

David Malouf's Partnership Narratives

David Malouf's Partnership Narratives:

The Light that Fills the World

By

Antonella Riem Natale

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PER IL FUTURO DELLA NOSTRA NATION

I dedicate this book to David, for his gift of loving friendship and for the everlasting luminous and blissful flavour of all his work.

Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is
limited. Imagination encircles the world.
—Albert Einstein¹

¹ Einstein, Albert, What Life Means to Einstein: An Interview by George Sylvester Viereck, *The Saturday Evening Post*, 26 October 1929, Start Page 17, Quote Page 117, Column 1, Saturday Evening Post Society, Indianapolis, Indiana (Verified on microfilm).

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Special thanks to the Australian Government for having appointed me in 2021 as Honorary Member in the General Division of the Order of

² Thanks are due to the series ALL of Forum Editrice Universitaria, University Publisher *Forum* (Udine, Italy), to *Merope*, University of Chieti/Pescara, to *Le Simplegadi* online open access Class A journal, to Leichhardt FILEF-Italo-Australian Publications (Australia), to Nicolaus Copernicus University Press of Turun (Poland), to the University of Minnesota *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* (U.S.A.), to the *Atlantic Literary Review* (India), which issued over the past thirty years some of my previously published studies, articles and essays on David Malouf's work, to Longo (Italy) for my work on the theme on the double. To keep the record straight, here is the list of these previous publications: Riem, Antonella, *The Labyrinths of the Self. A Collection of Essays on Australian and Caribbean Literature*, Leichhardt, Filef Italo-Australian Publications, 1988; *Il seme e l'urna. Il doppio nella letteratura inglese*, Ravenna, Longo, 1990; Riem, Antonella, *Storie di Sogno, Dream Stuff* di David Malouf, *Merope*, 1999, IX, 28, pp. 49-87; *Archetypes of Partnership and the Goddess: The Human Spiritual Journey in David Malouf's The Conversations at Curlow Creek*, Riem, Antonella et al., eds., *The Goddess Awakened. Partnership Studies in Literatures, Language and Education*, Udine, Forum, 2007, pp. 57-71; *The Only Speaker of His Tongue. David Malouf and Endangered Languages and Id-Entities*; Riem, Antonella et al., eds., *Partnership Id-Entities. Cultural and Literary Re-inscription/s of the Feminine*, Udine, Forum, 2010, pp. 19-29; *Tuning into The Sound of Imagination: David Malouf's Typewriter Music*, Riem, Antonella and Righetti, Angelo eds., *Drops of Light Coalescing*, Udine, Forum, 2010, pp. 211-222; *The Sea has Many Voices: David Malouf's Ransom and the Fluid Mother-Goddess World*, *Le Simplegadi*, 2011, IX, 9, pp. 95-119; *A Kind of Blessing: David Malouf and the Spirit of the Embodied Word*, *Le Simplegadi*, 2014, XII, 13, pp. 22-42; *Lords of Peace, Lords of War: the Master and the Terrorist in Child's Play* by David Malouf, *Le Simplegadi*, 2016, XIV, 16, pp. 37-49; *Places of the Imagination: Ecological Concerns in David Malouf's Jacko's Reach*, *Le Simplegadi*, 2017, XV, 17, pp. 72-80.

Australia (AM): “for her commitment to partnership relations in exchanges between Italian and Australian universities, for her many years of scientific research and dissemination of Australian literature and culture in Europe and worldwide”, and “for significant service to Australia’s bilateral relationship with Italy, particularly through the promotion of Australian literature internationally, and to cultural exchange programs”³. I am very grateful for this acknowledgement of my work and engagement with Australian literature and culture across these many years⁴. This great honour I share with all my mentors, writers, students and friends in Australian studies, who accompanied me over these many years in this magnificent scholarly and human journey.

Special thanks to Riane Eisler and the committee of the Center for Partnership Studies (CPS, California) for having kindly awarded to me, on February 15, 2018, its first inaugural prize honouring scholars who distinguish themselves in the dissemination of partnership studies in different fields of academic study and research⁵. This inaugural prize was conferred on the publication of my book *A Gesture of Reconciliation. Partnership Studies in Australian Literature*⁶.

I am very honoured for this prize that I wish to share symbolically with all friends and colleagues of the *Partnership Studies Group* international research network based at Udine University, who have the same ideals for a better and more caring future for humanity and all animate and so-called inanimate life on this beautiful planet.

Gratitude to the colleagues and friends who embarked with me in the adventure of the Master in Partnership Studies and Native Traditions, the first of this kind worldwide, for it puts together professors and shamans in a challenging and groundbreaking initiative, started in 2020, which is having a great international success and positive response from scholars, students and civic societies⁷.

Over the years, I have extended, deepened and expanded my critical methodology and comprehension of Malouf’s work, especially since the foundation of the *Partnership Studies Group*, which is a wonderful

³ See: <https://ilglobo.com/en/news/italian-academic-antonella-riem-recognised-for-promoting-australian-literature-around-the-world-73062/#>.

⁴ <http://www.antonellariem.it/news/>.

⁵ See: <https://centerforpartnership.org/news-events/riemudine/>.

⁶ Riem, Antonella, *A Gesture of Reconciliation. Partnership Studies in Australian Literature*, Udine, Forum, ALL 21, 2017. See: <https://centerforpartnership.org/news-events/riemudine/>.

⁷ See: <https://www.uniud.it/it/didattica/formazione-post-laurea/master/alta-formazione/Area-umanistica-comunicazione-formazione/partnership-sciamanesimo>.

meeting place of colleagues and friends, poets and artists, who share a deep enthusiasm and passion for beauty and truth. We are all convinced that only from a harmonious relationship with the cosmos we can really live a full and intense life. This intent for sharing partnership with the 'other' in whatever form substantiates my working principles and goals, inspires my human, academic and scholarly practice, and is very much in tune with Malouf's open, loving and caring attitude both as a writer and as a human being.

I would also like to thank with gratitude Bill Ashcroft, Bruce Bennett, Sue Ballyn, Francesco Benozzo, Maria Teresa Bindella, Veronica Brady, Maria Renata Dolce, Allan Lawson, Cecil Hadgraft, Laurie Hergenhan, Bernard Hickey, Coral Ann Howells, Nicholas Jose, Mattia Mantellato, Elisabetta Marino, Brian Matthews, Stanton Mellick, Stefano Mercanti, Anna Rutherford, Helen Tiffin, Chris Tiffin, John Thieme, friends and colleagues who are always present in my circle of life, across time and space, with their deep capacity to read into things, to give good and fruitful advice, to listen and look with an open heart and mind. All indispensable rays of this shining Sun warming our lives.

