

Island Home Country

‘Subversive Mourning’

Working with Aboriginal protocols in a documentary film
about colonisation and growing up white in Tasmania

A cine-essay and exegesis



Doctorate of Creative Arts (DCA)

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Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge and pay respects to the ancestors and elders, the traditional owners: palawa, cadigal, garigal, wurrunjerrri, boonawrung, yorta yorta, pitjantjatjara whose countries I have lived in and filmed in – and whose community members and ancestors appear, or are spoken of, in this film and exegesis.

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Abstract

In this doctorate, *Island Home Country*, a documentary film and exegesis, I reflect on growing up in a white settler-invader family in Tasmania in the late 1940s-1950s oblivious to any Tasmanian Aboriginal culture or history on the island.

The working method of the film was initially based on Freud's notion of 'the work of mourning' as a way of working through repressed history. However the project's engagement in a six-year protocols process with Tasmanian Aboriginal community members influenced this research paradigm. It triggered a 'meditation on discomfort', involving a turn towards critical race and whiteness studies, decolonising methodologies and a consideration of white privilege and ways to challenge it.

This exegesis seeks to articulate the film's textual strategies alongside theoretical and political issues that surfaced while making the film, in particular the impact of protocols, the ethics and responsibilities they entail and their repercussions into the text of the film and the project's research paradigm. The film is in the documentary essay mode. My aim has been to work in an affective and performative register with image, poetry, sound and music to try and penetrate amnesia and to think and see 'beyond the colonial construct'.

The process of making a film in consultation with Tasmanian Aboriginal community members, as well as my own family is examined, particularly the subject position of being a white person producing a work amidst the complex borderlines of 21st century colonial-post-colonising Tasmania. The six chapters of the exegesis – *Amnesia*, *Possession*, *Memory*, *Mourning*, *Encounter* and *Reckoning* follow the chapters of the film, opening out the ebb and flow of protocols process for discussion.

This exegesis analyses the film's attempt to 'work through' the historical trauma of colonisation at both an individual and community level, examining the film's intention to reckon with the ghosts of history and how they may live on. I conclude that the film's intention to 'make a reckoning' may be flawed. The film's practice-led process and the ethics and politics involved in working with protocols both challenged the project's 'work of mourning' thesis and facilitated the project's shift from the layer of 'text' only, to become a work grounded in responsible relationships with community. In this context I consider the potential of creative and collaborative works to become sites of

negotiation and dialogue around cultural differences, rights and responsibilities. Both the exegesis and the film suggest that this negotiated process may contribute towards a decolonising process as ‘newcomer’ Australians, such as myself, become ‘unsettled’ and learn to *come into country* in recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty.

On Language and Speaking Positions

The First Australians: Aboriginal people in Tasmania refer to themselves as Tasmanian Aboriginal, not Aboriginal Tasmanians or Indigenous Tasmanians (Everett 2007: pers.comm.). I follow this usage for Tasmania. I use Aboriginal, Indigenous and First Australians in other contexts in Australia. Some Tasmanian Aboriginal people also refer to themselves, in Palawa kani language, as ‘Palawa’.¹

The Strangers: How to name those who arrived-invaded in 1788 and all who have arrived since? The naming is charged and politicised. Current usage includes Europeans, Anglo-Celts, Anglo-Irish, invaders, settlers, settler-colonials, colonisers, non-Aboriginal people or whites. This exegesis uses newcomers, strangers, invaders, settler-colonials and non-Aboriginals. On occasions I refer to myself as a ghost. In some instances the terms white and black are used.

Indigenous Protocols: This exegesis principally uses the term ‘Aboriginal protocols’ in reference to Tasmania. ‘Indigenous protocols’, protocols and cultural protocols are used in other instances.²

country: ‘country’ has different meanings for Aboriginal people in contrast with the ‘newcomers’ notion of ‘the country’. Colonisers have tended to use the word ‘my country’ or ‘the country’ to signify both ownership of land and to refer to the ‘nation’. Aboriginal people speak of ‘country’ and their connection to ‘country’ in a profound ontological and spiritual sense; ‘country’ includes earth, water, sky and all living beings and their mutual responsibilities.

Speaking Position: I am speaking as a white middle class woman born into an Irish Celtic family of convict stock, transported for theft and dumped by the British into Gadigal country (Sydney) in 1788. At times I also speak from a place influenced by the extended Jewish family I married into. In both the film and exegesis I speak as an essayist and documentary film-maker, not as an historian or ethnographer.

¹ ‘Palawa kani’ is an ongoing reconstruction of a composite Tasmanian Aboriginal language.

² See Appendix 1.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

...perhaps the most fascinating terrain exists in the spaces between historical sources. The gaps between fact and fiction. This is the stuff of our dreams, our pain and our aspiration. It is where our identity resides.

Lehman (2003: 178)

Literature, art, and film, for example, can be particularly useful to critical race theory because their images, tones, and textures often perform subtle emotional work that richly engages the non-reflective aspects of white privilege.

Sullivan (2006: 1)



Figure 2: *We grew up behind a hedge keeping history out, Tasmania 1952*

We have been very happy here in the territory of the Nuenone people. Has any one of us paused to do a reckoning? (Pybus 1991: 7)

In the midst of the ‘history wars’³ in 2002 these words by historian Cassandra Pybus spoke to me. Born in the late 1940s into an Irish Celtic family, I grew up white in 1950s Tasmania and knew no Tasmanian Aboriginal people and little of their culture. As I came to know more of the island’s troubled colonial history, it was time to do my own reckoning. I wanted to penetrate the ‘silence’ around my childhood imaginary of this island and then connect it, somehow, to the reality of colonisation – the removal of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people from their home-lands and their resilient and dynamic struggle to re-establish sovereignty of their country. Some named Britain’s colonial rule and race based policies in Tasmania as ‘attempted genocide’,⁴ or ‘ethnic clearances’ (Boyce 2008: 11). Others denied the violence altogether claiming Tasmania was peacefully settled (Windschuttle 2002).

The eruption of this debate into the polarised ‘history wars’ affected me. Perhaps I could make a film that engaged with these issues beyond such an unproductive deadlock. As a film-maker I knew film offered ways to consider the past other than simple reliance on the historical record. Film’s textual strategies can strongly evoke feeling and emotion, ‘affect’. I was mindful of Giles Deleuze’s comment: ‘if we want to grasp an event we must not show it...but plunge into it, go through all the geological layers that are its internal history’ (1989: 254-55). In a film work I might be able to reach back, beyond amnesia, to my own memories about Tasmania and link it to the present – to the possibility of change. My intention was to expose ‘the silence’, do something about it. I wasn’t sure what. Make a reckoning and with whom – myself, my family, Tasmanian Aboriginal people? Moreover, what kind of text, if any, could signify the historical trauma created by Britain’s racially determined policies in Tasmania?

I developed these ideas into a UTS DCA proposal in 2003 and also planned a film industry pathway for the project. I anticipated that I could raise both industry finance *and* make the film in a university context and connect with intellectual scholarship around memory and history and post-colonial and documentary film studies. The project became a reality, although industry finance was not forthcoming. I started filming and gathering images in 2004. It was an intuitive, almost random process of creating an archive of images – a diary, ‘bricolage’ approach. The film evolved during the subsequent years, 2004-2008, in a ‘practice-led process’, marked by the ‘history wars’ at the

³ Debate escalated over the extent of frontier violence in Tasmania with the publication of Keith Windschuttle’s (2002) *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*.

⁴ Ryan and Matson-Green in *Black Man’s Houses* (1992).

outset and the Federal Government's national *Apology To Australia's Indigenous Peoples* at its close (Rudd 2008).⁵

Protocols

In developing the project, it became necessary to penetrate deeply into how the notion of a peaceful island, both when I was growing up and later, screened out the reality of Britain's colonial race policies. I needed to think about the amnesia that pervaded Tasmania for so long. Filming with my own white family and Tasmanian Aboriginal community members involved ethics and protocols.⁶ As words on paper these might seem clear and direct, but in practice observing Aboriginal protocols was a learning process for me – involving relationship, dialogue, responsibility, trust, and in some circumstances, lack of trust. Maori scholar Linda T. Smith's (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies* offers a critical indigenous perspective on ethical approaches to research and is perhaps a foundational text for any non-indigenous researcher or film-maker setting out on a project involving indigenous peoples, history and culture. Other relevant works by Indigenous scholars in Australia, include Martin Nakata's (2002, 2007) writings on *Indigenous Knowledge and the 'Cultural Interface'*, Vicki Grieves's (2009) discussion paper, *Aboriginal Spirituality: Aboriginal Philosophy* and Marcia Langton's (1993) early and significant publication on Aboriginal representation in Australian film *Well, I Heard it on the Radio and I Saw it on the Television*.

This exegesis discusses how the ensuing 'ethical encounter' with Aboriginal protocols and film-making process affected the film I finally made, influencing the dismantling of my childhood fantasy of Tasmania as some kind of a 'happy isle'. I examine the 'instability of whiteness' that emerged in this fissure, a liminal space precipitating a sense of 'the unsettled settler'. 'What to do with people?' asks documentary theorist Bill Nichols (2001: 6) referring to a critical issue for documentary makers – the speaking position of the film-maker, or *whose story is it?* The primacy

⁵ 'On 13 February 2008 the Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, moved a motion of Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples, particularly the Stolen Generations and their families and communities, for laws and policies which had 'inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians'. 'Stolen Generations' refers to those Indigenous children separated from their families under the Government's laws, policies and practices of forcible removal. http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/progserv/engagement/Pages/national_apology.aspx

⁶ Arts Tasmania (2004), *Respecting Cultures: Working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community and Aboriginal Artists*. See Appendix 1.

of the ethical issue is also taken up by documentary theorist Michael Renov as a ‘fifth “fundamental tendency, or rhetoric/aesthetic function” of contemporary documentary film’ (2008: 173). Film-maker and theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha (1991: 12, 15) puts it like this: ‘Who speaks? What speaks?...how can one re-create without re-circulating domination?’

The protocols process reverberated in the film’s production, influencing the project’s initial theoretical paradigm of ‘the work of mourning’ (Freud 1917) and prompting a turn to critical race and whiteness studies. Also, writing this exegesis in the midst of the shifting politics of Rudd’s (2008) national *Apology* and the continuation of the previous Federal Government’s 2007 ‘Northern Territory National Emergency Response’,⁷ alongside responses to the *Island Home Country* project as a film in distribution and as an academic work in conferences and publications, extended the theoretical reach of the exegesis.⁸

Film and exegesis structure and chapter outlines

This exegesis uses the film’s six-chapter structure – *Amnesia, Possession, Memory, Mourning, Encounter, Reckoning* to discuss the film-making process and ideas that informed it. The film’s chapters developed during editing. They were influenced by Stephen Muecke’s (2008: 84) suggestion that ‘Visitors are traders in stories, and visiting is a process which enhances the imagination (story-like in its own movement of *anticipation, encounter, exchange, return*)’. As others joined me to work on the film this structure made sense to them as well.⁹ It seemed to offer something akin to the movement of protocols in action. It was *there* in the footage: *encounter* involves *exchange* – something happens and it affects *return*.

Chapter 1 Introduction provides an overview of the project’s research intention, protocols and the film-exegesis structure.

⁷ ‘The 2007 Intervention’ into the affairs of (NT) Indigenous people was ostensibly a response to sexual abuse of Aboriginal children, violence, economic, health and substance abuse in communities. Extreme measures were introduced around welfare, land, policing and work programs. Critics suggest the policies are a denial of human rights and a return to assimilation policies, others see them as humanitarian.

⁸ Appendix 2.

⁹ Appendix 3: Post production script and film personnel.

Chapter 2 *Praxis* explores practice-led process, Aboriginal protocols, theoretical influences and their impact on the research intention and textual strategies.

Chapter 3 *Amnesia* discusses how the ‘repressed’ colonial past provokes a crisis of historical representation, raising questions of ‘who speaks’ and ‘how to speak’ in the context of the ‘deep history’ of a living culture.

Chapter 4 *Possession* provides a discussion of ‘possession’ in the ‘white’ colonising-colonised mind, introducing different cultural ways of thinking around history, time and country.

Chapter 5 *Memory* ‘speaks’ into the site of buried memory to explore the ramifications of articulating past times, in the site of the ‘deep’ memory of Tasmanian Aboriginal community members and the ‘shallow’ memory of the ‘newcomers’.

Chapter 6 *Mourning* explores the project’s initial premise of ‘the work of mourning’ and the turn to ‘impossible mourning’ – how is mourning subversive?

Chapter 7 *Encounter* examines the impact of ethics and Aboriginal protocols and the emergence of ‘the instability of white’ in the film-making encounter.

Chapter 8 *Reckoning* discusses the dismantling of the project’s ‘making a reckoning’ premise and the move to becoming ‘unsettled’. This chapter explores how the ‘borderline work of culture’ is informed by dialogue, negotiation, exchange, cultural difference and Aboriginal sovereignty.

The movement *through* or *along* the thread of the film-exegesis chapters is liminal, borderline – borders bleed, borders are fluid, as is memory and time. At the border of each chapter there is a shift or register to another layer of being with both the past and the present. This is a movement akin to Homi Bhabha’s (2007: 26-27) ‘hither side’, where the ‘splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity: “I am looking for the join...I want to join...I want to join.”’ This movement also parallels a process unfolding in protocols-in-practice, from ‘amnesia’, through to the ambiguous site of ‘reckoning’.

Chapter 2 – Praxis

Practice-led process, Aboriginal protocols and theoretical influences

And yet...the essayistic is notable for its enmeshing of two registers of interrogation—of subjectivity and of the world.

Renov (2004: 72-73)

“Aboriginality” only has meaning when understood in terms of intersubjectivity, when both the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal are subjects, not objects.

Langton (1993: 32)

Is her spirit clear? Does he have a good heart? What other baggage are they carrying? Are they useful to us? Can they fix up our generator? Can they actually do anything?

Smith (1999: 10)

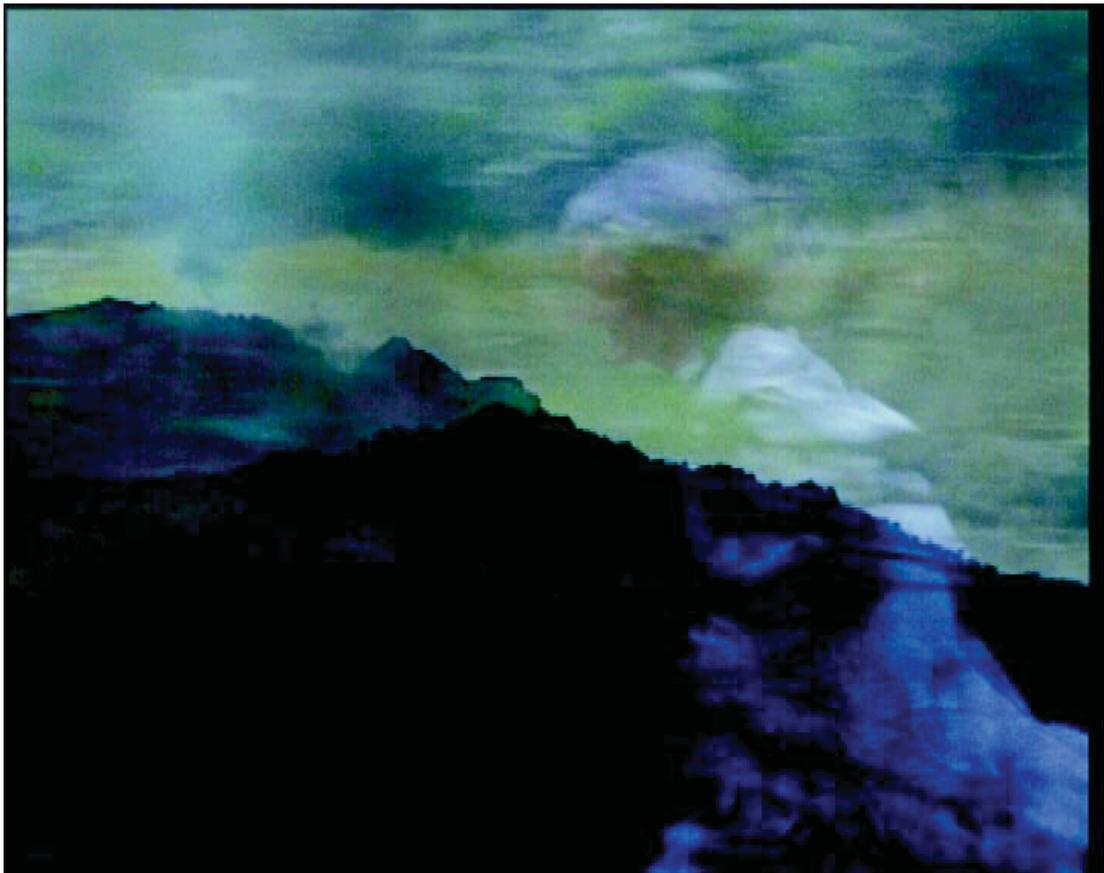


Figure 3: *I am white, born on a stolen island*

Conflicting forces

This chapter provides an overview of *Island Home Country*'s practice-led film-making process. During the years of production, theory and practice fed back and forth in a dynamic process determining the film's textual strategies. Theoretical and ethical issues, texts, films, memories, places and people coursed through the filmic encounters and the edit phase – a 'messy' process involving a mix of changing relationships and shifting desires (Marcus 1998: 567). Martin Nakata's concept of the 'Cultural Interface' assisted me to make sense of these many conflicting forces, which stretched this practice-led process in various directions during five years of film production:

The Cultural Interface...a space of many shifting and complex intersections between different people with different histories, experiences, languages, agendas, aspirations and responses...a space that abounds with contradictions, ambiguities, conflict and contestation of meanings (Nakata 2007: 199).

At times it became difficult to hold the film in a stable place in my own mind. Ethnographic filmmaker Eric Michaels (1994) in his essays, *Bad Aboriginal Art: Tradition, Media, and Technological Horizons*, based on media work with Warlpiri Aboriginal communities of western Central Australia, offers an insightful, theoretical and practice based account of issues around reflexivity and the ethnographer as 'other'. He refers to an edginess in cross cultural endeavours, particularly when the practitioner thinks 'reflexivity' may offer a way through: 'It is we who are rendered other, not its subject...reflexivity can so decenter the cultural subject that ethnography becomes opaquely self-inscriptive. So the course is full of danger' (1994: 124, 129).

Contributions by Tasmanian Aboriginal community members during filming and editing and the subsequent lengthy protocols encounter¹⁰ influenced the film-making process in unforeseen ways – delivering a rush of 'affect' – which I came to name as *the instability of white*. The 'work of mourning' paradigm sits uneasily here. This shifting ground encouraged me to read more widely in whiteness studies, critical race and whiteness studies,¹¹ decolonising methodologies and Indigenous knowledges (Nakata 2002, 2007; Grieves 2009) to understand where I found myself with the

¹⁰ Appendix 1.

¹¹ bell hooks (1995); Smith (1999); Moreton-Robinson (2000a, b, 2004b, 2007); Ahmed (2004, 2005); Nicoll (2004); Sullivan (2006); I Watson (2007).

project. I needed to develop textual strategies to disrupt my authorship and take responsibility for my 'white' speaking position.

In fact, finding a way to visually represent and convey the spiralling descent into the 'instability of whiteness' and the 'unsettled' settler transcends the objectification of the traditional ethnographer studying 'the other'. Instead, the gaze is reversed and turned within, towards the film-maker's 'white' colonised-colonising mind – to look at what's *in there*. Frantz Fanon (1986), psychiatrist and philosopher, is ahead of me here, investigating whiteness in his own black mind. Over time, the film evolved into a document of both the research process and protocols process, an exposition of 'ethics around decolonisation' (DB Rose 2004: 31), '*the practice of visiting country*' (Muecke 2008: 80) and 'being connected to country' (Everett 2006a: 92).

The repressed unconscious

In 1995 a psychotic twenty-eight year old man of British heritage, Martin Bryant, massacred thirty-five tourists at the Port Arthur historic convict site in Tasmania. I had filmed there fifteen years earlier amongst the crumbling ruins, in the golden light of sunset. It was like a picture postcard, a fantasy image, not real, despite the violent historical re-enactments for tourists amidst the ruins. Martin's act shakes the isle from its bucolic slumber. Tasmanian Aboriginal writer Greg Lehman (Trawulwuy) contexts the massacre way beyond any 'colonial' frame:

...the announcement of the massacre at Port Arthur recently was for Palawa more than an instance of tragedy: it was a reminder of our own experience. Death for us is not the musket shot or the hangman's hand. It is not the high-powered rifle of the mass murderer. Death is part of the spirit of our existence: an event which moves and changes us. When the White man arrived among us, he was called Numera, which means ghost. His arrival was the arrival of our ancestor spirits. The Palawa who saw him were aware of also seeing the arrival of their own death and an imminent, profound change to their world (Lehman 1996: 55).

Lehman's essay turned my thinking, my *feeling* about Tasmania on its head. I started a film script then about the repressed unconscious with insights from the 'new history' and emerging stories by Tasmanian Aboriginal community members. Later the 'history wars' exploded with Keith Windschuttle's (2002) sustained attack on historians Lyndall Ryan and Henry Reynolds, tipping into unresolvable debates about 'truth' and 'history'. These 'wars' pushed into the heart of

conflicting notions of representation and nationhood. The acrimonious debates about how many settler-colonials and Aboriginal people were killed on the frontier were disturbing. I needed to find my own voice as a Tasmanian, as an islander, yet somehow create a work that spoke differently. How to penetrate the childhood memory of an *Elysium* place and align it with the reality of this repressed history – the ‘attempted genocide’ – the making of ‘white’ Tasmania and the *silence* around it. The process of imagining a film inside this breach, this fissure and inside my own historical consciousness, was embryonic, but taking shape.

‘Terra nullius’ story telling

During the research phase I analysed my unconscious assumptions around race in my earlier documentaries, *Maidens* (1978), *For Love or Money* (1983) and *To The Other Shore* (1996). Presenting at the *Colonialism and its Aftermath Conference* (Thornley 2004) in Hobart, I explored ‘the poetics of mourning’ and film scholar Eric Santner’s thesis in *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory and Film in Postwar Germany*, that images ‘recuperate affect’ (1990: 155). I suggested that my first diary film *Maidens* (1978), which explored my Tasmanian convict Irish-Celtic family, actually perpetuated amnesia, unconsciously repeating the fantasy that this island was ‘ours’, denying that it was, in fact, stolen. As I came to understand, this was ‘terra nullius’ story telling (Collins & Davis 2004: 3-4). Indigenous scholar Moreton-Robinson, a Geonpul woman, describes it in these terms: ‘Through the fiction of Terra Nullius the migrant has been able to claim the right to live in our land. This is one of the fundamental benefits white British migrants derived from dispossession’ (2003: 25).

We floated, we white Tasmanians, in a fantasy of total ‘possession’ – our Apple Isle, our Little England, our great ‘wilderness’ and ‘Arcadia’. Lehman writes about this projection:

From the very beginnings of European encounter, there has been a perception, or a hope, that Tasmania might offer a new paradise. What was once ‘wilderness’ is today re-framed as ‘Eden’, where the travel-weary Westerner can purchase an opportunity to ‘return to nature’...Tasmania can now be seen as a refuge; a place of renewal, where primal energies can somehow flow from an unspoiled landscape to renew a spirit tired from the endless pursuit of happiness (Lehman 2004).



Figure 4: *My maternal family on meenamatta country, Deddington, Tas. 1910*

In *Maidens* I was also caught in another settler-colonial myth that had long dominated the national imaginary – the hardship and heroism of these (my) convict-pioneers. Again, this trope was re-invented in documenting both Aboriginal and white women’s work in our co-produced film and book *For Love or Money: a history of women and work in Australia* (1983), at times mythologising white women’s hardship. Despite our engagement with the newly emerging post-colonial historical research, an unconscious victimological narrative sometimes drove the text.

Reading historian Lyndall Ryan’s (1996 [1981]) newly published *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* and visiting colonial contact sites with her in 1981, was an awakening. The layers of repressed history were lifting. I started filming on super 8 – Cape Barren Island, Port Arthur, the convict ruins around my Aunt and Uncle’s sheep farm in the country of the Big River people. I also visited England for the first time. Here I recognised pastoral Tasmania and the sheer outer limits of the colonial experiment. I had to really *see* England, on the ground, and in my body *affectively*, to wake up to the extent of Britain’s colonisation of Tasmania. Here I witnessed the colonisation of

my own mind. As I filmed the rolling green Oxfordshire hills, the newly born lambs, these images revealed the landscape of my own childhood. I finally saw how Britain's colonial construction of *Arcadia* – with no trace of Tasmanian Aboriginal people – elided with this pastoral idyll, as Lehman argues. In a way, I was starting to make this film back then – not only were my unconscious perceptions being challenged – the way I perceived reality *and* history had been pierced.

An ethics of listening

I remember Indigenous activist, Sam Watson, of the Birigubba people, and his response to a 'white fella' question, "What can I *do*?"

Find out the history of the land on which you are living – just find out. And don't use white academic sources, use Aboriginal sources as your primary sources; and find out whose country you're on and find out exactly what happened to that mob. Find out what the dreaming stories are, the dances and songs. Then when you know, that's the first step on the journey of enlightenment (2005).

This direct, practical response from Watson penetrated, suggesting not only an ethics of listening, but indicating another country beneath the veneer of colonisation – 'the story of "the unacknowledged relations between two races in a single field of life" that WEH Stanner famously demanded in 1968' (Ashenden 2009: para 1). Watson's words became a compass of sorts – to connect with Aboriginal voices and not rely on 'white' academic sources, his 'advice' giving shape and meaning to this project. As well, the new wave of Indigenous film-makers and their work, from the 1970s to the present, brought *their* stories into national consciousness. The nation's 'narrative address' was changing (Bhabha 1990: 3). Innovative works by Aboriginal artists and film-makers were speaking out beyond the dominant paradigm of the white Australian national story of 'loss, sacrifice and valour in war, the struggles of our explorers and pioneers, or the sagacity of our civic leaders' (Ashenden 2009: para 1).

