THE (RE)INDIGENISATION OF SPACE

Weaving narratives of resistance to embed Nura [Country] in design

Danièle Hromek

Budawang/Yuin

Bachelor of Design (Interior and Spatial)

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DECLARATION

I, Danièle Siân Hromek, declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

This thesis includes Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) belonging to Yuin, Dharug, Gundungurra, D'harawal, Bundjalung, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta language, tribal or nation groups, communities, custodians or traditional owners. Where I have used ICIP, I have followed the relevant protocols and consulted with appropriate Indigenous people/communities about its inclusion in my thesis. ICIP rights are Indigenous heritage and will always remain with these groups. To use, adapt or reference the ICIP contained in this work, you will need to consult with the relevant Indigenous groups and follow cultural protocols.

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CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WARNING

For some Indigenous communities it is customary not to mention names or reproduce images associated with the recently deceased. Members of these communities are respectfully advised that there are people who have passed away mentioned in the writing in this thesis.

Some of the language, words and descriptions originate from early colonial writings and other sources. This language is now considered insensitive. I have amended and/or noted using [sic] as many of these occurrences as possible, however it was not always feasible to amend all such inappropriate language. In this instance please note the original sources of the language available in the Reference List.

I wish to include a further note for Aboriginal readers. While reading for this research I found some narratives or literature upsetting and even traumatic. Some stories were too close to my own, or indeed *were* my own story detailing how colonisation impacted my family. Remembering or re-hearing stories can re-traumatise, and while I found healing through retelling the stories from my own perspective, I wanted readers to be aware and gain support should this writing trigger any unease.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Uncle Noel Butler, Budawang Elder, Knowledge Holder of the Yuin nation and Dhurga speaker, provided the translation in Dhurga (the language of my Ancestors) for Country, that being Nura. Similarly, Ngura means Country in Dharug (the language of the land on which this thesis was written), as confirmed by Uncle Greg Simms, Dharug, Gundungurra and Yuin Elder. Using the words of Country, I pay my respect to Nura and Knowledge Holders of Nura. I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of all nations throughout this land and abroad, and their continuing connection to culture, community, land, sea and sky. I write with thanks to countless thinkers, makers and doers; due to their tireless work I can follow their footprints. I express my gratitude for the stories and knowledges shared with me. I am especially grateful to my Ancestors, who did whatever it took in order that I could be here now. I am here only by standing on their shoulders.

Recognising Country and Elders is a form of mutual respect between First Peoples. It is based on an ancient tradition which situates me and this thesis in the ontology and pedagogy of Indigenous ideologies. This acknowledgement is a living reciprocal action between people, narrative and Country.

Through the voyage of this thesis I have travelled to many spaces both of learning and geography, and they have left their inscriptions on me and on the text. It is not possible to undertake a journey such as this alone; it changes you beyond your control and recognition, and in doing so impacts those around you. I was unprepared for the challenges I would need to navigate, and without those standing beside me there are many times I would have fallen down.

I thank my family, including parents, siblings, grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins, who not only supported me emotionally and mentally, but contributed their stories, wisdom, knowledge and love. Thank you for listening to my rants, holding me through my tears, reminding me of the importance of family and the endless cups of tea. I also give my enduring gratitude to my husband Carlos who joined me on my life journey during my thesis journey after I asked my Ancestors to ‘sort it out already’. His support through the maelstrom that is academia, unwavering confidence in me and well-timed hugs sustained me through many difficult moments.

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I give gratitude to my friends and colleagues who grounded me, listened even when I was not making sense, and provided endless encouragement. I am sincerely grateful to all at The Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges for giving me a safe space to sit and write when I had none; I appreciate our camaraderie and shared learning. I thank Lori Lockyer for taking action when others did not, it takes real guts and decency to do that. With thanks to Hazel Baker, who patiently and meticulously edited my research and helped me become an immeasurably better writer.

As much as I aspire to live on love and air alone, regrettably it is difficult to conduct research without funding. Therefore I thank Jumbunna Institute for providing a postgraduate scholarship. Having the time to exclusively concentrate on my research made the difference to (almost!) completing on time, and the enjoyment of the research process. Thanks to the Lindsay Croft Postgraduate Memorial Scholarship

and Laurie Cowled for recognising the importance of providing financial support to Indigenous female researchers. I thank Deb Verhoeven for funding me to continue my research beyond the thesis. It would have been very difficult to complete this work without all their support.

Finally, I say thanks to all Ancestors, known and unnameable, who are no longer here physically yet have long acted as carers for Country and for me, for they too have power.

ABSTRACT

Space, for Aboriginal peoples, is full of Country. Furthermore, space, place, land, ground, geography, geology, cartography, topography, site, location, landscape, terrain, environment are *held* by Country. Deploying Indigenous theoretical and methodological approaches, I investigate an Indigenous experience and comprehension of space. By reconsidering and contesting the notion of *terra nullius* – an 'empty land' – the research considers how First Peoples occupy, use, narrate, sense, dream and contest their spaces.

Narratives and oral recordings are key to First Peoples' expressions of their lived experiences of both culture and colonial trauma. Trauma is embedded in First Peoples' lands and spaces via the invidious forces of invasion and colonisation, described here through select colonial archives and existing white historiography. Critiquing this historical narrative of colonisation, the research deploys instead Indigenous perspectives including lived experiences, oral histories, yarns, reflective practice and wider reading of Indigenous literature. These permit a focus on the (re)Indigenisation of space in order to investigate the question: 'what is the presence and space of Country in contemporary Indigenous lives?' The thesis therefore offers a (re)interpretation of the relationship between First Peoples and the land that is based on connectivity and relationality, as opposed to colonial writings that have inferred, stated or demanded that First Peoples' relations with land were and are non-existent and even lost.

This research speaks through a Budawang/Yuin woman's worldview. It considers the importance of stories for holding knowledges and connecting to land, and examines the micro and macro connections between Country, people and making. First Peoples' cultural practices connect to Dreaming and Country. They hold memory of culture and offer a means of (re)connecting to heritage. My investigation brings narratives, remembrance and Country together in a cultural, spatial and performative practice of weaving, exploring spatial reclamation and restoration of Indigenous spatial values. It 'names up' methods, linking them with narratives, considering how space can be (re)Indigenised. It rethinks and reframes the values that inform Aboriginal understandings of space through Indigenous spatial knowledges and narratives. By offering a reinterpretation and retranslation of Aboriginal methods of

reclaiming space, it likewise reflects on the sustainability of Indigenous cultures from a spatial perspective.

As foundational research in the area of Indigenous space this research has the capacity to impact policy and practice in relation to the planning of spaces to ensure they are designed equitably, relationally and with a connection to Country.

CONTENTS

PUBLICATIONS

Publications generated within the frame of this research enquiry:

Chapter 2:

Hromek, D 2019 (in press), 'Storytelling and Narratives on Country: A Yuin woman's perspective', Budawang/Yuin, in D S Jones & D Low Choy (eds), *Everyone's Knowledge in Country: Yurlendj-nganjin*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Chapter 4:

Hromek, D 2018, 'Always Is: Aboriginal Spatial Experiences of Land and Country', Budawang/Yuin, in R Kiddle, P Stewart & K O'Brien (eds), *Our Voices: Indigeneity and Architecture*, Oro Editions, San Francisco Bay, CA, pp. 218-237.

Chapter 7:

Hromek, D 2019 (in press), 'Contested Ground – Weaving Stories of Resilience, Resistance, Relationality and Reclamation', Budawang/Yuin, in K O'Brien (ed.), *Our Voices: The DE-colonial Project*, Oro Editions, San Francisco Bay, CA.

Exhibitions generated within the frame of this research enquiry:

Chapter 7:

Hromek, D. 2018, *Weaving Intentions*, Budawang/Yuin, cultural practice, in 'Make Known' curated by Eva Riestra-Rodriguez, UNSW Galleries

Publications related to this research enquiry:

Hromek, D 2019 (in press), *Void*, Budawang/Yuin, catalogue essay, Museums and Galleries of NSW, Sydney.

Gothe, J & Hromek, D 2019 (in press), 'A cultural generational communal iterative generative collaborative relational theory of design', *Theories of Design[ing]*, Budawang/Yuin (Hromek), Bloomsbury Publishers, London.

Hromek, D 2017, *Impact*, Budawang/Yuin, catalogue essay, UTS Gallery, Sydney.

Hromek, D, Hromek, S & Hromek, M 2018, 'Sensing Materials of our Country', Budawang/Yuin, *Architecture Bulletin*, vol. 75, no. 2 (September), pp. 18-19.

Hromek, D & Herbert, S 2017, *Indigenous Material Referencing Guide*, Budawang/Yuin (Hromek), UTS Library, Sydney.

Hromek, D & Janke, T 2020 (in press), *Cultural Principles and Protocols for Designers: for Projects or Curricula involving Indigenous Peoples, Communities and Materials*, Budawang/Yuin (Hromek), Meriam and Wuthathi (Janke), UTS ePress, Sydney.

Kombumerri, D & Hromek, D 2019 (in press), 'Designing with Country – Rethreading Aboriginal Culture into the Design Fabric of Sydney's Built and Natural Environment', Yugembir (Kombumerri), Budawang/Yuin (Hromek) in K O'Brien (ed.), *Our Voices: The DE-colonial Project*, Oro Editions, San Francisco Bay, CA.

Exhibitions related to this research enquiry:

Hromek, D. 2018, *Untitled (Eisenman by Hand)*, Budawang/Yuin, lightbox with drawings, in 'Void' curated by Emily McDaniel, UTS Gallery.

Hromek, D. 2018, *World Making*, Budawang/Yuin, speculative design, in 'Foundation' curated by Emily McDaniel, Fairfield City Museum & Gallery.

Hromek, D 2016, Winyanboga Yurringa, Budawang/Yuin, set and costume design, Moogahlin, Carriageworks Sydney and Geelong Performing Arts Centre.

Hromek, D, Hromek, S & Hromek, M 2015, Covered By Concrete, Budawang/Yuin, spatial map installation including video, aromas and audio, Underbelly Arts Festival, Sydney.

NOTES ON LANGUAGE

READING THIS THESIS – TERMINOLOGY AND RETHINKING CONVENTIONS

An Indigenous inscription of the ground is an oral inscription of the ground. As such this research relies strongly on oral stories, yarns and histories. However, as this is an academic written work, I make numerous decisions with regards to usage of words and language.

Research, as a term and endeavour, holds a lot of colonial baggage for most Indigenous communities (Smith 2012)[1]. It evokes mistrust and suspicion and I have struggled with it, including the idea of being a researcher myself. There is an irony in my choosing to use some colonising or anthropological terms while at the same time criticising those authors who penned them. These terms are used regarding my culture, often without permission or consultation. They are limited in terms of the diversity of First Peoples, and are inadequate in representing the cultures of Indigenous peoples worldwide or even within Australia. However, in a country such as Australia, which is continually undergoing a colonising process, it is impossible to separate them from my discourse. In using these terms, I am therefore taking ownership of them and request readers' understanding in my doing so.

Where possible and relevant, I use the names of individual people and their communities or group affiliations based upon how they identify themselves, particularly when referring to their lives, experiences and ways of being. Identity can be complex for First Peoples, who may have a mix of cultural reference points to address, or may have had their identities stolen or hidden as part of colonising and institutional processes. The colonial project affects all Indigenous peoples, albeit in differing ways and when discussing colonisation, it may at times be pertinent to speak more generally. This in no way aims to detract from individual people or communities and their experiences; rather it enables a more philosophical and conceptual viewpoint concerning the effects of colonisation.

[1] Linda Tuhiwai Smith is a Māori academic who affiliates to the Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi.

According to Michael Yellow Bird[2], *colonisation* is a system in which one people claim sovereignty over another and assert social, political, economic and spiritual control over them. Colonisation is motivated by beliefs and values of the coloniser being superior to those of the colonised (Yellow Bird recorded by Easter 2014). Colonising is a dehumanising activity that affects humans at a deep soul level (Duran 2006)[3], thus it is not only lands, waters and skies[4] that are colonised, but peoples also, physically, mentally and psychologically.

Settler colonialism, as experienced in Australia, is the form of colonialism in which so-called 'settlers' come to Indigenous lands with the intention of making a new home on the land, 'a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain' (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 5)[5]. Within settler colonialism, the primary concern is the resources of the land. The resources are viewed as commodities for the 'settlers', with Indigenous relationships to that land being irrelevant to this pursuit of capital. Land becomes remade into ownable and transferrable property. In order for 'settlers' to make the land they invaded truly their home, the Indigenous peoples must be erased, for while they and their creation stories connecting them to that land in perpetuity continue to exist, the colonisers cannot fulfil their own aim of settler colonisation, namely to become 'indigenous' themselves to that land (Tuck & Yang 2012).

As a member of the First Peoples of this land, my experience is that colonisation is not an event of the past; we are not in a *post-colonial* period; we actively continue to be colonised. As such, I will not be speaking of colonisation as a past occurrence, or refer to post-colonial conditions. *Neo-colonisation* is a form of global power in which, despite the perception of independence, transnational corporations and global and multilateral institutions combine to perpetuate colonial forms of exploitation of developing countries. Neo-colonisation has been broadly theorised as a further development of capitalism that enables capitalist powers to dominate and exploit subject nations through international capitalism rather than by direct rule (Halperin 2016). *Re-colonisation* (or *(re)colonisation*) refers to the argument that, for Indigenous people, colonisation did not end with European invasion. Colonisation continues in a number

[2] Michael Yellow Bird is a citizen of the Arikara (Sahniish) and Hidatsa Nations in North Dakota.

[3] Eduardo Duran is Pueblo/Apache and Lakota through the Hunka and the Yellow Horse family.

[4] When referring to the land in this research, air and water are also implicitly included, as well as the depths of the underground.

[5] Eve Tuck is Unangax and an enrolled member of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Alaska.

of forms, including globalisation, post-colonisation and cultural fragmentation. Re-colonisation refers to the active, ongoing repetition of colonisation layered in activities that occur in Australian society and worldwide, such as the neglect of Indigenous pedagogies, continuation of Stolen Generations, theft of Indigenous knowledges or intellectual property, continuance of assimilation policies, neglect in terms of reinstating Indigenous lands and land management practices, negative depiction of Indigenous peoples in the media or literature, or as being from the distant past.

Nor will I be referring to my culture as having been *lost*. It was not lost; it was forcibly silenced through the processes of colonisation. My family and Ancestors faced these forces with an incredible, creative and beautiful resilience and resisted them, passing on knowledges and practices in often hidden and discreet ways until, in my generation, it was safe for them to re-emerge from the deep sleep in which they were being kept safe. Until the land and descendants of the land no longer exist, our culture always was and always will be.

In 1788, there were more than 250 languages spoken on the continent, with over 800 dialectal varieties (AIATSIS 2019). Now many of our languages are sleeping, or in forms of revitalisation (T Janke 2019, pers. comm., 14 February)[6]. As is the experience with other Indigenous peoples whose languages were taken from them by force, some of my own experiences cannot be described within the limitations of English, and I no longer have the language I need to be able to adequately describe those experiences. Similarly, some English words and phrases are overly loaded with western preconceptions. In this instance I will either define the English term as I intend it to be read, or use a word from the language of the land that better interprets the meaning. If *language words* (those being words from an Indigenous language) are used, I provide as close an interpretation as possible, together with the nation, clan or language group from which the language comes.

Due to colonial processes, many writers about Indigenous knowledge, culture and practice are non-Indigenous. Often their interpretations reflect poor understanding, or overstep the bounds of appropriate

[6] Terri Janke descends from the Meriam people of the Torres Strait Islands and the Wuthathi people of mainland Australia.

commentary (Heiss 2002)[7]. Nonetheless, at times I have chosen to include their references, with a reinterpretation if required, as they provide access to some valued knowledges I may have otherwise been unable to retrieve. This being said, it is my preference to privilege Indigenous voices (Rigney 2006)[8] where possible, and use Indigenous speakers or writers to inform my research.

Prior to colonisation, there were no *Aborigines* in this country; *ab origine* is a Latin word meaning 'from the beginning'. It was assigned by colonisers to the peoples living in Australia to describe those whose lands they were appropriating. According to Anita Heiss, prior to invasion 'there just were people who were identified and known by their relationships to each other through familial connections, through connections to Country and through language group' (2012, pp. 3-4). I prefer not to use the word 'Aborigine'. I find it outdated, somewhat derogatory and lacking in recognition of the many and diverse cultures and languages that this land is made up of. Instead, when a unifying term specifically relating to mainland peoples is required, I prefer *Aboriginal peoples* or *Aboriginal person.*

In using the word *Aboriginal*, I am aware it is a colonisers' identifier. As I operate in an academic arena and also a country where, as a generalisation, people can name more American states than Aboriginal nations, I accept this word as a descriptor for the people who first occupied this land. However, I am aware it is not the preferred way of self-identifying by many First Peoples in Australia. I use 'Aboriginal' in this writing as a generic term to describe the First Peoples who inhabited the mainland continent as well as their descendants.

Through the course of this research, I have been asked in a number of ways, 'Who is Indigenous anyway?'[9]. As a starting point to answering this question, a definition agreed by the High Court of Australia in 1983 is that an *Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person* is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by their community. More importantly, our stories of our creation, history and belonging tell us we originated from here rather than having relocated to this land from elsewhere.

[7] Anita Heiss is a member of the Wiradjuri nation.

[8] Lester-Irabinna Rigney is a Narungga, Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri man.

[9] To be clear, this is an offensive and provocative question as it is a challenge on identity and belonging.

The term *indigenous peoples* describes 'racially distinct populations whose long-term histories connect them with identified areas of land situated within the borders of globally recognised nations' (Manus 2005, p. 553). Many First Peoples feel the word *Indigenous* has been imposed on them because it associates them with flora and fauna, and was a term used by colonials, and more recently academia, science and government. The word Indigenous generalises mainland and islander cultures into one group, despite both having very different cultures, customs and even flags. While personally I am comfortable with the term as I understand it as a uniting term that places me with global First Nations Peoples, some of my Elders growl at me when I use it, so I do so with caution. For practicality in an academic situation, I use this word to describe the First Peoples of the mainland continent and Torres Strait Islanders.

First Peoples, *First Nations* and *First Nations Peoples* are terms that many Indigenous peoples prefer internationally and within Australia as they describe our relationships with the land as the first inhabitants of that land. Generally, I use the term First Peoples to describe Indigenous peoples in Australia, and First Nations when describing Indigenous peoples globally.

It is always respectful to capitalise the words Aboriginal and Indigenous. Likewise, First Peoples and First Nations.

I choose not to use the terms *First Australians*, *Aboriginal Australians* or *Indigenous Australians* when speaking of First Peoples. The land that came to be known as Australia was given this uniting designation by Europeans. Prior to that time this land was inhabited by more than 500 different groups, all with their own cultures, beliefs, languages and names. Many Aboriginal people prefer to be known by the name of their own group rather than as 'Australian'. It is my view that the adoption of these terms is a (re)colonising practice that attempts to disguise non-Indigenous occupation of Indigenous land by removing the signifiers chosen by the original people of the land. Indigenous peoples were also not

counted as part of the nation until 1967[10], so Indigenous peoples were effectually the last Australians and the first Australians were Europeans, not First Peoples.

Likewise, I prefer not to be known as *our* First Australians or *our* Aboriginal people as is the tendency of some politicians and media; I do not belong to anyone nor does my identity nor my heritage nor culture. We do not refer to *our* white Australians or *our* non-Indigenous Australians, so as an attempt at finding equality in language, I choose not to claim ownership in this way. Likewise regarding the term *Indigenous leaders*; Indigenous peoples are not an homogenous group with a centralised structure or leadership group. We do not have nominated leaders who speak for us all as a united people (Pearson 2019)[11].

In relation to British *invasion*, I prefer not to use the word *settlers* when referring to the British. I cannot ignore the irony of people who travelled more than eight months and in excess of 24,000 kilometres away from their homes to then label the original inhabitants of that land – who had occupied the continent for many tens of thousands of years – 'wanderers' or 'roamers', and suggest they go 'walkabout'. *Settlement* has become a euphemistic term for conquering by force in the Australian context (McGrath 1995). I argue that it is the Indigenous peoples who are settled and the Europeans who are the wanderers – as well as *colonisers*, *imperialists* and *invaders*.

When I use *western* I am referring to cultures or societies that have values, worldviews, customs and systems of governance, beliefs or politics originating with Europe. Western worldviews have transferred to non-European countries through forces such as colonisation or immigration, and therefore Australia

[10] On 27 May 1967 a referendum was held to make two amendments to the Australian Constitution to alter sections 51 (xxvi) and 127, which stated, '*51. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to:- ...(xxvi) The people of any race, other than the aboriginal* [sic] *people in any State, for whom it is necessary to make special laws.'* and *'127. In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal* [sic] *natives* [sic] *should not be counted.'* With 90.77 per cent of people voting for the change, the words '*… other than the aboriginal people in any State*…' in section 51(xxvi) and the whole of section 127 were removed (National Archives of Australia 2019).

[11] Luke Pearson is a Gamilaroi man.

could be considered as having a (majority) western culture. In using the term *the west* I am referring to countries or nations that understand themselves in the context of having western values.

I prefer not to use the term *hunters and gatherers* to describe pre-invasion Aboriginal peoples. I do not find it sufficient to describe the rich social, cultural and spiritual societies of the First Peoples. While gathering and hunting did occur, this is inadequate to explain their relationships with the land, which was more profound and based on a deep understanding of sustainability (Pascoe 2014)[12]. Similarly, the term *nomadic* is unrealistic. It disregards the many groups that existed and continue to exist across the continent, all with differing traditions, rituals, Dreaming stories and ways of relating to their varying environments. For instance, it has been suggested that due to the relatively resource-rich coastal regions, there is little evidence that the peoples around the Sydney area seasonally migrated, and prior to invasion these lands were densely settled (Standfield 2012). The word 'nomadic' also disregards the purposes of travel, be it land management, ceremonial or kin responsibilities. Once the British arrived and appropriated the land, clearly additional movement was required simply for survival. *Mobility*, *movement* or *travelling* are my preferred phrases to describe movements of Indigenous peoples.

Despite accounts from the *Endeavour* voyage in 1770 assuring the British that Aboriginal peoples would show little opposition, there are regular reports of Indigenous peoples' defence of their lands – though these accounts described this defence as Aboriginal defiance or blamed convict disobedience for the problem, rather than invasion as the cause. Inevitably British violence towards Indigenous peoples was believed to be justified, even when it was outside the limitations of British law (Banner 2007; Standfield 2010). Yet for First Peoples the invaders had come uninvited and not followed protocol for gaining access to Country, so First Peoples were within their rights to defend their lands as per their Laws. Downplaying resistance was important to the British as it enabled them to conclude they were doing little harm to the peoples they invaded, achieving the result that Aboriginal people appeared 'acted upon rather than active agents in history, passive in the face of their own dispossession' (Standfield 2012, p. 73). This, though, was not the case. Therefore, I write from a perspective of active *resistance* rather than passive accepting victims.

[12] Uncle Bruce Pascoe is of Bunurong, Yuin and Punniler panner heritage.

According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *decolonisation*, 'once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognised as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power' (2012, p. 101). I am not overly comfortable with the overuse of the term decolonisation, and that it is being used by those who have clearly not experienced colonisation. This depoliticises a practice that must be political. It also denudes the term of its poignancy and does not represent the dismantling of power structures for the equality of oppressed First Peoples. Theft of language is a form of violence. As described by Eve Tuck and K Wayne Yang (2012), decolonisation is distinct from other civil and human rights projects and experiences of oppression. Decolonisation is about making reparations to Indigenous peoples, Indigenous social justice and equity, and righting colonial power relations. Therefore, I advocate for care in the use of the word by those who have not experienced colonisation.

An approach to decolonisation is described by Michael Yellow Bird as:

> … creating and consciously using various strategies to liberate oneself from, or adapt to, or survive in oppressive conditions. It is the restoration of cultural practices, thinking, beliefs and values that were taken away or abandoned but are still relevant or necessary for survival and wellbeing. It is the birth and use of new ideas, thinking, technologies and lifestyles that contribute to the advancement and empowerment of Indigenous Peoples (2008, p. 284).

Anthony McKnight[13] (2015) talks of reculturalisation and decolonisation of the self whereby decolonisation becomes a process of liberation not only of lands, but self. However, decolonisation 'in a settler context is fraught because empire, settlement and internal colony have no spatial separation' (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 7). We inhabit a land that is still undergoing a colonising process, where Indigenous peoples are repeatedly (re)colonised and (re)invaded. Every day that the 'settler' remains 'owner' of the land, Indigenous peoples are (re)colonised. Every day that Indigenous peoples are told directly or indirectly that their ways of living and being, knowledges, and ways of passing their learnings on, are inferior, they are being colonised again. Every day Indigenous people live in environments designed to suit the power structures of the coloniser, we are being colonised. Therefore, I embrace

[13] Anthony McKnight is an Awabakal, Gumaroi, and Yuin man.

words of *reclamation*, *resilience*, *resistance*, *relationality*, *responsibility*, *resurrecting*, *strength* and *subversion* as an approach to decolonisation and resurrection of culture.

Indigenisation refers to the adaptation to or increase of Indigenous cultures, participation and ownership. *(Re)Indigenisation* is a reference to 'always was, always will be Aboriginal land', a mantra used by Aboriginal land rights activists. It refers to the understanding that irrespective of invasion and colonisation, the relationships with and belonging to Country continue to exist.

This research is written from the perspective of empowering Indigenous voices. Within this remit are the rights of *self-determination* and *sovereignty*. Self-determination is our collective right to freely determine our political status and empower us to decide the nature of our own futures. It is the inherent right to have status, dominion or authority over our lives and lands (Australian Human Rights Commission 2002). In the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, sovereignty is described as:

> … a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown (Referendum Council 2017).

For Aboriginal people, the word *Country* (capital C) has a different meaning than the western understanding of the word *country* (small c). The western experience of land is one of property, an appropriated ground given a monetary value, a landscape that is tamed, built upon, produced, owned. When I use the word Country, I am referring to it in the Aboriginal sense of the word, which relates to the cultural group and land that we belong to, yearn for, find healing from and will return to. I make this distinction to ensure there is no confusion with the non-Indigenous use of the word 'country'. Larissa Behrendt[14] discusses this in relation to Aboriginal resistance to white settlement. She says,

[14] Larissa Behrendt is a Eualeyai/Kamillaroi woman.

> Aboriginal people didn't engage in serious resistance to the new colony at first because they assumed that the white people wouldn't stay. In Aboriginal culture, people had the responsibility for their traditional Country and their spiritual life was wrapped up in the landscape around them. They assumed that white people would have those responsibilities and worldview too and would have to return to their own land to look after it (2012, p. 85).

Mob is an identifying term that refers to a nation, clan or language group that we belong to.

An *Elder* is not necessarily an older person, rather a Knowledge Holder respected in their family or community for holding lore and/or knowledge. Within Indigenous cultures – and this writing – respect is given to Elders, and as a mark of this respect, they are addressed as *Aunt* and *Uncle*, with their titles capitalised. Similarly, if referring to Ancestors, the term *Old People* may be used; it is respectfully capitalised to ensure there is no confusion with the words used in everyday vernacular. I likewise capitalise *Knowledge Holders* to recognise their important roles within our communities as those who are custodians of particular Law, knowledges or stories. When referring to *Ancestors* I am referring to those from whom I am descended, but also the respected, revered, creative beings who may be involved in Dreaming stories. This being said, as the Dreaming itself, they are not from the past; rather, they are ever-present and continue to walk among and guide us.

I use *Dreaming* (capital D) to describe the unceasing action of creation which is ever-present now as well as in the past. It is the dynamic interaction between worlds, the seen and unseen, the physical and spiritual. It is the force that gave birth to all we know and it is the Dreaming that allows Aboriginal peoples to innovate and adapt (Graham 2008; Martin-Booran Mirraboopa 2003; Watson 1997; Yunkaporta 2009)[15] [16] [17] [18]. While there are many words in our languages to describe the Dreaming (for instance, in Dharug the word for Dreaming is Gunyalungalung, and Yolŋu people call it Wangarr), there is no direct

[15] Mary Graham is a Kombu-merri person and is also affiliated with the Waka Waka group through her mother.

[16] Karen Martin-Booran Mirraboopa is a Noonuccal woman from North Stradbroke Island (south east Queensland) with Bidjara ancestry (central Queensland).

[17] Irene Watson belongs to the Tanganekald and Meintangk Boandik First Nations Peoples, of the Coorong and the south-east of South Australia.

[18] Tyson Yunkaporta belongs to the Apalech clan (west cape) with ties in the south; his born-country is Melbourne and he has adoptive and community/cultural ties all over, from Western NSW to Perth.

translation in English. The term has been adopted to describe the creation of the world and human beings, and is often referred to in relation to spirituality and stories. Through Country, our spirituality, identity and heritage originated during the Dreaming. Silas Roberts[19] says about the Dreaming,

> Aboriginals have a special connection with everything that is natural. Aboriginals see themselves as part of nature. We see all things natural as part of us. All things on Earth we see as part human. This is told through the ideas of [D]reaming. By [D]reaming we mean the belief that long ago these creatures started human society. These creatures, these great creatures, are just as much alive today as they were in the beginning. They are everlasting and will never die. They are always part of the land and nature, as we are (Neidjie, Davis & Fox 1985, p. 13)[20].

I prefer 'Dreaming' over Dreamtime as it reflects the ever-presence of the Dreaming.

While I use the term *spiritual* in this research, I am not referring to a religious idea, rather 'an appreciation of everything that is inherent of Country, a connecting energy that provides oneness of being' (McKnight 2015, pp. 1-2).

Law (capital L) refers to the laws, customs and protocols of the land set out in the Dreaming as a set of rules or guidelines for every entity to follow. These have been passed to us through the land and Ancestors from the time Country came into being; they are our identity. According to Timmy Djawa Burarrwanga[21], we carry Law in our blood and hearts, and it tells us the significance of sacredness and spirituality in ceremony (Burarrwanga recorded by Churchill 2016). Should I use *law* (small l) I am referring to the imported laws imposed on the land by those who came from Europe. *Lore* is used when referring to knowledge or tradition passed from generation to generation through story, song and other performative expressions.

[19] Silas Roberts is a Yolŋu Elder.

[20] Bill Neidjie is a Gagudju Elder from Kakadu in the Northern Territory.

[21] Timmy Djawa Burarrwanga is from the Gumatj clan in north-eastern Arnhem Land.

Indigenous scholars often use the plural of words such as *knowledges*, *learnings*, *knowings* or *teachings* to describe Indigenous forms of these words. This is because we recognise that there are multiple Indigenous cultures and hence knowledge systems in Australia, so reflect this in our language.

Within this research a series of *narratives* are told; some personal to me or others, some are family *stories*, others are collective stories shared freely and widely and are not attributable to a single source. Where possible I have quoted a published source as a reference; however, for some, if I do not know of a published source, I acknowledge that this remains a shared collective story and indicate those who shared it with me.

When transcribing *yarns* or conversations, where possible *Aboriginal English* has been maintained without concern for 'correct' English, with a translation should that be required. Aboriginal English is a blend of English words and Indigenous words or slang.

I am aware spellings and word meanings can differ within and between communities. Place, language and group names (and other words) originated from an oral tradition with multiple dialects. Boundaries based on misinformed colonial mapping and historical conflicts can be highly contested concerns for some communities. As well, colonisers have not always well understood Aboriginal ways of forming words, and there are often many ways of saying and spelling them. I acknowledge this as a contested space, yet it is not the role of this writing to address their individual contestations. In Aboriginal knowledge systems there are many ways of knowing, many truths and diverse perspectives. Likewise, there are many truths about places containing diversity in the knowledges, stories, histories and understandings of that place. Historically spaces were more shared than is currently understood, with different groups holding different custodial and cultural responsibilities towards them. Therefore, divergent knowledge systems are all respected and acknowledged in this document. I use the spelling and names as preferred by either those whose identity I am referring to, or the people with whom I work and have key relationships with. I have no intention of excluding others, rather of acknowledging my own personal worldview.

I prefer to use the word *Yuin* or *Budawang* to describe my own personal relationship with my Country, my people, my heritage. I also use the word *Koori*, used by Aboriginal people from New South Wales. Regardless of the colour of my skin I refer to myself as a *Blackfella*, and, as is the practice in my mob, I call non-Indigenous people *whitefellas*. I write as a Yuin person while acknowledging my complex identity. I speak from a first-person perspective to ensure my voice is included in the themes covered in the discussion, and therefore come from a point of subjectivity as my ways of speaking are shaped by my experiences. I include myself in the discourse when referring to Aboriginal people, or (should I be referring to them) my family and kin, as '*we'* and '*us'* or '*our'*. I do this to ensure I am accountable for my words, and so readers know a Koori woman is the author of the text. In identifying the language I use, I am identifying myself to the reader.

PREFACE: CALLING UP THE WIND

CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS AND SPATIALITIES

Time was not known or recorded in the same way as it is now; however, an event occurred in the year identified by the Gregorian calendar system as 1770 that changed things indelibly for First Peoples:

> Saturday, 21st. Winds Southerly, a Gentle breeze, and Clear weather, with which we coasted along shore to the Northward. In the P.M. we saw the smoke of fire in several places; a Certain sign that the Country is inhabited … At 6, we were abreast of a pretty high Mountain laying near the Shore, which, on account of its figure, I named Mount Dromedary (Latitude 36 degrees 18 minutes South, Longitude 209 degrees 55 minutes West). The shore under the foot of the Mountain forms a point, which I have named Cape Dromedary, over which is a peaked hillock (Cook 1770, chapter 8, para 3).[1]

Captain James Cook arrived in the *Endeavour* off the coast of Yuin Country on Friday 20 April 1770 and stayed near what is currently Narooma for several days, recording observations of the land, waters, winds and people.

The Yuin people of the South Coast of New South Wales custodially owned, cared for and inhabited this Country. Their oral memory reveals a different understanding of events. They knew something was coming; smoke signals and messages had arrived from people to the south cautioning them to be prepared.

> The Old People down in Yuin Country were up on their sacred mountain, Gulaga, learning the stories and teachings of their Country from their Elders. As they were looking out to sea, to gadhu[2], they noticed this big white thing coming up from the south, a big white bird. The mob were really concerned because they noticed smoke signals coming from the south and knew that there was something dangerous out there. They heard about these big prehistoric pelicans in their Dreaming stories but had

[1] In all quotes, capitalisations, italics, spelling and grammar are as per the original unless otherwise indicated. [sic] is only used to indicate problematic language.

[2] Gadhu means sea in Dharumba.

> not seen a big white bird on the ocean like this for a long time. Their Elders had told them that these pelicans would scoop them up in their beaks, chew them up and spit them out, and of course there was a lot of fear. They did not want to be swallowed and regurgitated. So they got the Garadyigan[3], the clever fellows, and Elders to have a look. The Garadyigan decided they would call up the wind to send the prehistoric pelican on up the coast. So they called up Koorah Koo-rie[4], the wind spirit, who blew up a big southwester. This wind was at such a rate of knots that the big pelican started to go further and further out to sea. The mob were relieved at this point as the bird continued up the coast northward. Inevitably the big white pelican did land at what is now called Port Botany, the lands of the Gweagal people. Of course I am talking about old Jimmy Cook on board the *Endeavour*. Our Old People did not know that what was going to follow was much worse than what the prehistoric bird might have brought. With the invasion by the British our people did inevitably end up being swallowed, suppressed and regurgitated. As did their lands (Yarn with D Bannon-Harrison 2015 on 19 April).[5]

Gulaga is a female Dreaming place, an initiation and teaching place from time immemorial, a sacred place for women's business. The mountain top is ringed by extraordinary tall standing stones called guardians, some male, some female, whose presence sustains the mountain's spiritual integrity (Yarn with D Bannon-Harrison 2015 on 19 April; Rose 1998). It was on Gulaga that the Yuin people found the solace to face that of which they were aware via their long tradition of passing stories and histories from one generation to the next, the destructive white sea bird.

Cook arrogantly renamed Gulaga 'Mount Dromedary' as he thought the mountain looked like a camel. That change of name was the first of many changes wrought upon Yuin people. 'In those days the British sailed along our coast and claimed it as though we did not exist. Cook's maps were very good, but they did not show our names for places. He didn't ask us' (cited in *View from the Mountain*, an unpublished manuscript in the Umbarra Cultural Centre, Maynard 2014, p. 16)[6].

According to Yuin people, Cook discovered neither our mountain, nor us.

[3] Garadyigan means clever man in D'harawal and Dharug.

[4] Koorah Koo-rie is the name of a wind spirit in Yuin Country.

[5] This story, shared with permission, by Dwayne Naja Bannon-Harrison (Yuin/Gunai man with Watchabolic and Yorta-Yorta kinship connections), was originally told by Uncle Warren Foster (a Djiringanj Elder from Wallaga Lake).

[6] John Maynard is from the Worimi People of Port Stephens.

CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE GROUND

INTRODUCTION

First contact between Captain James Cook and Aboriginal people, the Gweagal clan, came 10 days after leaving Yuin waters, when they arrived at Botany Bay. During this 'contact' – for it was not a meeting – Cook and his men were opposed by Gweagal people. Cook's men fired their muskets and wounded two of the first Aboriginal people they encountered, stole valuable hunting spears and, 'in their patronising way, left beads with children staring at them from the humpies' (McMullen 2014, p. 6). They later found the beads discarded in the huts and surmised that they must have been frightened to take them – never considering that they held no value to the Gweagal people – a not-so-subtle metaphor for how this relationship started and unfortunately continues to this day.

Eighteen years later, in 1788, Governor Arthur Phillip returned with the 11 ships of the First Fleet to start a penal colony. Cora Gooseberry[1] told colonist George French Angas of her father's reaction to the arrival of the First Fleet. Angas reported: 'On the approach of the vessels, the natives [sic], who had never seen a ship before, imagining them to be huge sea-monsters, were so terrified that they ran into the bush, and did not stop to look back until they reached a place now called Liverpool, distant about twenty miles, where they hid themselves in trees!' (Smith 2006, p. 21). A report printed in London in 1789 by an anonymous officer likewise describes the encounter: 'The natives [sic] alarmed, ran along the beach in seeming great terror, and made much confused noise; they seemed very frightened, so much that they took their canoes out of the water upon their backs and ran off with them into the country, together with their fishing tackle and children' (Unknown Officer 1789).

Finding the soil at Botany Bay to be infertile and sandy, rendering it unsuitable for farming, Phillip decided to relocate the colony to Port Jackson's deep well-protected harbour with a supply of fresh water from the Tank Stream at Farm Cove. When the 11 enormous terrifying Dreaming birds floated into the harbour, Gadigal people on the shore pointed their spears at them, shouting, *'Wara wara! Wara*

[1] Cora Gooseberry, of the Murro-ore-dial (Pathway Place) clan, south of Port Jackson, was the daughter of Moorooboora, who the Sydney suburb Maroubra was named after (K V Smith 2005).

wara!' ('Be gone, go far away!')[2] (Yarn with G Simms 2018 on 10 January)[3]. However, the birds stayed, and in fact symbolically have never left. In effect, those enormous white birds did scoop up the First Peoples, chewed them up and spat them out.

Positioning the Ground

The two stories above outline parallel perspectives of the same event. Two narratives, two histories, two cross-cultural encounters, two spatialities, which interact in complex and often contradictory ways. This thesis is positioned within the interstitial spaces of these stories and requires a glance backwards in order to turn forwards. It is not a historical piece of research. Instead it explores from an Indigenous – and specifically Yuin woman's – perspective how Aboriginal people know, love, narrate, dream and contest our spaces. Situated in the discipline of spatial design, it considers these questions as part of a practice. It also tells the story of my family, for, as argued by Shawn Wilson[4], Indigenous researchers and authors (and, it could be argued, designers) have the responsibility to 'place themselves and their work firmly in a relational context'. He continues, 'We cannot be separated from our work, nor should our writing be separated from ourselves (i.e., we must write in the first person rather than the third). Our own relationships with our environment, families, ancestors, ideas, and the cosmos around us shape who we are and how we will conduct our research' (2007, p. 194). Accordingly, my relationships with others, culture, practice and Country – in my own voice – are placed forefront in this writing.

Researcher

The protocol when introducing oneself to other Indigenous people is to provide information about one's cultural, familial and, in some sense, spatial heritage in order to create social, cultural and political connections[5]. I follow this protocol when introducing myself. I was born on Gadigal lands, brought up in the Bundjalung and Awabakal areas with ancestral roots in the Budawang clan of the Yuin peoples. We

[2] Wara wara means 'go far away' in the Dharug language.

[3] Uncle Greg Simms descends from the Gundungurra (water dragon lizard people) of the Blue Mountains and the Gadigal (whale people) of the Dharug nation, as well the Budawang (beach plover people) of the Yuin nation.

[4] Shawn Wilson is Opaskwayak Cree from northern Manitoba, Canada.

[5] This protocol is well known and recognised within the Indigenous community. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2000) uses this protocol in her book. I follow her lead.

are the beach plover and Umbarra[6] Pacific black duck people. My family are the Golden Browns, originally from the South Coast of New South Wales. When it became impossible to stay on our traditional lands, my Ancestors relocated to Browns Crossing, named after my family, in Eungai near Kempsey, in between Gumbaynggirr and Dunghutti Countrys. I am a saltwater woman with connections to coastal regions of New South Wales. I currently live back in Gadigal Country, which most people know as Sydney. Songlines exist up and down the New South Wales coast, connecting the lands and Countrys, the peoples and stories, my people and my stories.

Yuin Country extends approximately from the escarpment of Wollongong[7] in the north to Mallacoota in the south, into the Pacific Ocean in the east and west to the Southern Highlands. It includes coastal areas, rivers and mountains, crossing the border from New South Wales into Victoria. The tribal area of the Budawang people is from Conjola in the north, Lake George in the west to the Moruya River in the south. It is believed that the Budawang tribe were the people sighted by Captain Cook on 22 April 1770, on Point Upright (still known by this name), in Murramarang National Park:

> In the P.M. had a Gentle breeze at South by West with which we steer'd along shore North by East and North-North-East at the distance of about 3 Leagues. Saw the smoke of fire in several places near the Sea beach. At 5, we were abreast of a point of land which, on account of its perpendicular Clifts, I call'd Point Upright; Latitude 35 degrees 35 minutes South; it bore from us due West, distant 2 Leagues, and in this Situation had 31 fathoms, Sandy bottom … After this we steer'd along shore North-North-East, having a Gentle breeze at South-West, and were so near the Shore as to distinguish several people upon the Sea beach. They appeared to be of a very dark or black Colour; but whether this was the real Colour of their skins or the Cloathes they might have on I know not (Cook 1770, chapter 8, para 4).

[6] Umbarra, or wambaara, is the word for black duck in Dhurga and other South Coast languages.

[7] Some Yuin people say our Country extends north into Sydney to the southern part of Botany Bay. I do not contest their understandings, rather my Elders describe it as above. However, considering our wider familial connections and the movement of Ancestors and kin it is clear there are relationships with places in the Sydney area.

Cook renamed another sacred Yuin mountain, Didthul, as ‘Pigeon House Mountain’; his renaming an attempted erasure which still affects our special places. My Elders tell me this is a sacred mountain for the Budawang people.

For as far back as we can see in our family tree and within our memory, recordings that continue to be passed on orally, our Aboriginal heritage has come through our matriarchal lineage. Many of our traditions and stories have been carried through the women of the family, and continue to be. Members of our extended family are part of the South Coast People claim entered on the Register of Native Title Claims; mutual Ancestors are recognised apical Ancestors, that is, people who were living on the land when whitefellas arrived.

As reflected in my name, I am also of European heritage, predominantly French (Danièle) and Czech (Hromek). My paternal grandfather, Oldrich Hromek, was born and raised in Račice; he used to say that if you drew a line on a map of Europe from east to west, and another north to south the two lines would cross outside his front door. After surviving World War II, in 1945 he ‘escaped’ from the Soviet ‘liberation’ of then Czechoslovakia to become a stateless refugee when the Iron Curtain separated the country from western Europe. He and a mate hid during the day and walked overnight to Vienna to seek refuge from the Russians. As a refugee he went to Paris, where he met my grandmother while working for Renault. My grandmother, Christiane Brossier, was born in Tours in the Loire Valley (where Sauvignon Blanc comes from). She was kicked out of home in her early teens, though she never really told us why, and ended up in Paris (K Hromek 2019, pers. comm., 8 January).

My grandparents married in Paris and told stories of spending their wedding night lost in the sewers of Paris. They thought they could ‘get rich by picking up the gold that was obviously lying around in Australia and then the United States of America’ (K Hromek 2019, pers. comm., 8 January). They had no money so hitchhiked overland across Europe and the Middle East to Asia. They eventually made it to Vietnam, which had been colonised by the French. The French were losing a war with the Viet Min so because my grandmother was French they were evacuated to Singapore where they caught a freighter to Carnarvon in Western Australia. From there they hitchhiked to Perth and across the Nullarbor Plain, which was just a dirt track through the desert at that time, to Sydney, where my father, Karel

Hromek, was born. There was a housing shortage in Sydney at that point, so they had to share a house in Stanmore, a poorer inner-city suburb popular with European migrants. It was a remarkable and brave journey and without a doubt our family are strongly impacted by their courage, work ethic, style and, I would imagine, their scars, having both lived through the Second World War.

My grandfather eventually got a job in the Snowy Mountains and they moved into a married workers camp at Kenny's Nob above Cooma, the highest town in Australia, where they stayed for a few years helping to build the Snowy Mountain Hydro-Electric Scheme. My grandmother fell pregnant with my aunt, Dominique Hromek, and it was her birth that finally cancelled their American dream. My grandfather was a fantastic (sometimes fantastical!) storyteller, so even though none of us were born in Europe, we all feel connections to it through his stories. My grandmother was an extremely skilled craftswoman and maker, who encouraged and inspired my creative abilities. My father says he certainly knew they were from 'somewhere else'; for instance, he could not speak English when he first went to school. Even when I came along some years later, I knew that part of our heritage originated a long way away.

My parents met at university, the first from both sides of the family to attend higher education institutions. After marrying, and with me on the way, they set off to travel via Asia to Europe. I was nearly born (or lost) twice on their travels until my French grandmaman, who happened to be in Paris at the same time, convinced my parents to return to Sydney for my birth. Six months later, we moved to Clunes, between Byron Bay and Lismore, then to Mullumbimby, where I spent many of my formative years and during which time my siblings, Siân and Michael, were born. When I was a child my parents were, quite honestly, roaring hippies. However, my father went on to become a medical doctor and my mother an educational psychologist.

My familial experiences between my divergent cultural heritages are vastly different, as are the ways I interact, understand and speak when relating to the two sides[8]. My identity lies and shifts somewhere

[8] This is known as code-switching, in which the speaker alternates between two or more languages or varieties of language. In cultural terms we might say we 'walk in two worlds', as is mentioned in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* (Referendum Council 2017).

in the interstitial space between the two. As part of the gift of their constructed resilience (from both sides), my cross-cultural family structures and values provided me with the ability to walk in two worlds. This mix of cultures places me well to discuss the spatial encounters between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, Blackfella and whitefella. I have learned to exist comfortably within the discomfort of my multiple cultural reference points, and my research asks the reader to do the same. While in this writing it may appear I have considered only one part of my ancestry, this is not the case. As Martin Nakata[9] describes, within me '[t]here is no strict Indigenous and non-Indigenous separation, but overlays, intersections, multiplicities and contested meanings' (2012, p. 104). However, the way I am positioned within my family has given me the capacity to work interstitially between cultures and disciplines. I write from a combined and interwoven place that acknowledges my heritages, and utilises mind, heart and spirit as a means of empowering our histories, stories and current reality.

Chasing my European heritage in my early 20s, I went to Europe. After 12 years living abroad working in fashion, styling, photography and creative project management, I returned to Sydney to complete an undergraduate degree in Interior and Spatial Design with a Performance major at the University of Technology Sydney. In my practice, I am a spatial designer, speculative designer and artist, fusing design elements with installations and sculptural form. Spatial design sits between the disciplines of architecture, interior design, urban design and public art. It uses the language of these disciplines to convey design concepts and intentions, which may cross a variety of scales from detailed designs to larger scale strategies. It concerns the design of human environments; it deliberates how people are affected by the spaces they inhabit and in turn designs improvements to these environments. Spatial enquiry considers how people move, interact and perform – or choreograph – in and with space, not only in spaces of performance, but also in space conceived more conceptually and broadly. Spatial designers study the flows across both interior and exterior environments, and rethink how the built environment is shared, often in relation to an understanding of place or place identity. They consider the relationships between spaces and the world to which they are connected. From a cultural perspective, my work often considers the urban Aboriginal condition while remaining grounded in

[9] Martin Nakata is a Torres Strait Islander.

Country. Three creative 'non-traditional research output' (NTRO) projects I worked on throughout the study period are included in the Appendices[10].

A reader might question why I, a Yuin woman, need to come to understand and acknowledge Indigenous space and my place within it. As an Aboriginal woman from the Yuin nation, I do not infer that I speak for all Aboriginal peoples; all our experiences are unique and varied. I am one voice speaking as a survivor of terra nullius. As for many First Peoples, the ravages of colonisation left my Aboriginal family displaced, placeless and culturally bereft. While Aboriginality was present, our identities became obscured. More recently, pride has taken the place of shame and familial narratives restored. Fortunately, oral traditions remained firm within our family and unearthing our stories has been more straightforward for us than others. In effect, through both this written and practical work I have had the opportunity know myself, my identity and space.

Context

Geographically, cartographically and topographically, First Peoples and Europeans have always understood the land in different ways. The ground has been measured, perceived, owned and read differently; for the colonisers, the land they called Australia was strange and in need of taming. This started with the brazen act of changing the original names of the land, and on 22 August 1770 the planting of not only a flag on Possession Island on the tip of Cape York, which the Kaurareg people call Bedanug, but also foreign laws, ways of knowing and living and of course language.

This research is situated in this familiar historical context that started with Captain James Cook's voyage up the east coast of now Australia. What is lesser known – at least in the dominant societal and spatial paradigms – are the parallel experiences for First Peoples. The aim of this research is not to revisit this familiar history, which begins around 250 years ago. Nor is it to tell the other 'missing' side of the account, as it is neither my right nor my intention to speak for all First Peoples. However, I do intend to challenge the chronology of this half-story by telling my own family story and discussing ageless spatial paradigms. I do this as a means of understanding one narrative, one familial journey, which was in parts scrambled and in other parts concealed but is also more ancient than I have words to describe. In doing

[10] Appendices 1. Weaving Intentions, 2. Winyanboga Yurringa and 3. Covered By Concrete.

so, this research subverts the perceived foundational events of 'Australia'. Considering the existing inequity – and without a desire to add to it – key points relevant to the European story are outlined here.

Cook's journey had been commissioned in 1768 by the Royal Society to map the transit of Venus over the sun in order to ascertain the distance of the earth from the sun. Accompanied by botanist Sir Joseph Banks on board the *Endeavour*, Cook set sail on 30 June of that same year for Tahiti from where they would observe the astronomical event. A greater objective was also conferred, that being to seek the legendary 'Great Southern Land' that had long been suspected and, if found, to explore and map its coast. The president of the Royal Society, James Douglas, knew that Cook's expedition was likely to encounter:

> … 'natives of the several Lands where the Ship may touch'. He instructed Cook to 'exercise the utmost patience and forbearance' when he met them. In particular, he warned Cook not to attempt the conquest of their land, because any such attempt would be unlawful. 'They are the natural, and in the strictest sense of the word, the legal possessors of the several Regions they inhabit,' Douglas reasoned. 'No European Nation has a right to occupy any part of their country, or settle among them without their voluntary consent. Conquest over such people can give no just title' (Banner 2007, p. 14).

Cook was carrying additional secret orders by the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain that countermanded Douglas's direction. They contained directives with regards to his search for *Terra Australis Incognita*:

> You are likewise to observe the Genius, Temper, Disposition and Number of the Natives, if there be any and endeavour by all proper means to cultivate a Friendship and Alliance with them … You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take Possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain: Or: if you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty by setting up Proper Marks and Inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors (Museum of Australian Democracy 2011).

With the objective of imperial colonisation steadfastly attached to the *Endeavour's* helm, success in Cook's search was imperative, irrespective of what he would find. By this time, the British were excellent

and well organised colonisers, having established an empire that held dominion over the British Isles, much of North America, India, parts of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as some of Asia and Oceania. While Cook's orders relating to this voyage may have been secret, it seems unlikely they were surprising. After observing the transit, Cook set his course westwards where he sighted the east coast of Australia. He travelled north up the coast, recording what he saw, including observations of the Indigenous peoples along the coastline. According to his journal entry of 6 May, 'the Natives [sic] do not appear to be numerous, neither do they seem to live in large bodies, but dispers'd in small parties along by the Water side' (Cook 1770, chapter 8, para 18). Banks further contributed to these observations, declaring:

> This immense tract of Land, the largest known which does not bear the name of a continent, as it is considerably larger than all Europe, is thinly inhabited even to admiration, at least that part of it that we saw: we never but once saw so many as thirty Indians [sic] together and that was a family, Men women and children, assembled upon a rock to see the ship pass by … it might be concluded that there were greater numbers than we saw, but their houses and sheds in the woods which we never faild to find convincd us of the smallness of their parties. We saw indeed only the sea coast: what the immense tract of inland countrey may produce is to us totaly unknown: we may have liberty to conjecture however that they are totaly uninhabited. The Sea has I beleive been universaly found to be the cheif source of supplys to Indians ignorant of the arts of cultivation: the wild produce of the Land alone seems scarce able to support them at all seasons, at least I do not remember to have read of any inland nation who did not cultivate the ground more or less … But should a people live inland who supported themselves by cultivation these inhabitants of the sea coast must certainly have learn'd to imitate them in some degree at least, otherwise their reason must be supposd to hold a rank little superior to that of monkies (Banks 2005, August 1770, para 16).

As a result of the recordings of a single journey up the east coast, in 1783 James Maria Matra, a midshipman on the voyage, proposed the establishment of a colonial settlement. More concerned with 'weakening the mother country by opening a channel for emigration' (Banner 2007, p. 24) than impacting the Indigenous populations, Matra (1783) mentioned only briefly in his five-page proposal his belief that the land was sparsely populated. Banks endorsed Matra's recommendation, confirming that obstruction by the few 'natives' was unlikely, and he believed 'they would speedily abandon the Country to the New

Comers' (Standfield 2010, p. 126). Lord Sydney took Matra's proposal to the Treasury and Admiralty, who used the escalating myth of an empty land to justify a colonial settlement there.

Of course we know how the story goes from here, right? In 1788, Phillip landed in Gweagal Country, ignoring the Laws of the land, and those of the Gweagal people. He came uninvited, disregarded protocol and imposed imported laws, culture, people, weaponry and disease. He also imposed on space.

Investigation

I have designed a hybrid interstitial (non-traditional) structure for this thesis for a number of reasons. First, it is a form of resistance. It is an act of empowerment to choose for myself and those (my co-authors/co-designers) who have shared with me the way this knowledge would be ordered, cited and acknowledged. Second, as a Yuin woman and also as a designer and a weaver, following usual academic practice would honour neither my heritage (which has gifted me with divergent ways of thinking), my practice nor even my discipline (which has trained me to use design thinking to find creative methods to solve problems). This means working in non-linear, iterative ways and challenging prior assumptions. While my thesis fulfils academic requirements, it also challenges them and asks questions of how, in actuality, Indigenous voices and worldviews can be privileged in a thesis structure. As such, there are two 'literature reviews'. The first, Chapter 3, contains only Indigenous voices describing how we have always known and cared for our spaces and the relationality that exists between all entities in Country. This review contains not only literature but also oral recordings, some of which were shared with me. Indigenous ways of recording knowledges are not often through written means; rather, they are spoken, sung, practised and performed. To respect our knowledge ways, and specifically those of my family and the wider networks who shared with me, I was morally and ethically required to include recordings in this first review chapter. In doing so, I have woven together many voices and their knowledges, some of which are academically non-traditional sources. While this chapter is therefore not a traditional literature review, it is a foundation on which the rest of the thesis stands, and acknowledges those First Peoples whose generous sharing enabled me to write this thesis as being foundational to it. The third and final reason for the non-traditional structure is that our voices, Indigenous voices, were here first and are best able to know our spaces in Country. As a means of honouring my methodological

process of privileging Indigenous voices, it is therefore imperative that they are heard first. Their words must form the basis for knowing our spaces, before colonial forces, reviewed in Chapter 4, dishonoured them. It is my hope that by providing space for their voices to shout, the other voices that are often enabled to overwhelm them are drowned out. In doing so our voices always were and always will be.

My investigation is situated in a qualitative research paradigm, 'an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem' (Creswell 2014, p. 4). Within a qualitative approach there are a number of dominant (western) research worldviews; Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Creswell (2014) offer descriptions of the differences between these worldviews, however the common thread that runs through them all is that knowledge is individual in nature (Wilson 2008). While critical and constructivist theoretical frameworks sit most closely with the research, the research itself adheres to neither. Instead, it is placed firmly within an Indigenous theoretical framework that follows an ontology (a belief in the nature of reality), epistemology (how one thinks about that reality), axiology (a set of morals or ethics) and methodology (how an individual's ways of thinking are used to gain more knowledge about their reality) that is Indigenous (Moreton-Robinson & Walter 2009; Rigney 2006)[11] [12].

In Indigenous research theories, knowledge is understood as belonging to the cosmos of which we are a part, and researchers are only interpreters and conduits of this knowledge (Wilson 2008). I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me, not only my blood Ancestors, but also narrators, makers, Knowledge Holders and doers. In my role as an Indigenous researcher, I am a conduit for this knowledge, not a creator or owner of it. It is passed to me by Country and Ancestors to hold as temporary custodian. This, lamentably, contradicts the demands of the academy in which I must create 'new knowledge' and become an 'expert' in my field. I sit uncomfortably between the demands of two spaces, both representing the institute and being the *other*. Lester-Irabinna Rigney indicates that an Indigenist research approach is informed by three fundamental and interrelated principles, those being resistance, political integrity and privileging Indigenous voices. Rigney defines Indigenist research as 'research by

[11] Aileen Moreton-Robinson is a Geonpul woman from Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island), Quandamooka First Nation (Moreton Bay) in Queensland.