Special, loving thanks to Luigi Natale, my beloved spouse, poet and friend. With competence and love, we travel together in our poetic, scholarly and human journey in and towards partnership. As Malouf says in his masterpiece *An Imaginary Life*: "We are free to transcend ourselves. If we have the imagination for it" (p. 67).

CHAPTER 1

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION. A PARTNERSHIP PERSPECTIVE ON DAVID MALOUF'S WORK

1. My Australian Itinerary

In retracing the itinerary of my scholarly steps in Australian literature, I must mention with gratitude Professor Maria Teresa Bindella, who was inaugurating Australian studies at the University of Udine when I was completing my MA degree in 1981. In 1983, Bernard Hickey and Veronica Brady tutored me during my post-degree period of study at the University of Venice. They initiated my passion for Australian literature. In 1985, as winner International Australian-European Award Programme Scholarship, I studied at the University of Queensland with Laurie Hergenhan, who was the supervisor of my dissertation thesis on Australian literature. When Laurie passed away in July 2019, a collection of essays and memoirs entitled *I'm Listening like the Orange Tree. In Memory of Laurie Hergenhan* was published in his honour as one of the greatest founders and pioneers for the study of Australian literature in Australia and abroad⁸.

During my period of research at the University of Queensland, Laurie introduced me to many Australian writers, and in particular to the depths of David Malouf's work⁹. I had the marvellous opportunity to study Australian and postcolonial literatures under the inspiring tutoring of Stanton Mellick, Helen Tiffin, Chris Tiffin, Cecil Hardgraft, Allan Lawson and many other distinguished scholars, who have become since then dear friends. We also had the chance to participate in lectures held by other

⁸ Riem, Antonella *et al.*, eds., *I'm Listening like the Orange Tree. In Memory of Laurie Hergenhan*, Udine, Forum, 2021.

⁹ Hergenhan, Laurie, Discoveries and Transformations: Aspects of David Malouf's Work, *Australian Literary Studies*, 11, 3, 1984, pp. 328-341; Hergenhan, Laurie, War in Post-1960s Fiction: Johnston, Stow, McDonald, Malouf and Les Murray, *Australian Literary Studies*, 12, 2, 1985, pp. 248-260.

important Australian scholars, like Veronica Brady, who remained a ray of light throughout my career. She became one of the first members of the *Partnership Studies Group*, the international research network I founded at the University of Udine in 1998¹⁰, which since then has welcomed many other colleagues worldwide. Then, I want to mention Andrew Taylor, a wonderful poet and very fine reader of Malouf (and others); Bill Ashcroft among the first theorists of postcolonial Australia, with Helen Tiffin and Gareth Griffiths; Brian Matthews founder of the Europe-Australia Centre in Melbourne; Bruce Bennett, who visited Italy many times and helped us spread Australian studies in Europe, initiated by Bernard Hickey and Anna Rutherford, when EASA¹¹, EACLALS¹² and many other national and international associations were established, also with my collaboration. These colleagues all became dear good friends and companions in this journey across Australian literature, which is still a continuing enterprise, with new interlaced voices, growing friendships.

At the University of Queensland, I was also in the good company of a group of Ph.D. students to which also Martin Leer belonged. I remember interesting discussions with Martin about the journey of self-discovery and the theme of the double in Malouf (my line of research) and his focus on the mapping/geography of Australia, theme of his in-depth and original Ph.D. thesis and basis of his subsequent publications¹³, which are central for a comprehension of Malouf's work. It was a fervent period of reading, discussing and studying. Never forgotten. A deep well of wisdom and knowledge, a reservoir of the heart and mind, still generous in refreshing thoughts and intuitions.

Since my university career begun at the University of Udine in 1987, I always taught at least one course on Australian literature, and carried on my research and study then onwards, notwithstanding the many academic engagements I had the honour to carry on over the years¹⁴.

Being at the University of Queensland for a long period, I also had the very great fortune of getting to know David Malouf more personally. We had met at a conference in Europe (neither of us remembers where) before 1985. Then I went to some of his readings at the University of

¹⁰ <https://partnershipstudiesgroup.uniud.it/>.

¹¹ http://www.australianstudies.eu/?page_id=335.

¹² <https://www.eaclals.com/>.

¹³ Leer, Martin, *At the Edge: Geography and the Imagination in the Work of David Malouf*, *Australian Literary Studies*, May 1985, 12, 1, pp. 3-21; Leer, Martin *Edge to Centre: Geography and the Imagination in the Work of David Malouf*, *Randolph Stow and Les A. Murray*, (Ph.D. Thesis), St. Lucia, University of Queensland, 1988.

¹⁴ <http://www.antonellariem.it/>.

Queensland and he showed interest in my research on his double characters. With great generosity and charm, David let me enter his world, offering the gift of his friendship, full of compassion, understanding, love, laughter and care. I am very grateful and truly happy for his generous gift.

2. Scholarly Work on Malouf

Relevant scholarly work on Malouf, which began in the later 1970s, was particularly intense in the 1980s, while I was at the University of Queensland. It grew, especially after 1990s, and is still growing. Thus said, there is an extensive range of critical analysis in articles, essays and reviews, but only relatively few monographic volumes for such a significant international writer, central not only to the English-speaking world, but globally, with most of his books of poetry, narrative and essays translated in many languages and appreciated worldwide.

The following studies on Malouf's work are milestones for any reader: Philip Neilsen's *Imagined Lives: A Study of David Malouf* (1990, with a second integrated edition in 1996), Karin Hanson, *Sheer Edge: Aspects of Identity in David Malouf's Writing* (1991); Ivor Indyk's *David Malouf* (Australian Writers series, 1993); Don Randall's *David Malouf* (Contemporary World Writers 2007). We must also consider: the collection of essays edited by Amanda Nettlebeck *Provisional Maps: Critical Essays on David Malouf* (1994); James Tulip's Introduction to the volume *David Malouf: Johnno, Short Stories, Poems, Essays and Interviews, St. Lucia* (1990); *David Malouf: A Celebration* (2001), a collection of essays, memoirs and annotations by many of Malouf's friends and fellow writers, edited by Ivor Indyk, published by the Association Friends of the National Library of Australia. Also very important is the special monographic number of *World Literature Today* (Autumn 2000) for David Malouf as the Neustadt International Prize for Literature 16th Laureate.

