison's words, the unconscious are those "who are only blindly part of the mechanism of exclusion: they at least do not know what they are doing, and thus have no guilt."[94] On the other hand are those who lay claim to morality, insight and discernment. These are they who think they can see, but are shown by Jesus to be the truly blind in their suppression of the truth. Alison points out that Jesus' teaching about judgement here is not limited to the particular biblical incident in question, but is universal in its application. He states:

> All humans are blind, but where this blindness is compounded by active participation in the mechanisms of exclusion pretending to sight, this blindness is culpable.[95]

Alison's interpretation reveals that the judgement of blindness against the Pharisees does not complete Jesus' teaching in the story. The other side of the recognition of blindness of the excluders is the temptation to blame those who did the initial blaming – to victimise the victimiser (as is popular in the modern media). The biblical insight

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[93] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 120-125; James Alison, *Faith beyond resentment: fragments catholic and gay* (New York, The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 3-26.
[94] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 122.
[95] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 123.

underlined by Alison is that both victim and victimiser dwell within the human being and that, in reflecting on the blind man and the Pharisees, our task is to "identify with the two positions at the same time."[96] Therefore, one has "to learn to un-pharisee his own discourse."[97]

As a result, the interpretation of the relationship between Australia and East Timor in accordance with Girard's insights into the victim requires the recognition of one's own "complicity in the murderous order of the world, and therefore of the degree of one's blindness."[98] Hence condemnation of the actions of Australian institutions requires one to be aware of one's own complicity as a citizen in government policy. This holds true in terms of the prevailing unconscious mythology and deceit as well as regarding the recognition of the very great good that was accomplished, particularly at the end of the occupation and during the early establishment of the nation of Timor-Leste. Consequently, a reality to be considered in the light of the blindness of which Jesus speaks is the easy willingness of Timorese supporters, including the writer, to point the mimetic finger at others. It is also means a process of intense moral scrutiny and honesty for the Timorese themselves as they reflect on their own violence towards each other, especially in 1975 (which has been part of the CAVR process).[99]

The application of this insight to all other political and social situations therefore presents a challenge to every person who wishes to take Girard's mimetic theory seriously. Girard refers to the "subtle and concealed" forms of resistance to violence which can appear "even in the language of nonviolence and in the concern for those

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[96] Alison, *Faith beyond resentment,* 19.
[97] Alison, *Faith beyond resentment,* 19.
[98] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 124.
[99] Commission, *CAVR,* Part 9.

who are suffering."[100] The willingness to avoid these effects of mimesis requires conversion of the type being discussed, that which resists scapegoating and blaming, is willing to reflect on our imitatory motivation for attitudes and actions, and to withdraw from rivalry. Girard states: "We have to acknowledge our mimetic nature if we hope to free ourselves of it", in the sense of the distortions and worst excesses of it.[101]

Re-mythologisation

Despite the insight into the erosion of the unconsciousness of scapegoating, reversion to mythic narratives still occurs. To our violent political realities lesser entities are sacrificed, including human beings. This is described as re-mythologisation, in which mythic self-aggrandisement and exoneration of the powerful is claimed at the expense of victims. While some societies express this by weaving mythologies with religious overtones, others, particularly in the West, endow "national security" or "national interest" with similar, though not stated, religious aura.

Regardless of the genesis of such re-mythologisation, the cultural solution to violence is invariably regarded as the use of more violence. Girard contrasts previous eras of more structured warfare with the present "era of security."[102] He further declares: "we have gone from an era of codified war to an era of *security*, where we think we can 'resolve' conflicts just as we cure sickness, with increasingly sophisticated tools."[103] The resolution of conflicts which threaten security remain violent, demonstrating the

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[100] Girard, *Things Hidden,* 426.
[101] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 205.
[102] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 117.
[103] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 117.

placing of ourselves "at the heart of violence."[104] We choose this rather than understanding what we actually have the capacity to do: to renounce violence.[105]

Thus national security becomes the overarching goal to which all else much be sacrificed. This discourse of security was, of course, the main driver in the Australian invasion of Timor in World War II and its complicity with Indonesia's invasion and occupation of East Timor. It was believed that security could only be achieved through a stable relationship with Indonesia, at the expense of Timor. In a sense this was true, because rather than seeking for peace between neighbours, Australian governments settled for the security that their doctrines of *realpolitik* dictated. Despite nonviolent approaches to achieving peace in the region 'security' was the god of Australian foreign policy to which the Timorese were sacrificed.