[12] Maggie Walter is a member of the Palawa Briggs/Johnson Tasmanian Aboriginal family descended from the Pairrebenne people of Tebrakunna Country, North Eastern Tasmania.

Indigenous Australians whose primary informants are Indigenous Australians and whose goals are to serve and inform the Indigenous struggle for self-determination' (1999, p. 367). I consider this research to reflect this objective, and in my role as the researcher I am responsible to my community rather than the academy.

In this writing I, as author, include my voice in the discussion as a means to acknowledge my position not only as part of a community but as a subjective researcher. The subjectivity of a researcher involves their identity, relationships, experiences and emotions, none of which are straightforward (Walshaw 2008). In qualitative research, the researchers themselves and their personal narratives have become a source of reflection and re-examination which is written about, challenged and even celebrated. The narratives of researchers offer uniquely privileged data of the world grounded in social contexts and biographical experiences (Coffey 2002). Relaying the narratives in this thesis, many of which originate with my own family and the outcomes from my own practice, has ensured the interweaving of my authorial voice.

Focus

The research explores Indigenous understandings, notions and conceptualisations of space. It also privileges Indigenous voices (Rigney 2006) in the telling of stories, ideas and experiences regarding space. It considers how Indigenous people interpret and know their spaces and Country, which is boundless. It asks how First Peoples experience, use, narrate, sense, sing and dream their spaces.

This research is located in the nascent area of 'Indigenous space', specifically Aboriginal space in Australia. With at least 500 Indigenous nations in Australia and bearing in mind the distinct spaces that relate to them, it is not possible in the confines of this project to examine all. This research is therefore predominantly centred in the saltwater (eastern) parts of New South Wales from which my relationships and connections to Country emerge, although sources from outside of these bounds are also used.

It is clear that questions regarding Indigenous space – because they encompass Indigenous relationships to and experiences of Country and land – must be answered by Indigenous people (see

Foley 2003; Heiss 2002; Martin-Booran Mirraboopa 2003)[13]. Considering Indigenous knowledges are largely held by Knowledge Holders and passed orally, much of the knowledge with regards to Indigenous space in relationship to culture and Country has not been written down in depth. As such, key Indigenous spatial thinkers, including Elders, Knowledge Holders, academics, architects and designers, and people who work on Country from within my extended familial and kin networks, have contributed to this discussion regarding their perceptions and experiences of space. At times and in a traditional academic sense, these sources would not be considered appropriate; however, from a community perspective – and specifically from a Yuin woman's cultural reference point – they are authorities in the knowledges they hold.

In the discussion about land and space as it relates to colonisation and re-colonisation, this research investigates the Aboriginal notion of land becoming 'sick' or traumatised through mismanagement of fragile ground and the trauma caused to peoples. It considers the Indigenous experience of occupation, dispossession and repossession, and brings to light people who in the past may not have been heard or seen, both in an urban and rural context. In doing so, it reformulates the ground towards restoring Aboriginal cultures that in colonised spaces have been mislaid, misappropriated and denied.

What this research explicitly does not seek to do is compare, contrast or examine Indigenous space in relation to western or European ideas or theories about space. Ample research has been undertaken since the time of the Greeks into theorisations and ways of thinking about 'western space'[14] and there is no need to contribute further to that body of work here. Indigenous space does not contest western space, as 'these understandings of place [and space], often framed in terms of land, derive from entirely different epistemological and cosmological foundations and, thus, cannot be easily combined or absorbed into western argumentations. They come from, and go to, a different place' (Tuck & McKenzie

[13] Dennis Foley identifies as a Koori; his matrilineal connection is Gai-mariagal of the Guringah language group, and his father is a descendant of the Capertee/Turon River people of the Wiradjuri.

[14] Coming from the majority spatial paradigm, their privilege ensures those in the predominant culture do not have the need to call it 'western space', however it is my sense this is largely what they are examining. Linda Tuhiwai Smith discusses this in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies.* For instance, in relation to research she says, 'Research "through imperial eyes" describes an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only idea possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings' (2012, p. 58).

2015, p. 11). Critiquing other spatial theories or justifying this research in relation to them would only (re)establish recognition of their jurisdiction over Indigenous space, which is disrespectful towards Country. That is not the aim of this research; western theories about space come from a different set of knowledges and experiences, so it is not appropriate to compare them. Importantly, this research speaks to the Indigenous peoples it engages with in the hope of making space part of the conversation that 'closes the gap' of the mainstream indifference towards Indigenous lands and our connection to Country. My project therefore differs from and may be controversial when compared to the tendency to engage in such comparative writings and mappings, which to a certain degree perpetrate inequalities.

As I am a spatial designer, this thesis is positioned in the discipline of design. However, I have been challenged to find authors within the design field who write on 'Indigenous space'. Therefore, I have been required to search outside my discipline. Academics and writers in anthropology, history and the social science disciplines speak of the Indigenous relationship with landscape, ground, the land, architecture and Country. References to Indigenous space can be found in works on the topics of colonisation, invasion and dispossession or in the Indigenous responses to these events (McGrath 1995; Reynolds 1989; Smith 2012). Indigenous invisibility and silencing in history have been widely discussed (Goodall 1996; Reynolds 1989), with some observations regarding the resulting placelessness of Indigenous peoples (Havemann 2005). There are anthropological and architectural comments on Indigenous uses of space, for instance their 'spatial behaviour' (Berndt & Berndt 1988; Rapoport 1975), construction of inhabitations (Go-Sam 2008; Memmott 2002)[15] and land management (French 2013; Gammage 2012; Pascoe 2014). Theories of place and belonging (Cresswell 2004; hooks 2009; Massey 1994; Rose 2000; Tuck & McKenzie 2015) and descriptions of the Indigenous experience of Country also exist (Rose 2003; Sutton 1995).

The question of why the research area of Indigenous space is so little covered is answered when numbers are considered; In 2016, 3.3 per cent of the population in Australia (798,400 people) identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018). Yet according

[15] Carroll Go-Sam is a Dyirbal woman from north Queensland. Her traditional Country is on the Atherton Tablelands and goes down to the Tully River and right into the sea.

to Page[16], Trudgett[17] and Sullivan[18] (2017, p. 37) only 0.48 per cent of all doctorate-by-research completions are by Indigenous peoples, which means that by 2015 approximately 397 Indigenous people in Australia had doctoral qualifications across all disciplines. Currently there are no national industry organisations specifically for Indigenous designers and so it is difficult to estimate the number of Indigenous people educated or working in spatial disciplines. However, the Indigenous spatial/architectural community is small and practitioners know each other. Equating for 0.002 per cent of the population, there are around 25 Indigenous people working in spatial disciplines including architecture, landscape and interior design. Most are practicing designers or architects rather than working in academia. Based on these numbers and the paucity of Indigenous researchers with postgraduate qualifications, it is therefore no surprise that there are few Indigenous designers undertaking research in a spatial field. Indigenous spatial questions in Australia are consequently largely under-investigated. My research is therefore foundational in the field of 'Indigenous space', and those parts of it which others might find speculative are necessary in order for me to help develop a field.

On this basis, it is somewhat inevitable that non-Indigenous commentators have filled the space relating to Indigenous research. It can be difficult to know whether the boundaries and ethical questions in relation to non-Indigenous researchers writing on Indigenous matters, as critiqued by Indigenous authors such as Anita Heiss (2002) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), have been overstepped. Examples of this include the negative representation of Aboriginal peoples in literature, the enabling of white careers through silencing of Indigenous voices, as well as tokenism, exploitation and appropriation. Questions remain as to whether the cultural filters, biases and assumptions of these authors have shaped the conclusions of their research. With the pursuit of 'being correct' or 'creating original knowledge' taking priority, the consequences of their arguments for First Peoples may be missed by white academics. As a result of their research, non-Indigenous commentators benefit from the gifts of the knowledges they engage with by becoming an 'expert' in a 'field'. This tendency of western academia to silo and categorise knowledge rather than consider it holistically, in actual fact, creates gaps in knowledge, as the complete system of that knowledge is not considered. As an Indigenous researcher,

[16] Susan Page identifies as being Aboriginal.

[17] Michelle Trudgett is from the Wiradjuri Nation in New South Wales.

[18] Corrinne Sullivan is from the Wiradjuri Nation.

I sit uneasily at the interface between such western authors and the knowledge that has been passed to me from Elders, Knowledge Holders, family and Indigenous academics. It is my view that Indigenous experience and standpoints need to be portrayed by Indigenous people, and non-Indigenous considerations can only ever attempt to reflect an Indigenous *use* of space, not a *lived experience* of space. In this foundational research, I have thus drawn selectively on the writings in western archives of non-Indigenous commentators and accompanied these with non-traditional and/or non-academic sources from Indigenous peoples.

Value of the Investigation

The United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

> … that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests (2008, p. 2).

Furthermore,

> … control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs (2008, p. 2).

However, for First Peoples in Australia these rights are often unmet, and Indigenous voices silenced with misinformation and misunderstanding with regards to considerations concerning Indigenous peoples, their histories and their lands. For instance, disputes over invasion versus settlement offer very little space for First Peoples to advance their perspectives (Pearson 2016). Indigenous authors such as Heiss (2002), Behrendt (2000, 2016) and Smith (2012) note this silencing of Indigenous voices and discuss how colonial tellings of Indigenous stories have created the lens through which the nation views First Peoples.

Furthermore, our spaces are racially designed; by this I mean they are designed to meet the needs of the predominant culture while denying those of First Peoples. Indirect discrimination is defined by the Australian Human Rights Commission as discrimination that 'occurs when there is an unreasonable rule or policy that is the same for everyone but has an unfair effect on people who share a particular attribute' (2017, para 1). Indigenous peoples walk straightened out, flattened down, fenced in, concreted over urban scapes instead of connecting directly with the undulations of Country. Our ways of knowing our spaces through Country are denied by heavy-footed structures; our ability to see and hear Country is silenced through manicured streets; our bodies are forced to move in straight lines rather than the natural inclines and gradients of the land. By design, imported western spaces are discriminatory as they are determined by the spatial values and paradigms of the majority, while those in the minority, who hold different spatial practices, are disregarded.

There are, however, more personal reasons for this research journey. A few years ago, my Koori grandmother, Gloria Nipperess[19], commented in conversation that she felt invisible in public spaces. Around the same time, I attended a lecture by Linda Tuhiwai Smith in which she used the term 'invisible original peoples' (2015) to describe Aboriginal people's experiences in urban spaces. This invisibleness began from the encounters in 1770 and continues today. I had also undertaken an undergraduate degree in Interior and Spatial Design and discovered there were very few precedent projects that I could either aspire to as a designer who was Aboriginal, or relate to as a Koori woman. As a result, I often felt alienated from the rest of the student cohort as the materials being presented in the course did not relate to my worldview and experiences. By contrast, when I am speaking with Elders and other Indigenous peoples, and from my own experience, it is clear my relationship with land, place and Country is often expressed differently from a non-Indigenous understanding. As a spatial designer, I started to question how the Indigenous experience or concept of space could be expressed, and with the thought of my

[19] Gloria Nipperess is a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation, and an Elder of my family.

beautiful bubbly grandmother's feelings of being invisible, I felt 'the Great Australian Silence'[20] in space required addressing.

Racism is still experienced in our organisational, institutional and academic spaces despite policies, procedures and strategies that imply otherwise. This type of discrimination has the capacity to create culturally unsafe spaces and noxious environments for First Peoples in spaces where we are purported to be supported to work and live. This type of discrimination was experienced during the course of this research. Despite reporting my experiences to the institution, I was poorly supported in being removed from the unsafe circumstances, and effectively punished for experiencing racism while the racism itself remained unaddressed. A position of privilege enabled the organisation to turn a blind eye to the discriminatory behaviour, and the systems embedded in the institution even prolonged it. Juanita Sherwood[21] says that the health of Indigenous peoples is directly linked to the colonial history of harmful policy, and that '[t]rauma is a normal and predictable response to overwhelming distress resulting from an event which is left untreated or, at worst, ignored' (2013, p. 36). Furthermore, Tracey Westerman[22] writes that research indicates racism impacts on Aboriginal peoples in the same way as a traumatic event (2019). Therefore, regrettably, I have direct experience of the immense impacts of racism in space. I also experienced the silencing and 'invisibling' of First Peoples in institutional spaces, in which others felt their experiences *with* Indigenous peoples were more relevant than my experience *as* an Indigenous person. Even more so, the processes of the institution enabled the suppression of my voice and experiences. I know firsthand how this creates 'ghosts' in the spaces of the organisation. It led me to question how we can ever achieve spatial equality when one side continues to 'ghost' and silence the other. Therefore, as someone who has the capacity to use her voice, not only orally but through this writing, I would be neglecting my cultural responsibilities to those coming after me to not try to be heard, and to make changes in relation to racially designed spaces and policies. While it is not my aim to be

[20] The Great Australian Silence was a phrase coined by economist and anthropologist W E H Stanner (1968). Still widely recognised today, he discussed the non-existent treatment of Aboriginal people in history (Hinkson & Beckett 2008). Since then theorists speak of the attempts to introduce Indigeneity into Australian history, most agree with mixed success. However, when encountering our spaces, it could be argued Indigenous peoples in Australia remain widely under-represented.

[21] Juanita Sherwood is a descendant of the Wiradjuri nation of New South Wales.

[22] Tracy Westerman is a Njamal woman from the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

political, I reiterate here what was stated by Margaret Kovach[23], 'By merely walking through (or out of) mainstream doors, we [Indigenous peoples] tend to make spaces alive with a politicality that creates both tension and possibility. Indigenous researchers make research political simply by being who we are' (2008, pp. 45-46). I am hopeful that in writing these words I might expose the possibility for change by offering an alternative approach to space that places Indigenous spatial thinking in the foreground, by questioning how space might be (re)translated to become more inclusive. This research aims to enable those who have been silenced to find their voice and reclaim space for the 'invisible original peoples'. I therefore feel the mandate unknowingly given to me by my grandmother has been to call up the wind and render the silence visible.

Aims and Objectives

This research aims to understand from an Aboriginal perspective how we experience and comprehend our spaces. It does this by investigating how we occupy, use, narrate, sense, dream and contest space. Furthermore, it seeks to understand how spaces can be reclaimed and Indigenous spatial values restored, despite the spatial trauma brought about by invasion and colonisation. This research seeks out the minute and subtle methods in which First Peoples have maintained their cultural practices to continue their relationships with Country. By offering an approach to space through Indigenous spatial thinking, this research investigates how space can be contested, thereby acknowledging and re-grounding Australia's 'invisible first peoples'.

It is not the aim of this thesis to reproduce western approaches to research, practice or to space.

Questions

The research is based on narratives and practice, and for that reason it asks, 'What is an Indigenous experience and conception of space?' To begin to answer this question, the research considers how Aboriginal people experience and understand their space in relation to site, land, ground and Country. It looks at the values that space has held for Indigenous people for immeasurable time and how those

[23] Margaret Kovach is Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux, her lineage is from the traditional territories of the Plains Cree and Saulteaux peoples of the Great Plains. Her relations are of the Pasqua and Okanese First Nations in southern Saskatchewan.

values have been embodied through cultural practices, songs, movement and story. It asks how the relationships between people and Country have affected space as a lived experience.

While the Indigenous peoples of this country have never ceded sovereignty despite every effort of colonisation and commodification, this research questions how the processes of colonisation, occupation, dispossession and re-colonisation have nonetheless impacted on Indigenous spaces. The research acknowledges the importance of narratives for First Peoples, so it explores how spatial memory is (re)known and held through story. Through explorations of cultural and performative practice, spaces are re-sited, contested and reclaimed.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1: Setting The Ground – Introduction introduces the research and lays out the positioning and field of the investigation, specifically in relation to how Indigenous people understand and experience space.

Chapter 2: A Woven Narrative Approach – Foundational, Ethical and Methodological Framework provides the grounding for the research in three parts. Part I examines the theoretical, methodological and ethical approaches and context for the research. In Part II, Indigenous women's perspectives are considered, specifically from the viewpoint of my family. Since storytelling plays a key role in the research, Part III discusses storytelling and narratives on Country and my family story is introduced.

The Indigenous methodologies used in the research advocate that Indigenous voices are privileged regarding Indigenous matters that concern their experiences, ways of expressing and comprehending. As such *Chapter 3: Always Was, Always Is – Enduring Relationships With Land – Oral and Written Accounts* incorporates Indigenous Elders and younger peoples, architects and designers, and people working on Country. They discuss their obligations, Dreaming, songs, belonging to and management of land as a review of Indigenous space. This chapter responds to the question, 'What is Indigenous space?' Only Indigenous people are included in this chapter for the reasons outlined earlier.

Despite western knowledge benefiting from the colonisation and dispossession of Indigenous spaces, written observations continue to perpetrate the absence of the Indigenous voice. *Chapter 4: The Problem With Anthropology – Non-Indigenous Commentaries* discusses non-Indigenous observations of Indigenous use of space. These include the observations of anthropologists, social scientists, theorists and historians who discuss Indigenous use of space, their relationship to Country and the effects of colonisation.

Colonisation has created a trauma to and on the land, not only physically but also in perception, spiritually and psychologically. The traumas to the land continue, leaving it scarred, sick and suppressed, a consequence of invasion, colonisation and misreading of the ground. This trauma is discussed in *Chapter 5: The Trauma Of the Land – The Colonisation of Indigenous Space*.

Chapter 6: Revealing Without Revealing – Materiality, Making, Narratives – A Pattern brings together ideas of materiality, making and stories through the conduit of weaving. It aims to understand the relationships between Aboriginal people, the object or artefact and the context or Country. It offers this through a women's worldview, specific to that of my family, for whom crafting has been a women's activity for as far back as we can remember.

Chapter 7: Contested Ground – Weaving Stories of Resilience, Resistance, Relationality and Reclamation considers how Indigenous people occupy, use, narrate, sense and contest their spaces using storytelling and spatial narratives. Through a number of situated narrative explorations that reclaim space, themes such as subversiveness, resilience and resistance to invasion, as well as reclamation and reconnection, are explored. Accompanying the writing of this chapter was the physical weaving of an object that, in my mind, spatially connects the cultural physical action of weaving with the materials gathered from Country. The philosophical meditative crafting and the written words express specific intentions regarding a woven object and its shape, where the object becomes the embodiment of the philosophical and spatial intent of the written work; the intentions of the words are expressed equally through practice. A non-traditional research output relating to the woven object is included in the Appendices[24].

[24] Appendix 1. Weaving Intentions.

This leads to the discussion in *Chapter 8: Not Lost, Just Sleeping – Conclusion Without Concluding* about how a 're-righting' and a rewriting might open the door to spatial cultural sustainability and a method of privileging Country in the design process.

CHAPTER 2: A WOVEN NARRATIVE APPROACH

FOUNDATIONAL, ETHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction[1]

As children growing up on the far North Coast of New South Wales, my sister[2] and I – and our brother when he came along – had relative freedom in our movements around the 60 acres of land on which we lived. For our safety, we were given some essential parameters by our parents and extended family. For instance, *show respect* for other creatures and life, everything has a right to be here, from a human to a spider, to a spider's web. Of course, be aware of those creatures that might be considered 'dangerous' to kids[3]. Give them warning of our presence, allow them time to escape. Step onto logs rather than over them to ensure our feet do not trample creatures seeking security behind the log. Learning to be respectful led us to the next guideline: *be observant*. Be mindful of where we place our feet to cause as little damage as possible. Also notice the changes in the environment, from one ecosystem to another, and how that means we might likewise need to move or act differently. So, in some places this required being fully grounded and walking quietly in single file, and in others jumping raucously from rock to rock. This meant we had to be observant of the more-than-humans around us, engage with the messages being sent to us, and *be responsive*. Watch carefully if an animal is comfortable or scared, leave it alone if scared. *Play, explore, learn*, was another parameter. Be curious but do not get lost; however, if we did, we were to retrace our steps by observing our own trail. We were taught to pay attention in the bush, observe where we went and re-observe on the way back. As we played and explored, we learned how to identify which foods we could safely eat, and so our instruction was to *consume wisely*. If we were unsure whether a food was edible, either do not eat it, or, if hungry,

[1] Parts of this chapter are being published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in a book tentatively titled *Everyone's Knowledge* (D Hromek 2019).

[2] I am the oldest of my siblings, and in our group of cousins. The next oldest is my sister Siân Hromek and our brother is Michael Hromek. While Siân and I are very different in many ways, we are very close in age, and in sisterliness. While writing this section I chatted with her about our experiences as children and she provided her memories and thoughts; I acknowledge her contribution with gratitude.

[3] Which some years later I realised were many! In fact, that part of the world has some of the most poisonous snakes and spiders on the planet.

start by just licking it, then wait. Sometimes that might mean waiting hours or longer. Then take a little nibble and wait again, and so on until we were sure it was safe. Do not take too much, but enjoy our food and *be grateful* for where it came from as it might not be there next time. Also, *be patient*, do not eat unripe foods or drink unclean water. Some things take time, and boredom is both part of being tolerant and a neglect of creativity. A key instruction (especially for us older children) was to *look after each other*, maintain a sense of responsibility towards each other and ensure everyone was well. Do not leave anyone behind, continually *communicate* where you were going. Importantly, *always listen*, stay attuned and *connected*, not only to the sounds and sense of the land, but for our parents calling, or the sound of our mother's powerful whistle, as that was when it was time to go home.

This chapter is presented in three parts; the first outlines the methodological and ethical foundations upon which this investigation is based. The second discusses the grounding for this research from an Indigenous women's perspective. The third part frames the importance of narratives and telling stories, specifically for Aboriginal women, an important aspect of the investigation.

Part I: Indigenous Ideological Framework

When it came to considering the values on which this research was based, inherent in me were the guidelines from my family – not separate to me, to who I am or how I work, but fundamentally part of me. I do not claim these came wholly from an Indigenous upbringing; I grew up in the dominant cultural colonised paradigm of Australia. Rather they come from the combination of my heritage which includes a set of values that are grounded in an Indigenous lived experience of Country. Using the grounding gifted to me through my childhood and my heritage for my research meant that while as a child and even up to the point of undertaking this research I may not have established the words for an Indigenous theoretical or methodological paradigm; they were nonetheless familiar as part of my worldview.

Colonisation has laboured to make Aboriginal experiences and realities invisible, to silence us, segregate us, make us into fragments of the past, and turn us into a dying race (Smith 2012). In my family we experienced this psychologically, perceptually and in lived experience as part of the Hidden Generations, discussed elsewhere in this thesis. It was my grandmother who inadvertently tasked me with undertaking this research by pointing out her spatial invisibility as her lived experienced. Therefore,

I have researched and written with her in mind. I have spoken regularly with her about the research, discussed questions with her, asked her to tell and retell stories and read parts out to her. To ensure it made sense to my grandmother it was important to use language and concepts that were compatible with realities of both of us, as Koori women. By using this perspective as the starting point, the nature of our contexts, stories, histories, beliefs, principles, ethics, spirituality, political stances, relationships, cultures, geography and spatiality is advanced. Using Indigenous research theories, frameworks and methodologies (Foley 2003; Martin-Booran Mirraboopa 2003; Moreton-Robinson & Walter 2009; Porsanger 2004; Rigney 2006; Smith 2012; Wilson 2008)[4] has enabled me through this writing to give voice to the invisible, so as to unsilence the unseen.

Graham Hingangaroa Smith[5] (2005) describes the characteristics of Indigenous theory as being culturally appropriately positioned, originating with organic processes involving community, as being the product of a theorist with the cultural cognitive foundations of an Indigenous worldview. He says Indigenous theory is focused on change, is user friendly and flexible and, while not universal, is relatable to other sites. It should be critical and engaged with other theoretical positionings and applicable to a variety of social justice objectives. Furthering this, Dennis Foley (2003) says that the research practitioner must be Indigenous, and the research must be for the benefit of their community or the wider Indigenous community. It must enable knowledge to be recorded for the community rather than for the academy, with the participants rather than the researcher being owners of their knowledge. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) adds that Indigenous theories are integrative, holistic and ethical, instead of segmented into disciplines with a reorientation towards individual and collective self-determination. Through this research journey, I as an Indigenous researcher have endeavoured to honour my family and their stories, and also the knowledge systems held and shared by Indigenous theorists, writers and scholars.

Indigenous Knowledges

Aboriginal peoples have inhabited this continent for millennia. We have lived on and with the land, belonging to it and part of it for thousands of years. Over this time, we have developed our learnings,

[4] Jelena Porsanger is Skolt Sami, originally from the Notozero region.

[5] Graham Hingangaroa Smith is Māori of Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Apa and Ngāti Kahungunu descent.

understandings and knowings about our lands. Our knowledges come from the land and are therefore grounded in Country. Indigenous knowledges are experiential, holistic and evolving, and epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies are interwoven into these knowledge systems (Moreton-Robinson & Walter 2009). Our knowledge systems are built on relationships, not just with people or objects, but with the cosmos, ideas and everything around them. This is a shared and mutual relationship as such, ideas and knowledge cannot be owned (Wilson 2001).

Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison[6] explains in relation to Yuin Country:

> Mother Earth births everything for us.
>
> Father Sky carries the water and oxygen for us to breathe.
>
> Grandfather Sun warms the planet, warms our body, gives us light so we can see, raises the food that the Mother births and raises most of our relations, all our plants and trees.
>
> Grandmother Moon moves the water and gives us the woman-time and our birthing (2013, p. 9).

Furthering this idea of the land as our mother, Manulani Aluli Meyer[7], remarks, '*[t]his is not a metaphor.* For the Native Hawaiians speaking of knowledge, land was the central theme that drew forth all others. You came from a place, you grew in a place and you had a relationship with a place. This is an epistemological idea … One does not simply learn about land, we learn best from land' (2008, p. 219). In Yolŋu understandings of the world, 'we have a library in the land. You can't destroy it. If you burn it, it grows again. This land is full of more knowledge than you can imagine' (Burarrwanga et al. 2014)[8]. As Margaret Kovach points out, in Indigenous approaches to learning and knowing, 'our doing is intricately related with our knowing' (2010, p. 40). Therefore, by habitually activating our connection with Country, we likewise connect with our knowledge, as it is from and within the mother, and Country, that our knowledges are born, stored and kept safe in the 'land library.'

[6] Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison is an Elder and Lawman of the Yuin people from the South Coast of New South Wales.

[7] Manulani Aluli Meyer is from Mokapu, Kailua, Wailuku, Hilo and Kohala on the islands of Oahu, Maui and Moku O Keawe.

[8] Laklak Burarrwanga, Banbapuy Ganambarr, Djawundil Maymuru, Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr-Stubbs, Ritjilili Ganambarr are all Yolŋu people, from Bawaka in North East Arnhem Land.

European colonisation may have disrupted Indigenous lives and ways of living, but Indigenous knowledges remain intact and continue to develop as living relational practices (Moreton-Robinson & Walter 2009). While western academic research has most often been oriented towards solving 'Indigenous problems' or searching for answers about Indigenous peoples, their research has disempowered First Peoples. Non-Indigenous scholarship has taken extensive knowledges away from Indigenous peoples who have been used as sources of information and passive objects, while giving little in return (Porsanger 2004). As a counterpoint, Karen Martin-Booran Mirraboopa (2003) proposes Indigenous knowledges as a way of disempowering the hold western research has on Indigenous research, resulting in the development by First Peoples writers and theorists of our own research paradigms and programs.

Indigenous Research Methodologies

Country intuitively has its own methodology; a relational methodology guided and inspired by Country (McKnight 2017). Indigenous knowledge systems, Laws and beliefs, which come from our origins and Country, 'inform the past, present and future, changing in interpretation through dreams and lived experience. This knowledge system also continually establishes Indigenous ways of life, providing a moral code, rules and laws for behaviour based on the principles of respect, reciprocity and obligation' (Moreton-Robinson & Walter 2009, p. 6). On this basis, Indigenous ideologies are formed and guided by cultural worldviews, paradigms, protocols, principles, contexts and behaviours – and Country. These values form an integral part of Indigenous research methodologies and require the researcher to think critically about their processes and outcomes because it is our own community's experiences, knowledges and interests that lie at the centre of the research (Porsanger 2004; Smith 2012).

The Indigenous methodologies that inform this research include the following principles developed by Karen Martin-Booran Mirraboopa (2003), whose framework extends on the work of Lester-Irabinna Rigney (1999) and Japanangka errol West[9] (2000), and Jelena Porsanger (2004). The principles are: *recognise Indigenous worldviews within which our knowledges and realities are distinctive and fundamental*; *honour Aboriginal social customs as essential processes through which we live, learn and situate ourselves*; *emphasise the social, historical and political contexts which shape our lives,*

[9] Japanangka errol West is a Tasmanian Aboriginal.

experiences and futures; *privilege the voices, experiences and lives of Aboriginal people and lands*; *include or consult with Indigenous peoples not as objects but participants*; *share and protect knowledge*; and *use appropriate language and processes*.

Relationship building in the form of sharing and participating is an important facet of ethical Indigenous research, which emphasises learning by watching and doing. Relational accountability requires the researcher to establish reciprocal and respectful relationships within communities (Wilson 2008). Shawn Wilson states that, '[a]s a researcher you are answering to all your relations when you are doing research' (2001, p. 177), which is true in the case of this research. The relationships developed throughout the research journey and the learning process itself has ensured participation in the sharing of communal knowledge in an ethical way (Muller 2014)[10].

Research Methods

In order to make sense of the research from both an Indigenous worldview and the perspective of a designer, a variety of research methods were used in this research. These include investigation of primary sources written in English, engaging with narratives, yarning and listening, lived experience and practice as research.

Discourse and Textual Analysis

Through this investigation and renegotiation of chronological understandings, I aim to create a new understanding of the misleading historical assessment that has consumed Australian society since 1788. This requires textual analysis, including those written by colonisers. Textual analysis closely examines either the content and meaning of texts or their structure and discourse, in which the texts are deconstructed to consider how they operate, how they are constructed, the ways in which meanings are made, and the nature of those meanings (Lockyer 2012). While imperial systems discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed Indigenous knowledges (often in an appropriative and inappropriate manner), in the colonial archives Indigenous peoples are nonetheless able to re-find fragments of themselves that were previously taken, catalogued, studied and stored (Smith 2012). Martin Nakata

[10] Lorraine Muller is a Murri woman, born on Kalkadoon Country, raised in the Torres Strait and lives on Girramay Country in North Queensland.

discusses the archives, saying, they are important for First Peoples 'first, as a source for building individual histories; and, second, as a source from which to generate a more complicated analysis to broaden collective memories' (2012, p. 103). In my search, I was required at times to read between the lines to find alternative narratives, and on occasion I found them distressing as they were telling my own family's story, but in an impersonal and academic way.

Narrative Enquiry and Storytelling

While colonial documentation was an important starting point, even more significant were the narratives shared with me. Narrative enquiry allows the intimate study of an individual's experiences over place, temporality, sociality and in context, through relational engagement (Clandinin & Caine 2012). Telling stories is part of Indigenous pedagogy (Martin-Booran Mirraboopa 2008). Furthermore, providing spaces in research for storytelling offers First Peoples the chance to tell and retell, claim and reclaim their narratives in their own ways, giving voice to their individual and collective experiences and struggles. Storytelling enables change and resistance through exchange, and gives room for healing because stories connect the future with the past through word (Archibald 2008; Battiste 2000)[11] [12]. Our stories contain our histories and traditions, our shared connections, memories, places and belongings.

Yarning, Craft and Tea

Yarning 'enables the unfolding of information through the process of storytelling (narrative) in a relaxed and informal manner that is culturally safe for Indigenous people' (Bessarab & Ng'andu 2010, p. 47)[13]. Yarning is a unique part of Aboriginal culture that connects us to our beliefs, spirituality and Dreaming; it is a powerful way for Aboriginal people to connect with each other. Yarning employs unstructured in-depth conversations in which the participants (in this case the researcher and the co-author/co-designer) journey together, and is the most culturally appropriate and immersive method that an Indigenous researcher can employ. It facilitates the exchange of information in a way that Aboriginal people are comfortable with, and maintains the integrity of Aboriginal communication practices while establishing relationality and accountability between people (Bessarab & Ng'andu 2010; Towney 2005)[14]. Yarning

[11] Jo-anne Archibald, also known as Q''um Q''um Xiiem, is from the Stó:lô First Nation in British Columbia.

[12] Marie Battiste is Mi'kmaw from the Potlotek First Nation, Nova Scotia.

[13] Dawn Bessarab is of Bardi (West Kimberley) and Indjarbandi (Pilbara) descent.

[14] Larry Maxwell Towney is a Wiradjuri man.

has been an important means for Aboriginal people to share not only stories but also knowledges. Yarning is not a static process, it is 'a fluid ongoing process, a moving dialogue interspersed with interjections, interpretations and additions. The stories remain in our conscious state like a thread hanging, waiting to be picked up again, to be continued, reconstructed, reinforced and once again embedded in our ontology' (Geia, Hayes & Usher 2013, p. 15)[15]. My family have yarned as long as I can remember. Mainly we yarn to connect with each other, tell stories and share memories, and somehow, we inherently know to put on the kettle and bring our crafting.

Listening to Hear

A key element of yarning is the ability to listen – not always to respond or judge but to hear in a different way. Listening actively to both verbal and non-verbal communications is important, as it is often in the interstitial spaces of the conversation that the real messages are sent and, hopefully, received. Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Bauman[16] furthers this, describing dadirri[17] as being a sort of contemplation or silent awareness. She says, 'A big part of dadirri is listening. Through the years, we have listened to our stories. They are told and sung, over and over, as the seasons go by. Today we still gather around the campfires and together we hear the sacred stories … This was the normal way for us to learn—not by asking questions … Our people have passed on this way of listening for over 40,000 years' (2002). Judy Atkinson[18] indicates that while the word 'dadirri' belongs to the language of the Ngangikurungkurr people of the Daly River area, the activity or practice of dadirri has its equivalent in many other Indigenous groups. She says,

> The Gamilaraay have the words winangar (listening) and gurri (deep), so winangargurri has a similar meaning to dadirri (Judy Knox, of Tamworth Gamilaraay, 1998). Aboriginal peoples of Central Queensland talk of yimban yiar a (listening to [E]lders), which has similar meanings and behavioural responsibilities to dadirri (Milton Lawton, Rockhampton, 1998) (2002, p. 15).

[15] Lynore K Geia is a proud woman of Bwgcolman, born and raised on Palm Island, Queensland.

[16] Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Bauman is an Elder from Nauiyu (Daly River) from the of the Ngan'gityemerri language group.

[17] Dadirri, meaning contemplation, silent awareness or deep listening, comes from the Ngangikurungkurr people, of Daly River in the Northern Territory.

[18] Judy Atkinson is of the Jiman people of the Upper Dawson in Central West Queensland and of the Bundjalung of Northern NSW.

Lived Experience

Lived experience, related to phenomenology, requires that the researcher attempt to describe the full structure of a lived experience, or what that experience means to those who lived it (Sadala & Adorno 2002). Lived experience research attempts to understand meanings by the ways in which they transpire and are formed by 'consciousness, language, our cognitive and non-cognitive sensibilities, and by our preunderstandings and presuppositions' (Adams & van Manen 2012, p.2). Lived experience addresses the unique and personal perspectives of researcher and participants, and how their experiences are shaped by the subjective influences of their identity, including race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, politicality and their roles in their communities (Boylorn 2012).

Research into the lived experiences of First Peoples is a powerful instrument with which to measure equality and social justice in society (Rigney 1999). According to Larsen and Johnson[19], 'Indigenous research takes place through encounter and relationship, both in the ordinary sense of "to happen" and also in the metaphysical sense that knowledge requires an actively inhabited place for its disclosure and use' (2012, p. 2). They continue, 'This phenomenology of place reveals Indigenous research as an empathetic, relational way of knowing grounded in the nexus of being-on-the-land' (p. 2). Thus, lived experience is also a way of approaching Country, as, according to Kevin O'Brien[20], 'Country is experienced and understood through the senses and seared into memory' (2011).

Practice as Research, Research as Practice

As a spatial and cultural practitioner, I instinctively turn to my practice to understand my lived experiences and explore my research questions. While my practice has played a key role in my research journey, I have undertaken neither practice-based nor practice-led research here; rather research and practice have been woven together and informed each other. I propose this thesis as a hybrid product, mainly written, but also referring to a journey as an individual, a practitioner and an Aboriginal woman. My research and my practice are presented here as interdependent with related practice outcomes and summary analyses included in the attached Appendices[21]. Often stories and yarns have led the practice,

[19] Jay T Johnson is Native American from the Delaware and Cherokee peoples.

[20] Kevin O'Brien is a descendent of the Kaurareg and Meriam people.

[21] Appendices 1. Weaving Intentions, 2. Winyanboga Yurringa, 3. Covered By Concrete, and 4. Indigenous Material Referencing Guide.

and conversely the practice has demanded the yarns. Inevitably it seems I have undertaken 'yarning-led, cultural-spatial-practice research'. While the research and practice are inextricably intertwined, I have not included imagery from my practice in the main body of this thesis as I wished to emphasise that words and stories have their own agency, effect and power.

Analysing the Narratives

Using yarning as a method for gathering narratives, while appropriate for Indigenist research, meant analysing 'data' was challenging (Parkes-Sandri 2013)[22]. Stories are by nature cyclical and interrelated so drawing out specific data without understanding the whole narrative would not have respected the integrity of the story, nor an Indigenous methodological process. I therefore chose to analyse thematically. Thematic analysis identifies themes or patterns in data, or this case, narratives.

Themes are defined by Braun, Clarke and Rance as reflecting a pattern of shared meaning organised around a core concept or idea (2014). In this method of conceptualisation,

> … themes capture the essence and spread of meaning; they unite data that might otherwise appear disparate, or meaning that occurs in multiple and varied contexts; they (often) explain large portions of a dataset; they are often abstract entities or ideas, capturing implicit ideas 'beneath the surface' of the data, but can also capture more explicit and concrete meaning; and they are built from smaller meaning units (Braun et al. 2019, p. 845).

In reflexive thematic analysis, themes are expressed as patterns with meanings that result from extensive analytic work by the researcher to develop a deep understanding of the meaning-based patterns. The researcher interprets the data through their own lens, which while subjective gives voice to social critiques or specific contexts (Braun et al. 2019). As an Indigenous researcher working with Indigenous co-authors/co-designers using yarning as a method, I was aware of the importance of respecting the direction of the yarn. This meant that while I asked questions pertinent to the research within the yarning process, I did not direct it myself. Therefore I was not in control of the themes that

[22] Robyn Parkes-Sandri is a descendant of the Gungarri people.

emerged. While I sought out themes related to my topic area of 'Indigenous space', I was interested to find that nonetheless recurring themes developed.

Emerging themes from this research included: the relatedness of space to Country, identity and culture (Chapter 3); cultural transmission and histories through storytelling (Chapters 6 and 7); colonial impacts on the land (Chapter 5); cultural practice as a means for cultural reclamation (Chapters 6 and 7); the resilience of First Peoples through connection to each other and Country (Chapter 7).

Referencing and Citations

Citations are the ways in which we acknowledge those who came before us, and our debt to their work. It is how we recognise those upon whose shoulders we stand. Referencing and citations have been important to my research as I felt the weight of responsibility of the choices made in relation to those whom I chose to cite. I detail here the decisions made.

First, this research privileges Indigenous voices (Rigney 2006). These voices are presented here not as a counterpoint or a comparison with western epistemology or understandings of space, but rather on their own terms, and as a part of a project to have Indigenous voices heard, centred and privileged. In so doing, we move away from an either/or binary and we also listen and hear how it is that Indigenous people know, feel and interact with their spaces and lands.

Not only have Indigenous voices been privileged, they have been actively sought out. In some chapters, such as Chapter 3, only the words of First Peoples have been included. This was an aspiration I made early in my research journey to cite primarily Indigenous peoples. I hoped that at least half of those would be female. While this was not specifically a political decision, due to my identity and the systemic processual challenges I faced along the research (and my life) journey, it is inherently part of a wider intention and inclination to challenge the institutions and systems of racism and patriarchy.

In order to reinforce this methodological approach and to emphasise the diverse connections of Indigenous peoples to their lands, their nations, groups, tribes and clans, all are acknowledged in my referencing. At the start of Chapter 6 is a *Pre-story*, the events of which led my colleague and friend,

Sophie Herbert, and me to develop a new referencing style called the *Indigenous Material Referencing Style* (UTS Library 2017), details of which are included in the Appendices[23]. This style recognises Indigenous peoples' cultural associations and groups as part of the referencing, and in doing so I pay respect to their identities, Country and culture. This style links objects, art, design and – in my case – the written word to the Country or place as well as the narratives where they originated. The style attempts to (re)connect the tangible presence with the intangible knowledge systems that created it. This style of referencing also acknowledges that colonial processes forcibly removed some of this information from our identities. It is through this humble referencing system, therefore, that I aspire to acknowledge and reclaim that information that is important to Aboriginal epistemologies. Below are examples of bibliography references using this style:

Smith, K 2017, 'Yarn with Kaleena Smith', Wiradjuri/Yorta Yorta, on Gadigal Lands, Sydney, interviewed by D. Hromek, 5 July.

Smith, L T 2012, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Māori/Ngāti Awa/Ngāti Porou iwi, 2nd edn, Zed Books Ltd, London.

The first time I cite them, I also include in the footnotes First Peoples' cultural associations, groups, nations, homelands, tribes, clans, or language names. I do this with the greatest of care and respect, either direct from the source or to the best of my ability from where publicly available. This was important as a means of recognising the diversity of First Peoples and actively reminding both the reader and myself to embrace similarities and respect difference.

In relation to the yarns conducted with the co-authors/co-designers of this research, I have acknowledged these in my citations and my in-text referencing. This is to express that yarning is a recognised research method that is culturally appropriate – and different – from interviews or personal communications. These appear as follows:

(Yarn with G Nipperess 2018 on 27 January)

(Yarn with G Simms 2015 on 28 October)

[23] Appendix 4. Indigenous Materials Referencing Guide.

Ethical Considerations

As a Budawang woman descended from the Browns in the black Clegg family line, and while also acknowledging my French and Czech heritage and the gifts bestowed by that cultural inheritance, I am aware of the familial values and communication practices inherent in my upbringing. These were outlined at the beginning of this chapter from the perspective of my childhood. My values, while originating from familial and life experiences, are strongly related to others working in this area. For instance, the framework produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council (2005) starts with the overarching principles of *spirit and integrity* from which come *reciprocity*, *respect*, *equality*, *survival and protection* and *responsibility*. Likewise, Norm Sheehan[24] and Polly Walker[25] (2001) developed principles of Indigenous Knowledge Research, these being: *Indigenous knowledge is not open knowledge*, *knowledge is living*, *be present*, *listen deeply*, *learn and nurture learning*, *be real and authentic*, *respect all things*, *engage in relationships* and *knowledge is contextual*.

Recognising that each nation, group and individual has its own distinct knowledges, some common core values are essential for ethical Indigenous research. As a Yuin woman I am aware of the importance of community protocols – values, customs and codes of behaviour important to a cultural group, that ensure respectful relationships. I am aware of the diversity among and within Indigenous cultures, languages and societies and the importance of acknowledging and celebrating those differences. The Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2012) provide overarching principles relating to research protocols. They comprise 14 principles grouped under broad categories of: *rights, respect and recognition*; *negotiation, consultation, agreement and mutual understanding*; *participation, collaboration and partnership*; *benefits, outcomes and giving back*; *managing research: use, storage and access*; and *reporting and compliance*. These were important to my investigation. Additionally, during the course of my research, with Indigenous lawyer Terri Janke, I developed *Cultural Principles and Protocols for Designers: for Projects or Curricula involving Indigenous Peoples, Communities and Materials* (Hromek & Janke 2020), a set of cultural processes specific to design disciplines.

[24] Norm Sheehan is a Wiradjuri man born in Mudgee.

[25] Polly Walker's heritage derives from the Tsalagi (Cherokee) peoples of the Southeastern mountains in what is now the United States.

As those with whom I co-authored/co-designed this research were either part of my immediate family, extended family, kin, associates or wider community networks, and our yarns were specific to their own lived experiences, knowledges and stories, it was important to me to approach them with deep respect and sensitivity in line with my values. As I have matured and continued to learn as an adult, my childhood values have matured with me to encompass my lifelong learning. They also recognise the values of those whose work I have relied on in this investigation. These values are: *be respectful to Elders, Country and others*; *observe and listen carefully, not only to words said but those not said*; *allow room for thought and reflection, give people and stories space to develop*; *be prepared to learn*; *be grateful*; *ensure reciprocally mutual benefits*; *consume responsibly*; *be open and transparent*; *lead with care*; and *maintain relationships*.

Ethics approval was granted by the University of Technology Sydney's Research Ethics Committee (Human Research Ethics Committee Approval Number 2015000219). In accordance with that approval, all participants were given details verbally and in writing about the research, and had the chance to speak with me about the research at any time in person, by phone or in writing. There was no obligation to participate and they had the opportunity to opt out at any time. They have given consent to the publication of their words, knowledges and stories. Prototypes of the consent forms, information sheet and interview questions are in the Appendices[26]. I have reverted back to contributors a number of times to ensure their words were accurate, including at the final moment prior to publication. All chose to be identified in the research. As part of the yarning process, while I could ask steering questions and redirect discussion, I was not in control of the direction or preferred topics that the participants spoke about. I followed the direction of the yarn itself, ensuring they told their own stories in their own words. I have not sought to own or appropriate their stories or to be their voice.

Co-Authors and Co-Designers

I refer to those who have shared their knowledge, narratives and time towards this research as co-authors/co-designers; I do not feel 'participants', 'informants', or the like is respectful of their contribution. They include Elders, Knowledge Holders and kin.

[26] Appendices 5. Consent forms, 6. Information sheet, 7. Interview questions

My relationships with my family, kin and networks have always been important to me. I was therefore highly aware of my ethical responsibilities including as my role as researcher, which could have had the potential to change the dynamic of our relationship. Those involved needed to feel confident they could trust me with their stories and knowledges, and that I would share them in a culturally responsible and sensitive manner. It was important our relationships were not only maintained in the research process but built upon, and that their Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) respected.

I started by engaging with my inner network, for instance, my family and our Elders. As the research developed, I respected where yarns led – not only throughout the yarn itself, but also by following up with others suggested during the yarn as key Knowledge Holders who could add to my investigation. As either I, or someone close to me, already had a personal relationship with the co-authors/co-designers, everything shared between us was in the context of the existing relationship, consistent with the research of Martin-Booran Mirraboopa (2008), Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010), and Somerville and Perkins[27] (2010).

While the co-authors/co-designers are mostly of Yuin descent, not all are. This reflects the connections in my extended networks. They are all from the eastern part of the continent, and all live in coastal areas. Yarns were largely held on their Country, or a location in which they felt safe to speak openly as chosen by them. Some yarns, especially those with my family, were held in groups as is the custom for us. This ensured open sharing of narratives and memories.

As a sign of respect to those without whom my thesis would not exist, I include here the co-authors/co-designers, listed alphabetically, and a brief biography of each in their own words, with my reflections on their contribution towards my learning.

Dwayne Naja Bannon-Harrison

> *My traditional name, 'Naja', was given to me by my lore Elder and grandfather Uncle Max 'Dulumunmun' Harrison. I am a proud Yuin/Gunai Man with Watchabolic and Yorta-Yorta*

[27] Uncle Tony Perkins is a Gumbaynggirr Elder, his homeland is on the mid-North Coast of New South Wales.

kinship connections. I am the founder and managing director of Ngaran Ngaran Culture Awareness (NNCA). Carrying on the knowledge and cultural teachings of over 17 years from my Elders, I established NNCA to create a foundation for myself, my family and community and to continue to share traditional culture and legacies passed down in Yuin Country. I strive to deliver self-determination for my family, and to assist and mentor other Aboriginal people to also get involved in their own communities. I am a working party member of the NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council, and have extensive and award winning achievements and national recognition in the First Nations male wellbeing space. With my wife Amelia I run Mirritya Mundya Indigenous Twist Catering, which uses native ingredients infused with other cuisine.

Dwayne's sharing has been incredibly important to me, my family and this research in so many ways. He gently and patiently led my 84 year old grandmother and the rest of my family up Gulaga mountain, ensuring we all arrived safely. He introduced me to sacred spaces and ceremonies, acting as guide for the way to be and the words to say. Dwayne's storytelling and the stories themselves guided me in ways to speak about Country, and specifically Yuin Country. His way of telling stories, not only as a way of connecting to the past, but providing lessons about culture, kindness and humour ensured narratives were embedded into this writing.

Aunty Fran Bodkin

I am a descendant of the D'harawal people of the Bidigal clan from the George's River/Woronora catchment area. As an educator of D'harawal knowledge I work with children of preschool age through to adult learners. I hold a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences with five majors, one of which is Environmental Sciences, plus other postgraduate degrees. Combining the knowledge passed down through my Aboriginal mother, my university education and my journey of lifelong learning, I bring a holistic understanding of the environment in order to promote a deeper understanding of how to care for our natural environment. I have published three books on D'harawal culture, stories and natural resources. I am an active member of Wollondilly Aboriginal Advisory Committee. In the past I worked for the NSW Parliament for many years. I also played a key role in the development of Campbelltown Hospital, Campbelltown TAFE, Mount Annan Botanic Gardens and what is now the Western Sydney University Campbelltown Campus.

Aunty Fran was very generous in relation to this research, not only with her knowledge about Country, place and plants, and her stories about D'harawal culture, but also in her joy of learning and sharing. I

spent time with Aunty Fran at the Mount Annan Botanic Gardens where we walked and yarned our way around the gardens, an active learning of the importance of Aboriginal ways of imparting knowledge. It encouraged me to explore this further in my investigations, and was one of the factors that contributed towards choosing to privilege women's experiences and voices in my final chapters. Aunty Fran also reminded me that age is not a factor in playfulness!

Oliver Costello

> *I am a Bundjalung man from Northern NSW and I lead the Firesticks Initiative, which I co-founded in 2009. I have a broad range of experience in Indigenous fire practices, Aboriginal Joint Management partnerships, Indigenous Natural Cultural Resource management and Indigenous governance. I am passionate about Indigenous leadership, empowerment, partnerships and recognition of cultural knowledge and practice through community-led mentorship on Country.*

Oli and I shared a number of yarns including on Bundjalung Country, and it was Oli's thoughtful way of speaking and sharing about Country that helped me to find my own voice to speak of the relationships and connectivity between people and land. It was really important to me to include a variety of Knowledge Holders' voices, both older and younger, female and male yarning about cultural practice, and in discussing Oli's cultural practice of cultural burning I was encouraged to relook at my own as a means of caring for Country.

Jenny Gillis

> *My name is Jenny and I am a proud Budawang woman of the Yuin nation and daughter of John (Nonnie's brother) and granddaughter of Alma. I am a maker with a passion for textiles including weaving, crochet, embroidery and natural dyes. My Nanna and her daughters were always making gorgeous things and when I was a kid I spent many happy hours learning from them and listening to them talk about our family and connections. This is the way it has always been with us and the tradition continues today with my cousins, our kids and grandkids. We are all connected and love creating together. It is my happy place.*

Jenny's immaculately crafted work is nothing less than inspirational. While technically Jenny is my second cousin, in our family she is a close cousin and through the course of this research Jenny and I underwent a number of adventures together, some literally taking us to the other side of the planet to

investigate another Indigenous peoples' weaving practices. These adventures meant a lot in terms of exploring crafting with family, as people who carry with you the familial narrative who are co-working to keep our heritage alive. Without a doubt Jenny corroborated my sense that crafting as a cultural practice is a form of resilience and a means of gaining strength despite trauma.

Robyn Hromek

> *My name is Robyn – I'm Danièle's mother. I'm a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation. We were raised in the bush and at the beach by our mothers, with our cousins, even though we lived in a city. We never sat without something in our hands, we were making clothes, shelling peas, crocheting, knitting – this is how we learned. And we were good at school work too. We were a large tribe of our own, hidden in plain sight amongst the white nations, thankful for our Aboriginal heritage.*

The impact my mother had on my learning journey, even as an adult undertaking this research, was clear after spending a few hours weaving with her; my weaving changed extraordinarily, seemingly as a metaphor for my life. Beyond teaching me *how* to craft my mother also taught me *why*. She taught me of the importance of cultural practice (while it may not have been called that, this is undoubtedly what it was) as a lifelong endeavour and as a means of connecting with family. Mum also taught me that embracing mistakes as we make can create things of distinctiveness and beauty, and how this might be reflective of our wider life stories.

Siân Hromek

> *I am Danièle's younger sister, born on Bundjalung Jagun Country with Budawang/Yuin heritage. I have always been interested in and in awe of nature and have spent a large part of my life working in collaboration with it. This interest has led me to explore horticulture, landscaping, bush regeneration, landscape design, native citrus orchard management and cultural burning. A unique aspect of my life is that over the years I have made friends with a variety of wild birds species that visit me each day for a snack and bath.*

I feel very fortunate to have been given a sister like Siân, who was my best friend and companion as a child, and still is. Siân's exuberance for nature is contagious and I have learned and co-learned many skills relating to care for Country from her. Despite growing up together she holds different narratives and memories than I do, which has been invaluable to my PhD. I regularly consulted with Siân about

how to say something in the right way, or how she recalled an experience, meaning I could provide a broader picture of that story. Siân often travelled a long way to be part of family events that contributed towards the research, showing her strong commitment to keeping our family narratives alive.

Lynne Lovett

> *I was born 11 September 1953, my name is Lynne, second daughter of Gloria. My early memories are of been surrounded by strong Budawang woman who influenced and supported the family, especially the many children. Growing up my best friends were my cousins. I was a curious child interested in craft my mother, grandmother and aunties did, such as crochet, knitting and cooking. I am left handed and did not see this as a blocker to joining in with my right handed family members. To master knitting, around the age of eight (when Mum was not home) I would undo her work stitch by stitch and redo in a way that I could understand. As the family has grown there are more left handed women who all knit and crochet. I have three adult children, five grandchildren ranging from one to six years of age, to them I am Mama. Last year I retired from over 35 years in the Australian Public Service, and I enjoyed my working career. My future is giving back to the community and spending precious time with my grandchildren.*

I recall when I was a child some friends were talking about their godparents, and I asked my mother who mine was. Without hesitation she told me it was my aunty Lynne, and certainly my aunt has taken on a maternal role towards me many times in my life. Some of my earliest memories of crafting are with aunty Lynne, of learning to knit as a right hander by sitting across from her as a left hander; I am guessing I was probably around six or seven years of age. Lynne also taught me about resilience through keeping active; persevere and continue moving forward, something I relied on often through the course of this research. Lynne listened often and gave words of assurance and advice while I was going through difficulties, and I believe this contributed to women's voices becoming stronger in my writing.

Caitlyn Murch

> *My name is Caitlyn and I am the daughter of Lynne. I am a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation. Crafting has always been part of my life, with some of my favourite childhood memories involving my mother, Nonnie and Aunties gathering to discuss all things craft related. I learnt from my mother how to knit, crochet, sew and many more. I now work as an emergency and*

toxicology doctor, and love sewing/crocheting/knitting in my spare time to help refocus my mind. Even now, I love that my children are already interested in our crafting.

As my cousin Caitlyn was one of my childhood play friends, and now as adults I still regard her as an important person to my life. Caitlyn made an extreme effort to come along to one of our yarns just a few days after she had given birth and without her contribution it would have been difficult to comprehend how our family's cultural practices have flowed through the generations to now, as she teaches the newest generation. Caity's openness in so many ways has made me feel comfortable to likewise share; she taught me about keeping a good humour and positivity, something I have relied on heavily through this journey.

Gloria Nipperess

My name is Gloria, I am Danièle's grandmother. I am a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation. I am well known in my family as a storyteller. I love telling stories of my Aboriginal grandmother as it keeps her stories alive for the next generation. I learned my crafting skills from observing my mother and extended family. Well into my 80s I led bushwalks around the Newcastle and Sydney areas, and further afield. I love the quietness of bushwalking, the smell and feel of the bush, it has a calming effect for me. I like all the bush, the shrubbery, the wattle, animals, native flowers, the waterfalls and rivers, everything you see. I liked exploring new tracks and finding different things in the bush, it gave me happiness. I enjoy sharing, and learned to look further out into the bush other than what was just at my feet. I had the ability to remember where I walked by just walking it. I am known as Nonnie, and I am an Elder of the family.

My grandmother taught me bravery. Though she might not see this in herself, she is one of the most courageous and strongest women I know. She shared with me difficult stories about our family, facing up to them nonetheless because as she says, they are the truth. She also showed me the importance of joy and gratitude, as she finds something to be grateful for even when things are bleak, or she is feeling tired or low. As children Nonnie used to take us on bushwalks, and I sense many of the lessons I learned about being respectful to the land came from her, if not directly, through interactions with others who learned from her.

Uncle Greg Simms

> *My name is Uncle Greg Simms and I am known as an activist for reconciliation, a traditional woodcarver, a storyteller and an Aboriginal cultural educator. I consider woodcarving to be my Dreaming. I grew up in La Perouse and now live in Western Sydney. My ties to the Aboriginal community of Greater Sydney are through my ancestral links to the Gundungurra (water dragon lizard people) of the Blue Mountains and the Gadigal (whale people) of the Dharug nation. I am also connected to the Budawang (beach plover people) of the Yuin nation on the South Coast through the Brown family. I am a great supporter of the Muslim communities of the Sydney area, and have for many years donated my artworks towards* Relay For Life *and to raise money to support sick children.*

I think the words I say most to Uncle Greg are, 'Can I ask you a question?' Fortunately for me he always agrees, listens and answers openly and with care. Uncle Greg has shared so many of his stories and ways of knowing Country with me, and from each one has left space for me to understand the multitude of layers hidden within the narrative. I learned from Uncle Greg about connecting to Country irrespective of being in an urban environment; something that can be hard to sense in the noise of civic life. He also taught me about cultural practices, and how this connects to Dreaming, heritage and culture.