David Malouf's production is extremely rich and varied, and, luckily, Malouf is a very active writer, publishing regularly and contributing with great subtlety, keen critical eye, depth of feeling and thought to the intellectual debate in particular on Australian literature, life and politics, but also on world themes and concerns.

3. Out of Love for the Poetic Word

My book on selected novels, short stories and poetry by David Malouf descends from the desire to systematise over three decades of studying his work, first and foremost as a student, reading and writing in order to learn

something about the poetic word as it manifests in all forms of art and life and myself. This to me is the utmost goal of the arts, in spite or beyond all the theoretical paraphernalia that too often now encumber critical analyses. Some key words and concepts, like *partnership/dominator*, *dialogical dialogue*, *scientific term/creative word*, *ethnophilology*, are used in a very specific way in my critical perspective, which will be explained in detail in this introductory chapter.

I believe Malouf's aim as a person and writer is to inspire and transform our lives for the better of all, to talk to our emotions as human beings, speaking to our minds, hearts and souls, as time and space travellers, temporarily visiting and walking on this beautiful planet Earth. His oeuvre – stories, essays, poems, novels – touches upon manifold epochs, geographical areas and cultures, inspiring us to a vibrant and fervent participation in the pluralistic diversity of the themes explored and in their “inter-indisciplinary” as a form of *multicommunitarianism*¹⁵, as found in Raimon Panikkar¹⁶ and Francesco Benozzo's critical approaches¹⁷. Thus, this book does not intend to be neutral. Rather, it is active, vigorously participative and engaging, dissolving the myth of the neutrality of the scholar who vivisections his topics of study with absolute detachment¹⁸. My intention is to investigate Malouf's work through Riane Eisler's biocultural partnership paradigm, also in its fundamental and creative relations with ethnophilology, ecosophy, and system theory. The partnership model shows how a better system of governing in cooperation can be fruitfully used for the ultimate good of all: “Scientists are today finding that our bodies are equipped with the capacity to release powerful chemicals when we engage in caring and care-taking behaviours – chemicals that reward these activities by making us feel good”¹⁹. By giving full scientific evidence and relevant bibliography

¹⁵ Benozzo, Francesco, *Breviario di etnofilologia*, 2012, pp. 195-196. This term was coined by Touraine (1997) to show the difference between the idea of multiculturalism, which underlines the need for respecting other cultures and traditions, while multicommunitarianism focuses on the concrete everyday relationships within a shared ‘community’. See also: Momin, A., Multicommunitarianism in a Fragmented World, *Asia Europe Journal*, 2, October 2004, pp. 445-459.

¹⁶ Raimon Panikkar (November 2, 1918 - August 26, 2010), world-renowned interreligious and intercultural scholar. See: <https://www.raimon-panikkar.org/english/home.html>.

¹⁷ <https://www.francescobenozzo.net/>.

¹⁸ Benozzo, Francesco, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, p. 109.

¹⁹ Eisler, Riane, *Tomorrow's Children*, Colorado, Westview Press, 2000, p. 71. To better understand Eisler's partnership model, see her foundational book: Eisler, Riane, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*, San Francisco, Harper

to prove her case, Eisler explains that the war of the sexes and violent behaviours on the other are not genetically, biologically or *divinely*, ordained; they are indeed a social and cultural means used by a certain dominator type of power through the ages to *divide et impera*.

Often now, the centrality of the writer's text, his use of words, the special qualities of his *stories* (in narration, poetry, essays) that intrigue us readers, become less central than theorising and practicing the academic ritual of belonging to a specific critical *fashion* or current. My book on Australian Literature, *A Gesture of Reconciliation. Partnership Studies in Australian Literature* (2017), is an answer to the necessity of looking closely at the text and the fine texture of narrative, exhorting readers and critics to be there, take sides, remember, retell the story, rather than simply superimposing a fashionable theory. Toni Hassall explains what happened (and is still happening) to literature, not only in Australia, but worldwide:

Literary Theory had long existed as a minor branch of Literary Studies, [...]. In the ensuing culture wars, converts to deconstruction saw to it that the "elitist construction" of Literature was demolished, and Theory erected in its place. Literature was condemned as a tool of the oppressors, and hence an enemy of the people. [...] In all this carnage, Australian Literature was collateral damage. Theorists saw little point in valuing a national Literature as distinct from the discredited construct of Literature in general²⁰.

& Row, 1987, which traces the cultural evolution of Western societies from prehistory to the present, in terms of the underlying tension between "equalitarian" and "dominator" modes of living. Eisler prefers the term "equalitarian" instead of "egalitarian" because the former indicates social relations within a "mutual" society, where both men and women have "equal" importance, while the latter was traditionally used to indicate equality only among men. See also: Eisler, Riane, *Sacred Pleasure, Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body: New Paths to Power and Love*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1995. See also: Eisler, Riane, *The Power of Partnership*, Novato-California, New World Library, 2002; *The Real Wealth of Nations. Creating a Caring Economics*, San Francisco, Berret-Koehler, 2007; Eisler, Riane and P. Fry, Douglas, *Nurturing Our Humanity. How Domination and Partnership Shape our Brains, Lives, and Futures*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019. For the Italian translations see: <https://forumeditrice.it/percorsi/lingua-e-letteratura/all/il-potere-della-partnership>.

²⁰ Hassall, Toni, Whatever Happened to Australian Literature in the Universities?, *Quadrant Online*, 1 October 2011.

Thus, theory “divorced writing from the lives of those who wrote and those who read”²¹. This is how the Nobel Laureate and Literature professor J. M. Coetzee sharply comments:

From their exposure to literary theory these not-very-bright graduates of the academy of the humanities in its postmodernist phase bore away a set of analytical instruments which they obscurely sensed could be useful outside the classroom, and an intuition that the ability to argue that nothing is as it seems might get you places. Putting those instruments in their hands was the *trahison des clercs* of our time. “You taught me language, and my profit on it is I know how to curse”²².