This dissertation has demonstrated this regression by investigating Australian government documents relating to three historical periods. The documents present a record which reveals unconsciousness of the depth of Australian dependency on other nations, and blindness as to the effects of its actions on the Timorese people. The casting of Australia as the "saviour" of 1999 while concealing prior complicity in the victimisation of Timor re-asserts the myth of fearless, loyal Australians dealing fairly with a regional problem. The forgetfulness of the general Australian population, aided by government reluctance to admit the official scapegoating of the Timorese people, is an attempted re-mythologisation. It may introduce elements of comfort, but is incapable of taking human beings back to the sincere unconsciousness which marked the scapegoating process before the revelation of the Gospel. The unveiling of the

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[104] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 69.
[105] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 68.

victimage mechanism by Jesus Christ brings with it the greater human responsibility

to recognise the innocent victim, and a consequent inability to claim ignorance.

Promotion of myths in the official Australian documentary record regarding East

Timor does not augur well for wider Australian relationships, as was discussed in

Chapters Four, Five and Six. Resistance to the forgetting and concealment of

Australian policy and action in Timorese history is an essential part of the rejection of

re-mythologisation. The Timorese saga presents Australians with an opportunity to

judge present international policy in the light of past errors. It signals probable effects

on other weaker neighbours if fairness, loyalty and independence continue to be

claimed as national characteristics without a balanced and honest appraisal of history.

Positive Mimesis

Imitating the good

Mimetic theory presents cogent explanations for the rivalry and violence inherent in

the scapegoating mechanism, the mimesis which leads to conflict.[106] However, Girard

also recognised the reality of human imitation that leads to the good and flourishing,

through the formative power of example.[107] He explains that Jesus himself advocates

mimetic desire in that sense, stating "Jesus seems to say that the only way to avoid

violence is to imitate me, and imitate the Father."[108]

Positive mimesis, as a gift enabled by Jesus' own love, provides the possibility of

behaviour that builds community and reins in violence. The non-retaliation and

[106] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 62-65.
[107] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 109.
[108] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 63.

forgiveness of the Timorese towards those who victimised them can be seen as an engagement in positive mimesis, through which they are in the position of a model of nonviolence and non-revenge to the whole world. They constitute an exception to Girard's lament that "positive models have become invisible."[109]

In the example of the Timorese people, Australians found a positive model on a number of levels. Apart from nonviolence and absence of revenge, the courage of the Timorese during World War II and throughout the occupation is formidable. Similarly, their desire for independence remained, despite the array of measures taken in language, education and culture to "Indonesianise" them. The Indonesian oppression sought to envelop the Timorese, presenting capitulation to the desires of the regime as the inevitable solution to their suffering. The truth of the situation, however, – its injustice – was recognised as the means of this fundamental affront to their identity. As Hodge reflects,[110] the blessings of the Christian faith provided the Timorese with the means by which they could together imitate Christ. In this solidarity with him, they could build and retain their "interdividual identity" as an ecclesial community, which strengthened and nourished their distinctiveness as a people. In positive mimetic identification with Christ and with one another they found the capacity to withstand the state-sanctioned violence which tried to force them into submission. At the same time their Christian faith enabled them to resist reciprocating the violence of their victimisers.[111] Thus the desire of the Timorese to retain their culture and character was strengthened by the positive mimesis which is part of Christian faith. The faith and faithfulness of so many Timorese produced examples of nonviolent courage worthy of imitation.

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[109] Girard, *Battling to the End,* 109.
[110] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 143.
[111] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisaiton,* 16; 143.