This vibrant rush of cultural works blasted into the national imaginary – poetry, art, music, dance and films,¹² along with programs from Indigenous media organisations such as the Central

¹² Films such as *Night Cries* (1989); *Stolen Generations* (2000); *One Night the Moon* (2001); *One Red Blood* (2002); *Beneath Clouds* (2002); *Yellow Fella* (2004); *Portrait of a Distant Land* (2008); *Samson and Delilah* (2009). There

Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) and Warlpiri Media, public television series such as *Message Stick* (ABC), *Living Black* (SBS), and Indigenous broadcasters, National Indigenous Television (NITV) and Imparja Television. As this DCA project developed I sought out cultural works and writings by Tasmanian Aboriginal community members. Here, too, I heard the story of *another country* – a different place from my experience *behind the hedge, keeping history out*. My eyes and ears were open – to learn, to listen. Alongside the earlier autobiographies by Mollie Mallet (2001) and Ida West (1987), I found a rich stream of thinking by contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal scholars, activists, artists and writers.¹³

As well as meeting and filming with Tasmanian Aboriginal artists Julie Gough (Trawlwoolway) and PennyX Saxon (Pyenairraanaa, Yorta Yorta) in 2004 and 2005, I worked Lehman's (2005: 13) statement: 'Our culture is carried on the wind' into an early draft of the script. I also included an excerpt from the documentary *Black Man's Houses* (1992) with Lehman's discussion on Aboriginal identity. I wrote to him to seek permission and to request an interview. Then when I read Clan Plangermairreenner Jim Everett's (2006a) essay *This is Manarlagenna Country*, it lucidly expressed a mind thinking 'beyond the colonial construct' in Tasmania and made sense of the almost psychotic split both on the island and in my mind between 'deep history' (Denig 2004; Lehman 2006) and the colonial history. The essay made a connection to culture and country that was profound in its genealogical tendrils, reaching far beyond two hundred years of British colonisation:

We walked over country, talked about it and brought together the threads of our being with it all: the place, history and people. I felt we were as one in a first nation, and of being alive with my clan country. It brought to me a deeper understanding of Aboriginality and country in a modern world. The experience was an articulation of what I call the All, of being related to everything there, with responsibilities and acceptance of our role as humans living *beyond the colonial construct* (Everett 2006a: 93).

I wrote to Everett, (also known as *purulia meenamatta*), for permission to quote from the essay in the film. As part of that process I sent him the film's script and subsequently asked if I could film with him – tentative steps towards dialogue, connection. Eventually this subtle process became part

were also significant collaboratively made films by non-Aboriginal film-makers, Aboriginal film-makers and Aboriginal people working together, including *My Survival as an Aboriginal* (1978), *Lousy Little Sixpence* (1983), *Two Laws* (1981), Ian Dunlop's work and the 1970s-1980s AIATSIS documentaries of Judith and David MacDougall.

¹³ Everett (1997b, 2006a, b, c); Gough (2004, 2006a, 2009); Lehman (1996, 2003, 2004, 2006); ed. A Reynolds (2006).

of the texture of the film – a fragile reaching out to connect across the pain of ‘the unacknowledged relations between two racial groups within a single field of life’ (Stanner 1979: 214).

Textual strategies evolve in the groundwork of practice

In the *Skin of the Film*, film scholar, Laura Marks defines *intercultural cinema* as ‘characterised by experimental styles that attempt to represent the experience of living between two or more cultural regimes of knowledge’ (2000: 1). This is relevant to the ‘praxis’ of producing *Island Home Country*, as the project traversed the ‘power–inflected spaces of diaspora, (post-or neo-) colonialism, and cultural apartheid’ (Marks 2000: 1). To be responsive to Aboriginal protocols process and connect meaningfully to the artists in the film *and* their cultural works, required a capacity to move between different world-views and in that process be *affected* and for that ‘affect’ to find its way into the film.

The ‘praxis’ of the filmmaking process became my encounter working with specific protocols in Tasmania, in particular ‘Aboriginal Control’ and ‘Communication, Consultation and Consent’.¹⁴ This protocols process, based on dialogue, reverberated into the project, informing it, changing it, changing *me*. Anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose writing on ethics and decolonisation suggests that ‘Dialogue works counter to monological separatism; it requires a ‘we’ who share a space and time of attentiveness, and who bring our moral capabilities into the encounter’ (2004: 30). In fact, the evolution of the ‘unstable’ performed ‘I’ narrator of the film is the outcome of this process of dialogue, with many incarnations until the final ‘lock off’ narration recording in 2008.

Dialogue with the film’s participants around the many film-edits influenced the shaping of this voice. The ‘affect’ of my evolving persona as ‘anxious white film-maker’,¹⁵ decentred, fragmented and losing control of the film, erupted in the face of the challenge – just *whose story* is being told here? This textual strategy is mired in the ground of practice. Aboriginal protocols knock on the door of the white mind: *Wake up. Tell your story, not ours* (Everett 2007: pers.comm.). How to evolve the authorship of the film – *listening* to all the voices, yet tell *my* story, not *theirs* and resist the ‘I’ narrating voice to hold the film together? Earlier edits tried to construct a film with no

¹⁴ Appendix 1.

¹⁵ Katrina Schlunke (2008: pers.comm.).

narration; different versions experimented with ‘splitting’ the voice into the ‘third person’ and ‘first person’ – an ‘I’ voice and a ‘she’ voice.

The textual strategy of the film as a letter became an organic way to evolve the voice of the film – no mere device. It’s as if I needed a ‘real’ person to offer the film – to receive the work, to *listen*: ‘The only way the letter can arrive at its destination and lay the repetitive force of the trauma to rest, is if it engineers a situation of transference which seduces the listener to the story to articulate what the text *enacts*’ (Van Boheemen-Saaf 1999: 67). Rinki Bhattacharya, my friend and colleague in Mumbai, becomes witness to the tale. From the heart of an ex-colony that overthrew British rule, she poses the question, ‘Tell me about your country...Are you free yet?’ As Moreton-Robinson points out, ‘In Australia the colonials did not go home’ (2003: 30).

How to tell *my* story, yet destabilise it? John Docker (2001: 262-3) writes about ‘the mythological trickster figure. Intellectuals, artists, writers...necessary outsiders’; and Dean Blackler (2007: 137) discusses the unstable authorial figure who can’t be trusted. Over time, I construct a narrator who *tries* to make a film, who *forgets* to turn on the microphone, a narrator who admits, ‘like in a dream I lose my thread. This film is dissolving’. I peer into my own mind and create a performance of ‘white instability’, uncertainty, fissure. I develop it into a visual metaphor too – a *white ghost of history* existing in a liminal space on country, a floating signifier of Freud’s (1919) ‘uncanny’, a fertile visual, embodied metaphor with legacies to film scholar Catherine Russell’s (1999: 40-47) thinking around Tracey Moffat’s *Night Cries* (1989).

Moffat’s textual strategies push the viewer into an unstable inner state, close to psychosis, breakdown. The extravagant visuals and re-workings of other films and genres in *Night Cries* takes the viewer through and beyond mourning, into a dynamic ‘performative’ space – shattering speaking positions, creating new correspondences. Yet, paradoxically a rich seam of embodied understanding opens up when we allow the images and ‘cries’ to inhabit us – the sound of the whip or the child sobbing at the seaside; then the ‘affect’ of the film does its work of making us *feel* the way colonisation strangles both black and white, infusing the viewer with the pathologies of this strange and maddening colonial dis/union.

Russell develops a way of thinking about film that calls on ethnography *and* surrealism; others call this auto-ethnography, ‘a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social

contexts' (Spry 2001: 710). Renov discusses 'the performance of subjectivities' and the way 'a self, typically a deeply social self, is being constructed in the process...fluid, multiple, even contradictory—while remaining fully embroiled with public discourses' (2004: 177, 178). Although my previous films have always been produced in this rupture between private and public, the personal and the political, with *Island Home Country* I could more consciously consider the textual strategies available to me from across a range of film, literature and art based forms, and, as well, consider textual strategies in response to protocols process.

I was particularly interested in Australian films that constructed the 'affect' of colonisation in image and sound using poetic and performative methods.¹⁶ These films strike to the heart of the nation's wound – beyond words. I viewed and reviewed them, analysing their form and structure, digitising sequences, trying to work them into the film edit. For instance Steve Thomas's *Black Man's Houses* (1992) shares a structuring method with Claude Lanzmann's documentary on the Holocaust, *Shoah* (1985). Both film-makers film with living survivors who bear witness to the past *in the present*. The resilience of *survival* structures their films. There were clues in these films, both textual and textural strategies, suggesting ways I might develop *Island Home Country* from the subject position of a white settler-invader, yet with the potent presence of other voices speaking from their own centre, *their* place – speaking from 'country'.

Images "recuperate affect"¹⁷

Filmmaking process is a method, often a search for a container, to convey both an inner and an outer journey. I was receptive to the *art of trauma* in the films of post-war Europe and the new German film-makers of the 1980s, and the way they used performative textual strategies to articulate the layers of repression in their own minds and in their nation's.¹⁸ Santner considers the textual strategies these film-makers invent to 'recuperate affect' and speak into numbness, drawing on Freud's notion that absence is the 'real cause of traumatisation' (1990: 155). He refers to Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's (1975) psychoanalytic study of the repression of memory

¹⁶ *Night Cries* (1989); *Black Man's Houses* (1992); *Terra Nullius* (1992); *Remembering Country* (2001); *Stolen Generations* (2000); *One Night the Moon* (2001).

¹⁷ Santner (1990: 155).

¹⁸ Films such as *Night and Fog* (1955); *Hitler: A Film From Germany* (1979); *Germany Pale Mother* (1980); *Heimat* (1984); *Shoah* (1985).

in post-war Germany, a study that laid the groundwork for subsequent research by psychoanalysts, historians and cultural theorists, linking psychoanalytic insights to nation states. I was interested in the Mitscherlichs' application of Freud's work from individual to nation and applying that to Australia and 'the silence' in Tasmania. How do we 'mourn' in film works and confront amnesia and the repercussions of colonial policies in the present? The Mitscherlichs' (1975: 23-31) 'inability to mourn' thesis, I thought, might provide insight into the potential of this film to be a 'work of mourning'.

Other scholars have used the Mitscherlichs' work to help them think about Australian difficulties in coming to terms with the past. Scholar Ross Gibson applies it to the repression of 'the bloody past of Australia's colonized frontier' (2002: 50), and historian Bain Attwood suggests that the Australian nation is like Freud's patient who 'resisted having a history' (2007: 64). Eventually, I came to interrogate psychoanalysis' premise of *working through* historical trauma to achieve closure. Philosopher Jacques Derrida's (2001a: 217) profound meditation on 'there shall be no mourning', Renov's (2004: 120) discussion that 'art can only hope to signify the limits of its healing powers', and Judith Butler's (2003: 467) questioning 'that mourning might be completed', offered more nuanced insights to think through the complex situation I found myself in with this project. There was, in fact, to be no resolution. My sought for 'reckoning' turned out to be illusory. Everett's wait 'at the borderline' (*Island Home Country* 2008), and Nunga philosopher and lawyer, Irene Watson's (2007: 30) 'meditation on discomfort', ask something else of 'newcomers'.

“the strange fecundity of that wreckage”¹⁹

The relationship of psychoanalysis to my film projects has always been more than theoretical and shapes my film practice from the inside. My films are introspective, take many years and always traverse the interface of private and public, inner and outer.²⁰ Jacqueline Rose (2007: 7) refers to the fundamental basis of the psychoanalytic encounter as a kind of making strange. She asks, 'where am I most myself?...in the places where I am most foreign, in my unconscious'. Jacques Lacan puts it like this, 'I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think' (1977: 1).

¹⁹ Butler (2003: 469).

²⁰ Collins (1998, 2001a, b).

The psychoanalytic process of ‘remembering, repeating and working through’ (Freud 1914 [1953: 145]) informed this project ‘affectively’, especially in my attempts to think about family patterns of madness, where I also recognised echoes of Australia’s ‘Colonial Horror Story’ (Russell 1999: 40). As well, I sensed connections between the eerie silence in Tasmania and ‘the incomprehensible mystery of the Nazi genocide’ (Gilroy 2000: 4), an enquiry unfolding in the secular and diasporic extended Jewish family I became part of in the 1980s, with all its gravitas and humour around Jewish history and the turbulent politics of the Middle East.

Yet, in thinking about the traumatic legacies of colonisation in Tasmania it has been necessary to try and separate out family traumas in my own mind from how I understand Tasmanian history and politics. Over the years I have tried to penetrate intergenerational trauma related to convictism and family breakdown, from ‘madness’ around the repression of Tasmania’s violent colonial history and its irruptions in the present. Perhaps this ‘working through’ has allowed less detritus from my own ‘dirty history’ to leach into the film’s protocols process? Or maybe learning to understand and process family breakdowns has generated some kind of porosity – an opening to the colonial nightmare.

In any case, when I read Moreton-Robinson’s (2000a: 248-250) research on white feminists it struck a chord. She explores how family background impacts on subjectivity – especially on those women in uncertain, liminal family spaces exposed to cultural difference, or raised in households where a parent’s mental illness dominated daily life. Moreton-Robinson suggests a capacity for ‘deploying different subject positions in order to function’ may contribute to a more aware intercultural subjectivity (249). So perhaps my dogged perseverance with protocols process was fired in a family member’s madness?

The essay film – *to try*

By the time I arrived to make *Island Home Country*, I was well practised in the process of shedding resistance and making the unconscious *conscious*, having had a long experience of psychoanalysis. Yet the film’s protocol process pushed me further towards ‘I am where I do not think’. There’s a link here with the essayist’s approach in film-making, ‘trying’ out ideas in words and images, tipping into affect, into feeling:

The film-maker's openness to the potential of the image to work in this way is related to a way of looking at the material world that does not start from pre-determined ideas about what is there. Here the film-maker goes into the world with eyes to see, to connect with the world in a mimetic way...The way Varda approaches the filmic medium is inseparable from the way she sees the world – in connections (A Rutherford 2003: 126, 129).

Essay film-making encourages a free flowing intuitive form and also serves the practice of 'remembering, repeating and working through', where the mind can roam across borders: inner and outer, self and society. There is no destination only the exploration. In producing previous essay films I have used this compilation essay method with its links back to early Russian film-making – what is 'not workable with the compilation film...[is] writing the script first, and then struggling to find and fit the images to it' (Leyda 1964: 119). I call this process 'gathering' – compiling a visual and sound archive that takes its final shape and form in editing. So when I set off to Tasmania to film with my family and whoever else I might encounter along the way, the film unfolded more by chance, rather than with a focused plan. My method evolves here – *film often, film by chance, in a contingent way, film by intuition. Film thematically*; create an archive of images to take into the edit room.

This method has some august precedents: Chris Marker structures his essay film *Sans Soleil* (1983) with the *random*, using this *non-organising* principle to plunge the viewer into a sea of colliding images, referring in narration to poet Sei Shonagan's 'list of things that quicken the heart'. Hanna Arendt (1977) describes essayist Walter Benjamin's walking style in Paris as 'strolling through it without aim or purpose...this strolling determined the pace of his thinking...(he) entrusted himself to chance as a guide on his intellectual journeys of exploration' (1977: 21, 43). But, Tasmania, or any part of Australian ground, is not an old European city with Benjamin's city streets. Underneath this colony's roads lies another story, as Gagudju Elder Bill Neidjie (1985: 47) of Arnhem Land expresses:

White European want to know...
Asking 'What is this story?'
This not easy story.
No-one else can tell it...
Because this story for Aboriginal culture...
Our story is the land...
it is written in those sacred places.

Environmental historian James Boyce, in his work on the early phases of colonial take-over in Tasmania, indicates just how much the country and its traditional owners ruled the 'strangers':

What the Europeans saw of this island was also largely shaped by the owners of the land: either Aboriginals showed them around in person or the newcomers followed the extensive network of tracks which led to the places they so urgently needed to access: hunting grounds, lakes, rock shelters, shell fish collection areas and so on (Boyce 1996: 52).

I needed to consider other forms, connected to *being here*, to structure this essay film. For instance, DB Rose's (2004: 3-4) discussion of the ethics of decolonisation, in the context of 'wild country' and 'quiet country', provided a potent visual metaphor and aural sensibility to take into the film's visuals, structure and sound design. It linked directly to the philosophical notion of country articulated in the film by Everett:

The Aboriginal way of seeing the world is not about exploitation...the life of this planet really relies on how humans behave and accept responsibility; and keep the old cultures alive as they have proven to have been the working way with living on country. The impacts have been far less, if you take 40,000 years of human habitation in Tasmania before white people came here and find the answers to how we actually can live on this planet and not exploit it forever.

Duration

Over the years of my 'slow' film-making producing one film a decade, I sensed my method resonated as a craft practice more than one based on any 'industry' model. My films develop as an internal process and have their own duration: 'The end product...is in the future, too far ahead to encourage...It requires a different patience from the patience we are accustomed to—the patience of waiting...The principle in craftsmanship that calls us to work with materials may be the same

principle which in a larger sense calls us to work with ourselves' (Needleman 1979: 66, 106). It's more about the process, relationships and responsibilities during the making of the film that live on after the film; these have as much value, if not more value, than the final artefact. My film-making has always focused on one aim – *make the film, make the film*. So, I was interested in Claude Lanzmann's statement discussing *Shoah* (1985), 'I have made the film, and the film has made me' (1985: 322).

Island Home Country's practice-led process, both as an internal process within this film-maker, and as a social process in direct relationship with Aboriginal protocols and community, attempts to show something of the 'affect' of colonisation and the faltering steps taken to release its yoke personally and politically. In the film Arundhati Roy articulates a similar process for the artist *and* activist:

The search for the individual art, the individual way of expression – how does that link into a community? How does that link to what's important? These are very interesting questions and ones that you can never be comfortable with...a place that you always live in conflict. And that's not a bad thing to live in, in a conflicted sense....where you're not really sure and you have to pick your way through things and you make a decision every time you take a step (*Island Home Country* 2008).

“Silence, the big swag also lies between us”²¹

Renov, in reference to Lacan, suggests 'Death opens up a hole in the Real that will be filled by a "swarm of images" having perhaps ritual or therapeutic value' (2004: 125). This resonates when making a work that attempts to enter the 'silence' or 'void' that clings around sites of violent colonisation. There is a need to be ethical with the camera and wary of valuing film over life; to be insightful with the 'swarm of images' and not seduced by them. Santner discusses the risk in telling the story of traumatic histories – cautioning against 'narrative fetishism....a strategy of undoing, in fantasy, the need for mourning by simulating a condition of intactness, typically by situating the site and origin of loss elsewhere' (1992: 146).

Smith (1999: 146) speaks to the 'frequent silences' in her chapter 'Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects', where she outlines appropriate decolonising methodologies:

²¹ DB Rose (2004: 22).

The remembering of a people relates not so much to an idealized remembering of a golden past but more specifically to the remembering of a painful past and, importantly, people's responses to that pain...there are frequent silences and intervals in the stories...This form of remembering is painful because it involves remembering not just what colonization was about but what being dehumanized meant for our own cultural practices. Both healing and transformation become crucial strategies in any approach which asks a community to remember what they may have decided unconsciously or consciously to forget.

In considering *Island Home Country* in this light, and in the context of working with my own family and Tasmanian Aboriginal community members, the ethical encounter is all. This exegesis proposes that any productive linking between self and community needs to take place in grounded ethics – in the ebb and flow of relationship informed by negotiations around Aboriginal protocols. Within each image and each frame there is a story behind the image: a story of encounter, dialogue, exchange, and negotiation. Each moment, each encounter varies. Yet there is underlying bedrock to it all – articulated in the protocol 'benefit to community' and in what may unfold from 'learning to come into country the proper way,'²² with its implicit recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty.

²² Public discussion, "*Unsettling the Settlers*", *Australian Psychoanalytical Society Annual Conference*, Open Day, 22 July 2006: <http://www.psychoanalysisdownunder.com/downunder/backissues/696#747>.

Chapter 3 – Amnesia

We will not have come to terms with the past until the causes of what happened then are no longer active. Only because these causes live on does the spell of the past remain to this very day unbroken.

Adorno (1986: 129)

Being largely absent from view across mainstream Tasmania while our island is continually redeveloped by non Aboriginal Tasmanians has put Tasmanian Aboriginal people and culture in a precarious position of being more present in print and television than on the ground.

Gough (2009)

Something to be best forgotten

To be born white on the island of Tasmania in the late 1940s was to inhabit a profound silence around race, Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and history, convictism and the violence of British colonisation. There were the instrumental colonial laws and policies that cemented the erasure of Tasmanian Aboriginal people from white eyes – from the notion of ‘terra nullius’²³ in the first days of the British Possession 1803, to Martial Law 1828-1832, to the removals of Aboriginal people to Flinders Island in 1841, to the 1945 Cape Barren Reserve Act which legislated there were no people of Aboriginal descent left in Tasmania,²⁴ to the stranglehold belief, fervently stated in widely circulating films such as *The Last Tasmanian* (1978) and *Manganinnie* (1980) that the death of Truganini signified the death of an entire people.²⁵

Researching *Island Home Country* I went back to Ryan’s (1996 [1981]) *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*. I read about martial law and the call for volunteers for the 1830 ‘Black Line’, a ‘full scale military expedition’ to drive Aboriginal people from their lands. It was a human chain of over 2000 men including soldiers, settlers and convicts (1996: 110-112). I scan the list of volunteers. Did my great grandfather and uncles join up? Pa’s Catholic grandfather, born in Dublin in 1821,

²³ ‘The legal foundation of the Australian state was based on the white supremacist doctrine of *terra nullius*... (it) justified acquisition of lands the coloniser deemed were unsettled; the presence of Aboriginal peoples in Australia was not sufficient to displace *terra nullius* as we were viewed not to exist in law’ I Watson (2007: 17, 201 fn.6).

²⁴ Ryan (1996); Boyce (2008).

²⁵ Truganini, 1812-1876 was ‘a member of the Nuenonne band of the South-East Nation... a proud and courageous survivor in a time of harsh brutality and uncertainty for the Aboriginal people’, (*tayenebe* 2009). Her name is spelt in various ways including Trugernanner, Trukanini, Trucanini.

had joined the British Army's 76th Manchester Regiment and was stationed in Tasmania in 1839-1849; that puts him in Tasmania at the height of what Boyce calls the 'horrific, and almost unscrutinised...government-sponsored ethnic clearances' conducted on the west coast (2008: 11).

Boyce's use of the term 'ethnic clearances' to refer to the Crown's race based policies after the 'Black Line' only hints at the drastic consequences of the Colonial Government's race based policies. Everett (1997a) discussed this highly politicised issue of naming, fifteen years earlier, in a critique of historian Henry Reynolds' (1996: 175) use of the term 'ethnic cleansing' in *Aboriginal Sovereignty*: 'And his once only use of the term ethnic cleansing appears to be a subtle use of literary English to show how imperialist nation-states will change common language terms to 'soften' their practices of genocide' (1997a: 8).

The extent of the denial of what *really* happened in Tasmania produces not only a crisis for historical representation, but an underlying psychotic split, certainly in my mind, and, it seems, in everyday life and culture amongst settler-colonials. As Geoffrey Hartman (2004: 8) probes, 'How does traumatic knowledge become transmissible – how can it extend into personal and cultural meaning?' In a discussion on the Armenian genocide David Kazanjian and Marc Nichanian (2003) consider the way 'genocide' has 'performative' agency, with disturbing consequences:

By using the word "Genocide," we survivors are only repeating again and again the denial of the loss. We probably can't help it. We are doing what the executioner wanted us to do, from the beginning on. We claim all over the world that we have been "genocided"; we relentlessly need to prove our own death. We are still in the claws of the executioner... "Genocide," here, has become an example of what it describes. It is not simply a word we use to represent an event we can know. Rather, it has become a word that represents us in our use of it (2003: 127, 129).

Yet many 'newcomer' texts seem obsessed with 'genocide',²⁶ perpetuating a kind of colonial melancholy in the midst of decades of Tasmanian Aboriginal political struggle and dynamic cultural renaissance. To make cultural works in 'sites of instability and disturbance' (Gough 2004) is to approach philosopher Jean-François Lyotard's (1984: 7) *differend*, 'the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put in phrases cannot yet be. This state includes silence'. Or as Nichanian articulates: 'How to fix the Catastrophe, how to say it,

²⁶ *The Last Tasmanian* (1978); *Manganinnie* (1980); Hughes (1987); *Frontier* (1996); Flanagan (2008).

when one knows that it resides in the shattering of language and that no narration can take account of it' (2003: 113).

In *Guilt about the Past*, German jurist and writer Bernhard Schlink (2009), discusses German guilt about the Holocaust, and echoes some of these contemporary issues around historical shame and unresolved guilt in present day Tasmania. Britain's ethnically based policies of forced removals and the imposition of Martial Law were absent from my knowledge of the island's history. My attempts to raise questions with my own family about the colonial occupation and our family's 'land grants' in relation to the dispossession of Tasmanian Aboriginal people has not been easy. *Better not talk about it*. Acknowledging that the 'long shadow of past guilt is universal', Schlink nevertheless declares he is unable to discuss it in universal terms, 'I have my hands full understanding the German experience' (2009: 2). His essays resonate with my task with this project, trying to *remember* and dispel amnesia and connect to the ethics and responsibilities around making a film, in the particular circumstances of Tasmania – a site in which the past, the present and the *unspoken* hover.

Mudrooroo Narogin (1983: 4), writing from the perspective of Tasmanian tribal elder Wooreddy, in his novel *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World* comes nearby the impossible task of speaking into this site: 'Nothing from this time on could ever be the same – and why? Because the world was ending!' If Narogin's novel comes nearby 'the impossible' perhaps it's because his writing imaginatively enters the inner world of Tasmanian Aboriginal people to evoke the experience of invasion from their perspective as custodians of their own country. It is not written from the vantage point of the colonisers. Yet for the perpetrators and their descendants (my family) how to approach the *un-name-able*?