My first Australian period of study and research, luckily, was in the 1980s, which, as Hassall says, was one of the most flourishing periods for the study of Australian Literature. Recently instead, I asked a very good friend why according to him my article was rejected by a prestigious journal. He replied, “because you speak about literature and the text. Not enough theory”.

There is of course also some theory and methodology and critical thinking in my background, for the useful tools of the craftsman must be known and then (sometimes) left behind. Therefore, the foundations of this book also rest in the previous steps of my research in postcolonial literature and criticism, in particular on Australian literature, which resulted in different publications, also on Malouf’s work.

I have met many storytellers, both personally and through their works, and David Malouf is my favourite (whatever literary means and genre he uses), because he knows and uses exquisitely the power of his poetic word to remythologise our life, infusing all his texts with deep humanity and understanding, putting things together in a harmonious, beautiful, dancing and revolving unity. Therefore, one aspect I love and find particularly important is Malouf’s choice of theme and language, the tune he sets for a story, with all its ripples and resonances, which are unique for that specific story, and, at the same time, have a special flavour of their own that makes it distinctively maloufian. Focal is his attention to everyday detail²³, to the personal that leads us to the universal and the cosmic, to

²¹ Modjeska, Drusilla, *Poppy*, Ringwood, Penguin/McPhee Gribble, 1990, p. 150. See also Hassall, Anthony J., Australian Literary Criticism: Future Directions, *Australian Literary Studies*, 20, 2001, pp. 88-93.

²² Coetzee, J. M., *Diary of a Bad Year*, Melbourne, Text, 2007, pp. 29-30.

²³ Ley, James, Malouf’s Madeleines, *Australian Book Review*, 285, October 2006, pp. 6-7, <https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/abr-online/archive/2006/273-october-2006-no-285/6699-james-ley-reviews-every-move-you-make-by-david-malouf>:

Australian landscape, which is also transfused as a distinct echo in his deceptively *less* Australian texts, such as, for example, *An Imaginary Life* or *Child's Play*.

The great literary scholar and dear friend Veronica Brady, in most of her scholarly and teaching career, was perfectly aware, like Malouf, of the limitations and heaviness of physical reality and, at the same time, always alert to notice any opening towards the numinous, the luminous, the liminal. She was always very well versed in the most recent critical theories. However, she did not allow the excesses of leading theoretical fashions to condition her interpretations, for she believed that "every reading involves a kind of reinvention of the text"²⁴. Brady, in line with Deleuze and Guattari's thoughts²⁵, thinks that the literary text does not so much *describe* the world but *remakes* it, "involving us as its readers in this process. [...] giving an understanding of ourselves and the world which is always in process and never concluded"²⁶.

In 1983, during her magisterial lectures and seminars on Patrick White within Bernard Hickey's courses at Ca' Foscari in Venice, Brady shared with us young students a literary practice that by necessity is always *in fieri* because, as she told us, critical analysis concerns "reading" and "reinvention". I also believe reading and writing are interconnected and fluid processes that keep transforming over time and across space, as one develops both personally, humanely I would say, and professionally. In an essay on Patrick White, Brady traces the source of White's creativity in the balance or interaction between the physical and the spiritual dimension of life:

taking us behind the reticulated screen of language to the sources of the writer's creativity, the crossroads between physical and psychic existence, the inner and the outer dimension, the public and the private, between

"David Malouf's fiction has been justly celebrated for its veracity. His prose, at once lyrical and precise, has an extraordinary capacity to evoke what a character in an early story called the 'grainy reality' of life. For Malouf, small concrete details convey a profound understanding of the defining power of memory. He has a strong sense of the way the most mundane object can embody the past, how its shape or texture can send us back to a specific time and place and mood, just as Proust summons a flood of memory from the aroma of a madeleine dipped in tea. This tangible quality to memory is essential to our sense of self".

²⁴ Brady, Veronica, *To Be or not to Be? The Verbal History of Patrick White*, *Westerly*, 2, Winter, 1992, p. 24.

²⁵ Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Felix, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie Mille Plateaux*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1980.

²⁶ Brady, Veronica, *To Be or not to Be?* 1992, p. 24.

belonging and the sense of alienation, all so important in White's life and work²⁷.

Her statement is well apt to describe Malouf's sense "of the importance of language as a meeting place for the negotiation of difference"²⁸, fundamental to establish a creative relationship between the dual elements of life, with the aim at finding a kind of relational, *partnership* balance, like in the Tao symbol, where opposites continually metamorphose into one another. It corresponds very closely to Raimon Panikkar's concept of "dialogical dialogue"²⁹, born from the courage to be authentic as the "automatic fruit of the purity of the heart [...], primary condition to act in an appropriate way and to have a fruitful life"³⁰. Literature, music and the arts have always been relevant instruments that can inspire us and orient our path more and more toward the common good of all life, in an optimism of the heart aiming a Truth that is also Beauty, which transcends the limitations of intellectualism and aims at poetically and imaginatively reinventing our lives.

4. Reading and Reinventing

The methodology of my critical approach in the past twenty years descends from the "reading" and "reinvention"³¹ of Riane Eisler's work that the international *Partnership Studies Group* (founded in Udine in 1998)³² applies to the study of world literatures in English, languages and education. The *creative word/dialogical dialogue* is another interesting area of relational significance found in the ground-breaking work of the Hindu-Catalan intercultural scholar, philosopher and theologian Raimon Panikkar³³,

²⁷ Brady, Veronica, *To be or not to be?* 1992, p. 24.

²⁸ Randall, Don, *David Malouf*, Contemporary World Writers, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007, p. 3.

²⁹ See: Panikkar, Raimon, *Lo spirito della parola*, Milano, Bollati Boringhieri, 2007; *Concordia e armonia*, Milano, Oscar Mondadori, 2010; *Vita e Parola*, Milano, Jaca Book, 2010. See also: Phan, Young-chan Ro and Williams, Roman eds., *Raimon Panikkar: A Companion to His Life and Thought*, Cambridge, James Clarke, 2018.

³⁰ Panikkar, R., *Concordia e armonia*, 2010, p. 81.

³¹ Brady, Veronica, *To Be or not to Be?* 1992, p. 24.

³² <https://partnershipstudiesgroup.uniud.it/>.