Such a response is of an entirely different order to the tendency to retaliate and take revenge that is the norm in much human interaction, individually and collectively. The Timorese response is characterised by aspects of Christ's reality as victim. It is a manifestation of the two-fold identification of Christ and the victim – Christ identifies with victims thus enabling the victims to identify with him, as is comprehensively analysed by Hodge.[112]

Values desired by Australians

Paradoxically, a series of traits often claimed as describing "Australianness" was demonstrated for many years by the Timorese people: courage, loyalty and independence (in the sense of not succumbing to the mob). While many individual Australians showed these characteristics when championing the Timorese cause, it is difficult to apply these qualities to Australian institutions as a whole in regard to the Timorese people. The documentary record is witness to the fact that such features characterised Timorese actions during the historical events, whereas they cannot be said to describe the Australian part of the narrative. The historical record remains as witness to the events within which the actions of the Timorese provide a compelling model for positive mimesis. This positive mimetic example was a factor in the appeal of the Timorese to Australian consciences and added weight to the morally upright and innocent quality of their cause. Moreover, it provided a mimetic mirror of the kind of people so many Australians aspire to be.

Undertaking imitation of the Timorese people's attitudes would require of Australians the ongoing human task of remembering truthfully the dire situation of the victim and

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[112] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 143-162.

the Australian complicity with the oppressors. It calls for celebration of those who acted in solidarity with the victim in the face of official disdain. It requires remembering the Timorese victims and the work of Australian civil society on their behalf, instead of maintaining chronicles which form an Australian myth, a "romantic lie."

New relationship

Far from being simply an interpretation of the history, the conversion evident in Australian civil society and (to some degree) government, involved a change in relationship with others, particularly with East Timor and Indonesia. There is a new place to be inhabited by those who have experienced change in the process of reconciliation after enmity and suffering. As Schreiter explains: "Christian reconciliation never takes us back to where we were before. It is more than removal of suffering for the victim and conversion for the oppressor. Reconciliation takes us to a new place."[113] The events of 1999 demonstrated the contours of this place, which included advocacy for and relief of the persecuted Timorese people from their oppressors, through diplomatic and military action. In other words, it required a major shift in Australian policy, driven by a more radical expression of public support for the victimised Timorese. This shift has on-going political and cultural implications, including support by Australia, as demonstrated by the Timorese request for Australia's intervention in Timor-Leste's internal crisis in 2006.

The new place of the Australian and Timor-Leste relationship is under construction. To remain faithful to the spirit of 1999 requires the acceptance of the Australian

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[113] Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 55-56.

"existential downfall."[114] Seeing the victim in the light of the violence condoned by Australia for so long has major implications for the Australian effort to seize the identity its people desire. Girard states: "True conversion engenders a new relationship to others and to oneself."[115] Seeing through violence and seeing the victim reveals the self. Alison states that this essential work of perception involves:

> ....learning to see the same reality from a different perspective: specifically the hugely culturally complex (and apparently very rare) process of learning to look at the act of victimisation from the point of view of the victim, which subverts identity (in order to rebuild it), rather than from that of the lynchers, whose viewpoint constitutes an identity that is also a cover-up."[116]

Conclusion

Girard's insights into Australian civil society's support for the Timorese people reveal the influence of the Christian scriptures' revelation of the innocence of the victim, providing an interpretation of the Australian society's gradual recognition of the victim in their midst as a "conversion". Greater Australian self-knowledge can arise from the "existential downfall" accompanying the recognition of complicity in the oppression of its neighbours. In its status as victim, East Timor undertook the role of judge in the manner of Christ, and offered forgiveness as the door to a new relationship with Australia which can thus evolve. Though obscuration has occurred to absolve the Australian government of its complicity in the oppression of East Timor, a reminder of the changed relationship with Timor and the debt owed by the Australian government and civil society is still effective in guarding against returning to past attitudes and approaches. Scrutiny of Australian history in regard to East

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[114] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 3; 294.
[115] Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel,* 294.
[116] Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong,* 69.

Timor through a Girardian lens proves to be a potent force in determining "who we might be as much as who we think we were."[117]

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[117] Hank Nelson, "Gallipoli, Kokoda and the Making of National Identity," in *The Australian legend and its discontents,* ed. Richard Nile (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press. 2000), 215.