“Is her spirit clear?”²⁷

There are significant ethical issues concerning the question of 'Who has the responsibility and legitimacy (or power and authority) to represent others....in the sense of "speaking for" and "presenting a case"?' (B Nichols 1994: 64). Or as post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak inverts, 'Who will listen?' (1990: 59-60). How and where does a white Tasmanian position herself in

²⁷ Smith (1999: 10).

making a cultural work? By facing the silence within her own family and culture? This seemed to be a place to start. But during my many visits to the island over a period of nearly fifty years, I never penetrated beyond the surface layers of my own white family's denial – their amnesia or my own. How did Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and history, and my own family's convict past, become so locked away?

Repression around our convict ancestry also created amnesia around class origins and a strange ambivalence around owning being 'Irish', as our mother's family turned to the British monarchy and Christianity as sovereign rulers of the land.



Figure 5: *Empire Day*, Invermay, Launceston, Tasmania 1933

The intergenerational trauma of the Irish, subjugated by British rule in Ireland, and then Australia, was laid down deep: Tasmanian author Christopher Koch (2000: 111) suggests ‘The convict past is like a wound, scarring the whole inner life of Tasmanians...suspicion of convict ancestry was a matter of real shame and anguish – even up to the 1950s. That past was hated’. The sites of violent colonial occupation not only haunt, Koch links them to ‘a pathos of absence; so that the essential Australian experience emerges as one where a European consciousness, with European ancestral memories, is confronted by the mask of a strange land...there’s an almost unconscious level at which we’re still a colony’ (2000: 95). Yet, as Smith points out, ‘In the end they [convicts, immigrants,] were all inheritors of imperialism who had learned well the discourses of race and gender, the rules of power, the politics of colonialism. They became the colonizers’ (1999: 9). Once in power they maintained a divide between black and white, a phantasy ‘white’ memory repressing Aboriginal sovereignty with its potent links to Indigenous knowledge about living on the island.

Gough (2009) makes some acute observations of the risks involved in the contemporary elevation of the convict ‘Other’ in Tasmania. Tracking the rise in the Government’s development of convict heritage sites and convict ‘tourism’ as respectable, worthy and exploitable, Gough argues it may simply perpetuate the erasure of Aboriginal presence and ownership of country. Her radical interpretation of what is required in this historical moment suggests recognition of different regimes of cultural thinking and opening up colonial history as a shared site:

Colonial heritage is Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage...Luring people forth to face their ancestors, whether convicts or other colonial arrivals, is the first necessary step to ensure people own their own difficult histories...how complicitous their family origins are to the displacement of Indigenous Australians...descendants of convicts and Aboriginal people in Tasmania will finally meet and recognise each other for the first time in generations. Denials need to be debated and the present state of unrest resolved, as much as possible (Gough 2009).

Don’t mess with history

Back in 1981, on one of my trips to the island, my Uncle J asked, ‘what are you going to Cape Barren for? There’s nothing there’. His words were delivered hard. Like his weathered, red face. The words were almost like code: *don’t you go digging around. Don’t mess with history.*

Tasmania's white. There are no blacks (left). This moment in the sunroom, the pale winter's light filtering through the drawn blinds, the emerald green hedge surrounded the farmhouse like a barricade, is a memory I can touch with my fingers. Everything hangs suspended in space, adrift, time standing still. The distant, denuded barren hills, the dying sheep farm, the phosphate-layered soil, a dead weight around my neck, strangling me. This moment holds my childhood on the island. Keep your mouth shut. Your mind shut. This is amnesia, forced forgetting. Woebetide if you break the lock. Outside in the car, my closely read copy of Ryan's (1996 [1981]) just published *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*. The next day, on Flinders Island, at Wybalenna, Ryan reads from her book:

For Flinders Island was now a ration station to a remnant group of people from whom the most able and the most healthy had been removed...on a clear day a number of women would sit on Flagstaff Hill and look across to the north-east coast of Van Diemen's Land ninety kilometres away and lament the loss of their country...At night they performed ceremonial dancing and by day they went hunting for mutton birds and shellfish without...permission (Ryan 1996: 196-97).

In that moment my mind opened up to 'the secret'. Ryan's work affected me like a psychic shock. I knew, then, I would make a film about the fissure that opened up in this mighty space between past and present – 'deep history'. Sociologist Norman Denzin (2003: 34) refers to such moments as 'breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or schism, crossing from one space to another'. Learning about Wybalenna, Cape Barren Island, Martial Law, the Black Wars and the resistance to white invasion – a veil was lifting.

In the public arena Ryan's *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* also helped shift the spectre of 'genocide' that Tom Haydon's documentary film *The Last Tasmanian* (1978) perpetuated – a thesis that reinforced over two centuries of colonisation in Tasmania that there were no Aborigines left. The debates around *The Last Tasmanian* in the 1970s prefigured the intensity of Keith Windschuttle's subsequent attack on the historiography of Ryan and Reynolds. In a significant way, Windschuttle's (2002) *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* and Tom Haydon's *The Last Tasmanian* demonstrate a refusal to listen or develop relationships with Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the community and connect with the diversity of their stories. Greg Lehman (2003: 180) writes about this in his essay *Telling us True*: 'He [Windschuttle] would have learned so much more if only he had asked an

Aboriginal person to show him around Risdon Cove. Instead he insisted on keeping us at arm's length, maintaining Aborigines as a shadowy, threatening "other".

"to learn to see the frame"²⁸

There is no direct route to this process of encounter and relationship. That moment at Wybalenna was the catalyst to my process of trying to shed amnesia – born in Tasmania and knowing nothing. But, did we really know *nothing*? Was this just another smoke screen that white settler-newcomers have tended to hide behind? Consider Uncle J's 'what are you going to Cape Barren for? There's nothing there', as code for, *we know nothing, but we know everything*. 'It is still the past event that cannot become past, linked to the extreme experience of trauma' (Nichanian 2003: 113). The very worst excesses of Britain's colonial rule were enacted in Tasmania and the memories are alive in both survivors and country: 'What disintegrates forever, for generations, is having been at one time...the target of a will to annihilation' (116).

I remember going to the ruins of an old farmhouse, *Montacute*, in the country of the Big River people, not far from our relative's sheep farm: 'Situated at the junction of three ridges which plunged down to the River, it was ideal for Aboriginal ambush. Captain Torlesse, the occupant at the time, built a high brick and stone wall to enclose the homestead and outhouses and at intervals this wall established positions for firing at the Aborigines' (Ryan 1996: 104). In 1981 I filmed *Montacute's* ruins with my super 8 camera. Editing this footage twenty-five years later, the faded images of the old ruins seem to say something about the hidden, buried history that is painful and difficult to look at. The stone convict walls, tumbled like piles of debris, the abandoned farmhouse – light and shadow on a pale winter's day. These hard stones, even without Ryan's historical evidence, evoke 'affect'. The ruins embody loss and decay as if they are the concrete form of an abandoned, forgotten history of colonial violence – a violence the newcomers, the strangers, prefer to forget, to bury: 'To learn to see the frame that blinds us to what we see is no easy matter' (Butler 2005a: 826).

At the sheep farm one day, while making this film, I tried to talk with Uncle J about the local Aboriginal people and their country – occupied by the family farm. He hinted at the race violence

²⁸ Butler (2005a: 826).

around the Midlands, also documented by Ryan. The Big River people fought the British invasion right here – to protect country, their food, water and sacred sites (Ryan 1996: 114-123). That day, the air was heavy with pain – the impending loss of the farm, Uncle J’s approaching death, his wheezing lungs. From the window, beyond the hedge, the paddocks were bare – no trees, no sheep dogs waiting at the gate; a new highway stretching from the kitchen window, the logging trucks sweeping by. Everywhere was loss and decay, death:

What happened to the land when the people who had managed, created and renewed it for more than 30,000 years were almost all killed or removed?...Perhaps the oddest environmental change was that the trees began to die...in 1844 Mrs. Nixon wrote of the Oatlands district: “we observed one of those frequently recurring tracts of dead timber – large trees in which every branch and their trunks perfect, only leafless...The effect is most melancholy, as though the locust has passed over the land” (Boyce 2008: 206-208).

I ask Uncle J if I can film with him (an insensitive request, given he is unwell). ‘You can film in the farmhouse and outside’ – and I do. In a way, those eerie, silent rooms evoke more of the repressed history than if he had spoken to camera. It’s uncanny – the farmhouse hasn’t changed since the 1950s. It’s as if time has frozen. His refusal leads me to a more uncertain, intuitive way of filming. It is as if my camera is seeking out something way beyond words: ‘the “un-image-able”...the event, in its totality, was beyond the limits of the imagination – it shattered the speech that was supposed to account for it – but it was also beyond the limits of representation, that is of the image’ (Nichanian 2003: 111, 114).

In the film I narrate: ‘I track the house looking for any clues...the hedge, always, the hedge’. At the time of filming I sense its enclosing quality – like a fort through every window. A visual metaphor of *amnesia* is forming here. It is palpable, *the hedge that keeps history out*. These rooms, frozen in time, empty of life conjure up a ghostly presence. Making a film where personal memory moves beyond established orthodox histories to create other ways of seeing and telling is a subtle process. As I film that day, the past seems to be present in *absence*, not presence. Benjamin (1977: 216) says ‘most memories that we search for come to us as visual images’. Paradoxically in Uncle J’s refusal *the hedge* emerges as a potent visual metaphor – ‘surface traces of an absent subject’ (B Nichols 1996: 59). A similar experience of memory is described by Sidran DeKoven Ezrahi (1994: 123) in a discussion about Holocaust poet Dan Pagis:

“For years I had tried to ignore the subject of the Holocaust, but the sight of the room, which appalled me, enabled and even forced me to write poems on the subject.” The room appears, in the telling, as a kind of nature preserve, a museum-like reconstruction of a lost world...As if following some metaphysical law of conservation, memory that refuses to die is set loose as a property of the universe.

At the end of 1849 our Pa’s great grandfather had a bakery supplying bread to the men building the railway line between Hobart and Launceston. With the exile of all the last remaining Aboriginal people to Flinders Island, the colony’s railway tracks could now be laid down, erasing the presence of an ancient culture that travelled seasonally across country for food and ceremony for thousands of years. As I film with my cousin on his bread run from Richmond to Hobart, the years 1849 and 2004 seem quite close. He struggles with the fissure between history and memory too – the narrative orthodoxy of his high school history and his growing realisation that there’s another story here.

Later I film with him at the kitchen sink of the old farmhouse, gazing out at the new highway with the logging trucks hurtling by. As I film, the image seems to hold the years of this sad story of a brutal colonisation. Trauma is in the air, but laden heavy just under the surface. It’s as if we are both reckoning with an *excess* of knowledge – the deep history of Aboriginal presence and survival. What can colonial-settlers do with this knowing? Push it back down and stay in colonial melancholy, longing for the fantasy of a bountiful white Australia: ‘their power their privilege, their history....vested in their legacy as colonisers’ (Smith 1999: 7) or move forward into ‘new dialogue’? (Gough 2009).

The “un-image-able”²⁹

An ex-student asks me to act in his film.³⁰ I am to play a madwoman who tries to kill the Buddha on the road and then murder her son and girlfriend in a jealous rage. The day we film, it doesn’t stop raining. It is intense, cold and surreal. I wonder what I am really doing here. In my mind’s eye, performing these murderous feelings – the moment reminds me of the Port Arthur massacre. I see

²⁹ Nichanian (2003: 111, 115).

³⁰ *Mad Woman’s Mountain* (2003), director Woo Jung Kim.

my super 8 of the crumbled convict ruins, the dark black of the sky, the greens and grey of the trees.



Figure 6: *Death, life's quiet companion*,³¹ Port Arthur Historic Site, Tasmania 1996

As I perform this film-maker's 'madwoman' I sense that I am something 'other' than his construct. I recall my footage of the convict ruins. I imagine the white ghost figure into the buildings as uncanny, ghostly returns. The image is embodied, performative, ritualistic. That moment in the bush gave form to my inner state of mind. I am performing my own 'white ghost' self. The sleepwalker is waking up: 'This collective amnesia was all quite intentional, of course. From the point of Truganini's death there was a determination to define the original Tasmanians as not-being' (Pybus 1991: 178). The tourist image of Tasmania as an untouched 'wilderness', maintained by the pastoral idyll of my childhood, was now finally breaking down.

My amnesia is partially expressed in the shape of this restless hovering ghost who has no country. This comes nearby Santner's (1990: 155) notion that images 'recuperate affect'; what was

³¹ Lehman (1996).

repressed is now given form – albeit a ghostly form. That day in the bush – wet, bloodied, performing a ‘mad woman’ – I was drawn to this ghost in *me*, in an embodied way. It was an image that evoked how I felt *inside*, unspoken. Tasmania’s repressed colonial story was debated interminably in *words*, endless circles trapped in the ‘history wars’, and for me this image now broke through. It was as if ‘amnesia’ was pierced in my own mind, and now I could both construct *and* become that ghost. In the mysterious process of creating this image – ‘affect’ is embodied in form – *and* it ‘affects’ the viewer. In *Samson and Delilah* (2009) silence breathes both the wound *and* resilience into ‘us’. In *Black Man’s Houses* (1992) the rhythmic repetition *hammers* ‘us’ to remember. In the autobiographical film *Remembering Country* (2001) the intense, fragmented close-ups of faces communicates the fissure of separation in the break-up of Aboriginal families under racially motivated laws – to make Australia ‘white’.

Wakefulness

The experience of performing this ‘mad woman’ and subsequently placing her into the film, *amidst* the challenge of protocols process, seemed to trigger ‘affect’; *the instability of white* literally seeped into the film. This white ghost echoes something about the nature of *remembering* in my previous films:

Thornley brings to mind Walter Benjamin’s “angel of history” who presides over the mounting debris of the past. Like the angel, Thornley’s face is “turned toward the past”; she too “would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed,” but irresistible forces propel her “into the future to which [her] back is turned.” For Thornley, the filmmaking process itself is an act of remembering, an on-going experiment with her own historical time (Collins 1998 : para 1).

In developing *Island Home Country* I examined my narration in *Maidens* (1978). I recognised how unconscious it was and *is* about ‘race’. For instance the narration, ‘The land is hard’. What is it really saying? What does it hide or cover over? Boyce discusses such one-dimensional ways of *remembering* the Tasmanian colony in his book *Van Diemen’s Land*:

The dominant national narrative, which begins with the struggle of British settlers to come to terms with a “harsh and forbidding” land, needs to be substantially qualified...Here was an abundance of fresh water, a temperate climate, reliable rainfall,

density of game...Most crucially, there were open grasslands – Aboriginal hunting grounds – close to the ports and estuaries of first settlement (2008: 3-4).

My ‘land is hard’ narration echoes a line in *Island Home Country*: ‘The farmers grim bearing’. Yes, I know these faces. As a child I absorbed them at the sheep yard auctions: ‘The mouth is a serrated horizon-line. Furrows mark a neck and jaw-line champed to the rigours of adversity. Eyes are tarped with forbearance...it is keeping to itself whatever it knows’ (Gibson 2002: 94). Yet another process is required to deconstruct images like these from the national ‘white story’ of suffering in a harsh land.

Historian Ann Curthoys (1999, 2006) prises the scab off this white wound to analyse the messy knot of complex emotions layered beneath the surface. She writes about the victim mentality in the white settler community’s sense of homeland and the way victimological narratives take form: ‘...the trauma of expulsion, exodus, and exile obscures empathetic recognition of indigenous perspectives, of the trauma of invasion, institutionalisation, and dispersal’ (1999: 18). I read this early on in the film’s research phase. It offered ways to think about the ‘subject position’ of the white settler – how being a victim occupied centre stage in the ‘white Australian’ historical narrative. It resonated, too, with my own family in Tasmania – no one ever talked about Aborigines and there was an ingrained sense of our own hardship, ‘We worked hard for the land, it’s ours’.³² By placing this ‘suffering’ in a particular historical frame and analysing how certain archetypes of behaviour become embedded, Curthoys suggests white settler suffering erased Aboriginal presence and place, conferring right of ownership to the land. As Moreton-Robinson (2003: 26) argues, ‘Whiteness is the invisible measure of who can hold possession’.

Erasure is the prerogative of white possession – to ‘see’ *and* ‘not see’ Aboriginal people. Sharon Sullivan (2006) discusses this ‘mind-state’ as an entrenched habit of unconscious racism, suggesting ways to challenge and deconstruct it. The oscillating ‘presence’ and ‘absence’ became something to expose in the film, the question reverberating, how to find ways to signify erasure and amnesia, colonial (white) power and acknowledge Aboriginal sovereignty in the same text? As I was to discover, this could not be done in isolation – production of identity is dynamic. It needs to be done in connection with community: ‘Simply to listen is to be drawn into a world of ethical

³² Narration, *Island Home Country* (2008).

encounter: to hear is to witness; to witness is to become entangled...presence-to-the-world' (DB Rose 2004: 213).

As I connected with Tasmanian Aboriginal writers and artists – their cultural works tell the story of country from another place, from *inside*, not outside. This capacity to see *beyond* the frame of the colonisers is a practice to be learned, especially by 'outsiders' (Smith 1999: 137). As it develops, amnesia may fade and liquefy into a river of fast flowing memories towards wakefulness and present tense entanglement.

In Britain's *will to annihilate* a whole people – all Tasmanians across the racial divide of black and white were deprived of a more profound connection to country and culture. Lehman articulates this loss while making *deep history* contemporaneous with now:

Tasmanian Aborigines are not just far-off figures on a long-ago shore. People like Lanney and Trucanini, Walter Arthur and Mary Anne lived in the same city as us. They worked in industries that are familiar to us. They had families and friends. They suffered loss and had happy times. Most importantly, their lives offer a window into the life and culture of Tasmanian Aboriginal people today – people who have drawn a culture and heritage from the past that is not only embodied in middens and archaeological sites, but is a part of the living history of urban, industrial and cultural precincts...We have an essential opportunity here. Because while Aboriginal culture continues to lie beneath still waters, Tasmania will continue to have only a dim understanding of the deep history of this place – and a limited ability to truly know this land as home (Lehman 2006: 7-8).

This growing articulation of 'deep history' by members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community – the reclamation of language, the naming of places in language and the recovery of the 'sacred geography' of country (DB Rose 1996: 35) re-animates a profound history and a living present. Lehman writes about 'a new, negotiated place called Tasmania, where conflicts of the past can be talked about by all who are present and transformed – a place that we can imagine into existence' (2003: 183). This capacity to shed 'amnesia' and to find a place in the mind 'beyond the colonial construct' (Everett 2006a: 92) allows a dynamic *living history* into the present no longer couched in the language of the colonisers – in the language of the 'genocide sayers'. 'Mixed stories and ancestries shouldn't dilute our Aboriginal identity but should give us back our terrain – including our inseparable land and stories from colonial times to the present' (Gough 2009).

The next chapter *Possession* explores the way ‘white’ possession functions to block the emergence of a dynamic ‘shared cross cultural history’, albeit an ‘*uncomfortable one*’ (Gough 2009).

Chapter 4 – Possession

We who lived (in Tasmania) between the thirties and the fifties were living in the half-light of a dying British Empire; but we only slowly came to realise it. The culture based in London was the imaginary pole star of our world.

Koch (2000: 92)

White subjects are disciplined...to invest in the nation as a white possession that imbues them with a sense of belonging and ownership.

Moreton-Robinson (2006a: 222)

There’s no such thing as post-colonialism – and that means giving us back our country and letting us rule our own country.

Everett (*Island Home Country* 2008)

“Tell me about your country. Are you free yet?”³³

There was *possession* of this island continent in 1788 – ‘the taking of a territory subject to a sovereign ruler or state’ (OED 1973) and there was another *possession* – the taking of my mind, as in ‘the fact of a demon possessing a person’ (OED 1973). This chapter attempts to think through the imbricated and symbiotic site of the white paranoid nation-state (Hage 1998, 2003) and its troubled subject(s), in the context of my practice- led film-making. How to express this inner and outer ‘possession’ in a film was a research question when I began, but in practice, it was dialogue and process at the ‘Cultural Interface’ (Nakata 2007: 199) that shaped the final film more than any independent, authorial decisions by me as film-maker.

In her discussion of intercultural cinema Laura Marks suggests that, ‘When experience takes place in the conjunction of two or more cultural regimes of knowledge, filmmakers must find ways to express this experience that cannot be in terms of either’ (2000: 10). At the very opening of the film differing notions of country, nation and colonisation are contrasted. The opening narration ‘I

³³ Narration, *Island Home Country* (2008).

am white, born on a stolen island' is juxtaposed with Everett's '*country* is us as much as we are it'. Several minutes into the film Bhattacharya speaks from another subject position: off shore, indirectly and *through* the film-maker. Her question is uttered from a post-colonial space and, in a way, poses the hypothesis of the film, 'Tell me about your country...are you free yet?'

There are several years of film-making process in this montage that presents the film's formal strategies, suggesting a film with multiple speaking positions, expressing different 'cultural regimes of knowledge' and different ways of 'remembering'. There's the unreliable white ghost narrator who names her *whiteness* and the fact that she is on *stolen* country; there's the Tasmanian Aboriginal Elder who states his *indigenous* connection to country and there's the Indian film-maker who poses a question about *freedom* from inside a country which fought a long anti-colonial war against British rule.

It was no easy task to articulate this film's evolving form – working with these differing subject positions, the film was navigating several cultural realities as it stumbled along uncertain tracks. Yet Marks' suggestion that 'experimental form helps to express the emergent knowledge conditions of intercultural experience' (2000: 10) reads as too concise a summation to fit this film's tentative process around textual strategies. In fact, so often with film, what we finally *see* on screen is determined by a complex interplay of so many production forces. Textual strategies aren't always arrived at by choice, but by the interplay of multiple factors; more often than not textual strategies are desperate moves – intensified by financial constraints.

Imaginings

I am writing this exegesis five years after I set off to Tasmania to make the film. A radio program, *Larapuna* (2009) about Aboriginal cultural practices on the north-east coast of Tasmania, reminds me that meeting and filming with Aboriginal community members caused a fundamental shift in the way I *imagine* Tasmania. *Their* imaginings 'affected' *me* and became part of the film in subtle mimetic ways. Marks writes about mimesis as 'an immanent way of being in the world, whereby the subject comes into being not through abstraction from the world but compassionate involvement in it' (2000: 141). So, instead of seeing Tasmanian Aboriginals as a people dispossessed by 'white possession', constantly fighting a 'resistance' war against the colonisers,

the experience of making the film in a ‘protocols’ context became a process of *experiencing* the force of Tasmanian Aboriginal continuity and custodianship of country. Everett talks about this in *Larapuna* (2009):

If one sees oneself as part of the country as much as the country is part of you, then the living consciousness of that place, the feeling of the spirit of that place is in its own way, your story. Stories are not static history; they are always living history. So today’s Aboriginal community hasn’t lost anything.

Learning to understand the past and the present as a continuum becomes transformative. It set aside my inherited dependence on the tired old ‘extinction-resistance-mourning’ or ‘possession-dispossession-resistance’ paradigms. Marks, also refers to the *transforming* quality of intercultural film works: ‘People whose lives are built in the movement between two or more cultures are necessarily in the process of transformation’ (Marks 2000: 65). My remembering self, based on a childhood ‘white’ fantasy island is thus transformed, initially by the progressive historians of the 1970s and 1980s but, more, in the intercultural encounter where my subjectivity is impacted: ‘embodied and experiential knowledge brings an important and revealing new dimension to non-Aboriginal understandings...of meaning-making in Aboriginal cultures’ (Deger 2006: xxvii).

Some years into the film’s production, through protocols process and filming with members of community, I learn a little about country. In Everett and Kimberley’s (2006b) *Meenamatta Water Country Discussion* I discover the traditional name for the mountain Ben Lomond is *turbuna*, and that it is in *meenamatta* country, home to the *plangermairreenner*, Everett’s clan. To know this subtly alters my relationship to country as our own Nana was born there in 1890, near Ben Lomond – *turbuna*. She loved country, too, in her own way, often talking of the river where she washed the clothes as ‘dear old Nile’, or in her own paintings where she realised the powerful presence of this mountain as a sheltering force. Boyce (1996, 2008) provides fresh insights into Tasmania’s early colonial history of 1803-1820 with a perspective on how much this pre-industrial society of transported convicts, Irish agricultural labourers, farm servants and itinerant poor adapted to live in ‘deep interaction with the land and its Aboriginal owners’ (1996: 40). Boyce’s class analysis also challenges the entrenched possession-dispossession paradigm:

The European invaders remain objectified in this view: raping, killing, cutting and building a little England over the ashes of the earth and the people of this land. The emphasis remains one-sided: on what we do to the land and its people, never on what

this experience might be doing to us...Survival still requires not only a much deeper interdependence with the land but a listening to the Aboriginal people about what this may mean (1996: 58-59).



Figure 7: *Tribal boundaries of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, map, Jessie Ginsborg-Newling 2008*

The sense of a growing, yet fragile connection to country and its Aboriginal owners, with their threads to ecologically sensitive environmental and cultural practices long preceding British occupation, is not acquired through books, but through relationship and living encounters. The past *and* present may then develop a living continuity, rather than existing as disembodied, cut off from each other. Investigating ‘colonial possession’ in my own mind – and exploring this in film – required me to connect to a living community, with their ‘protocols’. Marks see the personal movement into the collective as another distinctive quality of the intercultural film: ‘Perception in such works is not just an individual exploration but socially and historically specific: it embodies a collective expression even as it is highly personal’ (Marks 2000: 62).