Kaleena Smith (Briggs)

> *My name is Kaleena Smith (Briggs), I am an Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri/Yorta Yorta people. I am originally from Melbourne but have spent most of my life in Sydney living on Gadigal Country. For the last 20 years I have been a member of the band* Stiff Gins *with best friend Nardi Simpson. During our extensive career* Stiff Gins *have travelled and performed around the world and across Australia. Along with Nardi I have also developed the arts project* Spirit of Things/Sound of Objects *which explores residual and embedded stories and songs retained in Aboriginal cultural material, this was then performed at Carriageworks for the Live Works Festival. I have completed a Bachelor of Education at the University of Technology Sydney and now work in the Indigenous unit, Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, as the Indigenous Programs and Outreach Coordinator.*

Kaleena and Nardi's[28] beautiful project, the *Spirit of Things/Sound of Objects*, related directly to my own explorations about Aboriginal objects and the relationships they hold with people and Country. Kaleena helped me find the language to speak about some of the experiences I was having with cultural objects, and how to draw out the narratives and knowledges enclosed within an object. She taught me to be bold with my language about my work, and to own my role in my family and community. Kaleena and Nardi's music sustained me through many writing sessions, and helped me to find words that sometimes were otherwise not there.

Part II: Women's Business, Voices, Narratives and Knowledges

According to Ambelin Kwaymullina[29], Aboriginal women were born at the beginning alongside the nations of the continent, thousands upon thousands of years ago, 'along with grandmother crow and sister rock, formed out of the substance of the earth, our mother' (2017, pp. 100-101). She continues, 'Indigenous women were women of power. We walked the hills and the riverbanks and the deserts; we cared for the sacred places; and we followed the [L]aw that gave us a place that was different from, but not inferior to, that of men' (pp. 100-101). This idea is expanded upon by Borroloola woman, Alma[30]:

> We are Aboriginal women. We talk for our hunting business, ceremony business. We used to go hunting, we can't wait for the men. We are ladies, we go hunting and feed the men too … Men never used to boss over the women. We are bosses ourselves, women ourselves. Sometime man used to work for woman too when we come back from hunting, tired and everything, and husband to work for us (Gale 1983, p. 70).

Larissa Behrendt describes the 'traditional' roles that pre-invasion Aboriginal society had, explaining them as not being subordinate, rather as autonomous, with 'their own special ceremonies and stories which men were not allowed to witness or know' (1993, p. 28). Behrendt explains how Aboriginal women

[28] Nardi Simpson is of the Yuwaalaraay nation with ties to Gamilaraay Country.

[29] Ambelin Kwaymullina belongs to the Palkyu people from the Pilbara in the north-west of Western Australia.

[30] Alma's surname is unrecorded in the book; however, she is described as being a Nardidji woman, a 'sacred person among the Borroloola women although, at the same time, a quite ordinary person' (Avery, John in Gale 1983, p. 68).

were the primary providers, making them economically powerful and independent since before colonisation – a fight non-Indigenous women have comparatively only relatively recently won. She says,

> Women played an important role spiritually within Aboriginal society. The Rainbow Serpent, the spirit of creation, was a female energy. Spiritual rites were inherited through the mother. The place of conception and birth of a child were chosen by the mother, not the father. These places would have spiritual significance in a person's life … Women were consulted on matters concerning the clan. They enforced the laws broken by other women. A female elder within a group could have more authority and influence than a male elder (1993, p. 28).

Indigenous Women in the Colonial Narrative

The world – or to be specific, the western colonised world – is still defined as male. The masculine perspective dominates over the female voice, male stories overwhelm female, '[t]he narratives are male' (Behrendt 2000, p. 176). The western male voice that carries 'male values, European values, and erroneous assumptions' has disempowered women, specifically Aboriginal women whose experiences lie not only in a racial but also a patriarchal structure, also sitting at the bottom of the class system. Larissa Behrendt continues in relation to this matter, '[b]y eradicating any mention of the roles and power they had in their own community, and describing them as "Beasts of Burden" and chattels of Aboriginal men, their place at the lowest level of the colonial socioeconomic hierarchy was cemented' (p. 176). This disregards our original roles in which the women had agency, authority, responsibility and independence, 'making misogyny a legacy of colonialism for Aboriginal women' (p. 176). Myrna Cunningham[31] describes the egalitarian ethic of Indigenous communities in which 'men and women are complimentary and women are revered as the source of preservation of the social and cultural heritage of our Peoples' (2006, p. 57). She asserts that Indigenous women's struggles should be against patriarchal systems that grew out of colonialism. I would also argue that women are disempowered spatially, since we inhabit spaces designed for and constructed by males. Furthermore, the systems and processes around those spaces are built to enable western colonial prosperous males.

[31] Myrna Cunningham is a Miskita woman from Nicaragua.

White male anthropologists assumed that Aboriginal women held a similarly subordinate position in their society to European women in western society (and there was no equivalent of 'women's business' in European culture). They therefore ignored the roles Indigenous women played in our societies, introducing patriarchal and hierarchical systems. They did not record our women's stories, values and locations of significant sites, the result being that women's sites were not protected. Consequently, the culture and spirituality of Aboriginal women has been fragmented, and purposefully so, more rapidly than that of Aboriginal men (Behrendt 1993).

For Aboriginal women, including those in my family, the experience of invasion included not only dispossession, assimilation, destruction of culture, abduction, denial of language and customs, murder, incarceration and exploitation of labour, but also rape, sexism and removal of their standing in society. This resulted in guilt, self-blaming and shame, and traumas being passed between generations (Behrendt 1993; Dudgeon 2017; Mia 2017)[32] [33]. According to Janet Mooney[34], Lynette Riley[35] and Fabri Blacklock[36] (2018), statistically Aboriginal women have higher rates of mental and physical health issues as a result of colonisation, and experience more domestic violence compared to non-Indigenous women. It is not my intention to name the specific events nor those involved; however, these experiences formed part of the story for the women in my family. I know and carry these stories along with the insurmountable will of the women involved to survive. White settlement started to impact my family from the 1810s, just 20 years after invasion, which meant my family was amongst the earliest to be affected. Despite the devastating experiences of my Ancestors, and irrespective of the long years of being impacted by invaders, the women in my family continue telling the stories of our family, and passing on practices and crafting knowledge. Talking about our experiences, or yarning up, empowers Aboriginal women (Mooney, Riley & Blacklock 2018) and yarning is one method the women in my family have continued to use to ensure the continuance of our heritage. Irene Watson describes this cultural transmission as Grandmother's Laws, saying, 'our grandmothers held the [L]aw and they carried and

[32] Pat Dudgeon is from the Bardi people of the Kimberley area in Western Australia.

[33] Tjalaminu Mia is a Menang, Goreng and Wardji woman of the Nyungar nation, and the Great Southern region of Western Australia.

[34] Janet Mooney was raised in La Perouse, her mother's father was an Aboriginal Yuin man.

[35] Lynette Riley is from the Wiradjuri nation — Dubbo and Gamilaroi nation — Moree.

[36] Fabri Blacklock's mob are the Nucoorilma/Ngarabal people from Tingha and Glen Innes and the Biripi people from Dingo Creek near Taree.

passed onto future generations what they could within a rapidly changing colonised space' (2007, p. 98). She continues:

> With the white-washing or the making invisible of women's [L]aw came the transferred western values, which left Aboriginal women little opportunity to represent their [L]aw stories, or hold in place our own meanings and functions of the law … Laws relating to the obligation to care for [C]ountry and family, ecological sustainability, and the ethics of sharing and caring and their deeper philosophy remain largely unknown to the public (p. 100).

Watson describes Grandmother's Laws as 'a continuing strategy for providing a safe and healthy environment for women and children. In the same way our [L]aws of women did when they were sovereign to this land' (p. 96). She claims that 'the presence of Aboriginal women and our calling up of the sovereignty of the Grandmother's [L]aw causes a disruption to the stability of a colonising white patriarchy' (p. 105).

Aboriginal Women's Standpoint

For Aboriginal women, our ways of knowing are shaped not only by our Indigeneity, but also by our experiences as women. Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Maggie Walter (2009) say Indigenous women share experiences of being mothers, sisters, daughters, aunties, grandmothers and leaders in our communities. We share experiences of racism and sexism and of living in a society that deprecates and depreciates us as Indigenous women. We share dispossession and oppression and the continual denial of our sovereignty, having no epistemic or systemic authority within the academy, and negotiating public and private spaces that are non-Indigenous and masculine. This results in, for me as a researcher, a political commitment to examining and challenging western patriarchal ways of knowing us. Moreton-Robinson developed the *Indigenous women's standpoint* as a way of doing research, explaining it as an extension of communal responsibilities. As our families and communities provide us with the contexts and knowledges that shape our work, we are therefore accountable to them, and 'the values we bring to our research are bounded by our understanding that all things are connected' (Moreton-Robinson & Walter 2009, p. 6). She says Indigenous women's ontologies and belonging are derived from our relationship to Country and ancestral beings through our Bloodlines. Furthermore, 'Indigenous women's bodies are tangible evidence of our sovereignty, and our embodiment as Indigenous women is evidence

of our ontology; it is born of the interrelationship between ancestral beings, humans and [C]ountry' (p. 6) and is 'not destroyed by colonisation' (p. 6).

As an Indigenous woman, researcher and designer, it is not possible for me to dislocate myself from an Aboriginal women's perspective and experiences in the research process. I am not a 'blank canvas'; my culture, values, knowledge and experiences are inseparable from the research. Therefore, this writing inherently operates through an Indigenous women's worldview. Kathy Absolon[37] and Cam Willett[38] discuss the importance of locating oneself in Indigenous research to ensure that individual realities are not misrepresented as generalisable collectives. They say, 'Our ancestors gave us membership into nations and traditions; location both remembers and "re-members" us to those things' (2005, p. 123). Important to self-location are the connections and relationships established, built and maintained, not only with others, but with Country and narrative.

My Grandmother's Grandmother, A Yuin Woman's Perspective

> *It is often said that the first sound we hear in the womb is our mother's heartbeat. Actually, the first sound to vibrate our newly developed hearing apparatus is the pulse of our mother's blood through her veins and arteries. We vibrate to that primordial rhythm even before we have ears to hear. Before we were conceived, we existed in part as an egg in our mother's ovary. All the eggs a woman will ever carry form in her ovaries while she is a four-month-old fetus in the womb of her mother. This means our cellular life as an egg begins in the womb of our grandmother. Each of us spent five months in our grandmother's womb and she in turn formed within the womb of her grandmother. We vibrate to the rhythms of our mother's blood before she herself is born (Redmond 1997, p. 39).*

As I look backwards in my family tree, I see a long continuous Bloodline of Budawang women providing guidance and leadership for the family. In contrast with colonial anthropological recordings – and as noted by other New South Wales coastal families (Pascoe recorded by Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2017; Foley 2000; McKnight 2015) – my family is matricentric, oriented towards the

[37] Kathy Absolon is an Anishinabe (Ojibway) woman from Flying Post First Nation in Canada.

[38] Cam Willett is a Bill C-31 status Indian from Little Pine First Nation in Saskatchewan, his mother is Cree.

mother[39]. Strong women have led and directed our family and it is clear their decisions ensured the safety and continuation of the family, and now they enable me to have a voice. My life, and this writing, is shaped by the shared experiences and collective memories of these women, Ancestors and current, from both sides of my family. The matrilineal intergenerational transfer of knowledges and narratives is strengthened by our heritage that links us. I am conscious of this connection with my Ancestors and their voices have spoken through me to ensure their stories are heard here.

For the women in my family, making has been a pursuit for as far back as our stories take us. For us, crafting is part of our women's business. It is important to mention that while women's business is referred to in this writing, I am not describing a white feminist concept. I am meaning knowledges and practices that are specific to, held by and transmitted by women. In my family, women's business and men's business are equally important, as is shared business. They are equal but not the same.

Our practice of crafting has been a means of transmitting culture as well as providing a space to share stories even when crafts such as weaving could not be performed in the open. It is in this way that our family has been and remains matricentric, oriented towards females, as, regardless of what happened, the grandmothers, mothers, aunties, sisters and cousins ensured the safety of the children, transmission of our stories and the continuation of our lineage.

Depicting the histories of her foremothers as stories of endurance and resilience as much as stories of rape, indignities and prejudice, Pat Dudgeon says their 'resistance and survival fills our hearts with respect, pride and admiration' (2017, p. 107). By acknowledging the 'dual influences of racist and sexist ideologies on how they [Aboriginal women] were perceived' (p. 111), we can understand their stories, and our own, and the resulting silencing of Aboriginal women's views. Dudgeon gives us, Aboriginal women, the responsibility of ensuring that our foremother's stories, so often silenced, are remembered and their lives retold as a tribute to those women. Thus, it is my intention in telling our stories that women's places and narratives are made visible and heard, a reclaiming of not only our crafting practices but also our spaces.

[39] It should be noted that when referring to the mother, or Minga in Yuin culture, we are not only referring to human females but also Mother Earth.

We are Women. We are not victims. Nor are we merely survivors. We are Women. We have creation powers. We are the Creators of the Future (Atkinson 2002, p. 3).

Part III: Storytelling and Narratives on Country

For many First Nations communities, storytelling is an essential tool for the survival and empowerment of Indigenous knowledges, cultures and identities. Most importantly, it is a means of connecting to Country and landscape, and a method of forming First Nations' understandings of the creation of the Earth and the cosmos. Ambelin Kwaymullina (2017) describes how Aboriginal women are part of this ageless tradition of storytelling, telling stories of how the world began and how to live sustainably to ensure it always continues. Our narratives are not separate from us and our diverse worldviews, they are woven into every aspect of our existence and are still embedded in our lands and ourselves. Kwaymullina (2017) indicates that these days, our stories tell us not only of our Laws and creation but also include accounts of colonisation. In this colonised space, Aboriginal women walk in multiple worlds, negotiating systems, institutions and spaces that do not reflect our worldviews.

Storytelling is the study of narrative and the ways people experience the world; 'humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives' (Connelly & Clandinin 1990, p. 2). For Indigenous peoples, it is the study of our lived experiences, a means of reciprocal educating and learning, a passing along of stored knowledge in narrative with the listeners of the story having as much responsibility to and for the story as the storyteller. Kaleena Smith (Briggs)[40] describes storytelling as her way of telling people about her Country, and a way to connect with people from other cultures. Storytelling also connects us to our dances, ceremonies and languages; even if they have changed, they connect us back as we create new stories, like a never-ending cycle (Yarn with K Smith 2017 on 5 July). Anthony McKnight says, 'Storying is the "legacy pedagogy" that is passed on to the next generations to be "held"' (2015, p. 282). He continues:

[40] Kaleena Smith (Briggs) is a Wiradjuri/Yorta Yorta woman from the Riverina around Narrandera and near Cummeragunja Mission on the Murray and the Murrumbidgee Rivers.

> The teaching of the correct stories from Country is the responsibility of the holders of the story. Importantly, the beholders to the story have an obligation in the learning process as well, as respect is shown in many varying (culture-specific) forms. The silence while on Country, while listening and viewing the story, provides the depth in meaning, placing the responsibility on the viewers of the story to feel the story (2015, p. 282).

This method of cultural transmission creates space for us to make sense of our lived experiences and of shared events over time and through space.

My grandmother is well known as a storyteller. Whenever she suggests we sit down and have a yarn over a cuppa, I know I am in for a treat. Despite having told me numerous stories of her own life and our family over the years, every time we have a yarn she still has new stories to share. Somehow these stories bring me closer not only to her as the storyteller, but to those whose stories she tells. She has shared some tales that are incredibly difficult to hear, stories that fill me with gratitude for the strength and resilience of my Ancestors. These sorts of stories are not unusual for Indigenous women, as Tjalaminu Mia says,

> Oppression was a commonality for all our Old People, experienced one way or another. As I see it, an individual story is only that, but a collective story and experience – the common thread that runs through – makes up a tapestry of the struggles shared by them all. I also feel that by embarking on journeys, they can give us opportunities to reconnect to our ancestors (2017, p. 53).

My grandmother says that sharing the stories she learned while she was growing up of those she associated with, her relatives and forebears, enables her to share those people with younger generations who did not know them (Yarn with G Nipperess 2018 on 27 January). She especially likes sharing stories of her grandmother, Margaret Ann Brown[41], who she describes as a remarkable Yuin woman. It is my privilege to now carry some of these stories, and my responsibility to share them so as to keep honouring my Ancestors and family.

[41] Margaret Ann Brown is a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation.

History, Knowledge, Substantiation

> *It happened at a meeting between an Indian community in northwest British Columbia and some government officials. The officials claimed the land for the government. The natives were astonished by the claim. They couldn't understand what these relative newcomers were talking about. Finally one of the elders put what was bothering them in the form of a question. 'If this is your land,' he asked, 'where are your stories?' He spoke in English, but then he moved into Gitskan, the Tsimshian language of his people – and told a story.*
>
> *All of a sudden everyone understood … even though the government foresters didn't know a word of Gitskan, and neither did some of his Gitskan companions. But what they understood was more important: how stories give meaning and value to the places we call home; how they bring us close to the world we live in by taking us into a world of words; how they hold us together and at the same time keep us apart (Chamberlin 2003, p. 1).*

Telling stories is a key part of Indigenous pedagogies (Iseke 2013; Martin-Booran Mirraboopa 2008)[42]. Stories hold our histories and knowledges. They are our archives. They are medicines for our mind and healing for our spirit. Tom McCallum[43] says:

> Stories are a history of our people from many lifetimes and … stories are real. Storytelling was used in communities as a form of entertainment … because we have what we call a holistic approach. We include a lot of things in storytelling that we leave for the other person to be able to interpret themselves. It gets their mind going. It puts their experience together and validates them as a person who has the ability to be able to draw from that storytelling and relate it to their own lives (Iseke & Brennus 2011, p. 249).

Furthering the idea of allowing space for the listener to interpret and learn from a story, Uncle Greg Simms says:

[42] Judy Iseke is a member of the Metis Nation of Alberta.

[43] Tom McCallum, White Standing Buffalo, is a Métis Elder.

> When the Old People used to tell us stories, we'd say 'he's talking murrinj[44]'. We'd go back the next day and listen to the Old People telling stories, and we'd think he was murrinj, but we kept going back to listen to their stories, we'd be four, five or six years old … At 19, 20, 21, you'd be walking down the road, you might be on your own and start thinking about the old fella telling those murrinj stories, and then you'd stop, and think 'I know what that old fella was trying to tell me'. It wasn't stupid stories after all. And the reason why he put it in that way of thinking or looking at it was because we weren't supposed to know what it was all about until we got to a certain age. He knew what he was all about! (Yarn with G Simms 2015 on 28 October).

This way of learning, through cycles of hearing and rehearing the same stories over and over, ensures stories are not only remembered, but the lessons are learned throughout a lifetime, even when the teller of the story is no longer there.

Jo-anne Archibald describes the pedagogical potential of storytelling in relation to some teachings from her nation, the Stó:lô, which she indicates are about cultural respect, responsibility and reciprocity. She says, 'According to these teachings, important knowledge and wisdom contain power. If one comes to understand and appreciate the power of a particular knowledge, then one must be ready to share and teach it respectfully and responsibly to others in order for this knowledge, and its power, to continue' (2008, p. 3). She says that stories have a power as part of the pedagogical process used not only to educate, but also heal the body, heart, mind and spirit.

Teaching the stories of Country is the responsibility of the holders of the story. Anthony McKnight writes, 'In Yuin ways of knowing, learning and behaving we must listen to Minga (Mother) speaking to us without voice so that we can see her story through the wisdom of the Elders' (2015, p. 282). He describes Uncle Dulumunmun Max Harrison saying, 'I must give it away to hold it' in relation to stories and knowledges. While knowledge is a privilege rather than a right, without our storytellers and Knowledge Holders mindfully and appropriately sharing their knowledge, our culture cannot be maintained as the longest continuous culture.

[44] Murrinj means 'stupid' in Dharug language.

Connection and Continuity

Storytelling through yarning contains the threads of our history as it 'moves into the present tense, its parameters within present time is filtered through the memories of the past as the two move simultaneously and at points collide and reveals fragments of the future' (Geia, Hayes & Usher 2013, p. 15). This type of narrative making enables us to reclaim our stories and reconstruct our lives in new ways, in spite of colonisation, ensuring continuity of culture and connection to shared lived experiences with family and wider community networks (Geia, Hayes & Usher 2013).

In Yuin creation stories, the woman, Ngardi, was created first by our creation spirit Daramah and then came Tunku, the man. The creator gave Ngardi and Tunku two gifts; a rock and a tree, which symbolise everything we need for our survival[45]. For Yuin people, women were first from the beginning. In my family, this is reflected in the family structure, as women have often been, and continue to be, cultural leaders and Knowledge Holders for the family. As Yuin women – some of the first women to be affected by colonisers – my foremothers made immense decisions in order to keep our family safe. These decisions changed the direction of all our lives and are part of my own narrative of dispossession and survival. Pat Dudgeon says of Aboriginal women, 'Through their stories and ours, we can name the oppressions and injustices, we can name our strengths, culture and spirituality, and we can also celebrate how we as individuals had to, and still do, join together to make rich lives amid the difficulties' (2017, p. 109).

Through our family stories and histories, we can name the people who were first impacted by colonisers, and know how they were affected by colonial processes. We can name Wandera and Kalloar, a couple living in the Clyde River area around the 1830s onwards, recorded in William Oldrey's 1842 and 1843 censuses as having received colonial blankets. We can name Thomas Golden Brown who lived on Currowan Reserve near Nelligen with his family, a reserve of 60 acres gazetted in 1893. His family were employed to cut timber and cultivate wattle bark, as well as fishing and undertaking odd jobs for the colonisers. During the 1870s and 1880s, fishing boats were provided by the government to some South Coast Aboriginal families (Egloff 2000), and Thomas, as reported by the Aborigines Protection Board in

[45] This is a story I have been told many times by many people as it is a Yuin creation story. Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison includes this story in his book (2013), as does Uncle Bruce Pascoe in his talk (2016).

1882, applied to the Police Magistrate for a government boat to help them make a living (Legislative Assembly New South Wales 1883). The stories in my family indicate that a few years later, Thomas's son, Patrick Joseph Brown, sailed a boat from their traditional lands north to Gumbaynggirr Country. However, when looking at the stories in more depth, the decision to leave their lands was actually initiated by two sisters, Elizabeth Marshall, wife of Patrick, and Catherine (Bridget) Marshall, married to William Donovan. This was in part due to concern over the restrictive actions and attitudes of the local Aboriginal Protectors and Reserve Managers, as well as disease epidemics, which were impacting their kin around them. Commissioner Lambie wrote to the Chief Commissioner,

> They are few in number on the Table Land of Maneroo; somewhat more numerous along the seacoast, but everywhere decreasing rapidly … There is every probability of the few Aborigines [sic] belonging to this District soon becoming extinct, from the number that die annually of Influenza, and Consumption (1851).

There were also massacres occurring to kin. Uncle Noel Butler[46] describes a massacre at Murramarang Beach, the same beach on which people were observed by Captain Cook aboard the *Endeavour* – the first Aboriginal people he saw on his voyage, believed to be Budawang people. Uncle Noel describes the massacre as follows:

> … the guy who was running the place was tired of the so-called 'blacks' coming spearing his bullocks or causing a nuisance I suppose … he asked for permission to 'get rid' of some of them and his request was granted as long as he … got rid of some of the ringleaders. And who's the ringleaders? I mean, we've got documents at home from Alexander Berry stating exactly the same sort thing, 'get rid of the ringleaders.' Butlers and Browns and there's three names I think mentioned in the paperwork that I have of the records. And so, he was given permission to shoot so many of them. So, in the camp I suppose when it was at their will they decided to shoot whoever was on the property at the time, which was, to my recollection an old man, an old lady, a very heavily pregnant lady and a couple of boys (Butler recorded by National Library of Australia 2011).

[46] Uncle Noel Butler is a Budawang Elder of the Yuin nation, and a Dhurga speaker.

This officially sanctioned massacre of kin, Butlers and Browns, happened in 1832 around 50 years before my family left the area.

In around 1890, the Aborigines' Protection Board developed a policy enabling the removal of children of mixed descent from their families in order to assimilate them into the white population. Incorporated into the *Aborigines Protection Act* of 1909, amended in 1915, are the words:

> The Board may assume full control and custody of the child of any aborigine [sic], if after due inquiry it is satisfied that such a course is in the interest of the moral or physical welfare of such child. The Board may thereupon remove such child to such control and care as it thinks best (Aborigines Protection Board 1909).

So, out of fear of massacres, sickness, family separations and child removals – especially the removal of paler children – in 1885 Patrick, Elizabeth and their family headed north from the Budawang tribal area to Brown's Crossing near Eungai, which lies between Macksville and Kempsey. Their daughter, my great-great grandmother, Margaret Ann Brown, travelled with them, aged three years. I can only imagine the anxiety my Ancestors must have felt in order to make the major decision to leave their lands and extended kin to move north. When confronted with the stories of dispossession faced by our family, my mother, Robyn Hromek[47], described it as very disorienting; everything of us was taken over, as if it needed fixing. Their beautiful paradise was made to seem somehow imperfect, millennia of practice of living with County ignored and brutalised. And not only their paradise, but them as people as well (Yarn with R Hromek 2018 on 1 February). The concerns about leaving their traditional lands were outweighed by the concerns of losing their children or their lives. Our stories say they heard rumours that by squatting on the land on the mid-North Coast, it would be granted to them by the government. In hindsight it is now clear this was only the case for whitefellas; our family were refused on the grounds that no 'improvements' had been made to the land, the irony being that Brown's Crossing was eventually named after them.

[47] Robyn Hromek is a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation.

While Alfred William Howitt (1996) claims the extent of marriage partners for Yuin families was the Shoalhaven, the stories of our family imply that there were relationships with mobs much further north and west, and that our family followed familiar trading routes, or songlines, to kin connections in the north. Uncle Greg Simms, whose grandparents were likewise removed from where they camped on the future footprint of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in Gadigal lands to La Perouse, says the Old People were always travelling along the coast, staying with family and extended kin networks. He remembers sitting in his father's workshop listening to people speaking in all sorts of 'lingo', including Dharug (around Sydney), Bundjalung (far North Coast), Dhurga (South Coast) and places in between (Yarn with G Simms 2015 on 28 October).

My Ancestors were directly affected by and made decisions based upon assimilationist governmental policies, as well as massacres, child removals and dispossessions occurring to and around them. It was on this basis that our family became part of the Hidden Generations. While it is clear from the stories my grandmother tells there were happy times at Eungai, the other side of the experience is of the grandmothers, mothers and aunties listening out for strange cars and sending the children into the bush to hide from welfare authorities. My mother talks about our family, after relocating to the mid-North Coast, becoming our own tribe, who looked after each other and maintained familial structures and practices (Yarn with R Hromek 2018 on 1 February), albeit in a more hidden way. Shannon Foster[48] likewise describes her own family's experiences:

> Our story does more than just highlight the government's assimilation policies, it also interrogates the dichotomy of the Aboriginal experience that says you either grew up on a mission or you were Stolen Generations. There are other lived experiences made up of mission refugees, runners, and those swept up in the policies of assimilation, in the hope of a better life for our children. We created our own communities forged by the intended destruction of that which we would not allow to be destroyed. My father was not stolen from his immediate family, he was stolen from his community of origin, but he created another one around us, drawing in the love and respect of an extended family of wonderful aunties and uncles that helped him preserve culture and pass it onto us just as our Ancestors have done for generations before him (Foster 2018).

[48] Shannon Foster is a D'harawal Saltwater Knowledge Keeper.

‘Hidden Generations’ is a term to describe Indigenous peoples who were hidden from colonisers, sometimes by hiding physically, other times by hiding their Indigeneity or cultural practices, and in some instances having their identities hidden from them. This process of being ‘hidden’ was to ensure safety and continuity. In my family, not only were our children sent to hide from welfare and other government organisations in the bush, they were also hidden in plain sight, disguised for their own safety. Irrespective of being hidden, our knowledges and ways of being, as well as our cultural and performative practices, were often passed on to us in a hidden yet safe way to ensure these were maintained for future generations, to be reclaimed when it was once again safe.

Spatial Narratives of Country

> *For their part, of course, [A]boriginal societies thought of themselves as the civilised ones. ‘There goes the neighbourhood,’ they said when they saw the settlers arriving. They believed the place was indisputably theirs. They had stories of being there forever, and of how the rivers and prairies and mountains and lakes with which they shared dominion over the land came into being. The so-called settlers seemed like the wanderers to them, strange presences (Chamberlin 2003, p. 31).*

Moving through Country is part of storytelling. Movement is not wandering, rather a focused action of custodianship. To learn Country through being on Country and walking Country is to experience it, is to hear its stories, is to know it. Narratives are in and of the land, and our knowledges are grounded in Country. Our stories are woven spatially as part of walking the land. McKnight (2015) indicates that a purpose of storytelling is to initiate a reciprocal, respectful and spiritual relationship with Country in order to care for Country as an everyday lived experience, an entwined journey through Country. He says Country is the source of the knowledge, and thus the principal teacher, with Elders as the guides.

Our stories that connect us to the land and each other are much older than the process of institutional colonisation. Our ‘stories create the relationships that have made communities strong even through numerous atrocities and injustices’ (Goeman 2013, p. 28)[49]. Despite the agonising decision to leave

[49] Mishuana Goeman is from the Tonawanda Band of Seneca Indians in the State of New York area, North America.

their lands, my family remained connected through our stories and cultural practices. Like many families of the Hidden Generations, we nevertheless maintained our kin networks. Certainly, our cultural practices have changed to incorporate new technologies and techniques, as happens with all cultures over time, and our stories now include narratives of dispossession and colonisation, yet we have always stayed strong with each other. My grandmother says her grandmother, Margaret Ann Brown, accompanied her brothers back to the South Coast for work and to visit mob down there. It was a familiar pattern for our family not only to return to the places where they were born and had kin connections, but to follow an established songline that had been walked for millennia.

Just as our people have followed songlines, so have our stories. These lines of energy connect people, place and every entity within a space, often encased in songs, dances and narratives. In this manner, our land is a 'storyscape' (Larsen & Johnson 2012, p.10), revealing our origins and events that have occurred, while at the same time also carrying the Laws and knowledges that unite us forever in the landscape, seascape and skyscape. Thus, terrain becomes experience and memory, and knowing the stories is knowing Country, creating connection to place and space. Knowledge of our narratives is a shared responsibility, so even if one part becomes detached or separated from the whole, the stories remain intact, stored in people and land.

Storytelling has remained a fundamental means of enabling Indigenous peoples to maintain their cultures, contest their identities and reclaim their spaces. Our narratives have kept our communities connected, despite colonial processes, helping us to reconnect with each other despite foreign, introduced structures designed to keep us apart. Our knowledges and Laws have been stored and storied within the land, which as part of our cultural and performative practices are forever there for us to (re)engage with. In retelling our stories and articulating new stories, we always are, just as we always have been and always will be.

CHAPTER 3: ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS IS

ENDURING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LAND – ORAL AND WRITTEN ACCOUNTS

Introduction[1]

Aboriginal understandings of space are fused with our knowings of Country, our relationships with land and our experiences of how those values are embodied through cultural practices, songs and movement, according to our stories, for time immemorial and eternal. We are inseparable from the land; our bodies come from it and will return to it, just as our Ancestors' bodies have, just as their spirits continue to care for it. In our ways of knowing our spaces, everything is related, unified and carries its own Law, which determines how we act and interact with each other, and always have done so. Enrique Salmón[2] writes in a similar vein that the fine web of interactivity between people, land, animals, plants, rocks, this blade of grass, that faraway star and everything between has no 'hierarchy of privilege' (2012, p. 27). No one entity, including humans, is placed above or below another, and our different roles, duties, contexts and places are equally valued.

The title of this chapter refers to a maxim used by Aboriginal land rights activists: 'always was, always will be Aboriginal land' and our stories support this phrase. According to Aunty Julie Freeman[3], our connections to our Galamban[4] or Country are very ancient, originating from the 'absolute beginning of the world … before we were human beings, when we were other things coming through the world' (2016). Aunty Julie says our stories are accurate histories of place. They remind us we were here when it was ice, when the first eucalypts bloomed, when other things were forming alongside us, informing our ways of being and thinking. From that ancient beginning, our Ancestors have returned to their lands

[1] This chapter has been published in a book titled *Our Voices: Indigeneity and Architecture* (D Hromek 2018).

[2] Enrique Salmón is from the Rarámuri people of the northern Mexico region of Chihuahua.

[3] Aunty Julie Freeman is a traditional owner of the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community on the South Coast of New South Wales. Her mother is of the Gurawarl (Wonga pigeon) clan from Botany Bay (Kamay), and her father was a Wandandiandi man of the Yuin nation.

[4] Galamban means homeland, heartland or Country in D'harawal.

to die, their essences joining their Ancestors' essences, to eventually become ours and in turn the essences of future generations. Aunty Julie states:

> The DNA of every grandmother and grandfather from the beginning of the world is here in your Galamban because it was theirs before it was yours and every piece of them is contained in the earth. And singing up the ground and making the dust fly and breathing that in, is strengthening you because it is the absolute DNA of everyone you have ever been (Freeman recorded by Kaldor Public Art Projects 2016).

Through our genetic material we are connected to Country, to other species and to the beginning – and to the creation of Indigenous space.

As with most relationships, Aboriginal connections with land are an ongoing and enduring process of renegotiation, reassessing, reclaiming. These occur on a personal level but have wider political effects and social connotations. Additionally, while this chapter discusses shared themes and related ways of knowing, our ways of being as First Peoples are very diverse, and this diversity must be acknowledged and respected. Accordingly, while this chapter discusses Aboriginal connections to spaces, these perspectives come from a diverse range of individual people speaking of their own particular connections. Largely these are people inhabiting the continent now known as Australia; however, when relevant and useful for comparative purposes of argumentation, there are references to Indigenous peoples from other lands. Sources include oral narratives as well as written words, delivered from an Indigenous-only perspective. Incorporated in the review are the voices of Elders and younger people, academics and people working on Country, peers and heroes. None are privileged above another; rather, they are wrapped together based on themes that make up Indigenous space.

The Indigenous philosophy authored by Dennis Foley interacts via three interrelating worlds: the physical, human and sacred. He says:

> The physical world is the base that is land, the creation. The land is the mother, and we are of the land …. The land is our food, our culture, our spirit and our identity …. The human world involves the knowledge, approaches to people, family, rules of behaviour, ceremonies, and their capacity to

> change. The sacred world is not based entirely in the metaphysical, as some would believe. Its foundation is in healing (both the spiritual and physical wellbeing of all creatures), the lore (the retention and re-enforcement of oral history), care of [C]ountry, the [L]aws and their maintenance (2003, pp. 46-47).

Every entity exists and connects to others in equilibrium according to the Law, all held by Country. These three interacting worlds are interwoven in this chapter across four parts. The first part, subtitled *Relationality, Connectivity, Reciprocity*, describes how all entities in land and thus space are connected, not only physically, but sensorially and experientially. It illustrates how these networks flow into and within each other and how the Aboriginal experience of Country, as well as our identities, are irrevocably intertwined. The second part, *Dreaming Landscape*, discusses how, according to our narratives, our relationships with land and each other originated, resulting in our Laws, custodial responsibilities and kinship structures. At the core of our lands are our sacred spaces, the liminal spaces between the Dreaming, the human and physical domains through which the everyday and spiritual, as well as the conceptual and actual, are expressed. The third part, *Singing the Land*, describes the human expression of that Dreaming relationship in which Aboriginal peoples are spatialised and temporalised beings (beings in space and time) driven by the celestial, earthly and cultural cycles of which they are part. These cycles guide our movements, through which songs, arts and knowledges map the land. This part includes a discussion of languages and methods of communication, born of the land to facilitate human and nonhuman exchanges carrying messages, stories and memories of Country. The fourth and final part, *Landscape as Monument*, recounts and analyses the physical inscription, mapping, boundary making and memorialisation embedded into the landscape.

Oliver Costello[5] suggests that Indigenous space has identity and is not empty, and it is important in cultural practice to have an understanding of space. He relates a western definition of space as an empty container to terra nullius, land that is empty and can be taken whereas, for Indigenous people, in space there are protocols, and ritual and practice are based on spatial aspects and measurements that need to be managed respectfully. Costello says that place is the connection to space and how space is identified (Yarn with O Costello 2015 on 28 August). Norman Sheehan takes this further, saying, ‘The

[5] Oliver Costello is a Bundjalung man from northern New South Wales.

space we inhabit cannot be assumed to be the null void that was contrived as the background' (2011, p. 76). He describes beings, objects and the interactions and relations between them as generating social and natural spaces, and in this sense, 'space is alive and has a history and a feel that influences all inhabitants … exercis[ing] a positioning power on us all' (p. 76). Sheehan calls space a living thing with exterior apparent conditions, but also internal hidden processes essential to the life of the space, all sharing relational dimensions. Knowing space as a living entity that holds memory, feelings and relationality provides a framework for understanding the core values of space, as well as the cultural practices required to interact in and with space.

According to the Bawaka people[6], Yolŋu ontologies say that knowing and valuing spaces comes from living among them, 'learning (hearing, feeling) the language of its soils and winds and birds, and in becoming together' (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a, p. 10). This lived embodiment of space helps us understand the patterns, flows and connections between all entities in the space as an active knowing of space throughout every aspect of everyday life. Thus, *writing* about an Indigenous experience of space contains challenges as it removes the everyday living in that space, replacing it with static words and static movements over ground. It seems almost cruel that I cannot take you to my Country, introduce you to it, allow you to experience it, breathe in the air and know the scents carried on the breeze, be still within its spaces, and learn directly from the land. Moreover, since colonisation commenced, many of us are no longer able to use our languages. These languages, that were born of our lands and stored within them, have words to describe those lands and our relationships with them. English words do not do these relationships justice. Aunty Fran Bodkin[7] says that when we use our language words our whole body speaks, and attempting to communicate in English does not give the expression required. English was not born of this land, so to this land it is effectively a dead language (Yarn with F Bodkin 2016 on 28 October). Nevertheless, this text has no alternative at this time and in this context but to be in written

[6] Bawaka is an Indigenous homeland on the water of Port Bradshaw in Arnhem Land off the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north of Australia. Research is conducted in collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, with Bawaka Country as lead author in many of their writings.

[7] Aunty Fran Bodkin is a descendant of the D'harawal people of the Bidigal clan from the George's River/Woronora catchment area. According to Aunty Fran, the Bidigal clan spoke a dialect that could be understood by other clans and were part of a much larger clan (Bidjaigal) that covered the northern section of the Botany Bay area between Cooks River and the high Country overlooking the Boora Birra. Unfortunately, the Bidigal suffered pretty horrifically from diseases, and after the massacres there were only five left (Bodkin 2017, pers. comm., 5 December).

form and in the English language; it would be extremely challenging to write and be examined in a language other than English. Therefore, in my attempts to describe the almost indescribable and purely experiential Indigenous space, I ask your forbearance. My aim is to privilege Indigenous voices as the primary sources of knowing their spaces and in so doing to give an understanding of the narrative, history and knowing of space from an Indigenous perspective. It is not my intention, wish or right to speak for all Aboriginal people; rather, I gather together the thoughts of some Indigenous peoples about Indigenous space. As a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation and as a spatial designer, I weave my thoughts with theirs as a means of linking them all together.

Relationality, Connectivity, Reciprocity

> *In the old days before humans came were the eagles, sharks, eels, and ants.*
> *Eagles would keep the skies clean, sharks would keep the seas clean, eels would keep the rivers clean, ants would keep the land clean.*
> *Everything is linked, there are circles.*
> *Interrupt one thing and it carries through the whole system (Yarn with F Bodkin 2016 on 28 October).*

There is an unbounded interconnectedness 'via genealogies contained within a landscape that is really more of a "storyscape" … resonant of cosmological and social origins, events, and encounters' (Larsen & Johnson 2012, p. 10). When we speak of being related, we are referring not only to our human or kin relatives, it goes beyond this. In Yolŋu terms, it includes 'humans and more-than-humans, and how they are connected to each other, how they fit, where their ties and obligations are, where their responses and responsibilities lie' (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a, p. 6). For Yolŋu people, spaces are relational, always emerging, being renegotiated and reconsidered in a structured, patterned and meaningful manner. In knowing one's place via the flows of kinship structures, all relationships are acknowledged between human and nonhuman, 'including songs, land, ceremonies, winds, minerals, animals, tides, rocks and spirits', for 'they are components of a whole acting, responding to each other' (p. 7). Each component in the entirety remains distinguishable and diverse, with its own songs, stories, Laws and knowledges.

We are the land. We emerge from the land as part of it and it is part of us. It is 'home to our songs and [L]aws that lie in the land; it is our relative; it is our grandmother and grandfather. Our ancestors are alive in the land, and this is in accord with saying that to sell the land is akin to selling one's own mother' (Watson 2009, p. 40).

The land, and thus space, is alive; people are not separate from it; we are bounded to it through reciprocal relationships of care. Animals and plants, as well as weather, terrain, songs, dances, are kin. They make us who we are, just as we make them who they are (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a). In Bawaka Yolŋu ontology is the notion of co-becoming, in which everything exists in a state of emergence and relationality. Every entity is vital and sapient with its own knowledge and Laws, constituted through relationships that are constantly regenerated. Thus, space is the doing, being, knowing and becoming of each entity inhabiting that land (Bawaka Country et al. 2015b).

Knowing the correct place of each entity inhabiting space enables people to relate to them appropriately, for 'the world, and all its possible experiences, constitute[s] a social reality, a fabric of life in which everything ha[s] the possibility of intimate knowing relationships because, ultimately, everything [i]s related' (Deloria & Wildcat 2001, pp. 2-3)[8] [9]. Underlying all relationships and holding everything is Country, sentient and ever-knowing.

Country: Sustaining, Maintaining, Sentient

> *So, Country is known – people sing for it, there are dances known, taught and danced for it, it has its stories that are taught, learned and told. It has its mysteries. It has its rituals. It can be painted, it can be harvested, and one can care for and love it (Dodson 2007, p. 3)*[10].

Country holds everything and the potential for everything. Indigenous space is part of Country and simultaneously has Country in it. It is therefore always full of the everything and the potentiality of

[8] Vine Deloria Jr is from the Standing Rock Sioux peoples.

[9] Daniel Wildcat is a Yuchi member of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma.

[10] Michael (Mick) Dodson is a member of the Yawuru people from the Broome area of the southern Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Country. It could never have been empty or terra nullius. According to Mick Dodson, 'We are talking about the whole of the landscape, not just the places on it … All of it is important – we have no wilderness … None of it is vacant or empty, it is all interconnected' (2007, pp. 2-4).

Notably, Country is a lived experience and a heritage, and includes all people who have belonged and will belong to it. For Oliver Costello, Country is holistic. It is the spaces, the places, the relationships, the connections. Country is everything that exists and everything that does not, everything we know and do not know (Yarn with O Costello 2015 on 28 August).

Extending this idea, Kevin O'Brien (2011) describes connection to Country as being experienced and understood through the senses and seared into memory. He states:

> Country is an Aboriginal idea. It is an idea that binds groupings of Aboriginal people to the place of their ancestors, past, current and future. It understands that every moment of the land, sea and sky, its particles, its prospects and its prompts, enables life. It is revealed over time by camping in it and guides my way into architecture. There is no disenfranchisement, no censorship and no ownership. Country is a belief. It is my belief (2012, p. 3).

Brian Martin[11] adds to the discussion by stating that Aboriginal culture is created by the reality of Country, where all things are extracted through memory and continual practice. His philosophical approach sees Country as a grounding of the metaphysical (or theoretical) into the material (or physical). 'Country is the basis of Indigenous ideology and it specifically constitutes and is constituted by the relationship between memory, life and culture, which are embedded in land' (2013, p. 187).

Country includes everything in the landscape: land, water and sky; it soars high into the atmosphere, deep into the planet crust and far into the oceans. Country – which incorporates ground, space, site, environment – is aesthetic, environmental, social, spiritual and political. It is geology and geography, landscape and terrain. It writes the ground and imparts the knowledges that afford its care. Cultural

[11] Brian Martin is of Bundjalung and Muruwari descent.

connection to Country encompasses narratives and knowledges, incorporating traditions, practices and art, linked to identity, language and community.

Country is inherent rather than owned or earned; we become connected at birth and rights to Country are immediately obtained along with the responsibilities to care for it as we learn through life. This does not change with colonisation; likewise, our kin networks never change (Dodson 2007).

Country is more than just a place marked on a map in a geographical sense. Nor is it passive scenery for humans to play out their lives. Anthony McKnight discusses Country as 'decentr[ing] the human authorship privilege of overseer, creator, controller, implementer, and owner' (2015, p. 2). He indicates that Country provides opportunities to reimagine and mutually create how we consider and practice knowledge, because Country holds our knowledges in place, as a source for us to connect and reconnect to the land and to ourselves.

While the processes of colonisation do affect Indigenous spaces, Uncle Greg Simms says that Country is unaffectable, only our relationships with Country can be affected. Likewise, affected relationships are also reclaimable and reparable. Uncle Greg speaks of Country as a place to return to for healing, a place of comfort, strength and nourishment. He discusses changes to the land, saying,

> It is still our spirit Country; our spirit still lies there. No matter that they build city on it, it is still a place we can always go back and heal … it is all changed but it is still Country. You still get healing from that place. Just go back, take off your shoes, walk around on the land to regenerate the soul. Call out the spirits of your Ancestors. That is what the Old People taught us. We have got to go home to talk to the Old People, talk to the spirits of our Ancestors (Yarn with G Simms 2015 on 28 October).

Since Country cannot be divided, while the land may be damaged or traumatised by colonial processes, like a broken arm, it can heal through Country. Thus, if one part is removed physically, the songs and stories keep it in place, in memory, and its knowledges remain intact (Burarrwanga et al. 2014).

The Cultural Space of Identity

> *I will not lose my culture and my tribe to your games like a bird moving from place to place, looking for its camp or to sleep in other places, on other people's land that is not our land.*
> *I do not want my people to move from here and die in other places. I don't want this. We don't want this. I am Aboriginal from mud, red mud. I am black, I am red, I am yellow, and I will not take my people from here to be in these other places.*
> *We want to stay on our own land. We have our culture, we have our [L]aw, we have our land rights, we have our painting and carving, we have our stories from our [O]ld [P]eople, not only my people, but everyone, all Dhuwa and Yirritja, we are not making this up (Gumana 2009, p. 2)*[12].

Determined during our deep past, our identity links us to our knowledges, lands and spaces. Residing within us as creative spiritual registers are essences of our ancestral creator beings, linking us perpetually to identity. Culture and identity are not stagnant; they respond to environmental and social changes, and it is through our culture that identity adapts to the future while respecting the past. Mary Graham (2008) describes our creative and spiritual identities as still inhabiting the land, a corporeal extension of self, locating us inherently as numerous generations before us who have shared the land. The shapes and structures of the land give us identification. We evolve physically and psychologically to complement our lands, and thus, according to Marcia Langton[13], our identities are localised. We are associated with being of that land, from that region, in a place, and so are 'constituted as spatialised beings' (2002, p. 259).

Supporting this, our narratives reveal we have always had connections to our lands. They tell of the dramatic changes our lands experienced over time, ice ages, volcanoes, colossal floods and the like, yet through this immense time we remained attached to those lands, and adapted with them. Kaleena Smith (Briggs) says culture is change, culture evolves and everything we do today is culture, including ideals from the past, ideals from today and foreknowledge of future principles. She describes Country

[12] Gawirrin Gumana is a leader of the Dhalwangu clan of the Yolŋu people in eastern Arnhem Land.
[13] Marcia Langton is a descendant of the Yiman and Bidjara nations of Queensland.

as being part of identity, an extension of oneself, as fingernails and hair are part of the same body. Smith reasons that the actions and cultural practices that identify us externally, such as painting ourselves with ochres, using smoke from gum leaves to cleanse, or connecting with our Old People by going back on Country, originate with Country. Likewise, connecting physically back to Country by immersing ourselves in that locality, swimming in the waters, walking barefoot on the land, gazing over vast distances, provides cultural strength to adapt (Yarn with K Smith 2017 on 5 July).

Oliver Costello says that while we have continually connected with each other, our identities nonetheless remained diverse. Sharing and passing on knowledge, songs and stories is part of our responsibility, our identity and our Dreaming (Yarn with O Costello 2015 on 25 November). Through this reciprocal sharing process, culture is restored and kin relationships maintained.

The Kinship Grid

> *For Aboriginal people, the land is the great teacher; it not only teaches us how to relate to it, but to each other; it suggests a notion of caring for something outside ourselves, something that is in and of nature and that will exist for all time. Every Aboriginal person ha[s] a place at some intersection within the kinship network which extend[s] over the whole of Australia, and every intersection within that grid [i]s anchored, eternally, to some point on the landscape by the relationship to Creator Being ancestors (Graham 2008, p. 183).*

There is an endless reiterating pattern linking people, spaces and other entities, thereby giving the world meaning, order and equilibrium. This may be understood as kinship systems or relationships. For Yolŋu people, Gurrutu[14], or kinship, 'is always emergent; it co-produces a world which is living and interconnected. It maps and co-produces connections between agents and materialities, based on relationships between and across places/spaces and times' (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a, p. 11). They indicate that Country and kin relationships are far more than networks of beings and things; spaces and diverse beings, processes and dreams, affects and songs emerge relationally.

[14] Gurrutu, in Yolŋu, is the complex system of kinship that link individuals and groups to each other and underlies all relationships with Country.

Bawaka ontologies further explain this as human and nonhuman being connected to the extent of altering each other. They say, 'we mean this as a fact, a fact of cells and history influencing each other, becoming each other, changing each other. At Bawaka, the mundane is the spiritual, the emotional is the conceptual. And vice versa' (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a, p. 11). For them, space and place are co-emergent, active and sentient, drawing attention to the dynamic, ongoing, intense webs of living connection.

Thus everything fits and is bounded to make a whole in an intricate perpetual 'sacred web' (Graham 2008, p. 187). Through these interconnecting networks, people know their place, roles and responsibilities, for land, other people and nonhumans. It is through our kinship systems that we learn we are not alone in the world; that rock may be our grandfather, that tree may be our sister. Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison (2013) describes flora as being tribal and, along with animals and other nonhuman entities, we are defined by our location in the kinship framework.

Oliver Costello speaks of the kinship structure in the landscape, which incorporates cultural, social and natural constructs. These constructs are the relationships and responsibilities that link us to the land and each other. He says the knowledge to care for the land according to our kin responsibilities is in the land and in us, and through communicating with and listening to Country, Country indicates what it wants and needs (Costello recorded by Hong 2013).

Dreaming Landscape

> *I am a boorai[15] [or child] of this land*
>
> *My old ones tell me my spirit*
>
> *Belongs here*
>
> *I walk on this land like no other*
>
> *Following my [D]reaming tracks (Murphy 2003, p. 55)[16].*

[15] Boorai is the word used by the Wurundjeri people, to describe a baby or child.

[16] Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy is a Senior Wurundjeri Elder of the Kulin alliance in Victoria.

In the beginning was Country; in the beginning was the land[17]. At some point, according to Mary Graham, immortal ancestral beings, who had been sleeping in a state of potentiality just under the earth's surface, were disturbed and they awoke. She describes the land being 'like a moonscape, no features, no flora and fauna, just bare open plain' (2008, p. 182). Upon awakening, 'their potentiality transformed into actuality and they arose out of the ground' (p. 182) as very tall and strong beings. They started travelling and interacting with each other, 'fighting, dancing, running about, making love, killing' (p. 182), and this activity shaped the landscape creating hills, valleys and waterways. Marcia Langton describes Dreaming beings as 'numinous, supernatural beings of power' (2002, p. 257), whose creative energies infuse the land with certain qualities, some dangerous, others protective and nurturing. She says they are 'phenomenal, appearing as rainbows, the moon, and the like, and differentiated and speciated by their various characters' (p. 254).

During this period, Graham claims, humans were asleep in various embryonic forms. They were awakened by the activity of the ancestral beings, at which time they helped the emergent humans become fully human. They taught them the Laws of custodianship of the land, giving them all the knowledge required to care for the land and have a stable society. Wherever the ancestral beings travelled, they left tracks or traces, and these determined the identity of the people in that location. Thus, every Aboriginal person has some of the essence of those ancestral beings, authorising them to be custodians of that land. The ancestral beings then went back into the land, where they remain in the same eternal sleep from which they were awakened (Graham 2008). Aunty Julie Freeman likewise speaks of human evolution occurring alongside the evolution of the land:

> Of course we sat here in that fragrant place. Of course we watched and told our children about the perfection of every other living thing in the world and that we are not above that. Those things all have to have a chance to live and survive and help each other … because they help us also. They give us the secrets of the things that have been in the world from the beginning, when we were not quite anything yet, just observing in a different form the evolution of the world (Freeman recorded by Kaldor Public Art Projects 2016).

[17] While each group, nation or clan has its own stories about its beginnings their foundations are similar, with the land at their beginning. Brought together here are descriptions from a number of people expressing their understandings of creation, with none being representative of a whole.

Because we emerged from the land, we actively draw on the potentiality of the land, both physically and spiritually. Our behaviours, beliefs, values, symbols, designs, cultural productions similarly emerged from the land and are inseparable from it (Wildcat 2001). In their movements through the atmosphere, landscape and waters, the ancestral beings infused the features of the land with their spiritual essences. Irene Watson describes ruwi[18], or land, as being sung by the ancestral beings. They sang the names into every feature they shaped, giving responsibilities and authorisation to the peoples and animals living on those lands to care for the lands. With those responsibilities came the Laws, languages, designs, cultural practices and stories. As we are descended from those who hold the essences of the ancestral beings, we are instilled with their characteristics, sharing them with others who are related (Watson 2009).

The ancestral beings are tied to particular tracts of Country and, according to Aileen Moreton-Robinson, created the physiographic features, or distinct regions, of Country associated with their journeys. As they moved across the land, they left behind possessions designating specific sites of significance, creating the world of humans, 'being metamorphosed as stone or some other form, disappearing into the territory of another group or into the sky, ground or water. In doing so they leave behind tangible evidence of their presence on earth' (2003, p. 32).

Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison describes the Dreaming as being like a pathway, made up of stories of different events, like initiations and ceremonies, that happen at particular sites. Uncle Max says the river is a journey leading from the mountains to the sea, through the various parts of Yuin Country. The river holds much memory of Yuin culture, a place of sacred walking, with some parts holding particularly powerful significance for Yuin people (Harrison 2013).

The Dreaming, according to Irene Watson, represents more than an idea of the past; rather, it is a continuing and present time and space. It is an 'ever-present place of before, now and the future, a place that we are constantly returned to' (2009, pp. 36-37). It exists at all times, and is memorised and

18 Ruwi means 'land' in the language of the Tanganekald peoples.

re-performed through rituals and ceremony. She says, 'Nungas[19] believe that we are descended from beings of Kaldowinyeri[20] [or Dreaming] and that they are our ngaitje[21] [or totems] and our spiritual attachment to the land. From our ngaitje, we learn about the interconnectedness of life, that humanity is just a small part of life' (2009, p. 37). Thus, all know their place in the land, their foundations for identity and position, in the present, before birth and beyond death.

Sacred Geography

> *This tradition … is a body of knowledge about the relationship among particular beings, human and nonhuman, and the places for which they bear particular responsibilities and in which they have particular rights … It is through this knowledge that people write themselves on the land and the land in themselves. Such sacred readings of the landscape through the lens of highly localised bodies of social, ritual, and juridical knowledge is a 'cosmic framework' for interpreting places, binding particular persons and places together in a sacred relationship (Langton 2002, pp. 255-256).*

While all sites across the land, waters and skies are important, some are particularly significant; these may be referred to as special or sacred sites, and are the cultural core of Country. Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison describes sacred places as land that has been sung: 'it holds the indentation, the singing, the stomping of the feet, the rhythm of the clapsticks …. Hundreds and thousands of years of stamping those old black feet as the women and men would be passing through from circle to circle have left their mark' (2013, p. 97). Maintaining ceremony takes us back to the beginning, connecting us to our Ancestors, whose spirits, Uncle Max says, are still the guides and guardians of special places. Their spirits have been sung into the land, chanting and indenting their sounds into the earth and atmosphere.

According to Uncle Tony Perkins, the Old People became 'clever', meaning they were able to access spirit powers through ceremonies carried out in special places. Uncle Tony describes spirit powers as

[19] Nungas is a term for Aboriginal peoples in South Australia.

[20] Kaldowinyeri was known to the Tanganekald and Ngarrindjeri peoples as the Dreaming.

[21] Ngaitje means spirit beings or totems in Tanganekald language.

being ‘in the animals or mountains or different things, and even the things they change into, you know the Old People in them times, when they used to change into different things with their power, different forms’ (2010, p. 132).

A Bama[22] perspective of spirituality is signified by places, and understanding the land from a Bama perspective is predicated on an understanding of the world as a ‘biography of human and nonhuman presences, some living and mortal, and some spiritual and ever present’ (Langton 2002, p. 265). Langton writes that spirits reside in specific locations, enlivening them as ‘powerfully effective, dangerous places to be approached with the protection of the Elders leading the way with their rituals and expressed statements of familiarity and imploration to the spirits’ (p. 260). Uncle George Musgrave[23] says it is the responsibility of Elders to ‘sing out’ to Ancestors who are the ‘keepers of life forces – life’s fecundity – not only for their own sakes when they enter a [C]ountry or place, but also particularly for the sake of others with them’ (Musgrave cited in Langton 2002, p. 262). Deceased Ancestors never depart from the landscape; the land is full of spiritual presences who are the Ancestors of traditional owners who must be spoken to in the appropriate language. ‘If one does not “sing out”, there are dire consequences. Engaging with a place thus requires engaging with the spiritual presences therein. The aural sense and the power of sound … (re)inscribes space’ (p. 262). Ensuring visitors are correctly announced confirms safe passage through special spaces. The act of singing out, communicating in language, ensures proper respectful etiquette is followed with Country. Therefore, an aural aspect of space is vital to the Bama experience of that space.

Spirit presences likewise visit us in our everyday lives; in turn, we feel close to the spirits and welcome their care and protection. Langton indicates the spirits and memories of our Ancestors who have passed continue as affective presences, constantly creating the landscape alongside us. She continues, ‘deceased ancestors are conceived of as spiritual presences in particular places expressing both a resonating “spiritual” trace of the once-living persons returning to a Story [or Dreaming] place and as the “returning” to a place of an ancestor’s spiritual force whose source is Story’ (p. 254). Mick Dodson extends this idea upwards, saying, ‘The lightning men and women live in the sky, creative beings have

[22] Bama means ‘Aboriginal people’ in the various languages of the Lakefield and Cliff Island National Parks region.
[23] George Musgrave is a Kuku Thaypan Elder from Cape York in Queensland.

travelled this place we call the sky, and for some of us it is where some of our dead relations now reside' (2007, p. 3).