CONCLUSION

I began this dissertation hoping that I would be a witness for humanity in the "mangled mess" of human life as I wrote about two peoples whom I love: the friendly, inscrutable Timorese, and my own sprawling and dogged fellow-Australians. My initial desire was to try to understand why Australia, particularly through its government, was complicit in the oppression of the Timorese people. I wanted to "get beneath the surface" of the necessary, yet flawed, political rationales. This journey using Girard's theories has shown that by scapegoating East Timor and officially recording events in a way which continued the persecution, the Australian government and sections of civil society rejected the Timorese claims to their own identity and contributed to immense human suffering, before turning and recognising the victim.

The discovery of René Girard's mimetic theory has provided a means of understanding why my nation, Australia, has treated East Timor in the way described in this dissertation. The concepts of mimetic rivalry and the victim mechanism have provided ways to approach and understand the underlying forces that led to violence and cover-up in relation to East Timor and the way Australia's government and military actions contributed to Timor's scapegoating for "security" reasons. Moreover, I have applied Girard's insights into the manufacture of myths and "texts of persecution" to provide a critical way of interpreting the written historical records around East Timor and to see through the rationales for Australia's actions. Significantly, I have shown that recognition of the victim can generate a reversal of

scapegoating - a conversion - which for Australian civil society was the culmination

of being able to "see through violence" and come to be in solidarity with one's victim.

Three interrelated features of Girard's theses, then, have been used to interpret the

relationship between Australia and East Timor in the dissertation: the scapegoated

victim, texts of persecution and conversion. These features have been used in a

particular way in this dissertation to show that the Timorese were sacrificed by

Australia and other world powers. The dynamics of the sacrifice were in some ways

peculiar to the particular context of international politics – in that the collective

violence did not occur in a clear action of mob violence against a scapegoat, but rather

as repeated and accumulated acts that subjected the Timorese to violence, oppression

and marginalisation. These acts sacrificed the Timorese to the exigencies of

Australian security policy and alliances. In this way, the dissertation has provided a

way of analysing international politics and relationships amongst nation-states,

showing how such relationships can involve the sacrifice of weaker nations such as

East Timor. In briefly summarising my approach in this dissertation, I propose that it

is one of the major implications of this dissertation and can make a major contribution

to understanding violence in international affairs. The dissertation has shown how

history and relationships can be interpreted from the lens of the victim, and how a

theological interpretation is necessary to understand how victimisation can be

overcome through conversion.

The Victim

The sacrifice of a scapegoat is an expression of the victim mechanism.[1] Girard identifies certain defining elements of scapegoating which he describes as "stereotypes of persecution."[2] These are *crisis, crime, criteria for the selection of victims* and the consequent *violence* done to them. As well as being used specifically in the case study in Chapter Six, these features have underlain the interpretation the history of the relationship between East Timor and Australia throughout the dissertation.

Crisis

Australians experienced specific crises during the 20th century which can be identified as generating the victim mechanism which in turn affected East Timor so badly. Drawn into the Second World War, Australia made a huge contribution relative to its population. Significant fear of invasion had been fed by literature which had painted Australia as the object of Asian, and specifically Japanese designs. The ferment of the global scene and regional threat threw Australia's vulnerable isolation into relief. With the approach of Japan and the realisation of the inability of Britain to maintain protection, such fear solidified, demanding personal and family sacrifices affecting all areas of national life. The national rivalries generating the war exacted a heavy toll on the Australian population, but the crisis passed without the feared invasion. Further crises arose as the decades after the War passed. These were countered by alignments with dependable larger powers for mutual security. The threat of communism intensified Australian ties with the vehemently anti-communist Indonesia, thus strengthening the alliance with the United States. As ways of ensuring

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[1] René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning,* trans. J.G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), xv.
[2] René Girard, *The Scapegoat,* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 14-23.

national security, treaties with Indonesia tied the two nations together more firmly, allowing for the sharing of resources and for mutual protection. Clearly, the challenges of maintaining a small population in a huge land mass in a developing region whose peoples sought both expansion and protection posed a series of crises to successive Australian governments for many decades. The exploitation and sacrificing of a weaker neighbour was an outlet for these crises.