White possession

When I began this film project I sensed the land grab and the possession of the island as the theft that it was. I never did as a child. It was simply ‘home’. How to express such psychotic fissure in the film? Perhaps by going deeper into it. Katrina Schlunke (2009: 1) in an essay called *Home* draws out the stark reality that this place we newcomers think of as home ‘for all time’ is, in fact, ‘on someone else’s land’. Drawing on Moreton-Robinson’s (2004a: para 6) ‘possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty’, she develops the concept of ‘the possessive imagination’ beginning with Captain James Cook’s ultimate possession of the entire continent. These ideas, drawn from Australian critical race and whiteness studies, hit full force during the film’s editing phase, irrupting in the encounter and dialogue around *whose story* is being told here. They penetrated my defences not as theory, but in fleshy human connectedness – in reality – providing a space to examine unconscious habits around the pervasive nature of *white possession* – how it ‘manifests itself in everyday encounters, how it works materially, discursively, ontologically and epistemologically for Australians of every colour...white subjects are disciplined...to invest in the nation as a white possession that imbues them with a sense of belonging and ownership’ (Moreton-Robinson 2006a: 221-222).

I started filming flags

Just up the road from the *Colonialism and its Aftermath Conference* (University of Tasmania 2004), the Prince of Wales Hotel still flies the British flag. ‘Did colonialism happen or is it happening?’ asks anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli (2002: 154). Moreton-Robinson prefers to call ‘the current condition not as postcolonial but as *postcolonizing* with the associations of ongoing process which that implies’ (2003: 30). I film the flag. It is dusk. The light is deep blue. Snow is on *Kunanyi*. Down the road at Battery Point the cannons are still poised against possible invasion. Paradoxes abound. Henry Reynolds (2004) gives a keynote paper on race, eugenics and colonial policy and later that evening, Conference delegates are inducted into the formal protocols of presentation to meet the Governor at Government House. The juxtaposition of Reynolds’ post-colonial analysis of race and Julie Gough’s ‘Welcome to Country’ sit uneasily with the colonial protocols still being enacted at Tasmania’s Government House in the 21st century. This *aftermath*

of colonialism seems increasingly phantasmagoric. How to give film form to these maddening contradictions of ‘white possession’ – these differing cultural regimes of knowledge?

It’s early days with this film project. I’m to give a presentation at the Conference (Thornley 2004). Yet I am at the outer rim of this project and unsure of how to proceed. This prising apart of ‘possession in the mind’ is a risky business, even dangerous; in deconstructing *possession* another *possession* is forming – these words on the page now, the film itself, both forms of possession, holding the reins of story. I remember the cautionary warning given to Pybus as she began her own ‘reckoning’ on Bruny Island: ‘First we steal the blackfellas’ land, then we deny them an identity and now you want to steal their story for your own intellectual purposes. Don’t you think that’s just another kind of colonialism?’ (1991: 15).

Months later, on a mild Sydney winter’s day, along with the fluttering of the many American and Australian flags, I film the US Fleet, its supercarrier USS *Kitty Hawk*, and the anti-nuclear protestors. I think of the painting of the British flag-raising ceremony that morning of ‘possession’ in Sydney 1788.³⁴ The signifying image of the Australian flag, its origins in the British flag, lies in direct lineage to this moment, or rather, as Schlunke (2009) argues, to Captain Cook’s 1770 ‘possession’ of Bedang (‘Possession’ Island) in the Torres Strait: ‘Everything is claimed, even the harbours like Sydney that he hasn’t seen...Taking women, marrying anyone, shooting, wanting anything they could get—rivers, bays, harbours islands...This tiny island, just off the tip of Cape York, bears a huge representational burden’ (2009: 4).

I prefer the deconstructed version of the flag-raising ceremony in the *Cadi Jam Ora: First Encounters* installation in Sydney’s Botanic Gardens.³⁵ It’s next to a portrait of Captain Cook with the irreverent caption, that blunt statement of fact, ‘He didn’t discover Australia. It wasn’t lost to us’. As I film the display screens, with the story of invasion from the point of view of the Cadigal people, sunlight streaking across the British flag amidst the screeching bats, Captain Philip and his crew seem strangely stunted, lost in space.

³⁴ *The Founding of Australia by Capt. Arthur Phillip, Sydney Cove, Jan. 26 1788*, by A Talmage (1937), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

³⁵ It includes the story of the Cadigal people (traditional owners, Sydney area), Botanic Gardens Trust: http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/welcome_to_bgt/royal_botanic_gardens/garden_features/indigenous.

A few years later when the 2005 Cronulla ‘race’ riots erupted, the Australian flag became a rallying symbol for the protection of Australia’s whiteness. On that same day, I film the Australia Day ceremony on the ‘northern beaches’ where I live in Sydney. There is no visible racist outburst or violence up here that day, yet as I film I sense *white settler nationalism* infuse the event. It is symbolised by the flag of ‘phallic plenitude’ raised aloft the flagpole: ‘The boast of possession reverberates throughout the culture’ (J Rutherford 2000: 209). Bhattacharya’s ‘are you free yet?’ echoes as I film these visual icons of occupation. Paulo Freire’s (1996: 29) discussion about ‘the struggle for freedom’ and how to become *transformed* seems as relevant today as that day of white invasion back in 1788.

The Crown possesses the mind

How could a child of Irish rebels and convicts become so possessed by the Crown? Extraordinary! We were from Irish stock, Britain’s original ‘subalterns’. Memory, laid down in the child’s mind gives a clue to this colonisation of the mind. Possession becomes so total that even the capacity to witness oneself as a coloniser *and* ‘white’ is impossible, unless there’s a ‘breach, crisis....schism’ (Denzin 2003: 34). My friends and colleagues in the film, Dara, Lai Storz, Bhattacharya and Roy, all know about being colonised by the British. They speak *back* into colonial-neo-colonising Australia about ‘possession’; they show something of *their* process in working through colonial possession of their minds. Dara states that ‘being colonised is a very subtle thing...you were never a first class citizen’. Roy suggests ‘It’s important to actually reach out and make connections beyond national borders’, and Lai Storz’s ‘identity crisis’, in the segregated black-white toilet block in the bush, is about Australia’s racism *and* her own coming to consciousness about *being* Chinese.

For a child of the 1950s the images of the Monarchy merged with stories of fairies and princes. It’s as if my world had a layer of the every day – the ordinary and then this other layer of sublime ‘otherness’ – a fantasy world, a dream world. The two worlds merged and became *real* with the Queen’s 1954 visit when Mum and Dad were deputy Mayor and Mayoress (Launceston, Tasmania) and Mum had curtsy lessons to meet the Queen. ‘White possession’ was laid down early in my mind, born amidst ‘the fantasy of the Australian Good...that a beneficent Australian nation endows

on its populace, and it is this good that must be maintained against the threat of an unregulated, un-Australian Other' (J Rutherford 2000: 205).

'country' beyond possession

There are the cliffs at the Gorge on the outskirts of Launceston, where our Pa used to high-dive. This is no 'Queen's' country. The huge escarpment inhabits one's mind, reaching far back into time and beyond the wide skies and bush. Perhaps this is what Everett suggests about *country* in his poem, 'this place is outside of the bible' (2006b: 18). His poetics speak of connecting to country way 'beyond the colonial construct' (Everett 2006a: 92). For the coloniser/colonised like me, this beckons a passage of unlearning, re-visioning – the capacity to shed the colonial layer and see with different eyes.

How do I write (or even film) the cliffs at the Gorge – these cliffs that entered my spirit back then as a child? Without thinking I write *majestic* cliffs. And then realise I have chosen a word from the British Crown: 'greatly impressive in appearance, showing great dignity and grandeur, grandiose, splendid, superb, regal, royal, stately, imposing, magnificent, splendid, superb' (OED 1973). My speech *possessed*, an agent of the Crown. Nana and Pa's infusion of colonisation and their Christian-Catholic God had entered my child's mind erasing a deeper experience, beyond words, that was happening *mimetically* – to simply *absorb* the Gorge – cliffs, trees, rushing waterfalls, rocks, stones as they *are*, allowing them spaciousness to *be* and to be *with* them; this resonates with Boyce's proposition to consider 'what this experience [of being here] might be doing to us' (1996: 58).

Everett speaks and writes of *country* beyond possession. In fact, his discussion of the difference between 'landscape' and 'country' seems to go to the heart of an Indigenous philosophy and poetics of country:

This beautiful country challenges any thought of calling it a landscape. To me, European concepts narrowly define place as landscape, with a land-view that is devoid of understanding the holistic life of a place. Country, as I read it, encompasses many facets of life and relationships, with histories and memories of time (Everett 2006a: 91).

How to express these differing cultural ways of seeing in the film visually and aurally: the colonised/colonising mind of *white possession* and the mind that roams freely *outside the bible*. Again Marks offers a way to think about these two cultural regimes of thought: ‘formal experimentation is thus not incidental but integral to these works. Intercultural cinema draws from many cultural traditions, many ways of representing memory and experience and synthesizes them with contemporary Western cinematic practices’ (2000: 1).

The expression ‘our culture is carried on the wind’ (Lehman 2005: 13) has been worked into the Aboriginal community’s naming of Mt. Wellington as *kunanyi*. Their innovative viewing panels and script in *palawa kani* language, incorporating *wind in situ*, offered clues to this film’s textual strategies. I experimented with film structure and visual and sound techniques that moved between two ‘regimes of knowledge’ and different notions of ‘country’ – that of ‘white possession’ brought south by the colonists from the north, and the notion of ‘country’ expressed by Tasmanian Aboriginal community members. In the film, Everett expresses it like this, ‘Everything on country is related and connected. We don’t see ourselves as superior to any part of it; you’re not over it, you’re not boss of it, you’re just part of it and everything else you have a responsibility to, as it has a responsibility to you’.

Structuring the film using *colliding* notions of country connects to ‘quiet’ country and ‘wild’ country discussed by DB Rose in her conversations with Elders in the north of Australia. Colonised, or degraded country, is called ‘wild’ by traditional custodians; country cared for over hundreds, thousands of years is known as ‘quiet’:

...quiet country – the country in which all the care of generations of people is evident to those who know how to see it. Quiet country stands in contrast to the wild: we were looking at a wilderness, man-made and cattle-made. This ‘wild’ was a place where the life of the country was falling down into the gullies and washing away with the rains (2004: 4).

This structure, colonising as *wild*, and caring for country as *quiet*, extended into specific textual strategies in editing and sound design. The film’s editor, Karen Pearlman (2009: 43), describes how she shapes ‘the energy and spatial organisation of movements in shots and across edits into rhythms’:

In this cut from the documentary Island Home Country....the raucous movement, colors, and framing of an Australia Day celebration picnic collide with the flow and grace of the dolphins in the sea. Cutting these two shots together creates an idea through visual collision; in this case, the idea that colonization and nation building conflict with nature and First Nation peoples (2009: 58).

The cultural concept ‘our culture is carried on the wind’ also provided a way into structuring music and sound design and experimenting with specific sounds. Sharon Jakovsky, composer and sound designer, drew on the four elements – fire, water, earth and water for a thematic approach to structure; she also utilised the concept of ‘quiet’ and ‘wild’ to create a percussive sound-scape drawn from living country – water, wind, fire, wind rustling of shells, wood on wood, dogs, communal family sounds. Jakovsky worked with specific elements to express the presence of the colonisers: horses, military, muskets, sails flapping in the wind, building, logging, the sound of massive trees falling and British colonial music. At the same time it was important to create a spaciousness in the sound design to convey a sense of process – a meditative quality – ruminating, as in the essay form; or as ‘intercultural cinema works at the edge of an unthought, slowly building a language in which to think it...Hence the quality of stillness that characterizes many of these works’ (Marks 2000: 29).

Unpossession

The film expresses a set of conflicting regimes of thinking, around *being here* now. Learning to revision, to see and understand another from a different subject position, but without *possessing*, has been part of the process of its making. There’s a lack of resolution, intractability, discomfort and alienation that comes from non-belonging – or *never* being able to belong and always being ‘an outsider’. This is an intentional layer of the film. It doesn’t offer any way forward. At times it swirls around without fixity, contrasted with the strong connectedness to country expressed by Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the film.

John Docker (2000, 2001) offers another way to think about this site of ‘no-place’, suggesting that the notion of ‘diaspora’ offers a place to *not be*, a place of un-possession that is strangely fecund and creative. He writes, ‘artists, writers should be strangers amongst the nations...as if they have no place in the ordinary world, never’ (2001: 262-263); I worked this into narration, weaving ideas

from his essay *Autobiographies*: ‘mind dwells in diaspora, a consciousness that roams in time and space, at once here and there, now and then’ (2000). This diasporic consciousness is so opposite to colonial possession by nations, yet also a challenge to ontological-blood-soil-territory ownership. In the film, my narration about ‘the diasporic Jew who has no country’ is edited with an image of my husband’s family Menorah,³⁶ and juxtaposed with the Aboriginal flag, which is ‘grounded in country’. There is no suggestion of resolution here, just different regimes of cultural thinking. This ‘work is produced in the flux between cultures...in the productive conflict between different ways of knowing’ (Marks 2000: 239).

At times, the film draws on Moreton-Robinson’s (2003) work which suggests that ‘newcomers’ can’t have connectedness to land:

...the sense of belonging, home and place enjoyed by the non-Indigenous subject – colonizer/migrant – is based on the dispossession of the original owners of the land...Against this stands the Indigenous sense of belonging, home and place in its incommensurable difference...This ontological relation to land constitutes a subject position that we do not share, and which cannot be shared, with the post-colonial subject whose sense of belonging in this place is tied to migrancy (2003: 23, 31).

Everett, while maintaining the sheer fact of Aboriginal sovereignty, speaks about ‘belonging’ and ‘not belonging’ in subtly different terms:

We’re all the same species, we’re humans. And we all have different cultures. That is up for people to have their identity and their cultures the way they want them. But if they want to actually know what they are as human beings on this planet connecting with the country that they belong to and it’s their belonging place, then they need to understand the Aboriginal connection. They don’t have to be Aboriginal (*Island Home Country* 2008).

My belated encounter with critical race and whiteness studies is in dialogue with both the Everett and Moreton-Robinson viewpoints. Not easy. Unsettling. Yet Everett’s question ‘how do you become responsible?’ takes the discussion towards the possibility that ‘newcomers’ may develop a committed and ethical relationship to ‘country’, in certain circumstances.

³⁶ The menorah is a candelabrum used in celebration of Hanukkah, The Festival of Lights. The seven branches represent the seven channels of spiritual self-expression and the seven days of creation.

In their story-telling, Julie Gough, Jim Everett and Aunty Phyllis Pitchford each articulate the significance of 'place' and 'country'. Gough's installations and sculptures are often made from the very fibres and substance of 'country' to bring forth cultural memory in form. She expresses it like this:

If anyone says where's my homeland I would say automatically...it's Tasmania and north-east Tasmania... Along this whole coastline most of the Aboriginal community today of Tasmania come from this area, in fact, so it's traditional country for most of us. If I know of something that has happened here or if something happens to me here I can relate it directly through the materials of the place (*Island Home Country* 2008).

Negotiating with Gough where to film her interview, what to film, what to keep or what to drop, as well as her incisive critiques of the film at every stage, enacts something of the protocol 'Aboriginal Control'. It pushes any sense that *I* possess 'the work' into dialogic process, where the film's authorship has to open up to include process-based negotiation, as in an intercultural text. Marks (2000:7) develops links to film scholar Hamid Naficy's (1996: 120-121) "'independent transnational genre'...the genre allows films to be read both as authorial texts and as "sites for intertextual, cross cultural, and translational struggles over meanings and identities"". *Island Home Country* includes some of this difficult process around 'meaning and identities' – which took place during the film's production – in the text of the film itself. Marks discusses this as an intrinsic aspect of intercultural cinema:

When a film reflects upon its own production process, its obstacles, and the very cost of its making, it acts as this sort of catalytic crystal, reflecting the film-that-could-have-been-in the complex of its virtual images...All the events that prevent the production of images stimulate circuits of memory (Marks 2000: 65).

During filming Gough implies she has issues around the very nature of the filming process:

Gough: Here I am trying to figure out with you what we're doing here together...working on our different histories. I like the irony of it all and that, and the effort we put in to understand each other, that's what I think is the valuable thing. And it's a discussion, but in a film sense, I'm talking to the camera, it's not you, it's...

Thornley: But, I'm operating the camera. I'm here.

Gough: You're turning the camera on and you're there behind it.

There's an irony and subtext here. As I was both camera operator *and* interviewer I had to be *with* the camera, behind the camera. With a proper film budget *and* a camera operator I might have been able to be more present for Gough – open eyed and in conversation – not caught behind the camera as a 'collector'? Later, towards the end of the film, some of the complexity of this intercultural process is worked into the edit suggesting a fragility around my own capacity to hold the film together any longer: 'We're re-editing – but it's hard to contain the film in my mind, like in a dream I lose my thread. This film is dissolving'.

A few scenes prior to this I use an image of a white child lost in the bush from my film *To the Other Shore* (1996) to express a growing instability around 'whiteness' and this sense of being 'other'. Perhaps this scarred internal landscape seemed to be laid down deep from back in Tasmania; something seeping into the mind beyond words; something connected to dispossession and stolen land and the convict ancestry so heavily repressed in my family. In making this project, it's as if I am tracking the inner and outer terrain of this thread and attempting to locate the inter-connections. Marks suggests, 'Intercultural cinema is constituted around a particular crisis: the direct political discrepancy between official history and "private" memory...this process of reconnecting experience with the social is often traumatic' (Marks 2000: 60, 64).

I am reminded of Curthoys' (1999, 2006) discussion of the primal wound in the white Australian psyche having its origins in myths of exile and exodus, the wound generating ambivalent feelings about home and abandonment – fears of splitting, of homelessness permeating national mythologising, projecting into past and present Indigenous policy; extending to boat people, who are also exiled, like the Tasmanian Aboriginal people to far away islands, *out of sight out of mind*. The border is unstable, liminal. In the film my white ghost floats above the railway lines, a visual metaphor of white instability. Or white terror? This exiling of 'the other', this 'affect' of instability also has historical resonance in the transportation of my own convict forbears.

White fear

I picked up a few clues about 'white fear' watching *Van Diemen's Land* (2009), a feature film about eight convicts escaping from the infamous Macquarie Harbour convict station in Tasmania in 1822. It's as if the film-makers projected a state of mind onto their convicts, which Lacan (after Freud), called *The Thing*: 'The Thing is characterised by the fact that it is impossible for us to

imagine it' (Lacan 1992: 12). It's as if the fear and paranoia about surviving on this island provokes a terrifying, deathly extinction for the escapees. In fact 'The Thing' is cannibalising *them*. 'The subject is oriented to seeking out this lost object that will never be found again...it can only ever be found again as something missed' (J Rutherford 2000: 36).

The depiction of 'white terror' in *Van Diemen's Land* disappears its white characters into a 'hole in the Real' (Renov 2004: 125). In a strangely uncanny way the film unconsciously repeats the white habit of 'possession'. Imagining, recreating Tasmania as totally void of living people or culture, as a vast death-like 'Thing', they repeat *terra nullius*, the notion of an empty 'landscape' upon which they can project their own terrified mind. It is a *traumascap*³⁷ of death. In 2009, to have chosen to make a film devoid of Tasmanian Aboriginal presence and culture demonstrates how 'White Possession moves and is performed in the everyday' (Moreton-Robinson 2006a : 222).

'carigal' country

As I sit by the water's edge, north of Sydney, the layers of sounds tell a story, too. The distant traffic of the workers returning home from their day's work, the gentle lap of the waves, the yachts in the twilight races on the horizon, seagulls, magpies, pelicans. A noisy jet ski roars in. Over the waters at Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, the country of the carigal people stretches. There is no signage here, 'white possession' rules in this conservative area of Sydney's northern beaches. Here in carigal country, where I have lived for many years, there is no signage. The Australian (derivative British) flag flies from the many flag-poles on the peninsula homes and gardens.

The local 'newcomers' call this area 'paradise'. The local council has recently installed a new carved bust of Governor Phillip at the entrance to Governor Philip Park, a monument of 'white' possession'. 'There are hardly any words about it but these two: "Took Possession". An understated unconscious that lurches out, peels across the mind, and remains. A presencing. A persistence' (Schlunke 2009: 11).

It will be quite a process for Aboriginal naming and living presence to assert itself here. In Tasmania, there's signage in many places, reminding visitors whose country they are in – and that

³⁷ Tumarkin (2005) discusses ghostly places of trauma in her book *Traumascapes*, including the former convict prison at Port Arthur Historic Site, Tasmania.

the descendants are alive and caring for country; the signage ask visitors, ‘newcomers’ to care for country, suggesting, they too have responsibilities here. There’s also some signage with naming in *palawa* language. Gough (2009) reflects on the work ahead for any evolution of ‘shared’ colonial sites to become a reality:

Making new dialogue can liberate not only the interpretation but the interpreter by challenging the safe set of stories within which Aboriginal people have been firmly bound in their relation with the mainstream to the present. This form of heritage interpretation would....present examples of complex interactions through time at the places interpreted.

The film’s *Possession* chapter attempts to paint in a few stark brushstrokes, in filmic language, some of the issues embedded in Britain’s possession of this island continent in 1788 and the reverberations that have played out from then to 2008. The film’s six-chapter structure also opens up the site of *possession* to suggest that insight into one’s own mind, ‘beyond the colonial construct’, can connect ‘newcomers’ to the reality of Aboriginal ownership of country.

Possession, in this exegesis, lays the groundwork for exploring the impact of ‘different regimes of cultural thinking’ in the remaining chapters – *memory*, *mourning*, *encounter* and *reckoning*.

Chapter 5 – Memory

Weaving as a method of non-linear montage is a narrative of the process of memory. The framework of meaning is constantly newly constructed.

Melitopoulos (2008)

Our heritage still seems to be managed as part of a remote world, along with the natural history of the island. It cries out for a profound place at the heart of contemporary Tasmania.

Lehman (2006: 7-8)

The baskets are not empty. They are full of 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.

V Nichols (2009)

Unravelling the web

The previous two chapters *Amnesia* and *Possession* examined the extent of ‘the silence’ in Tasmania – how colonisation could be laid down so deep in the white psyche that it contributed to the making of a constructed memory, covering over Aboriginal presence and cultural practices, denying their existence. Amnesia is loss of memory – when memories are restored, re-inscribed or embodied – amnesia cracks. This chapter, *Memory*, attempts to think about memories, deep history and repression in relation to stories and images in *Island Home Country*, while circling ever closer to the heart of the question – how does memory live on? What memories rise to the surface amidst the catacombs of the many thoughts and impressions that lie dormant? How can we ‘read’ them or understand them on a deeper level?

This chapter also acknowledges the difficulties of speaking into the site of memory across different cultural regimes of thinking – that of Tasmanian Aboriginal communities and that of the ‘newcomers’. Memory, as I discovered, is ‘raced’. Tasmanian Aboriginal memory and newcomer memory inhabit different spaces. Digging into surface memory the layers of a deeper history are exposed. Underneath colonial history, Martial Law or the forced expulsions, other layers of memory are revealed.

As I think about memories coming to us as visual images (Benjamin 1977: 216), I like the way historian and ethnographer Greg Dening calls on the metaphor of ‘the yolla’, the mutton bird, to open his book *Beach Crossings*: ‘Their line ripples and rolls as one living body. In their hundreds of thousands, they look to be in direct, determined and undistracted flight...They had sustained the first people in Tasmania...for perhaps forty thousand years’ (2004: 14). I am struck by the synchronicity of Dening’s link to the significance of the mutton bird for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, layered deep in their past and continuing into the present. Yet, this is not part of my Tasmanian story, as Everett’s words remind me – *tell your story, not ours*.

Thus I turn to *my* memory and what visual metaphors resonate for this project. It is weaving, represented by the loom. The moment I film Anna Freud’s loom, I am flooded with memories of my loom in the craft room of my 1960s high school. Weaving offered calm from family trauma – the steady rhythmic sound of the shuttle – back and forth, wood on wood. Perhaps that’s why Anna Freud felt comfortable weaving in sessions with her patients. She was giving form to the psychoanalytic practice of ‘remembering, repeating and working through’ (Freud 1914).

Images and sounds are my coloured thread, the finished film is the cloth with its patterns and stories. The digital edit system is like electronic weaving with light into patterns. Benjamin suggests, ‘the important thing for the remembering author is not what he experienced, but the weaving of his memory...remembrance is the woof and forgetting the warf’ (1977: 204). This film is my web, the exegesis its unravelling. My loom is the edit machine – a container for the film, as if a membrane to hold the mercury-like substance of ideas, memories and feelings in place, that is also this chapter. Benjamin reminds us that remembering is also *forgetting*. In order to give space to the images of a night’s dreaming we forget the day. Memory is elusive.

Passing by the search for origins

Ashis Nandy (1995: 144) writing about India’s first psychoanalyst Girindrasekhar Bose, says he ‘was not concerned with unearthing the objective past, but with working through the remembered past. He seemed to know that...the past flows out of the present...at other points of times, the present flows out of the past’. Memories course through the body, alive, palpable. My film narration says, ‘passing by the search for origins, don’t speak about convicts in the family – the

shame'. Yet I have to own those origins, touch them, *unhinge* them and see their connection to now. Down at a Sydney wharf one day with my camera, the ferry *Scarborough* passes by. In that moment past and present collide – my ancestor Joshua Peck, transported for stealing, sent out on the *Scarborough*, the First Fleet 1788 and Mary Frost, another convict relative arriving on the *Neptune*, the 'Death Ship' in 1790.

Katrina Schlunke (2005: 51) suggests that in (white) 'family histories "our" historically owned characters move between place and situation in a tour that gives us access to a slide show of *our* historical identity....and can invent subjects with claims to a real belonging'. Yet, with Everett's (2007: pers.comm.) 'too much our story, not enough yours', and the subsequent stepping back into *my story*, I don't want to revert to a tired old routine of family history-making in order to claim my spot of 'belonging'. Yet, knowing that my relatives were convicts, camped somewhere in cadigal country in 1788 and part of the convict relocation to Norfolk Island, and then New Norfolk in Tasmania, impacts on my sense of who I am – *here* – today. Is it about 'belonging'?

Deeply *hearing* S Watson's (2005) imperative, 'find out whose country you're on and what happened to that mob', *and* holding that frame together with my family's role in dispossession in the one film text, is a different undertaking to claiming a *belonging*, a birth-rite. This family history, connecting across the different cultural regimes of thinking, is exposing, destabilising and unsettling – a process of acknowledging sovereignty and all that this triggers for the newcomer, the stranger.