Garby Elders from Gumbaynggirr Country[24] describe spirits' knowledge as being passed on through ceremony, particularly initiation ceremonies, continuing today through songs and stories being told in special places. Places of intensity are known as miirlarl[25] and songs are a part of the language of ceremony through which this knowledge is articulated, holding some of the power of the spirits of place. Stories about spirits in places are 'stories of the liminal' (Garby Elders cited in Somerville & Perkins 2010, p. 131) or threshold spaces, the spaces between human and Dreaming.

Sacred metaphysical connections mark the land with meaning and, together with the symbols of that place, they inform human behaviour, such as songs, dances, expressions and designs. Sacred designs are shared through engagement with the spiritual world, human and nonhuman intertwined through common spiritual ancestry (Langton 2002). According to Langton, 'the land is always here, sensual, and experienced in its spirituality' (p. 257) and is written by its spiritual affiliations. She describes the essences and potentials as 'pre-existing in the primordial landscape behind the landscape – the sacred' (p. 265). And thus we retrieve the ever-presence of the Dreaming, as our special spaces are perceived simultaneously as mundane and sacred, conceptual and actual, present, past and future. Embedded within sacred landscapes are our Laws, while within us is our lore, the knowledges or traditions passed through generations.

Law, Lore

> *Our story is in the land.*
> *It is written in those sacred places.*
> *My children will look after those places,*
> *that's the [L]aw (Neidjie cited in Burgess et al. 2005, p. 118).*

[24] Garby Elders, from Gumbaynggirr Country on the mid-North Coast of New South Wales, include Tony Perkins in collaboration with Margaret Somerville.

[25] Miirlarl means 'special or sacred place' in Gumbaynggirr language. It often signifies a special place of gathering and ceremony.

Our Laws, originating of and from the land, are complex; they are connected to geography, carry interconnectivity between peoples and are inseparable from Country. Laws regarding land are not embedded in a written language; rather, they are lived, sung, narrated, practised experientially, stored in the land and passed down generationally. Mussolini Harvey[26] says that Yijan[27], or the Dreaming, made our narnu-Yuwa[28], or Laws. He says, 'The Dreamings are our ancestors, no matter if they are fish, birds, men, women, animals, wind or rain. It was these Dreamings that made our Law. All things in our [C]ountry have Law, they have ceremony and song, and they have people who are related to them' (Harvey cited in Bradley 1988, p. xi). Greg Lehman[29] furthers this idea, saying that the birds give us notice of what is to come, the bush calls us when it is time to burn, the rain punishes our lazy ways. 'And always, the great ancestor spirits watch us as they lay sleeping – their bodies forming the ridges, peaks and valleys of the Country all around' (2008, pp. 137-138).

Knowledge, lore and beliefs established during the Dreaming inform the present and future, guiding the lives of all entities sharing the land. Mary Graham describes the Law as an action guide for living, and a guide to understanding reality itself, especially in relation to land. Our land is the Law, and how we treat the land determines our humanness. Our Laws guide our morals, ethics and discipline, and Elders guide us in following the Law. Our Law, she continues, 'doesn't deal with the actions of humans or the events which befall them, but with what makes it possible for people to act purposively, and experience "events"' (2008, p. 191). In other words, they are enduring living instructions for the land.

Since the Laws of the land were not written by humans, they cannot be adapted by them or supplanted by other laws. As custodians of the land, we are entrusted to follow and pass on the Laws given to us to ensure harmony between all. Our Laws cannot be extinguished as they are embodied in and born from the land, the universal order of all. Law is not imposed; rather:

> [L]aw is lived, sung, danced, painted, eaten, walked upon, and loved; [L]aw lives in all things. It is [L]aw that holds the world together as it lives inside and outside of all things. The [L]aw of creation breathes

[26] Mussolini Harvey is a Yanyuwa Elder from the Gulf of Carpentaria.

[27] Yijan means 'Dreaming' in Yanyuwa language.

[28] Narnu-Yuwa means 'Laws' in Yanyuwa language.

[29] Greg Lehman is a Palawa man descended from the Trawuluwuy people of north east Tasmania.

> life as we walk through all of its contours and valleys. It holds a continuity as there is no beginning or ending, for the constant cycles of life are held together by [L]aw (Watson 2002, p. 255).

Apart from being in all things, our Laws also exist between groups like ancient treaties. Irene Watson (2016) indicates that these treaties are embedded in the land, sung across and into the land and across time. She says:

> Our voices were once heard in light of the [L]aw. The [L]aw transcends all things, guiding us in the tradition of living a good life, that is, a life that is sustainable and one which enables our grandchildren yet to be born to also experience a good life on earth. The [L]aw is who we are, we are also the [L]aw. We carry it in our lives. The [L]aw is everywhere, we breathe it, we eat it, we sing it, we live it (1997, p. 39).

Aunty Fran Bodkin describes a space of Law making that exists in the three hills at Yandel'ora[30], or Mount Annan. It is a place of peace, meeting and Law dispensing for people along the eastern side of the continent, where Laws that were common to the eastern peoples were discussed and made in order that those travelling between peoples could do so with knowledge of the Laws they had to obey. Aunty Fran says that this meeting, which occurs about every 19 years, takes place when the three sister planets line up to dance in a straight line in the western sky. Then the peoples start to march from as far north as Cape York and Kakadu, from as far south as the Central Desert in South Australia, and from as far west as Hermannsburg, Northern Territory. With the Law hill in the centre, the women gathering on the left and men on the right, Laws have been dispensed on these hills for thousands of generations. This place is the Country of the lyrebird, the only creature allowed to understand and speak all languages[31], the reason this place was chosen to host such meetings (Yarn with F Bodkin 2016 on 28 October). Distinct peoples gathered in this important place of peace, coming together in harmony to ensure Laws were respected.

[30] Yandel'ora is the name the D'harawal people gave to Mount Annan. It means 'Place of Peace between Peoples'.
[31] According to Aunty Fran, in the story of the lyrebird, everybody once spoke the same language, but events resulted in the punishment that all different peoples would speak their own language, and only the lyrebird was allowed to understand and speak all languages. Even today the lyrebird can speak the language of the camera or the rifle, or the cat and dog fight (Bodkin 2017, pers. comm., 14 October).

The rules of the land exist for all entities. Nonhumans follow their own Laws, which weave with our human Laws; their behaviours have been set by the ecology of the planet and, according to Jim Pura-lia Meenamatla Everett[32], our survival is based upon integrating with the Law. 'If you don't show due respect to the water, the water gets sick; your Sister Water is then no good to you or anything else. You formed a responsibility to your Sister Water, that fellow citizen that you should be showing respect to, not to see yourself as superior to her' (2003, pp. 58-59). Law binds us together, to care mutually with each other, for land, for people, for others sharing spaces with us.

Custodial Economy

> *Those who arrived in our Ancestors' time did not understand that the bush they saw around them was not a wilderness, but a culturally managed landscape; that life in all its shapes watched them anxiously from the ground, the water, the sky; and that there was not a single grain of sand beneath their feet that was not part of a thinking, breathing, loving land. In their language, the British described and catalogued the land as an object, not grandmother, grandfather, mother, father, sister, brother and family (Kwaymullina 2008, p. 11).*

Our Laws inform us how to maintain balance via our kinship care networks, manage the land sustainably and use it appropriately, ensuring we leave it healthy for those coming after us, human and nonhuman. Through knowing and experiencing Country, ethics of care and responsibility emerge. Understanding every action and movement impacts others in the kinship web, ensures that we act responsibly towards Country. Bandak Marika et al.[33] relate this to the ancestral beings' travels, saying, 'The paths they took on their journeys and their resting places in the land, rivers and sea require our ongoing care and protection' (2012, p. 132). Thus it is our role to perform rites that ensure the land is correctly tended. Cultural practices, such as burning, arts or crafts, dance or song, are part of lore and part of our role to keep Country healthy and balanced, not only for ourselves but for those yet to be born.

[32] Jim Pura-lia Meenamatla Everett is from the Plangermairreenner clan of the Ben Lomond tribe, north-eastern Tasmania.

[33] Banduk Marika, Banul Munyarryun, Buwathay Munyarryun, Napunda Marawil, Wanyubi Marika are Yolŋu and come from the Laynhapuy Homelands in north-east Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

According to our Law, land is held in common and we are only momentary custodians. In the wider community, we as common custodians have responsibilities and rights to ensure that a broader action of care and balance of the land's resources is maintained. Aunty Julie Freeman furthers this notion, saying, 'We have never wandered around the landscape aimlessly … but were given by Miryyal[34] [a creator being] tracts of Country for ourselves and our descendants after us' (2016). While our lands are held in common and we work cooperatively, individual people are responsible through our kinship systems for sustaining particular animals, trees, tracts of land or waters. Uncle Bruce Pascoe calls our system a 'jigsawed mutualism' in which people have rights and responsibilities for particular pieces of the jigsaw, and are constrained to operate that piece so it adds to, rather than detracts from, our neighbours' pieces and the 'epic integrity of the land' (2014, p. 138).

Our custodial responsibilities require us to maintain Country using land management techniques, fire, preservation of water sources, land and sea cultivation, seed selection and plant distribution (Pascoe 2014). Through these actions we shape and sustain the animal and plant life of the continent. Resources are shared through trade and cultural relationships, and sufficient food is available for all. Uncle Bruce calls this sharing economy 'more than a commodity; it [i]s a civilising glue' (p. 137).

Our sustainable land management techniques work within our Laws and our ecosystems. Victor Steffensen[35] describes how Aboriginal people evolve like the land; different ecosystems and species evolve in different places, requiring diverse cultural practices, techniques and methodologies to manage their landscapes (Steffensen 2016, pers. comm., 22-26 August). For instance, fire is essential to our cultural practices. We burn the land to keep it healthy, maintain campgrounds and pathways and tend resources. Burning keeps some plants and ecosystems safe and encourages others to renew. Burning looks after Country, revitalising our stories and people. Fire also sends messages, warning of impending events, advising of movement, aiding both current and future hunting, clearing tracts of land to foster animal visitation and of course we use fire to cook, keep warm, provide light. Smoking ceremonies welcome and cleanse us (Costello 2016). Costello says that cultural fire is about 'leadership,

[34] Miryyal means 'the creator' in Dhurga language.

[35] Victor Steffensen is descended from the Tagalaka people of far north Queensland.

empowerment and cultural practice. It creates a pathway for recognition and to rebuild cultural frameworks that exist in the landscape, when clans, families and larger language groups act together to look after [C]ountry' (2016, p. 144).

While custodial ownership of Country may not exist in a monetary or transactional sense, the land belongs to us and we belong to it. Irene Watson explains that ownership of land is not considered as material; rather, it is understood in terms of values such as knowledge, relationships, resolution of a problem or ceremony in relation to that land. Since we hold both obligations and rights, our 'relationship to land combines traditional ownership and custodianship and is difficult to translate' (2009, p. 38). Furthermore, Uncle Bob Randall[36] says that the land owns us (Randall recorded by Global Oneness Project 2015), and thus caring for the land is equivalent to caring for our own bodies. 'It is an act of self-preservation and self-protection, and it engages a deep knowledge of our interdependency' (Watson 2009, p. 41). In this sense, just as we cannot sell ourselves or our relatives, we cannot sell Country, as our connections lie deeper than a commodity that can be bought or sold.

Land cultivation occurs in ways such that many groups of people and other entities, present and future, are taken into consideration. For instance, trees are planted to recognise sites of significance in the knowledge that descendants will be visiting that location for many years to come and will need sustenance there. Certainly we are not passive in the harvesting of the resources of the land; Shane Carriage[37] describes the land as nurturing us physically and mentally, feeding us and keeping us alive. He calls the land our economy, even if that economic structure has changed through colonisation (Carriage recorded by NSW Aboriginal Land Council 2015).

Through our kinship network, all plants have meaning, so if a tree needs to be cut, Ephram Bani[38] indicates an Elder should come and talk to it. 'We do not just get rid of it; that's how big the attachment is. We have harvest ceremonies for the fruits that we can eat. We have to say to the trees "Please bear for us so we can survive"' (2003, pp. 88-89). Aunty Fran Bodkin says that Aboriginal people 'encourage

[36] Uncle Bob Randall is a Yankunytjatjara Elder from the Central Desert region.

[37] Shane Carriage is from the Dhurga language group on the South Coast of New South Wales.

[38] Ephram Bani is from Mabuiag Island in the Torres Strait Islands.

plants to grow' (Yarn with F Bodkin 2016 on 28 October); this gentle practice of interacting with flora respects their Laws of how and when they need to be nurtured, where they need to be to flourish and how Country needs to be sustained.

Singing the Land

> *When our creator emerged from the ocean and stepped onto our land he left his footprints forever embedded in the landscape of my homelands, Djugan Country on the Kimberly coast of Western Australia. The creator brought with him our Law and culture, through songs he gave my people our identity, taught us the boundaries of our land and the rules we must live by. From Djugan Country he travelled north to other tribes leaving a trail, a path of knowledge, a web of songs. These songs stretch from Djugan Country thousands of kilometres into the Northern Territory and beyond. Our songlines have been passed down through the generations and connect us to other tribes along the songline trail (Cornel recorded by Torres 2016)*[39].

Songlines link sites to people, landscape and ecosystems, to sky, water and languages. They connect Countrys and groups, creating lines of knowing, interchange and movement, often across vast distances. Jakelin Troy[40] tells of our Ancestors using epic songs that record how our Countrys and peoples were shaped when they travelled and interacted with each other to create the landscape. Songlines are 'shared histories and knowledges that track our ancestral creators and connect the living to the spirit world and all those who have gone before us' (Troy 2016).

Songlines follow a trail, a path of knowledge, carrying a web of songs. Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison (2013) describes songlines as an important part of our mental and spiritual structure, lines of energy running between places, animals and people. They energise and galvanise, enabling communication between entities and generating spiritual strength. People and place are sung into being whenever ceremony is performed; within the ritual, landscape and water, plants and animals are sung into being in specific places, connected through songlines (Somerville & Perkins 2010).

[39] Cornel Ozies is descended from the Djugun people in the Kimberly Western Australia.

[40] Jakelin Troy is a Ngarigu woman whose Country is the Snowy Mountains of NSW.

Also known as storylines, stories likewise travel along these tracks, often encased in art, song or dance (Muller 2014). Ju Ju Wilson[41] indicates that stories lie in the Country, and it is the spirit in the Country that gives people song. Knowing the songs means you know the Country. Singing the songs of Country keeps Country strong and nurtured (Wilson recorded by National Indigenous Television 2016).

Trade routes follow them, used to trade not only products of the land but also intellectual property and technologies. Cornel Ozies describes songlines as a library of information. He says, 'They are many things: a road map, a bible, our history … [they] guide the way we live and give us our unique cultural identities' (Ozies recorded by Mandybur 2016). Furthering this idea, Francis Jupurrurla Kelly[42] says 'Country holds our story forever like an archive. Travelling through Country, the songs reveal themselves. They are embedded in Country' (Kelly recorded by Mandybur 2016).

Songlines form walking paths that link events that happen at particular landmarks, noting animals and plants living there. They are thus marked out forever in the landscape, seascape and skyscape, to be followed as our Ancestors did, creating a knowing and mapping of Country through song, story and lore. In Gumbaynggirr Country they tell the story of Birrugan, a powerful warrior and cleverman, and his travels and battles that form many landmarks. This story links Gumbaynggirr Country with its neighbours, extending into the night sky to become the Southern Cross. Birrugan's story is symbolised in the diamond patterns of the linking trails and on carved trees that mark special places (Somerville & Perkins 2010). Uncle Greg Simms speaks of another songline running from the Queensland border all the way down to the Victorian border. People travel this route, staying with family members along the way – coastal people with coastal people, mountain people with mountain people – all connected via the songline (Yarn with G Simms 2015 on 28 October). My own Ancestors followed this songline from their homes in Yuin Country north to family connections in Gumbaynggirr Country.

Songlines remain a means of connecting with Country and each other, irrespective of colonisation. 'Modern songlines … now tell political stories and keep us connected in our struggles for recognition

[41] Burriwee (Ju Ju) Wilson comes from the Miriwung-Gajerrong group of the Kimberley region of Western Australia.
[42] Francis Jupurrurla Kelly is a Warlpiri man. Warlpiri Country is located in the Northern Territory.

and sovereignty' (Troy 2016). Bawaka Country et al. speak of connections enduring, despite damage to the material aspects of the land through mining. They say,

> Now, many trees and some Country have been removed. Those trees aren't there anymore but Yolŋu still sing them, Yolŋu still keep them alive remembering them. Like a young person who took their own life, or an ant crushed thoughtlessly under a human foot, their gurrutu [or kinship systems] still holds them. These are the present absences of gurrutu (2015, p. 12).

Knowing Country as sentient land, and singing its presence even when physical alterations have occurred, maintains connections to land and other peoples.

The Language of Place

> *I listen and hear those words a hundred years away*
> *that is my Grandmother's Mother's [C]ountry*
> *It seeps down through blood and memory*
> *and soaks*
> *into the ground (Watson & Martin-Chew 2009, p. 141)*[43].

Our languages were born of the ground, and thus explain the experiences of Country perfectly. Aunty Julie Freeman says that language is unique and specific to Country and landscapes, as it expresses the most intimate things that no one other than those who evolved to that particular Galamban, or Country, knows. Each entity with which we share the land has words and language that accurately describe its evolution because while it was forming, so were we (Freeman 2016).

Aunty Julie furthers this concept, describing languages as a living entity, like the wind, associated not only with the direction in which it flows, but also with the emotional attachments it carries, sickness and health, anger and quietness. She states, 'Language is not just the word – it's the concept that goes behind the word and its relationship to landscape … Languages reflect their own worldviews, they reflect their own landscapes and their own beliefs' (2016, p. 131).

[43] Judy Watson is a descendant of the Waanyi people of north-west Queensland.

Using the stability of our languages as evidence of our long connections to specific lands, Uncle Bruce Pascoe says the ageless stability of our languages is 'proof of their existence over millennia, and their intimate linguistic connections to a specific landscape is proof that they have remained in that place since the language was developed' (2007, p. 114). Uncle Bruce suggests that the truth about Country is embedded in languages, and knowing our languages enables us to live respectfully and knowledgeably with the land.

According to the Garby Elders, who work to bring the Gumbaynggirr language home, language belongs to Country (Somerville & Perkins 2010). Uncle Stan Grant Senior[44] supports this, saying that language does not belong to people, it belongs to the land you live on. He indicates that many Old People were multilingual and the etiquette of travel when going to another's Country was to speak the language of that Country, or risk being disrespectful to the land and people (Grant cited in Tan 2016).

Holding knowledge is a collective responsibility, and 'story knowledge is held collectively, shared between generations, between men and women, and resides in [C]ountry' (Somerville & Perkins 2010, p. 162). Knowledge about language and story is knowledge about Country and knowledge about Country is stored in language, story and connection to place. While language is the underlying basis of connection between people and place, it is the stories that hold the meaning of language.

Temporality, Ephemerality

> *The way that Bama perceive landscapes is thus rather like the way that someone with a reasonable astronomical knowledge in Western culture perceives the night sky resplendent with twinkling stars. As one looks at the stars, there is the simultaneous sense of perceiving something that is present, the view itself sensed visually at that time, and of perceiving things that are past, the stars whose deaths many thousands of light years ago are perceived as the twinkling radiances in the black depths of space. And again at the same time, there is the knowledge behind these perceptions, that we can only know these things because of our understandings of time as past-*

[44] Uncle Stan Grant Senior is an Elder of the Wiradjuri people of inland New South Wales.

> *present-future. The future is implicated in our understanding of the past and the present. These temporalities are inscribed in our being as fields of experience, memorialised as the landscapes we know. Experiences are sensual topographies of time and space not simply inscribed and affirmed through physically imposed anthropogenic marks, but through the marks of socio-ontological order and understanding (Langton 2002, p. 265).*

Time is grounded in land, waters and skies, is based on seasonal and cosmological cycles, and our evolution remains intrinsically linked with land and time. As such, our temporalities are fluid in nature, dependent on events recurring in particular places, making them contemporaneous with the present and oriented towards an awareness of flow and ambience (Larsen & Johnson 2012). Seasons as cycles, visibly and ephemerally, impact land, air and water, communicating when and how events may occur.

Thus the land is the indicator for human and nonhuman movement, which is tied to responsibilities to the land as well as to other people and their need to avail themselves of the products of the land. Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison describes the seasons in Yuin Country as indicators of events that relate to products of the land being available at that time; particular blossoms indicate which fish are travelling at that time; specific colours in the bark of mountain trees signal when it is time to move from mountain to coast. He says, 'When we go to take our food from plants or trees, we have to shake that tree three times. If the plant or the trees don't release their crops, then they are not going to give us anything at all' (2013, p. 57), at which point it is time to move on. Time and thus space are vibrant, perpetual and familiar companions. The relationships with Country tell us when and what we do:

> It is the mullet, as part of Country, along with the other messengers who tell us when it is the right time to hunt. And if it is the right time, if the animals, the plants, the winds, the sunsets, the clouds, tell us that they are ready to be hunted or harvested and if we do not attend to the messages, we fail to harvest yam or hunt fish, that is disrespectful. That is not to care for and nourish Country, not to take our part as one being alongside others, not to contribute to keeping Country balanced (Bawaka Country et al. 2015b, p. 275).

As indicated by Bawaka Country et al., our kinship systems suggest a view of space that is dynamic and ever moving towards an emergent future, sustained via practices and knowings of the past. 'Gurrutu thus makes sense of relational spatial production through multiple dimensions … temporality, like spatiality, is contextual, knowing/knowable and affecting/able to be affected' (2015, p. 12). They continue, 'In Bawaka, messages are generated through material shifts in Country, which both mark time's passage and reproduce times past and future through the evocation of knowledges and practices' (p. 12).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) introduces the experiential quality that links time and space. She says that the Māori word for space and time is the same, and everything is understood through spatial relationships in the environment. There is no single direction of travel or progress, be it through space or time, young to old; rather a cyclical, environmental, ongoing living of spaces and times. Sharing our stories using oral methods of transmission over repeating generations of peoples makes us spatially and temporally entwined peoples, as Marcia Langton (2002) also suggests. Likewise, following our Ancestors' corresponding movements and returning to special places situates us as spatialised and temporalised beings.

Furthering this concept, Brian Martin says the situated experience of Country gives us a more objective view of the world as an ontological experience. He says, 'In Indigenous culture there is no division between the real and the ideological or split between memory and temporality' (2013, p. 193). In linking memory with time, space is also connected; Country is always; the Dreaming is every time.

Understanding time through repeating cycles of the cosmos enables a longer view of life sequences, with humans decentred from the patterns and ephemeral flows binding all entities. Noel Nannup[45] (2008) describes star stories told by his mother, stories that indicate that as the world turns, star patterns pass overhead signalling the time of year. Certain stars or groups of stars are connected to particular Dreaming tracks, which in turn are connected to significant places on the land. This suggests that our space, held by Country, is kinetic and may be 'understood as more than living with(in) the physical

[45] Noel Nannup is a Nyungar/Indjarbandi man connected to the south-west and north-west areas of Western Australia.

landscape, it has a certain mobility; it is embodied and thus travels … and it reaches out to incorporate distant stars and space' (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a, p. 11).

Time is intrinsically linked to space, as spatial movements through Country are determined by occurrences in time. Songlines are embodied time and space, whereby time and space are sung, storied and embodied through movement. Furthermore, space is united in time due to our ways of learning, which are cyclical. Of course, we do not learn Country in a classroom, we learn Country in Country, in the spaces of Country through time. We learn by being shown over and over, listening to the same stories repeatedly over our lifetimes, being with Elders and Knowledge Holders on Country – thus the recurring temporal experience-based learning continues. Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Bauman explains this through dadirri, inner deep listening and quiet, non-obtrusive observation and hearing without ears. She says, 'Through the years we have listened to the stories. In our Aboriginal way, we learn to listen from our earliest days. We could not live good and useful lives unless we listened' (1993, p. 35). Judy Atkinson furthers this, saying, 'Listening invites responsibility to get the story – the information – right. However, listening over extended periods of time also brings the knowledge that the story changes over time' (2002, p. 18). Relating this to Country, the importance of time in regard to space is evident; observing deeply the messages of Country as they come to us, waiting for them to be ready in space, in the right space at the right time. We are not the authors of nor authority on time, nor indeed space, it is an immeasurable cyclical continuum of which we are one part. In this way time becomes and is space.

Reading the Terrain

> *Everything at Bawaka has and tells a story. Everything communicates, through its own language and its own Law (Burarrwanga et al. 2014).*

Each entity in space speaks its own language, communicating and sending messages to each other and humans. We are only one part of Country, and being able to read the stories and hear the lessons and requests being sent by others in space is the responsibility of people as custodians. In Yolŋu ontology, 'animals, rocks, winds, tides, emotions, spirits, songs and humans speak. They all have language and knowledge and Law. They all send messages; communicate with each other' (Bawaka Country et al. 2015b, p. 270). According to Bawaka people, it is their role to ask Country to welcome

ngapaki[46], or westerners, so the land, tides, currents, plants, animals, winds, rocks, songs, emotions and Dreams recognise them. While these entities might not all communicate as humans do, they do create and they do communicate, they all tell stories. They leave signs in their own written languages, give knowledge and meaning in their own ways of being and communicating (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a; Burarrwanga et al. 2014). While we cannot possibly read the language of every entity in a space, it is our responsibility to listen to the messages, engage with their subtleties and respect their diversity.

In telling the stories and singing the songs of Country, dancing up the land and holding ceremony, we send messages to the other entities sharing our spaces as they also read us. According to Yolŋu people, what humans do is attended by many others, and to hear the messages of Country, we must take great care to the world (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a; Bawaka Country et al. 2015b). They continue:

> When the wärrkarr[47] [or white sand lily] is in flower, we know it is time to hunt stingray. You know the sweat you felt when you sat drinking tea on the sand earlier this evening? That sweat tells you that the fruits are ripening. We know that when it is hot there will be good fruits to eat. The thirst we feel in our bodies is linked with the trees that give the fruit. We know and the tree knows. We feel these messages in our body, and our body sends messages to the fruits and the animals. In our heart and our soul we feel the season unfolding. The fruits will be ready when we go out on Country, when we need them. These messages are part of our very being (2015, p. 275).

Deep ties between people, land and others sharing spaces enable a reading of and communication with one another, through observation, awareness and respect. Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison tells the story of his Uncles and father chanting, calling in Koorah Koo-rie, the wind spirit, and slapping the surface of the sea water with their sticks, a message to the dolphins to herd the fish to be hunted in the shallows. He says, ‘These old men were masters of communicating and getting in touch with the spirit of the dolphins. They never went out in a boat and trained the dolphins to do this; they did this through connection of spirit, telepathically’ (2013, p. 53). Uncle Max also describes the songs trees sing. He says that a tree, from its leaves to its roots, records everything that passes around it or connects through

[46] Ngapaki means western in Yolŋu language.

[47] Wärrkarr means the ‘white sand lily’ in Yolŋu.

it, telling about the health of our environment. By reading the messages the trees pass to us we can know the wellbeing of the land. Trees also indicate important places; Uncle Max says, 'Angophoras, they are old female trees. If you look at a tribe of angophoras that's sprouted out from some rocks, you will see they are so huge and how they twist and turn and are embracing everything. Once you start looking at those old grannies, as we call them, then you know "Whoa, there's a women's place somewhere round here", because they are used as a signpost' (p. 141).

Reading the messages of Country requires awareness of the connections around you, being open, alert and conscious that people are not at the centre of all. Oliver Costello supports this, describing the intangible spirit of Country, which can be sensed when read respectfully. Land and memory operate side by side, a simultaneous collective connectedness, and thus the memory of land becomes tangibly visible on the landscape despite any changes that occur. Costello says that through memory the land can respond, remember ecosystems, repopulate displaced species, re-establish itself. It is our role to listen to the messages of the land, read what the land is teaching, support Country. In doing so, stories emerge and re-emerge, the memories of place rematerialise (Yarn with O Costello 2015 on 25 November).

Landscape as Monument

> *The ochre is a story painted on the body. It's a connection. It makes you strong when you dance, it's part of the land because the ochre comes from the land, so it represents you being part of it … There's a connection with the song and paint (Bin Saaban recorded by Torres 2016)*[48].

Spaces remind people of culture and identity, of origin and narrative. Terrains become memory and experience. Land becomes both tangible and intangible monument, inscribed into the senses. For Gumbaynggirr people, the bend of the river literally is Birrugan's knee, recording where the giant man fell when killed in the Dreaming. Irrespective of changes to the material structure of the place, visiting that river bend is a reminder of the associated story and the origin (Somerville & Perkins 2010). We

[48] Brian Bin Saaban is a Djugun Law boss in Western Australia.

remember narratives in an embodied sense by smearing our bodies with the paint of the land – ochre – and telling the story through dance.

Marcia Langton adds to the discussion, describing landscape as monument in terms of the land being marked, known and memorialised phenomenologically through the senses. She describes sites as being 'inscribed through metaphysical relationships and are experienced through relationships with the emplaced Story [or Dreaming] Beings who gave rise to the original clan ancestors' (2002, p. 255). As such, not only are people's rights marked by ancestral connections, but cultural memories become inscribed in places, accessed 'through engagement and an inscription of the senses' (p. 254).

The landscape is the material embodiment of narratives embedded into the creation of a site, a monument and physical reminder of connections to sites and Ancestors. Uncle Greg Simms tells the story of why the cliff faces in the Blue Mountains are bare. He says that in the Dreaming, the Rainbow Serpent came down the valley from Lithgow, making the winding rivers. Following behind was Gurangatch[49], a giant part-serpent part-fish or eel, and as it swam behind the Serpent it splashed its tail along the surface of the water. As the water sprayed out up onto the cliff faces it washed them clean of trees and plants, as they remain today (Yarn with G Simms 2016 on 14 December). This story remains embedded in the landscape, a visible memory of the formation of the land.

Similarly, Aunty Fran Bodkin describes how in her family, when a girl child was born, a native frangipani tree was planted (Yarn with F Bodkin 2016 on 28 October) to signify the continuation of peoples and culture, marking a personal moment as physical monument in the land.

Ground as Cartography

> *Representations of people, spirits, and landscapes are symbols in a rich variety of rites, from the merely petitionary to the profoundly cosmological. The cultural map through which the landscape is reinscribed with the cultural memories, regulations,*

[49] Gurangatch is a giant Dreaming spirit that is part-serpent part-fish who was responsible for creation in the Gundungurra nations around the Blue Mountains in New South Wales.

and logic of the Elders is marked and memorialised through social experience (Langton 2002, p. 256).

Mapping is a process of both tangibly and intangibly writing into the land; the map 'extends from the community into the landscape through inscriptions on trees and rocks, drawings on the ground, or dance and ceremony' (Pearce & Louis 2008, pp. 110-111)[50]. Our mappings accentuate the lived experience of spaces, and thus our maps are phenomenologically spatialised (Pearce & Louis 2008). Habitual movement over ground maps the land, while knowing the stories and songs of the land enables travel.

Correspondingly, the land becomes a navigational instrument to those who read and know it, with certain landmarks enabling movement in the appropriate direction. Uncle Jack Campbell[51] describes Didthul, or Pigeon House Mountain, as a navigation landmark for the Yuin people. He says the mountain not only directs people where to fish but is also a ceremonial 'high test' or initiation site for the Djirringany people and that knowledgeable men are needed to operate its many ceremonial sites (Campbell recorded by Creamer 1974). Tangibly, Didthul appears as the breasts of a woman, Mother Earth nurturing us, physically and mentally.

In Yolŋu ontologies, gurrutu, or kinship systems, explain an emplaced and distinctive space that incorporates all time, thus reiterating 'an ontogenetic form of cartography [a form of mapping concerned with the origin and development], a continual mapping of not only space but the particular combinations of practice, materiality, temporality and conceptualisation' (Bawaka Country et al. 2015a, p. 11). This means of mapping forms the foundations for living in a space in which humans are only one part, and in which the relationality between all parts is vital.

Place names carry narratives, meanings and interrelationships, and identify events or geographic features. Jakelin Troy discusses the names of places or topographical features like mountains or rivers. She says the naming of rivers is noteworthy in that not only, as the whole waterway may be named, rather but each bend or waterhole. She says, 'The river is deeply significant all the way along because

[50] Renee Pualani Louis is a Hawaiian woman.

[51] Uncle Jack Campbell is a Yuin Elder from the South Coast of New South Wales.

different parts of it are known for being good fishing spots or … spots where … ancestral figures have had some contact with the landscape' (Troy cited in Giakoumelos 2012). Oliver Costello further explains that different groups may have different names for sites based on their responsibilities and authority for that location, as well as cultural structure and language (Yarn with O Costello 2015 on 25 November).

Delineation, Demarcation

> *It took me weeks to find out the problem was the boundaries of the land claim. Kartiya[52] [or white people] asked the Old People, 'where is your Country?' and kartiya just drew a straight line on the map. Kurtal [his grandfather's Country] was outside the boundary. Spider [his grandfather] can't understand what the confusion is all about. It's his Country and always has been his Country. In his mind, he never lost it in the first place. The problem is the whitefella's rules. It's written on paper, and it always changes. The Blackfella Law is written in the stars, the ground and countryside, and it never changes (Lawford recorded by Ma 2016)[53].*

Spatial demarcation or boundary making comes from geographic features in the landscape; a bend in a river, a range of mountains, or even 'the rain shadow, trees, and rocks, as well as fabricated markers' (Watson 2009, p. 37). Likewise, songlines do not travel in straight lines across the land, nor do absolute boundaries exist. Jim Pura-lia Meenamatla Everett claims that ground and territory cannot be fought over, as the land, not humans, creates our boundaries. Nor may we try to change those boundaries as everything we need is in them. Everett describes the Law in relation to boundaries thus: 'The [L]aw is to sit and wait at that land boundary. Sit and wait, and after a while the right person would come out and talk with you to see what your business was. If they were happy they would bring you in. The same protocol existed between all Aboriginal people' (2003, p. 58).

Aunty Fran Bodkin furthers this understanding of boundary delineation by describing how sea level changes reformed spatial demarcations for the Bidigal clan and neighbours. She says, 'As the seas rose we all moved further westward following our environment which also moved, then, as the sea levels fell,

[52] Kartiya means 'white person' in Wangkajunga language.

[53] Putuparri Tom Lawford is a Wangkajunga man who lives in Fitzroy Crossing.

we moved eastwards, again following our familiar food sources. That is why we say we belonged to the land, we did not own it' (Yarn with F Bodkin 2017 on 5 December).

Edges are defined through knowing Country, walking and experiencing the land, camping in the landscape, rather than lines on a map. According to Uncle Tony Perkins, straight lines on a map are problematic as they do not conform to Country as understood through 'the delicate negotiations with others involved in boundary work' (Somerville & Perkins 2010, p. 195). Movement outside of boundaries is undertaken through knowledge of languages, totems and spiritual awareness, and is passed down through generations by way of Law. Knowing boundaries is not only important to maintain harmony with neighbours and respectful protocol, it also signifies identity. For the Gumbaynggirr, their sense of their Country's boundaries is constructed from the inside, from the centre of their being. Identities are an 'intertwining of self, people and place' (p. 191).

Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison says that language is key to understanding demarcations. 'Some people think language is just talking, here and there, but it is much more. It represents a border and it holds culture and [L]aw' (2013, p. 136). He says taking language outside its boundaries is disrespectful as it removes it from its homeland and creation spaces. Respecting boundaries ensures safe movement and, according to Uncle Max, similar limits exist between people and the animal world, such as the boundaries set by sharks in the oceans. Of course, languages, like boundaries, overlap and are kinetic; as people share and move so are borders and vernaculars shared and moved.

Interstitial spaces that are shared between many groups are often places of gathering or meeting, mutually accessed, used and cared for. According to Irene Watson (2009), some areas are shared, others restricted, some require permission to travel across or hunt in to avoid conflict. Similarly, liminal spaces, often between Countrys, mark the thresholds between peoples via monuments in the terrain, visible for all who can read the land.

Designed Land

Indigenous spaces have been designed. Our spaces are culturally designed by the community in accordance with what the land needs and wants. Through our connections to our homelands, to one

another and to other beings inhabiting spaces, we have planned the function of particular zones of land based on the meanings and stories embedded in those tracts, as laid out by our ancestral beings and predecessors. Our lands are designed through caring for Country activities, including spending time on Country, cultural burning, gathering food and medicines, taking part in ceremony, creating art and designs and protecting special sites. Performing caring for Country actions and maintaining knowledge systems ensures the land and, in turn, people and ecosystems, remain healthy.

The design of land occurs physically, conceptually, sensorially, spiritually and intergenerationally; we learn from our Elders, who learned from their Elders how to know and read the land. Mussolini Harvey describes our design process thus: 'In our ceremonies we wear marks on our bodies, they come from the Dreaming too, we carry the design that the Dreamings gave to us. When we wear that Dreaming mark we are carrying the [C]ountry, we are keeping the Dreaming held up, we are keeping the [C]ountry and the Dreaming alive' (Harvey cited in Bradley 1988, p. xi). Marking our bodies with the design of the land using ochre at times of ceremony is a direct embodiment of the land; a corporeal representation of our relationships, kinships and Country. Designing the land also happens at more mundane moments, when walking the land and feeling feet connecting with ground, reading the landscape to burn at exactly the right time and location, drawing a marker in the sand or on a tree.

Cultivating the earth using our subtle encouraging techniques designs ecosystems, and acknowledges that future generations will continue to nurture the ground. In designing the land with our descendants in mind, we design sustainably, using proven ancestral techniques. Designing the land in partnership with Country ensures all beings are considered and cared for.

Conclusion

As designers in collaboration with Country, we maintain a reciprocal relationship with ourselves, with the land and with previous generations unbroken over thousands of years of inhabitation. Guided by our Ancestors, we have created spaces of identity and kinship, known to us via our lore and Laws. Our ways of reading, singing and speaking Country are determined by our ephemeral and temporal understandings of who we are in the landscape we occupy, as a part of, rather than separate from it. As custodians of the land, we have been guided by our Laws in how to care for Country to realise

sustainable co-existence. We maintain our diversity as First Peoples, remaining continually and respectfully interconnected with each other, the land and all entities inhabiting the land. Our maps, boundaries and monuments do not occur as documents; instead they exist in the appearances of terrain and formations, based on those determined by our Dreaming Ancestors. We are designers of land. This is how our Indigenous spaces always were and always will be.

CHAPTER 4: THE PROBLEM WITH ANTHROPOLOGY

NON-INDIGENOUS COMMENTARIES

Introduction

> *Anthropology, as the study of 'otherness', never disengaged itself from Eurocentric narcissism; but as the 'others' were mirrors in them Europe too was seen with a new inflection (Nederveen Pieterse 1992, p. 221).*

The term 'anthropology' refers to the study or science of humanity. It is the scrutiny of peoples throughout the world, how they have evolved historically, how they have adapted to different environments, their behaviours and socialisations. It concerns itself with the study of both biological and social characteristics. According to Marvin Harris, 'anthropology began as the science of history. Inspired by the triumphs of the scientific method in the physical and organic domains, nineteenth-century anthropologists believed that sociocultural phenomena were governed by discoverable lawful principles' (1968, p. 1). Anthropology has been the practice of allegedly superior forms of thinking and observation of one people over another in order to describe those observations to themselves. It is a subjective science that assumes superiority of the observer over the observed. This pervasive belief of European superiority caused the negation of non-western learnings, practices and beliefs. According to Ann McGrath:

> Racial ideas went hand in hand with British imperialism, from the Christian notion of 'the chain of being' where blacks were ranked as inferior and white Christians at the summit, to the rise of anthropology, which turned such ideas into a sustaining 'science'. Their findings were later applied in Africa, Australia and other colonial contexts, providing justification and information to facilitate the implementation of colonialism. Theories like Social Darwinism, popularised by Herbert Spencer in the 1870s and beyond, predicted that the extinction of 'inferior races' in the wake of 'colonial progress' was inevitable (1995, p. 15).

As such, anthropology became a weapon of control. It enabled one people to assert authority over another's customs, languages, possessions, relationships and space. It asserted a perceived superiority between observer and observed, scientist and assumed subject, missionary and supposed subordinate. Europeans appropriated space from Indigenous peoples, and then repeatedly found ways to justify their occupation through the subjective sciences of anthropology and history. Under the guise of science, their observations created enduring misunderstandings about Indigenous peoples, their cultures and their spaces. Anthropology became a 'science' of convenience and this convenience continues.

The recording of Australia's Indigenous people was carried out not by the Indigenous people themselves but 'by white male observers – missionaries, government officials, employers, travellers, anthropologists and artists – these accounts appeared in mission tracts, government reports, personal memoirs, press articles, travel books, films, exhibitions, art and literature' (Haebich 2005, pp. 3-4). Indigenous stories and histories, spaces and places were framed and formulated through European imperialists' accounts that were, on the whole, ignorant of precisely what they were observing and documenting. Greenop and Memmott note that when British colonisers arrived in Australia they were:

> … enculturated with what now seem deeply racist notions of Aboriginal people as savages who were barely human. The settlers could not interpret Aboriginal cultural practices as anything more than barbarism or savagery … Acts of kindness or decency by Aboriginal people as seen by the settlers lead to notions of the 'noble savage', but still their culture was not considered 'civilised' or worth retaining … So issues of culture were irrelevant to the minds of the government and settlers. The attitude was more one of recording what had existed of Aboriginal culture before it disappeared altogether (2006, p. 159).

This chapter refers to anthropology with regards to a fabricated ethnology of absence and the silencing of Indigenous voices in relation to their spaces. Different types of 'anthropologists' will be discussed in reference to their observations of Indigenous inhabitations, cultivation, relationships to land and landscape, and custodial ownership of the land. While most of those mentioned were untrained in the profession and would not give themselves the title of anthropologist, they embraced the traits of observation, categorisation and appropriation of Indigenous knowledges and spaces. The frames or filters through which these anthropological surveillances occurred caused the observers not to see the

relationships of Indigenous peoples with their land and culture, along with their inherent complexities. Thus, these so-called (but predominantly unofficial and unqualified) anthropologists, who saw lands that seemed unfarmed and impermanent or had no structures built on them, were unwilling to learn the language of the land or to understand its Laws and therefore dismissed the culture as primitive. They did not see Indigenous peoples as humans like themselves. Thus did anthropology come in all its forms, instituting cultural and invariably spatial dislocations while silencing Indigenous voices.

These 'anthropologists' came to the continent in waves, each bringing a new set of misunderstandings from various misguided positions. The first to arrive were the 'accidental' anthropologists: the invaders, colonists and 'explorers' who brought the legal and spatial notion of terra nullius and their belief that they had the right to 'discover' new lands. Then came the 'guardians': missionaries and 'rescuers' who noted that genocide was occurring and felt it was their responsibility 'to save' through religion and segregation. Emerging from European industrialisation, occurring more or less between the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815) and the First World War (1914-1918), anthropology became recognised as a profession (Eriksen & Nielsen 2013) and its practitioners, believing that it was their duty to record the final throes of a race while using it to look backwards at their own race, made annals of their observations as 'science'. More recently, academics and writers have 'archaeologically' dismantled, unearthed and authored Indigenous peoples' histories, knowings and worldviews. As a result, discussions of Indigenous spaces have been and continue to be largely by non-Indigenous commentators.

Despite western knowledge benefiting from the colonisation and dispossession of Indigenous spaces, these written observations illustrate the absence of the Indigenous voice.

This chapter considers the practices of recording and assessing Indigenous cultures and their spatial practices, not only by anthropologists themselves but also by those who, either from an accidental or outsider viewpoint, documented Indigenous uses of space in such a way as to create misunderstandings of the Indigenous people's relationships to their land. These misreadings prepared the ground for further ongoing misinterpretations and justification for invasion. As an Indigenous person, and despite the filter of time between the various authors and myself, much of what I have read has been distressing. Enough

of these studies, written from a clinical outsider's perspective, told the story of my family (and therefore my own story) as to make the writing of this chapter particularly challenging.

The Accidental

Early colonists left a comprehensive archive of accounts of both amicable and violent encounters with Indigenous peoples, exploitative and humanitarian relationships, and public debates about their fate, in newspapers, personal memoirs and professional histories (Haebich 2005). Their records repeatedly, and perhaps inadvertently, show Indigenous peoples' connection to and use of the land. Uncle Bruce Pascoe (2014) and Bill Gammage (2012) discuss signs of Aboriginal agriculture, aquaculture and inhabitations described in colonisers' documents. However, as the land was cultivated and structures built in a way that European colonisers were unfamiliar with, the colonisers misinterpreted Indigenous alteration of the land, or assumed that the cultivation they did observe was the result of earlier colonisers. This misinterpretation started with the visit of the *Endeavour*.

Captain Cook's Law: The Empty Land

In 1768 Captain James Cook, accompanied by botanist Joseph Banks, set sail on board the *Endeavour* ostensibly to map the transit of Venus over the sun. However, Cook had additional secret orders to seek out the legendary 'Southern Continent' (Museum of Australian Democracy 2011). Both men produced substantial journals of their voyage, observing and documenting in detail their journey, the lands they visited and the peoples they encountered. On their return to Britain in 1773, their journals were edited by book editor John Hawkesworth (1969) and prepared for publication. While Hawkesworth featured Māori people in the general description of New Zealand from the first line, he dedicated the first nine pages of the Australian section to an account of the land, flora and fauna. Only then were Aboriginal people even mentioned. Hawkesworth also took the opportunity to omit a note by Cook that the Aboriginal people he encountered were 'far happier than we Europeans' (Hawkesworth cited in Standfield 2012, p. 47). The omission from the published account of the Indigenous encounters recorded in the journals means it was written as an ethnology of absence (Standfield 2012). This convenient 'absence' ostensibly gave space for British colonisation under the premise of terra nullius. Very little was recorded about Aboriginal impact on, or modifications to, the land, perhaps because this impact was

invisible through western social filters and ways of understanding. In effect, Indigenous society and land management were invisible to the British.

From Cook's and Bank's journal entries, Britain learned that Australia was 'mostly empty', sparsely populated with 'non-agricultural' 'hunters and gatherers' who wore 'no clothing', had 'few possessions', built 'rudimentary shelters' and were 'disinterested in trade' (Hawkesworth 1969). On this basis, the British surmised there would be no way to purchase land from the Indigenous peoples who occupied it. They also discovered that the Aboriginal inhabitants were 'primitive', 'akin to monkeys' and as such unlikely to fight back (Banner 2007). Despite recording 'a certain sign they [the lands] are Inhabited' (Museum of Australian Democracy 2011), and with no negotiations held or treaties signed, upon reaching Possession Island at the far northern tip of Queensland on 22 August 1770, Cook declared the east coast a British possession. This was achieved by making Aboriginal people seem 'will-less' in their 'state of nature', where possession of land was recognised only as satisfying immediate needs (Moreton-Robinson 2015). 'Ownership' of the east coast of the continent was at this point symbolic and applicable only to Cook and his crew; the Indigenous peoples were obviously completely unaware their sovereignty had even been challenged, and thus the fabricated 'anthropological' foundation of western transactions and the observations that were to follow was created.

Although these accounts reflect minimal interaction with Aboriginal occupants, they could be considered early ethnographic accounts that shaped assumptions, albeit mistaken ones, about Aboriginal people and their use of the land (Standfield 2012). The active dissemination of the belief that Indigenous peoples were not settled on the land was used as a political tool to justify dispossessing them of that land. It was on the basis of this 'understanding' of the land and its people that the British set out to claim Australia as terra nullius, an empty land.

Squatters' Letters Home

> *The British set about clearing the site for settlement and [Lieutenant-Colonel David] Collins imagined that 'the stillness … had then, for the first time since the creation, been interrupted by the rude sound of the labourer's axe, and the downfall of its ancient inhabitants.' The act of clearing trees was enough for Collins to declare that*

> *the British had taken 'possession of Nature … in her simplest, purest garb', without any reference to the Eora[1] (Standfield 2012, p. 73).*

It is clear that Indigenous and European views about the land were very different, and as Europeans assumed superiority and were unwilling to learn from Indigenous ways of knowing the land, they misread Indigenous people and their lands. For the British, land had been the basis of class structure and hence of social relations and a cause of conflict in industrialising Britain. The colonists' beliefs and expectations were that land was a private possession and a symbol of class and power. This was in sharp contrast to the culture and beliefs of the Indigenous peoples that they were in a custodial and obligatory relationship with the land, they belonged to the land and since they cared for it, the land cared for them. With invasion, Indigenous relationships with the land were not supplanted by the British notion of property. The two concepts coexisted and continued to operate simultaneously, uncomfortably, and at times in conflict with each other (Goodall 1996). In bringing with them and applying their notions of property, Europeans enabled the contrived anthropological framing of their observation of Indigenous space.

The British transported with them their assumptions about the land and the Indigenous peoples, principal among them the assumption that the land was in a 'state of nature' and unchanged by human activity. They thought Aboriginal people roamed aimlessly across the land, and because of their preconceived European concepts of land management, they condemned Indigenous peoples as being unproductive, lazy, unstable and unsavoury (Prout & Howitt 2009). Their ideas of permanence and temporality differed from Indigenous peoples' experiences of living perpetually with the land as part of the land. The British also assumed that European knowledge and tools could be applied to make the land productive and like Britain (Goodall 1996) and their claims on the land for colonial occupation were further enhanced by the force of their armies, which were prepared to defend their right to dispossess the Indigenous peoples.

On 26 January 1788, Captain Arthur Phillip arrived in Sydney Cove to claim Australia on behalf of the British and create a military convict base. His instructions with regards to the Indigenous peoples were

[1] Eora means 'people' in Dharug language, and is also the name for some people from around the Sydney area.

to live in harmony with them. How this objective was to be achieved while simultaneously appropriating Indigenous people's lands was not discussed (Hiatt 1996). From that early moment of colonisation, letters, reports, records and journals were dispatched back to England, recording numerous instances of how Aboriginal peoples used their space, including land ownership, territory, cultivation and inhabitations (Gammage 2012; Pascoe 2014). Despite these frequent, often accidental recordings, these reports remained conveniently overlooked by the colonisers and the ethnology of absence in regard to the fact that the Indigenous peoples already inhabited the spaces the British were appropriating was maintained.

On 7 February 1788, Lieutenant-Colonel David Collins, who had been appointed Judge-Advocate, read Governor Phillip's commission to a public assembly as well as letters-patent from King George III which established an English court of law and transplanted the new laws of England to Australia. This transferral was not discussed with the Indigenous peoples whose Laws the new ones were displacing. While in the colony, Collins wrote *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, which he published in 1798. Standfield (2012) notes that in the account, Collins ethnographically recorded topics regarding the Aboriginal people of the Sydney region, including their government, religion, physique and appearance, dwellings, ways of living, ceremonies, courtship and marriage, characters, customs and behaviours, superstitions, illnesses, property and languages.

Indigenous Real Estate

Numerous reports were sent to England recording the Indigenous 'ownership' of land and Aboriginal ideas of 'property rights'. Hiatt, describing Collins' account of the colony, writes:

> [Collins] surprised his readers with the information that the natives not only held property in spears, shields and clubs but 'strange as it may appear, they have also their real estates'. The estates, moreover, were owned by individuals …. Collins recorded that various others possessed this same kind of hereditary property, adding 'which they retained undisturbed'. As he himself had played an historic role in its disturbance, we may presume the statement was intended to be ethnographic (Collins cited in Hiatt 1996, pp. 17-18).

Collins likewise recorded Bennelong's 'ownership' of Memel (known as Goat Island) in Port Jackson. He explained that the island had been inherited from Bennelong's father and despite British invasion, use of and settlement on the island, Bennelong intended to pass the island on to his friend By-gone. Collins found Bennelong's description of Indigenous property ownership 'strange', due to previous ill-informed assumptions by the British, formed during the trip up the east coast on the *Endeavour*, that there were no Indigenous property rights (Standfield 2012). Further to this is the misinterpretation of Indigenous 'ownership' of land or property. Collins (1798) understood Bennelong as saying that he owned and inherited the land; however, it is more likely that he said he was the custodian of the land and inherited the responsibility of being the protector of knowledges associated with Memel.

Collins also described how 'the unexpected arrival of Europeans caused many [Aboriginal people] to conclude that they [the British] too must have belonged to the land in question, or at least know of it, in a previous life' (Collins cited in Reynolds 2006, p. 39). He dismissed it as being backward, not understanding that this was an indication of the Indigenous spiritual relationship between land and people. It was when Aboriginal people realised that the British were not departing home to care for their own lands that hostilities arose. After many thousands of years of being custodians of their land, with enduring hereditary responsibilities to protect and care for it, it was inconceivable that they had been dispossessed (Standfield 2012).

As cited by Hiatt, in 1839 Reverend John Dunmore Lang wrote letters to Thomas Hodgkin of the Aborigines' Protection Society assuring him that the Indigenous peoples had concepts of land ownership not dissimilar to those of westerners. In his writings he described how each tribe 'owned' a district of land as well as the animals and plants found within the boundaries, and that individuals 'owned' particular portions. Just as pastoralists depended on their properties, so did Aboriginal peoples. Lang discussed how each tribe would protect its territory against trespassers and described how they performed burning practices to assist in hunting and that proprietors had the right to invite others to the resulting feast (Lang cited in Hiatt 1996). The concept of 'ownership' mentioned by Lang was based on a western understanding of land tenure rather than an Indigenous one. However, the sharing of resources and burning as a method of land management were and are pertinent to the Indigenous connection to land (Gammage 2012; Pascoe 2014; Steffensen 2013). While these 'accidental

anthropologists' were starting to observe the complexities of Indigenous peoples' relationships to land and culture, the filters and prejudices through which they saw these complexities caused judgements and misunderstandings, with dire effects for Indigenous peoples and their spaces.

Despite being aware of Indigenous peoples having ideas of property rights (even though these actual relationships were misunderstood), and admitting that 'we had not yet been able to reconcile the natives [sic] to the deprivation of those parts of this harbour which we occupied' (Collins 1798, p. 147), the British concluded that Indigenous peoples lived in a 'state of nature', which enabled them to create a colony in New South Wales without recognising Aboriginal sovereignty (Standfield 2012).

Backward Blacks Couldn't Even Farm

> *Settler colonialism wants Indigenous land, not Indigenous peoples, so Indigenous peoples are cleared out of the way of colonial expansion, first via genocide and destruction, and later through incorporation and assimilation. The settler colonial discourse turns Indigenous peoples into savages, unhumans, and eventually, ghosts (Tuck & McKenzie 2015, p. 66).*

The British legitimised their settlements under the Roman law of *res nullius*, meaning that 'empty things', including land, were property common to all humankind until they were put to some use – generally agricultural. Thus the first (European) person to use the land became its owner (Standfield 2012). Emeric de Vattel's *Le Droit de gens ou principe de la loi naturelle* of 1758 stated that the 'cultivation of land … is an obligation imposed on man by nature' (Vattel cited in Standfield 2012, p. 49). He went on to say that people who were 'dwelling in fertile countries' but 'disdain[ed] the cultivation of the soil and prefer[red] to live by plunder … deserved to be exterminated like wild beasts of prey' (p. 49). It was according to this understanding of agricultural cultivation that the British judged the apparent failure of Indigenous people to farm. John Hirst says the British believed the Indigenous peoples to be:

> … a backward people. In their understanding, the progress of humankind could be marked by the movement from hunter-gathering to herding, then to agriculture, to trading and finally to manufacturing. As racial ideas firmed up during the nineteenth century, Aborigines [sic] became still more inferior in

> European eyes. Instead of being a backward people who might yet improve, they were branded a congenitally inferior race that was incapable of advancing (2014, pp. 7-8).

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell was a Scottish surveyor and 'explorer' in south-eastern Australia in the early and mid-nineteenth century. He recorded a journal and later published *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia and Journal of an Expedition into the Interior of Tropical Australia*. In his notes he described ethnologically not only the countryside, but also the Aboriginal peoples he met. Clearly perplexed over some of what he saw during his journey down the Darling River, he was unable to reconcile that the Aboriginal peoples might be cultivating the land, even after comparing it to European fields, remarking:

> In the neighbourhood of our camp the grass had been pulled to a very great extent, and piled in hay-ricks so that the aspect of the desert was softened into the agreeable semblance of a hay-field. The grass had evidently been thus laid up by the natives, but for what purpose we could not imagine. At first I thought the heaps were only the remains of encampments, as the aborigines [sic] sometimes sleep on a little dry grass; but when we found the ricks, or haycocks, extending for miles we were quite at a loss to understand why they had been made (1839, chapter 2.5, 19 June).

Similar mentions of mile upon mile of rich natural pasturage and of grains being cultivated and collected occur throughout his journal. Despite stating that he was unaware of the purpose of the cultivation, he later recorded the making of bread from the seeds that grew in fields as far as the eye could see (Mitchell 1848). Seemingly the notion of Indigenous land cultivation was impossible for him to concede despite his own observations.

Mitchell was unapologetically aware that European behaviours were going to destroy the Indigenous fields, lands and ways of life. For example, he stated, 'These children of the soil were doing everything in their power to assist me, whose wheel tracks would probably bring the white man's cattle into it' (1848, chapter 3, 9 March). The fact that Mitchell derogatorily called them 'children of the soil' while simultaneously being both indifferent to their cultivating activities and grateful for their assistance illustrates the ethnology of absence with which the Europeans undertook the 'discovery' of Indigenous lands, enabling them to maintain the notion that Indigenous peoples lived in a 'state of nature'.

Numerous other ‘explorers’ made notes in their journals and letters regarding Indigenous land management and cultivation across the continent, including George Grey in Western Australia in 1839, and Chief Aboriginal Protector George Augustus Robinson in 1841 in the Port Phillip area. Surveyor J H Wedge drew a sketch of Aboriginal women collecting yam daisies in Victoria in 1835. So-called settler Isaac Batay in 1836 in Victoria described a form of terracing as ‘accidental gardening’, continuing, ‘it is reasonable to assume that the aboriginals [sic] were quite aware of the fact that turning the earth over in search of yams, instead of diminishing that form of food supply, would have a tendency to increase it’ (Batay cited in Frankel 1982, pp. 43-44). Between 1828 and 1844, Captain Charles Sturt undertook a number of expeditions into inland Australia, keeping a journal on his travels. In these, he stated, ‘Just as we halted we saw a small column of smoke rise up due south, and on looking in that direction observed some grassy plains spreading out like a boundless stubble, the grass being of the kind from which the natives [sic] collect seed for subsistence at this season of the year’ (1849, chapter 7, para 5). Despite witnessing agricultural activities, Sturt chose to describe them as ‘subsistence’, endorsing the European view that Indigenous peoples did not have agricultural abilities (Pascoe 2014). Record after record by ‘accidental anthropologists’ describes Indigenous cultivation of the land; nonetheless, this cultivation was downplayed by the authors as the actions of ‘nomadic’ ‘hunters and gatherers’.