Crime

The second element identified by Girard as a feature of scapegoating is that of the *crime*, believed by those in crisis to be the cause of the emergency and the threatened harm to the community. In the case of East Timor there was no crime as such committed by the Timorese to invite their condemnation, neither in World War II nor under the Indonesian regime. In both cases however, the perception of the antagonists was pivotal to the events. In each case Timor was seen to occupy the role of obstacle to the attainment of the desires of the rivals. Connected to this, it was seen to be a weak territory that required the intervention of larger powers to prevent it becoming a threat (either from Japanese or communist use).

In World War II the advance of both Australian and Japanese towards Timor was in the interests of rivalrous possession: the Japanese to occupy and thus expand, and the Australians to prevent occupation and so protect themselves. Neither perceived East Timor as a player in the events, either as an entity to be considered or as a reality with rights. The *crime* of Timor during the Second World War was its very existence, occupying a geographical position which was seen as either opportunity or threat, depending on the views of the rivals. Thus, Timor was the object over which the

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rivals fought, but its status as the colony of a neutral power rendered it an obstacle to the realisation of each rival's dream.

The *crime* of East Timor in relation to Australia and Indonesia in the 1970s was based on its geography and colonisation. As the outpost of an unstable Portugal on the Indonesian archipelago it invited the designs of Indonesian expansionism, with which Australia concurred. Furthermore, the spread of communism into Southeast Asia placed the fledgling political aspirations of the Timorese into question, thus providing useful excuses for the Indonesian invasion. The crime attributed to the Timorese was not something which had happened, but something which its neighbours calculated might happen: the possibility of either independence or communist control. As the Indonesian occupation took hold (with Australian approval), the Timorese desire for their own identity and for freedom was seen as their crime. Their hope challenged Indonesia's notion of its territorial integrity and again, Australia supported the Indonesian position as a means towards its own national security, as well as providing the prospects of financial gain from the Timor Sea. Hence, while Timor lacked the guilt of the commission of any crime, it bore the consequences of being an obstacle in the path of the desires of its neighbours.

Criteria for the selection of the victim

The third of Girard's stereotypes of persecution is the *criteria for the choosing of the victim*. Girard identifies victims as needing to be both marginal to the persecuting society and credible suspects. As a small half-island whose population was generally tribal, East Timor provided the insignificance required of scapegoats. Lacking the opportunity to be either politically or economically self-sufficient marked it in the

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eyes of its neighbours as unviable as well as weak and exploitable in the brutal politics of nation-states. Moreover, it was accused of having communist leanings, thus providing its scapegoating with a veneer of validity. Of greatest consequence was its position of being friendless among suspicious and fearful neighbours who thus avoided any retaliation for their scapegoating acts. There was no one to take up the Timorese cause; there was no one to counter the lies; there was no one to champion the people.[3] As a negligible and undefended entity, East Timor was a feasible candidate for sacrifice and victimisation.

Violence

Regarding the fourth and final aspect of Girard's persecution stereotypes, *the violence done to the scapegoat*, the Timorese people are notable among the world's victims. The decimation of the population in both World War II and the Indonesia occupation is nothing short of astounding. As has been discussed, the WWII death-toll in this colony of neutral Portugal is comparable to that of major nations in that same war. During the 24 year occupation by Indonesia, a further unconscionable number of Timorese died by violent means – up to one-third of the population.

From 1942 to 1999, the history of East Timor is an acknowledged catastrophe. Australia was involved in that tragedy, the events of which formed its relationship with the Timorese people. Nevertheless, the Australian government and civil society underwent a conversion towards the innocent victim that was integral to Timorese independence. Influenced by the Timorese nonviolent response to suffering and

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[3] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* trans. Patrick Gregory (London: Continuum, 1988), 14.

committed resistance to oppression, all levels of Australian society contributed positively to the resolution of what was ultimately a moral crisis.