Here, I am coming nearby Lyotard's (2004) discussion of anamnesis: 'a work of mourning for the conflicting emotions'. This is fluid, liminal, 'neither the forgotten nor the remembered but rather the moment between these two states. Anamnesis is a product of the encounter, the happening now' (Quick 2006: 169). Just that moment when the *Scarborough* floats by, as if in a dream – this boat that carried Joshua, the sound of the water and the rush of past and present wash through as sensations, rather than as memory – this is *now*. Or when Everett writes about *turbuna* he revisions country in direct genealogy to his deep memory in 'now' time:

we talk about our old people when we camp here, remembering the past with our present, creating visions for our future. being here on meenamatta country, and all the big clan country of the north-east and south along the coast to oyster bay clans, going west to turbuna, we know ourselves. this country with its all-life make up who we are,

as does the country have our identity and we are family. this place is where i visit planegarrartoothenar and his family, finding memories of our connection that go beyond time and space (2006b: 15-16).

When deep memory enters the picture you know you are in someone else's country, thus the re-visioning of oneself as a newcomer, a stranger. Memory takes me back to that defining experience on Cape Barren Island in 1981: 'That night we camp, the local islander boys ride their motorbikes into our tents, shouting – "get off you lot. This is our land"' (*Island Home Country* 2008). This is one of those intense breakthrough moments that shakes to the core. Here are we, four white women, coming to the island connected to research, yet whatever visiting protocols we think are in place, clearly they are inappropriate or not 'working'. Later, an Islander woman sings – a keening song for homeland. Across the stillness of deep waters her song of longing echoes across the islands that hold so many stories – whalers, sealers, Islanders and the stories long before the white ghosts sail in.

Yet, I am one of the white ghosts, and in the process of making this film and writing this exegesis, I have been sinking deeper into the loam of instability. I am trying to *not possess* or *belong*. To be *open*, seems the only path. Thinking through the times when I feel most like an intruder, an unwelcome 'other', I read this insight by DB Rose:

Openness is risky because one does not know the outcome. To be open is to hold one's self available to others: one takes risks and becomes vulnerable. But this is also a fertile stance: one's own ground can become destabilised...Openness...is counterbalanced by commitment to the decolonising process (2004: 22).

This puts 'my instability' in a context. It is not just *my* own 'personal' issue. This is historical and also very much to do with *now*: 'ethical dialogue requires that we acknowledge and understand our particular and harshly situated presence...what lies between us are these terrible histories: the invasions, the dominations, the deaths and exclusions' (22).

I am implicated in the story of this country

After watching *Island Home Country*, a Tasmanian friend asks, 'Aren't you taking on too much guilt?' I try to explain it's not about guilt. As H Reynolds says in the film *Black Man's Houses*

(1992), ‘It’s not a question of guilt’. He argues it’s simply a matter of successor Tasmanian government’s honouring the verbal treaties of the past. I show my friend the book I am reading, Schlink’s (2009) *Guilt about the Past*. I try to open up this difficult site with him: ‘Something happened in Tasmania, in Australia, and we “white” Australians might learn to respond in other ways than with silence or denial’. Schlink says ‘true understanding is more than searching for and finding causes. It includes putting yourself in someone else’s place...thoughts and someone else’s feelings and seeing the world through that person’s eyes’ (2009: 82). Perhaps my friend wants to perpetuate the fantasy of the ‘happy isle’. But for me now, there’s no going back to that *eerie silence*.

Yet, the cover-up continues, despite the reality that ‘convicts and their families were implicated in environmental destruction and a human tragedy of almost unimaginable proportions’ (Boyce 2008: 11). Langton in the *First Australians* (2008) suggests that ‘the only way most Australians can pretend that the Australian nation was developed honourably is to lie...and this is why Tasmanian history is the most disputed amongst historians’. It requires a re-visioning to shift and see that *I am implicated* in the story of this country. Sarah Ahmed (2005) argues this move towards accountability may be vexed, particularly when people seek ‘healing’ for their shameful or ‘bad’ feelings in national redemptive rituals like government apologies or the ‘Sorry Books’ of the reconciliation movement. Every step across the colonised space of Tasmania’s racialised divide raises more questions than it answers: ‘finding the way out—out of the master’s house’, has no markers (Frankenberg 1996: 3).

“a double time frame of memory”³⁸

In connecting with Tasmanian Aboriginal artists and their cultural works, and engaging in dialogue around ethics and protocols, I sense a pattern – each artist and writer is working through and beyond historical trauma in their creative medium – art, craft, poetry, painting, writing *and* political work. Each person that I film with is engaged in their own memory work in their own remembering selves – digging into private and public pasts to powerfully connect into present time and create a living continuum, not an ossified past.

³⁸ Bhabha (2008: 48).

This is palpable in a project like *tayenebe*³⁹ where more than ‘twenty-five Tasmanian Aboriginal women...journeyed together across the island...to reconnect with the cultural craft of Ancestors’. This renaissance of traditional weaving, handed down by mother to daughter, like *maireener*, the tradition of shell necklace making, are expressions of ‘deep memory’. They are like wind, dispersing the colonial years of silencing Aboriginal culture. In Tasmania, where space and territory has been so appropriated by the colonisers, these cultural projects, linked to speaking place and grounded in country, erase colonial possession. As Everett (2009) says: ‘So, today’s Aboriginal community hasn’t lost anything’.

Bhabha writes about making a space for memory that is able to hold ambivalence: ‘Only by embracing both “possession” and “dis-possession” could I construct a discourse of heritage that truly understood the trials and tribulations of the ethical’ (2008: 47). Across that ambivalent divide between Tasmanian Aboriginal people and ‘the newcomers’, communities both scarred by colonialism where, ‘Our shared cross cultural history is an uncomfortable one’ (Gough 2009), there’s the possibility for a potent *transmutation*. In this emerging space – history, memory and life experience find shape in cultural expression and communication across the racial divides. It’s here that I begin to make sense of Langton’s (1993: 32) discussion of ‘the signifying practices in Australian racism’:

“Aboriginality”, therefore, is a field of intersubjectivity in that it is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people create “Aboriginalities” (1993: 33-34).

In their art-works both Julie Gough and PennyX Saxon create continuous and direct links from the repressed past to the present. Gough discusses this in a documentary on her art practice, *Julie Gough: We Walked on a Carpet of Stars* (2007):

I think that in Tasmania people remember more here than other parts of Australia, or there’s more willingness to come and talk about what’s happened...I really like the fact that being in a place can produce something...the constant search to find a way to make physical the idea of travelling through time and place, to this place...to transport myself back to an impossible place which is this place more than 200 years ago; trying to get back to meet my own relatives as they were, here.

³⁹ *Tayenebe* (2009), Tasmanian Aboriginal women’s fibre work exhibition, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery: <http://static.tmag.tas.gov.au/tayenebe/>.

In the fluidity of shifting memory, in these ‘sites of instability and disturbance’, Gough finds the momentum for her art practice (Gough 2004). She describes this process as ‘figuring ways to render distinct, sometimes blurred and disassociated personal and public memories’ (Gough 2006b). Filming with Julie Gough in 2005, where she grew up in Melbourne, near the old timber amusement park – Luna Park, she talks about the screams that erupted into the night air – the *scream of Australian history*. Racism enters black and white minds and disturbs ‘the deep psychic uncertainty of the colonial relation itself...a division which cuts across the fragile skin – black and white – of individual and social authority’ (Bhabha 1986: xv).

These unstable spaces provoke instability, madness, too – spaces where memory has been so repressed it erupts in irrational fragmented acts, psychosis and breakdown, like the 1996 mass shootings at Port Arthur or the 2005 Cronulla riots. These irruptive events carry layers of contradictions buried deep within and combust into irrational, violent acts: ‘Didn’t Freud say, what we choose to forget comes back to haunt us in history?’⁴⁰ (Narration, *Island Home Country* 2008).

It is in haunted places that these artists process memory, history, culture and time. PennyX Saxon, in her art works, creates a fecund holding space to work through the pain of racist child removal policies, her own adoption *and* make links back to culture and country. In *Mother’s Nest* (2006) she uses potent symbols of fertility, juxtaposed with pierced, staring eyes:

Here again I use the symbol, the nest, and the egg represents identity. And over here are the eyes, and the eyes have been speared; it represents the sorrow and the pain and also out of sight out of mind.

⁴⁰ Adapted from A Nandy’s (1983: 71) *The Intimate Enemy: loss and recovery of self under colonialism*.



Figure 8: *Mother's Nest*, PennyX Saxon 2006

A lot of people don't want to talk about sensitive issues of adoption and stolen generations. The egg represents myself and it's being removed from this nest (PennyX Saxon, *Island Home Country* 2008).

In the unity of this one work Saxon creates a container 'embracing both "possession" and "dispossession"' (Bhabha 2008: 47).

Deep time

As this project developed I discovered *deep history* all around – the First Australians and their deep history, the contact history and the newcomer history. Denning (2004: 44-45) writes, 'In a period of "discovery", encounter, settlement, colony and post-colony, deep time impinges differently on those who come first and those who come later to a land'. He introduces the notion of 'shallow time' as a time where a people of 'say two or three hundred years – live in settlement beside a

people whose presence in that place reaches back two, forty, sixty millenia'. This comes nearby the core of my project: how can a 'newcomer' like me, whose memory in Australia is *shallow time* connect to the *deep time* memory of the Palawa as a living community today?

Marks' (2000: 24) insight that intercultural cinema 'operates at the intersections of two or more cultural regimes of knowledge' is relevant to 'memory'. Memory inhabits different realms for the Tasmanians and for 'the newcomers'. Memory is impacted by cultural difference, filtering through the different subject positions of the remembering person. In *Representing the Holocaust* historian Dominic LaCapra (1992) describes this process:

The Holocaust presents the historian with transference in the most traumatic form conceivable – but in a form that will vary with the difference in subject position of the analyst. Whether the historian or analyst is a survivor, a relative of survivors, a former Nazi, a former collaborator...a younger Jew or German...or a relative "outsider" to these problems will make a difference...Working-through requires the recognition that we are involved in transferential relations to the past in ways that vary according to the subject positions we find ourselves in, re-work and invent (1992: 110, 125).

Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) has been an important film for my process around how to visualise memory. Lanzmann films each person in a way that is integral to who they are, to *their* place, their memories unfolding in a way that is unique to them. These differing subject positions determine *how* and *what* people remember, particularly in a colonised space.

Moreton-Robinson looks at this difference from an Indigenous perspective:

Our sovereignty is embodied, it is ontological (our being) and epistemological (our way of knowing)...our sovereignty is carried by the body and differs from Western constructions of sovereignty, which are predicated on the social contract model, the idea of a unified supreme authority, territorial integrity and individual rights (Moreton-Robinson 2007: 2).

Given these vastly different relationships to country, to the *body* of the continent, inevitably the encounter on the frontier careened into collision. Since the invasion of Tasmania in 1803 and the drive to assimilation, race relations have remained vexed and complex. In the silencing, both the Tasmanian Aboriginal communities *and* 'the strangers' have been denied access to *what happened*. Personal memory has been covered over, while public history remained a colonial construct, as Everett describes:

Remembering my family, parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts who have since died, it is apparent that they were all conditioned in their thinking and seemingly silenced by an inner fear of their Aboriginal history. I can remember “Uncle” Geoff Everett lending me a book of research by Tindale about Cape Barren Islanders. He told me not to let anyone know I had it, because he believed that he could be jailed for possessing it. It was rare to hear any of my family talk about being “coloured”, much less discuss their Aboriginality (Everett 2006c: 216-217).

Tasmanian Aboriginal Islander Molly Mallet (2001) transforms white colonial history into her own profound and embodied remembering. In her autobiography *Stories of My People* she reclaims her kin from anthropologist Tindale’s objectifying gaze, decades after his 1939 Cape Barren Island expedition, when he was collecting evidence for his studies on race. Mallet is determined to restore ‘dignity and humanity to our people who were the subjects of the “scientific” research by Tindale’ (2001: 47). She returns warmth and affection to her family and community, re-visioning the photographs with her own anecdotes and stories:

These old people were our teachers, our Elders. They were practical and related their lessons to the environment. Their theories were always based on experience...they were the people who taught us right from wrong, who made us feel we were important and shared with us whatever we had...I wonder if the old people really knew what Tindale was doing. I don’t think they did! My Mum was a proud old woman who said what she thought. I am sure she would be disgusted if she knew the outcome of Tindale’s report (Mallet 2001: 43, 55).

Mallet demonstrates the central role of family in the face of government attempts to disperse and break down community values and cultural identity. She reaches back into ‘collective memory’ to challenge the hegemony of the official history of assimilation and white ownership of land. Lehman also offers a perspective on Tindale’s visit – a stark description of these clashing ‘cultural regimes of knowledge’:

Many Palawa can recall visits to Cape Barren Island by the anthropologists. They were intent on measuring our heads and studying our curious speech. They knew nothing of the land or the ways of the sea. The things that were of real importance seemed of little interest to them. They had no real manners; asked questions both rude and bizarre and had no story of their own to tell. Never treating us as equals, even in conversation, these men had no respect for us as a living people (Lehman 1996: 56).

It is their country

My initial film treatment reproduced an 1858 photograph of Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders on the cover. Julie Gough asks me back in 2004, something like, ‘What makes you think you can use this photograph?’



Figure 9: *Emma, Truganini, Flora and Wapperty, Oyster Cove, Francis R Nixon, 1858, Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania*

It is confronting. I am ambivalent and uncertain about how to proceed, yet I know there is no going back to some fantasy of Tasmania as a ‘good’, happy *white* place. The photograph has possessed

me in some way; sitting with this photograph, with the survivors of invasion, I look at the hands of the women, the comfort of their physical closeness to each other and their dogs. As the camera apparatus captures their image on silver nitrate, I gaze at them. They look back at me, and in this moment, as observer, I stand in photographer Bishop Francis Nixon's place.⁴¹ I am his camera. I look at the women – Emma, Truganini, Flora, Wapperty. They look back at me. I know it is their country. They belong to this island. Dispossessed by the British, yet, in fact, the photograph speaks of *their* possession. I allow this photo to possess me. The women's gaze is grounded, strong: *This is our country, back off stranger – white ghost*.

They speak to me, not in words, but they *affect* me. I see them as I walk the streets of Hobart, I dream of them at night. Their spirit is there, whispering to me to reckon with their presence. They are not gone, as the British hoped, as most whites in Tasmania hoped – that they would be gone forever. No, I let them come visit. I allow myself to be haunted, like Freud (Derrida 1995: 85-88). As I do, I sense myself as the stranger, dislocated in this site of 'making whiteness strange' (Dyer 1997: 4). I am the interloper.

This Oyster Cove photograph is 'the traumatic kernel of the *real*...that disturbs their (white) homely space' (Hage 1998: 74). I am reminded of Luc Sante's closing words in his photographic study *Evidence*: 'There is no place for us outside the frame, nothing to breathe, nowhere to stand. We cannot be the viewer of such a scene. We must have forgotten: we are the subjects' (1992: 99). Here is an invocation to the act of looking – merging with the image: 'A photograph's *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)' (Barthes 1981: 27). The details of this photograph 'prick' me. Flora's scarf is out of focus in the wind; Wapperty turns away from Bishop Nixon's camera, her hand holding the dog's leg, while Truganini's hands rest on the same dog. The dogs breathe warmth; the women are connected, breathing with their dogs together. Bishop Nixon's camera apparatus is austere, hard, inanimate. The 'punctum' from the camera – the prick of the photo is in the women's hands, the scarf, and Wapperty's turn of head, their dogs and perhaps the absent, 'possessing eye' of the photographer.

I am disturbed, destabilised, pricked in this wound of history, in a theft of profound proportions...this photograph has *worked* within me, as Roland Barthes suggests '—in order to see

⁴¹ Nixon was the first Anglican Bishop of Tasmania, 1843-1863.

a photograph well, it is best to look away or close your eyes...to allow the detail to rise of its own accord into affective consciousness' (1981: 53, 55). The photograph provokes an intensity of 'affect', mysterious, trembling: 'Imagination is our capacity to see ourselves as somebody else', says Denning 'our capacity to experience solidarity with different people as fellow sufferers' (1998: 209).

Memory brings the past back re-membered, re-configured, re-visioned, just as Benjamin (1977: 257) observes, 'The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again...To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it "the way it really was"...It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger'. So, too, this photograph of my sister and I – *the photograph reaches me; it animates me, and I animate it.*



Figure 10: *I found one trace*, Invermay, Launceston 1952

We are in fancy dress at the local church fete. I'm the pixie, my sister, in 'black'. Who is she supposed to be and who dressed her in that costume? She must have been hot. You could tell she felt strange wearing it, because through her stocking face she never smiled. The stories of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people were never spoken then, not by a soul in our family. Yet there she was, my sister, in this costume. And still the silence. The secret. This photograph carries a 'trace' of the real, a hint of race. Sitting with it, *in duration*, a process starts – call it 'affect', 'memory shock', 'aura', something is taking place. As Benjamin suggests, discussing Freud: 'consciousness comes into being at the site of a memory trace' (1977: 162; Freud 1920).

Betrayal

The ‘silence of the journey’ that Nandy (1999: 308) writes about or what Denning (2004: 55) calls ‘the silence of vast spaces...the cold silence of death’, elides with my sense of betrayal by the repression of what happened on the island – like Martial Law, the ‘secret’ reserve on Cape Barren Island and the child removals. Back in 1955, when Dad and Mum were Mayor and Mayoress – *they must have known something*. So that day in 2004, when my sister and I visit Aunty M, mum’s sister, I come as a messenger to my white family in Tasmania, as if trying to move out from ‘the secret’. I bring the film treatment with the Oyster Cove photograph on the cover. I don’t feel as if I am *a collector* – I feel tender towards the women – Emma, Truganini, Flora, Wapperty. Like Barthes’ (1981: 67-72) obsession with the photograph of his mother, the women at Oyster Cove are *occupying* me: ‘suddenly a specific photograph reaches me; it animates me, and I animate it...The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here’ (20, 81).

Don’t speak about Aborigines

It is with an intention of knocking on the door of denial in my family (and within *myself*) that I am here at Aunty M’s with the Oyster Cove photograph: *Look, does it prick you, too?* Her response, ‘we never saw photographs of Aborigines, never, never, never’ is revealing. She utters ‘never’ thrice – her speech emptying out three negatives, ‘the non-seeing that structures trauma’ (Spicer 2004: 189). I am the disturber here. I take the photo to Aunty M, not as an object, a fetish. I take it as a white Tasmanian into the fissure of ‘the silence’, into the liminal in-between space, crossing the boundary of two hundred years of racial divisions. It seems Aunty M is more comfortable with her memories of Queen Victoria, although the day we film she contacts a sense of moral outrage as she considers the forced removals of Aboriginal children from their mothers. She speaks her last sentence, ‘Why did they think they could look after them any better than their mother?’ assertively, direct into camera, as if she knows she is speaking out, finally articulating what she feels. It’s a courageous act for an elderly white lady, born in 1925 Tasmania, to speak of taboo matters – especially in the public realm of film.

Later, in the film, Gough queries the use of these photographs, provoking a discussion of representation, memory and ethics:

The way that the photographs have become publicly owned, that's what I find deeply disturbing. And there's a sense that anyone can use them for their own purposes all the time...it is a sense that Truganini's Tasmanian and belongs to everybody, nobody's responsible for her. But I think collectively the whole community feels responsible about her. I think there's a protectiveness about that and, and about all the "Old People" who were photographed (Gough, *Island Home Country* 2008).

I respect Julie Gough's preparedness to have this discussion with me, to allow me to film it. But, it is painful, too. I am this *anyone* she refers to, who thinks she can just come along and use the photograph for her own purpose; just as Bishop Nixon was another *anyone* who turned up at Oyster Cove that chilly day, with his new glass plate camera and tripod to *take* the photographs and exhibit them on his return to London.⁴² In a similar way documentarist Robert Flaherty takes *Nanook of the North* (1922) back to the cinemas of Europe and America, with scarce regard for either Nanook or his Inuit community. Gough's words implicate me. What brings me to *use* this photograph for my own purposes? Sullivan suggests that:

Whiteness as possession describes not just the act of owning, but also the obsessive psychosomatic state of white owners. Commodifying non-white peoples and cultures, unconscious habits of white privilege tend to transform them into objects for white appropriation and use. The benefits accrued to white people through this process include not merely economic gain, but also increased ontological security and satisfaction of unconscious desires (2006: 122).

Protocols of looking

Does my attachment to this photograph make me a kind of Nixon or Tindale with an anthropologist's gaze? I am forced to consider these questions and they are destabilising. What might be *my* unconscious desires around the photograph? Are they like Nixon's desires? What was *his* motivation in taking the photographs? There's a story here, but I want to stay with the *feeling* of the photograph *in me* and also consider the constant repetition of these photographs today. Bishop Nixon's photographs are in constant use by many people (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) as a way

⁴² The photographs were exhibited in the London International Exhibition 1862.

of narrating Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture throughout the 19th and 21st centuries. The photographs have been used to signify competing paradigms of Tasmanian history – from the ‘doomed race’ thesis, as in the documentary *The Last Tasmanian* (1978) and more recently as an expression of resilience and sovereignty in the documentary series *First Australians* (2008).

During filming Gough also considers the Oyster Cove photographs in terms of memory and representation, suggesting direct photographic representation such as Nixon’s, and the repeated use of his photographs, perpetuates domination and objectification. She contrasts this with the drawings by white settler Tasmanian artist Fanny Benbow:



Figure 11: *Tasmanian Aborigines at Oyster Cove Station*, Fanny Benbow c1900 Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania

She was a child at Oyster Cove – a non Aboriginal girl. Fanny Benbow drew her childhood memories when she was in her 80s. I see those documents as much more relevant, interesting and less intrusive than using photographs of Aboriginal people. There’s a white child growing up and finding enough richness of memory, seventy years later, so that it impacted on her greatly – being at Oyster Cove as a child – to be able to draw such detailed drawings of what the Aboriginal women and the men were

doing in that place...through her mind's eye, she remembered into her hand as a child (Gough, *Island Home Country* 2008).⁴³

Susan Crane, in relation to the ever-constantly circulating photographs of the Holocaust, argues that saturation level has been reached: 'I would like to suggest that removing them from view or repatriating them might serve Holocaust memory better than their reduction to atrocious objects of banal attention' (Crane 2008: 329). Marianne Hirsh also pursues ethics in relationship to Holocaust photography, referring to 'a murderous National Socialist gaze that violates the viewing relations under which we normally operate'. But unlike Crane she suggests we can 'search for ways to take responsibility for what we are seeing...as we try to redefine, if not repair, these ruptures. This is the difficult work of postmemory' (Hirsch 2001: 26).

In the re-figuring of colonial photography, Tasmanian Aboriginal community members Mollie Mallet (2001), Darlene Mansell (*First Australians* 2008) and Ricky Maynard (Maynard & Munro 2008)⁴⁴ are all doing the work of 'postmemory'. They are reinterpreting, challenging, refusing the 'coloniser's gaze'. Mansell and Mallet *feel* these 'colonial' photographs in Aboriginal terms. Mansell translates the photographs into her concerns as a survivor – in a community of lineage with Aboriginal women on the island. In her deeply felt relationship to the photograph she is grounded, a 'participant in a social relationship, bringing a responsibility to authenticate' (Lydon 2005: 29). She takes the photograph back from Bishop Nixon's colonial gaze and reincorporates it into her storytelling. Similarly Mallet and Vernon Ah Kee⁴⁵ (2008) subvert anthropologist Tindale's photographs, taking their own families and kin back, re-incorporating them into *their* care.

Memory and care

'Is there an ethics of memory?' asks philosopher Avishai Margalit (2002: 6-7). 'Are we obligated to remember people and events from the past? If we are, what is the nature of this obligation?...Who are the "we" who may be obligated to remember?' Margalit then takes this further, suggesting that 'memory is partly constitutive of the notion of care' (28). Gough cares for

⁴³ The Fanny Benbow sequence was not included in the final film due to space limitations.

⁴⁴ See also *Portrait of a Distant Land* (2008) a documentary film about Maynard and his photography.

⁴⁵ Vernon Ah Kee, artist, is of the Kuku Yalandji, Waanji, Yidindji and Gugu Yimithirr peoples (Queensland).

the Elders in the photographs and in that caring she shares a common past, and an ethics about how best to serve her Elders in the present and in the future. A protocol of ‘looking’, or rather ‘not looking’, is suggested here. The care and feeling that Gough and Mallet share, is taken further by Mansell in her discussion of the Oyster Cove photographs in the documentary series *First Australians* (2008):

You look at those photos and these beautiful Aboriginal women, who have just experienced so much despair in their life and they’re sitting there in strange clothing, their hearts broken; and I think the strongest human characteristic they had was that of belonging, knowing that their life would never be the same. And their strength was in their togetherness, despite those horrible conditions.

Mansell, like Mallet, restores dignity to her elders. She feels the photographs from the inside. She brings life to a community that faced dissolution by a brutal colonisation (Schwab 2006: 99). This is not a split gaze – the gaze of ‘surveillance’ from outside. Mansell feels care. She brings community, genealogy and *presence* to her reading. Thus, the women are not frozen in past time, captured and observed by Bishop Nixon – taken to London. They are linked by Mansell to *her* present, the present of her community, and held tenderly in ‘now time’.

Embodied Memory

If the Oyster Cove photograph ‘testifies to the theft of experience, the non-seeing that structures trauma’ (Spicer 2004: 189), then Mansell’s powerful screen presence in *First Australians* (2008) does much more than ‘recuperate affect’. There are several moments in this documentary series, where intense transgressive moments erupt, breaking through television’s narrative structure. These moments split the ‘western’ screen of denialism, colliding past, present and future into an ongoing continuum: ‘There will never, be no Tasmanian Aboriginal people, *never, ever*’, says Mansell; or Gadigal elder Alan Madden’s direct address to camera about the repatriation of the great Bidjigal/Gadigal warrior Pemulway, ‘We need the whole of him to put it to rest, once and for all’.