The Handsomest Country

The British regularly said that the Australian countryside was like an English park, even though they usually described this similarity as ‘accidental’ and thus a way of disregarding what they saw in front of them. Mitchell described country in inland New South Wales as consisting of ‘open forest which, growing gradually thinner, at length left intervals of open plain … we crossed a beautiful plain; covered with shining verdure, and ornamented with trees which, although dropt in nature's careless haste, gave the country the appearance of an extensive park’ (Mitchell 1839, chapter 1.4, 21 January). In the early part of the nineteenth century, George William Evans, Assistant Surveyor of New South Wales, wrote of land west of Sydney:

> … at the Space of about a Mile I came on a fine Plain of rich Land, the handsomest Country I ever saw … this place is worth speaking of as good and beautiful; the Track of clear land occupies about a Mile on each side of the River … the Timber around is thinly scattered, I do not suppose there are more

> than ten Gum Trees on an Acre, their Bark is amazing thick at least 2 Inches; At 3 o'Clock I stopped at the commencement of a Plain still more pleasing and very Extensive; I cannot see the termination of it North of me; the soil is exceeding rich and produces the finest grass intermixed with variety of herbs; the hills have the look of a park and Grounds laid out; I am at a loss for Language to describe the Country[2] (1916, chapter 3, 6 December).

These descriptions of the land as park-like were likely due to the Aboriginal use of fire for land management – a technique used widely across the continent – rather than Australian native bush naturally 'taming' itself. In his Journal, Mitchell (1848) recorded in detail fire farming techniques, recognising it as a method of keeping the bush manageable, and a technique for hunting kangaroos. However, he did not connect the two elements to acknowledge them as a form of animal husbandry, saying:

> Fire, grass, kangaroos, and human inhabitants, seem all dependent on each other for existence in Australia; for any one of these being wanting, the others could no longer continue. Fire is necessary to burn the grass, and form those open forests, in which we find the large forest-kangaroo; the native [sic] applies that fire to the grass at certain seasons, in order that a young green crop may subsequently spring up, and so attract and enable him to kill or take the kangaroo with nets … But for this simple process, the Australian woods had probably contained as thick a jungle as those of New Zealand or America, instead of the open forests in which the white men now find grass for their cattle, to the exclusion of the kangaroo (1848, chapter X, para. 11).

His final note that 'the intrusion therefore of cattle is by itself sufficient to produce the extirpation of the native [sic] race, by limiting their means of existence' (chapter X, para. 11) is indicative of the British attitude to dispossessing the Indigenous inhabitants of their lands, and their intention to ethnologically record the expected 'extermination' of the Indigenous peoples, without changing their behaviour to prevent it.

[2] Capitalisations, spelling and grammar as per original in all quotations.

Furthermore, 'the desire of the British to establish their own economic security led to the dismantling of Aboriginal self-sufficiency. Foraging was considered an inferior pursuit, and more significantly, it clashed with British land-use requirements' (McGrath 1995, p. 21). While foraging was one cultivating technique used by Indigenous peoples, it was not the only method of obtaining food; their techniques were subtler and more sophisticated, in tune with the local environment, and less random than the word 'foraging' implies (Pascoe 2014).

The words 'agriculture' or 'farming' seem foreign in relation to pre-invasion Indigenous use of the land. Certainly land cultivation in the European sense was unlikely to be practised by a people who had experienced ice ages, desertification and unpredictable seasons on a dry continent with a thin topsoil that is generally unsuited to these techniques. Indigenous peoples developed unique methods of land management and cultivation, methods that cooperated with the different environments they inhabited across the continent (French 2013; Pascoe 2014). While Europeans tried to recreate the land in the image of European fields and pastures, they ignored the 'far more influential and complex land management techniques practised by Indigenous women' (French 2013, p. 39). It also suited the British to believe that Aboriginal people were hunters and gatherers who roamed the land without attachment to any particular piece of ground; if there were no attachments, the land was available for colonising. While Europeans recorded their observations of Indigenous peoples' land uses, they did so through an erroneous western filter, resulting for Indigenous peoples in dispossession of body, ground and Country, and a diminution of their creative abilities, skills and management of Country.

Humpies, Huts and Hovels

The British catalogued and labelled the Indigenous peoples ethnologically as 'nomadic', 'wanderers', 'hunters and gatherers', eschewing any notion of permanence in place. However, Indigenous permanence differed from European permanence on a number of levels; unlike the Europeans, Indigenous peoples have inhabited this continent for millennia without leaving to settle other parts of the planet. They have reacted to extreme changes in climate by adjusting to the land, knowing the land, being part of the land. Across the continent, different groups found different ways of living with the land, creating different tools, technologies, arts, traditions, languages, inhabitations and land cultivation techniques according to their specific environment. No one group of people reacted in the same way to

their land, because all had different conditions. Some did not need to travel often, while others did. Some built permanent structures, others ephemeral. Irrespective of these differences, however, there was permanence for all in their relationships with the land, with their Country. Despite observing these differences, colonists merged them into a unified understanding of one people and one relationship with land, returning instead to the misinterpretation that permanence was not feasible, which in turn facilitated dispossession.

Early colonial 'explorers' recorded in their journals the Indigenous inhabitations they saw, as detailed by Uncle Bruce Pascoe (2014). They reported on the design of the structures, which varied in response to climate, pest control and material availability. It is clear they were aware that they were displacing a complex society, and despite their assumptions of superiority and entitlement, they were 'acutely aware of the permanence and prosperity of many regions because the early literature has so many examples of their witness' (Pascoe 2014, p. 84).

Sturt undertook a number of expeditions to 'explore' south-eastern Australia. He was particularly interested in surveying the river systems, with the hope they would lead to the inland sea believed to exist and because he was eager to have the honour of 'discovering' it. In his journals, published in 1849, Sturt sketched the countryside, recorded his difficulties in surviving the harsh conditions and his interactions with the Indigenous peoples. While not trained in anthropology, he recorded these notes anthropologically, remarking on the general benevolence of the Aboriginal peoples he came across and admitting that they saved his life on more than one occasion. His writings included many drawings and descriptions of the variety of Aboriginal inhabitations he came across, and regularly expressed his admiration for their construction and maintenance. He also described construction techniques, differing styles, sizes, layout, suitability for climactic differences, imperviousness to wind and heat, comfort and strength, as well as the evidence of permanent habitations (Pascoe 2014). Sturt even expressed regret at not 'taking possession' of some 'huts', due to their effectiveness in restricting insects, noting:

> … upon a rising piece of ground, and certainly above the reach of floods, there were seven or eight huts, very different in shape and substance from any we had seen. They were made of strong boughs fixed in a circle in the ground, so as to meet in a common centre; on these there was, as in some other huts I have had occasion to describe, a thick seam of grass and leaves, and over this again a compact

> coating of clay. They were from eight to ten feet in diameter, and about four and a half feet high, the opening into them not being larger than to allow a man to creep in (1849, chapter V, para. 58).

Similarly, Mitchell recorded his observations of Aboriginal dwellings, describing in detail the constructions and noting that the inhabitants returned to the same locations continually over many years. His description and drawings of an Aboriginal burial are enchanting and he admitted that 'superior' European artistry could do no better. Yet, despite his evident admiration for the site, he called the Indigenous peoples 'savages' (Pascoe 2014). Mitchell said:

> The burying-ground was a fairy-like spot in the midst of a scrub of drooping acacias. It was extensive and laid out in walks which were narrow and smooth, as if intended only for sprites; and they meandered in gracefully curved lines among the heaps of reddish earth which contrasted finely with the acacias and dark casuarinae around. Others gilt with moss shot far into the recesses of the bush, where slight traces of still more ancient graves proved the antiquity of these simple but touching records of humanity. With all our art we could do no more for the dead than these poor savages had done (1839, chapter 2.8, 28 August).

The ethnographic language used by colonisers illustrates the filter of ignorance through which they viewed the peoples they were dispossessing. They chose words such as 'hut' to describe buildings they estimated would accommodate 40 or more people, and 'humpy' or 'hovel' to describe structures they portrayed as being well constructed. 'Even men as enlightened as Mitchell and Sturt, despite having seen villages of over a thousand people and grain fields reaching to the horizon, lapse into imperial euphemism by referring to those same people as "children of the soil", "sable friends" and "knights of the desert"' (Pascoe 2014, p. 77). Despite describing numerous villages, often of large size, they continued to define the population numbers as 'thinly spread' or say that the numbers were small, even so far as quoting Cook and Dampier's accounts of population numbers on their journeys, which covered only the circumference of the continent, not the interior.

The Guardians

Soon after invasion, Aboriginal people started to be represented as a group of people 'doomed to die out according to a natural law, like the dodo, and the dinosaur' (Stone 1974, p. 46). The idea that Aboriginal people were a 'doomed race' had various consequences for how they were treated and anthropologically observed and recorded, both as part of official governmental policy but also in terms of religious interference. Attempts to 'protect' Aboriginal people meant that they were sent into exile on reserves or removed to missions – and forced to stay there (Brantlinger 2004). With dispossession, land became less and less available to Indigenous people and spatially this affected their freedom to move about and inhabit their traditional lands. As non-native animals and introduced pests damaged the soil and native flora and fauna, food sources and places for inhabitations became scarce, so they were forced to rely on government rations. These were available through pastoral stations, missions and police stations, and enabled easier control over Indigenous people as they became reliant on non-indigenous food sources and were corralled into controllable spaces (Gray 2007). Missionaries were eager to 'civilise' and make Christians of Indigenous peoples to show the progress of 'primitive' to 'Christian'. This process meant the modification and at times erasure of Indigenous cultural and social life and the restriction and segregation of Indigenous peoples onto reserves and missions (Gray 2007). Using the guise of anthropology as religion, Europeans could prove that Indigenous people were incapable of caring for the land, and as such, dispossession was required.

Towards the end of the 1800s, and as colonisers sought to sanitise and authorise their claim on the continent through a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of Indigenous culture via the practices of often untrained anthropologists, a number of histories of Australia were written. George Rusden, who wrote *History of Australia* in three volumes, was typical in his treatment of the complex debates regarding Aboriginal relationships to land (Goodall 1996). Rusden largely belittled calls for reserves, calling them 'absurd', and Aboriginal peoples 'the weak Australians' (1883, p. 512). Most later authors made no mention at all of Aboriginal people in their historical accounts of Australia. This process of silencing the Indigenous voice through reinventing the past enabled a British court in 1889 to declare the continent as legally having been terra nullius in 1788. This continued the act of making Indigenous people invisible to those who invaded their lands (Goodall 1996).

How to Save a Dying Race (Call up the Missionaries)

At the same time as colonisers and the state were steadily imposing themselves on Indigenous people's lives and lands, property was being granted to missionaries for churches, schools and ration stations. Stripped of land, resources, culture and children, 'Aboriginal people were driven to the very margins of existence in an even more organised and articulated fashion – an existence that was at the time thought by most to encompass only a short term' (Maynard 2007, p. 36). Christianising, 'civilising' or 'saving' a race that they believed was inevitably dying out offered missionaries the opportunity to justify financial support from their bases in Europe. Naturally, Indigenous people were not themselves consulted in regards to the plans to 'help' them. Despite their good intentions, the missionaries' deeply ingrained assumptions of western superiority were the foundation for much of their work (Maynard 2007).

Humanitarian concerns about contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous increased around the perceived threat that white vices posed to the survival of Aboriginal people. Missionaries were especially concerned at what they believed to be both the corruption and exploitation of Aboriginal people, specifically the 'evils' of alcohol and sexual liaisons between white and Black (Byrne & Nugent 2004). Even while pushed to the fringes of society, Indigenous peoples lived with the constant threat of removal, and the missionaries' concerns offered invaders the chance to forcibly segregate them.

Missionaries were a fundamental and consistent factor in the process of making Indigenous peoples anthropologically invisible through separation. Their records spoke *instead of* Indigenous voices, regularly expressing patronising views in regards to the people whose welfare they believed was in their charge. Carl Strehlow, a German missionary and amateur ethnographer, concluded that Aboriginal languages were in a state of decay, and by extension so too was their culture. In a letter written in 1893 to G J Rechner of the mission board in Germany, he said, 'The language of our people has already had its flowering and is now falling into decay' (Strehlow cited in Cox 2014, p. 19). This led his grandson John Strehlow to conclude that 'in Carl's view Aboriginal culture had declined from an earlier, higher state of development' and as such 'Christianity would reverse this decline, and enable them to regain their former condition' (p. 19). Carl Strehlow started with the presupposition that 'Aboriginal peoples of the central desert regions, like all humans, had fallen from an original state of purity, but, in light of the Christian Gospel, could be redeemed and assume the very same relationship to God as any Christian

in western society' (p. 20). While still maintaining the ethnological observation and categorisation of Indigenous peoples, this prejudicial position came from Christian beliefs that were anti-evolutionary, in contrast to contemporary anthropological determinations about Indigenous peoples.

In 1896, anthropologist Baldwin Spencer described the work of the Lutherans at Hermannsburg in the Northern Territory under Strehlow as 'attempting to teach them ideas absolutely foreign to their minds and which they are utterly incapable of grasping' (Spencer cited in Cox 2014, p. 17). He then asserted that 'it is far better that as much as possible he should be left in his native [sic] state and that no attempt should be made either to cause him to lose faith in the strict tribal rule, or to teach him abstract ideas which are utterly beyond the comprehension of an Australian aborigine [sic]' (p. 17). Thus religion came to inform anthropology, all too persuasively imparting a western perception of Indigeneity while creating conditions of marginalisation and poverty.

Smoothing the Dying Pillow

> *On the fringe of the vast island continent of Australia live a few millions of white people; in the vast desert regions far from the coast live a few thousands of black people, the remnant of the first inhabitants of Australia. The race on the fringe of the continent has been there about a hundred years, and stands for Civilization; the race in the interior has been there no man knows how long, and stands for Barbarism. Between them a woman has lived in a little white tent for more than twenty years, watching over these people for the sake of the Flag, a woman alone, the solitary spectator of a vanishing race. She is Daisy Bates, one of the least known and one of the most romantic figures in the British Empire (Morehead cited in Bates 1938, in Introduction).*

Daisy Bates was an Irish Victorian 'adventurer' who, after emigrating to Australia, spent 20 years living with Aboriginal peoples in outback Western and South Australia. During this time, she studied the peoples she lived amongst and wrote about their culture, history, rituals, customs and beliefs. Bates published a series in major Australian newspapers titled 'My Natives and I', very much portraying herself as a saviour or rescuer of the Aboriginal people among whom she lived. While she was not a missionary, teacher or anthropologist, Bates believed that the Aboriginal race was bound to disappear and it was

her responsibility to ‘make their passing easier and to keep the dreaded half-caste menace from our great continent’ (Muecke 2005, p. 25). She considered that she ‘looked after’ Aboriginal people and ‘they should be left as free as possible, to pass from existence as happily as may be. She has wanted to save them from the worst effects of casual contact with the fringe of civilisation’ (Morehead cited in Bates 1938, in Introduction).

Bates lived amongst Aboriginal peoples for many years, yet referred repeatedly in her book *The Passing of the Aborigines* to the ‘savagery’, ‘barbarianism’ and ‘cannibalism’ of Aboriginal people (1938). She thought the cultural differences were determined by categories well known to the oppressive and racist colonial mentality, these categories being ‘primitive’ as opposed to ‘civilised’. Stephen Muecke discusses Bates’ perception of Aboriginal people as being sculpted by Victorian ideals: ‘Race differences were determined in essentialist ways, as if Aborigines [sic] do things because their primitive drives compel them to. Thus their living conditions are at least partly a consequence of their “nature”’ (2005, p. 25). Continuing, he says, ‘She was sustained by the belief that the empire was supremely powerful, and, in contrast, the poor Aborigines [sic] were helpless, like children’ (p. 26). The characteristics supported by Bates’ belief supposition that ‘primitive’ peoples were unable to use their minds and intellects resulted in the misbelief that Aboriginal people were unable to invent things, create their own histories, produce things of value or manage the land and resources. By lacking such values, Aboriginal peoples were disqualified not only from civilisation but from humanity as well (Smith 2012).

Similar tales regarding Indigenous peoples created by adventurers such as Bates were taken for granted as facts and have been entrenched into the language and opinions of non-Indigenous people towards Indigenous peoples (Smith 2012). For instance, in both her writing and actions, Bates kept alive the colonial spatial idea that Indigenous peoples lived mainly in the central areas of Australia, making the edges particularly available for British settlement.

The Science[3]

> *Australia is the present home and refuge of creatures, often crude and quaint, that elsewhere have passed away and given place to higher forms. This applies equally to the Aboriginal as to the platypus and the kangaroo. Just as the platypus, laying its eggs and feebly suckling its young, reveals a mammal in the making, so does the Aboriginal show us, at least in broad outline, what every man must have been like before he learned to read and write, domesticate animals, cultivate crops and use a metal tool. It has been possible to study in Australia human beings that still remain on the cultural level of men of the Stone Age (Spencer & Gillen 1927, p. vii).*

While 'explorers', government and faiths were imposing themselves on Indigenous peoples' lives, lands and spatialities, further understanding of Indigenous cultures was largely attained through science, or rather the social science of anthropology. From the colonisers' first contact, Indigenous peoples were observed, documented, represented, studied and classified and the characteristics of Aboriginality were debated and incorporated into the knowledge systems of western sciences. However, anthropology is a notably subjective science; it decrees that one has knowledge and the other does not, and compares while seeing in isolation. Historians and anthropologists presumed authority over Indigenous history, story and space, and recorded colonised viewpoints with prejudices that became 'truth'. Eurocentric concepts of history rooted in evolutionary anthropological models denied Indigenous peoples their own interpretations of their pasts. Bain Attwood writes:

> Aborigines [sic] were further consigned to the past but not to history by dint of becoming the subject of anthropology rather than history. Indeed, the Aborigines [sic] were valued by this new discipline because they were construed as artefacts of the human past. Just as European history constituted its object in a temporal sense – the modern, the present (and the future), the civilised – so too did European anthropology invent its object – the traditional, the past, the savage (1996, para. 2).

During the second part of the nineteenth century, Europeans believed themselves to be witnessing a progressive transition in their own societies:

[3] While I call it 'science' in this section, I am referring more specifically to the social science of anthropology.

> Marx defined a capitalist society emerging from a feudal society; Weber was to write about the rationalisation, the bureaucratisation, the enchantment of the old world; Tönnies about the move from community to association; Durkheim about the change from mechanical to organic forms of solidarity (Kuper 1988, p. 4).

They considered the 'new world' in contrast to 'traditional society' and the underlying traditional society that they believed was 'primitive society.' For these men, modern society was defined by the territorial state, the monogamous family and private property, whereas primitive society was nomadic, organised by blood ties, promiscuous and collectivist. They also believed they experienced a progression in mental ability and religious ideas; while primitive peoples were illogical and directed by magic, modern man had invented science (Kuper 1988).

Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, originally published in 1871 (1999), discusses the theory of evolution and natural selection. The book portrayed a social hierarchy with white people at the top of the evolutionary scale and Black people at the bottom. It follows that groups with the same origin would develop differently in different environments, and as such the history of a species could be traced backwards in time by looking at others of the same species (Kuper 1988). Therefore, to understand their own society and supply evidence for their beliefs, anthropologists looked towards what they perceived to be 'primitive societies'. Western anthropology brought the study of Indigenous peoples into their science using 'Indigenes' to define 'primitivism'. This notion of primitive society was intimately related to other captivating ideas surrounding primitive mentality, primitive religion, primitive art and so on (Kuper 1988).

Despite assuming the voice of authority and claiming to be experts, early anthropologists were often unqualified amateurs. The findings of anthropologists and scientists were frequently constructed around pre-existing conclusions, which they came to even when there was debatable evidence to support them (Nakata 2007). Questionable evidence was applied and accepted. Subsequently, 'these assumptions of Australian Aboriginal societies became the accepted premise upon which all other hypotheses were built. It can be no coincidence that these premises made it much easier to justify colonial conquest of this continent' (Builth 2009, p. 24). The patriarchal, condescending manner in which western scientists

evaluated Indigenous societies for their own (the scientists') benefit resulted in misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The unwillingness of scientists to be guided by Indigenous people infiltrated the policies that were patronisingly created for Indigenous people. Two global paradigms shaped the understandings of Australia's Indigenous peoples: 'social evolution' which ran from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, and 'assimilation' which was official government policy from the 1950s to 1970s. Both continued to influence public ideas of Indigenous people long after they were abandoned as official government policy, and became reflected in the lived outcomes of Indigenous people (Haebich 2005). This reliance on anthropological observation set up a cultural dislocation that inevitably became a spatial dislocation.

The Othering

Anthropological discussion is articulated on perceptions of difference, 'us' and 'them', and the investigation of 'the Other'. Even before there were detailed ethnographic descriptions, 'Australia had already been identified as the crucial anthropological laboratory. The reasons were obvious enough. The Australian aborigines [sic] were naked, black hunters and gatherers' (Kuper 1988, p. 92). Anthropologists believed that anthropological work in Australia was of the utmost importance, since 'if a primeval religious ceremony was still being celebrated, this could only be in Australia. That was the place to hunt cultural dinosaurs' (p. 92). Anthropologists such as Lorimer Fison, Alfred William Howitt and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown set out to define, categorise, model and classify the First Peoples. Imposed ideals about the 'Other' objectified, dehumanised and silenced them, and removed them from the conversation about themselves.

Social evolution, based on Social Darwinism, provided an explanation for the fatal effect of western colonialism on Indigenous peoples around the world. Promoted as scientific fact, social evolution was a 'circular, imaginary proposition based on ethnological fragments collected by amateurs in the field and cobbled together by armchair anthropologists in distant Europe into vast evolutionary histories of mankind' (Haebich 2005, p. 5).

Believing Aboriginal people were the primordial ancestors of humankind, the best examples of primitive humans and the missing link between apes and humans, anthropologists appropriated Indigenous

peoples' artefacts and even their bodily remains for private collections and public exhibitions. Indigenous peoples in Australia seemed to be the 'missing link' these anthropologists were searching for to understand the supposed leap between primitive societies and traditional societies. David McKnight notes:

> It is hard to imagine anthropology without Australian Aborigines [sic]. They were once regarded by anthropologists as living representatives of primordial hunters and gatherers and as such greatly influenced scholars' beliefs about primitive mentality. They were the retrojected ancestors on which theories of evolution, diffusion, functionalism and structuralism were in large measures developed and tested. As the term 'ab-origine' suggests, in the public imagination Australian peoples had not only lived where they were from the beginning, but they were the most distant temporal representatives to which the human race could be traced … So they were both a yardstick against which to measure progress, conceived in evolutionary terms from this beginning, and also destined to extinction by the immutable laws of that progress (1990, pp. 42-43).

According to anthropologists, in the clash between 'primitive' and 'civilised', Indigenous people were 'doomed to extinction' and as such colonists were absolved of their role in this extinction. With the belief that Indigenous peoples in Australia were dying off, anthropologists operating under the directive of Australian institutes deemed they were obliged to observe and record Aboriginal beliefs, customs and rituals without interfering and trying to change them. This theory 'provided the rationale for policies of protection and practices of enforced segregation in isolated reserves where Aborigines [sic] could be sheltered from the onslaught of civilisation while they quietly passed away' (Haebich 2005, p. 5), at the same time unchecked expansion onto their lands could remorselessly continue.

In 1930, British anthropologist Alfred Radcliffe-Brown published in the inaugural edition of the journal *Oceania* that 'the Australian Aborigines [sic], even if not doomed to extinction as a race, seem at any rate to be doomed to have their cultures destroyed' (Radcliffe-Brown cited in Cowlishaw 1988, p. 67), adding some urgency to the ethnographic work being carried out. The view by western anthropologists that Aboriginal culture was 'lost' or 'destroyed' because it responded to change with change was undermined by the many changes their own society had undergone without culture being 'lost'.

However, maintaining this misnomer was essential to anthropologists who silenced Indigenous peoples in turn by becoming or claiming to be the 'voices' or spokespeople for Indigenous peoples.

The Silencing

The relationship between anthropologists and government suggests corresponding values, reflected in the desire of both parties to improve and modernise Indigenous people (Gray 2007). It seems paradoxical that anthropologists wanted both to study the 'primitive' *in situ* while recording its demise and to help modernise the same 'primitive' Indigenous peoples alleged to be on the verge of extinction. This can be explained by the policy of assimilation, under which anthropologists assumed they should supervise the absorption of Aboriginal people and their culture into western culture. They considered missionaries were wrong to attempt to change their beliefs by introducing them to concepts that were beyond their grasp.

From the early 1930s, anthropologist Adolphus Peter Elkin put increased pressure on the Commonwealth government to adopt a 'positive policy for Aborigines [sic]' (Elkin cited in Gray 2007, p. 39). His interpretation of the issue was that the policy was one of welfare and humanitarian concerns which would enable Aboriginal people to contribute to the wider Australian community. On this basis, and working with government ministers, Elkin developed the model of assimilation. The policy that was introduced stated that Aboriginal people were to become 'members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians' (Elkin cited in Haebich 2005, p. 6). New legislation stated that urban spaces would no longer be off limits to Indigenous people and they were to be welcomed into mainstream Australia (Prout & Howitt 2009).

For many Aboriginal people affected by this policy, life became a path towards forced removal from families, institutionalisation, marginalisation and servitude. In the 1930s in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, extreme forms of assimilation were adopted to progressively 'breed out' Aboriginal physical and cultural characteristics through forced state marriages. Disadvantage was attributed to social rather than racial factors, leading to more optimistic programs based on bettering social conditions and the promise of equality for all (Haebich 2005). As social awareness in mainstream Australia changed

from understanding Indigenous people as part of nature to part of society, Aboriginal people were now allowed into metropolitan spaces. However, in order for this to happen, they were required to adhere to 'productive', 'settled', essentially non-Indigenous, existences (Prout & Howitt 2009).

Elkin's 1954 book, *The Australian Aborigines: How to understand them*, contains generalising discussions about topics such as physical attributes, Aboriginal 'types', culture, philosophy and their relationship to the land. Despite discussing the existence of 'tribal groups', he included images in the book that featured people without naming them, often giving only broad descriptions of where they were from. His perception of boundaries between tribes was that they were clearly defined, but the so-called 'no man's land' between tribes was difficult to define and as such 'no one cares' (1954, p. 21). However, this generalisation missed the importance of this land between Countrys for ceremonial purposes when a person was passing into another's territory. Elkin later discussed the 'fear' Aboriginal people experienced when reaching the border of their Country, and their refusal to go on. Instead of understanding this as an aspect of their relationship to the land and respect towards custodians of other lands or sacred sites, Elkin belittled it as fear of 'the unknown and magical terrors' (p. 36).

Elkin's writings were influenced by colonial views that Aboriginal people were 'parasites' on nature and the land. 'The food-gathering life is parasitical; the Aborigines [sic] are absolutely dependent on what nature produces without any practical assistance on their part' (p. 21), continuing the misconception that not only were Aboriginal people dependent scroungers, they were also purely nomadic hunters and gatherers who were compelled by circumstance rather than a long-held relationship with the land. 'This view of parasitism was intrinsically connected to the view of terra nullius: the idea that the land was untransformed underpinned the idea that the land was unowned' (Rumsey & Weiner 2001, p. 101), and the erroneous idea of parasitism was in turn underpinned by the western understanding of land ownership. According to this western logic, Aboriginal 'parasites' were excluded from forms of ownership by reason of their own nature, creating room for exclusion and displacement.

Despite the fact that Aboriginal people were now expected to assimilate into white society, other books and journals of similar reach and stature released by anthropologists across the continent bound Indigeneity to the past and history, science and anthropology. These contradictory expectations for

Indigenous peoples returned them to the status of 'other', and neither reflected their social structures nor cultural expressions.

The Appropriation

In the nineteenth century, early European anthropology dealt with the exploration and description of previously unknown societies; however, the project to colonise and document unknown people says as much about western views of history and science as it does about those being observed (Garde 2011). In 1921, anthropologist and entomologist Norman Tindale was given permission by the South Australian Museum to collect specimens from Groote Eyland and Roper River in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Tindale collected more than 500 artefacts over a year, during which he was informed by Maroadunei, a Ngandi man and songmaker, of the concept of bounded tribal territories, 'beyond which it was dangerous to move without adequate recognition' (Tindale 1974, p. 3). On his return to Adelaide, he realised a new paradigm was required for the way in which Aboriginal peoples were described or catalogued. With his colleague Joseph Birdsell he catalogued, measured, photographed, took blood samples and recorded the family trees of more than 6,000 people, his aim being to define the diversity of a people prior to transformation by western contact. Tindale became known for his work mapping Indigenous tribal groupings, genealogies and languages from all over Australia, and his work has been called one of the greatest systematic genealogical surveys conducted on any Indigenous population worldwide. For many Aboriginal people, these records have provided insights into their own cultural heritage; however, without the consequences of colonisation, dispossession and assimilation, these records would never have been required.

Tindale described the major purpose of his work as being to 'discover the real tribal units, to determine their proper names and their real bounds, and to relegate alternative names, corruptions, and misapplied terms to their rightful places' (p. 32). However, the 'definition of Aboriginal territoriality according to non-Aboriginal concepts of boundaries (precise lines on the ground/maps) is fraught with danger. It is generally not appropriate for Aboriginal groups' (Young 1995, p. 88). The mapping of Aboriginal societies and the identification of boundaries was a fundamental part of the colonisation and dispossession process, as it was 'carried out principally through the alienation of their land and the relocation of Aboriginal groups to government and mission administered reserve communities' (p. 88).

Hagen states that ‘once lines have been drawn on a map they attain a false concreteness that stands out from the complexities and ambiguities of reality. Boundaries between Indigenous groups are rarely so hard and fast (2001, p. 221)’. Anthropologists organised Indigenous people into groups through the bounded mapping process, thereby imposing a colonial order on them.

Tindale referred to ‘indeterminacies, “shared” zones, and differences of perception’ (Tindale cited in Hagen 2001, p. 221), yet seems to have made assumptions, mistaken translations and lacked detail in his investigations, resulting in continuing mistruths. For instance, in the 1940s he named the Yorta Yorta people as a separate group from the Bangerang; it took more than four decades for others to challenge this view, resulting in this error living on in publications and historical records (Hagen 2001). The cataloguing, categorisation and collection of a people and their cultural practices forms part of a colonising procedure and ‘the names in Tindale’s catalogue are decontextualised lexical units removed utterly from indigenous [sic] contexts and intended to serve scientific and administrative ends’ (Monaghan 2003, p. 66).

Another instance in which the appropriation of objects, practices and the knowledges attached to them was supported (and funded) by an institution is the work of Theodor George Henry (Ted) Strehlow. Ted Strehlow was the son of Lutheran pastor, Carl Strehlow, he grew up in the early 1900s in the mission of Hermannsburg, where he learned the local Arrernte language. He left Arrernte Country for Adelaide at the age of 14 when his father became ill. Graduating with a Bachelor of Arts with first class honours in English language and literature, he received no formal anthropological education. However, with the support of Tindale and Elkin, he received a grant to study the Arrernte people, so returned to the mission. He recorded, photographed and filmed secret and sacred Arrernte ceremonies and in 1934 prepared to publish his findings, but chose to delay publication until 1947, by which time all his informants had died. During his time with the Arrernte people, a large number of sacred objects, primarily men’s objects and recordings, came into his possession. Arguing that only he could protect them properly because of his unique understanding of the Arrernte people, Strehlow claimed that, ‘in accordance with the Aranda rules of tjurunga[4] [or secret-sacred] inheritance, these traditions would be regarded as becoming my personal property after the deaths of their original owners. There is thus no longer any reason for not

[4] Tjurunga refers to secret-sacred rituals or objects in Arrernte.

publishing these songs' (1971, p. xlvi). However, they were sacred songs of Country communally owned by the Arrernte people and publishing them was unlikely to have been acceptable to the Arrernte as it dispossessed not only the people, but also the Country, of the songs that related to them. In 1978 he sold highly sensitive and culturally restricted photographs to the German publication *Der Stern*, which then sold them on to *People* magazine in Australia, to the outrage of the Arrernte people. Strehlow had promised to pass the objects in his possession on to a new custodian at his death; however, despite the fact that these objects were predominantly men's objects and as such required the care of a male who understood their meaning and value, they were left to Strehlow's wife, who in the 1990s attempted, and in some cases managed, to auction them off. It is unlikely Arrernte Elders had this in mind for their sacred objects.

On his final visit to Arrernte Country, Strehlow found that despite believing certain Arrernte rituals had become extinct with the deaths of 'the last great ceremonial chief' or 'the last great medicine man' (as Strehlow referred to his elderly informants), the rituals had in fact been passed on, irrespective of the Christianisation of the people. His belief that the living culture of the Arrernte people had come to an end, like his father's belief before him, was unfounded and mistaken (Hill 2002).

The Archaeologists

> *It galls us that western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples' claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems for living within our environments (Smith 2012, p. 1).*

In most instances, writers of the 'Indigenous voice' have been non-Indigenous. The readership has similarly been largely non-Indigenous. Those documenting or transcribing oral recordings have on the whole been non-Indigenous as well, and irrespective of good intentions, errors made are very difficult to correct once they have been written down, and cultural nuances and ways of knowing may be lost in translation. Needless to say, 'some critics have questioned whether, good intentions notwithstanding, their interventions have compromised the authenticity of the indigenous [sic] voice, even appropriated it' (Beckett 2001, pp. 124-125). The 'archaeologists' referred to in this section are historians, authors and researchers who unearth Indigenous peoples' inhabitations, cultures and histories through their academic work.

While non-Indigenous writers may seem to provide a platform for Aboriginal voices, the question remains, 'Who are they silencing in taking this voice?' Many Indigenous authors tire of competing with non-Indigenous writers for the opportunity to write and be published in their field, particularly when the subject is specifically related to their own lives and experiences (Heiss 2002). In this regard, Heiss quotes Melissa Lucashenko[5], who says:

> When non-Indigenous people come in and write about us they are writing in ignorance. Ignorance of us and our lives, and ignorance of Aboriginal Law. It is the cornerstone of colonialism to say that Aboriginal Law is invalid or doesn't exist. It does exist, it does matter, and if you break our Law you are doing exactly what white people have always done here since 1788. Who asked you to write about Aboriginal people? If it wasn't Aboriginal people themselves, I suggest you go away and look at your own lives instead of ours. We are tired of being the freak show of Australian popular culture (Lucashenko cited in Heiss 2002, p. 199).

Heiss (2002) further quotes Jackie Huggins[6], who believes that while white writers can in some instances write on Aboriginal themes, such as historical evidence and colonial literature, she is resolute they should not be writing about Aboriginal creation stories. Christine Morris[7] suggests it is appropriate

[5] Melissa Lucashenko is of Goorie (Aboriginal) heritage.

[6] Jacqueline (Jackie) Huggins is of the Bidjara Central Queensland and Birri-Gubba Juru North Queensland peoples.

[7] Christine Morris identifies as Aboriginal.

for white authors to write about issues covering Black/white relations, first contact and invasion, recordings of oral histories, and the roles whites have had in the oppression of Blacks, as these have not been adequately covered in Australian historical records. Jennifer Martiniello[8] supports this, saying:

> For many issues there is also a white story, not just a black story – after all, we didn't create the last 200 years of crap all by ourselves. So long as white writers are aware that there are boundaries they cannot cross when they are writing, and where or what the appropriate protocols are for dealing with Aboriginal people, their stories and their communities, then their work may be approved (Martiniello cited in Heiss 2002, p. 199).

At the same time, the archives are now important resources for Indigenous peoples who have been affected by the forces of invasion and colonisation, both as a source for building individual histories and as a foundation on which to generate a more complicated analysis in order to broaden collective memories (Nakata 2012). Martin Nakata further discusses the importance of using the archives – even if largely constructed in the western corpus – to understand the past, saying that now 'there is no strict Indigenous and non-Indigenous separation, but overlays, intersections, multiplicities and contested meanings' (p. 104). Indeed, western archives have enabled me as a dispossessed Indigenous person to re-make connections with extended kin networks and Country and to undertake this research.

The 'archaeological' 'unearthing' of Indigenous peoples and their relationships to the land has the potential to remove them from their context of being grounded in Country. Smith and Wobst write, 'At heart, archaeology is a colonialist endeavour. It is based on, and generally perpetrates, the values of western cultures. Privileging the material over the spiritual and the scientific over the religious, archaeological practice is solidly grounded in western ways of knowing the world' (2005, p. 4). Discussions by non-Indigenous commentators regarding place, land, permanency and Country pose the risk that the narratives of people and land become detached. Non-Indigenous authors, often with good intentions, have produced a new body of literature very different from that of inter-war and immediate post-war anthropology. Some of this is useful for my discussions regarding space and I

[8] Jennifer Martiniello is of Arrernte descent.

acknowledge their work below, yet a surprising number continue to generalise about and appropriate from Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Architecture

Paul Memmott is both an architect and social anthropologist. He coined the term 'ethno-architecture' to describe the knowledge systems of a given community associated with the use and construction of physical environmental structures and the ethnographic methodologies to record them. Memmott's book *Gunyah, Goondie and Wurley: The Aboriginal Architecture of Australia* (2002) has provided the beginnings of a continental overview of Aboriginal ethno-architecture in all its diversity. Drawing on the records and artworks of early 'explorers', archaeological surveys, anthropological accounts, photography and his own work, Memmott addresses the question of whether the Indigenous peoples of this continent created built forms such as inhabitations and aquaculture. His discussion also extends to campsite domiciliary behaviour patterns, travel between sites in response to seasonal change, semi-sedentarism and socio-spatial patterns of settlements, that is, the division into 'spatial zones, each occupied by an aggregate of domiciliary groups, and each possessing some common social identity and characteristic social structure' (p. 112).

Memmott's anthropological architectural study gives a comprehensive view of the types of structures Indigenous peoples were constructing at the time of colonisation to the present, as well as observed spatial behaviours. His work illustrates the temporal and innovative nature of Indigenous architecture, with the materiality and climate of the local landscape determining styles. The very existence of *Gunyah, Goondie and Wurley* challenges terra nullius; this could not have been an 'empty land' if people were building and living here and doing so with complex social forms, structures, objects, artefacts and spaces.

Country, The Sacred and The Dreaming

Writing as a non-Indigenous author about the Dreaming and secret-sacred matters is precarious; many authors position the Dreaming in a past time context or as belonging to an 'authentic' past. However, the Dreaming continues, it is enduring and retains its guiding principles for First Peoples. With correct

guidance and co-authoring by a community, it can be addressed in a respectful way. In their study, Memmott and Long discuss place in relation to the Dreaming according to the Lardil people:

> … in accordance with Lardil philosophers of the North Wellesley Islands, the Dreamtime is a second spatial universe that somehow split away in remote history. It coexists in time with the worldly environment but lies in a separate space dimension not visually accessible under normal circumstances. Although there are allegedly two separate universes, there is a spatial contradiction in that there are places where the properties of one overlap with the properties of the other, providing certain links, respectively via dreams and 'Story Places' or sacred sites (2002, p. 47).

Deborah Bird Rose also deliberates about Dreaming stories as an ethnographer and consultant anthropologist. Rose came to Australia from the United States in 1980 to 'study with Aboriginal people' (Rose 2004, p. 1), specifically working with the people of the Yarralin, Lingara and Pigeon Hole communities in the Northern Territory. She says that 'from their teachings, our conversations, my questions, and our shared work together on land claims, sacred site registrations, judicial matters, and written work, they have offered a set of questions concerning the major issues of our time and place' (p. 1). Rose states that Aboriginal people welcomed her into their homes and taught her about Country, sites, Dreamings, history and kinship, while the Australia she came to know as a new Australian was a place of invasion, death, betrayal, hardship and cruelty, yet also of resilience, survival and storytelling (2004). Her research largely covers these themes. Rose describes Aboriginal experience of place in relation to Dreaming thus:

> Dreamings are the great creative beings who came out of the earth and travelled across the land and sea. The Australian continent is crisscrossed with the tracks of the Dreamings: walking, slithering, crawling, flying, chasing, hunting, weeping, dying, giving birth. They were performing rituals, distributing the plants, making the landforms and water, and making the relationships between one place and another, one species and another. They were leaving parts or essences of themselves; they would look back in sorrow; and then they would continue travelling, changing languages, changing songs, changing identity (2003, p. 166).

She clarifies that the cases she recounts come from her time with the Yarralin people, who shared their knowledges with her. However, throughout the chapter Rose calls them 'Aboriginal' instead of naming them, leaving the potential for ambiguity for readers to misunderstand that her writings are not a reflection of all Indigenous groups across the continent.

Historian Ann McGrath describes Dreaming stories, clan sagas, song cycles, dance and art in relation to the sharing of history, in *Contested Ground*. She indicates, 'For them, history is written in the landscape itself; the land is not just a test book for history, it is history and history is the foundation of their present-day lives' (1995, p. 10). McGrath also addresses the 'convenient imperial fantasy' that has long shaped Australia's past, 'being only one of many hypocrisies implicit in colonialism' (p. 1). She calls this attitude a 'collective consciousness of denial' (p. 1) that fills history books with stories of male discovery and exploration of Australia's vast spaces. She goes on to discuss how terra nullius shaped the way history unfolded, referring to property ownership and Indigenous dispossession, which in turn resulted in the loss of sovereignty, dominion and authority over their lands, effectively making them foreigners in their own lands. The pastoralists and farmers who entered the scene demanded that good lands be handed over to them as, according to them, if the lands were occupied by Aboriginal peoples, it would be 'wasted or wasteland' (p. 23). In this way, she says, First Peoples suffered not one but many dispossessions.

Furthering the discussion relating to colonial dispossession, in *Nourishing Terrains* Rose quotes Anzac Munnganyi[9] as saying, 'White people just came up blind, bumping into everything. And put the flag; put the flag' (Munnganyi cited in Rose 1996, p. 18). She goes on to say, 'His imagery of white people stumbling around in unknown country and yet having the effrontery to "put the flag" and claim the land exactly captures the arrogance of the act of conquest' (2000, p. 40). While Rose writes about colonisation as an event of the past rather than as ongoing, her evaluation is accurate, which is that it is being undertaken by people who are convinced that they have the right to go anywhere and to claim anything. She remarks, 'In their arrogance and violence they walked into and on top of the sacred places of the worlds they claimed, without even knowing what they were' (p. 40).

[9] Anzac Munnganyi is a Bilinara man of Pigeon Hole.

Permanent Yet Ephemeral

In her chapter 'Dance of the Ephemeral: Australian Aboriginal Religion of Place', Rose writes about Dreamings in relation to concepts of place and Country, stating that 'Aboriginal Australians were for some 60,000 years or so nomadic hunter-gatherers. Their elaboration of place was accomplished through mobility … Aboriginal people engage with a particular nomadic problematic: that of being here and not-here at the same time, of being both localised and mobile' (2003, pp. 164-165). In later writings with a colleague she reiterates this:

> Sustained Aboriginal connections to place link attachments, reciprocities, communities and roots. At the heart of these connections is the concept of return. Prior to colonisation, these hunter-gatherer peoples moved from resource site to resources site, from waterhole to waterhole, moving with the seasons, the resources, the Dreaming tracks and the Law. Their movement was always predicated upon their return, and this remains so today. (Rose & D'Amico 2011, p. 126).

Certainly, hunting and gathering was a key part of many pre-invasion Aboriginal lives; however, this assumes all groups had a similar way of being in and responding to their unique lands and climates. Similarly, nomadism was not practised universally across the continent and devalues the nature of the temporal mobility of Indigenous peoples in Australia.

McGrath also considers pre-invasion Aboriginal permanence and mobility, discussing the Gunditjmara people without naming them specifically:

> Aboriginal people in western Victoria wore fur cloaks and lived in relatively permanent villages with stone housing. In warmer resource-rich areas, Aboriginal people stayed for months at a time. Careful land management techniques were applied to harvest food resources and sensitive and skilful methods were used to hunt game. Hunting and gathering required great physical agility, dexterity and a detailed knowledge of animals and land (1995, p. 10).

Bearing in mind her account of permanency, her subsequent description of Aboriginal people travelling is somewhat generalised: 'Families and clans travelled the land during the year, harvesting resources when the opportunity was available, and looking after special sites to which they had responsibility. Men

and women separately facilitated the reproduction of resources through ritual nurturing' (p. 11). Eurocentric conceptualisations of nomadism or the hunter and gatherer fail to address the complex relationships Aboriginal people have with the land. Each nation's relationship is tailored to ensure the land is correctly cared for, be that through mobility or permanency. This also brings into question the lack of specificity when naming the group referred to; considering the many Indigenous groups and how each differently inhabited their varying environments, being explicit would have clarified how each lived with the land and avoid generalisation.

Land Management and Cultivation

In *Let the Land Speak* (2013), author Jackie French discusses her experiences with the Djuuwin women who live in the Araluen Valley. She describes how, despite not having been on their land for more than 150 years due to her own family 'owning' it, her Indigenous neighbours knew what they would find there as their lore had been passed down in a continuous tradition. French discusses Indigenous farming techniques, specifically referring to the vital role Indigenous women played in agriculture and food gathering, and explaining that this had largely been ignored in western literature, 'because those who wrote history, colonial records or published diaries in the first hundred years of European colonisation here were mostly men, from a culture that undervalued women's contribution in their own homelands' (p. 44). French explains that white male anthropologists generally talked to men rather than women, rightly pointing out that even if they had talked to women, Indigenous women were unlikely to have talked about women's business to men.

Using British colonists' journals and records, paintings, photography and botanic history, historian Bill Gammage has written extensively in *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia* (2012) regarding Indigenous land management using fire, fenceless farming and animal husbandry. He bases his conclusions on three facts about Australia in 1788, these being that (1) about 70 per cent of plants in Australia need or tolerate fire, and knowing which plants welcome fire was critical to Indigenous land management, (2) grazing animals could be shepherded as they were (and are) in Australia, as other than humans they had no major predators, and (3) there was no wilderness, only Law, which compelled Indigenous people to care for Country. Gammage provides extensive evidence of farming using fire to create park-like Country, as observed by the early British colonisers, and refutes the widely-

held stereotypical image of Indigenous peoples as being ignorant, primitive nomadic hunter-gatherers who wandered the land aimlessly. He also discusses 'post-colonial' experiences of the land changing, becoming overgrown, densely forested and full of weeds, making Australia as it was in 1788 unrecognisable to today – and not just due to fences, roads and buildings, but because the land was no longer being managed.

Creating Separation

In *Nervous landscapes: Race and space in Australia* (2003), Denis Byrne discusses the 'imperial machinery', which 'assimilated colonial terrain to metropolitan terrain by imposing the same generic grid of counties, parishes, and rectangular "holdings" onto it. With England's cartographic language inscribed upon it, the landscape of colonial Australia would be in immediate dialogue with the landscape of England' (p. 172). He acknowledges that colonisation gave no recognition of pre-existing boundaries, spatial conventions or land title.

A further study by Byrne with Maria Nugent titled *Mapping Attachment: A spatial approach to Aboriginal post-contact heritage* (2004) considers the Aboriginal 'post-colonial' history of the lower North Coast of New South Wales in regards to Aboriginal peoples' racial and spatial experiences. The discussion extends to post-invasion segregation, that is, the separation of Aboriginal people from white settlements, which notes 'that racism always has a spatial dimension and that racial segregation specifically concerns itself with the issue of how close people of different races are permitted to be to each other' (p. 49). At the same time, they bring awareness of Aboriginal people's ability to subvert, resist and create openings and resilience to the boundaries created, not only in lines, grids and geometry marked on a map, but also through fences and structures on the land.

Byrne and Nugent also discuss the ongoing invisibility of Indigenous people in historical documentary records, stating that most governmental records were created to document agricultural production, the buying and selling of land, and the exploitation of timber resources. They state, 'The position of Aboriginal people in the local colonial economy was a marginal one: they worked as farm labourers and timber cutters but were not land owners or timber exporters. Consequently, they have little or no visibility in these records' (p. 11). In terms of this research, they are discussing people like my family, who after

dispossession relocated to just north of the area they examine and worked as timber cutters. The government and historical documentary silence reflect the fact that Aboriginal people were not considered as having relevance to histories, creating an illusion they had vacated the landscape, leaving it open for white occupation.

Another who has published extensively on settler colonialism is Bain Attwood. Specifically discussing spatial segregation, he says:

> … while the temporal illusion that Aborigines were not contemporary with "Australians" was undoubtedly sustained by the spatial relations which existed between Aborigines and whites in twentieth century Australia – the majority of "Australians" lived in areas where few if any Aborigines [sic] were physically present – one can nevertheless argue that the historical discourses of history and anthropology were mainly responsible for creating this chimera (1996, para. 6).

In later writing he continues this discussion further, relating it to research in the field of 'Aboriginal history', where he argues for the non-existence of Indigenous peoples in Australian history to be contested, to the challenging notion of British invasion rather than settlement.

Conclusion

This review has shown how enduring misinterpretations and erasure of Indigenous cultures, knowledges and spaces were established from early colonial times, through writers using observation, categorisation and appropriation. It is their writings that created the voice by which Indigenous people have been heard or, rather, misheard. They have spoken for Indigenous peoples about how their spaces are experienced and used, thereby silencing those actually experiencing and using the spaces. Their negation of Indigenous land management and cultivation of the land enabled colonists to create an ethnology of absence, as they maintained that Indigenous peoples lived in a 'state of nature'. By claiming the continent as terra nullius – both a legal and a spatial term – invaders effectively made the people already living here invisible and their lands available to be possessed. Europeans appropriated Indigenous lands, and then used subjective science to assert power and control over the original inhabitants. This is 'the problem with anthropology'.

CHAPTER 5: THE TRAUMA OF THE LAND

THE COLONISATION OF INDIGENOUS SPACE

One of the earliest mentions I have been able to locate of one of my Ancestors is in a colonial record, a letter written by Walter Thomson in 1834, addressing the Colonial Secretary, Alex McLeay Esquire. Thomson lists my ancestor's name, Wandera, amongst 22 other names, describing his receiving a blanket. This brief glimpse of his life is all I am offered now; however, understanding it in the wider context of the colonial project, where patronising invaders – after dispossessing my ancestor from his traditional lands, the lands he cared for and loved as did others for millennia before him – saw fit to offer him a blanket in return. As if through that dispossession, suddenly he suffered from the 'inclemency of the weather' and needed a blanket to survive it. A pathetic, condescending, suffocating blanket. A 'gift' from a thief. I preface the discussion below with this understanding.

Introduction

The trauma of the land can be metaphorically understood like a blanket; it covers the land in layers, some heavier and thicker and harder to penetrate than others. The trauma has occurred not only physically – pressing down on a sleeping body as a thick and heavy blanket does – it is impossible not to notice the flattening of city ground to place weighty structures atop or, more subtly, to observe the overcrowding and merging of ecosystems whose complex management systems have become neglected. The trauma also occurred spiritually and psychologically, as well as in perception, in how the land came to be perceived. These traumas to the land continue, leaving it scarred, sick and suppressed (Yarn with O Costello 2015 on 28 August; Steffensen 2016, pers. comm., 22-26 August). This trauma is inflicted spatially on the land, and is experienced directly through the ground by Indigenous peoples; a hidden enduring trauma blanketing current experiences of space and suppressing our ability to properly tend to the land and offer healing, both to the land and ourselves.

The word ‘trauma’ derives from the Greek word meaning ‘wound’. Trauma is defined as a deeply distressing or disturbing experience, an emotional shock following a stressful event or a physical injury, any or all of which may result in psychological damage (Oxford Dictionary 2016). As Pat Anderson[1] states, for Aboriginal peoples there is direct correlation between the land being ‘wounded’ and our own emotional, physical or psychological health. Self-identity has been, and largely still is, understood and strengthened through the relationship with the land: ‘Our identity as human beings remains tied to our land, to our cultural practices, our systems of authority and social control, our intellectual traditions, our concepts of spirituality, and to our systems of resource ownership and exchange’ (1997, p. 81). However, the processes of colonisation, neo-colonialism and re-colonisation have impacted upon the spatial experiences of Indigenous peoples, leaving not only the people wounded or traumatised, but also the land.

Native American psychologist Eduardo Duran considers the ‘horrendous holocaust’ and ‘systematic genocide’ (2006, p. 7) that Indigenous peoples experienced during colonisation. In relation to his discussions with a First Nations community in California, Duran talks about Elders describing ancestral wounds being passed through the generations, wounds which they described as ‘spiritual injury, soul sickness, soul wounding and ancestral hurt’ (p. 16). They gave accounts of the effects not only on the people but also on the earth. Earth wounding refers to the process whereby people become destructive to the natural environment and disturb the natural order. These Elders said that as caretakers of the earth, their people also become wounded at a ‘very deep soul level’ (p. 16).

Like earth wounding, ‘ecocide’ is defined as ‘the wilful and permanent destruction of environment in which a people can live in a manner of their own choosing’ (Knoll & Nies McFadden 1970, pp. 71-72). Describing ecocide as a crime against humanity, scientist Arthur Galston, who coined the term, expresses the belief that the most highly developed nations have committed auto-ecocide over large parts of their own countries (Knoll & Nies McFadden 1970). Since Indigenous peoples’ cultures and Countrys are so intrinsically entwined, the British undoubtedly committed both genocide and ecocide on the societies and lands they invaded.

[1] Pat Anderson is an Alyawarre woman.

According to an expert in psycho-traumatology, Ingeborg Kraus (2016), there are two types of trauma: the first is a sudden, unexpected, once-only trauma; the second is a chronically cumulative trauma. Victims of chronic abuse are under constant stress; healing a trauma requires putting words on what has been hidden, or uncovering lies. Jill Bennett, drawing on the terminology devised by Holocaust survivor Charlotte Delbo, distinguishes memory acquired through trauma, *sense memory*, which has affective impacts from *ordinary memory*, in which events are understood and placed in a narrative or temporal framework. Bennett describes ordinary memory as being 'more easily communicated, rendering trauma intelligible to an outsider, but it is only the former that registers a sense of the interior experience of trauma and of its fundamental unintelligibility' (2002, p. 335). According to Maree Giles, 'Unlike ordinary memories, traumatic ones can perforate through at slight provocations, triggering anger, frustration, deep sadness' (2016). The lands of the continent now called Australia are obviously expressing the stresses and memories of the traumas inflicted upon them through generations of whitewashing and untruths, and non-Indigenous people now living on and utilising the lands are using western ideologies relating to land. They are not heeding the distresses the land is communicating, and this increases the impact of the trauma of the land. It is not in one place; trauma is in all places consumed by western practices of land mismanagement and abuse.

The effects of trauma are often transmitted across multiple generations. Wounds that occurred to grandparents continue with their grandchildren, since grandchildren are the perpetual reflection of their Ancestors (Pihama in Pihama, Behrendt & Lee-Morgan 2016; Pihama et al. 2014)[2] [3]. Collective trauma may also have acute intergenerational effects that penetrate beyond measurable factors, coming from survivors' telling and retelling of trauma or, in contrast, the deep silence that is common among some survivors (Bombay, Matheson & Anisman 2009). Intergenerational trauma is imprinted on Indigenous lives and lands through colonisation, attempts to inflict assimilationist policies and forced removal of Indigenous ways of being.

Israeli studies on intergenerational trauma indicate that not only is trauma passed on inter-generationally, it is also cumulative and as such unresolved trauma becomes more severe each time it

[2] Leonie Pihama is of Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Māhanga and Ngā Māhanga ā Tairi descent.

[3] Jenny Lee-Morgan is of Waikato, Ngāti Mahuta Māori descent.

is passed on to a subsequent generation (Duran 2006; Shoshan 1989; Solomon, Kotler & Mikulincer 1988). Marianne Hirsch (2001) adds to this notion in her discussions about 'postmemory'. Hirsch's work combines feminist theory with memory studies, in particular the transmission of memories of violence across generations. She explains 'postmemory' as both the transmission of intergenerational trauma and the reclaiming of memory and further describes it as the relationship between the children of survivors of collective or cultural trauma and their ancestors' experiences. Hirsch draws the connection between these memories and narratives of traumatic events that are so powerful and monumental that the ancestors' traumas become memories in their own right in the minds of the descendants. With narratives being such an important method for Aboriginal peoples to transmit knowledge, 'postmemories' invariably heighten the experiences of trauma, and these accumulate progressively with each new generation.

Australian culture, and by extension Australian space, has been constructed upon multiple layers of trauma imprinted on the ground by the processes of colonisation. When Europeans came to this continent, they forcefully transplanted a western style of living, culture, agriculture, architecture and spatial interpretation. This started with the trauma of Indigenous peoples being dispossessed, told they never existed as custodians of the land through the legal and spatial fiction of terra nullius, had genocide inflicted on them, were expected to convert culturally to become 'European', and were made to helplessly observe rapid changes to the land they had lived with for millennia. Subsequently, convicts who, frequently for minor offences, were forced onto convict ships to travel for more than eight months to a land entirely foreign to their own, away from connections, family, culture, history and spatial paradigms, suffered trauma. Blackbirding of peoples of the Pacific introduced the trauma of slavery. Asians and Afghans, once they were deemed no longer useful to the colonial expansion, endured racism as laws and custom duties were passed at border crossings between colonies to deter their movement in the lead-up to the implementation of the White Australia Policy in 1901. Regrettably government policy and societal racism continues to inflict traumas for First Peoples and others. While there is no homogenous experience of historical trauma and no experiences of trauma can be compared, certainly the trauma inflicted on Indigenous peoples reached critical levels when choice and freedom were forcefully removed. These multiple traumas in the politics of human dispossession and geographies of lost ground continue today and have never been appropriately addressed. Even while Australia claims

multiculturalism as a basis for its cultural expression, its spaces have been 'torn and fractured by violence and exile, and … pitted with sites where life has been irretrievably killed' (Rose 2004, p. 34). For First Peoples whose interrelatedness with the land is intrinsic, the memories of these traumas are also in the land, perforating and scarring the ground, expressing stress and distress to those who can hear it.