Texts of Persecution

In analysing the Australian-East Timor relationship through mimetic theory, I have argued that the revelation of the scapegoat mechanism is a fundamental means of historical interpretation. This revelation has opened up an essential insight into human culture and politics. The dissertation has used this revelation to identify how Australia governments were complicit in Timor's victimisation and what forces Australian civil society confronted in order to overcome this complicity. Significant evidence of the victimisation resides in official documents. An abundance of that material is accurately described as "texts of persecution" because of the omissions, embellishments and lies which, as modern-day myths, continue the scapegoating.

Initially I wrote that I was aware that the dissertation itself could become a text of persecution. I have imagined myself as an investigator of the rivalries and dependencies of my nation and of the undeniable *unfairness* which contributed to the suffering of the Timorese people. I have championed the Timorese. And yet when writing of Australian agencies, I have had to curtail certain expressions and re-write condemnatory passages. I am the one who has had to answer the question: "Is that fair?" The dissertation thus risks immersion in the same process that it attempts to reveal, that of scapegoating.

It is not as if Australia did not treat East Timor abominably, as has been shown. The very real transgressions of the Australian nation are undoubtedly egregious and

contributed to the unspeakable suffering of the Timorese people. For this reason, judgements must be made. Yet the realisation that I may have been victimising Australia and its governments in my text, thus attributing to one of Timor's persecutors the status of scapegoat because of the crisis of my own anger and disgust, is integrally linked to an understanding of the victimage mechanism. Alberg refers to this in no uncertain terms: "The victim who offends us also helps us to recognize that the 'normal' way we do things is fundamentally flawed."[4] What is the "normal" way we do things? It is the way of blame. It is the age-old method of securing peace by accusation and punishment, repeated *ad nauseam.* Thus, this dissertation is not fundamentally an accusation against the Australian government or people. It is rather an interpretation inviting recognition and acceptance of Australia's history in an unadulterated light that can lead towards even deeper forms of conversion.

Conversion

In truth, the mere perception of scapegoating does not automatically give human beings the capacity to live without it. It is impossible for us who are bound by violence to release ourselves from the bind. As Girard points out:

> This unprecedented task of revealing the truth about violence requires a man who is not obliged to violence for anything and does not think in terms of violence – someone who is capable of talking back to violence while remaining entirely untouched by it.[5]

Christ is that one who is untouched by violence and yet who is the answer to it. As the dissertation shows, it was in Christ that the Timorese people predominantly found the grace to resist revenge and to embrace forgiveness. Their example of nonviolence

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[4] Jeremiah L. Alberg, *Beneath the Veil of the Strange Verses: Reading scandalous texts* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 90.
[5] René Girard, Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* (London: Continuum, 1978), 218.

inspired people across the world, not the least of whom were Australians, who recognised them as the victim. Ultimately, it is the Timorese nonviolence and forgiveness which interrogates and exposes the texts of persecution as well as calling those who were complicit in persecution to conversion. Jesus quoted the prophet Hosea's formulation of God's desire on a number of occasions: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13; 12:7). Following the Christian example of the Timorese people's forgiveness, the texts of persecution themselves can be read with mercy and forgiveness, rather than accusation and resentment.[6] This reading with mercy, rather than accusation, is another major implication from this dissertation that seeks to give the opportunity to its readers to recognise the truth and open a space to change.

The very call of Christ to show mercy can present a crisis, however. For if I "show mercy" to the Australian texts am I not condoning the violent realities which they record and the way they record them?[7] In relation to accountability for crimes against humanity, a situation which applies to the Timorese history and to Australia's involvement in it, this is a deeply perplexing question.

The application of justice to situations of violence, domestic or national, is humanity's attempt to come to terms with the violence of scapegoating revealed by the Gospels. The gradual understanding of victimisation has moved nations to place retributory violence against malefactors within the hands of the state, thus weakening the power of private or random acts of scapegoating, vendettas and rivalries.[8] This can be problematic, however, because of the abuses of state power world-wide, and as

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[6] Alberg, *Beneath the Veil,* 120.
[7] Alberg, *Beneath the Veil,* 90.
[8] William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 1998). 5.