These moments break with the colonial past, of surveillance, of trauma. They claim a sovereign space and a communal space of speech, of enunciation. The regenerative continuity of Aboriginal culture and presence is realised in such moments and this viewer is taken to a new threshold of understanding. This resonates with Bhabha’s sense of ‘an interstitial future, that emerges *in-*

between the claims of the past and the needs of the present...of the future as a *becoming* “once again open”” (2007: 313-314).

In the diverse Tasmania Aboriginal community, Bhabha’s interpretation of ‘performative agency’ (2007: 314), this speaking *in-between*, is expressed in many ways. The community re-invents itself constantly, recuperating and gathering itself in the face of the successive governments that willed its dissolution. It’s in political challenges by activists in the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) over sovereignty and struggles over land rights, repatriation and compensation to the Tasmanian Stolen Generations. It is in the work of the artists, writers and poets who re-invent the traditions of the past and bring them into the present.

This memory or ‘postmemory’ work revitalises community. It also *affects* the newcomers, the strangers – who may be changed by it. My own ‘performative agency’ is sparked off by these voices, these cultural works; they permeate my borders, enter my *in-between*. Something happens when I step back from a *gaze* focused on the Aboriginal community and shift it to face my ‘white’ story and to my responsibilities in the intercultural encounter. Perhaps I am rather like Fanny Benbow – an old white lady visualising myself into a 21st century frame – to try and remember *beyond the silence* of a childhood on the island lived in *shallow* time, in denial. Now, with this film I re-vision through ‘shallow’ time, sensing *deep* time. In the *in-between* emerge performative moments – like the ‘white ghost of history’, ‘the hedge that keeps history out’, or a mood evoked by a soundscape or the fluid movement between past, present and future.⁴⁶

Family members *in* the film, too, like my sister, Aunty M and cousins become exposed in this encounter – viscerally – by the sheer fact that their bodies inhabit *the same film* as members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community:

The recognition of injury rewrites history, and it reshapes the very ground on which we live. If the violence of what has happened is recognised as a violence that shapes the present, that shapes the skin of bodies that shudder and breathe in the present, then the “truths” of history are called into question (Ahmed 2005: 83).

⁴⁶ The ‘performative’ is discussed in depth in the documentary film scholarship, see Renov (1993); Bruzzi (2000); B Nichols (2001).

Their bodies ‘shudder and breathe’ within the membrane of the same film. Memory in this process has the potential to be embodied. It is a practice that takes place in *present* time – and it involves an ethics of care.

The following chapter *Mourning*, to a large extent, evolved from this process of encountering memory in the *in-between* spaces between past and present, public and private, Aboriginal and newcomer. The memories have to become palpable, felt or embodied. Perhaps, then, mourning, in all its depth and complexity, as in Derrida’s (2001b: 66) ‘impossible mourning’, may be faced.

Chapter 6 – Mourning

...trauma enters the national psyche in the form of resistance to its own pain.

Rose (2007: 6)

Healing does not cover over, but exposes the wound to others: *the recovery is a form of exposure*...political and emotional work.

Ahmed (2005: 83)

...to pay respect and honour to the spirits of the Old Ones after so many years of desecration and indignity is our most important obligation.

Lehman (1996: 60)

“Remembering, Repeating, Working Through”⁴⁷

This chapter explores the project’s initial premise of ‘the work of mourning’ and how in the six year practice-led, protocols-influenced film-making process it gradually became *unhinged*. In the 1980s, during a time of mourning in my own family, I read Freud’s (1914) essay, ‘Remembering, Repeating and Working Through’, which outlines his psychoanalytic method. Something about this ‘work of mourning’ premise suggested a way to approach the troubled ‘site’ of colonised Tasmania and the ‘eerie silence’ I sensed there. Perhaps it was a method I could apply to my film process. I wasn’t sure how. I knew, from my own long psychoanalysis that this was no simple linear process, with a narrative trajectory towards a resolution – *analysis terminable*. I knew it as a more liminal in-between state, a reaching down into the unconscious, into uncertainty, into the dark, into images and metaphors from a night’s dreaming. Yet I was unprepared for the challenges that emerged to my premise as the film-making process unfolded.

In the 1980s I visited the Freud Museum and filmed Anna Freud’s loom. In a diary entry at the time I wrote: *It’s quiet in here with the loom. The pale filtered light of a London afternoon enters the room quietly, unannounced. I sense here that the breath, the inhale, and the exhale is linked to the movement of the shuttle*. In a way, even then, without knowing it, I was seeking visual metaphors for a film on memory, history and colonisation in Tasmania. But as well, I was seeking a certain spaciousness that might provide the film with a sense of reflection – like meditating on

⁴⁷ Freud (1914).

one's own stream of consciousness, witnessing one's mind; or as in a psychoanalytic session, when the flow of one's own thoughts are witnessed, sometimes analysed, and there is a gradual coming to know the contours of one's own mind. It reminds me of the way Denning articulates his method: 'As I write now, the combers on the beach below my window roll into a continuous rush of sound. It is the white noise that separates my mind from my body and lets me think to write' (2004: 16). Eventually, the loom and weaving, from that day in the Freud Museum, provided a visual metaphor for both the *Memory* and *Mourning* chapters, as well as for this film's overall process.



Figure 12: *Anna Freud's Loom*, Freud Museum London, c1985

White ghost of history

In the film chapter *Mourning*, the white ghost runs through the bush, with my narration: 'You know, this world, this history can drive us mad, white Australia's history has haunted me; there are ghosts, spectres'. In the film's final chapter *Reckoning*, the ghost floats above the train tracks, edited with Saxon's (2006) art works – the white ghost British soldier, the Aboriginal face with piercing eyes, and the distant echo of Rudd's (2008) *Apology* on the sound track. In Chapter 1 of

the exegesis I suggest this constructed ghost image is a free-floating ‘signifier’ of the after-shocks of ‘White Possession’, as if an *excess* which cannot be ‘mourned’. In fact, this ghostly irruption into the text, three times, ‘signals the advent of the uncanny’ (Santner 1990: 32). This ghost is trapped *beyond* mourning. Here, in the film, I am drawing on John Docker’s quest ‘for an intellectual method that seeks a kind of derangement, a cultivation of the art of madness’ (2000). The ghost is restless, hovering above or living inside *Kunanyi* (Mt. Wellington), a sign of trapped souls who haunts Tasmania just below the prim surface of British colonial order. This resonates with Denning’s (1998: 220) call for ‘edgy, disturbed, questioning’ history.

The capacity to performatively create and inhabit this uncanny white ghost has perhaps been enabled by a porous lack of boundaries. It is clear now, six years into this film project of ‘unsettlement’ that being witnessed in psychoanalysis has developed a capacity to sit with the trauma of colonisation. Film scholar Thomas Elsaesser (1996: 173) takes this further, describing an active state: ‘*Betroffenheit*, which roughly translates as “the affect of concern” but in its root meaning includes “recognising oneself to be emotionally called upon to respond, act, react.” It thus covers empathy and identification, but in an active, radical sense of being “stung into action.”’

Bhabha refers to the ‘houses of racial memory’ (like the ghostly rooms of the farm) to explore ‘the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present’ (2007: 18). My white ghost hovers at the margins, at the interstices, in the spaces; this ghost is not consolidated powerful white. Also, the unstable, ‘unhomely’ white narrator disrupts the reliability of this film text, suggesting the filmmaker has lost her way into fragmentation. This *other being*, this white ghost part of me, seems unable to integrate historical trauma. Something else is evoked here, unsettling, akin to I Watson’s (2007) ‘meditation on discomfort’ or anthropologist Michael Taussig’s ‘strange stuff’ (2006: viii).

Subversive mourning

Reflecting on when I filmed with Julie Gough and PennyX Saxon in 2004 and 2005, and subsequently with Jim Everett and Aunty Phyllis Pitchford in 2007, I can see how my own attachment to ‘the work of mourning’ influenced my approach and possibly restricted my capacity to sense their own individual, communal and traditional ways of working through the past and loosening the grip of the colonisers – in other words, to see how mourning could be subversive.

Marks' insight about making films 'at the intersections of two or more cultural regimes of knowledge' is relevant to this discussion of mourning (2000: 24). Here in Tasmania, there are different communities remembering through different experiences, different subject positions – calling to mind *deep time* and *shallow time*. My own unconscious assumptions clouded me to these different cultural knowledges early on in the project.

During my presentation on this project and the 'work of mourning' at the *Colonialism and its Aftermath Conference* (Thornley 2004), an Indigenous historian asked me, 'What makes you think you're welcome at our mourning sites?' I was surprised. How unconscious was I in my presentation? Did I deliver the paper with that assumption? I apologised for any shortcomings and said that I had not meant to assume non-Aboriginal Australians should rush to massacre sites. I remembered the funeral scene in the Australian film *Jindabyne* (2006) where the uninvited whites barge in. I begin to see the comment from her perspective – we newcomer Australians invade, possess the country, the story and now want to be in on the mourning sites.

Scholar Meaghan Morris (2006: 81) suggests we think about 'whiteness' at the margins. In this context, "White Australia", for example, was not only a policy valorised by a set of beliefs instilled in people over decades, but a wild array of stories, myths, legends, rumours, images, factoids and ideas....and always taking on lives of their own'. Morris's reading assists my process, keeping the gaze on the visual metaphor of the *white ghost* and releasing my expiring 'work of mourning' frame.

A pertinent question, then, is how can the 'work of mourning' be subversive in the Tasmanian context? Judith Butler opens the door, pushing past melancholic readings that end up in 'aporia' – no way, confusion or dead end. Her interpretation appreciates loss as creative with political potential. She writes about 'thought emerges from the ruins as the ruins...the strange fecundity of that wreckage' (2003: 468-469). Marks, too, suggests a move beyond aporia:

the tentative process of creation that begins at the time of grieving: in effect, the scent that rises from the funeral garlands...deconstructing dominant histories to creating new conditions for new stories...It is the attempt to translate to an audiovisual medium the knowledge of the body, including the unrecordable memories of the senses (Marks 2000: 5).

As I consider this six year practice-led film process I am conscious that mourning needs to be something other than an outlet for ‘newcomers’ to vent *their* anguish or shame at the trauma of colonisation. As recently as 2008, in the documentary series *First Australians*, Marcia Langton says, ‘this history is so shameful that most Australians could not admit that this is the origins of the state and their nation. It’s just too shameful’. Much has been written on the complex, tricky site of shame, particularly as ‘newcomers’ and the nation struggle to come to terms with the ongoing reverberations of British colonial rule. Yet, what to do with shame? ‘But in allowing us to feel bad, does shame also allow the nation *to feel better?*’ (Ahmed 2005: 72). Various scholars, along with Ahmed,⁴⁸ have commented on the ‘newcomers’ desire for reconciliation and reparation as having more to do with reconciling *their* shame about ‘bad’ settlement history, ‘turning back towards the “ideality” of the nation’ (Ahmed 2005: 80), than any serious intent of facing the consequences of recognising Aboriginal sovereignty. ‘Perhaps solidarity only works when sentiments solidify into actions’ (80, 81).

“Impossible mourning”⁴⁹

When I presented on this project at the Re-Orienting Whiteness Conference (Thornley 2008), one critic was determined to place this project in the ‘white guilt-shame-redemption’ trope, although she had not seen the film. Nevertheless the discussion opened up my thinking further into the complexities of this site. In hindsight the film chapter ‘*Mourning*’ was perhaps mistakenly named. Writing this exegesis after the film has required a further questioning of the premise of the project. ‘The work of mourning’ seems to suggest that mourning is a state that can be realised, or it’s a process that’s worth *doing* – good for all, like medicine. In the early days of the project the task was to expose repressed history and in this process make the unconscious, conscious – and *work through it*. That was the theory, but in practice it’s messier. Derrida fully explores ‘impossible mourning’ in his profound and moving essay on Lyotard’s phrase, ‘There shall be no mourning’:

“There shall be no mourning” was thus like a drifting aphorism, a phrase given over, abandoned, exposed body and soul to absolute dispersion...It could be said that this spectral echo roams about like a thief of the Apocalypse; it conspires in the exhalation

⁴⁸ Povinelli (2002, 2005); Moreton-Robinson (2007); Foley (2008).

⁴⁹ Derrida (2001b: 66).

of this phrase, comes back to haunt our reading, respire or breathes in advance – like the aura of this “there shall be [aura] no mourning” (Derrida 2001a: 217, 219).

A more recent set of essays under the rubric, *The Politics of Mourning*, also tackles this intractable space in terms of ‘that creative process mediating a hopeful or hopeless relationship between loss and history’ (Eng & Kazanjian 2003: 3). In his study of post-war German cinema Santner defines ‘the work of mourning’ as ‘The task of integrating damage, loss, disorientation, decenteredness into a transformed structure of identity, whether it be that of an individual, a culture, or an individual’ (1990: xiii). But what if there is no integration or that the search itself is fundamentally flawed?

Mourning is a difficult task. Susan Sontag (1982: xiii), in reference to Hans Syberberg’s epic film *Hitler: A Film From Germany* (1978) writes, ‘It takes time—and much hyperbole—to work through grief.’ Yet, whose grief? Who is mourning what? What am I mourning? What space can contain the work of mourning in all its incompleteness? Could the film itself be that container and hold the effects of two hundred and twenty years of colonisation and the repressive silences in both my own white family and in white society? Renov, recalling Barthes, suggests ‘the photographic image’ may offer a space for *some* process to take place: ‘Perhaps, there in the ritual value we ascribe to the documentary as a work of mourning, we will discover a limited but resilient source of reconciliation for our private losses and our public tragedies’ (2004: 129). This is perhaps a ‘middle way’ recognising that film as mourning work, if not over-invested in, may offer some kind of medium to process or engage with historical trauma.

Colonial melancholy

Maria Tumarkin (2004: 24) explores the silence or ‘absence at the core of colonial identity’, as being subsumed into loss – the lost object being ‘a fantasy of a golden colonial moment’ before the full destructive force of colonial invasion is fully revealed. I think about this and try and see if her shoe fits with my own experience of Tasmania. Did I live in such a fantasy? Perhaps my childhood fantasy around the Royal family and our parents ‘reign’ as Mayor and Mayoress was ‘my golden colonial moment’? But what, then, is *my* work of mourning? Is it, as Tumarkin suggests, that settler-colonials now mourn the lost colonial fantasy?

Paul Gilroy (2003: 84) refers to Fanon's description of the 'amputation' that colonisers enact: 'Whiteness can carry its own wounds even if they are still veiled in postcolonial melancholy and colonial privilege'. Or the horror colonialism generates in 'the melancholic pleasure of elegiac literature...lyrical poetry out of attempted genocide' (McCann 2006: 54). The risks are borne out in the novel *Wanting* by Tasmanian author Richard Flanagan (2008). He tells the story of Mathinna, the Aboriginal girl adopted by Lady Jane Franklin in 1841. 'Extinction discourse' (Brantlinger 2003: 1) clings to the pages. Flanagan writes a 'documentary' post-script at the end of his novel:

Although the catastrophe of colonisation led many at the time, both black and white, to believe the Tasmanian Aborigines would die out – a terrible anguish which I have tried to mirror in my novel – they did not. Nor were they absent from the subsequent unfolding of Tasmanian history. Today around 16,000 Tasmanians identify as Aborigines (2008: 256).

But it's too late for the Tasmanian Aboriginal characters depicted in his book. Flanagan's frame is similar to Tom Haydon's controversial 'extinction discourse' documentary *The Last Tasmanian* (1978). Gothic, the film depicts a genocidal tragedy of a doomed people. 'The whole story could be turned into a Victorian melodrama' (H Reynolds 1995: 201). So, here's a danger, is my film project simply a melancholic response to the loss of imperial privilege and position – the convicts who became the King and Queen and then lost that, too? Henry Reynolds (1995: 201) refers to "a little exquisite regret"...moral concern was politically safe and provided no legal purchase'.

Reynolds (1995) consistently turns moral accountability into view for 'newcomer Australians' suggesting the possibility of an Australian national story which 'mourns black Australians who died defending their homelands from invading Europeans...With frontier warfare as part of the story, the dawn landing at Gallipoli could be juxtaposed with the many dawn raids faced by sleeping Aborigines' (Reynolds 1995: 211, 212). But is this a move towards subversive mourning? Or does it reflect a desire to fold the Aboriginal story back into yet another 'honourable' national story – a *turning back to the ideality of the good nation?*

Remembering difference

How do I separate out my 'work of mourning' and not impose it on members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community or my own family (which perhaps I did in the process of making the film).

Sara Ahmed's (2005) essay *The Politics of Bad Feeling* gets nearby this matter: 'Justice might not simply be about "getting along", but might preserve the right of others not to enter into relationships, "not to be with me", in the first place. The other, for example, might not want my grief, let alone my sympathy, or love' (2005: 81). Yet, even this discussion seems to be posed in the troubled site of the 'newcomers' frame. Another approach might *also* consider the extent that Aboriginal philosophical understandings and cultural practices live dynamically outside the Western hegemony that constructs mind and culture, like Everett's place 'beyond the colonial construct' (2006a: 92, 97). I am interested in how this thinking has affected the shaping of my project.

Everett's (2006b) poems in *Meenamatta Water Country Discussion* are a rich expression of cultural survival, moving far beyond the recycling of grief for what has been lost. They express the power and longevity of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture grounded in country – a dynamic expression of Butler's 'fecundity of that wreckage' (2003: 469). Yet, perhaps it limits this poetry to see it through Butler's lens. Everett's poem (2006b: 18), 'this place is outside of the bible', gives a clue to the way his poetry breathes way beyond the western paradigm of psychoanalytic mourning handed down to us by Freud. It is an expression of a mind roaming free of the colonial construct, shedding it – leaving behind the ruins of colonial/colonising wreckage:

this place is outside of the bible
of world ideas that paint eden
with ancient trees that hold the fruit
of life's rules from the theistic
man god who owns all for man
who never walk this country place
as equals with all-life of clean water
but see their reflection in the sky

where man-god lives in his kingdom
while his images will seek paradise
in landscapes built by their hands
for wealth over family of this place
to challenge their angst of being
in country never accessed as family
and the believers of no-man's land
other than celebration of it untouched
yet powerless to prevent its death throes
from saws and axes of the followers
of god's rules where it has been given
to all men to tame and be paradise
only by colonial construct from away
and their dome of thinking as owners
prevent their desires to own a new eden
thus the world is threatened by the hand
of lucifer and his breed who cannot see
the forests or the trees as brothers and sisters
nor the great rivers of time flowing through
meenamatta country and clans with water
living together in community respect
and trust of all in true love with each other
as the great rivers carry their bloodlines
in the water of all places travelling forever
touching beyond the world of man's eden

this place is outside of the bible, Jim Everett (puralia meenamatta), 2006

S Watson's (2005) 'use Aboriginal sources as your primary sources' resonates in this context, as does Everett's, 'They need to know us, the indigenous people of this land. They need to understand that we are not the aliens' (2003: 174). It's in connecting with these writings and cultural works by Aboriginal people that newcomers may develop some understanding of 'a coexistence of radically different ways of reading country and history' (Gall & Probyn Rapsey 2006); and, further, to be *affected* by these other voices.

From his subject position within the Tasmanian Aboriginal community Greg Lehman (1996) writes about death in *Life's Quiet Companion*. His words change the way 'the strangers' might think about death and mourning in the context of the deep history of Tasmania. Here, death is not the wound, forever bleeding. On the contrary, says Lehman, 'The world we live in vibrates with the

energy of political struggle and revitalisation. The clarity of our vision and the depth of our understanding of the world today is made possible through our intimacy with death' (1996: 55).

Grounded solidarity

On the day of filming, Tasmanian Aboriginal Elder, Aunty Phyllis Pitchford brings her poem *Sad Memories* (2008: 5) to read in the film.



Figure 13: *I am proud, I am strong*, Aunty Phyllis Pitchford, *nunarng*, 2007

She explains how *sharing* her pain about loss of country and culture with the women of her community becomes 'a little part of their healing process'. As well, by performing her poem in the film, she crosses the racial divide of black and white Tasmania, articulating wounds for both communities. It's as if she is acknowledging that the tasks of mourning – what she refers to as 'taking journeys in my mind' – are necessary for both colonised and colonisers.

By reading her poem in the film, it's as if Aunty Phyl is sedimenting the tasks of mourning. She makes links with community, gathering in the poem itself and in her recitation, a grounded

solidarity – working through shared memories of the forced removals. Thus, mourning becomes collective, communal.

I'm an Aboriginal Woman so proud of my race
But I carry sad memories which I cannot erase
Of so many things from back in the past
Though some are forgotten, there are others that last.

When I was a small girl at my mother's knee
I heard 'Old Ones' talking of what used to be.
At times there was laughter but then they'd grow sad
As they dredged up old memories of times that were bad.

I was too young to know then, so could not relate
To the blows that were dealt by the cruel hand of fate.
The shame, degradation, the anger and scorn
That was heaped on my people, long before I was born.

Now today I still question, which was the worst kind?
The rape of the body, or that of the mind?
They never told all that was hidden inside
And though deeply wounded, they salvaged their pride.

And this they passed on, where it's proven today
In the pride that we carry as we pave the way.
For our children, our future, we must try and erase
Those sad bitter memories of long bygone days.

Recognition is happening though advancement is slow
And we all are aware there's a long way to go.
In the move to step forward, away from the past
Give Us back our Identity to walk free at last.

As I think of the 'Old Ones' I now understand
The pain that they carried for the loss of their Land.
Though I live with their memories of things that were wrong
As an Aboriginal Woman, I am proud, I am strong.

Sad Memories, Aunty Phyllis Pitchford (nunarnng), 2000

In the aftermath of the trauma of colonisation Aunty Phyl's healing takes place in a long tradition. Now, speaking the pain publicly, in a white film-maker's film that circulates beyond her community, she shares her poem in her own community's oral tradition. This is as an inclusive process, bringing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal together, storyteller and listener, in the telling of trauma, resilience and cultural survival. In the film she describes her process: 'One of my ways of healing myself – when a lot of our people read it – especially the women, and it's like they're living it, it's almost as though it's a little bit of their healing process as well'.

As the 'work of mourning' frame for this project shifted, I sensed the presence of a living cultural tradition of working through trauma, long pre-dating Freud and psychoanalysis. As Lehman (2003: 177) writes, 'There are many types of historians. Our grandmothers, most important in Aboriginal culture, draw on their own experience and the collective memory of their family and community'. This shared communal process links to Indigenous scholar Judy Atkinson's (2002: 15) work discussed in her book, *Trauma Trails* – working through trauma from Aboriginal traditions and philosophy. Atkinson describes *dadirri* as 'an Aboriginal concept which refers to a deep contemplative process of "listening to one another" in reciprocal relationships' (Ungunmerr 1993: 34-37). Atkinson considers 'appropriate recovery from within Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and acting, in the world...The land grew the people and people grew their country' (2002: 24, 29).

“texts must be performed to be experienced”⁵⁰

Even though the documentary film, *Black Man's Houses* (1992) is directed by a non-Aboriginal film-maker in close collaboration with community, the communal, shared story telling is palpable. In the slow, dignified movement of the mourners in the fire-light, a funeral is performed to commemorate the 'Old Ones' dispossessed of their country. As the drum beats out their loss and pain, the Tasmanian community, in the present, recover and reanimate 'a storehouse of possibilities...a striving after new forms...where the structures of group experience are replicated, dismembered, re-membered, re-fashioned....and made meaningful' (Turner 1986: 42-43). The repetitive sound of the hammering of the grave-stone markers into the earth is performative,

⁵⁰ Bruner (1986: 7)

hammering into consciousness the reality of what happened there – recuperating the names and grave sites of the Old Ones into the present. As the names of those who died in the transit camp flows down the screen, with the voice of Fanny Cochrane Smith singing in language, we sense the presence of the survivors and the Elders graves in a restored genealogy. In *Black Man's Houses* (1992) Aunty Phyllis Pitchford refers to the funeral ceremony, 'To me, we were laying their spirits to rest, we were laying the ghost; and it was like a lull came over...we found them'.

Memory that refuses to die

Enough has been written on Truganini without my words, but what happens when the story of Truganini is released from non-Aboriginal story-telling and returned to her own community. Tasmanian 'newcomer' author Andrys Onsman suggests (2004: 43) 'Truganini's life was the yardstick of the white invasion'. So, is the fact that we whites are still writing and thinking about her, evidence that white invasion/possession is ongoing? What if Onsman had used the present tense? Truganini's life *is* the yardstick of the white invasion. Or maybe it depends on *how* she is spoken about, and who speaks for her? As with Bishop Nixon's photographs – an ethics of *not looking*, an ethics of *not speaking* may be appropriate.

For Greg Lehmann the past and the present are a continuum that gives him community. He is writing about his descendants, his Elders: 'Truganini would often walk the short distance down to the Cove. She had a favorite spot on Kellys Steps, where she loved to sit in the sun and watch the goings on in the busy port' (2006: 5-7). Lehman's time is a continuum. He brings Truganini from the gothic, 'extinction' projection she has had to carry for so many years, into the sun. She lives, then, in Lehman's remembering, in warmth, not in a perpetual gothic tragedy. On subsequent visits to Kellys Steps in Hobart, I now have this as a *living* memory in my mind. I, too, can sit in the sun here, and feel this *past in the present* – in my own body-memory, across time, *recuperating affect*. Some special memory images live with me, too, such as Ryan's remembering of Truganini:

But she was already living with her dreams and had removed herself spiritually from the European world. She used to visit what she called her own country, the isthmus and Adventure Bay on Bruny Island, wandering the beaches, gathering shells and seaweed, and calling upon those of her old friends who were still alive...In the winter of 1874...Truganini was to be seen about the streets (of Hobart) dressed in a red turban,

serge dress, and knitted cardigans and scarves, always accompanied by her dogs (1996: 218).

Yet, 'extinction discourse' and the dual ideologies of imperialism and racism so dominated Tasmanian history prior to the 1980s that their shadowy legacies permeate and cling:

While the effect of what it has meant to live in and conquer another's home remains unexplored, the restlessness of the present will surely carry within it some haunting shadow of the past...(to be) more rooted in the experience of life here...a new direction, and a heightened struggle are needed (Boyce 1996: 59-60).