Western ways of understanding space created trauma via numerous different expressions, not only in physical scarring and damage, but also psychologically and spiritually in terms of how land was and is thought of and understood. The conversion from knowing the land as Country to understanding it as property, changing its texture, slicing it up, smoothing and flattening its topography and imprinting foreign ways of being with the land have caused enduring distress and disease that the colonisers cannot heal. Colonial mechanisms understand the ground as an 'object' that can be tamed and controlled and turned into a commodity. These processes have never respected Aboriginal ways of knowing the land; ways that see the land as vital, living and with which enduring intergenerational relationships have been developed and need to be maintained. The British created this illness while setting themselves up as the 'settlers', making Aboriginal peoples the dispossessed 'wanderers', despite the British being the ones who had actually travelled far from their origins.

Australia is a Crime Scene[4]

Indigenous spaces, lands, knowledges and languages were not lost; they were systematically taken through the processes of colonisation (Behrendt in Pihama, Behrendt & Lee-Morgan 2016). At the heart of settler colonialism is the acquisition of Indigenous lands and their associated resources, unquestionably a driving rationale for colonial endeavour. British invaders came to the land they named Australia, 'discovered' and claimed it, and enforced their transported values and beliefs not only on those who came to the land, but also on those already there. They entrenched their imported values

[4] Robbie Thorpe, from the Krautungalung people of the Gunnai nation, at a talk at the University of Melbourne, called Australia a crime scene on the basis of the legal fiction of terra nullius. Thorpe states that not only was the nation of Australia founded on this premise but also its constitutions and institutions. The crime he speaks of was a premeditated criminal act of genocide, resulting in the people of Australia now living off the proceeds of that crime (Thorpe recorded by The Juice Media 2008).

into law with colonisation and subsequently by the economic, legal, political and social structures that institutionalised and perpetuated them, and made their values and laws seem superior and 'normal'. In reality, for this invasive society to thrive, it required those already on the lands to be erased (Rose 2004; Tuck & McKenzie 2015).

Across the continent, genocide occurred through massacres, diseases, malnourishment and starvation; dispossession and assimilation were used to force Indigenous peoples from their homelands, their histories, kin, ways of existing and knowledges that were grounded in their lands. Many were killed, concentrated in missions, reserves and colonial properties or separated into fringe camps. They were often relocated repeatedly, thus further impacting on their dispersal. Others were forced into the periphery of colonial communities, concealing themselves in European society to find refuge against invaders and governmental policies, which were directly aimed at their eradication or assimilation (Rose & D'Amico 2011). Colonialism brought complete disorder to the Indigenous peoples affected by its processes. 'It was a process of systematic fragmentation which can still be seen in the disciplinary carve-up of the indigenous world: bones, mummies and skulls to the museums, art work to private collectors, languages to linguistics, "customs" to anthropologists, beliefs and behaviours to psychologists' (Smith 2012, p. 29). This systematic fragmentation of the peoples resulted in ecocidal warfare against the lands.

Terra Nullius: The Void

The British assertion of terra nullius resulted in Aboriginal people still struggling today to claim land that not only belonged to them, but to which they had belonged for millennia. Europeans took possession of the land, asserting authority over nature to 'civilise' the land as they had 'civilised' the land they left behind. Once the British had claimed the land under the fabrication of terra nullius, it became their responsibility to ensure that the country remained 'empty' – or near enough empty thus enacting re-colonising practices that continue to this day. Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie write:

> One of the notable characteristics of settler colonial states is the refusal to recognise themselves as such, requiring a continual disavowal of history, Indigenous peoples' resistance to settlement, Indigenous peoples' claims to stolen land, and how settler colonialism is indeed ongoing, not an event contained in the past. Settler colonialism is made invisible within settler societies and uses institutional apparatuses to "cover its tracks" (2015, p. 60).

As a spatial concept, a void means nothingness, a space without spatiality, emptiness; in actuality, a void is always filled with something else. A void is also defined as having no legal force or effect, ineffectual, without contents, an empty space, something experienced as a loss or privation, invalidated, nullified (Oxford Dictionary 2017). A spatial void is 'a place incorporating activity' (Kuloğlu & Şamlıoğlu 2012, p. 132). However, a void in space creates a place. Voids can be understood either cognitively or functionally; cognitive voids relate to the perception or visualisation of space, whereas functional voids relate to the use of space (Kuloğlu & Şamlıoğlu 2012). In relating voids to terra nullius, 'nobody's land', both the cognitive (perception) and the functional (use) of the land are implied, since the term describes the complete voidance of Indigenous peoples across the continent. Out of the perception of empty space the British created a purportedly functional place.

Terra nullius is both a legal term used by the British to justify settlement on Aboriginal peoples' lands and a spatial expression. Creating this spatial narrative of emptiness or 'un-belonging' was essential to the British claim of the continent. From the first encounters between the British and the land, narratives of the void were sewn into the collective memories of the new arrivals coming to the land, creating what was to them a necessary untruth that enabled unfettered settlement – even when it became clear that the continent was indeed inhabited and had belonging. Likewise, creating the narrative of colonisation as an event that occurred in the past, that Indigenous peoples and their cultures are part of a distant history in remote places, and that western society just 'developed faster' than Indigenous societies, so justifying western 'progress', ensures that current inhabitants can believe that the lands they live on are not stolen, and they are not implicated in the ongoing occupation or settlement of Indigenous ground that in fact was never ceded (Tuck & McKenzie 2015). In fact, it was the Europeans' ideas of the void that were null and void; the reversing of the land's trauma lies in its reclamation by Indigenous peoples.

'Void' and 'terra nullius' were implemented in language and image through the writings of Cook, Banks and Matra. These early recordings of an immense rich land inhabited by a limited number of beings that were seen as barely human gave the British the opportunity to claim the continent as their own – even if that spatial narrative of emptiness was constructed upon mistruths and subjective language. There had been no thorough exploration of the entire landmass by the British to determine the veracity of their

claims. Nor were existing practices, attachments and relationships that already existed between land and people taken into consideration, let alone were there negotiations, signed agreements, or any in-depth engagement (McMullen 2014). This led to disaster, not only for Aboriginal peoples, but also for the land. Prior to the British invasion, between 500,000 and up to three million people (Sand cited in Builth 2009, p. 25) had the reciprocal responsibility of taking care of the land; it was inevitable that the land would suffer and deteriorate once these people were dispossessed and therefore no longer able to manage or care for it.

The fantasy of terra nullius that developed from Cook's ill-informed trip enabled Australian society to progress with a collective consciousness of denial; Australia became the 'empty continent', devoid of previous human presence. By acquiring the land via neither conquest nor cession, simply by occupying a supposedly uninhabited land, 'Its history books attempted to fill Australia's vast spaces with stories of male discovery, exploration and above all, with "settlement", which became, in the Australian context, a euphemistic term for conquering by force and outnumbering the indigenous [sic] population' (McGrath 1995, p. 1). The result of this was that officially Aboriginal peoples had no property rights at all. This is despite the fact that the observations made by Cook and his crew were later proven incorrect once the invaders travelled inland; there, as detailed by Uncle Bruce Pascoe (2014), they found sophisticated settlements, land cultivation and people with specific territories and relationships with land on the basis of inheritance and spiritual affiliations. Regardless, as the nature of Aboriginal land use did not fit western views of ownership or occupation, the terms of British occupation were not amended (Banner 2007; McGrath 1995).

Terra nullius was virtually uncontested in the early years of colonisation – Aboriginal peoples had no legal standing under the imported laws to dispute it (Banner 2007). Thus it remained a legal and spatial fiction and Indigenous space was voided by British place. Nor has the legacy of terra nullius as an historical and spatial lived experience been erased and that legacy continues to shape current public opinion (McGrath 1995). For Indigenous peoples and lands,

> the impact of terra nullius surrounds us: violations of our [L]aw, ecological destruction of our lands and waters, dispossession from our territories and the colonisation of our being. Terra nullius has not stopped; the violations of our [L]aw continue, the ecological destruction of the earth our mother

> continues with a vengeance, we are still struggling to return to the land … This is terra nullius in its practical and continuing application. There is no death of terra nullius' (Watson 1997, p. 48).

The image of the poison blanket of trauma appears historical, yet it is not. This image persists through an inherent and enduring spatial trauma whereby Indigenous peoples carry inner voids that wait to be refilled with the lands we belong to. Terra nullius, imported laws, perception and language connected to the spatial aspects of trauma introduced and facilitated the spatial assault that occurred across the continent.

The Spatial Assault: Invasion

> *Sadly, 'no amount of sophisticated culture would outweigh cannon and muskets' (French 2013, p. 109).*

As it became clear to the invaders that the myth of 'the void' was in truth a fallacy, they were forced to undertake acts of aggression and decimation to justify and solidify their claims. What ensued was a systematic process of eradication of peoples through murder, kidnapping, starvation, forced removals and introduced diseases that enabled the so-called 'settlers' and farmers to steal valuable lands. 'Wholesale butchering and poisoning was common. Groups of mounted men, known as extermination parties, regularly terrorised Aboriginal encampments, sparing no one. The result was nothing short of near annihilation in the arable portions of the continent' (Findley 2005, pp. 85-86). The collective memory of the vacuum, empty land, enabled unfettered invasion across the continent. As Indigenous peoples were removed, lands were no longer cared for and vice versa; the Europeans effectively declared war on the ground itself.

According to Rose (2004), settler societies are constructed through a dual war of attrition against nature and against Indigenous peoples. Better-armed Europeans disregarded Aboriginal claims to land in order to seize the land, using force where required to ensure Indigenous rights were invisible to colonial policy and religious advancement. That lands were 'seized' from Indigenous peoples was largely unquestioned; it was understood as a simple military operation based on commercial reasoning and religious necessity (Pascoe 2007). Dispossession reduced Indigenous peoples to poverty and dependence, 'just the position in which a missionary might begin his work and raise the "savages" out

of the muck of their unholy sin' (pp. 123-124). It was an imperative part of the colonial plan to convince invading authorities that Aboriginal peoples were barbarians dying out and in need of saving, and thus unworthy of holding the lands upon which they lived.

The nature of these attacks and the direct conflict with the ground prevented not only Indigenous peoples from being able to negotiate so that their lands could continue to be correctly cared for, but also prohibited Europeans from developing their own healthy relationships to ensure the land remained well. This physical spatial assault, a process of 'taming' the land in the minds of the invaders, continued the trauma of the land and destruction of ground.

Taming the Land

Sociologists Phil Macnaghten and John Urry (1998) argue that in the 1800s, the separation between nature and civilisation progressively took a spatial form, with society at the centre and nature marginalised as the 'other'. This understanding of nature as 'other', separate from society (that is, western society, which became associated with reason and intellect), meant that men[5] had the right to master and dominate nature. The taming of nature through industry, the economy, logic and science was claimed as a right of man. To be demarcated as 'nature' was to be passive, submissive and subordinate, while men performed their acts of reason and cultural feats against the background of the environment. Tameable nature could be 'defined as a terra nullius, a resource empty of its own purposes or meanings, and hence available to be annexed for the purposes of those supposedly identified with reason or intellect, and to be conceived and moulded in relation to these purposes' (Plumwood 1993, p. 4). This 'othering' of nature enabled invaders to see the land as untamed, uncultivated, unmanaged – and they believed it their right to tame it as, according to the narratives they helped construct, it was also void of human interaction. In considering it their right to tame the land, in not recognising the relationships between land and First Peoples, invaders caused damage to the delicate systems that already existed, rendering them invisible.

[5] Women were also associated with being 'other', inferior, irrational and illogical, the weaker sex, unable to control emotions and influenced by nature. White western males on the other hand were rational and logical, the experts, and at the centre (Macnaghten & Urry 1998).

The imprinting of ‘Europe’ onto the landscape of the continent was intentional. While it was certainly an attempt to create familiarity for the Europeans, they silenced and made invisible Indigenous connections with the land, removing any doubts for the invaders regarding the act of colonisation, however earth shattering it was for the land. For ‘progress, it seems, is built on the ruins of process: in order to stand erect the man must, it seems, stamp the earth flat, turning it into a passive planisphere’ (Carter 1996, p. 9). The violence and carnage, clearing of the ground, opening up of woods, removal of bushes, that rendered the ground ‘as smooth as a billiard table’ (p. 9) to remove every vestige of vegetation, were not only an act of ‘progress’; they were an attempt to control the ground in order to extend a false claim.

Colonists spoke of the land as being uniform and featureless (Rapoport 1975) and were unable to perceive the subtle details and variations between ecosystems. Compounding their inability to read the land was their unwillingness to comprehend the differences and relationships; doing so would have voided their colonial endeavour. In creating the fallacy of an ‘empty land’, they removed the identity and complexity that Indigenous people had designed with the land over millennia. Their wilful misunderstanding of the landscapes and their desire to master the land on their terms destroyed the lush diversity within each finely balanced ecosystem, leaving a trail of trauma.

Putuparri Tom Lawford speaks of this trauma in relation to the advancement of the Canning Stock Route in Western Australia, saying:

> When whitefellas came into our Country in the 1880s they wanted water. They drove us off our land and turned our Country into a huge cattle station. And then Alfred Canning came along. He wanted our sacred waterholes for their cattle. He built a 2000 kilometre track through our tribal lands, they call it the Canning Stock Route and it destroyed our traditional way of life …. He used our sacred waterholes to make 51 wells for their cattle …. Only problem is that Canning fellow didn’t have a bloody clue where the water was. So, he captured our desert people, chained them up, gave them salt meat and starved them of water. When he let them go he followed their tracks as they ran to get water. They imprisoned our water inside metal and wood boxes. The wells were closed and some of my people drowned trying to get down to get water. Most of my people had to move away from their traditional way of life (Lawford recorded by Ma 2016).

This notion that water has qualities that can enable imprisonment poses a vastly different way of thinking about and responding to the land and waters. For the colonists, the land was an object to be exploited, used and overused, never considered as an entity with sensibilities and kinship, which if damaged also damaged human and animal life, in the present and in the future. The domination of nature through so-called 'progress' in industry, science or reason separates human and nature through the colonial process of racial oppression. Consequently, trauma becomes dispossession and dispossession becomes trauma.

What colonisers could not have anticipated was that Country exists irrespective of what is placed on top of the land, or drilled down into it, or elevated into its skies (Yarn with G Simms 2015 on 28 October). The struggle for landscape through domination and the imposition of familiarity over the environment, can never replace Country. It can only ever add superficial layers (Falah 1996). Attempts to eradicate Indigenous relationships by transforming the landscape have caused the lands the colonisers now rely on for their very existence to become sick and unable to support the imposed activity, creating a scarring, a trauma. In continuing to enforce the breaking of the Laws of Country, colonisers have produced an illness they are ill equipped to tend to, let alone recognise.

It's Eerie to Have the Names but Almost None of the People[6]

One of the first acts by Cook and subsequent invaders was to rename the land at will. In the minds of the Europeans, the renaming was the cultural and spatial beginning of the continent they came to call Australia. With the act of renaming places, 'space is transformed symbolically into a place, that is, a space with a history' (Carter 1988, p. xxiv). When the person who renames a place marks a piece of paper with that new designation, they simultaneously write their name into history as the 'discoverer' of that place.

Of course, the land already had names that had belonged to those places for thousands of years. These names carried narratives, meanings and connections for Indigenous peoples. The very languages that provided these names also come from the land, revealing the long history of the relationship of those names with the locations (Pascoe 2007). Colonists gave new names to the land, often arbitrarily, based

[6] Cited by Uncle Bruce Pascoe in *Convincing Grounds* (2007, p. 73).

upon the topography, after those accompanying them or experiences they endured during the trip. Renaming often recalled far-off British places, geographies or people, as if in doing so they legitimised the supposed discovery and subsequent appropriation of that piece of land (Carter 1988; Smith 2012).

This aggressive and arrogant renaming of land reinforced the 'othering' of nature, the division between ground and human, the disconnection from narrative. As 'explorers', the British claimed knowledge of a land they had often not even touched, or simply passed through, without realising the irony of that renaming, or the very 'unnaturalness of attaching ministers to mountains, secretaries to capes, the playful tautology of calling islands "Islands of Direction", the unlikelihood of Botany Bay, as if the flora in question were marine: by all these figurative means Cook preserves the difference between the order of nature and the order of culture' (Carter 1988, p. 31). The symbolic yet traumatic act of being renamed changed the land; out of space the British created place.

Many places still carry the names given to them prior to white contact. Ironically, though, as Uncle Bruce Pascoe (2007) describes, the people who originally used and gave those names were removed. While there may be a compulsion by the colonisers to forget how land came to be held by non-Indigenous peoples, retaining the original name appears to finalise the theft of the land and the appropriation of its language, as though retaining the names somehow legitimises the occupation. For all their being retained, many of these names were mis-recorded by the British, not least because the British were unfamiliar with the languages of the land from which they originated and the way the words were formed in those languages. Those doing the recordings also simply made mistakes, and once these mistakes were solidified in writing they were very difficult to change. Nor did these names recognise the multiple names for the same geographic feature that originated either from different language groups or from the different characteristics of that same geography.

The naming of the landmass as 'Australia', originally proposed by Matthew Flinders as 'an assimilation to the names of the other great portions of the earth' (1966, introduction, para 6), was officially adopted in 1901, disregarding in an instant the hundreds of Indigenous groups that inhabited the continent and promoting the colonial propaganda of terra nullius. In the creation of a single nation, Laws of the Land and of Country, and even the laws between First Peoples were broken and the land became

exterritorialy (existing and functioning beyond local territorial jurisdiction) traumatised. The assimilatory name overwrote local knowings of territory, which were knowings of self as well; it enforced change in the intimate readings of land and self, making void those whose identities were sewn into the land to which they belonged and who knew themselves only in this way, from the beginning.

The Commodification of Ground

The complex and well-functioning systems of custodial ownership between Aboriginal peoples and the land were invisible to the colonisers, who made little effort to notice, acknowledge or learn the existing language of the land. Through this ignorance they claimed the continent. Through colonial processes the land became object, tameable, empty and ownable, thus enabling the invaders to reassign it as property. When land is redefined as property, the human relationship to that land is also redefined, into one of ownership, consumption and capitalisation. As property, land can be exchanged, sold and stolen, while existing Indigenous epistemological, ontological and cosmological relationships to land are disregarded, made to seem pre-modern and backward (Tuck & McKenzie 2015). Constructing an understanding of the land as property, a capitalistic commodity tied to rights of ownership, denies the intricate communal relationships Aboriginal people have with the land, and psychologically changes the way the land is known.

This understanding of ground as commodity undermines the Laws of the land, embedded during the Dreaming. These Laws mean existing sustainably, sharing resources, living with the land rather than on it, understanding the land as family that is nurtured and nurtures in return. Capitalising the land essentially enslaves it (Watson 2002), as resources become disrespectfully and untenably extracted and traded for money or goods, perpetuating a one-way system of dependence. Indigenous peoples are still trying to grasp the 'extent to which the "trade" of human beings, artefacts, curios, art works, specimens and other cultural items has scattered our remains across the globe' (Smith 2012, p. 92). Trade implies a mutual transaction between seller and buyer, based on the assumption that people, land and objects are commodities 'for sale'. However, those assumptions were flawed, and 'from Indigenous perspectives territories, peoples and their possessions were stolen, not traded' (p. 92).

Based on the fallacy that the continent was void of 'proper' human inhabitation, colonisers set about owning the land, all the whilst choosing to remain ignorant of Indigenous people's cultivation and custodianship. The laws imported by the British protected property more than life and private property was vigorously defended against thieves, trespassers and even the prerogative powers of the Crown. Yet Aboriginal rights to land were completely ignored, based on the reasoning that despite that Aboriginal peoples were the pre-existing occupiers of the land, they had no rights to property as the Europeans perceived they had not tamed the land with agriculture. The 'state of nature' as understood by Europeans was a condition whereby humans had not yet appropriated land as property. They believed that all human societies had started in a state of nature, and most had progressed beyond that, including by awarding property rights to land. If Aboriginal peoples were still in a 'state of nature', by definition they did not own the land and, again, the land was terra nullius (Banner 2007; Reynolds 1987).

Aboriginal narratives and relationships remain to this day tied up in the land, starting with the formation of the land and our place in it. Hereditary custodial ownership within distinct boundaries were observed: in the same year that the First Fleet landed, Captain John Hunter noted 'that the natives [sic] associate in tribes of many families together, and it appeared now that they have one fixed residence, and the tribe takes its name from the place of their general residence' (2005, chapter III, para 22). Numerous colonists recorded similar observations, albeit mistaken observations in terms of 'property' or 'real estate' and British systems of inheritance. However, the European invaders never considered this as a type of proprietorship, or when they did notice it, they misunderstood it, or found ways to ignore or deprecate these observations as they went against their own narrative of a people who had no understanding of land management or ownership. Therefore, from 1789, colonisers were given, allotted or purchased property that had been taken from violently displaced Indigenous peoples. From 1825 it was possible to sell land by private tender, such that the land was carved up with titles, fences, developments and zones, ensuring that the comprehensive appropriation and enslavement of Indigenous lands was complete.

Continuing the affront is that, even now, patriarchal governmental bodies consider they have the authority to return 'ownership' of parcels of land to Indigenous peoples. This western position of 'giving' continues the filtering and silencing of enduring Aboriginal relationships to the land, and in direct

contradiction of the Aboriginal belief that it is the land that owns the people, and the people are temporary custodians. On this basis, western 'ownership' of land is a fabrication and hence a theft that occurred more to the land than to the people; an instant theft through the pitiful planting of a flag. Western labels, conditions and ownerships in monetary terms placed on the land are only ever a continuation of colonising systems and these fade into insignificance when relationships with Country become embodied and the relationships, knowledges and practices that Indigenous people and their land developed over millennia are recognised (Johnson 2016; Ritter 2004).

Opening Up the Savage Lands: Clearing, Mapping, Enclosure, Structure[7]

> *Without laying claim to this country by right of conquest, without pleading even the mockery of cession, or the cheatery of sale, we have unhesitatingly entered upon, occupied, and disposed of its lands, spreading forth a new population over its surface, and driving before us the original inhabitants.*
> *To sanction this aggression, we have not, in the abstract, the slightest shadow of either right or justice – we have not even the extenuation of endeavouring to compensate those we have injured, or the merit of attempting to mitigate the sufferings our presence inflicts (Eyre 1841, chapter 1, para 32).*

Indigenous memorialisation of culture onto the land is invisible compared to non-Indigenous construction. After 1788, buildings, roads, fences, zones – the acute signs of western intersection and scarring of ground and landscape – became the norm for proving a relationship with the land. This blatantly disregarded Aboriginal connections to Country that occur through story, Dreaming, kin relationships and collective cultural memory. As the colonisers dispersed across the landscape, they 'enacted rituals of possession: parcelling out the land with surveys, grants and purchases; naming; clearing and fencing; holding and defending territory, … the building and furnishing of homes, the growing of gardens, the bearing and raising of families, the establishment of monuments and memorials'

[7] 'Opening up the savage lands' is used by Uncle Bruce Pascoe in relation to Joseph Gellibrand, John Batman and the Dutigalla group's plan to take up free land which they could then sell on for a large profit. Gellibrand proclaimed that the best way of getting rid of Aboriginal people was 'sitting on the blacks to eat them out or drive them out' (Gellibrand cited in Pascoe 2007, p. 63).

(Russell 2005, pp. 22-23). These acts of proprietary ownership overlayed onto the land their imported versions of belonging, and seemingly shaped a new starting point for the continent's history.

While land clearing, mapping, enclosure, monument and structure appropriated Indigenous space, the dispossession and dislocation of Indigenous peoples from the lands for which they cared deprived the land of its care. The introduction of imported laws, agriculture, mineral extraction and construction techniques – as a continuous creation of boundaries for control – caused stress to the landscape. These alien processes of marking, defining and controlling space can be understood in a very specific spatial vocabulary assembled around three concepts: the line, the centre and the outside (Smith 2012). The 'line' was used to map territory, survey land, establish boundaries and mark the limits of colonial power. The 'centre' recognised the orientation to the core of the system of colonial power. The 'outside' situated territory and people in opposition to the colonial centre; for Indigenous peoples to live in an 'empty space' was to 'not exist' (Smith 2012). These spatial expressions that led to the carving up of the continent changed the land, in some places irrevocably. They enabled land to be capitalised and boundaries to be marked up and held, overwriting knowledges of Indigenous nations' spaces. A new carved-up version of the land, the white man's demarcation, scarring the land like tattoos, sprung forth.

The physical changes to the land established new landmarks that drew associations with British place, not only asserting a western colonial presence on the land, but remaking Indigenous space by erasing or ignoring Aboriginal practices and relationships with land (Potter 2012).

Of Course, Fences Don't Like Fire: Mapping, Gridding and Fencing

> *[W]e never say, 'You come from that part of the country, you come from that part of the country', no, we never say those sorta things – all the people is all the same to us – because they know their boundary, they go back – we know – we know our old people's boundary too they all go back to each boundary (cited in Gelder & Jacobs 1998, p. 105).*

According to the British, not only were the Aboriginal people savages; the land too was viewed as wild, untamed and disorderly (Byrne 2003), in need of control and order using regular rectangular units and geometric patterns. The survey of the land, the mapping of the grid to create property boundaries further

enabled the appropriation of Aboriginal land. British surveyors arrived in Sydney Cove soon after 1788 to begin apportioning the land so that it could be granted or sold in order to be cleared. These surveyors radiated out, assessing what might prove valuable for the colonial farmers and their introduced animals. Sketching the rough outlines of the terrain and determining the potential for so-called productivity, land tenure surveys enabled appropriated land to be granted or sold by the Crown. And so emerged the orthogonal grid of property boundaries, albeit expressed only on maps at this point (Byrne 2003). While these new demarcations existed only on paper and in the minds of colonising forces, surveyors were an essential part of the machinery of colonisation, 'facilitating the intensification of white settlement in the sense that land could not be sold, cleared, and farmed (particularly in this relatively lush and closely settled part of the country) until the property boundaries were established' (Byrne & Nugent 2004, pp. 31-32). Eventually the writing on paper moved on to land, taking the form of surveyor's lines, pegs and marks on trees (Byrne & Nugent 2004).

Fences soon started to be erected, creating a visible demarcation of white settlement. These fences did not recognise pre-1788 'boundaries' and for Aboriginal peoples they became powerful symbols of dispossession. Certainly First Peoples had territories; they knew what land they belonged to and which people belonged to the lands around them, and they never needed fences or markings to determine this. Rewriting the land with fences became a form of assimilation, recreating Britain's direct cartographic dialogue with the landscape of Britain. Fences became representations of the materiality of colonisation (Byrne 2003; Somerville & Perkins 2010) and First Peoples became confined by fences to areas that the colonists did not want.

In creating maps of non-Indigenous Australia, cartographers, who were often referred to as heroes in their discoveries and charting of the hinterland, overlaid straight line and edge onto Indigenous spatial boundaries, which were more nebulous. Roads, towns and cities obscured special places and Dreaming tracks, intense naming structures and Aboriginal connections to lands disappeared under the survey (Byrne & Nugent 2004).

The mapping of Indigenous nations' boundaries by western colonisers on the one hand contradicted the mistaken belief that Aboriginal people were randomly wandering nomads. For instance, in 1925 Norman

Tindale's editor refused to allow boundaries to be shown in solid lines due to his mistaken belief that Indigenous people 'roamed at will over the whole country' (Gelder & Jacobs 1998, p. 57) and as such were 'naturally dispossessed' (p. 57). On the other hand, it was a colonising tool. In creating a defining map, boundaries became concretised when they had never been so in the past, and peoples were organised in locales. This enabled colonial order to be imposed over and above Indigenous people's knowledge of which lands they belonged to, despite that these lands were often shared through interstitial spaces and fluidities of spatialities that cannot be expressed by a line drawn on a map.

The mapping and gridding of the land also worked indirectly as a colonising tool; suddenly Indigenous people were forced to walk around spaces they previously walked through, across flattened slopes or round relocated waters. The introduction of a formulaic grid that re-parcelled the land went against its organic form, forcing feet to walk in ways that were unnatural to the body. Roads as they are now inscribed onto the landscape did not exist, since Aboriginal routes and paths are more inclined to follow the motion of the land. As the people were pushed away from their Countrys and fences were erected around white settlements, Indigenous cultural practices to manage the land, such as cultural burning, were no longer possible. In 1828, Peter Cunningham described the land around Parramatta and Liverpool, west of Sydney Cove, as 'a fine timbered country, perfectly clear of bush, through which you might, generally speaking, drive a gig in all directions, without any impediment in the shape of rocks, scrubs, or close forest' (Cunningham cited in Attenbrow 2010, p. 42). This quickly changed when Aboriginal peoples were unable to tend to the land correctly and it resulted in an illness of the land that radiated out from Sydney Cove. Ironically, it was the colonisers who remarked soon after their arrival that without the fires started by Aboriginal people, it became more difficult to navigate the country, kangaroos were no longer seen and the grass was 'choked by underwood' (Mitchell 1848, chapter X, para. 11). However, fire was no longer 'desirable there amongst the fences of the settler' (chapter X, para. 11). Today fires devastate rather than defend, a tragic outcome of colonisation.

Separation and Segregation: Race and Space

Once the land had become bounded, it was possible to segregate society racially and spatially. Racial segregation is by nature a spatial practice and 'a segregated society requires a segregated landscape'

(Byrne 2003, p. 170). Such policies and unofficial societal rules enabled Black to be kept separate from white, giving the colonisers a sense of order and reducing the racial anxiety they felt about the 'natives'.

The grid, fences, straight lines, roads and signage represented the physical separation of peoples from the landscape. Their movements became controllable and their exclusion became the norm. As white settlement intensified, spaces became increasingly regulated and contained, and colonisers administered the space through imported British laws. One of the first bills passed with Federation was the White Australia Policy[8]; as non-Indigenous people were insecure about their claim on the land on the basis of terra nullius and racial superiority, racial exclusion became central to the theft of the land. Policies and legislation enabled spatial censorship because they perpetuated the foundation for legal segregation, physical dispossession and repression (McGrath 1995; Prout & Howitt 2009). The establishment of white Australia through imported policies and laws added to the trauma for Aboriginal peoples, emotionally, physically, culturally and spatially.

New boundaries became enforceable through spatial ideas of inside and outside, imaginary lines drawn onto the façade of the earth to include British places and exclude Indigenous spaces. Like Smith (2012), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o[9] states that colonial mappings divide land into three categories: the border, the centre and the outside (wa Thiong'o cited in Sium & Ritskes 2013)[10]. Through being forced into one of these classifications, Indigenous peoples access either the privileges associated with the centre or the erasure and genocidal policies associated with the periphery (Sium & Ritskes 2013). The construction of these lines, of inside and outside experiences, were an attempt to displace Indigenous Law.

[8] Australia became a federation on 1 January 1901. The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, the formalisation of the White Australia Policy, received royal assent on 23 December 1901. It was one of the first pieces of legislation introduced in the newly formed parliament. On 12 September 1901, Attorney-General Alfred Deakin said the legislation 'means the prohibition of all alien coloured immigration, and more, it means at the earliest time, by reasonable and just means, the deportation or reduction of the number of aliens now in our midst. The two things go hand in hand, and are the necessary complement of a single policy — the policy of securing a "white Australia"' (Kendall 2007, p. 17). The legislation was expressly designed to limit non-British migration to Australia and allowed for the deportation of 'undesirable' people who had settled in the colony prior to federation. It also impacted Indigenous peoples, who were considered to be inferior and 'an example of predestined extinction' (p. 21).

[9] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is Kenyan and writes primarily in the Gikuyu language.

[10] Aman Sium sees himself as being simultaneously – and equally – Tigrinya, Indigenous, Eritrean and African.

The spatial strategy of enclosure resulted in the allocation of 'acceptable' Black spaces, such as reserves, missions or town camps on the fringes of white society. They were often established in remote areas, deliberately distanced from white society in towns or cities, and commonly away from peoples' traditional lands. Where the Indigenous presence could not be exiled from colonists, a variety of segregationist strategies were employed to control Aboriginal people. Motivated by anxieties and prejudices drawn upon ingrained tendencies to associate dark skin with degradation and immorality (Byrne & Nugent 2004; Potter 2012), the colonists found that spatial segregation eased their disquiet in relation to Aboriginal people.

Spatial othering, a reductive act of labelling peoples as being part of a subordinate group, also allowed Indigenous peoples to be 'disciplined', the most obvious forms being spatial exclusion, marginalisation and loss of freedom of movement. This othering happened directly to the land as well, through the forced imposition of individualised titles, through giving and taking land away, or through redefining the land as 'empty' to enforce removals (Smith 2012).

A lasting consequence of the practice of exclusion was and is not only an enduring tension between those who were displaced and those who replaced them (Harris 2003), but also a strain for the land, which was deprived of being cared for, understood, known and respected. As a capturer encages an animal so she can no longer roam free, so too did the British encage the land, and remove, displace and disassociate its carers.

No Place for the Sole of their Feet: Missions and Reserves

> *We always visit that place, don't get me wrong. That's our home. It's just that we don't live in that part of the country. Our home is the size, bigger than Great Britain. So we can't live all over. One time we – my ancestors – could because they roamed the country. But these days we can't. We've got to live in one specific spot so we don't upset the white man. We couldn't be free to go and do this and that (cited in Prout & Howitt 2009, p. 398).*[11]

[11] The person quoted is recorded only as being a 'Female Indigenous Interviewee'.

Despite having travelled far from their home country, the British ironically became known as the 'settlers', while Indigenous peoples were designated the 'nomads' or 'wanderers'. Following on from the creation of British places on Indigenous lands, becoming 'settlers' of that ground spoke to the invaders' desire to legitimise their ownership of the stolen lands, expelling and replacing the Indigenous peoples in the process. However, 'settlers are not immigrants who come expecting to become part of existing communities and cultures; they implement their own laws and understandings of the world onto stolen land' (Tuck & McKenzie 2015, p. 67), displacing the original Laws and inhabitants. By using imported laws and policies, alongside concealment strategies and violence, the invaders excused their behaviours and were thus able to enforce their theft. Due to poor collective memory, the theft continues to be unrecognised.

In 1848, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson, expressed concerns about British pastoral and squatters' expansion, such that that 'every acre of their native soil will shortly be so leased out and occupied as to leave them, in a legal view, no place for the sole of their feet' (Robinson cited in Goodall 1996, p. 53). In response, the British Secretary of State for Colonies, Earl Grey, attempted to create policies to recognise property rights of Aboriginal people. Two years later, and after much objection from colonists and squatters, 35 Aboriginal reserves were created in pastoral districts. To the British Colonial Office and reformers in Britain, this act was a recognition of Aboriginal property rights. In order to explain this change of policy to Aboriginal people, the British were required to explain the meaning of 'Crown Land', that the monarch owned all land in the colony and it was Queen Victoria who had granted the reservations back to them. Needless to say, this idea of ownership contrasted with custodial relationships to Country, which was not owned by anyone and was certainly not within the Queen's authority to grant. As pastoralists became perturbed by valuable lands being taken up by reserves, the Aborigines Protection Board was established in 1883, becoming responsible for the management of approximately 32 new reserves. The Board, controlled by missionaries or Board managers, intervened actively in Aboriginal peoples' lives, and so religion entered into the trauma. In addition, The Board had the power to expel some from the reserves on the basis of their colour, descent or resistance and to remove children from families. Reserves were established to turn Aboriginal people into European agriculturalists; however, another motive became apparent: segregation. White interest groups now had an official administrative body to lobby. Their attitude was that Aboriginal people should

be kept separate from white society for their own good. They largely believed reserves should be placed beyond town limits, and Aboriginal people should have only restricted access town facilities (Goodall 1996).

As the grid became visible in the landscape, as farms became fenced and towns were apportioned, what was previously unrestricted space became restricted. Once access to traditional lands, homes and sources of food and water became spatially prohibited, Indigenous peoples had no choice but to live on missions or reserves or become squatters. Alternatively, they fell into poverty and the theft perpetrated on them, the oppressed, was blamed on their immorality and 'backward' ways (Pascoe 2007). The invading authorities were responsible for the conditions in the institutions they established, and it was in the interest of the trespassers to ensure these conditions were poor, as it gave reason for further dispersal and removals. Indigenous lives and liberties became controlled and dictated by the state and church, which wanted them to be sedentary and restrained (Goodall 1996). This was devastating for the land, which in many ways relied on the very act of movement to remain healthy and managed. The trauma enacted by removing their liberty of movement erased their bodily connection to the land.

At a number of points during the colonising process, some Aboriginal people were required to carry official classification documents. These 'certificates of exemption' (or passports, commonly referred to as 'dog licences' or 'dog tags') offered the holder protection or enabled travel. The holders were required to disarm and give up hunting, and in return for the passport they were provided land to 'obtain an honest and Comfortable Subsistence by their own Labour and Industry' and 'relinquish their wandering, idle, and predatory Habits of Life, and to become industrious and useful Members of a Community where they will find Protection and Encouragement' (Macquarie 1816). These new rights were conditional on their adopting British rules and cultural values while rejecting their own, and surrendering contact with kin and community. It required that they 'recognise the reality of invasion, accept small agricultural patches of land as compensation, and settle down to be British farmers' (Goodall 1996, p. 101). The humiliating irony of having to carry passports in the lands they belonged to and once freely tended must have caused immense distress, as the people were unable to maintain their relationships, not only with family and friends but also with the land. Being forced to carry a piece of paper with words in an imported

language that had no relationship to the language of the land caused further trauma. While the piece of paper was ephemeral, the intention behind it was anything but.

Concealment continues for Indigenous peoples; Indigenous lives exist alongside, interacting poorly with non-Indigenous social and institutional lives. This is largely because of the low numbers of Indigenous people and the political strategies that have tended to 'discount a culture often under-enumerated and insensitively treated' (Atkinson, Taylor & Walter 2010, p. 312). There is a mutual exclusivity and insularity between the two parties, generating ignorance and an absence of mutual comprehension and knowing (Atkinson, Taylor & Walter 2010).

Degradation in a Crippled Land: Spatial Fragmentation

> *The invasion of this land was an assault, not just on Aboriginal peoples, but on all life in Country. Aboriginal peoples were killed, forced out of their lands, and confined in prisons, lock-hospitals, reserves, missions and other institutions. Country was attacked with the axe and the plough, scarred by roads, fences and mines, and subjected to a barrage of foreign species. And even when we were able to remain on our land, Aboriginal peoples were prevented from practicing the culture that sustained Country (Kwaymullina 2008, p. 13)*

Europeans changed the environment, deploying machinery such as excavators to create infrastructure such as roads, as one example. They also changed the perception of the land using methods such as religion, capitalism and industrialism. This resulted in spatial fragmentation as the finely balanced ecosystems that relied on each other for equilibrium became separated and segregated. Foreign land management, urban development and mining caused major disruptions to the capacity of Country to heal and be heard. Colonial systems and processes created a crippled land. No longer needing to rule directly, the people who now called themselves Australians were using corporations, capitalism and globalisation to exploit and dominate.

The Natives Know Nothing of Cultivation: Land Management

According to Cook's accounts of the Aboriginal peoples he encountered on the east coast, not only were they less technologically advanced than other peoples he came upon, but they lived in 'small hovels not much bigger than an oven, made of pieces of Sticks, Bark, Grass, and even these are seldom used but in the wet seasons' (1770, chapter 8, para 151). Most important of all, Cook explained, 'the Natives know nothing of Cultivation' (chapter 8, para 145). This notion that Aboriginal peoples lacked any knowledge of cultivation and a correct understanding of housing enabled the Europeans to justify their right to settle on, farm and make changes to the land, at least according to the laws of Britain. The British associated the development of property rights and agriculture with specific stages of civilisation, since 'unsettled habitation in these immense regions cannot be accounted a true and legal possession' (de Vattel cited in Banner 2007, p. 20).

Obviously, the land and its yields were an economic resource for Aboriginal peoples prior to 1788. First Peoples harvested the resources of the land, including regularising and managing animal numbers and planting plants in specific locations (Goodall 1996). Harvesting these resources respectfully enabled the custodians to live in healthy interdependence with the land. Each Country was cared for, used and managed in a way that was pertinent to it. The people not only tended the land as its guardians or custodians to prevent damage or violation, they were also responsible for training subsequent carers to ensure a continuing relationship. This meant the land was not overused, resources were carefully sustained to ensure proper preservation for future generations, and it remained unstressed.

Bill Gammage (2012) states that plants and animals create communities, or ecosystems, based upon their preferred climate, soil and conditions. Because the invaders did not understand these habitats, they caused damage to these sensitive bionetworks, or ecologies. As ecosystems change, biodiversity and habitats are damaged. Yet these systems now support the lives of the invaders.

Australia's flora, fauna, insects and microorganisms have changed immensely since invasion, as discussed by Gammage. Some have vanished, some have prospered, too many are new arrivals. Western agricultural practices have caused many key changes. Upon arrival, colonists described the soils they encountered as soft and ashy. Soft soils allowed water to soak in rather than run off, so low

precipitation could still support many plants (Gammage 2012). The thin layer of duricrust, which held the topsoil in place, was damaged by introduced hard-hoofed animals, in contrast to the soft pads on the feet of native animals, such as kangaroos and wallabies, that leave the duricrust undisturbed. Not only did these hard-hooved species displace native animals, they caused topsoils to be lost, blown away by winds, or washed into rivers or out to sea (Sutton recorded by Local Land Services Western Region 2014)[12]. Gammage (2012) states that this in turn caused the creeks to fill with silt, salt levels to rise, water tables to change and arable lands to be lost to salinisation or erosion. Waters carrying valuable nutrients away from the land further depleted the soil and faster flowing creeks and rivers cut deeper into the land. In addition, the invaders cleared rivers for easier vessel access, further increasing river speeds. When river reed beds were removed, water flows changed and sanctuaries and food sources for fish and birds were lost.

Over half the water sources in the Murray-Darling catchment have been depleted since 1788 (Smith cited in Gammage 2012)[13]. Water was drained and diverted from swamps for pastures and stock. Sheltering scrub that protected river banks was stripped to allow access for hard-hooved animals, which further damaged the water edges. Stock was depleted and grasses uprooted, causing the waters to run off even more instead of soaking in; drought became more inevitable and more intense. Gammage (2012) indicates that as the native grasses were diminished, imported grasses were introduced along with superphosphate fertilisers. While these were essential to ensure the survival of the introduced species, they were lethal to native plants and caused many perennial native grasses to disappear. Because the introduced plants were thirsty, they destabilised the existing sensitive systems further by taking ever increasing quantities of water from the land.

[12] Mark Sutton is a Malyankapa man.

[13] The Murray-Darling Basin runs from Queensland into New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory and out through Victoria and South Australia; it is the largest river system in Australia. It includes 77,000km of rivers and more than 25,000 wetlands. In early 2019 up to a million fish died in the Darling River, a result of poor water quality and drought. Low flows of water through the river system combined with blue/green algae build up, which depleted the oxygen in the river, caused their deaths. This was effectively due to water mismanagement by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, as found by the Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission (SBS News 2019). Despite the Basin Plan being agreed to in 2012 by the federal government and four states, 'there is no evidence yet to demonstrate improvement across the Basin as a whole', and '[e]nvironmental water recovered so far has not been sufficient to arrest the long-term deterioration in key river indicators' (Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists 2017, p. 3).

Gammage (2012) says that pre-invasion, grasses grew in the best soils while trees inhabited the worst. As the colonists assumed the opposite, they rapidly cleared trees to plant crops, which caused erosion and earth scalding and allowed salt to rise to the surface. In the best soils, grasses were depleted and too many introduced species were planted. He indicates that trees can cause salt water to rise because their roots break the clay barrier that keeps the salt water deep in the earth. Too dense planting of trees allows the salt to rise to the upper levels of the soil and even onto the surface, whereas perennial grasses mitigate this by holding fresh water in their dense roots as a barrier.

During Cook and Banks' swift survey of the east coast, Banks determined that the sparsity of the trees was sufficient for the whole area to be cultivated without cutting down a single tree. He described sandy soils that produced valuable grasses and a rich black soil in other areas that supported the growth of tall trees and could enable any kind of grain to grow (French 2013). Of course, what they were actually observing was a managed and designed land. Cultivation of the land occurred, just not in a way the British chose to understand. For millennia, the Aboriginal people planted harvests not only with the current generation in mind, but for distant future descendants. Grains and tubers were sown in key locations as 'living larders' (p. 59) to ensure nourishment during times of movement. Fire created delicately managed ecosystems, which were revisited regularly to ensure their wellbeing. This precise land management meant that tall parent trees were appropriately spaced, ensuring a healthy canopy for the nurtured soils and plant life below (Steffensen 2016, pers. comm., 22-26 August). The arrogant assumptions of the British that the land was uncultivated, and available to the introduction of foreign species completely disrupted these finely balanced ecosystems, leaving the land sick and increasingly unable to recover as the systems continued (and continues) to spiral away from equilibrium.

By the 1810s, land near Sydney 'had become crowded – choked up in many places by thickets of saplings and large thorn bushes and the sweet natural herbage had for the most part been replaced by coarse wiry grasses which grew uncropped' (Macarthur cited in Perry 1963, p. 28). This change was rapid and noticed by the invaders, yet they did not change their methods of farming and continued to cause damage to the land.

It is clear that Indigenous people's actions shaped the complex bionetworks that ensured the sustainability of ecologies across the continent. They used techniques developed *with* the land, ensuring they were relevant to that particular land; some peoples remained relatively sedentary, others travelled. One technique they did not employ was carving up the land and overusing it; instead, they allowed it to recover and replenish. This resulted in a resilient sustainable landscape that provided for them for millennia (French 2013).

The Edge: Architecture as Colonial Instrument

> *We lived in Eden here but things altered dramatically. These buildings may look like wonderful historical things, but they almost destroyed us. The clearing of the land, the taking of the species, the eating of everything that was balanced so well, that whole thing altered our landscape …. No matter what gets built on our Galambans [homelands], the essence of our Ancestors and ourselves still walking around today is encased in the Country, it can't go anywhere no matter what is built on it … Aboriginal people are the essence of their Galambans (Freeman recorded by Kaldor Public Art Projects 2016).*

The architectural edge appeared only with colonisation. The formation of cities is a key part of imperial processes; they are formed through the exercise of power and political control by some groups over others. The aims of the colonial city included commercial gain, strategic manoeuvring in international geopolitics, the dispersal of undesirable social groups and the alleviation of population pressures (Home 1997). Lord Shaftesbury, who was given the title to a huge tract of land in North America (it became the Province of Carolina), referred to the 'Grand Modell' of colonial town planning. This included a policy of deliberate urbanisation in preference to dispersed settlement, as without it scattered disparate dwellings could spark destabilising conflicts (Brown cited in Home 1997). This planning model preserved the European objective of enlightenment and superiority over what they saw as Indigenous lack of rationale, which led to Indigenous invisibility, exclusion or enclosure.

Towns and cities were organised in ways that marginalised and controlled Indigenous peoples. The imposition of western spatialities and denial of Indigenous spatial knowledges and practices enabled western spatial order and governance over Indigenous peoples. This colonial ignorance of different

spatialities manifested in distinctive physical ways, from the organisation of public spaces to the design of structures and materiality (Potter 2012). Towns became non-Indigenous spaces as Indigenous peoples were removed from the public gaze. Similarly, some non-urban spaces, for instance, cultivated fields, structures, fences and landmarks, also became Indigenous-free zones; even when constructed by Indigenous labourers, they were conceptualised as European rural landscapes (Prout & Howitt 2009). In constructing environments of isolation and making other people into fringe dwellers, in the occasional patronising handing back of dirt, colonisers continue the trauma of the land and of non-recognition, when in actuality there needs to be a complete redrawing of the ground.

According to human geographer Tim Cresswell (2004), one of the main ways in which memories are established is through the production of places via the placing of monuments onto the landscape. He discusses place and memory, which he says are inevitably intertwined. Changing the terrain to reflect displaced ideas of European places destroyed Indigenous monumentalisation that occurred in the landscape, both through physical means, such as planting signposts or scarring a tree, and intangible monuments known through narrative. Western manipulations are heavy on the land; they dislodge materials from distant places to be relocated and formed into new versions of even more distant places. Indigenous treatments of the land tend to be light on the ground, and hence they were imperceptible to – or completely disregarded by – the British when they first arrived. Of course, for Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous possession is not only not invisible, it is over-visible, as 'cities signify with every building and every street that this land is now possessed by others; signs of white possession are embedded everywhere in the landscape' (Moreton-Robinson 2015, p. xiii). Cities became evidence of ownership. The collective memory of Australians became whitened; spaces became governed not only physically but through social conventions.

The very flattening of a landscape, the concretisation of smoothed ground, reinforces the tracks of colonisation by denying Indigenous societal spaces, replacing one system of memorialising the land with another, and in so doing, Indigenous relationships could be erased. 'It was as if the colonists set out to erase the common ground where communication with the "Natives" might have occurred' (Carter 1996, p. 6). The creation of British places out of Indigenous spaces played an ongoing role in the

whitewashing of history; if Indigenous peoples cannot be seen, they never existed and have no narratives or histories, nor spaces.

Trauma on a Colossal Scale: Mining

Once Aboriginal peoples had been dispossessed of the lands of which they had been custodians for generations and were collected into reserves so that farmers could take over those lands, mining companies began to take notice of the reserves. They considered them free from alternative capital purposes, and colonial governments encouraged the development of these lands for profits that could be taxed (Roberts 1981).

Mining commenced in Australia in 1841, with lead mining at Glen Osmond in South Australia. By 1850, exports of copper and lead earned more than exports of wool and wheat. By this time Australia was also producing 40 per cent of the world's gold. Australia is now a global leader in mining and the mining industry one of the biggest contributors to export trade (Geoscience Australia 2015).

This invasion by mining companies disrespects special and mundane sites, the disrespect compounded by the fact that the companies carrying out the destruction are themselves so protected by the authorities. The most visible capitalisation and tearing of the ground is trauma of industrial magnitude; cutting into the land on such a dramatic scale makes it harder for its stories to be heard and harder for it to be healed. Mining also fails to share capital correctly with First Peoples, not to mention disregarding the Laws of the land.

Colonised Space: A Conclusion

Country holds land, site and space. With this understanding, the British assertion of terra nullius, an empty land, is the ultimate insult to Indigenous space, which is actually full of Country. The country now known as Australia is colonised space. The land the colonists called Australia was never the paradise of fertile lands that Captain James Cook and botanist Joseph Banks promised. With its thin topsoil, extreme weather events, reliance on fire for land management and lack of water, most of Australia was unsuited for western methods of land use, farming, construction and mining. These methods contributed to the present trauma of the land and resultant catastrophes. Spatial mechanisms and concepts such

as the void, the line and the edge became colonial tools for control and dispossession. As First Peoples became fragmented and injured, so did our lands and environments. Moreover, the systems and processes of colonisation and invasion caused and enforced disconnection between Indigenous peoples and lands. Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes Indigenous space in relation to colonisation thus:

> For the indigenous world, western conceptions of space, of arrangements and display, of the relationship between people and the landscape, of culture as an object of study, have meant that not only has the indigenous world been represented in particular ways back to the West, but the indigenous world view, the land and the people, have been radically transformed in the spatial image of the West. In other words indigenous space has been colonised. Land, for example, was viewed as something to be tamed and brought under control. The landscape, the arrangement of nature, could be altered by 'Man': swamps could be drained, waterways diverted, inshore areas filled, not simply for physical survival, but for further exploitation of the environment or making it 'more pleasing' aesthetically. Renaming the land was probably as powerful ideologically as changing the land … This newly named land became increasingly disconnected from the songs and chants used by indigenous peoples to trace their histories, to bring forth spiritual elements or to carry out the simplest of ceremonies. More significantly, however, space was appropriated from indigenous cultures and then 'gifted back' as reservations, reserved pockets of land for indigenous people who once possessed all of it (2012, pp. 53-54).

Furthermore, our spaces are racially designed, and they cause colonised bodies. Eyes can no longer focus long distances due to inhibiting structures; we are 'blinded by buildings' (Yarn with K Smith 2017 on 5 July). Feet wearing alien materials that separate from Country walk straight lines on hard flattened surfaces. Lungs breathe toxic poisons forced into the air, taking those toxins into the body. Likewise, the land is blinded, flattened and poisoned by colonisation.

For Aboriginal peoples, land and human cannot be separated; people formed as part of our lands. Victor Steffensen talks of the relationship between land and people being integral to the health of each; when the land is sick, so are the people. In healing the land, so too are the people healed (2017, pers. comm., 10 April). Although the land is voiceless, it can be heard. Yet the land is not listened to and readings of what it says it needs are not acknowledged; the land is not heeded. Cultural wounds need cultural

healing. Like human skin when it bleeds from a scrape, the soil, the land, is injured by European cultivation and exploitation; while it can heal, the wound is immense and ongoing causing obstacles for healing. It is within our relationships that the First Peoples of the land can start to heal our traumas past and present.

While the position taken here may seem historical, it still resonates today. The past is important: 'We must not forget, because we need to learn lessons about the repercussions of this type of trauma, which run deep and permeate society' (Giles 2016). The land needs its people back. Without us, traumas to the land will only continue and the diseased blanket will not be lifted.

CHAPTER 6: REVEALING WITHOUT REVEALING

MATERIALITY, MAKING, NARRATIVES – A PATTERN

Pre-story

While researching this thesis I went to the Australian Museum for a behind-the-scenes tour of the Indigenous collection. I was unsure what to expect; however, my understanding was that there were 20,000 objects in that collection. The objects I saw were the more 'everyday' objects, in that they were not classified as 'secret/sacred', nor were they human body parts.

When I entered the storage area with the group I noticed row upon row of ceiling-to-floor metal shelves storing thousands of artefacts. We were instructed to leave our belongings on a bench and to have a look at a few objects laid out on a table for us. I am short, so I generally tend to put myself at the front in order to see well. However, I started to feel like I needed to stand back. The objects on the table were varied; a boomerang, a glass knife, a dilly bag, all with small white tags with handwritten descriptors, such as:

> *E.38263 Area E Coiled Bag Richmond River, NSW 1935 Don. Mrs Gill A3/1/1/4*
>
> *E.58706 Area D Brungle Abor. Station Brungle, near Gundagai, NSW Boomerang Purch. E. Hubbard*
>
> *E.83154 Area ? Northern Territory Hafted Stone Axe Don. M. Ward*

Looking at these artefacts with their tags, I felt devastated. The name of the person who collected the item was there. The name of the creator and their land, their Country, was not. Later during the visit, I saw other objects whose labels listed the creator as 'Unknown'. It was hard not to question the circumstances by which these artefacts had been acquired. Were they given freely or taken? Borrowed indefinitely or insufficiently paid for? Removed from a grave? Stolen as a 'normal' part of colonial processes?

It did not take long before I started to feel odd, a bit woozy and lightheaded. One of the staff members showing us around was Aboriginal so I sidled over to her, identified myself and said, 'Sis, I don't know how you work in this place, it's making me feel faint.' Immediately she replied, 'Oh gosh, I should have

warned you, this can happen when Blackfellas come into these spaces.' She went on to describe her own similar experience and what she now did to avoid being affected while working in the presence of the collection.

She later explained how she understood what was happening. An object made by hand contains remnants of the maker or crafter; the oils and skin particles from their hands become embedded in the object. These oils and particles contain the DNA of the maker. The objects also contain the DNA of the materials of Country from which they originated. From my experience as a crafter, I know that objects contain energy exerted by the maker during the process of making or creating and that energy is captured in the object. So are the stories and the conversation that took place during the making process. When a Blackfella enters the space where such objects are held, there is a mutual recognition of shared energy, shared DNA, shared stories.

When I entered that room, those objects sang to me, a resonance of recognition. I heard voices not in my ears, but in my knowing. I could not hear what they were saying because there were hundreds of voices, maybe even thousands. It was as though they were waiting to be heard, they felt this relief that someone was there to hear them. It was overwhelming.

I spoke with Indigenous friends and colleagues and received affirmation that my experience was familiar for some. I asked Uncle Greg Simms what he thought it might be about and he explained it as energy, that Country had energy and things that come from Country contain latent energy. I also heard a story told by Aunty Julie Freeman who talks about our DNA containing every ancestor we have ever been, and those connections go very deep because our connection with this land has existed for a very long time. Every ancestor's DNA is carried not only within ourselves, but also within the Country; as their bodies returned to the land, they connected us genetically over and over to the land. I then spoke with my Mum who explained it using quantum physics and so-called 'entangled particles', which created resonance over time and space.

Despite their dispossession from Country, these objects and sites still 'speak'. I cannot be certain what they were saying; what I can be certain of is that their voices cannot be heard in the context of colonial

institutions unless there is a Blackfella there to hear them. This is because, while tangible aspects of their cultural care – the humidity, the temperature, etc. – are seen to, the intangible aspects – their purpose, the relationships they have to Country, their responsibility (part of which may be deteriorating back to the land) – are not.

Introduction

Indigenous cultural practices enable a knowing of, listening to and reading of Country, fostering a reclamation, (re)storying and (re)knowing of Indigenous space. Uncle Greg Simms describes his cultural practice of woodcarving as his Dreaming. In this he means that woodcarving connects him to his Ancestors through a long line of woodcarvers; he was taught by his father, a master woodcarver, who was in turn taught by his father. Finding healing from woodcarving, Uncle Greg says this is because spiritual healing energies come via ancestral links established while undertaking the practice. The healing happens through learning from Elders and Knowledge Holders, and working with others (Yarn with G Simms 2018 on 10 January). In describing his cultural practice as his Dreaming, Uncle Greg links it to stories, songlines, Country and culture.

Cultural practices incorporate any practice that Indigenous peoples carry out that connects them to their culture, Country and Dreaming. While my own cultural practice is weaving, others are woodcarvers, undertake cultural burning or fishing, nawi[1], or canoe, making, or are storytellers or musicians or artists. A cultural practice is not restricted to 'traditional' practices – indeed robotics or writing could be a cultural practice if they connect with culture and Country. Sandy O'Sullivan[2] confirms this, indicating that technology (multimedia in their case) is cultural practice and denying this buys into 'primitivist ideas of Indigeneity and upholds the concept that Indigenous people are unable to participate in cultural ways in the modern world' (2008, p. 53).