evidenced in this dissertation. The application to the Timorese people of many state-based forms of "justice" in their recent history were deeply unjust and violent. In this regard it is also obvious that the usual forms of international justice have not eventuated for the Timorese people.[9] The absence of accountability for the crimes against humanity committed against them raise questions not only of justice, but of impunity and its detrimental effects on possible future victims.[10] Many concerned supporters of the Timorese people worldwide remain dismayed at the lack of application of justice as a scandalous affront to those who suffered and died, to the hard-won systems of justice worldwide, and to those who supported the pursuit of Timorese freedom. Despite pressure, the UN Security Council decided against establishing an international criminal tribunal, accepting Indonesia's assurances that it would bring any perpetrators to justice.[11] Flawed international investigations, the general unwillingness to risk offending Indonesia and the complaints of activists have, however, coalesced into a vacuum. Alone among the reports of investigating bodies, the extensive suite of CAVR recommendations is practical.[12]

The absence of accountability for crimes against the Timorese people underlines the victimage mechanism which has governed so much of their recent history. It implies that the truth of the Timorese persecution has not yet been fully acknowledged by those who perpetrated or supported it. The resulting impunity can ultimately lead to a

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[9] Geoffrey Robertson, *Crimes Against Humanity: the struggle for global justice,* 3rd ed. (Camberwell: Penguin Books, 2006), 503

[10] Another related investigation occurred when Portugal took Australia to the world court in 1995 claiming that Australia and Indonesia's Timor Gap Treaty refused to recognise East Timor's right to self-determination. The International Court of Justice, via a minor legal minutiae, declined to state the fact that Indonesia was an illegal occupier. Robinson, *East Timor 1999,* 495.

[11] Pampalk, "Accountability for Serious Crimes," 13.

[12] Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre, *Justice and Reconciliation in East Timor: Australia and the CAVR* (Uniya: Kings Cross, 2006), 12.

situation in which victims "can be exposed to violence without fear of reprisal."[13] This risks a dangerous situation which elsewhere has all too often been filled by private vengeance.[14]

Despite the injustice, the response to the violence which the Timorese people themselves have applied is mercy. This has opened a space for an alternative form of justice – a properly purified justice – that recognises the universal claims and rights of the victimised and oppressed. Whatever the inner workings of politics in that movement, the fact remains that mercy and forgiveness rather than revenge and retaliation have characterised the Timorese people's management of their recent history. Violence has not had the last word.

Questions such as those concerning the lack of accountability for gross abuses have no easy answer. Yet the Timorese people have manifested themselves as part of the slow, inexorable growth of humanity towards universal mercy, a mercy shown through the revelation of the scapegoating mechanism by Christ. Denouncing reprehensible acts rather than attacking (in whatever form) the persons responsible is essential to prevent mimetic retaliation which can only repeat and escalate violence.[15]

Inspired by the Timorese people, I share with other Australians the potential of being a witness to them and their recent history. While desiring to evade the very scapegoating described, there are positive contributions to be made by Australians, who willingly or ignorantly have been part of the persecutory structure of our nation. As part of the widespread friendships which describe the relationships between many

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[13] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 82.
[14] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 85.
[15] Alison, *Knowing Jesus,* 44; Girard, *Things Hidden,* 426.

Australians and Timorese people, friends are faced with the task of revealing the inner workings of systems which victimise. Friends "are able to demystify the world of the oppressors from within, to expose its weakness and incoherence, to point out its lies."[16]

The relationship of "friend" is crucial in its positive recognition of responsibility towards the other. The extraordinary fellowship which exists at grassroots levels demonstrates the best of the Australian responses to the Timorese people. Veling quotes Emmanuel Levinas's preoccupation with that fundamental responsibility: "In the face of our neighbour we see the face of every other, such that our neighbour attests to 'the whole of humanity, in the eyes that look at me.'"[17] This overarching relationship with the whole of humanity is "the prior, fundamental, primordial ethical relation of being-for-the-other and responsibility for the other" which is required to underpin social ethics and systems.[18] Yet the basis of responsibility is personal. Expanding on Levinas, Veling states:

> Unless public life is underwritten by the personal, then its collective structures are always in danger of forgetting or repressing the very relation that 'give rise' to political activity, namely, the 'I and the other' of human fraternity and ethical responsibility.[19]