Over the last three decades several progressive non-Aboriginal historians⁵¹ have written historical narratives that challenge the victimological, doomed race thesis. Although their work has assisted re-visioning Tasmanian colonial history, Boyce suggests there is a long way to go: 'Even today it is more comfortable to stay with pity and regret than deal with this new story...the more hopeful story of Aboriginal survival and cultural resilience and adaptation' (Boyce 2001: 42, 48).

Island Home Country, in a sequence around Truganini, comes close to falling into the mourning-colonial elegy trap, too. As I film my sister crying at the Truganini memorial on *Lunawannaalonnha* (Bruny Island), what are her tears about and what draws me to film her here? Is she, are we, mourning the loss of the 'Good' (white) Australian nation, as the impact of the extent of the horrific colonial racist violence perpetrated here, *in country*, dawns? This is her first visit to Tasmania in thirty years, and she attempts to connect her childhood memories with some of the post-colonial history: 'It's hard to believe it, she says, 'we are on Aboriginal land'. Perhaps this is *her* shock of recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty. It's as if the entire foundation of the white Australian nation is dissolving before her eyes, as she and I both face the reality. What are we settler colonials *to do* with this growing realisation? Collins and Davis suggest:

The shock recognition of *terra nullius* as a myth breaks through the protective shield of historical amnesia, but at the same time the shock itself entails a protective numbing effect...because the highly contentious revision of the nation's past activates unconscious fantasies which, by definition, cannot be directly acknowledged (2004: 78).

⁵¹ Ryan (1996 [19981]); H Reynolds (1982, 1995, 1999, 2004); Boyce (1996, 2001, 2008).

I don't think either my sister or myself are 'numbed' or caught in unconscious fantasies in this moment on *Lunawannaalonnha*. On the contrary, the moment is visceral – memory embodied in the present. In this moment, both of us face the harsh reality of colonisation together. *We have to go there*. We are witnessing each other, the camera is witnessing. As Renov suggests, 'ethics also introduces the third dimension, which is the audience...the unknown third party that could be watching in a hundred years from now' (Renov 2008: 173).

The moment reminds me of Lanzmann with Bomba in *Shoah* (1985). 'I can't', says Bomba, 'It's too horrible. Please'. 'We have to do it', says Lanzmann. 'You know it'. This is not amnesia – *forgetting*, but anamnesis – *recollection*; and we, the audience, are witness to the scene. It is also remembering *in place*. As Lanzmann films at sites where the shock of the repressed history and memory erupts in the present of the filming moment, so my sister recalls what the white invaders really did to Truganini and her family – right there, near the *place* where it happened. There's a link to Lanzmann's thinking about *Shoah*, 'the film is the abolition of all distance between past and present; I relive this history in the present' (Lanzmann 2007: 45).

Santner suggests the 'tasks of mourning' need to be sedimented 'in the presence of an empathic witness...Mourning without solidarity is the beginning of madness' (1990: 25, 26). Santner is interested in those works that recuperate 'affect' so that mourning may be integrated into history; like Elsaesser's 'affect of concern', when one is 'stung into action' (1996: 173). *Stung into action*, like that day with Ryan at Wybalenna. I knew that day I had to *act* and make some kind of reckoning – *make the unconscious conscious* – 'when sentiments solidify into actions' (Ahmed 2005: 81).

I think, too, of my Tasmanian family and how we pledge ignorance of what really happened – *we didn't know*. The claim of 'ignorance' by white colonial settlers is contextualised by Curthoys and Docker (2002) in their historical and global analysis of 'genocidal desires and practices'. They place this alongside a critique of a victimological narrative that 'permits one to be innocent in history, to be comfortable with denial, to be outraged at the accusation of complicity in founding violence'. Being 'innocent in history' permits an ambiguous identity too, 'Settlers imagine themselves free to depart...to search yet again for that better future...Detached from organised moral accountability' (DB Rose 2004: 5). To grow up in 1940s and 1950s Tasmania when the

imperative was *to forget*, has been transformed through this project, into *remembering* and *to be stung into action*; and to impel my white family to remember too. ‘So we whites have not ‘just found out’...rather, we are beginning to remember differently, to understand and care about what we knew’ (Morris 2006: 107).

Resistance challenges mourning

In various edits of the film I attempted to shift the paradigm of *mourning* towards the rarely told stories of Aboriginal resistance to colonisation. I was particularly struck by the story of the Tasmanian Aboriginal fighters Truganini, Timmy and Pevay and their 1841 revolt in Melbourne (Cox 2004). There’s a link here between Lehman’s (1996: 55) ‘energy of political struggle’, Reynold’s (1995: 87-119) discussion of the sustained resistance by Tasmanian Aboriginal people against the British, and Bhabha’s (2007: 296) ‘political psychosis of panic’ in the 1857 Indian Mutiny against the British.

The ‘transmission of fear and anxiety, projection and panic in a form of circulation *in-between* the coloniser and the colonised’ (Bhabha 2007: 294) must have erupted when ‘Chief Protector’ Robinson took Truganini, Timmy and Pevay, along with thirteen other Tasmanian Aborigines to Portland, Victoria in 1839-1841. Truganini, Fanny, Matilda, Timmy and Pevay’s taking up of arms and their breathtaking raids on various shepherds’ huts and on whalers, ‘had all the marks of sustained guerrilla resistance to white settlement’ (Ryan 1996: 197). There’s an extraordinarily resilient energy to this story – desperate, catastrophic, heroic: ‘they were what fanned the smouldering resentment into the fires of freedom’, says Robert Cox (2004: 163) one of the few non-academic writers to tackle the resistance wars. The ‘in-between’ of these intense ‘affects’ of revolt rise like yeast – are fully *present*. They are not narrated away in the order and control of the colonisers’ language, as in the ‘extinction discourse’ in Flanagan’s (2008) *Wanting* and *The Last Tasmanian* (1978), the ‘wilderness discourse’ of the feature film *Van Diemen’s Land* (2009), or the elegiac guilt in works by so many white settlers, as in the documentary series *Frontier* (1996).

Even though Boyce (2008: 10) claims that the ‘suffering and brutality associated with invasion and conquest must forever remain central themes of any truthful account of life in Van Diemen’s Land,’ it needs to be heeded that these ‘themes’ may, in their very articulation, perpetuate a

repetition of invasion and conquest. The descendants of the ‘invaders’ are writing the histories, the novels, the films and relentlessly choosing the ‘gothic’ genre, with graphic descriptions of gruesome, shocking suffering and brutality perpetrated on Tasmanian Aboriginal people. It seems that the ‘strangers’ are obsessed by the tragedies caused by the British invasion of Aboriginal lands, more than the spirit of their extraordinary resistance(s) that fanned out across country, or the *living presence* of Tasmanian Aboriginal people in their midst. It’s as if these works of film and literature, by the ‘newcomers’, hold within them the ongoing reverberations of *their* trauma as ‘perpetrators’ or descendants of perpetrators.⁵² Perhaps ‘remembering, repeating and working through’ is taking place in some of these cultural works, but for *whom*? And what if these works simply repeat the traumatic history, without any tangible *benefit* to community. Rather, perhaps there is an unconscious attachment to ‘*the horror, the horror*’, which maintains the ‘repetition compulsion’, and thus history is repeated. Perhaps they are perpetuating guilt and shame, creating *numbing*, rather than the momentum of being *stung into action*? As H Reynolds considers, ‘to admit the brutality of the invasion...eased the conscience without having any political or economic implication’ (1995: 201).

I attempted to represent the Aboriginal Tasmanian’s spirited and powerful mutiny against British rule in the film, but dropped it from the edit, realising, with the influence of protocols, that it’s not my place to tell that story; that’s *possession* again. No doubt the stories need to be told, not least to shift the stranglehold of the inexorably circulating ‘extinction discourse’ – yet the question of *how* to tell it remains a challenge – along with the critical question of *who* tells it.

The energy of revolt

In Bhabha’s writing on the Indian Mutiny ‘the word’ and ‘the sentence’ become expressions of the breathtaking energy of the *moment* of revolt. We witness many examples of this in the cultural and political work of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, from the insurgency that began in 1803, the resistance wars of the 1820s-1830s, into 20th and 21st century political campaigns around land rights, ‘Stolen Generations’ compensation, repatriation, sovereignty and cultural rights. A poetic and visual work like *Meenamatta Water Country Discussion* (Everett & Kimberley 2006b) sings

⁵² Discussed by historians Curthoys & Docker (2002), Attwood (2007).

the song of country, yet its poetics articulate a savage critique of the damage wrought by the colonisers. For instance Everett's (2006b: 26) poem *antipodes* is beyond the frame of mourning – was never in it:

white sails explore country
of other worlds that
have no owners only
the all-life nations
where wealth is in family
yet the white sails come
with owners in their blood
money for the monarch
and everything of all-life
is taken to another place
where no heaven can be
and trees become logs
of woodchip planks
of clear-felled country
taking over from all-life
so that water will sicken
across country
for thirst to dry quenching water
all-life cannot drink money
yet the country mother
will survive and heal
in timeless space beyond
living memory until water
heals for new life in the never
never lost in bloodlines of water
and water's arteries and veins
will be clean once again
where all-life
with the spirit of a first nation
will emerge with the laws of the land
once again in timeless space beyond
living memory a new seed for all-life
will dwell beyond time and space

antipodes, Jim Everett (puralia meenamatta), 2006

The momentum and diversity of Everett's writings (essays, poetry, plays, films) about the Tasmanian Aboriginal struggle, including the direct political activist period of the 1980s in *Voices*

from *a First Nation* (1997b), through to his subsequent analytical and personal writings, *This is Manalargenna Country* (2006a) and *Dispossession* (2006c), to the innovative poetry in *Meenamatta Water Country Discussion* (2006b), shows that the ‘strategic affect of political revolt’ holds firm (Bhabha 2007: 285). Britain’s colonial policies – attempting to rid Tasmania of Aboriginal people and culture – and all those who subsequently carried these policies out, was doomed. The memory of potent resistance – alive then *and* now – are living memories stored in safe-keeping by the descendants of the original people.⁵³

Caring

In constructing the film in the edit-room during 2005-2008, the movement from memory to mourning has been fluid. Memory is like a river, rushing forward, flowing like time (Baer 2002: 3). In the same way, these two chapters *Memory* and *Mourning* ebb and flow in and out of each other. I like the way Margalit (2002) links memory, mourning *and* care. He says, ‘*To care* used to have a meaning now declared obsolete, namely, to mourn. The connotation that connects caring to memory through the idea of mourning is one I would like to preserve...Memory, then, blends into morality through its internal relation with caring’ (2002: 31-32).

If my ‘work of mourning’ is to move beyond the personal and wake up to the reality – ‘the lie of the “Australian Good” and not pretend that the Australian nation was developed honourably’ (Langton, *First Australians* 2008), then my own mourning work has to be subversive and of some benefit or use to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, my own family and the wider community. Over the last twenty years as I learnt more about what happened in Tasmania and came near the hidden, secret memories and the extent of Britain’s violent and cruel colonial race based expansionism, my own responses developed and ‘mourning’ evolved.

Considering Margalit’s view that mourning means *to care*, then perhaps I might consider my mourning as *caring* about what happened on the island and to the island’s people – then *and* now, in deep time *and* shallow time. In this caring I am *stung into action*. It seems that this kind of

⁵³ Laura Marks (2000: 13) refers to ‘affective memory’ (P Gilroy) as ‘a memory that cannot be expressed in Eurocentric terms: a memory stored in safekeeping until a means of translation can be found’.

process takes place in direct ‘encounters’ grounded in dialogue and negotiation. This is the subject of the next chapter, *Encounter*.

Chapter 7 – Encounter

...as a visitor you initiate a conversation with Indigenous people as an exchange of knowledge and creativity. Where you offer a gift that is not motivated by gaining something at the expense of the host. But where each party involved in the collaboration leaves both on equal terms and have gained something through the encounter (The Woiworung practice of Tandurru).

Birch (2003)

So there's always that circulating ethical question about how are we treating one another...what are the relations that exist among us. That's really what documentary has to share to the world, and we can't, no matter how interested we are in the formal, we can't ever give up that connection to the ethical register.

Renov (2008: 174)

...for what are aesthetics if not an expression of a filmmaker's ethics?

Taylor (1998: 12)

In this chapter I discuss how various 'encounters' shaped the film's form and content, evolving a film with distinct textual strategies that reflect something of the project's 'encounter' with Aboriginal protocols, ethics, my own family – and *within* my own self. There are many interlacing layers in documentary film production that influence the development of a film's textual strategies, especially in a work straddling the film industry, university, family and the community. Povinelli describes 'a politics of "thick life" – in which the density of social representation is increased to meet the density of actual social worlds' (2006: 21). I understand Povinelli to be suggesting that 'dense' social worlds require 'dense' representation; in this project's case a filmic representation that has fidelity, that's linked to its referent and that reflects something of the complexity and depth of the 'social worlds' it encounters.

For this project these 'social worlds' include all those aspects that make up the film-making process – including permissions arrangements with people and institutions and places that were filmed; music, film and photo/painting copyrights; working with film personnel such as the film editor, composer, sound designer, post production technical staff, DVD designers, distributors, film festivals and TV broadcasters; at the University, there are the Ethics Committee (HERC), the

Indigenous House of Learning (Jumbunna) and doctoral supervisors; in the Tasmanian context there is dialogue around protocols in *Respecting Cultures* (Arts Tasmania 2004) with Tasmanian Aboriginal community members who participated in the film, and with community organisations, such as the Tasmanian Land and Sea Council (TALSC). Also in a personal essay film such as *Island Home Country*, there is my own extended family in Tasmania and extended family locally and overseas to consider.

There are past and present encounters embedded in the film, too, as on Cape Barren Island in 1981, when the local Aboriginal boys reacted to us whiteys, ‘Get off you lot, this is our land’. Direct, clear and passionate. Then there are the ‘encounters’ and sometimes ‘non-encounters’ with my own white family on the island. Mostly, though, in my family, we stay on the top-soil to avoid the ‘encounter’. Or there may be technical mistakes that become narrative strategies, such as the day my sister wept at Truganini’s memorial and I forgot to turn on the microphone. Later that ‘encounter’, as technical insufficiency, becomes part of my performance as the ‘unstable’ filmmaker-narrator of this film.

Family protocols

Unlike Indigenous protocols, now formally regulated across Australia, there are no formal written protocols or ethics to guide filming with family members or friends. The history of documentary film-making is perhaps a royal road of ruins in this regard, including my own autobiographical film-making with *Maidens* (1978) and *To the Other Shore* (1996). I have not been very skilful in these previous personal films involving family – being ‘unconscious’ is perhaps a more accurate way to describe it. Gradually, over years of film-making and teaching around the site of ethics and informed consent, I have become more conscious about the pitfalls of documentary film-making with family members. A significant issue is assuming consent is granted when, in fact, it has not really been given. There’s an imbalanced power relationship with the film-maker, the camera perhaps holding a certain talismanic power – which family members may feel too intimidated to refuse in the context of intimate family relationships. Filmmaker and theorist Michelle Citron (1999) discusses this in respect to her own work:

Whatever happens in front of the camera must be lived with, by the artist and her family, for the rest of their lives together...what significance does informed consent really carry? And what right do I have to display them to audiences in often unpredictable ways? These questions are further intensified for me in autobiography, where I'm intimately attached to the people being filmed and taped. The tension that exists between respecting the rights of others and speaking the unspeakable.... the right to privacy versus the right to know (1999: 276, 280).

I had a range of conflicting emotions the day I filmed with Aunty M. I felt that operating the camera distanced me from her; it made her uncomfortable, this being 'observed', although around environmental issues and the 'Stolen Generations' she became animated and wanted to share her point of view. But I sensed I was taking something from her and returning to Sydney with it. Despite the fact that DVD edits were sent to the family at various stages, in hindsight, wouldn't some 'shared protocols' have given both of us some protection and space for more meaningful dialogue?

Film theorist and ethnographic filmmaker David MacDougall reflects on the 'methodological asceticism that causes filmmakers to exclude themselves from the world of their subjects also excludes the subjects from the world of the film' (1998: 133). Although he is referring to the neutral, detached observational documentarist – and this is certainly *not* me, nor is *Island Home Country* an observational documentary – yet his words are relevant. I am conscious that the Tasmanian Aboriginal participants, because of their protocols, have access to this film's production process in a way that is not commensurable to family members or others who are in the film: 'By asking nothing of the subjects beyond permission to film them, the filmmaker adopts an inherently secretive position. There is no need for further explanation. No need to communicate with the subjects on the basis of the thinking that organises the work' (MacDougall 1998: 133).

The filming encounter with my friend Moni Lai Storz demonstrates something of this. One day, when filming, she loses her temper with me, 'I don't know how to do this with you. You can't edit in camera. It's so frustrating, just let me rave on and then edit it later'. We pause for a while, and then resume filming. Later, when editing I want to keep her angry outburst in the film, but viewers of that edit felt it wasn't intrinsic to the film's main themes. Yet when I think of her visceral emotion, her rage – direct, strong, passionate – articulating how she wanted more control over the process *and* her own representation – *this was indeed, a theme*. I should have kept it in the film and

also created a production context so that Lai Storz, along with other participants, could have engaged in a mutual ‘thinking process’ around the film – just as the Tasmanian Aboriginal participants had with their access to the edit process, with protocols to protect their interests. MacDougall suggests a way through this may be ‘a principle of multiple authorship leading to a form of *intertextual cinema*...a better position to address conflicting views of reality, in a world in which observers and observed are less clearly separated and in which reciprocal observation and exchange increasingly matter’ (1998: 138). Simple on paper, hard in practice; with the project now moving into its seventh year, the economic challenges and logistics of even limited ‘multiple authorship’ is hard to sustain.

The encounters with family and friends in the film-making process, varies. Each has their distinctive story, each of them relates to the film in different ways. Film theorist Vivian Sobchack suggests, ‘One viewer’s fiction may be another’s *film-souvenir*; one viewer’s documentary another’s fiction’ (1999: 253). This is palpable in how different family members relate to a particular family photograph, a historical incident or the home movies. The haunting, eerie footage of the rooms in the farmhouse or the footage of ‘the hedge keeping history out’ may have different meanings for each family member. This footage of these rooms was created out of Uncle J preferring *not* to be filmed; in this encounter with him I stumble upon a way of filming, a textual strategy that could never have been planned or chosen in advance. It arose in the midst of practice – an example of ‘The principle of needs eliciting styles’ (MacDougall 1998: 225).

There’s also the screenings of the film and the way each person feels about their lives appearing on film in the public domain, especially when screened on national television. What is their encounter with the finished work? How do they relate to my expression of ‘unsettlement’? Or do they need to deflect it away, as in that statement, ‘Don’t you think you’re carrying rather too much guilt’, suggesting that my enquiry is more my own personal shortcoming than an investigation worth doing by settler-strangers. Yet, guilt or no guilt, something gives rise to an uncomfortable feeling in some viewers. Perhaps it’s when their own subjectivity encounters this difficult history *and* its present manifestation; I sense this *may* be an ethical function of the documentary doing its work. Renov suggests that the *fifth fundamental tendency of documentary film* is, in fact, the *ethical*:

our challenge is to remain connected with this notion of the ethical, that the relationship always is about the I and the thou, myself and the person on the other side of the

camera – whether sometimes it’s me and me, or me and my best friend, or me and my mother, or me and someone totally unknown to me. . .But that’s always the challenge: to really negotiate that relationship in a way that remain true to an encounter, a reciprocity, that is *I* and *you* on somehow an equal ground...They’re all about subjectivity....objectivity won’t get you there (2008: 172, 173).

“protocols do not meet a virgin world”⁵⁴

Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology. They are “factors” to be built in to research explicitly, to be thought about reflexively, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways and in a language that can be understood (Smith 1999: 15).

Aboriginal protocols don’t exist in isolation. They are not words on a page. They are, in fact, about ‘relationship’. In setting off to Tasmania to make this film I came into an uncertain space where I had not been before. There were no maps for this. I had to stumble along on my own tracks. In 2004 when I started there was as yet no published protocol document specific to Tasmania.⁵⁵ I knew no Aboriginal people there. There was my white family – Mum’s sister and my cousins. I wrote to some Aboriginal organisations in advance – the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council and Riawunna Indigenous Higher Education, University of Tasmania.

My meeting with Gough and Saxon at the *Colonialism and its Aftermath Conference* (University of Tasmania 2004) became the initial ‘encounter’ from which the film took shape. Both of them came to my presentation on this project and I went to Gough’s (2004) paper *Voices and Sources – Making Art and Tasmanian Aboriginal History*. Both artists seemed open, if cautious, to filming at a later date. I filmed mostly with my family in 2004 and then more in-depth filming with Saxon, Gough and others in 2005.

In November 2006 I sent the ninety-minute DVD edit to everyone interviewed in the film. Gough responded with an extensive shot by shot critique of the film. I found it confronting, particularly

⁵⁴ Povinelli (2006: 48).

⁵⁵ In 2005 Riawunna, UTAS, sent me a copy of the newly published *Respecting Cultures* (Arts Tasmania 2004). However to be exposed to Smith (1999), Nakata (2002) or Moreton-Robinson (2000b, 2003) at the outset of my research may have contributed to a more conscious approach around intercultural issues in a post-colonising frame.

her critique of my subject position, the extent of the changes advised and the strong suggestion that I return to Tasmania to film with more members from the Aboriginal community. To initiate Gough's suggestions were costly, particularly returning to film – airfares, accommodation and finding people to be in the film; also being camera operator and interviewing was demanding. Having no budget was an issue, too. I had applied to several Australian film organisation for finance with no success.⁵⁶

Yet more important than these production obstacles I needed to work on my attitude: stay *open* and learn to trust. This was the two-way road of documentary protocols: Renov's '*I and you on somehow an equal ground*' (2008: 172). And why should I be trusted? In the colonised-colonising spaces of Tasmania, this was a challenge – and for good reason, as Gough (2009) so clearly articulates:

Given our post invasion history of near extinction, Aboriginal people in Tasmania have not been especially keen to share knowledge, information, places, skills, stories with outsiders. We absented ourselves and were simultaneously removed by the mainstream from everyday Tasmania. We were positioned as doomed or dead – definitely past...Our shared cross cultural history is an uncomfortable one. Here the grieving and the celebratory avoid each other.

I sent the film treatment and DVD edit to more Aboriginal community members and several Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations in 2006. I returned in February 2007 to film with Elders Everett and Pitchford, submitted a formal proposal to the Tasmanian Land and Sea Council (TALSC), meeting to seek their approval of the 2007 film script. During the meeting a TALSC representative queried my film narration, which referred to Molly Mallet's (2001) and Ida West's (1987) autobiographies: 'What do you want to quote Aunty Ida for? What makes you think you can? You can't unless you get permission from their families'. I started to feel a bit unstable in this meeting. I sensed I was an intruder, 'the other'. The night on Cape Barren Island flooded into my mind: 'Get off you lot, this is our land'. My feelings were visceral – what I came to name as *the instability of white*.

⁵⁶ Film Finance Corporation (FFC), Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Film Australia and Screen Tasmania. A bank loan financed additional filming and post-production; the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) licensed the film upon completion for three screenings in 2009-2012.

Marks' (2000:10) perspective about 'different cultural regimes of knowledge', and Moreton-Robinson's (2003) analysis of incommensurable differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, assists me now, at this stage, to contextualise moments like this. For instance, a 'newcomer' autobiography published in the public domain would not require me to obtain permissions from *living* family members. Yet this request for me to contact the Mallet and West families was *ethical* and grounded in relationship, suggesting perhaps an appropriate ethical approach for documentary film-making in general. Indigenous scholar Margaret Raven (2009), in fact, argues for a 'common ethics', not making any necessary causal link between Indigenous protocols and Indigenous knowledges and calling for detailed research to evaluate the actual workings of protocols on the ground.

My 'non-encounters' with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre also pushed me further into an experience of being 'an outsider'. Protocols process was hurtling the film and me into 'a space that abounds with contradictions, ambiguities, conflict and contestation of meanings' (Nakata 2007: 199). Most of my correspondence requesting permission to use the word *kunanyi* never arrived or was missing. Yet, in these *non-encounters* I came to understand something of the political issues around 'newcomers' use of Aboriginal language: 'We always emphasise that Aboriginal language belongs to Aborigines, and we control its use. For many years Tasmanian Aborigines debated whether white people should be allowed to use our language – after all, we've barely got it back again after nearly losing it altogether' (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre 2006: 7). As Langton, in the 'pre-protocols' era recognised, 'The central problem is the failure of non-Aboriginals to comprehend us Aboriginal people, or to find the grounds for *an* understanding' (1993: 38).

Working with Indigenous Protocols

Protocols have proved to be complex and contentious, and over the last three decades various commentators have discussed them – as they have become mandatory across film-making, art, anthropology, archaeology and sociology and media organisations. During the 1980s both Langton (1993) and Michaels (1994: 21-46) considered the intricate issues around representation and the defining of 'Aboriginality', with Langton stressing 'intersubjectivity, when both the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal are subjects, not objects' (Langton 1993: 32). Recently, Noonuccal-

Quandamooopah researcher, Karen Martin (2008) has argued for the potential of protocols, discussing them in the context of Aboriginal sovereignty in her own research project:

A different relationship to self as researcher is articulated in the reframing and redefining of research agreements to give greater agency to the Aboriginal research participants...This stronger dialogic and self-reflexive researcher role works towards addressing, if not neutralising, issues of power of researcher over researched...Thus, in this new relationship, research is no longer a site of resistance, but a site of decolonisation and transformation (Martin 2008: 146).