³³ Panikkar was one of the leading scholars and finest figures in interreligious and intercultural dialogue in world cultures throughout the second half of the twentieth century; his many publications have been translated into English, Italian, French, German, Chinese, Portuguese, Czech, Dutch, Tamil and many other languages. See: Panikkar, Raimon, *Lo spirito della parola*, 2007, (in particular chapter 3), and

whose challenging and profound research focused on interculturalism and inter-religious dialogue. Significant for my critical approach are also the works on archetypal and mythological thinking – James Hillman³⁴, Joseph Campbell³⁵, Shinoda Bolen³⁶, quantum physics and system biology, in particular Fritjof Capra³⁷. I would also like to mention Clarissa Pinkola Estés's work on the archetypal figure of the “Wild Woman”³⁸ in traditional folktale that focuses on caring behaviours as therapeutic tools to *re-member* our wholeness. These scholarly approaches in different scientific fields are connected to the study of World literatures and cultures, and represent the theoretical foundations of the research carried out over the years by the *Partnership Studies Group*³⁹. In previous critical studies and publications of the *Partnership Studies Group*, prominent scholars from around the world have been following the threads, forms and expressions of the *creative word* in the fields of literatures in English, language teaching, education, storytelling, poetry, ethnophilology and the arts, investigating its strength and potentialities as an instrument of transcultural consciousness and awareness⁴⁰.

Riane Eisler's biocultural partnership model works within an ample intercultural and interdisciplinary framework, identifying what supports and encourages all positive human qualities like creativity, love, caring and peace, the deep human capacity for empathic union with the other, also the “natural” and cosmic other. This without ignoring the tentacles of the dominator and globalising worldview pushing towards

Panikkar Raimon, ¿Mística comparada?, VVAA *La mística en el siglo XXI*, Madrid, Trotta, 2002.

³⁴ Hillman, James, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, New York, HarperCollins, 1975.

³⁵ Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, New York, Bollingen Foundation, Princeton University Press, 1949.

³⁶ Bolen, Shinoda, *Goddesses in Every Woman. A New Psychology of Women*, New York, Harper & Row, 1984.

³⁷ <https://www.fritjofcapra.net/>.

³⁸ “I call her Wild Woman, for those very words, *wild* and *woman*, create *llamar o tocar a la puerta*, the fairy-tale knock at the door of the deep female psyche [it] means literally to play on the instrument of the name in order to open a door”, Pinkola, Estés Clarissa, *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, New York, Ballantine, 1992. p. 6.

³⁹ On partnership and postcolonial criticism, see: Riem, Antonella, *A Gesture of Reconciliation. Partnership Studies in Australian Literature*, Udine, Forum, 2017, p. 12 ff.

⁴⁰ See the list of the PSG publications here: https://partnershipstudiesgroup.uniud.it/?page_id=151. See also the online international journal *Le Simplegadi*: <https://le-simplegadi.it/>.

violence, exploitation and brutality. Eisler is a macro-historian who uses an interdisciplinary paradigm to examine cultural differences, gender relationships and, more extensively, creative processes of reinvention and re-imagination, in order to find new ways of making difference fruitful rather than destructive, as “diversity is not automatically equated with inferiority or superiority”⁴¹. Eisler founds her work on what she calls the Cultural Transformation Theory, tracing the cultural evolution of Western societies from a “gender holistic perspective”:

The first [model], which I call the dominator model, is what is popularly termed either patriarchy or matriarchy – the ranking of one half of humanity over the other. The second, in which social relations are primarily based on the principle of linking rather than ranking, may best be described as the partnership model. In this model – beginning with the most fundamental difference in our species, between male and female – diversity is not equated with either inferiority or superiority⁴².

Eisler shows the interaction of these two cultural paradigms present in most globalising Western and Westernised cultures. The dominator model centres on “ranking” and operates through “technologies designed to destroy and dominate”⁴³, while the partnership paradigm works on the principle of “linking”, and otherness and diversity are positive and enriching elements. Drawing from many scholarly fields, such as macro-history, intercultural studies, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, mythology, archetypal psychology, biology, economy and others, Eisler shows how our cultural paradigms are constructed, not only in literature and art, but also in our everyday reality, by what stories we are told and how these shape our frame of mind, culture and belief-systems⁴⁴.

My book puts in *relation* postcolonial criticism with Riane Eisler’s work. I employ the words *partnership* and *dominator* according to Eisler’s perspective, where the word partnership does not refer to a business partner, but signals how human beings are loving and caring partners with one another and with all life⁴⁵. Eisler also focuses on the study of archetypal and

⁴¹ Eisler, Riane, *The Power of Partnership*, 2002, p. 161.

⁴² Eisler, Riane, *The Chalice and the Blade*, 1987, p. XVII.

⁴³ Eisler, Riane, *The Chalice and the Blade*, 1987, p. XX.

⁴⁴ Eisler, Riane, *The Chalice and the Blade*, 1987, pp. 75-77.

⁴⁵ For a detailed analysis of key words and concepts used in partnership studies, see: Mercanti Stefano, Glossary for Cultural Transformation, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* (IJPS), 1, 2015, pp. 1-35; and Mercanti, Stefano and Riem, Antonella, The Gift of Partnership, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* (IJPS), 9, 2, 2022, pp. 1-13,

symbolic structures and motives as instruments to transform the *dominator* storytelling about our world and the deterministic view of human nature as something immutable connoted by the prevalence of engrained aggressiveness, violence and warfare. Through this approach, Eisler aims at unveiling and rejecting the dominator-androcratic cultural super-structures that condition us to repeat the same patterns, and creating and supporting a cultural transformation towards a partnership-gylanic paradigm⁴⁶.