Failures of our social structures are laid at the door of human refusal to recognise the basic responsibility inherent in relationship.[20] Girard sees this responsibility in terms

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[16] Ada María Isasi-Díaz, quoted in Melissa Browning, *Epistemological Privilege and Collaborative Research: A Reflection on Researching as an Outsider* (Chicago: Loyola University, 2013), 13, accessed August 10, 2017,
http://practicalmattersjournal.org/2013/03/01/epistemological-privilege/
[17] Veling, *For You Alone,* 151.
[18] Veling, *For You Alone,* 70.
[19] Veling, *For You Alone,* 76.
[20] Veling, *For You Alone,* 70.

of our fundamental connection to and reliance on the other in the formation of our identity.[21]

This primary responsibility is exemplified the history of the relationship with East Timor. There is an "answerability" to Australian actions through which a particular "other" has been grossly disadvantaged. Such answerability is not general, but particular, and is underscored because of the gaze of East Timor, the "gaze of the other."[22] This dissertation has attempted to see East Timor from an Australian point of view. The process has revealed, however, that East Timor is looking at me, at us. The relationship is such that we are truly "addressed."[23] We are faced with the interrogation and the questioning of the other, East Timor.[24] Such interrogation examines my whole nation, and most importantly, the reality of our victim.

Especially as scapegoat, this Timorese face "summons me, calls for me, begs for me, and in so doing recalls my responsibility, calls me into question."[25] An Australian willingness to be faced by the other[26] introduces elements of the existential conversion which Girard saw as necessary to the realisation of the influence of mimeticism.[27] Hodge describes that conversion as "the breakdown of the rivalistic 'romantic self' and the emergence of the relational, other-centred self, out of which self-awareness, agency and responsibility properly emerge."[28] Yet the history of the

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[21] Ann Astell, "Violence, Mysticism and René Girard," *Theological Studies 2017,* Vol. 78(2): 391, accessed September 5, 2017,
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0040563917698560?journalCode=tsja
[22] Veling, *For You Alone,* 40.
[23] Veling, *For You Alone,* 115.
[24] Veling, *For You Alone,* 40.
[25] Veling, *For You Alone,* 23.
[26] Veling, *For You Alone,* 40.
[27] Girard, *The Girard Reader,* 284.
[28] Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation,* 46.

relationship depicts an Australian "romantic self" in the full flight of mimetic rivalry. The self-projection of the Australian nation as independent belied its dependence on greater powers, its anguish to remain British, or at least European, and its embrace of the United States of America. Instead of self-awareness, a vacuum of identity arose in association with the repudiation of the prior Indigenous inhabitants.

Within a historical mix of hubris and cringe, Australians were summoned, called into question by the Timorese. We did not see them as they were, as the victims of our fear and insecurity, and when we looked at them at all, it was as an obstacle to our self-protective desires, within which we wove an image of ourselves as victim. Because we did not see their face, we could not see our own. Once the face of the true victim was seen, however, the Australian desire for the emergence of its true self had some space and scope. The conversion entailed in the Australian recognition of the Timorese people as victim expressed itself in the shouldering of responsibility towards them. Countless Australians then saw the other, the victim: the tortured man, the raped woman, the fleeing family, the starving child. Through Girard's mimetic theory it is possible to see through the violence, but in the process we too have been seen, and we have been seen through.

All facets of the perception have come by way of seeing through the window of the inspiration given by the Timorese people, who themselves have seen and experienced "transcendent violence" but also "transcendent love."[29] Exploring the history of the Timorese people in that context may explain their willingness to bestow mercy, however incomplete those efforts may remain in the many challenges that face them.

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[29] René Girard, Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* (London: Continuum, 1978), 217.

In Girard's thought, in seeing and receiving that transcendent love, "we have to accept the idea that human violence is a deceptive worldview."[30] Following Jesus Christ, the Timorese have shown that the triumph over that deception is mercy: extending forgiveness and friendship to those who caused them suffering.

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[30] Girard, *Things Hidden,* 217.

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