



Thesis writing

# Body chapters



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

## ARTS & HUMANITIES EXAMPLE

### Example: thesis structure (English literature)

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### 1. Past and Present: The Grotesque Body in Theory and Culture

*Nothing grows without a root. (Hugo 346)*

*That the grotesque exists has always been a given.  
But it is up to the culture to provide the conventions  
and assumptions that determine its particular forms.  
(Harpham xx)*

During the era of European colonial expansion, mariners and mercantilists represented the people of other countries as primitive, monstrous, and depraved. In *A Dream More Luminous Than Love* and *The Island in the Mind* Rodney Hall investigates these themes of Otherness as they apply to the Australian historical narrative and produces a poetics of the grotesque which he uses to interrogate the depictions of Australia in the European archive. When the British invaded Australia in the eighteenth century they perceived the land and its indigenous people through the lens of neo-classical discourses of primitivism which can be traced back to the classical period's notions about human evolution.

*provides historical  
analysis of grotesque  
body in theory and  
culture*

*provides context for  
historical analysis*

## ACADEMIC LITERACY

Learning, Teaching & Curriculum – Learning Development

Classical thought was not homogenous though; some people saw humankind evolving from monstrous forms, while others argued that primitive humans were no different physically to themselves. This kind of discursive conflict which involves issues of aesthetics and identity has helped to define its essential ambivalence. In the Australian colonial moment the British marginalised both the Aboriginal inhabitants and its own convict rejects by portraying them as grotesque, but Hall embraces this mode of representation and uses it to undermine the facticity of those images. As identity politics have been integral to the grotesque since it first appeared in Europe, it is worthwhile examining the classical writers whose texts have been the source of many of the grotesque body's images, and tracing the development of the grotesque through the ages to see how different social formations have used it to produce discourses of the lower classes, social outcasts and foreign indigenes as Other

The history of the grotesque may be read as a narrative and oppression ....

The word grotesque evolved in the late fifteenth-century when antiquarians discovered the murals in the excavation of Nero's *Domus Aurea* in Rome ...

Renaissance scholarship's interest in classical aesthetics focussed particularly on the works of the Roman engineer and architect ...

The genealogy of the colonial grotesque constitutes a narrative which is pertinent to this study because the continent of Australia was invented in antiquity and from that time onwards the land became the repository of images of Otherness. Prior to the European invasion it was an amorphous space on the map filled with signs of desire: monsters, gold mines, exotic fruits and species. Furthermore, the historical archive portrays the Australian colonialists – the convicts and free settlers- as abject. In *A Dream More Luminous Than Love* Hall focuses on the European encounter with the Indigenous Other in Australia to reveal the relativity of the 'official' truth about colonial history. He demonstrates how Europe constructed Australia as a utopian space and encoded the indigenous body with signs of its own otherness. These discursive strategies prevented the invaders from knowing the land and its people. Furthermore, in *The Island in the Mind* Hall extends his argument about the politics of representation by displacing the history of Australia's origins from the foundation of the convict colony in the late eighteenth century to the seventeenth century and showing how it was caught up in European politics. According to Hall, Terra Incognita embodied the Europeans' repressed desires. But before examining Hall's work in detail it will be useful to trace the pre-Renaissance history of the grotesque body and show how it is related to the representations of the Australian Indigenous Other in order to contextualise the narratives of both *A Dream more Luminous Than Love* and *The Island in the Mind*.

*indicates historical perspective, cultural and theoretical basis*

*flags the contested nature of this perspective*

*discusses its significance to broader aims of research project*

*the rest of the chapter unpacks ideas presented in introduction, elaborating in detail, and connecting each idea to the next*

*conclusion reiterates main ideas, provides rationale for aim of following chapter, and guides reader through logic of thesis' structure*

Chapter 2 goes on to examine the 'traces of [the grotesques'] past in the present'. The introduction states "As a supplement to the history of the grotesque produced by the major theorists discussed in chapter one an alternative genealogy may be traced which links the grotesque body to European colonialism ..."