Another source for my critical inspiration is Francesco Benozzo's critical, poetic and musical work. Professor of philology, scholar, poet, and traditional Celtic harpist, Benozzo suggests a new method/non-method, an "indiscipline" he names *Ethnophilology*, which can more easily embrace the empathetic presence of human beings in dialogue with one another. Ethnophilology studies ancient and modern oral, sung and written texts, with special focus on popular traditions and oral creations of different cultures, in order revive and preserve a human participation and emotional encounter with the poetic and creative word. Since traditional philology is an art which has become "discipline", with its fixed methods and its surgical "nonchalance in front of mystery", Benozzo wants to re-fund and re-create something closer to the poetry of words, songs and narratives, a "philology of the people with their multiple forms of cultural expressions"⁴⁷. Thus, the definition of popular, oral culture as inferior to the classical written text has to be surpassed, and we should also overcome the "division between material culture and intellectual culture"⁴⁸. On the contrary, we must learn, or rather learn anew, to put all texts (written and oral) in a poetic and insightful dialogical dialogue with one another, in order to have a more complete understanding of what we are studying, reading, listening to and meditating upon. Indeed, ethnophilology aims at keeping alive the "emotion of meeting with texts and words"⁴⁹. It should free itself from rigid critical rules, discipline and dogmatism, showing the way towards a new "continuous becoming of tradition, that is of the 'traditioning' of tradition"⁵⁰. Ethnophilology thus is a poetic call not to confine living traditions within a canon, established by an authority, within sharp precincts

<https://pubs.lib.umn.edu/index.php/ijps/article/view/5131>.

⁴⁶ Eisler, Riane, *The Chalice and the Blade*, 1987, p. 105, pp. 198-203.

⁴⁷ If not otherwise specified, all translations from Italian texts are mine. Benozzo, Francesco, *Breviario di Etnofilologia*, Lecce-Brescia, Pensa MultiMedia, 2012, p. 206.

⁴⁸ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia. Un'introduzione*, Napoli, Liguori, 2010, p. 108.

⁴⁹ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Benozzo, Francesco, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, p. 108.

and set interpretative patterns. It is a poetic call to be open to challenges, to explore the different lyrical dimensions of words and texts and the emotional vibrations they create in us. It is a solicitation to embrace alternative, mobile critical stances, to be on the move, as it were, ready to revise and contradict our previous assertions, if needed, while we read, speak, think, feel, explore words and texts, meet with peoples and flow with life:

The idea of a (philological) revolution can be defined in terms of dissemination and social metamorphosis, in opposition to the appropriation and substitution method (of authority). Philological practice, understood in terms of an original drive towards liberty, can give us a glimpse of a series of consequences [...] ‘we can (and must) engage in tackling problems which have a human significance’⁵¹.

This approach will make “evident and available the beneficial effect of opening to the unknown, becoming a mouthpiece, among other sciences, of the concrete experiences (cartographic, *en plein air*, anti-hierarchical) of uprootedness”⁵². Benozzo proposes a fresh and clever approach in place of the dominator scientific procedures characterising our times. Like Capra’s “tendencies to occur” in contemporary science and Eisler’s idea of partnership as a world cultural paradigm, ethnophilology “aims at extending the opportunities for free thought for generations to come, hoping they can welcome and disseminate them, refusing any resurgence of authoritarian thrusts”⁵³ not only in science, but also in our lives. According to Benozzo, science in its truest meaning must retrieve its passion for liberty, unchaining itself from dogmatisms, ideologies and rigid critical rules. From this perspective, ethnophilology encourages our visionary capacity not to fix or imprison living traditions within canonical forms and structures, defined boundaries, withered and crystallised interpretative patterns established by a dominator authority. Ethnophilology reminds us to be open to challenges, to discover the different lyrical dimensions of words and texts and feel the vibrations they create in us.

Indeed, many contemporary scientists find hyper-specialist and dogmatic, preconceived truths a limitation to their open and experimental research. Especially quantum physicists and system biologists⁵⁴, focus on the interconnectedness of all life, theorised in the dynamics of emergence

⁵¹ Chomsky quoted by Benozzo, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, 107.

⁵² Benozzo, Francesco, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, p. 109.

⁵³ Benozzo, Francesco, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, p. 108.

⁵⁴ Bohm, David, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

and self-organisation conceived by Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana⁵⁵, and by other scholars in systemic science, the theory of complexity⁵⁶ and the Gaia hypothesis⁵⁷. In particular, Fritjof Capra further developed their significant ideas in order to “explore the new systemic

⁵⁵ Maturana, Humberto and Varela, Francisco, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, 42, Ridell Publishing Company, Dordrecht, Holland, 1980; Maturana, Humberto and Varela, Francisco, *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*, Boulder, Shambhala, Revised, 1992. On January 15, 2020, the Center for Partnership Studies awarded the second International Prize for Research, Study, and Dissemination of Partnership Studies to Humberto Maturana and Ximena Davila Yáñez (<https://centerforpartnership.org/news-events/cpsaward-2020-2/>) in recognition of their pioneering international work through Instituto Matriztica (<http://matriztica.cl/>) on the biology of relationships and love in alignment with partnership cultural principles.

⁵⁶ Morin, Edgar, *Le paradigme perdu [Paradigm lost]*, Paris, Seuil, 1979 (Original publication date, 1973); Morin, Edgar, Self and autos, in Zeleny, Milan, ed., *Autopoiesis: A Theory of Living Organization*, New York, Elsevier, 1981, pp. 128-137; Morin, Edgar, From the Concept of System to the Paradigm of Complexity, *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems*, 15, 4, 1992a, pp. 371-385; Morin, Edgar, *Method: Towards a Study of Humankind. The Nature of Nature*, New York, Peter Lang, 1992; Morin, Edgar, *California Journal*, Brighton, Sussex Academic, 2008; Morin, Edgar, *On Complexity*, Cresskill (NJ), Hampton Press, 2008; Morin, Edgar, The Reform of Thought, Transdisciplinarity, and the Reform of the University, in Nicolescu, B., ed., *Transdisciplinarity: Theory and Practice*, Cresskill (NJ), Hampton Press, 2008, pp. 23-32; Ceruti, Mauro, *La danza che crea. Evoluzione e cognizione nell'epistemologia genetica*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1989, Prefazione di Francisco Varela; Ceruti, Mauro, *Constraints and Possibilities. The Evolution of Knowledge and Knowledge of Evolution* (A. Montuori, trans.), New York, Gordon & Breach, 1994; Ceruti, Mauro, *Il tempo della complessità*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2018; Bocchi, Gianluca and Ceruti, M., eds., *La sfida della complessità*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1985; Ceruti, Mauro and Lazlo, Ervin, eds., *Physis: abitare la terra*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1988; Morin, Edgar and Ceruti, Mauro eds. *Simplicité et complexité*, Milano, Mondadori, 1988; Waldrop, M. M., *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1992; Watzlawick, Paul, *How Real is Real?* New York, Vintage, 1977; Wells, J., *Complexity and Sustainability*, London, Routledge, 2013.

