

# THE FANTASY OF EXILE

SOME REFLECTIONS  
ON THE  
MARGINS  
OF THE  
'UNHOMELYCONSCIOUSNESS'

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

The University of Technology, Sydney  
November 1995

## CERTIFICATE

I certify that this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being submitted as part of candidature for any other degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me and that any help that I have received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Signature of Candidate,

Production Note:  
Signature removed prior to publication.

Dedicated to  
my Mother  
BESSIE JEAN MCCARTHY  
and to  
the memory of  
my Father  
NOEL FENTON MCCARTHY  
1928-1989



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am eternally grateful for the patience and friendship a number of people have shown me throughout the course of this thesis and who ultimately made it possible. I want to extend my appreciation, in no particular batting order, to: Mark Mantle, classicist, Asianist and dedicated public servant, whose comradeship, humour and intellectual generosity has sustained me throughout the years; Louise Prichard, whose close reading and intelligent probing showed me the way and whose great support and faith, at a time of my greatest need, made it all seem worthwhile; my family, Noel, Bessie, Ann, Steven and Gregg, who made it possible; Henry McCarthy, whose real 'adventures of the dialectic' in places and times gone by, inspired me from the very beginning; Ian Williams, Mick Carter and Bob Mackie who, in their different ways, opened my eyes to the interstices of theory and practice and helped me on the way; Jennifer Harris, who, with the greatest patience, humour and passion, made me see things anew; Helena Bauer, Germanist, scholar and visionary, who understood and assisted me in the ways of government; my friends Michael Lacey, Serenea McLoughlin, Mark Murray, Isabelle Richardot, Agnieszka Jaskółka, Nigel Powell, Chris Maxwell, Maria Vlady, Kelly White, Lisa Hill, Sarah Vallance, Noel King and Katya Andreyeva who, in different ways, supported me and kept me on the ball; Nikki Maloney, Celt, wise, eternal comrade who always understood and helped sustain me; and, finally, I want to extend my great appreciation to my supervisor and friend Stephen Muecke who was responsible for me taking it on in the first place and who always respected my views.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is about exile, but exile of a particular nature. I take the term exile discursively and textually, with no particular regard to historical specificities it may offer. In this sense I intend to use the concrete to render the abstract, working backwards from the historically and generally recognised condition of exile—the relegated, the diasporic—to its discursive relocation in various forms of narrative, reflection and representation. In this the measure of the exile will be the continuities and discontinuities of the discourses of its location.

The thesis will argue that the exilic subject—that is, the subject of modern consciousness—is the product of a certain fantasy formation of a subjective homeland projected onto the various margins of discourse, history and geography. This fantasy leads to a fascination and identification of things perceived at the margins or the bounds of a psychopathological homeland, rendering the homeland itself the site of alienation. The thesis argues against the positioning of the subject as alienated 'lack' in favour of a subjective and representative plenitude. The thesis will look to various discourses on alienation and ideology, with a particular focus on the philosophy of reflection, phenomenology and psychoanalytic theory (the philosophy of the 'unreflected') to trace a sort of exilic affectability that inheres in the representation of the modern subject.

The introductory chapter 'Parenthesis' picks at the relation between the discourses of post-structuralist and post-colonial theory, looking to their fascination with the margins and positing a certain intellectual and political tendency to fantasy. Chapters One and Two explore the problem of representation in these discourses with particular emphasis on the disposition of the subject and its relation to its own reading or metaphysical positioning, taking as its metaphor the representative relation between the map and the territory. Chapters Three and Four look to the ontogenesis of the subject of exile and its reflective and metaphysical positioning in representation. Chapter Five closes the thesis with an exposition on the fantasy of subjective and representative closure. The fantasy of exile as the fantasy of closure proper.