Cultural practices are at the centre of Indigenous identity. Bronwyn Carlson[3] cites Coombs, Brandl and Snowdon whose research relating to Aboriginal identity supports the notion of 'continuity of traditional

[1] Nawi is the word for 'canoe' in the Dharug language.

[2] Sandy O'Sullivan is a Wiradjuri person.

[3] Bronwyn Carlson identifies as Aboriginal.

principles and the idea that the underlying cultural principles rather than observable forms of culture were what persisted' (2016, p. 78). Furthermore, she indicates cultural practices are not the surviving fragments of an ancient degenerating culture, but the core of identity for Aboriginal people.

In this chapter I propose weaving as a model for a cultural and performative practice, incorporating my own perspectives and narratives. I also describe the relationship between material culture – the objects, resources and spaces that define our culture – and the physical (re)connection with culture and Country. I reflect on the stories relating to the cultural practices of my immediate family, extended family, kinship networks and community connections in order to create a 'pattern', the intent being to understand weaving as spatial narrative and method, reading and writing story and Country into form and object. The intersection of skill and materiality in a woven object inherently forms the geography of Country. Stories embedded in this writing are personal not only to those sharing them, but to me. In offering this self-reflective narrative, wider cultural meanings and understandings are positioned within the context of Indigenous cultural practice.

Consider the 'pattern' of this chapter as the pattern to crochet a blanket (to continue this analogy from the previous chapter, though in contrast, the blanket in this chapter is nurturing, warm and healing – and connected to Country). In a crochet pattern, you might find instructions about notations, how you do the stitches, what type of material to buy and where to find it, what size hooks you need and any specialist skills or techniques required in order to complete the blanket. Likewise, the key elements of my pattern weave together ideas of materiality, making, spatiality, and narratives through the conduit of weaving, exploring the relationships between Aboriginal people, object, context and Country.

The subtle pattern of this chapter, the allegorical healing coming from the blanket in this chapter, also necessarily creates a buffer between the colonial violence of the previous two chapters, and the narratives in the following chapter. This chapter holds space, and holds off impacts, in the form of a pattern. A pattern consists of regularly repeated units and can include making (crafting or sewing for instance), but also numerical order or text, a dance or music, behaviour or thought patterns, prints or grids or genealogies; it is a means of understanding rules or order (Jefferies 2012). Paul Stenner describes patterns as 'the relation between unity and multiplicity … a multiplicity of elements gathered

into the unity of a particular arrangement … of distinguishable *modes of togetherness*' (2012, p. 136). Considering the pattern as a process that occurs over time, Stenner describes the emergent pattern as 'the *contrast* between gathering and dispersal' (p. 137). Therefore, in the pattern of this chapter, discussions relating to learning and teaching, materiality and the practice of making are included as insulation from colonial trauma.

It is my privilege throughout this writing to share some of my family's story with you, specifically relating to the women in my family. Within the context of the Nyungar nation, Tjalaminu Mia discusses the importance of sharing and valuing our cultural and social knowledge and oral histories to heal ourselves and have a positive influence in our communities. She says:

> I share the journey I made, which also includes my family stories … What I have learned over time through my mother's voice – our stories are our history, and our history, our [C]ountry – are fundamental lessons for us, as individuals and cultural communities. The responsibility is ours, as individuals and as a group, to reinforce this truth to our peoples and young ones as a positive goal, to reclaim our cultural ways (2017, p. 43).

For my family, weaving is reclamation. In this reclamation we are not only (re)connecting with a craft, we are connecting with our narratives, heritage, Ancestors and our Dreaming. While weaving may not have been passed down through recent generations, crafting has been. Crafts deemed to be 'acceptable' by nuns were nonetheless passed down 'Indigenously' within my family, master craftswomen instructing students, women gathering together to learn from each other, stories being shared. In this way our Dreaming continues. And now, we reclaim our woven heritage.

I would like to express my admiration for, love of and gratitude towards the women of my family, especially those who gave their time, knowledge and stories so generously towards this research investigation. I specifically thank my grandmother Gloria Nipperess (née Darby), my mother Robyn Hromek (née Irwin), my aunty Lynne Lovett (née Irwin), my cousin Jenny Gillis (née Darby), my sister Siân Hromek and my cousin Caitlyn Murch (née Lovett). All strong Yuin women.

Object or Artefact: Tangible and Intangible

Aunty Julie Freeman says, 'Objects are connections to traditions' (2016, p. 130), and certainly the women of my family continued their connections to each other and their wider networks through their traditions of crafting and making objects, art, food and clothing. While weaving has not been (re)practised until recently, the way we taught and learned our crafts has been maintained. My grandmother told me the move away from weaving was probably in her grandmother's time. She says there was anger in the family at the Catholic nuns regarding some 'bad behaviour', leading to a shift away from Catholicism. It was when the nuns also taught them how to knit and crochet – 'acceptable' crafts according to the nuns (Yarn with G Nipperess 2018 on 27 January). Despite this change in technology and technique, we still gather together to swap projects, methods and materials as well as to share stories, food, tea and lots of laughter. I learned how to knit from my aunty Lynne Lovett[4] when I was about six or seven years of age, and how to crochet from my mother in my teens. It is still largely a women's activity in our family, and our women's gatherings are events we all look forward to. Our more recent reclamation of our weaving practices has for many of us felt like we have come home; 'Not lost, just sleeping' (Nichols cited in Gough 2009, p. 33)[5] [6].

Our cultural objects, like our Ancestors, were historically fetishised by colonisers, according to Julie Gough (2009). While on one hand there was repression and dispossession, on the other hand, these objects inspired the practice of collecting, cataloguing and a sort of valuing. Our objects were regularly taken and exhibited, akin to the collection of animal trophies that glorified the hunter/coloniser over the creator, denying our cultures, sovereignty and connections to Country. Since colonisation, the focus for Aboriginal people has necessarily changed from:

> … living to surviving, and, more recently, to redressing the plunder of culture and Country by political action. These circumstances left little time for making. Creative work, until recently, has been considered a luxury, and pursued in private – and The Museum, any museum, has been regarded with suspicion (Gough 2009, p. 32).

[4] Lynne Lovett is a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation.

[5] Aunty Verna Nichols is Tasmanian Aboriginal and also a descendant of the Bunurong people of Victoria.

[6] Julie Gough's matriarchal Aboriginal family line traditionally comes from Tebrikunna, far north eastern Tasmania.

On the one hand, there is repression and dispossession, on the other hand, a collecting and cataloguing such that a value was placed on certain aspects of Aboriginal cultural expressions, if only in a museum situation.

Objects hold in their form knowledges about their creation, including the knowledge to recreate them. Hidden within a single object is contained thousands of years of knowledge about everything: ecology, biology, hydrology, geology, weather, history. Within the design, shape and materials information is stored about their tangible and intangible heritage. The tangible elements of an object include the materials used or anything with a physical presence, whereas the intangible aspects include the skills, techniques and knowledges used to create the object, the significance of the design and how it was used. Its history and stories are embedded in the objects, including nowadays stories of colonisation. Understanding how to recreate objects enables us to fill in the holes in stories that have been created through colonial processes (Freeman 2016; Garwood-Houng 2015; UNESCO 2003)[7]. Heather Builth[8] says of intangible heritage:

> The underestimation of the intangible in our intellectual analysis of culture via an archaeological methodology, of itself inevitably leads to an absence of cultural understanding and empathy. An ancient object loses its meaning outside its context, and its intangible context is as important, if not more important, than knowledge of its provenance or its dateable age. Intangible cultural heritage is, therefore, arguably more important than the tangible as it brings the past into the future, not just the present, by bringing successive generations on their journey with meaning and purpose. And it provides the raison d'etre for the relationship of [I]ndigenous people with their past. The intangible brings past and present connections of all types – be it with their language, their relationships, [C]ountry, or the creatures, landscape or seasons they live with, into reality by making sense of them (2009, p. 26).

[7] Alana Garwood-Houng is a Yorta Yorta woman with Wergaia and Wamba Wamba heritage.

[8] Heather Builth is an archaeologist/anthropologist who has worked extensively with Gunditjmara people in particular to recover their aquaculture systems.

Objects are extensions of ourselves, of who we are, according to Kaleena Smith (Briggs). For instance, the boomerang is an extension of the arm and eye, the yidaki[9] an extension of the voice and breath. These tools or cultural objects play an important part in our everyday lives, incorporating culture, language, space, voice, food. They connect back to Country and visually denote our diversity as peoples. Smith questions whether gathering our objects in museums, where they are no longer used for the purpose for which they were crafted, changes what they are; is a shield still a shield if it sits on a shelf in a museum rather than protecting a body? While they are still born of wood or plant or earth from Country, they have also been moulded, shaped and smoothed by hand, turned into something new, in doing so taking on their own voice and telling (and carrying) their own stories (Yarn with K Smith 2017 on 5 July).

When objects are held in institutions, their function changes from object to artefact, making the tangible the most important aspect. Objects that once 'were worn daily are now considered to be precious objects by museums. Baskets that were once only for short term use by the people as they were easily renewable are now so precious that they cannot be touched by the bare hand of a possible descendant of the makers' (Garwood-Houng 2015). However, some objects had the responsibility of returning to Country to deteriorate once their purpose had been served, so being stored 'forever' denies their purpose, and their Dreaming. The institution 'protects' the artefact, ensures the temperature is correct and other conditions are met, making sure gloves are worn when handled; however, this puts a barrier between makers and possible descendants. The objects become supposedly too precious to be touched by a bare hand, even if it was a bare hand that made them (Garwood-Houng 2015). Even so, hidden knowledges in objects speak back to those whose heritage has prepared them to recapture the wealth in those knowings.

Object, Country and Memory

> *Baskets held in museums may seem as though they are empty, but held within them are histories. It is not always visible but with time, patience and research, baskets can reveal what is held within. The histories in the baskets are important because they tell*

[9] Uncle Greg Simms prefers the word yidaki, a Yolgnu Matha word, instead of didgeridoo, which is a western word.

> *a story of a time past and a time of change. They also hold the threads of the story of their collection and journey to their current resting place (Garwood-Houng 2015).*

The tradition of object making has been sustained in my family, and so our objects inherently carry ancient memory in the process of crafting. Aunty Lynne describes sitting around the living room with her grandmother, my great-grandmother, Alma Evelyn Darby (née Brown)[10], aunties and cousins making together while listening to the wireless[11]. She says my mother and she used to go every Thursday night for dinner, they would stay the night, and all would knit together. Lynne, as a left hander, learned to knit by undoing her mother's knitting and observing how the stitches came undone to remember for later (Yarn with L Lovett 2018 on 27 January). My mother Robyn says she learned to knit from just being with her mother and grandmother while they were doing it every week. She describes how everyone used to bunk in together, including their aunty and her four kids, their uncle, Nanna and Pop, as well as Lynne and her, all in a three-bedroom house with a sleepout (though as Pop took up a whole room to himself, effectively it was two bedrooms) (Yarn with R Hromek 2018 on 27 January).

There is also a collective memory to which our cultural practices are connected. Our collective memories held in objects enable us in the present to activate the bond between ourselves and the creators of the objects. Within '[o]ur stream of practice … is an interesting unbroken continuum of cultural response to this landscape and hence holds a resonance that readily connects the artist to the morphic resonance from antiquity' (Archetypal Visual Arts 2015)[12]. Our personal, collective, ancestral – and Country – memories locate us within the collective stories of our people in the kinship web.

Like an object, Country likewise holds memory of what has happened in a place, an:

> … intangible presence, a memory of time; there are things that have happened in that space which can linger, and people can get a feeling for that. So when they move into this space, they sometimes

[10] Alma Evelyn Brown (nee Darby) has heritage from the Budawang people of the Yuin nation.

[11] Wireless is what my grandmother still calls a radio.

[12] Archetypal Visual Arts is part of Keeping Our Culture Alive (KOCA) Weavers and Okka Wikka, a small body of North Queensland Master Weavers practicing traditional folk craft from the Pacific Basin. Aunty Rhonda Brim is a member of this group and taught me the twining weaving technique.

> feel something in the space which is not the things that we can touch or feel. They are not the five senses, it's that sort of sixth sense. I think that's the interface with that memory, is being able to feel that, the Old People, the stories of that place, in Country (Yarn with O Costello 2015 on 25 November).

Our Ancestors made objects from the materials of their Country – plants, mud, bark, stones, ochre, trees, animal skins. In creating objects of Country, not only memory of tradition but memory of Country is captured in the object.

Heritage and Potentiality

Ancestral memories come from our molecular structure, according to Lionel Kinunwa[13]. He says, 'Our ancestral memories are in your blood, they are in your muscles, they're in your bones, they're in your hair … That is why when we hear the drum, our spirit is moved. The vibrations of the drum stir old memories – our ancestral memories … That is also why when you hear someone speaking your language, your molecular structure picks up those vibrations, because each language has its own peculiar patterns, and you feel good that somebody is speaking your language' (Kinunwa cited in McIvor 2010, p. 143)[14]. Even with a single drop of Indigenous ancestry in a body, there is still a Bloodline and spirit connection back to our Dreaming. It is through that link our Ancestors and spirit connections may find a voice to guide us in our lives. That transference between our mundane lives and the Dreaming is also connected to landscape and objects of Country (Absolon 2008; Freeman 2016). Ancestral memories are linked to material culture, as objects woven become narrators of Country.

Uncle Max Harrison describes this further in relation to identity:

> So distance and time before the settlers came is different to distance and time after they came because they altered a lot of our truth. We were being told this and that, and in particular, we were being told we were half-caste, or quarter-caste, one-eighth and all the different castes, which is all bull. I can't understand that you see. I am being looked on as some sort of measuring implement, yet I hold knowledge, I hold knowledge of thousands of years of Dreaming, and my blood is running full of

[13] Lionel Kinunwa is an Elder of the Lakota nation.

[14] Onowa McIvor is nehiyaw from Norway House and Cross Lake Cree Nations in Northern Manitoba.

> traditional knowledge. So I won't let what people tell me and put into me distort me. We have got to keep the purities of traditional knowledge there (Harrison & McConchie 2013, p. 68).

Material culture creates a connection to our ancestral memories, a means of accessing those memories through object. The designs embedded in objects come from our collective memory. Our objects have maintained family and landscape for our entire human existence as essential tools, connecting us to an enduring ancestral memory bank (Archetypal Visual Arts 2015). This primary craft developed by ancient Ancestors to gather and carry items into a container is one of the first formations between human and land. While our culture has adapted to the changes that came with colonisation, our ancestral memories have remained radiant within us. It is reflected in our cultural practices and any resultant expressions of those practices, including objects, holding within them an Aboriginal cultural identity. This is part of the heritage all Indigenous people share; within our bodies is the key to unlocking our potential. The act of weaving, of collecting materials of Country, and recreating objects whose origin is millennia old connects us to our ancestral memories. The weave narrates Country into form, bringing memory into life.

Weaving a Pattern

Woven objects have weight and spatial form, and are bonded to the site specificity of Country, which Aboriginal people are indelibly part of. The materiality of site and crafting form from hand brings meaning to the Dreaming up of the object. Forms are created through transference of material, action of hand and emergence of function, a phenomenological experiential practice of doing with and associating to Country.

Fibre work has an ancient tradition, a tradition as long as our cultures. Respecting the seasons, fibres have been mindfully harvested, women have sat together for countless generations, stringing, knotting, looping, coiling, plaiting, twining into objects to transport the mundane and remarkable items they needed for life. The capturing together of single fibres into strong bundles are a symbol of the strength and togetherness of our rich culture. Revitalising that tradition links generations together and recovers our inheritance (Carmichael 2016).[15]

[15] Freja Carmichael is Ngugi from Quandamooka in Queensland.

One approach Aboriginal people used to maintain their culture safe and ensure it continued, including cultural practices like weaving, was to keep them hidden. Sally Morgan[16] (1988) discusses hiding identity due to shame; harassment from Fisheries and the general public deterred South Coast Aboriginal people from fishing, causing shame and anger as their culture became criminalised as something to hide and practice in secret (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation & South Coast Culture/Commercial Fishing Rights Aboriginal Corporation 2018); Eileen Alberts[17] (Alberts cited by Bissland 2018) describes how her aunt, Aunty Connie Hart[18], used to watch in secret as her mother wove, thereby keeping their weaving practice alive; in the play *Winyanboga Yurringa* Andrea James[19] (2016) describes how women wove in the dark in order to keep the practice alive; Nadeena Dixon[20] (2018) indicates that Yuin women continued weaving in secret, and only recently felt it was safe to bring our weaving practices back into the light. My grandmother, Gloria Nipperess, says she is proud of the reclamation of our weaving practice, as it is also reclaiming our heritage (Yarn with G Nipperess 2018 on 27 January). After years of being in the Hidden Generations, my family are coming into the light. In reclaiming our weaving practice now, when it is safe for us to do so, we are not only (re)claiming the practice, but (re)claiming and (re)invigorating our culture as well. Respecting our traditions ensures that what our Old People went through is never forgotten or hidden again. By maintaining and reinvigorating our cultural practices, we deny not only colonisation, but the patriarchy and the institution; what seems like a simple craft is a form of empowerment.

Learning from Masters

> *While making Dilly bags I'm thinking about the Old People and how their culture and technologies kept them thriving in this land for thousands of years. Weaving grasses and leaves that I have gathered keeps me connected to Country and it is my honour to keep this knowledge alive (R Hromek 2017, pers. comm. 2 October).*

16 Sally Morgan belongs to the Palku and Nyamal peoples of the Pilbara.

17 Eileen Alberts is a Gunditjmara woman.

18 Aunty Connie Hart is a Gunditjmara woman.

19 Andrea James is a Yorta Yorta/Kurnai woman.

20 Nadeena Dixon is a Wiradjuri, Yuin and Gadigal (Dharug-Boorongberigal clan) woman.

Learning from Elders and Knowledge Holders is important, not only for the next generation and the reciprocal process of learning, but for the continuation of knowledges, history, culture and cultural practices. Tahana Rimmer[21] says she weaves to learn: 'It's my connecting with culture. It's family. I think that we're weaving family into our basket' (Rimmer cited in Gough 2009, p. 33). Likewise, in my family, grandmothers, aunties, sisters and cousins have always played important roles in each other's lives. Our aunties and grandmothers were our carers when our own mothers could not be there, caring for, raising and educating us. Our cousins and siblings were – and in many instances still are – our closest play friends. We also learned how to craft from our grandmothers, aunties, mothers, sisters and cousins; we still teach each other methods and techniques, share patterns and materials. My aunty Lynne says, 'When there is a receptive vessel you fill it by teaching … When someone is ready to learn it is often unspoken – it is just known between the learner and the teacher' (Lovett 2017, pers. comm., 4 May).

My first weaving learning came while at an Indigenous Fire Workshop in Wujal Wujal, Far North Queensland where Aunty Rhonda Brim[22] (2016) was teaching a twining style. Cultural fire plays an important part in the care of Country process. And once Country is healthy, there is space to use the resources of Country, and cultural and performative practices – such as weaving – can take place. Like spaces, meeting places and Country, technologies, knowledges, techniques and methods were shared between our peoples well before invasion occurred; while our diversity was respected, the interconnectedness and relatedness between mobs was mutual. Our resources travelled our songlines with our stories, dances, knowledges and songs, so while every group had its own styles and designs, the techniques were connected. This sharing of practice has continued since colonisation. For instance, the coiling technique, unique to peoples from the south-eastern parts of Australia, is known to have travelled north to weavers in the Northern Territory in the 1920s (Garwood-Houng 2015). This cultural exchange has enabled our practices to be more easily reclaimed.

My Mum, Robyn Hromek, has often said she knew how to weave before she could weave, and this sense is familiar to me. Mum and I have attended gatherings, festivals and workshops where weaving

[21] Tahana Rimmer is a pakana (Tasmanian Aboriginal) woman.

[22] Aunty Rhonda Brim is a Djabugay Elder from Far North Queensland.

was part of the program, taking every opportunity to learn weaving stories, techniques and protocols for collecting from Knowledge Holders. Between us we have shared techniques, somehow finding it easy to fill in the gaps in our knowledge through sharing and learning from each other, and sharing and learning from others in the family. Through our weaving we have (re)connected with extended family networks. Our weaving masters and teachers have included learning to coil from Aunty Phyllis Stewart[23] (2016) at an Aboriginal women's gathering. Our coiling education continued alongside our cousin, Jenny Gillis[24], with Ronnie Jordan[25] (2016). Related through our South Coast kin, we learned with the Galamban Weavers Group (2017) and Nadeena Dixon (2018). After one such gathering during which I was taught a making technique Yuin women have done since time immemorial, I saw this style exhibited in the Australian Museum, where it was vaguely identified as being from New South Wales. I was informally able to identify it as being unique to the Sydney and South Coast area, and thus my own cultural reclamation has been able to bring a cultural object home.

Materials of Country

> *Bingyadyan ngalu birgun nudjarn jungarung. We come from the Mother earth. That's all you need to know. Aboriginal people believe that we rise out of the Mother, that's what that statement says. Bingyadyan ngalu birgun nudjarn jungarung. We come from the Mother's heartbeat. We all come from the earth. We're all going back there, some of us sooner than others. Everything that you do to the earth, you have to be prepared to do to your mother. If you're not prepared to hurt your mother, do not hurt the earth because she is in fact your mother. That's the essence of Aboriginal culture and Law. It comes up all the time and yet we despise the earth. We think that we can change it with fertiliser and pesticide and with river redirection and all kinds of manipulation of the earth. Where in fact, we should just listen to the earth and try to do the best by her because the earth wants to be productive. The earth wants to grow food for us. She's always done it. She's always provided for us (Pascoe recorded by Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2017).*

[23] Aunty Phyllis Stewart has family connections from the Dharawal and Yuin peoples on the South Coast of New South Wales.

[24] Jenny Gillis is a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation.

[25] Ronnie Jordan is a Kalkadoon woman from Mount Isa.

Walking the land is vital in order to become intimate with Country, and as a method of making Country healthy again. Knowing Country thoroughly, hearing what Country needs, enables a care of Country. Country wants to be healthy and care for us in return, as it always has.

Walking is also part of my protocols for collecting and harvesting of materials. I, and many members of my family, live in urban areas. However, we still collect much of our weaving materials from the urban landscape. While this urbanised colonised land is certainly materially damaged from two centuries of colonial degradation, there are ways to connect with it and to hear Country, in particular its intangible elements. One of these ways of connecting is through my weaving practice, specifically, the collection of materials. In doing so I walk Country, spend time with Country, communicate with Country, get to know it and in my way care for it. When I am collecting, I speak to Country, explain who I am, why I need the materials and listen for cues as to when I have collected enough. I am careful not to over collect, ensuring younger plants remain unharmed for next year. I think of my Old People, say words in the language of Country, and listen for messages in return.

There are many fibres that can be collected from the urban landscape, including traditional materials such as lomandra, gymea, dianella, bulrushes, flax, barks, vines, reeds, sedges and other grasses. Lomandra grows along the east coast of Australia, and has traditionally been used in woven objects. Aunty Fran Bodkin says that in the old days lomandra was a sign; it was planted at flood levels, and was an indicator you could camp on one side of the lomandra, but not the other as the land was damp and you would get wet and sick (Yarn with F Bodkin 2016 on 28 October). There are also numerous non-traditional materials (as I call them, materials *not*-of-Country, usually lost or discarded items, or rubbish) that are easily accessible, and are part of the process of care for Country, as by collecting these foreign articles they are no longer impacting the land or invading the waters.

Such methods of collecting are similarly described by Timara Lotah Link[26] in relation to her lands in California. She says:

[26] Timara Lotah Link is from the Chumash Coastal Band in Pasadena, California, United States of America.

> Being a gatherer is not just a practice, it's a mindset … The Spanish came and then the United States, and they swept over the land and when they were done it was cut into tiny little pieces and they put fences around those pieces. We live in a world of fences today, and those fences are boundaries between us and the landscape. I respect boundaries … but fences, borders, dams were never meant to be … We come not only to gather, we also come to tend to land. We are not just here to take; we are here to give back … This place is really special because it's a place where the old basket weavers grew up here, they were born here, they died here and the baskets, the actual junkus that they make their baskets out of, it is from here. And we feel that when we come back here that there is a continuation going on of not only a skill and an art, but also a tending … There is a balance to everything … Native people are finding our traditions again. The traditions are coming to life, they're not always lost, sometimes they're just asleep (Link recorded by Yuan 2016).

Connections with Indigenous weavers locally, nationally and internationally give reassurance that the reclaiming of practice and culture is collective and achievable. It is alive, not deceased or 'museumed'. Continuing the practice of weaving removes woven objects from being sited metaphorically in the collectable, removes it from the museum to the here, to the now. New stories told by each generation as living cultural expressions bring forth a new way of relating to Country, albeit still based on ancient technologies and memories. Collecting from Country connects us to the spirits of our Ancestors who continue to care for the land. As weavers and collectors we start to read the land differently, and know the stories and knowledges of that land. In that way, the stories and knowledges are never lost, they are simply waiting for the right people to hear them.

Cultural Spatial Practice

The intersection of skill and materiality held in a woven object intrinsically forms the geography of Country; such an object is a phenomenological entity created of material and the land from which it is derived. Human interaction with object and Country snakes its way through millennia to the present in which we are but makers weaving intangible complexities into something tangible. There is no separation between the formations of materials and their location, and the spatial structural forms made by hand.

According to Brian Martin, all cultural productions in Aboriginal culture are created by Country. 'One belongs to [C]ountry which provides all sustenance in relation to living and all cultural practices, including "art" … there is no distinction between art, culture and living in the mediated experience of human beings' (2013, pp. 193-194). Martin's formation of art points to a different conception of 'art', as it is grounded in belonging to Country. From this grounding, all cultural productions and practices are created with a holistic interrelatedness; they do not exist in isolation from one another. Movement and dynamic force through Country are a vital part of Martin's (2013) ideology in which culture filters through the living of everyday life.

Weaving is both a cultural and spatial practice; the act of weaving creates a spatial form, with micro and macro connections to culture and Country. Micro connections include small acts of care of Country, such as collecting materials not-of-Country, or responding to a message from Country informing a specific material or type of weave. Macro connections include the action of reconnecting with kin, land, culture, narrative and identity. Intimate spaces shaped through weaving by hand create a vessel that holds and is formed by Country. This occurs alongside communal and global acts of caring for the land resulting from people moving through space.

Conduits and Vessels

The micro and macro acts of weaving create transfer of energy from hands and material into a vessel. The body acts as a conduit for the energy, capturing it in form. Uncle Greg Simms speaks of energetic transfers between peoples and Country, saying,

> Those Old People would have been in their late 40s, up to 60s, late 60s … When them Old People were laying there, they'd say, yeah my boy you're going to be someone special and they'd hold your hand. And when they held your hand you could feel tingling, and like some bubbling and vibrating, like hanging onto a pot handle while the water's boiling, feel those vibrations, the energy going into you. They wouldn't pass on good energy to some bastard! … So they give you this energy to pass on (Yarn with G Simms 2015 on 28 October).

Similar energy transfers occur from hand to objects made of materials of Country. Like many cultural crafters, I find weaving is a healing experience. While this may be due to energy transfer, taking

moments from the mundane suspends the weight of the everyday, giving fingers the space to work fibres into form. This is especially the case when undertaken in a group setting; through yarning, listening, sharing and storytelling, reconnecting is aided and strengthened. Sharing simple hand movements allows narratives to unfold and be held by those hearing and by the vessels being created.

Ellen Trevorrow[27] describes weaving as a survival connection, saying 'Stitch by stitch, circle by circle, weaving is like the creation of life. All things are connected' (Treverrow recorded by Change Media and Ngarrindjeri Land and Progress Association Inc. 2016). Laklak Burarrwanga uses weaving as a metaphor for intergenerational ancestor-descendant connectivity which cycles continuously through life. She writes:

> The spiral in a woven basket shows the life cycle – tells us how babies grow, their arteries and their selves, both in the womb and as growing children and on through the generations. As the basket grows, so a baby girl grows up until she's a young mother and she'll learn and have babies, and the knowledge and growth keeps spiralling. The woman becomes a grandmother and the cycle keeps going. There's no actual death, life keeps spiralling on through the generations (2008, p. 33).

Using this metaphor, as the sides of a woven basket grows, so too does the knowledge of a woman, until she herself becomes a Knowledge Holder, capable of holding, teaching and sharing with others.

The physical act of moving materials with hands to create shape is not only an energetic exchange, but also an exchange of heritage. Oils and particles from my hands and the materials used are woven into the object. The tactility of skin and materiality of Country, the passing of oils and tannins from material to skin and back again encases genetics in the weaving, to be held there always.

Woven Words

By weaving together with kin, healing happens through words. Words, conversations, thoughts become captured through the energy exchange into the form of the woven object. Stories, histories and life are encased in the shape. Aunty Verna Nichols describes woven baskets as, 'not empty. They are full of

[27] Ellen Trevorrow is a Ngarrindjeri Elder.

makers, their stories, their thoughts while making. The baskets are never empty. All of the thoughts jump out of the baskets onto all of us' (Nichols cited in Bolton 2011, p. 7).

Weaving with intention, with pensive speculation, with particular meanings, stories, thoughts or ideas embeds these intents into the object, connecting me to others, our history and future and the land. Intentions inform and even form the shape of the object, thus absorbing and embodying these idioms and carrying them perpetually. The physical weaving of an object spatially connects the cultural action with the materials gathered from Country. Philosophical meditative crafting and the words that accompany it engender specific intentions regarding object and shape, such that the object comes to embody the philosophical and spatial intent of the words; expressed intentions of language through practice. And this is part of my cultural reclamation. The object I weave is shaped according to those intentions and conversations, as well as to the ancient heritage encased in me and in the land. In crafted objects, shared words, along with heritage, ancestry and Country, become encased in the objects as they are woven into being.

Weaving is a methodology of thinking oneself into the object being woven – the form appears when the method used in its making is activated. It becomes the weaver's story of Country in spatial form.

This poem, shared with permission, is by Aunty Verna Nichols (cited in Gough 2009).

Always full never empty
What stories can you tell us?
Empty basket is all some see
If you could talk, what's that you say?
You are filled with laughter, hopes,
Sadness, tears your makers thoughts
Your fibres have been shaped by hands
Loving hands that have caressed
Callused hands through hard work
Hands that softly stroked a baby's back
Hands outstretched to get it back

Arms that ache to hold your people

A hundred years have passed

I hear your story whispered to me

I am listening

Your basket is full

I smile and nod in acknowledgement

Yes I understand

In years to come

Will someone hear

My basket whisper my story?

CHAPTER 7: CONTESTED GROUND

WEAVING STORIES OF SPATIAL RESILIENCE, RESISTANCE, RELATIONALITY AND RECLAMATION

Introduction

Returning to one of the motivations behind this research, specifically relating to my grandmother feeling invisible in colonised spaces, I have sought to investigate and understand how a vibrant, bubbly, chatty lady could ever be perceived thus. This is not an irregular experience for many First Peoples, especially when it seems our spaces held by Country have been covered by concrete, glass and asphalt. This apparent absence of First Peoples in spaces is no accident; Aboriginal peoples have been driven out of urban centres, not only from early town spaces, but more recently from inner-city suburbs, to become fringe dwellers; in what is often referred to as 'the Great Australian Silence' (Stanner 1968), they have been written out of city life by authors, academics and civic planners; and forcibly assimilated into 'settler' spaces by cruel welfare policies. This erasure continues in contemporary discourse with the misrepresentation that Aboriginal people living in urban spaces are inauthentic, have lost their cultures, or are newcomers to the urban environment, irrespective of their constant contribution to civic life (Ireland 2013).

It is difficult not to link this invisibility with being part of the Hidden Generations – those who became 'ghosted', forgotten, lost and ignored somewhere between escaping unsafe policy and spatial restrictions, and avoiding becoming part of the Stolen Generations. Aunty Fran Bodkin calls the Hidden Generations the Dudbaya'ora – the Hidden Ones[1]. Her son, Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews[2], says the Hidden Generations are those whose Bloodlines sit in the often-ignored ether between the missions and the Stolen Generations (G Bodkin-Andrews 2018, pers. comm., 8 August). Sometimes hiddenness was accomplished literally by hiding – there are stories in my family of children being sent running into the bush to hide when unrecognised cars approached their homes. Some people opted for placelessness, leaving their traditional lands to live somewhere they were unknown. Some hid right in the middle of

[1] Dudbaya'ora means 'Hidden Ones' in D'harawal.

[2] Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews is a member of the Bidigal clan within the D'harawal nation.

white society by claiming to be of another heritage. And some hid their Aboriginal identities from their children, so they grew up not knowing who they were. In fact, my Ancestors used all these tactics to keep our family intact. It is difficult to calculate how many families located in and around the areas of first colonial impact became hidden, because there are those who remain concealed. It seems likely to be more substantial than thought considering the alternatives of being herded onto missions or reserves, restricted to the fringes of urban centres, or the risk of having children removed; becoming invisible was the safest of a bunch of poor options.

At the same time, and paradoxically, in the eyes of the dominant white culture, Aboriginal peoples are hypervisible, specifically in relation to non-Indigenous spatial expectations in terms of how spaces 'should' be used or inhabited. Spatial hypervisibility is based on the perception of difference; it causes the scrutinisation of otherness and leads to the misinterpretation of nonconformity to the predominant spatial paradigm, or in this case, the imported laws of the land. Consequently, the white gaze causes discomfort for First Peoples using urban spaces. Paul Havemann discusses the extreme visibility of Aboriginal peoples thus:

> The imperatives of modernity are space-conquering economic growth and its attendant processes of statist order building. Indigenous peoples, with their place-based, sustainable, state-free social order, have been chronic obstacles to modernisation to be overcome by whatever means – typically by violence concealed behind liberal legalities (2005, p. 57).

He goes on to discuss the enduring effects of colonisation, or 'placelessness', for First Peoples, including suicides, high levels of incarceration, ill health, lowered life expectancies, loss of identity and intergenerational insecurity (Havemann 2005). Greenop and Memmott (2006) also discuss Aboriginal culture located in urban spaces as being 'unreadable' to many non-Indigenous people who see only a 'culture of poverty' or 'welfare dependence' or a culture so changed from 'proper' Aboriginal culture (by which they mean from the remote interior of the continent, or from a distant archaeological past) that it is therefore 'no culture'. Yet in western value systems:

> … much of what it means to be a subject and citizen is embodied in cities. Cities insulate us from natural processes; they are the places where the delineation of public and private space is most

> marked, the division of labour most developed and the impersonal relations of the market most concentrated. The idea that civilisation obtains its most mature expression where population densities are highest is a profoundly European one (Morgan 2006, p. 155).

The inequity of principles and privileges that the dominant spatial paradigm places on First Peoples in relation to cities has enduring impacts as it effectively makes First Peoples in an urban context placeless. Regardless, while in colonial spaces we may seem both invisible and hypervisible, unrepresented and uncomfortable, we have nevertheless continued to experience and know Country within the metropolitan landscape.

The reaction of my family to these contradictory spatial expectations of invisibility and hypervisibility was to leave their traditional lands. They had other reasons to leave as well: reserve managers started to become problematic along with other events such as massacres of kin and colonial policy that began to impact their lives. They sailed a steamboat from Currowan on the Clyde River near Batemans Bay in Yuin Country on the New South Wales South Coast to Eungai near Nambucca Heads near the border of Gumbaynggirr and Dungutti Countrys on the mid-North Coast. This happened in my third great grandparents' time, around 1885. It was a remarkable voyage in many ways, not least because at least two families, including children and Elders, travelled 800 kilometres on a small boat. It was on that boat trip that they started to become hidden; in making that impossible decision to leave their traditional lands, they moved towards safety but to somewhat obscurity as well. Unquestionably my family was indelibly affected by this impossible decision; however, it would be remiss of me to accept this as the final truth. The gift of my heritage means I have the right to contest and reconstruct the perceptions and actualities of our stories and spaces. It is my privilege to carry the narratives and cultural practices shared by my family and wider kin networks, and with that privilege comes the responsibility of resilience, resistance, relationality and reclamation.

Aunty Fran describes how the bushland is woven, with stories woven into it. She says plants cannot live alone, they need the earth and the anchorage it provides. There is a wonderful diversity of plants, and likewise a diversity of Aboriginal peoples, with their roots woven together, communicating with each other (Yarn with F Bodkin 2018 on 22 June). Metaphorically, like the bush, this chapter contains stories shared by women from family, kin and wider networks, which are woven together, interconnecting

collectively from their ancestral roots. This penultimate chapter responds to Indigenous peoples' experiences of trauma, dispossession and the onslaught of colonisation through a series of situated narratives. It includes narratives of how Aboriginal communities have resiliently maintained their love for kin, family, community, Country, and their relationships with land, Ancestors, culture, knowledges and stories. The stories describe how Aboriginal peoples – specifically women – occupy, use, narrate, sense and contest their spaces, from institutional to domestic. These woven narratives claim the ground; lives intertwine literally and figuratively to bind back to the earth, place and Country. Cultural/spatial practice/research methods of connecting expression and words through doing are adopted, explored and 'named up'[3] (Bessarab 2018, pers. comm., 17 May) in this chapter. These are quieted voices being heard, invisible people being seen. In this way, our spaces are not only reclaimed, they are also constructed anew.

Naming Up Methods

Through the sharing of stories, I also share the methods developed, practised and used in the research. While I do not claim to be the creator of these approaches – I believe they are collective iterative ideas and methods used by generations of Aboriginal peoples before me – I am naming them up and relating them to spatial practice.

Resilience: Making-Yarning Process

A Method of using Dialogue to Lead Practice

Some years ago, a very dear friend of mine passed away from cancer. Around the same time my beloved grandfather passed on, as did an uncle and a mentor from my youth. It was a distressing time, impacting my life significantly to the extent I myself fell ill not long after. During the period my friend was unwell, I wanted to spend as much time with her as I could manage. However, as I observed her health deteriorating, and was distraught by other events occurring around her, I experienced compounded

[3] While attending a workshop about yarning facilitated by Dawn Bessarab (2018, pers. comm., 17 May), she described how she 'named up' yarning as an Indigenous research method. She chose the words 'named up' because while it is something Aboriginal people have always done, she is the first to write about it as an academic method.

traumas. I was also living far from family at that time, so did not have access to my usual support networks. Yet I had one mechanism for coping which in many ways carried me through the experience: making[4].

In one of our customary family women's gatherings – that included my grandmother Gloria Nipperess, my mother Robyn Hromek, my aunty Lynne Lovett, my cousin Jenny Gillis, my sister Siân Hromek, and my cousin Caitlyn Murch – we yarned about making. We mutually agreed that making was a means we used to manage demanding situations, and in some ways it was therapeutic. Unconsciously we turn to making to find psychological comfort from environmental and other stresses that surround us. Siân[5] described how when she is making, she goes to another level, almost like meditation. She said, 'You feel a mix of calm and excited about what you're making. You're almost sort of not even there. Sometimes I look back at what I've made and go, wow, did I make that?' (Yarn with S Hromek 2018 on 27 January). Jenny likewise described that when her sister Joanne died and she could not concentrate on other work, she needed something in her hands just to keep moving, something to clear her mind (Yarn with J Gillis on 27 January). Making is one of the ways we adapt to circumstances, perhaps by keeping our hands and minds busy, but also, because frequently at the same time as we make, we yarn.

Yarning is a means of communication inherited from the previous generations who perfected this method of cultural sharing. Walker et al. discuss the importance for Aboriginal peoples of yarning as a family, saying, 'Family yarning captures the family and personal connections and relationships that exist … in regards to land, spirituality, and kinship … Family yarning is part of the process of connecting and social positioning that occurs as participants discover their relationality to one another' (2014, p. 1222). In their research about yarning, Dawn Bessarab and Bridget Ng'andu identified four types of yarning, including therapeutic yarning. They describe therapeutic yarning not as counselling, rather an opportunity for those involved to listen and provide support. When stories are given voice, they are confirmed or reinterpreted. Consequently 'the meaning-making emerging in the yarn can empower and

[4] In this context, making is the process of doing, forming or producing. For the women in our family, making includes crafting, such as knitting, sewing or crochet, as well weaving and cooking. For me as a spatial designer, making might also include drawing, modelling, fabricating, composing.

[5] Siân Hromek is a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation.

support the participant to re-think their understanding of their experience in new and different ways' (2010, p. 41). As the yarn evolves, stories from those involved become woven together, enabling the patterns of life and connectivity to reveal and resolve themselves. Beth Cuthand[6] furthers this idea in relation to storytelling:

> We come from a tradition of storytelling, and as storytellers we have a responsibility to be honest, to transmit our understanding of the world to other people … In this process, there is something more than information being transmitted: there's energy, there's strength being transmitted from the storyteller to the listener (1989, p. 54).

In the energetic exchange that happens in the process of sharing stories, or what Jo-anne Archibald calls 'story energy' (2008, p. 85), strength is restored between speaker and listener, both the relationship between them and as individuals. As narratives – and within them, cultural knowledges, histories and teachings – are shared, one's place in the world and how we interact with events is better known and understood.

Like yarning, making is part of our inheritance, a gift from our Ancestors to keep us connected. It also provides a means to teach culture and cultural practices to our young ones, who are included in the process of making-yarning. Caitlyn[7], at our family yarns, brings her children with her to be part of that continuation of sharing and learning; it is a normal part of our sharing and learning process. Continuing a tradition of making while yarning connects back to times of strength, and is an act of reaffirming and renewing the link between the past and those to come.

The practice of making while yarning has been passed through my family via generations of women, who developed this means of creating resilience. Making through yarning teaches strength and endurance by shared meaning-making and collective actions. While in my family it is not only females who yarn up to make, it is often associated with women's business. Everyone in attendance at the aforementioned women's gathering described their experiences of learning how to make, being taught

[6] Beth Cuthand is Cree and grew up in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

[7] Caitlyn Murch is a Budawang woman of the Yuin nation.

by and learning from mothers, grandmothers, aunties, cousins and each other while sharing stories and dialogue. Caitlyn described the weekends when we used to go to Nanna's [our great-grandmother, Alma Darby] and all the aunties would bring their crafts and sit around talking about whatever they were working on (Yarn with C Murch 2018 on 27 January). This familial habit of coming together to make and yarn during times of ease establishes a device for managing or maintaining resilience during times of hardship.

A common definition of resilience is positive adaptation despite adversity (Luthar 2006). Cultural resilience is the capacity of a distinct community or cultural system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change in order to retain the key elements of structure and identity that preserve its distinctness (Healey 2006). What seem like minute acts of resilience, namely, making while yarning, may not appear sufficient to deflect the enormous impacts of colonisation and cultural suppression; however, they need to be understood in the context of the strength of stories being (re)told and of kin being together.

Cultural resilience, according to Heather Builth, is maintained in individual families irrespective of, or perhaps because of, cultural change. She says, '[d]espite the huge losses in population as a result of the recent occupation of this land by non-Indigenous nationalities, there has been a failure to quell an existing cultural knowledge or separate people from it' (2009, p. 25). Irrespective of the determined efforts to control relationships and prohibit the speaking of languages, as well as incarceration, dispossession or placelessness, cultural knowledge lives on in families. '[T]heir inherited intangible cultural heritage remains with them, and the nature of it means that it will not easily be forgotten. As long as it remains a part of these people's history it will connect them to their often alienated [C]ountry' (p. 25). Resilience as a means to enduring changing environments has been gifted to us while we learned to manage change over countless generations. Our ancient means of embodying resilience 'is a blessing as it is without doubt that our ancestral DNA prepared us unknowingly for what was to come with the onslaught of colonisation' (Lee 2017, p. 214)[8]. To view cultural change as cultural loss disrespects the large, but also the small, acts of cultural resilience by our Ancestors.

[8] Vanessa Lee is from the Yupungathi (Cape York Peninsula) and Meriam (Torres Strait Islands) Nations.

Spaces, held by Country, likewise sustain resilience. Aunty Fran Bodkin describes the site of a massacre as being 'the most peaceful place, calm, beautiful and welcoming' (Yarn with F Bodkin 2016 on 28 October). The Appin Massacre occurred in 1816 in D'harawal Country. Ordered by Governor Lachlan Macquarie, soldiers pursued D'harawal women and children off the cliff at Broughton Pass. The true number of people murdered in the massacre is unknown, yet but at least 14 were recorded (Irish 2017; Karskens 2009). Despite the atrocity that occurred in this place, Aunty Fran says the site protects itself and returned to what it always was, a traditional birthing place. This remarkable spatial resilience exists despite. Despite colonised space. Despite trauma of the land. Regardless of conflicts in identity and stresses associated with acculturation, the resilience of the land and a resolve to maintain relationships with Country provides fortitude to our own resilience. Through the resilience stored in Country, and offered to us in the making process, we can retrieve resilient knowledge and behaviour.

Minute acts of personal resilience through making while yarning captures thoughts and conversations into the made object or physical entity. In the process of making tangible cultural heritage through yarning, intangible cultural heritage is captured. When one is Dreaming up an object, yarning makes a perceptible difference to the entity in its form, its materiality and its intentions. Thus, yarning, in conjunction with the activity of making, forms part of the method, foundation and materialisation of the resultant physical entity. The yarned-up object becomes shaped by the cultural, spatial, socio-political and speculative discourse that occurs during the process of making. The enclosed words create enduring remembrances of the people and events spoken about, but also restoration that occurs through expression. A cycle of making and yarning, yarning and making, a method of minute acts of resilience, is therefore encased in a process of curative action.

Resistance: Mapping Through Walking Practice

A Method of Caring for Country via Movement

Both because of and despite their simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility, Aboriginal women have experienced and continue to experience violence in colonial spaces, institutions and at home (Behrendt 1993; Dudgeon 2017; Watson 2017). Not only do Indigenous women have colonial forces they must contend with, they also have to contend with patriarchal systems and class structures, which force them

to the bottom via the strategies of classism, sexism and racism. Describing her as 'the most beautiful lady', my grandmother, Gloria Nipperess tells a story of the only time she saw her grandmother, Margaret Ann Brown, cranky. It was when my grandmother was around eight years of age and her mother, Alma Darby, was seven months pregnant. My grandmother says it was the first time Margaret had visited her daughter in their home in Rutherford in the Hunter Region of New South Wales. Margaret witnessed her son-in-law 'punch up' his wife, then followed him upstairs clutching a hairbrush to confront him, and said, 'Joe Darby, if you punch my daughter again, I will hit you with this!' My grandmother says Margaret was 'a skinny little thing, about six stone', and if he had backhanded her, she would have been knocked to the ground. Distressingly as a result of his violence the baby was lost, yet due to Margaret's fierce defiance he did not hit his wife again (Yarn with G Nipperess 2018 on 27 January). Later in life, my great-grandmother showed similar defiance of her husband; many in my family speak of her actions towards him with pride as she put him in his place[9].

Women's resistance to colonisation, racism, sexism and classism comes in many forms, from marching the streets, to ensuring the wellbeing of loved ones, to sharing narratives. As Indigenous women are often primary carers for our young ones, and find innovative ways of responding to adversity, all forms of resistance by them are key to continuing culture. Resistance in this context is defined as refusing to comply or accept something, fighting against something (or someone) that is attacking, or the ability to not be affected by something, specifically adversity. I believe the defiant attitude exhibited by my two times great-grandmother filtered down through the generations, and even grew, so what started as resistance has also become resilience.

[9] My great-grandmother's considered actions to empower herself in an unbalanced and abusive relationship were spoken of at length by Gloria Nipperess, Robyn Hromek, Lynne Lovett and Jenny Gillis at the women's yarn mentioned previously, and at many other times through my life.

Telling this story about her grandmother, mother and father was a form of inadvertent[10] resistance on the part of my grandmother; storytellers and stories themselves 'become mediums for Indigenous peoples to both analogise colonial violence and resist it in real ways' (Sium & Ritskes 2013, p. V). While in this story my great-grandfather is only an allegory for colonial violence, his violence was absolutely patriarchal and racial[11], and clearly it was also physical. Yet by sharing these stories of violence, my grandmother employs 'acts of creative rebellion' (Sium & Ritskes 2013, p. V), and in speaking them she is not only engaging in truthtelling, but providing space for healing to occur. Truthtelling about injustices experienced in the past is important for First Peoples as a means for coming to terms with conflict and upheaval. Truthtelling our true history is key to ensuring a cohesive shared future. Telling the truth, in this instance, directly answers the impetus my grandmother herself gave to me; she feels invisible because colonisation caused it to be so, from the very first instance of the untruth of terra nullius, an empty land void of people, to a father not acknowledging his daughter's heritage. Truthtelling is therefore resistance.

Despite these compounding types of violence, despite living in a very different spatial paradigm, despite finding themselves in a colonised landscape, Aboriginal peoples continue to connect to Country. As Sarah Prout and Richard Howitt state:

> Indigenous populations have not lived in a cultural vacuum and their contemporary spatialities cannot therefore satisfactorily be explained away as the result of a nomadic predisposition to 'wander'. Rather, contemporary Indigenous spatial practices are iteratively informed by a complex set of geographical, historical, demographic, socio-cultural, and economic considerations … These include relationships to family and [C]ountry, life-stage and degree of engagement with mainstream social and economic institutions (2009, p. 398).

[10] I use the word 'inadvertent' advisedly; I spoke at length with my grandmother about telling this story in order she would know the context within which it was being used, and why I wanted to include it. I asked her if it would make her anxious to know this story could be read by anyone, and she said, 'Well, it's the truth' and she felt it was important it be told. While my grandmother may not see this as an act of resistance, I do, as truthtelling can be confronting not only for those hearing the truth, but those telling it. In this way, I feel, my grandmother is the epitome of resistance.

[11] My great-grandfather used to call my grandmother, his own daughter, in derogatory terms for Aboriginal women, for instance, 'black gin'. The reason he was violent towards my great-grandmother in this instance was because it was her Black mother who was there to support her during her pregnancy, not his white mother.

One means for connecting to Country has been our persistent movement around the land, a means through which we have challenged colonial perceptions. Aboriginal peoples have found refuge in the interstitial and in-between spaces and developed tactics to subvert the spaces of the restricted landscape. We have found new means of mobility, and created new ways to move through the landscape. In this manner our invisibility has been useful, as indeed has our inherited and cultural movement around Country.

While spending time with Elders and Knowledge Holders both on Country and talking about Country, many have described their means of connecting to Country. A common theme has been to walk Country, with many specifically stipulating being barefoot. My grandmother, a renowned walker until well into her eighties, speaks of inherently knowing which direction to move due to her ability to read Country and to retain clear navigational memories (Yarn with G Nipperess 2018 on 27 January). Uncle Greg Simms describes taking off his shoes and walking Country as a means of finding healing and communicating with the spirits of Ancestors (Yarn with G Simms 2015 on 28 October). Ambelin Kwaymullina expresses the 'work' of movement that generations of Aboriginal women have undertaken in terms of their continuing connections:

> [F]or generations of Indigenous women, there was no "work" that was not part of living and a part of renewing the life in others. When women moved through the [C]ountry gathering food, we walked the trails that the Ancestors had walked and we sang the songs that told the stories of those Ancestors, the stories of [C]ountry. We took only certain foods, at certain times, in certain quantities. Our journeys – far from the random, nomadic wanderings of the European imagination – were ones of purpose, of teaching, of celebration and of caring for [C]ountry. Our "work" was a task that sustained and renewed ourselves, our connections to each other and the connections between women and [C]ountry. The whole is more than its parts and the whole is in all its parts. This is what it was, and is, to live holistically in a holistic reality (2017, p. 101).

Aunty Joan Tranter[12] said whenever she gets scattered in her thoughts (specifically related to the urban environment) she finds some grass in a park or sand at the beach and spends time reconnecting with Country. Aunty Joan says synthetics such as concrete, asphalt, carpet and even shoes can block interactions with Country, which is detrimental to our wellbeing (Tranter cited in Hromek, Hromek & Hromek 2015). While urban centres, with their straight lines, paved streets, manicured parks, foreign materiality, glass, asphalt and concrete create the sense for many that Country is distant, this is not so. Country exists in city spaces. Certainly, it might be harder to 'hear' or sense, however, Country still holds us all in urbanised spaces.

For me as a maker, connecting to Country occurs through moving over Country while (re)telling the stories embedded into the land, inextricably weaving landscapes into made objects. For makers who are also collectors, the objects we make are derived from materials of Country (and some not-of-Country[13]). Walking as a method enables practices of care to occur; a form of cultural care of Country through knowing, seeing, communicating with Country and collecting materials provided by Country for cultural and performative practice. But also, literally collecting undesirable foreign elements not-of-Country.

In the movement process a storying or mapping occurs, connected directly to place and practice. Ingrid Seyer-Ochi says, 'Our sense of place is shaped through our experiences directly with it, our understanding of history it embodies, and our interactions across its changing social and structural landscape' (2006, p. 170). She calls the ways in which people make sense of the built and historic layers, the natural landscape and the lives made possible by this landscape, *lived landscapes*. Expanding on this, for First Peoples, these are lived *relational* landscapes. Mapping Country through walking creates a map of the lived experience of places, in a way, a true knowledge of place. Mapping lived experience enables a knowing of places through the senses, which interact with our emotions; it is an embodied learning of the relational narratives of that place through space and time. Navigating using Country as a means for movement embeds encountered stories into made objects. The route

[12] Aunty Joan Tranter belongs to Wakka Wakka Country, and also Kamilaroi Country, which is her mother's Country.
[13] While the collecting process is often associated with materials of Country, it also can include materials not-of-Country, that is, not native to that location. Many have been discarded or dislocated from other Countrys, or even other countries, and thus belong elsewhere.

‘drawn’ into the landscape links, and at times follows, the narratives of places; this is meaningful movement that not only retells stories but writes them anew.

Walking Country, as we have always done, is a means of reclaiming space and resisting colonial and other forms of violence. Spending time on Country with Elders and Knowledge Holders enables urbanity to be seen through a different lens, a ‘Country lens’. Irrespective of whether they are in the countryside or an urban landscape, Elders and Knowledge Holders, from animated excitement to complete silence, share the knowledges of places, using a different filter to see and know the expressions of Country. In doing so, they negate the supposed voids of terra nullius, they resist the perception of invisibility and the truth is told, because they are with and caring for Country.

Relationality: Storying Making Knowledge

A Method of Sharing Knowledge through Narrative

Aunty Fran Bodkin tells a story of how she learned from her mother about the relationality of everything. In her story, her mother provocatively asks young Fran to make a series of observations. These observations continued through her life, inevitably amalgamating for Aunty Fran a realisation of how everything in Country is related to and reliant upon everything else. The story starts at Tempe Station near the Cooks River in Sydney, where they stood on the bridge looking into the water. Aunty Fran says:

> So, I looked in the water and in those days Cooks River had a beautiful white sandy bottom. On the bottom the water didn't look that deep, but at the bottom were sharks laying on that white sand, just gently flapping their side fins. She [her mother] said, ‘What do you see?’ I said, ‘Oh look at the sharks. Mum, they're sunbathing!’ I'll always remember that. She got this awful flipping look on her face. Have a closer look, what are they doing? Then I saw suckerfish dropping off from the side and swimming upstream up Wolli Creek. ‘Oh Mum, the sharks are having babies. They're swimming up the stream.’ She said, ‘Do they look like sharks?’ ‘No, Mum, they look like fish.’ She said, ‘I want you to remember that.’ So, I did. And I never forgot it. That was the first time she gave me one of those puzzles (Yarn with F Bodkin 2018 on 22 June).

While Aunty Fran was repeatedly removed by welfare from her parents as a child, she always ran away and found her way home. Whenever young Fran returned her mother would do a period of intensive teaching. One time she ran home, her mother took her to the Georges River Bridge in Liverpool:

> Just down from the bridge is a weir, we were standing near the weir and she said, 'What is happening?' Now it was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen. The entire weir was covered in huge eels all spilling out of the weir and falling into the water. And there were so many eels it looked as if you could walk across the water on their backs. It was beautiful. She asked, 'What's happening?' and I said, 'Oh, Mum, look at the eels, isn't that amazing!' She asked, 'Where are they going?' 'Down the river.' 'Where does the river go?' 'Botany Bay, which is the same place that the Cooks River goes.' 'Where would they go from there?' 'Out into the sea.' 'Good girl. Remember that.' And then after that Mum died (Yarn with F Bodkin 2018 on 22 June).

Aunty Fran's Mum passed away when Aunty Fran was a young teenager. However, her ways of teaching and the provocations she left enabled her narrative to continue to be learned. Some years later, Aunty Fran went to university to take environmental studies. One of the subjects was marine studies, which included an excursion to Heron Island off Queensland, where there is a research station. The sharks had been trained to come in at sunrise and sunset for feeding:

> You could swim amongst them and study them in between the feeds and they didn't hurt you or anything. I got to talking to one of the other scientists and who was studying the sharks. I told him what Mum had done, and he said, I know where the eels go! So, we stole the university boat (okay, we didn't steal it, we took it!) out to the Coral Sea and at that time of year all the eels had come down out of the rivers and up to the Coral Sea where they spawned and died. And waiting to eat dead and dying eels were the sharks. I thought, there's the key (Yarn with F Bodkin 2018 on 22 June).

After returning home to Sydney, Aunty Fran investigated the final part of the cycle:

> When the sharks came back down south into the rivers, I waited and followed the suckerfish up to the headwaters. They spawned and died. And waiting to eat them were the eels. And then I had this wonderful thing, a circle (Yarn with F Bodkin 2018 on 22 June).

Aunty Fran's story continues to a realisation that when even the smallest part of this circle was taken away, every other part is affected. And by considering the whole, all the minute parts are also relationally considered as they not only make up the whole, but rely on each other in order to be the whole.

Relationality in this context means the state or condition of being relational, informing ways of knowing, being and doing. Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Maggie Walter discuss this in terms of Indigenous women's epistemologies, which are, 'informed by relationality; we are related to others by descent, ancestors, [C]ountry, place and shared experiences. Flowing from a world that is organic, alive and inhabited by ancestral beings who guide and shape life, … one cannot know everything, … everything cannot be known and … there are knowledges beyond human understanding' (2009, pp. 6-7). Likewise, Shawn Wilson states that knowledge is relational and shared with all of creation. He says knowledge is shared 'with the animals, with the plants, with the earth' (2001, pp. 176-177). Wilson places the responsibility of accountability directly with our familial relationships, whereby we are answering to all our relations. Thus, 'relatedness is embedded in our worldview' (Martin-Booran Mirraboopa 2008, p. 75) and 'all things exist in relatedness' (p. 81).