⁵⁷ Lovelock, James, Gaia as seen through the atmosphere, *Atmospheric Environment*, 1972, 6, 8, pp. 579-580; Lovelock, James, *Gaia. The Practical Science of Planetary Medicine*, London, Gaia Books, 1991; Lovelock, James and Margulis, Lynn, Atmospheric homeostasis by and for the biosphere: The Gaia hypothesis, *Tellus*, Series A, Stockholm, International Meteorological Institute, 26, 1-2, 1974, pp. 2-10.

conception of life at the forefront of science and its application in economics, management, politics, design, medicine, and law”⁵⁸.

In the relational desire to transmute our lives for the better of all, partnership studies, Capra’s system theory and Malouf’s imaginative and poetic insight into things have a poetic affinity with ethnophilology. All these analogical, open and creative approaches to poetry, storytelling, song and life talk to our emotions as human beings, readers, writers and scholars and they resonate deeply in our minds, hearts and souls. Since, as Morin says, a scholar also needs “Imagination, illumination, and creation”⁵⁹, like Malouf’s approach to writing, also my epistemological approach is not impersonal but dynamic, empathically engaged, leaving behind as inadequate the myth of the neutrality of the scholar who analyses with absolute detachment⁶⁰.

The strength of my critical work and this book lies in this dynamic and passionate participation, in its *multicommunitarianism*, in the engaged and engaging *inter-indisciplinary* approach and pluralistic diversity of the themes explored. As Benozzo says about ethnophilology, this new context is necessarily “dynamic – not pre-determined” and recalls some ideas of contemporary physics. It is a context that “expands with the expansion of

⁵⁸ See Capra’s invitation to his course: <https://www.capracourse.net/>. See also: Capra, Fritjof, *The Tao of Physics*, London, Flamingo-HarperCollins, 1975; *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, Simon & Schuster, Bantam, 1982; *Die Seele Indiens: Tamil Nadu*, Hamburg, Ellert & Richter, 1984; *Green Politics*, New York, Dutton, 1984; *Uncommon Wisdom*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1988; *Mindwalk*, Bern, Scherz, 1991; *Belonging to the Universe*, San Francisco, Harper, 1991; *EcoManagement*, San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler, 1993; *Steering Business Toward Sustainability*, Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 1995; *The Web of Life*, London, HarperCollins, Flamingo, 1997; *Die Capra Synthese*, Bern, Scherz, 1998; *The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living*, New York, Doubleday, 2002; *The Science of Leonardo: Inside the Mind of the Great Genius of the Renaissance*, New York, Doubleday, 2007; *La Botanica di Leonardo*, Sansepolcro, Aboca Edizioni, 2009; *Learning from Leonardo: Decoding the Notebooks of a Genius Hardcover*, San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2013; *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016; Capra, Fritjof and Luisi, Pier Luigi, *Vita e natura. Una visione sistemica*, Sansepolcro, Aboca Edizioni, 2014; Capra, Fritjof and Mattei, Ugo, *The Ecology of Law: Toward a Legal System in Tune with Nature and Community*, San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler, 2015. See also: Capra, Fritjof, <https://www.fritjofcapra.net/books/>.

⁵⁹ Morin, Edgar, *California Journal*, Brighton, Sussex Academic, 2008, pp. 34-35.

⁶⁰ See: Benozzo, Francesco, *Memorie di un filologo complottista*, 2021, pp. 107-109.

knowledge”⁶¹ and its research questions. In spite of the diktats of technocratic science, we can detect a deconstruction of the “myth” of the “neutral observer”⁶² in many fields of research, where we find more and more a specific attention to the interaction between the observer and the observed. This interaction does not only engage the rational mind, but all aspects of human intelligence, imagination, creativity, emotion, and the capacity to capture the intrinsic reality and interrelatedness of all things:

[...] one of the conquests of biologists, physicists and chemists is indeed that of having freed themselves, at least since the beginning of the 1950's, of this late positivistic *habitus*, to the advantage of a more credible (and methodologically fruitful) awareness that any researcher, even the one who experiments in a laboratory, through his observation, continually constructs and modifies what he is observing⁶³.

Benozzo, discussing about ethnophilology, describes it as “the study of a tradition and of the texts that transmit it first of all as an encounter with the other, underlining in this a human dimension of its methods that is also emotional and participative”⁶⁴.

Naming is a psychic force, a creative act that allows that force to descend from the celestial world or ascend from the underworld. They are both deep reservoirs of the spiritual energies we need to activate and keep alive in ourselves and the world. They are instrumental in our capacity to imagine, materialise and manifest on the physical plane those forces of beauty, loving creative power, including the need to be transformed and achieve our metamorphoses. As humans, we have deep-rooted memories of our past harmonious relationship with the native, mythological “Other”, and the “Earth-Mother” that in waves of occurrence tend to *re-present* an alternative solution to our world's crises. Malouf often uses names for the same narrative, archetypal, mythological purpose. This narrative and poetic quest for a harmonious relationship with the other and with Nature is a key and central element in Malouf's work, for:

Stories are medicine. They have such power; they do not require that we do, be, act anything – we need only listen. The remedies for repair or reclamation of any lost psychic drive are contained in stories. Stories engender the excitement, sadness, questions, longings, and understandings that spontaneously bring the archetype, in this case the Wild Woman, back

⁶¹ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 46.

⁶² Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 46.

⁶³ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 47.

⁶⁴ Benozzo, Francesco, *Etnofilologia*, 2010, p. 47.

to the surface. Stories are embedded with instructions which guide us about the complexities of life. Stories enable us to understand the need for and the ways to raise a submerged archetype⁶⁵.

Estés recounts of a metaphysical dream she had where old wise wild women of the past were holding her as a younger storyteller on their shoulders, carrying and supporting her in her task⁶⁶. In the same way, I feel that, while I am writing this book on a wonderful storyteller, who grafts his narratives exactly on this very same archetypal power, I am also carried and sustained by all the ancestral forces of myth and archetype (and of the old wise wild grandmothers who carry me on their shoulders). I imagine this book as the spiralling repetition and recomposed echoes of my multiple and recurring “conversations” and interlacing narratives with Malouf’s texts, with criticism on Australian literature, and with some focal ideas of authors, scholars and researchers who inspire me.