Likewise, stories[14] are relational in that they reveal relationships, renew them and return them to the place to which they belong. Robin Wall Kimmerer[15] says about stories told by First Peoples:

> We are told that stories are living beings, they grow, they develop, they remember, they change not in their essence, but sometimes in their dress. They are shared and shaped by the land and the culture and the teller, so that one story may be told widely and differently. Sometimes only a fragment is shared, showing just one face of a many faceted story, depending on its purpose (2013, p. 386).

[14] In using the word 'story', I acknowledge songs, dance, music and other forms of expression as narratives. For instance, in 'Earth song as storywork: reclaiming Indigenous knowledges', Frances Wyld and Bronwyn Fredericks say, 'For us, songs are like stories. They are the things that we have from the time we are physically born until the time we pass into the spirit world. Indigenous people often exchanged songs at gatherings when people met to trade goods or undertake business. We believe that the songs of the earth are shared when we are open to the sweetness and the sorrow that songs can bring, along with other emotions, stories and learnings. We recognise that the earth has a song that Indigenous people listen to as story and, in return, we "sing the world"' (2015, p. 2).

[15] Robin Wall Kimmerer is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

Stories are a means of divulging, analysing and understanding events, keeping hold of knowledges and giving space for resistance. In relation to women, Laurel Richardson says, 'Women talking about their experience, narrativising their lives, telling individual and collective stories [becomes] understood as women theorising their lives' (1994, p. 927).

My grandmother is a storyteller – she even has nicknames acknowledging her storytelling capabilities. I did not inherit this gift (that went to my cousin); however, I am a listener. I have listened to narratives told around me my whole life – in fact I am told by my aunty Lynne Lovett that as a young child I *demanded* stories be told (though as I was an early riser, this was unfortunate for her sleep). While I may not have the talent for telling stories, I have a responsibility in the storying process as a listener. A storyteller is accountable to the story to honour its core teachings or details; each narrative has storylines, actions, characters, contexts, morals and/or themes. However, the teller also has a responsibility to ensure the story is engaging for those listening so that the lessons of the story can be captured by the listener. This may require adding their own voice to the story, making it current or updating some elements. Unlike western ways of storing knowledge, which must be written to be kept (and it could be argued, believed or trusted), for First Peoples, our knowledges are stored in stories, which are most often passed along orally. This provides the opportunity for the story to exist in many versions and be told in many voices, all of which are true and correct. The listener, for their part, must be attentive to the story, hear with openness and attend to the reasons the story is being told. Once the story has been shared, the listener then has the responsibility – if appropriate – to pass it on, and in doing so correctly honours (references) the original teller of the story. As Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison says, we 'must give it away to hold it' (McKnight 2015, p. 282). The teller's final responsibility to the story is to ensure that they themself learn through the process of (re)telling it. In this way the narrative process is cyclical and reciprocal.

Places hold stories because stories are located and draw all entities of Country into relatedness. Anthony McKnight says one of the purposes of stories is 'to initiate a reciprocal respectful relationship in taking care of Country, including the spirit of Country into what we do in our daily lives in the capacity of who we are' (2015, p. 287). He describes how Country also shares stories with 'unseen and seen

energies to activate sight and learning' (p. 287), which triggers reciprocal stories of connection so that learning can occur in a respectful relationship.

Sharing stories is sharing knowledge; it is learning about one's place and space in the world; it is energetic exchanges, it is changing perceptions and understanding and, ultimately, it is taking action. From a maker's perspective, sharing knowledge in stories can be a means of making. While the stories told during making become embedded in the object made, they also become a means for guiding, analysing or theorising about the process of making. Stories reveal the relationships between maker and object, materials and Country, place and knowledge, all of which are rooted in the made entity. Seemingly insignificant aspects of a making process are understood further through the relationships revealed by the stories in and about a made object, thus illuminating their true significance. The learnings from the knowledges held in the stories as well as the learnings about making are therefore accessed through the process of making and storying. In this way, ways of knowing, being and doing for a maker are informed relationally through story.

Reclamation: Responsive Cultural Practice

A Method of Practice following the Signals of Country

In her book *Let the Land Speak*, Jackie French tells a story about the time six Djuuwin[16] women, whose ages ranged from young to elderly, came to lunch on her property in the Araluen Valley in the New South Wales Southern Tablelands. Araluen is located between Braidwood[17] and Moruya in the

[16] Djuuwin is another way of spelling Yuin, as are Djuwin, Juwin, and Yuwin.

[17] Europeans arrived in the Braidwood area around the 1820s, and the town itself was surveyed in 1839. The town is named after Thomas Braidwood Wilson (1792-1843), a surgeon in the Royal Navy who undertook many voyages to Australia. He was originally granted land in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) as a reward for his exploration of and discoveries in what is now Western Australia. In 1826 he transferred this grant to New South Wales; Braidwood is located on the site of his grant. European settlement along the coast south of Wollongong commenced in 1827, when surveyors were sent to map the area. H S Badgery and Henry Burnell arrived in the Araluen Valley in the same year. Robert Hoddle followed the Deua/Moruya River to its mouth in 1828. He said of this land, 'It is very barren … at least nine tenths of it will be suitable for no purpose whatsoever.' Thomas Florance surveyed the coast from Batemans Bay to Broulee and Moruya, adopting Aboriginal names for Broulee, Tomakin, Candlagan Creek and Moruya (Magee 2006).

Budawang lands of Yuin Country. Jane Brown, one of my Yuin apical Ancestors[18], was born close by in Braidwood, about 60 kilometres from the coast. Early in her life she travelled to the coast and was married in Moruya. Her son, Thomas Golden Brown, was born on the Clyde River just north of Moruya, and it was nearby in Batemans Bay that Jane passed away. Thomas' son, Patrick Brown, was born in Araluen. Patrick married Elizabeth Marshall on the coast in Broulee, and it was Patrick and Elizabeth who made the impossible decision to journey north on the boat away from their traditional Country. French did not name the women who came for lunch, saying only that they came from a community 'down river'. The Araluen Valley was the Country of my five times great-grandmother and of many other Ancestors before and since. In her own words, French says about the visit of these women:

> These women had never been here before, but they knew my land, could tell me where the fig trees and kurrajongs were, and why. They told me to watch for the clematis in spring, to see how it would form a highway to show the young girls where to go to gather the young inner stringybark that makes waterproof fishing line and string and many other woven products.
>
> Five hundred or five thousand years ago, or even more, trees that gave food, medicine or other useful materials like sticky saps for bird traps or seeds for making torches were planted where they were needed, near places where ceremonies would be held, by camping sites, or as a signpost at the base of the ridge that this was the easiest way to get from the valley up to the tableland above. Everywhere we went that day, those women knew what we'd see before we came to it because their ancestors had planted the ancestors of those trees (2013, pp. 40-41).

Generations of Aboriginal women, in this case Yuin women, made a series of linked farms that were unrecognisable to invaders and so their significance was unacknowledged. Often created over hundreds of years and thousands of generations, these farms had plants deliberately sown in significant locations with seeds collected and harvested by women. Areas near good water sources, regular campsites or places of significance were turned into 'living larders' or 'mobile agriculture', ensuring a range of foods were available at different times of the year, safeguarding sustenance in years of extremes. These living

[18] An apical ancestor is a common ancestor from whom a lineage or clan may trace their descent. Jane Brown, recorded as being born in what came to be known as Braidwood in 1817, is listed in the *Register of Native Title Claims for the South Coast People v Attorney General of New South Wales*. She was born around the time Europeans arrived in that part of the South Coast, and therefore, grew up knowing them and seeing the changes occurring around her.

larders needed to be planted only once to feed generations of families, because new seedlings took the place of older trees. Living larders undoubtedly changed the land, but they did so without disrupting the soils or ecosystems (French 2013). They were planted sensitively, diversely and deliberately, assuring the land could manage sustainably. Plantings by women would take into consideration not only what they needed there immediately, but what their descendants might need many generations into the future.

In a similar way, Aunty Fran Bodkin says that in the Sydney area, maduri[19], or canoes, were constructed out of three types of eucalyptus trees. While these varied according to area, Aunty Fran recalls stringybark, iron bark and rough bark tree plantings. You can still find these three trees growing near each other, planted thus to ensure the materials for constructing a maduri were easily accessible – not for those who planted them, but for many generations in the future (Yarn with F Bodkin 2016 on 28 October).

My sister Siân also tells a story from Bundjalung Country on the far North Coast of New South Wales, where we grew up and where Siân still lives. The Bundjalung women weave with native hibiscus, specifically the inner fibres of the bark, which they use to make twine for dilly bags, fishing lines, mats and nets for fishing or hunting. The outer bark can be made into strong rope and the wood is easy to manipulate. The flowers, young stems, leaves and roots are edible, while the bark and roots can be made into a tea to treat colds and congestion. You can still find groves of native hibiscus trees growing together near water sources, and it is hard not to wonder if they were planted by women as living larders not only for food and medicine sources, but also for making. Groves of hibiscus are still being activated by Aboriginal peoples; they are used differently now, but they are still significant spaces (Yarn with S Hromek 2018 on 14 December). As children growing up in Bundjalung Country, my sister and I learned what could be eaten and not, where to find drinking water, and how to be respectful of creatures that might be of danger to us. When we later moved to the suburbs, our neighbours thought we were wild kids; in hindsight, we were in actuality 'Country kids' who knew how to keep ourselves safe because we were taught to read and know the land and therefore had freedom in the knowledge of being safe with the land.

[19] In D'harawal, maduri is a flat bottomed canoe mainly used by women when fishing in bays and inlets.

Country, which we know to be sentient, sends messages and signals to all entities inhabiting the land. Burarrwanga et al. remind us that Country, and everything in Country, 'has and tells a story. Everything communicates, through its own language and its own Law' (2014). Bawaka Country et al. write:

> Let's listen. Do you hear the wind in the trees? The water on the beach? The splash of the fish? That is the wind, the trees, the water, the sand, the fish communicating. They have their own language, their own Law. Sometimes they are sending a message to humans. Sometimes they are sending a message to each other. Humans are not the centre of the universe, you see. Humans are only one part of it. Humans are part of Country along with the mullet, the tides, the moon, the songs and stories, along with the spirits, the plants and animals, the feelings and dreams (2015, p. 273).

Listening as a way of life is described by Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Bauman in her discussions about dadirri. Ungunmerr-Bauman says dadirri is something like contemplation, silent awareness or deep listening. Learning by watching and listening, waiting and then acting. An important part of dadirri is quiet stillness and waiting, about which she says:

> Our Aboriginal culture has taught us to be still and to wait. We do not try to hurry things up. We let them follow their natural course — like the seasons. We watch the moon in each of its phases. We wait for the rain to fill our rivers and water the thirsty earth … We watch the bush foods and wait for them to ripen before we gather them. We wait for our young people as they grow, stage by stage, through their initiation ceremonies. When a relation dies, we wait a long time with the sorrow. We own our grief and allow it to heal slowly (2002).

Returning to Yuin Country, Anthony McKnight states, 'The Yuin reality of culture can exist without the spoken/written (English) language as the real communication of Yuin culture is done in silence … Country/Yuin culture does not need English to exist; it can "read" memory, emotion and the behaviour of the body and spirit.' (2015, p. 279). McKnight says this approach is the silent voice and powerful energy that guides the experience of self-examination so that connections occur in respectful relationship with Country.

Country communicates with all entities of Country, not just humans, and it is our responsibility to silently, patiently listen for those messages and respond. Since Country is the origin of knowledge and the ultimate Knowledge Holder, the signals or messages that Country sends us may be considered specifically in cultural and performative practice as a responsive means for making. Waiting for and listening to the messages of Country, reading, hearing, knowing Country – and being known, heard and seen in return – provides a method for making, and can form or shape what is made. The change in the form of the made object comes from awareness of Country, from responding to that which comes through the transmissions of Country.

Country has the capacity to inform and teach us about the potentiality of its spaces; Country can tell us what its spaces 'should' be like. As weavers, we learn to read the land through a maker's filter, by which I mean, the women of my family who reclaim cultural practices such as weaving have also reclaimed the ability to 'see' Country as different types of living larders or mobile agriculture; they are a series of spaces of collecting and making, irrespective of whether these spaces are in the countryside or cityscape. Siân calls them the 'templates for a weaving space' (Yarn with S Hromek 2018 on 14 December). By this she means the spaces in which there is potential for weaving to occur easily because everything that is needed is there, and not only materials but also nourishment and safety. In seeing Country thus, we (re)imagine spaces of Country where women have gathered, yarned, dined and made together for generations. We (re)tell and tell anew stories of those sites; in doing so, we (re)activate them by (re)visiting them and continue cultural practices there. Irene Watson describes how our Laws provided for gendered spaces, 'places where the [L]aw of women was revered and provided safety for women of the community' (2007, p. 102). Likewise, Marcia Langton discusses gendered spaces, saying, 'Places are imbued with the gender of the Old People, the deceased ancestor's unceasing existence, as one of their essential attributes. Places are thus genderised and gender emplaced. There are places where only women may go, and places where only men may go' (2002, pp. 262-263). These gendered spaces still exist in the landscape as spaces of safety, action and consciousness. Our collective memories are stored there, creating spaces of remembrance and narrative. Being responsive to the stories and messages of Country gives us the opportunity to reclaim cultural practices, and connect with knowledges necessarily hidden by Ancestors in order to keep them safe. Country as our master teacher and holder of knowledges is our means of (re)connecting. These micro means of (re)creating spaces of

making, whether they be urban or rural, are our means of (re)claiming them as women's spaces, and contesting them as Indigenous spaces.

Conclusion

Instead of considering how First Peoples have managed to adapt to the ravages of colonisation, cultural genocide, restrictive policy and rapid changes to the land, colonisers have tended to judge Indigenous peoples in terms of their perceived deficits while continuing to make exclusionary decisions. Attempts by First Peoples to reclaim land, history and knowledge have been met with colonial views of the past, and an imposed invaders' judicial system. Despite living in changing and different spatial paradigms of colonisation and capitalism, Aboriginal peoples continue to find ways to connect to Country, to continue storytelling practices, to find refuge in each other, to inhabit the interstitial spaces and to create new ways to move through the urban landscape. We also continue to connect to Country through our practices, which likewise connect us to culture.

Uncle Greg Simms has often said it is the women in our communities who are the strongest, and I doubt there are many in our family who would disagree. This research (narrative, story, journey) includes stories of my family, from one of the first women of our family (Jane Brown) to encounter colonial forces through to the women of today who are still fiercely holding their ground. It includes the stories of the two sisters, Elizabeth and Catherine Marshall, who made the impossible decision to leave their traditional lands through to my sister and I now reclaiming our cultural heritage and practices. In actuality there have been a series of impossible decisions made by the women of our family, and what is evident is that while these decisions came from a space of resilience, resistance, relationships and reclamation, they were invariably made for love. And so it is a story of love keeping family together as relations, community and kin. It is a story of how love – and yarning and hard work – reconnected us with our Country.

It has been important through the process of this writing to follow the narratives backwards and return with them to now, to have the true story at hand, so that I can go back to my grandmother and say, 'This is why you feel invisible in colonial spaces.' It has been important to all of us as a family to tell our stories,

especially those accounts that were previously kept hidden[20]. As a part of a wider familial journey, this process has given a return of pride and, for some, acceptance. It is extremely special to hear my grandmother speaking of her grandmother with such dignity and self-worth. Hearing her stories builds the identity of all of us and gives us grounding to connect to Country and wider kin networks. While we may have once been hidden, invisible, silenced peoples, through stories, practices, culture and Country, we have now come back into the light.

[20] Most of which are not shared here, but are kept safely with those who hold them.

CHAPTER 8: NOT LOST, JUST SLEEPING

CONCLUSION WITHOUT CONCLUDING

Not lost.

I hear the word 'lost' being used often in relation to our culture – in the past even I have used it. To be clear, our ways were not lost, they were forcibly removed by colonial processes, as were we from our homelands, our spaces, our Countrys. In my family, as a response to spatial and social traumas around us and for our own protection, we became not lost but hidden. Yet these words 'lost' and 'hidden' imply something can be found or unearthed again.

Just sleeping.[1]

It is very important to choose language[2] cautiously, not only in terms of specific words but also the language itself. I regret I had no choice but to write this dissertation in English, yet while undertaking this project I have also been learning language. This happens slowly, as I now have a brain full of English words[3], but bit by bit language words are being retained. Jeannie Bell[4] reveals:

[1] Aunty Verna Nichols said these words (Nichols cited in Gough 2009, p. 33).

[2] Uncle Greg Simms is one of my language teachers. He learnt language growing up in his father's workshop in La Perouse in coastal Sydney. As has happened for generations, Aboriginal people would travel up and down the coast from Bundjalung Country in the north to Yuin Country in the south, following a familiar songline and travelling marriage routes, so they would stay with Uncle Greg's father on the way. As Uncle Greg was exposed to so many language speakers as a child, he picked up many different 'lingo' words from many different people. The Old People would have also been multilingual in order to understand each other when they travelled. He teaches me in a similar way, inasmuch as I am learning terms from many east coast languages. Nonetheless, I am particularly attentive to my own language, Dhurga and the language of the land on which I live and work, Dharug, as per the protocol of language, which is to speak the language of the land you are on.

[3] It is possible my first language was French, if not my second; my French grandmaman used to speak with me only in French during my early years. Now, as I have a Spanish speaker for a husband, my brain is also filling up with Spanish words, so at home we speak a mix of English, Spanish and words including slang from Aboriginal languages. Language, as identity, is complex.

[4] Jeanie Bell is a Jagera and Dulingbara woman.

> It is a mistake to dismiss our languages as part of history, and long gone. They're not. They are alive and vibrant. They are in a new phase of growth. They're part of us as the Indigenous people of the land. Our languages are the voice of the land, and we are the carriers of the languages (2012, p. 170).

I wept the first time I had the opportunity to use words from the language of my Ancestors, Dhurga. The words I said, 'Walawaani njindiwan' [safe journey][5], caused something inside of me to well up and even now, typing these words, tears want to drop down my cheeks. Certainly there is a sense of loss within me that these words were forcibly removed from my tongue, and I was not able to use them as my first language. However, the tears also celebrate the stir of (re)awakening.

The Journey

My research has considered one way of knowing and reclaiming our spaces from an Indigenous perspective, and specifically, from a Yuin woman's perspective. My grandmother unintentionally set the aims of my research for me, which were to understand why she feels invisible in space, and as a spatial designer I thought I might be able to find an answer for her. It is clear that colonial processes silenced Aboriginal women, as European men coming from a patriarchal society assumed the social order was the same here and largely disregarded women's knowledges. They neglected to notice that the family structures even in my own family were and are matricentric[6], centred around the mother. It is clear that due to these same processes, my grandmother learned, for her own safety and survival, how to be invisible. Stories from our family and others of the big black welfare cars arriving every fortnight to check on and potentially remove children endorsed invisibility as a protective device. Also, sadly, it was shameful and dangerous to be Black and restrictions for Aboriginal peoples in urban spaces included hiding one's identity to ensure one could move around in a less inhibited way. More than just silencing Aboriginal women's voices, colonial processes enabled and moulded themselves around patriarchal, racial, class-based systems that need those it denigrates, so that it can continue to exist. Without those it denigrates, the system it is founded on ceases to exist. This is where the invisible/hypervisible

[5] Walawaani njindiwan, used as a greeting, means both 'I hope you had a safe journey here, and I hope you have a safe journey home' in Dhurga.

[6] They are also matrilineal; all the women in my mother's mother's line are Aboriginal. Most in my family would also agree our family is matriarchal, as we readily name our strong female Ancestors who became figureheads for the family.

dichotomy for First Peoples in space comes into play. We are invisible because we are literally designed out of spaces, both civic and rural. We are hypervisible because our ways of being as a communal community compounded by colonial encounters ensure we cannot possibly adhere to the standards of the spatial paradigms we now inhabit, thus forcing us to be invisible in order to be safe[7].

Being Hidden Generations was, in effect, a gift from our Ancestors to my family as we were not separated from each other. However, we were forced to leave our traditional lands and therefore our extended kin networks, and our ways of knowing the world were forcibly reformed. Maintaining a 'surreptitious identity' (Read 2015, p. 129) also had some unexpected outcomes, such as being dispossessed of our identity; our ways of life had to convert to mirror that of the coloniser – or be made inferior – and far worse. Nonetheless according to Margaret Kovach, 'Our culture, family, kin, community wait for us. We have the right to know who we are, that right involves responsibilities but we are not alone in that journey of rediscovery' (2009, p. 10). We have been fortunate to find this to be true. Despite being hidden, the re-assemblage of our narratives combined with a continuation of the methods of cultural practice and their transmission, has given the chance for our family to retune ourselves. Through our cultural and performative practices, we continue to reclaim and contest space using Indigenous spatial thinking and knowing. Through intergenerational matrilineal transfer our heritage speaks and is (re)learned. Through our crafting with materials of Country our connections are (re)vitalised. The mnemonic rhythmic movement of making aids the retrieval of cultural memory and retention of new remembrances. Indeed, it is clear for my family this was a method we returned to and passed on generation upon generation. Reflective practice, such as weaving in our family, also enables future projection, for the objects or performances that become are of Country, and hold ancient yet still pertinent memory and techniques that we continue to teach to our young ones.

[7] While in this investigation I have not discussed ageism in relation to my grandmother's question, this is not to disregard its influence. There is no doubt ageism, ableism, immigrant status, heteronormativity and other forms of discrimination are extremely detrimental; however, these were beyond the scope of this dissertation. It is nonetheless important to acknowledge (particularly in reference to ageism in this instance) that I honour my Elders and remember my ancestors with fondness. Any advanced age is truly an honour – quite literally in the case of my research, which could not have been completed without Elders and specifically my grandmother's wit, wisdom and determination to share.

Clearly my family attended this journey with me. While never discounting the men in our lives and their strong presence, it was particularly the women of the family in attendance as their voices screamed to be heard. Even so, impacted by compounded intergenerational traumas, some in my family choose to remain hidden. Their decisions are acknowledged and respected – indeed in some ways it is still not safe.

During the course of this journey I experienced overt discrimination enabled by culturally unsafe environments. This also resulted in indirect discrimination (for instance, apathy and passing responsibility) from the institution I turned to for support and lateral violence (violence from within my own community). There were points when I did not think I could continue on the journey, and at the lowest of these moments I asked my Ancestors for help. From that moment, my voice became stronger, and women spoke through my fingers as I inscribed their thoughts and feelings about their lives and stories. It is my sense that in asking for help it became my responsibility to tell their stories, and unsilence their voices.

I have described the journey my family took on a steamboat from the South Coast to the mid-North Coast, during which they started to become Hidden Generations. It is clear that on both sides of our family, we were placeless, as refugees and dispossessed people. On the one hand, they escaped the actualities and memories of the Second World War, made refugees by real and in some places invented boundaries. On the other, they hid from the colonial systems that created imbalance and insecurity in their worlds, and allowed violence and dispossession to be ignored. It is no wonder those two sides came together. Without both sides, and the capacity to walk in two worlds, this work could not have been undertaken. It has therefore been a very personal journey. On a very personal level, I heard what needed to be, and faced the story of the trauma my Ancestors endured. Reading their stories unsympathetically written by strangers in colonial histories became an act of retraumatisation as the colonial archives and more recent academic authors wrote and rewrote about my family. The historical traumas described in their writing, while recounting the same events, are so (in)different from the stories my family tell. In the search for objectivity, traditional academia demands detachment, yet for me it was personal as it was kin. In a sense, the indifferent telling of my familial stories forced me to readdress them by retelling that history and trauma from the perspective of my family. I believe there is no other

way that this research could have been produced. It is not that sort of project. It may be criticised for this and I will wear that in my role as a truthteller, a role handed to me by my grandmother when she said, 'Well, it's the truth' in relation to her own difficult story.

Together we have rewritten our history and told our story in our own way, with our own voices, for our own objectives, and 'healing comes from reclaiming our lost stories, and through telling and retelling these stories we can develop a stronger sense of identity and belonging' (Towney 2005, p. 40). However, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith says, 'It is not simply about giving an oral account or a genealogical naming of the land and the events which raged over it, but a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying' (2007, p. 332). As First Peoples, it is our right and responsibility to rewrite our stories, histories and spaces, and in doing so to (re)right and (re)site them also (Smith 2007). This is part of telling the truth, of reconciling. Yet to have true (re)conciliation between peoples, we need to 'concile' ground, and 'concile' with the Mother[8]. The ground must be righted and sited again – for both First Peoples and those with whom we now share our spaces. It is here that the question of spatial decolonisation comes to the fore.

Decolonising Space

Through the journey of this research I have been asked a number of times, 'How do we decolonise our spaces?' It was not the aim of my study to answer this question nor to come to a conclusion about spatial decolonisation. Admittedly I work in a decolonial practice, even though as a designer, researcher and educator, I am challenged every day when using the colonial tools of design, research and education. Our environments are designed to suit the power structures of the coloniser, and their footprint is heavy; I walk pavements of concrete, drive roads of asphalt, sit inside glass and brick boxes, move my body in a straight line on hard surfaces. How can we 'hear' Country calling us with so much visual, audible, sensory noise? How can we respond to the messages sent to us by Country, and those with whom we co-inhabit Country? I believe it can be done, but it requires strong connections and

[8] I have heard Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison say a number of times that in order to reconcile, we first must 'concile' (his word). I understand this to mean that without the relationship in the first instance, there is nothing to reconcile. Firing at and injuring two of the first Aboriginal people encountered by Cook does not build an image of conciliation or relationship building.

determination, especially as we inhabit a spatial paradigm that relies on colonisation to be a continuing occurrence.

Decolonising space can and must occur on a personal level as much as at an institutional or structural level. In the course of my explorations, my way of seeing and reading the landscape changed significantly. In what are perceived to be beautiful landscapes, I mourn for the missing grandparent trees. Bare hillsides cause me grieve for their missing relatives. Invading species make me see the sickness in landscapes. Yet Country holds memory, it communicates with us and knows what it requires to be well. Through the lens of story and culture, a (re)knowing of the land can occur; while there is damage and the original carers may be displaced, the land still tells us what has happened there and what it needs. Knowledgeable Elders, traditional custodians and Knowledge Holders can interpret this and start the process of re-righting it. Even in the simplest means of movement across Country through walking and heeding the signals of Country, land is reclaimed and space reconciled with Indigenous identities by acknowledging and enacting the ancestral care of that land, and creating the chance for that care to continue, irrespective of whether it is in urban or rural landscapes.

Privileging Country in Design

Bringing together ideas of making, spatial practice and materiality, I inscribe here a brief process for privileging Country in the process of design. This is a process used and created by First Peoples over generations through their care and management of Country. Our Ancestors developed generative iterative collaborative communal processes, from which base a design can be developed. Understanding Country as the lead author of design changes the dynamic and the practice of design as it recognises the local Country important to the design. Country, as that which holds all, is centred and privileged in the design.

While it is neither the right nor the role of people to know everything of Country, we can be attentive to reading and hearing the relevant messages it sends to those inhabiting its spaces. We can hear and read the ecosystems, landscape features, types of soils or rock, topography, geography, seasons, materiality, aesthetic, colours, as well as the spirit, Dreaming, story, songs and knowledges of Country. As part of Country, the community is next to be heard and read, including their nation, clan, language

and culture, as well as their relationships, history, art and designs. Individuals, who are both members of a community and part of Country, are then heard and read, their identity, cultural practices, lifestyles, practicalities, comfort, health, wellbeing and personal preferences. By considering the Country of a site, community and people can be designed for, and their needs considered in the process. This process then considers the relationships between the elements of Country, community and people, understanding the connections and kinships between all that share space.

Designers can be guided through this process by knowledgeable Elders and Knowledge Holders. The starting point is to patiently walk Country with them, connect feet to the ground and listen with intent.

Spatial Cultural Sustainability

My investigation has danced around the question of how culture can be sustained in spaces, and has demonstrated how, for my family, we have claimed and contested space thanks to the methods our Ancestors installed to sustain culture. Culture defines us and makes us who we are. Cultural identity is the sense of belonging to a distinct group, and for Aboriginal peoples our identities are deeply linked to culture, community and Country, and are a key factor to our health and wellbeing[9]. Country, as the holder of memory and narrative, of space and place and of the relationships connecting all entities of the land, is key for First Peoples in terms of our cultural sustainability. Cultural sustainability considers 'ways to improve human lives and how to leave a practical legacy for future generations' (Opoku 2015, p. 38). It is the survival of a distinct set of values practised by a defined group.

Different peoples and their cultural practices and narratives shape landscapes, making them important to that specific culture. Culture as an agent of both the tangible (physical) and the intangible (social) is a key part of the design of spaces, as it frames people's attitudes and relationships towards the natural

[9] The Australian Government expresses this in the 2018 *Closing the Gap* Report (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 2018), though expression and action are yet to meet. As a response, the *Uluru Statement of the Heart* states, 'Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future. These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness' (Referendum Council 2017).

and built environments. While designs may embody a moment in time, they bring with them a long story and history of the cultural heritage to that moment and location. Environments or landscapes, both built and natural, human and more-than-human, can also be considered as tangible and intangible. The tangible elements of an environment include its structures, buildings, geography, biodiversity or resources, whereas the intangible aspects of an environment are the traditions, beliefs, ontologies, lifestyles, knowledges, ceremonies, beauty or cultural memories that accompany a location. From a spatial design perspective, this might be considered, for instance, through the materials used to construct (tangible) and the methods used to undertake the construction (intangible). Cultural sustainability in space enables the collective memory of a people, relevant to the people of that place, to be maintained. Culturally sustainable sites as expressions of both the physical and the social therefore consist of – and also defend – expression, diversity, subjectivity and creativity.

Inherent to culture is change. Indigenous peoples worldwide have for thousands of generations embraced change, without which we would never have survived vast variations in climate. Our Dreaming, an ever-present act of creation, exists as much in the present as the past, giving us the capacity to be innovative, adaptive and resourceful (Graham 2008; Martin-Booran Mirraboopa 2003; Watson 1997; Yunkaporta 2009). We have lived sustainably with the land, ensuring that when non-Indigenous people turned up on our shores our homelands were beautiful, like an extensive English park as described by early British 'explorers'. Cultural change occurs due to environmental factors, new technologies and ideas, outside influences (for example, colonisation) and, in part, to economics. Designers and associated disciplines often use economics as a justification to design in a non-sustainable way, and to leave Country or culture out of consideration. However, '[E]conomics is the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between given ends and scarce means which have alternative uses' (Robbins 1935, p. 16). Neglecting to privilege Country in the design process disregards the relationships humans have to every other entity in space held by Country; by doing so, the 'given ends and scarce means' are considered only in a financial sense, and materials and methods are turned into commodities. Design falls down by not including Country in the design process, as the true economics of design (rather than money or consumption) are not considered. It is for this reason that sustainable considerations can no longer involve only economic, social and environmental factors, they must also include cultural factors. Due to its connection with identity, creativity, subjectivity and

Country, cultural sustainability can provide answers to questions about future sustainability. I place this burden on the shoulders of designers, architects, planners and developers, who otherwise risk becoming more distant and unrelated to Country.

As part of Country and as descendants of the Dreaming, First Peoples cannot differentiate ourselves from the land. The way we interact with and use flora, animals and minerals should be carried out with many generations in the future in mind. One referred to in this dissertation, is the way my Ancestors considered the cultural sustainability of their descendants by planting living larders in sites they always return to. Their capacity to plan for future prosperity for their children and their children's children many generations ahead demonstrates a settled forward-thinking society. The Iroquois on Great Turtle Island[10] likewise discuss the appropriateness of making decisions for the benefit of future generations in Section 28 of their Constitution:

> The thickness of your skin shall be seven spans … Cast not over your shoulder behind you the warnings of the nephews and nieces should they chide you for any error or wrong you may do, but return to the way of the Great Law which is just and right. Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground – the unborn of the future Nation (Iroquois Nations 2011, p. 931).

Returning to D'harawal Country, Aunty Fran Bodkin likewise discusses Law in relation to sustainability and the supply of resources, as determined by our Dreaming. She says the Law of Truth, within which is hidden the Truth of Being and the Truth of Law, is for all things. The Law of Truth and its elements ensure the availability and sustainability of all resources throughout the countless years that we have occupied our lands. Our knowledges have been 'gathered throughout the millennia, compiled, and stored within the memory of all those who ensure availability of all other resources and the sustainability of the supply of those resources' (2017, p. x). Through intergenerational observation and experience, we have recorded the conditions required for sustainability in story and in song, in the rhythm and pulse of the cycles of Country, because our very lives depended on it (Bodkin 2017).

[10] Great Turtle Island is a name used by many First Nations peoples for North America.

This sort of forward thinking, however, relates not only to the sustainability of the environment, but to each decision, to how we maintain respectful relationships, how and where we live, the direction we choose for our life, and the words we use. Regrettably, First Peoples are kept so busy unravelling intergenerational traumas and fending off future damages, we barely have time for our customary sustainable way of thinking and being. Henry Reynolds cites R T Latham thus:

> … when the first settlers reached Australia, 'their invisible and inescapable cargo of English law fell from their shoulders and attached itself to the soil on which they stood. Their personal law became the territorial law of the Colony.' It is a graphic image. What was not mentioned was that in transit from shoulder to soil the inescapable cargo struck the Aborigines [sic] such a severe blow that they still have not recovered from it (1987, p. 1).

Indigenous peoples worldwide are still recovering, and having to arm ourselves, some literally, others figuratively. While we are forced to beg for the removal of our children to stop, for the destruction of our lands to discontinue, for our families to be kept together, for our health and wellbeing be equal to that of others, and our waters be clean, how can we consider the future? While our children are committing suicide at alarming rates, our youth incarceration rates are among the highest in the world, our people live in poverty while enduring easily curable illnesses and our human rights are repeatedly abused, how can we think of our children's children? When our ecological habitats are being devastated, our marine systems are collapsing, our lands are suffering widespread deforestation, our species are undergoing one of the highest extinction rates worldwide, how can we create safe and sustainable spaces? While we adopt colonially violent ways to become laterally violent to those within our own communities, both with actions and words, exclusion and (re)oppression, how can we work together to move forward? Western culture may wonder why First Peoples struggle to cope, but it is not a problem of our making, these are not our ways. We are traditionally settled forward-thinking peoples.

The question is, is this the way of non-Indigenous people?

Non-Concluding Conclusion

I have spent most of this research discussing Indigenous knowings of space, but in this final section I want to ask a question: what happened to your connection? We have maintained strong relationships to Country; how could it be any other way? We have reciprocally cared for Country for countless millennia, we come from and return to the land, our Mother. How could our sacred link to Country have disappeared in the last 250 years? What about your connections? What happened to your relationships with the land? How could you leave your Mother lands for which you have a responsibility? What happened to your connections?

Mary Graham attributes the disconnection of westerners to systemic, relational alienation, saying:

> When there is a breach between the two [the relationship between the human spirit and the natural life force], or rather, when the link between the two is weakened, then a human being becomes a totally individuated self, a discrete entity whirling in space, completely free. Its freedom is a fearful freedom however, because a sense of deepest spiritual loneliness and alienation envelopes the individual. The result is then that whatever form the environment or landscape takes, it becomes and remains a hostile place. The discrete individual then has to arm itself not just literally against other discrete individuals, but against its environment – which is why land is always something to be conquered and owned. Indeed, the individual has to arm itself against loneliness and against nature itself – though not against ideas. It arms itself with materialism, ownership, possessiveness (not just vulgar materialism) (2008, p. 186).

This conduct, these choices, cause unethical behaviour towards others and Country; not only did they arm themselves against nature, but they forced those who need not be armed to become so. The shame of it is that Captain James Cook knew this. He was writing within the emerging frames of consumption, wants and needs, yet in facing the local peoples his European theories failed him:

> From what I have said of the Natives of New Holland they may appear to some to be the most wretched People upon Earth; but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans, being wholy unacquainted not only with the Superfluous, but with the necessary Conveniences so much sought after in Europe; they are happy in not knowing the use of them. They live in a Tranquility which is not

> disturbed by the Inequality of Condition. The earth and Sea of their own accord furnishes them with all things necessary for Life. They covet not Magnificient Houses, Household-stuff, etc.; they live in a Warm and fine Climate, and enjoy every wholesome Air, so that they have very little need of Cloathing; and this they seem to be fully sencible of, for many to whom we gave Cloth, etc., left it carelessly upon the Sea beach and in the Woods, as a thing they had no manner of use for; in short, they seem'd to set no Value upon anything we gave them, nor would they ever part with anything of their own for any one Article we could offer them. This, in my opinion, Argues that they think themselves provided with all the necessarys of Life, and that they have no Superfluities (Cook 1770, chapter 8, Column 1: English. Column 2: New Holland).

Yet still, here we are.

Finding the words to end this journey is like trying to find the end of the stars. From the Dharug language comes the word Dídjurígur[11]. It is used in place of 'thank you', but it actually means 'I've had enough'. Now over to you[12].

[11] Dídjurígur means 'I've had enough', it is used to mean thank you when translated to English.

[12] With thanks to Michelle Locke who gave me the language for this ending. Michelle is a Boorooberongal (kangaroo people) woman of the Dharug nation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Non-Traditional Research Outputs

1. Weaving Intentions
2. Winyanboga Yurringa
3. Covered By Concrete

Appendix B: Related Work

4. Indigenous Material Referencing Guide

Appendix C: Ethics Information

5. Consent form
6. Information sheet
7. Interview questions

APPENDIX A
1. WEAVING INTENTIONS
Danièle Hromek, 2018

Exhibited as part of *Make Known: The Exquisite Order of Infinite Variation*, an exhibition curated by Eva Rodriguez Riestra at UNSW Galleries, 29 July-8 September 2018, Weaving Intentions was created as part of Hromek's PhD research. The work responds to the words written into a chapter of her thesis in the form of a woven object.

The object was woven with intention and pensive speculation, where the weaver became connected to history and future, kin and Country. Words, conversations, ideas and thoughts were captured through the energetic exchange of making into the form. Stories, histories and life were encased in the shape, as was a cultural reclamation of a cultural practice. Intentions inform and even form the shape of the object, embodying and imbibing these idioms and carrying them perpetually.

The majority of materials were collected on Country, with permission from Country. Materials used included stories, lomandra, gymea, dianella, raffia, pandanus, string, eucalyptus flowers and nuts, beads, feathers, finger limes, materials of Country and materials not-of-Country.

The audio component of the work was compiled from a series of yarns with Hromek's female family members. The object became shaped by the conversations, as well as an ancient heritage encase within the weaver, her family and Country.

The exhibition was developed by UNSW's Design Research Collaboration Research Cluster and is presented in collaboration with UNSW Built Environment. Photography with thanks to Silversalt Photography.

Links:
Gallery
Designer
Non-Traditional Research Output

APPENDIX A
2. WINYANBOGA YURRINGA
Danièle Hromek, 2016

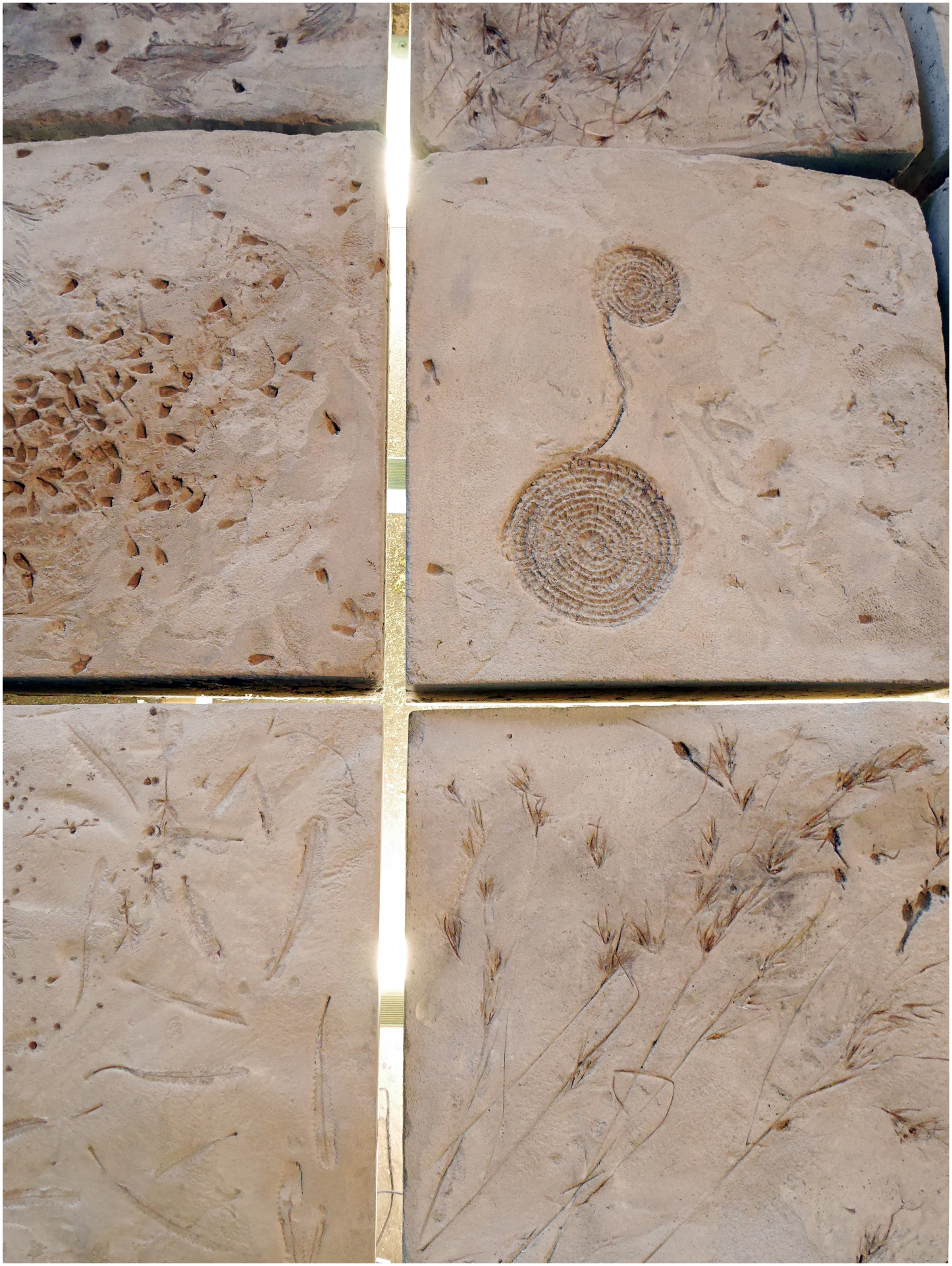
An interdisciplinary design practice spanning the fields of spatial design, performance design and Indigenous studies, the work questions how Indigenous narratives sit in colonised spaces of theatre. As a theatrical design relating to the Aboriginal experiences of Country and contemporary Indigenous identities, it addresses themes such as Indigenous women's worldviews, ongoing effects of colonisation, and intergenerational women's business.

The work includes set and costume design and construction for Winyanboga Yurringa, a play set in Yorta Yorta Country. Written and directed by Andrea James, it features six Aboriginal women camping on Country, reconnecting with the land and each other, and finding resilience and strength in doing so.
As a female Indigenous designer working with a primarily Indigenous cast and crew, the project challenges whether the enduring relationships Indigenous people have with Country can be designed into a colonised theatrical setting in both a culturally and aesthetically respectful way. Incorporating installation art and spatial design with Indigenous methodological approaches, the design features stylised shell shapes in abstracted sculptural forms, such as those that might be found in middens indicating thousands of years of Indigenous inhabitation to create the forest that surrounds the campground.

Staged at Carriageworks, 3-6 August 2016, travelling to Geelong Performing Arts Centre, 17-20 August 2016, the project was featured on ABC Radio and reviewed in Real Time Arts magazine. It was supported by Carriageworks, Arts NSW, Moogahlin Performing Art Inc, Australia Council, Australian Government.

Links:
Designer
Non-Traditional Research Output

APPENDIX A
3. COVERED BY CONCRETE
Danièle, Siân and Michael Hromek, 2015



This work is in the field of Indigenous art and design and addresses the relationship between the Aboriginal experience of Country, place and urbanisation.Other influential practitioners in this field include architect Kevin O'Brien and artist Daniel Boyd.

The project considers the latent history of Aboriginal occupation hidden under the strata of urban Australia. It questions whether the spirit of a place can still be perceived regardless of the colonising or 'smoothing over' of the natural landscape. The installation investigates whether a space can be reclaimed and Aboriginal culture reflected on contemporary identities. Additionally, it explores whether engagement with signage of a site, in this instance, Cockatoo Island, might bring understanding of obscured stories in order that non-Indigenous people might come to a new comprehension of a place. The creation of a spatial map of the island gave the opportunity for viewers to reconsider pre-colonial usage. The use of concrete impressed with local native flora and then burnt out using traditional Indigenous fire practices offers a paradox; and a relationship to the name of the work.

The work was funded by grants from NAVA, Arts NSW and a BrandX workspace. It was featured on Koori Radio, FBI Radio and Radio National. On completion of the Underbelly Arts Festival, where the work was originally exhibited, the Trustees of Cockatoo Island expressed interest in amending the signage to incorporate Indigenous content, and permanently installing the work as an ongoing installation on the island.

Links:
Designer
Non-Traditional Research Output

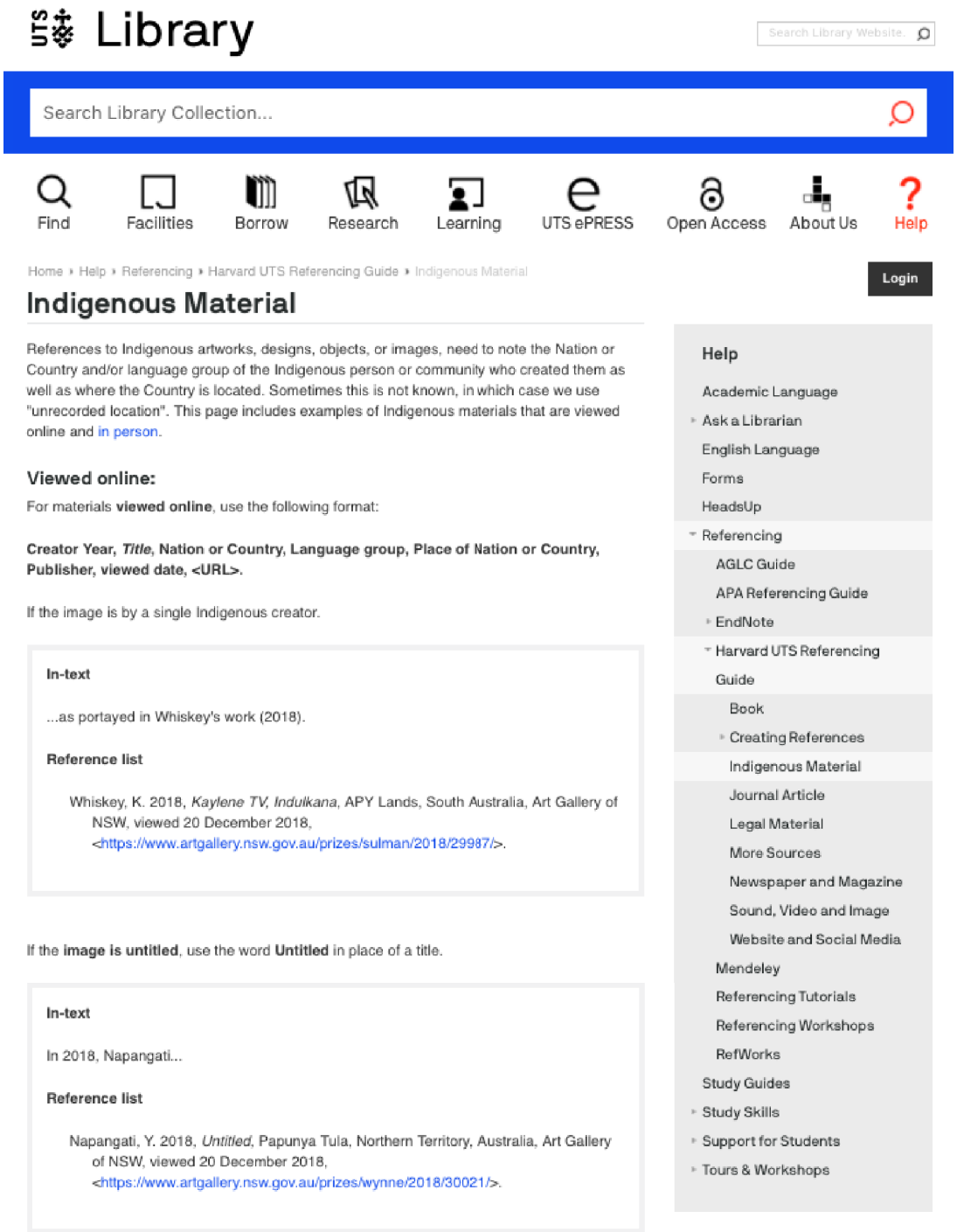
APPENDIX B
4. INDIGENOUS MATERIALS REFERENCING

Danièle Hromek and Sophie Herbert, 2017

Who knew the humble referencing system could be used to empower Indigenous perspectives? Indigenous objects, artefacts and other material culture are deeply linked to the Country and people they come from. However, due to colonial processes that information has often not been recorded, as cultural materials from Indigenous creators or communities were frequently removed without permission or attribution. Unsurprisingly, these processes are still in place but what if we could reframe the practice of referencing by linking Indigenous objects to Country and cultural heritage?

This innovative way of thinking about referencing occurred during a collaboration between a UTS Librarian and an Indigenous researcher to develop cultural resources. Through a process of yarning a strong relationship was created and it became clear there was a gap in the way Indigenous materials are referenced.
Together we created a new way of referencing Indigenous materials that recognises Country and colonial processes. Indigenous materials are connected back to the place and people they came from and material culture reclaimed by their living descendants.

This way of referencing works towards disrupting linear and empirical notions of research practice, that struggle to accommodate notions such as multiple voices and non-sole authorship. It is significant because it raises cultural awareness about Country, cultural heritage and identity, Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) and colonisation.



Links:
UTS Library
Non-Traditional Research Output

APPENDIX C
5. CONSENT FORM
THE (RE)INDIGENISATION OF SPACE (UTS APPROVAL NUMBER: 2015000219)

Project Title: The (Re)Indigenisation of Space
Researcher: Danièle Hromek
Organisation: University of Technology Sydney

I _____ agree to participate in the research project The (Re)Indigenisation of Space (HREC approval number 2015000219) being conducted by Danièle Hromek of the University of Technology Sydney for her degree Doctor of Philosophy.

I have read or had read to me the Information Sheet, which explains what this research project is about, and I understand it.

I have had a chance to ask questions about the project, and I am comfortable with the answers that I have been given. I know that I can ask more questions whenever I like. I agree that Danièle Hromek has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I agree to participate in the research. I know that I do not have to participate in it if I do not want to. I made up my own mind to participate and nobody is making me do it. I know that I don't have to answer any questions I do not like. The researchers will not write anything down unless I agree they can. The researchers will turn off the tape/stop filming if I ask them to. I know that I can pull out at any time and it will not change my relationship with the researcher or anyone else. If I do decide to pull out of the project, I understand that I will need to do this by _____.

I understand that I have been asked to participate in this research because I have relevant knowledge to the study and that my participation in this research will involve answering some questions in an informal interview which should take approximately an hour.

I know that I will not be paid for participating in the research project.

I am aware that there are very few if any risks to me because the research has been carefully designed. However, should I feel embarrassed, self conscious or distressed while being recorded I can stop the interview until I am ready to continue. I know that should I feel I have disclosed any information I wish you had not I will be given a number of opportunities to change and amend my responses both during and after the interview including being provided a copy of the transcript of our conversation and the final thesis. I am aware that should I wish for my identity to remain anonymous any information I provide can be de-identified to ensure I cannot be recognised.

I agree that the research data gathered from this project may be published in a form that does not identify me in any way should I wish.

I understand that the researcher wants to write about the research in a thesis and design. They will be the sole author of the research.

I understand I can choose whether my name will or will not be mentioned in the thesis or design that comes out of this research. The researcher will check with me before they publish the thesis and design to ensure it only contains the accurate information. I understand that anyone can read the thesis and design that comes out of this research. I understand that the information may also be used in future. The researcher will give me a copy of the thesis that is produced as a result of this research.

I understand that, if the researcher collects any secret or sacred information or things, they will put them into a safe keeping place. Other researchers/people will not be allowed to access this information or these things without permission.

I understand that I will retain any Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property from my personal interview recordings.

I am aware that I can contact Danièle Hromek or her supervisor Peter McNeil if I have any concerns about the research.

I consent to this interview being audio taped and/or filmed:

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to photographs being taken of this interview:

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to the recording of my interview and a transcript created from that recording:

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree that my name can be mentioned in the research:

Yes ☐ No ☐

_____ ____/____/____
Signature (participant)

_____ ____/____/____
Signature (researcher)

NOTE:
This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (ph: +61 2 9514 9772 research.ethics@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX C
6. INFORMATION SHEET
THE (RE)INDIGENISATION OF SPACE (UTS APPROVAL NUMBER: 2015000219)

Project Title: The (Re)Indigenisation of Space
Researcher: Danièle Hromek
Organisation: University of Technology Sydney

Who is doing the research?
My name is Danièle Hromek and I am a research student at UTS. My supervisor is Peter McNeil.

What is the research about?
The research contributes an understanding of the Indigenous experience and comprehension of space, and investigates how Aboriginal people occupy, use, narrate, sense, dream and contest their space. It considers the traumas affected to land, spaces and, by extension, to Indigenous peoples by the consequences of invasion and colonisation. Through cultural practice, an exploration of spatial reclamation and restoration of Indigenous spatial values will examine micro and macro connections between Country, people and cultural practice.

Why have you been invited to participate?
You have been invited to participate because you are a user or knowledge holder of the spaces being researched or hold a cultural practice and are able to provide valuable insight and stories in regards to the occupation, use, narratives and sense of that place.

What will it involve?
I will interview you and record your responses either via audio or audio visual recordings. I will also observe the use of relevant spaces by the general public and record this via photographs and video.

The research will happen at a time and location you feel comfortable. The interview will take up approximately one hour of your time.

What will happen to your information?
Your information will be used to write a thesis.

Are there any risks or inconveniences?
There are very few if any risks because the research has been carefully designed. However, it is possible that you might feel embarrassed, self conscious or distressed while being recorded. Should this occur I will stop the interview until you are ready to continue. Should you feel you have disclosed any information you wish you had not I will give you a number of opportunities to change and amend your responses both during and after the interview including providing a copy of the transcript of our conversation and the final thesis. Should you wish for your identity to remain anonymous I will de-identify any information you provide to me to ensure you cannot be recognised.

What happens if you change my mind?
You don't have to say yes to being part of this research. If you say no, nothing will happen, it will not affect our relationship. I will thank you for your time so far and won't contact you about this research again. If you change your mind after taking part please be assured you can pull out of the research, you don't have to say why and it won't change your relationship with me or anyone else. If you do decide to pull out of the project, you will need to do this within six months of your interview.

Data storage
During the project, the data will be stored in a password-protected computer and secure hard drives. Once the research is complete the information will be stored on the University of Technology Sydney's secure server.

The information will be kept for five years.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this research project and that can be identified with you will remain confidential unless otherwise permitted by you, or as required by law.

You will retain any Intellectual Property and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property from your own personal interview recordings.

Copyright will be owned by Danièle Hromek.

I will provide you with a copy of the thesis and design upon completion.

Culturally restricted information
It is your right to choose to disclose culturally restricted information to me or not. Should you do so permissions will be sought from relevant community organisations, traditional owners, elders, etc.

Contact
If you are worried about the research you can contact Danièle Hromek on [redacted] or daniele.hromek@uts.edu.au.

What if you have concerns or a complaint?
If you have concerns about the research that you think I or my supervisors can help you with, please feel free to contact us on the numbers or email addresses below:
Danièle Hromek daniele.hromek@uts.edu.au
Peter McNeil peter.mcneil@uts.edu.au

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9772, and quote this number 2015000219.

APPENDIX C
7. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
THE (RE)INDIGENISATION OF SPACE (UTS APPROVAL NUMBER: 2015000219)

Here is an example of some of the issues we will discuss. Due to time, we may not cover everything outlined here. You do not have to answer all the questions, if you do not want to answer a question just let me know and we will move on. There will also be time at the end for you to talk about anything else you feel is important.

Introduction;
- What is your name?
- Where are you/your family from?
- How do you identify in terms of your cultural heritage?

The Land & Country;
- What does the term "Country" mean to you? How would you define it?
- Is Country an important part of your identity? How would you describe it if so?
- How do you connect with Country?
- What is your understanding of songlines?
- If I were to ask about the Dreaming, what would this mean to you?

Space;
- How do you understand the word "space"?
- How do you think space relates to Country?
- What sorts of spaces do you feel would support Indigenous communities?

Identity & Culture;
- How do you understand or express your identity in relation to culture?
- Do you think it is important that identity in relation to culture is maintained into the future? If so, how?
- How do you understand identity and culture in terms of change?
- What role do you think colonisation has played in identity and culture, if any?

Storytelling & Narratives;
- Is storytelling important to your experience of Country? If so, why is it important?
- How did you become involved in telling stories?
- Why do you think storytelling is important to Aboriginal people?
- Are there any stories you might want to share?
- Do you think storytelling has played a role in keeping culture strong in Aboriginal communities?

Cultural Practice;
- What cultural practices do you undertake?
- Who taught you these practices?
- How are these important to your identity?
- How do they affect your relationship with Country or land?
- Have your cultural practices effected your relationships with your family, community or networks?

Resilience & Reclamation;
- Do you think Aboriginal people have shown resistance to colonisation? How if so?
- Do you think it is important Indigenous people claim/reclaim their cultural practices? Why or why not?
- Do you think Indigenous objects, artefacts, art etc are important? Why or why not?
- Are there any stories you might like to share about resistance or reclamation?
- Are there any stories you might like to share about spatial reclamation?

Conclusion;
- Is there anything else you would like to say or add that we haven't covered, that you feel is important to our yarn today?