Australia, island continent like Édouard Glissant’s Caribbeans⁶⁷, is a cauldron of interconnecting cultures, stories and peoples, starting from the *Original Peoples*⁶⁸, which are, to use Glissant’s definition, in *Relation*: “Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other”⁶⁹. This concept of *Relation* is analogous Eilser’s *Partnership* model, in that both words focus on harmonious co-operation and interconnectedness where difference is fecund and welcomed, rather than stigmatised, and it is seen as an instrument of personal and collective

⁶⁵ Pinkola, Estés Clarissa, *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, 1992, pp. 15-16.

⁶⁶ “I once dreamt I was telling stories and felt someone patting my foot in encouragement. I looked down and I saw that I was standing on the shoulders of an old woman who was steadying my ankles and smiling up at me. [...] she stood on the shoulders of a woman far older than she, who stood on the shoulders of a woman even older [...] If there is a single source of story and the numen story, this long chain of humans is it”, Pinkola, Estés Clarissa, *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, 1992, p. 19.

⁶⁷ Glissant, Édouard, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1989.

⁶⁸ I borrow this expression from the psychologist and Native American scholar and shaman Duran, Eduardo, *Healing the Soul Wound. Counseling with American Indians and other Native People*, New York-London, Teachers College Press, 2006, See his note 1, p. 11.

⁶⁹ Glissant, Édouard, *Poétique de la Relation. Poétique III*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990. See also: <http://www.edouardglissant.fr/relation.html>. Glissant, Édouard and Wing, Betsy, *Poetics of Relation*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2010, p. 11.

growth and wellbeing⁷⁰. As the expression of a "Relation"⁷¹, a word Glissant uses to describe the continuity, intertwining and intersections of his texts growing and converging into new ones, and like in Brady's teaching of "reading" and "reinventing", also my criticism is inspired and revolves around this idea. "Relation" manifests in terms of multiple relations and connections through which literary texts come into being, as children of their authors, but also as relatives and friends of their readers. They touch us in the form of surfaces connecting to other surfaces, discourses connected to other discourses, through continuous processes of territorialisation and reterritorialisation of the self/other continuum offering endless transformations and possibilities of dialogical dialogue and the creative word⁷². The "relation" is, in this sense, a dynamic model for describing hybridisation not only in a local, but also in a global perspective.

This is analogous to what Raimon Panikkar calls an *inter-in-dependent* human dimension of *dialogical dialogue*⁷³ and the creative word as juxtaposed to the scientific term⁷⁴. Panikkar differentiates "dialogical dialogue" from "dialectics":

Dialogue seeks truth by trusting the other, just as dialectics pursues truth by trusting the order of things, the value of reason and weighty arguments. Dialectics is the optimism of reason; dialogue is the optimism of the heart. [...]. Dialogue does not seek primarily to be duo-logue, a duet of two *logoi*, which would still be dialectical; but a *dia-logos*, a piercing of the logos to attain a truth that transcends it⁷⁵.

According to Panikkar, inter-in-dependence and dialogical dialogue are a praxis of humanist thought, which is complementary to rational-analytical thought:

⁷⁰ Eisler, Riane, The Dynamics of Cultural and Technological Evolution: Domination Versus Partnership, *World Futures*, 58, 2-3, 2002, p. 161.

⁷¹ Glissant, Édouard, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, University Press of Virginia, 1989; *Poétique de la Relation. Poétique III*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990; *La poetica del diverso*, Roma, Meltemi, 1996; Glissant, Édouard and Wing, Betsy, *Poetics of Relation*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2010. See also: <http://www.edouardglissant.fr/relation.html>.

⁷² Panikkar, Raimon, *Lo spirito della parola*, 2007, pp. 96-125.

⁷³ For a further analysis of Panikkar's idea of the creative word in literature, see: Riem, Antonella, *A Gesture of Reconciliation*, 2017, pp. 13-14 and pp. 16-17.

⁷⁴ For a further analysis of this theme see: Antonella Riem *et al.*, eds., *The Tapestry of the Creative Word in Anglophone Literatures*, Udine, Forum, 2013.

⁷⁵ Panikkar, Raimon, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, New York, Paulist Press, 1979, p. 243. See also: Panikkar, Raimon, *The Intra-Religious Dialogue*, New York, Paulist Press, 1978.

The dialogical-dialogue is not a simple conversation, not a mere mutual enrichment by the supplementary information that is contributed; it is not exclusively a corrective of misunderstandings [...] It is the joint search for the shared and the different. It is the mutual fecundation of what each one contributes [...] It is the implicit and explicit recognition that we are not self-sufficient... God is the one who makes it possible for dialogue to be more than the mere sterile crossing of two monologues⁷⁶.

The modern degeneration of the *word*, stripped of its dialogical power and reduced to a mere *term*, has a devastating effect, in that even education becomes a simple transferring of notions. With the Galilean and Cartesian fracture between world and spirit, the Western scientific approach to Reality rejected analogy as instrumental for scientific research, while Ancient and Native traditional knowledge and creative writing stem from the framework of analogy, rather than from a one-sided positivist approach to life. Analogy has always been a fundamental tool at the source of all human discoveries. Indeed, logical thinking always needs the power of imagination and creativity to open horizons beyond what is temporarily accepted and acknowledged as true and real, until the next scientific discovery has been achieved. Moreover, analogical thinking and symbolism are at the core of myths, sacred oral wisdom and spiritual texts of all world traditions. One cannot reduce these areas of human thought and feeling to a closed system of signs, where there is only one unequivocal meaning and explanation. In the field of analogy, there is a qualitative rather than quantitative relationship that cannot be fully demonstrated or accounted for in numbers or *terms*. Lucidity, judgement, exactness and discrimination are all key ideas for scientific intelligence and intelligibility. Terms are employed as means through which we indicate the real thing, and this is what matters. Conversely, in archetypal, mythical and analogical thinking, the word has a true creative power, which is transformed and renewed every time we utter, sing, act or write the word.

We can certainly say that as an intellectual also David Malouf has trodden a similar path in his collection of texts *A First Place*, where he puts together public pieces as another form of *presence* than his personal creations (poems, novels, short stories):

These pieces of writing are personal in that they have their basis in personal experience and represent personal opinions, but their purpose was from the beginning public; they belong to part of my life that is conscious and considered, rather than dreamingly obscure till it demands to be

⁷⁶ See: Raimon Panikkar, ¿Mística comparada?, 2002.