Martin's self-reflexive process provided insights into my ongoing understanding of protocols with this project. Jennifer Deger (2006) also develops a critical, self-reflexive analysis in her media collaboration with the Yolgnu community in East Arnhem Land, developing the concept of 'intercultural regard' with links to Laura Mark's discussion of 'intercultural cinema' (2006: 50-51). Both Ian Henderson (2009) and Therese Davis (2007) discuss the complexities of cross-cultural collaboration in *Ten Canoes* (2006) and *The Balanda and the Bark Canoes* (2006). Michael Jacklin's research into Indigenous life writing provides a detailed analysis of protocols especially in regards to 'power dissymmetries': 'Honouring protocols and consulting is a way of acknowledging that 'Who owns the story?' bears upon the reading of a narrative as well as its production' (Jacklin 2008: 141, 142). Others have, however, been more critical. Indigenous filmmaker Frances Peters-Little (2002: 7) doubted the use of protocols for film production suggesting they 'are almost impossible to follow', and Mitchell Rolls sustained a polemical attack on them calling them 'the Messrs Goody-Two-Shoes of Research practices' (2003: para 5).

Yet without protocols, what do critics propose? A return to the previous unregulated practice of anything goes? If the producers of the controversial documentary *The Last Tasmanian* (1978) and Tasmanian Aboriginal communities had negotiated agreed protocols, then the documentary may have been less damaging to the community or in fact, not made at all. Instead, the film re-enacts what Moreton-Robinson calls 'White possession' (2006b: 391). It perpetuates the 'ugly' re-assertion that the British genocide of Tasmanian Aboriginal people was achieved, thus evading any discussion of the ongoing 'politics of Aboriginal sovereignty' in Tasmania. Fifteen years after *The Last Tasmanian*, Steve Thomas, with *Black Man's Houses* (1992), in collaboration with the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association, makes a very different film from *The Last Tasmanian*. During this film's process, filmmaker and community negotiated a collaborative, ethical approach

to tell the story of Tasmanian Aboriginal continuity and survival from an Islander perspective, turning the genocidal thesis of *The Last Tasmanian* on its head.

Despite the many films made about Aboriginal people across Australia, few non-Aboriginal filmmakers have considered their own agency as 'white' or as 'newcomers'. Rolf de Heer (2007) in an anecdotal essay, *Personal Reflections on Whiteness and Three Film Projects*, and in his documentary *The Balanda and the Bark Canoes* (2006), examines his own attempts to negotiate the complexities of cross-cultural film-making in *Ten Canoes* (2006) and *The Tracker* (2002). Although *Balanda's* narrative strategies, including de Heer's narration, consolidate his identity as the strong auteur in control, while 'the other' remains 'other', something of the intricacy or density of the intercultural encounter is conveyed.

Aboriginal Control

Protocols involve communication, negotiation and relatedness and may be complex and lengthy. All these features of protocols were present in my own film-making process, working with protocols in *Respecting Cultures* (Arts Tasmania 2004) and interpreted by those Tasmanian Aboriginal community members who participated in the project. During the making of the film, as I began to examine my own unconscious assumptions, I realised I had to let go of my control of the project into a process of negotiation and dialogue. There is an inevitable letting go of any imagined or actual 'script' in documentary filmmaking but this felt different. The process required me to question my ingrained assumptions.

In hindsight, the protocols 'Aboriginal Control' and 'Continuing Cultures',⁵⁷ in the *Respecting Cultures* document, really pushed me to question my motives, further de-stabilising my control and learning to wait for negotiations to unfold in their own time. In this contested site I was no longer able to hold the film in my mind. It was slipping away into quicksand. It wasn't that it was becoming an Aboriginal film, it was more the challenge of 'whose story' is being told here, and 'who is the storyteller'? Also, the protocol process requires time to develop trust in working relationships, and an appropriate film budget, which was lacking.

⁵⁷ Appendix 1

As the years passed by, the film as a finished work seemed increasingly remote. I sensed a loss of control and a feeling of instability that forced me to shift the gaze further towards myself as ‘other’. Fiona Nicoll reflects on a similar process: ‘I unlearn what I think I know when I am knocked off my perch....and hit the ground with a thud...it does help me to understand Australian race relations *within my skin*, rather than presuming to know them from some point outside it’ (2004: 30).

Julie Gough’s (2006: pers.comm.) detailed shot by shot critique of the film’s first edit, as part of the protocol ‘Communication, Consultation and Consent’⁵⁸ was a pivotal moment in the project’s development, as was her suggestion that I return to Tasmania and film with more community members. The following year, after further filming with Everett and Pitchford and revising various film-edits, Everett’s (2007: pers.comm.) ‘I think the storyline should be more yours; looks too much like our story’, precipitated a turn to my ‘white story’. I became the ‘unsettled’ settler.

I am white, born on a stolen island

The *invisibility of white* was so pervasive in my unconscious and previous film work, that it was only through face to face encounters with an ‘Indigenous critical gaze’ (Moreton-Robinson 2000b: xxiii), and direct engagement in the filmmaking process by Tasmanian Aboriginal community members, that I was forced to confront my whiteness. Finding an embodied visual metaphor to express this white ‘other’, as well as working through how to ‘name’ myself, or my family, in speech – in narration – became a challenge. *What to call ‘us’?* The Tasmanian Aboriginal people I liaised with were direct: ‘You can’t call yourselves settlers, because you aren’t’. Anthropologist WEH Stanner (1979: 144) uses the term ‘newcomers’, while Indigenous film-maker Rachel Perkins describes the colonists as ‘strangers’ in the documentary series *First Australians* (2008). Germaine Greer turns to the notion of ‘Aboriginality as a nationality’ for all Australians: ‘I was born in an Aboriginal country, therefore I must be considered Aboriginal’ (2003: 15). Others⁵⁹ have suggested that a move to ‘belonging’, if grounded in responsibility and shared ethics, may offer a way to be here in ‘country’. This is clearly different from belonging to one country, one nation. I wondered which of these terms to adopt for myself. Eventually, through dialogue, internal process and film edit process, I opened the film with, ‘I am white, born on a stolen island’, a reflexive

⁵⁸ Appendix 1

⁵⁹ Graham (1999: 107); Read (2000: 2); DB Rose (2004: 190); Everett, *Island Home Country* (2008).

sentence of eight words, which took five years to articulate and texturally create in sound and image. This issue of ‘naming’ is also posed later in narration: ‘What to call us? Invaders, settlers, newcomers?’ I sensed a thread in this image of the eerie, white ghostly soldier in Saxon’s (2006) painting *The Hands of White Man’s Destruction*.



Figure 14: *The Hands of White Man’s Destruction*, PennyX Saxon 2006

The image assisted me turn the film’s gaze towards the interior space of my own colonised-colonising mind. Here the visual metaphor of myself as a *white ghost of Australian history* emerged. Saxon’s painting embodies the wound in the white psyche. It *affected* me. This British soldier is half man, half boy. His eyes are vacant, glassy, his mouth fallen – as if he is both witness and accomplice to the inexpressible, to ‘the silence’. The British adrift, neither here, nor there, yet enacting ‘white possession’, coloniser and colonised, imbricated in each other’s minds.

I sought out descriptions of white people by Aboriginal writers, as if to experience ‘whiteness’ through their gaze. Re-reading Mudrooroo Narogin’s (1983) *Dr. Wooreddy’s Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World*, it was as if I was reading a description of Saxon’s ghost soldier and by implication, my own ghost-self:

The ghost’s face, round like the moon, though unscarred, shone pink like the shoulder skin of the early morning sun. Sharp, sea-coloured eyes sought to bridge the gap between them. The ghostly eyes showed such an avid interest in him that he evaded those eyes by staring at the strange skin on the ghost’s head. From under it, his hair showed rust-coloured like a vein of red ochre in grey rock (1983: 29-30).

The opening image of the film thus contains several layers, suggesting the ghostly return of the never-faced ‘Possession’, or perhaps the ancestral ghost, some say, Aboriginal people assumed white-fellas to be. These phantoms imply a restless, presence and gave the film a dimension beyond the surfaces of a singular realist representation: ‘The threshold between life and death becomes a space of uncertainty in which boundaries blur....the dead return to the world of the living as a ghostly apparition’ (Mulvey 2006: 37, 38). My ghost of history exists in this liminal non-space, evoking no-belonging, being an outsider. Isaac Deutscher writes about this outsider as a ‘non Jewish-Jew’:

They lived on the margins or in the nooks and crannies of their respective nations. Each of them was in society and yet not in it, of it and yet not of it. It was this that enabled them to rise in thought above their societies, above their nations, above their times and generations, and strike out mentally into wide new horizons and far into the future (1968: 27).

I think about WEH Stanner’s (1979: 188-89) ‘analysis of the Australian conscience’ where he offers Aboriginal perspectives on the ‘ugly deeds’ of colonising Australians:

From their point of view we were men from Mars...we are ‘like sharks’, meaning that we pursue land, money and goods as sharks pursue little fish; some of it is perhaps very near the bone – as one old man said to me: ‘You are very clever people, very hard people, plenty humbug’ (235).

It’s as if Stanner is articulating a ‘non-Australian’ Australian, like Deutscher’s ‘non Jewish-Jew’ or Docker’s ‘strangers amongst the nations’ (2001: 262). Nakata takes it further, suggesting that outsiders must ‘feel what it is like *not* to be a ‘knower’ of this world’ (2007: 217). As any solidity

in knowing slips away, I experience *un-possession*, ghostly unsettlement on this colonial, colonising island.

During the film's production process, engaging with protocols has an intense impact on my childhood memories: I'm between a rock and a hard place. This is a 'messy text' (Marcus 1998: 189). I can't control it. I want to make a film about being a whitey growing up in Tasmania encountering the reality of colonisation, but I'm clumsy and keep putting my foot in it. More than that, I am pushed to examine my assumptions every step of the way. Here we are certainly at the site of Renov's (2008: 173) fifth tendency of documentary – the ethical.

“Am I like one of those collectors?”⁶⁰

When Julie Gough (2006: pers.comm.) offered her sustained critique of the film's edit, she also showed me images from her 1988 installation *Whispering Sands* – haunting, ghostly figures of 19th century British collectors of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and culture. I wondered, am I like one of those collectors? Maybe she is suggesting I am. I feel paranoid now. Was I collecting Aboriginal stories, like film-maker Chris Marker's 'bounty hunter' in his essay film *Sans Soleil* (1983), yet without the ironic distance that Marker deploys to get himself both in and out of his own film? My unstable feelings around being a white person making this film take a greater hold. I try and work this *instability* back into the fabric of the film.

⁶⁰ Narration, *Island Home Country* (2008).



Figure 15: *The Whispering Sands, Ebb Tide*, Julie Gough 1998

My attempt to defer narrative authority in a multi-vocal film had become increasingly difficult with Jim Everett's injunction that I tell *my story, not theirs*. In the final stages of the edit Aunty Phyl suggests, 'just make sure it's your voice speaking, so it's really clear it's a film about you' (2008: pers.comm.). I am thrown further into having to think about myself as 'white' and 'other'. Yet in this process a shift is also taking place, from the project as an imaginary artefact in my own mind, or words on a page, to relationships with people in the present. To be present and grounded in what is happening seems to involve a shift from *introspection*, to what I Watson (2007: 30) describes as 'a meditation on discomfort', to considering questions such as the lawfulness of settler Australia. The focus of the project shifts from being a 'mourning work' towards articulating an intense experience of Australia's race relations *within my skin* (Nicoll 2004: 30).

Protocols re-vision country

This project's necessary commitment to a protocols process in Tasmania pulled the research, the filming and me into uncharted waters – 'Communication, Consultation and Consent' and 'Aboriginal Control' defining the research process in ongoing challenging ways. The Tasmanian pastoral idyll was breaking down; I now understood the land 'grants' and possession of the island as theft. I never had this understanding as a child. Back then the island was simply 'home'. In this breakdown of idealised memories, many layers are interacting: the impact of the 're-visioning' of Tasmanian history by non-Aboriginal historians like Ryan (1996) and H Reynolds (1995, 1999), and their accounts of Tasmanian Aboriginal resistance. Yet, more powerful is the profound body of work by Tasmanian Aboriginal writers, poets and artists that rush in and 'affect' me. Their collective works offer a way of seeing, a profound philosophical articulation of 'country', like Everett's place in the mind, 'beyond the colonial construct' (2006a: 92).

To a white Tasmanian knowing so little of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture or history, these cultural works are like a lightning bolt on the mind. Since reading Ryan's *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* in 1981 I had learnt *something* and it drew me to make this film. Yet, everything seemed indirect, until S Watson's (2005) counsel to *use Aboriginal sources as your primary sources* worked its way into the project. Subsequently, I immersed myself in the growing body of cultural work by members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, which expressed their fundamental relationship to country.⁶¹ Coursing through all this, like a raging river, *is* the ongoing political activism of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Council around land rights, repatriation, compensation, languages and sovereignty. It's when all these layers meet 'protocols' – in dialogue with those Tasmanian Aboriginal community members who are prepared to take this white film-maker on – that I have to confront the question of who's telling whose story here, and what is *my* story?

The contributions by Tasmanian Aboriginal community members during filming and editing also become a catalyst to extend the project's theoretical reach from the discourse of psychoanalysis to include the field of decolonising methodologies, critical race and whiteness studies, and theoretical work which examines the 'dialogic' encounter as 'an altering' event.⁶² Denzin (2003: 6-7) discusses this dialogic process as 'an embodied and moral commitment on the part of the

⁶¹ Mallet (2001); West (1987); Everett (1997b, 2006a, b, c); Lehman (1996, 2003, 2004, 2006); Gough (2004, 2006a, 2009); ed. A Reynolds (2006); Maynard (2008).

⁶² Van Boheemen-Saaf (1999); Denzin (2003); Butler (2005b); Martin (2008).

researcher to the members of the community....characterised by the absence of the researcher's need to be in control....nothing is desired for the self".

By mid-2008, towards the final 'lock off' of the film (when no more actual picture or sound changes can be made) I was immersed in Australian critical race and whiteness studies and it was influencing my thinking about the film. In the edit there were a few moments of available screen time – split seconds here or there – to re-work the narration in a few places, respond to the 2008 Apology and creatively work *the white ghost of history* into the film. Perhaps if I had been steeped in the work of 'whiteness studies'⁶³ before setting off to film in 2004, I may have made a very different film. Yet as I have argued earlier in this exegesis – it was my direct encounter with the protocol 'Aboriginal Control' that precipitated an intense experience of being 'other'. It was embodied and affective and it *pushed* me to innovate a range of creative textual strategies to represent whiteness. No amount of 'advanced' reading of the critical whiteness texts could have given me the embodied experience of 'falling off my perch' (Nicholl 2004: 30), becoming unsettled, or being able to approach I Watson's 'meditation on discomfort' (2007: 30) with any kind of 'affective' understanding.

"consciousness is created"⁶⁴

Encounter is where change happens. In the film-making process the 'instability of whiteness' was set in motion in this film-maker-researcher. The project's subsequent turn to 'critical race and whiteness studies' as a decolonising pedagogy shifted the focus of this project from being a 'mourning work' to become an intense experience of Australia's race relations *inside my skin*. Its 'double turn' (Ahmed 2004: para 59) has been to face I Watson's challenging questions about 'our' illegal sovereign status (2007: 30).

The film-making encounter demonstrates my attempt to give filmic form to the fluidity of these intense and affective experiences, as in Santner's (1990: 155) suggestion that images recuperate *affect*. These images pulse through the film: Julie Gough's British collector figures, PennyX Saxon's white ghost painting, my own uncanny ghost of history, and all those communal, unnamed

⁶³ Fanon (1963, 1984); Frankenberg (1993, 1996); bell hooks (1995); Dyer (1997).

⁶⁴ MacDougall (1998: 25).

ghosts – the dead on the frontier (DB Rose 2004, 2006). The momentum of these collective experiences, living within the text of the film, keeps pushing me back to the self, to what Butler calls ‘the task of giving an account of oneself’ (2005b: 10). This is coming nearby the kernel of the psychoanalytic encounter too, knowing the contours of dispossession in both my own family story and the nation’s, breaking down resistance, denial-ism – decolonising the mind:

...to push you right through what should be the impassable boundaries of the mind. “We will see the broken forms in each other”...“The task [of analysis]”, Freud writes in 1907, “consists of making the unconscious accessible to consciousness, which is done by overcoming the resistances.” Without resistance, no analysis. There can be no access to the unconscious, hence no analytic treatment, without a fight (J Rose 2007: 10, 24-25).

The process of working with Aboriginal protocols and their ethical principles, suggest that some of their attributes are, in fact, shared with documentary film-making practice in general. Certainly both MacDougall (1998) and Renov (2008) argue that ethics is at the heart of documentary film practice. Renov has recently suggested that: ‘the ethical in itself...has a sort of functioning dimension....an ethical impulse that one can see as an underlying and consistent theme that cross the history of documentary...what is my relationship with this other? What do I mean to that person, what does that person mean to me, what’s at stake in representing others?’(2008: 176-177). MacDougall pushes this further: ‘I want to look, sometimes sidelong, at the spaces between the filmmaker and the subject: of imagery and language, of memory and feeling. These are spaces charged with ambiguity, but are they not also the spaces in which consciousness is created?’ (1998: 25).

I think of the loom, the shuttle threading back and forth, Dening’s waves, the Islanders and their mutton birds, and Tasmanian Aboriginal photographer Ricky Maynard’s (2008: 51) poignant photograph of himself standing in the sea, gazing out, just where his Elders stood. Maynard communicates a sense of place, a genealogy of thousands of years, embedded in the way he places his camera *in country*:



Figure 16: *Broken Heart*, 2005 © Ricky Maynard, Licensed by Viscopy, 2010. Courtesy the Artist and Stills Gallery

He also places *himself* in the frame so that we, the viewers, are *with* him. It is such a generous gesture, as he gives us his perspective. We look with him, we stand with him, we share his broken heart. Maynard gives us his subjectivity, his longing. This photograph is the total reversal of Bishop Nixon's Oyster Cove photographs where we are forced by Nixon to gaze *at* the Elders. Maynard shares his contemplation with us. Yet, because it is *him* in the frame, and he is also the photographer, he takes us into a conversation – a dialogue. In this space *consciousness is created*.

And so in the filmic *encounter*, in the fleshiness of the bodies inhabiting this film, across these different ways of thinking about memory and history and culture, 'deep' time and 'shallow' time,

there is something permeable going on. DB Rose's notion of 'encounter', based on decades of working and living in Aboriginal communities, also suggests this kind of permeability: 'the work of living is the work of living with, for and through others. Far more than mere survival, living seriously demands encounter and engagement, and is situated in time and place, in the materiality of bodies and country, and in the complexities of encounter' (2006: 71).

At the end of the film's *Encounter* chapter, it's as if it 'bleeds' into *Reckoning* – with the abstract dream-like image of figures walking towards an unknown space. In the blank space between the two chapters – the edit point – is Everett's question, 'Well, how do you become responsible?' The final chapter of this exegesis, *Reckoning* is, in part, a response to Everett's question.

Chapter 8 – Reckoning

Well, how do you become responsible?

(Everett, *Island Home Country* 2008)

...it is always on the border that the most disconcerting questions get posed

(Derrida 1998: 77).

It is through image and fantasy – those orders that figure transgressively on the borders of history and the unconscious – that Fanon most profoundly evokes the colonial condition.

(Bhabha 1986: xiii)

This final chapter *Reckoning* returns to questions posed early on in the film: Bhattacharya's 'Tell me about your country, are you free yet?' and Roy's, 'the search for the individual art...how does that link into a community, to what's important?'⁶⁵ *Island Home Country* develops a conversation around these questions.

⁶⁵ Bhattacharya and Roy, *Island Home Country* (2008).



Figure 17: *Borderline*, Stephen Ginsborg 2007

This photograph of me *waiting* (Figure 17) suggests that newcomers sit in ‘discomfort’ with these confronting questions about our illegal and uncertain occupation-settlement (Watson 2007: 30). Yet in the film’s encounters along the way, and in its attempts to move beyond national boundaries and beyond ‘colonial mind’, a third question is posed in the film’s final chapter *Reckoning*, by Everett: ‘Well, how do you become responsible?’

This exegesis chapter reflects on my original intention of ‘making a reckoning’ in the light of what actually unfolded in the practice-led process and my ‘encounter’ with protocols. I knew when I had absorbed Pybus’s (1991: 7) question, ‘Has any one of us paused to do a reckoning?’ that I needed to make a reckoning and in Tasmania. To make this film has been my attempt – *essayist* – to try in the form of an essay film. Yet, in the process of making the film the original research intention of ‘making a reckoning’ has been dismantled.

Aboriginal scholar and educator Norm Sheehan (2009) discusses an exercise in his class room where white students are taken into an embodied experience of ‘loss’ (loss of being) and thus come

nearby an experience of the devastation wreaked by colonisation on Aboriginal people in Australia. The newcomers sense of ‘belonging’, based as it is on a false ontology, is confronted. ‘It is quite predatory’, says Sheehan, ‘to have no conception of being’. Sheehan’s account elides with my experience of ‘the instability of white’ that occurred while making this film. The ground shifted, and I was, so to speak, at a loss. It’s as if the film itself was ‘the exercise’ and ‘protocols’ the teacher. As Sheehan suggests ‘this scholarship evolves through process. It’s not what you listen to, but how you position yourself in listening. It’s not what you say, but where you position yourself to speak’ (2009).

Turning point

Visual artist and theorist Barbara Bolt (2004) discusses how the ‘new’ in a creative work, cannot be pre-conceived. She refers to Deleuze’s notion that the template of a work must be broken by a ‘catastrophe occurring’ – ‘the catastrophe provides the turning point, which allows the emergence of another world into the work. In the chaos or catastrophe a rhythm emerges’ (Deleuze 2003: 46, 49). In the case of this film that ‘other world’ created a space for the *performative* image of myself as the *white ghost* to emerge. This was not a pre-meditated construction. It was fired in the crucible of practice, a direct example of the ‘practice-led thesis’:

...the “shock of the new” is a particular understanding that is realized through our dealings with the tools and materials of production, rather than a self-conscious attempt at transgression. In the “work” of art, we do not consciously seek the “new” but rather are open to what emerges in the interaction with the materials and processes of practice (Bolt 2004).

In setting off to Tasmania to make this film in 2004 there was no foreseeable way I could have constructed the *instability of whiteness* as a theoretical ‘hypothesis’ to test. In the combustible space at the ‘Cultural Interface’ – a place of people, history, politics, protocols, ethics and the sheer materiality of film itself – the *white ghost* emerged. As Muecke (2004: 31) writes, ‘In their enactment the events of history exceed the possibility of their representation; this is why the performative aspect of history, which includes those elements normally left out...adds something to the representation of the factual’. The ‘shock of the new’ is this white settler-stranger’s un-

belonging. It is becoming *other wise*, along with the unhinging of the film's premise of the 'work of mourning'.

When I began the film research, my premise was that melancholia could be released, that unspoken trauma could be named and reparation made. This was my intention in 2004. Yet, here I was in 2008 making the film in the midst of a complex and protracted protocols process, and at the same time the nation's rhetoric, its story-telling, shifted. The 'duration' of this film-thesis (2004-2010) intersected with the 'history wars' and Rudd's (2008) national *Apology*, when the pain of colonised Australia was named in a ritualised, performative event.⁶⁶ Subsequently the colonised past and present reverberated into the complex politics of 'The Intervention'⁶⁷ and the contradictions of an Apology without compensation: 'Blackfellas will get the words, the whitefellas will keep the money' (Pearson 2008).

The Apology influenced the film and its speaking position – subtly. Previously the film's narrative address had to speak *out* from *within* the closet of 'the secret'. Now in post-Apology Australia the secret of 'what happened' was more exposed – although the reality of Aboriginal sovereignty was to remain the great 'unspoken'. Nevertheless, in the final editing phase, the film had to respond to the historical event of the Apology *within the text itself*. On the actual day of the Apology, I re-edited the film's opening narration, dropping the lines, 'adrift in the forgetting of history'. In one brief moment of parliamentary history, various phrases of narration were out of kilter. The repressed trauma had been named at a national governmental level, as Langton discusses:

...it was a large step towards justice. There was vindication for all of those people there who had suffered in one way or another, either directly or as the children or grandchildren of people who had been removed from their families. Because, there was a very clear acknowledgement of the truth of their history (2009).

This moment in Australian 'public' history came in the midst of the film's continuing process around protocols. The main issue in this final edit phase was that the film focused too much on the Aboriginal story and not enough on *my story*. There was some kind of fissure going on here. At the very moment when 'the nation' was engaged in a *performative* act of being a 'good' nation, reconciling its shame about the past, I was in an intense reflexive moment about being 'the white

⁶⁶ See footnote 5.

⁶⁷ See footnote 7.

other', constructing the *white ghost of Australian history* hovering in a place of *unsettlement*, an outsider to the nation. 'The nation is a Thing, in Lacanian terms....the imagined national home is a fantasy space' (Hage 1998: 72-73).

Reflecting on 'the Apology' as the first national Australian *mourning* ceremony involving 'the unacknowledged relations between two racial groups within a single field of life' (Stanner 1979: 214), I had to try and signal, in the text of the film, whether this Apology offered any kind of shift:

(The)...process of reconciliation, to the extent that it is happening at some official level...is a footnote, always an end-game, a way of ending the story, of "solving the Aboriginal problem" as if it can be swept under the carpet. Remove the difficulty...An alternative to a policy of reconciliation....in connection with national ceremonial ritual, involves recognising the foundational repression of the violent inauguration of the State in the Aboriginal wars (Muecke 2008: 92).

Have the tides of history sealed 'the Apology' back in the past in a 'collective ritual of shame' (Povinelli 2005: 19), the chapter now a closed door, mourned and reconciled? Indigenous activist and historian Gary Foley argues it 'will be part of future white Australian mythology about how wonderfully they have always treated the Aboriginal people...unless it's accompanied by some sort of meaningful form of compensation or reparations for past wrongs that have been committed' (2008: 2-3).

Bhabha's suggestion, over two decades ago, that 'the time has come to return to Fanon' (1986: xxv) seems prescient for 21st century Australia where 'the Apology' may function as a smokescreen and block the ongoing challenge of working through the after-shocks of traumatic colonisation. Fanon's (1963, 1986) insights demonstrate how *the madness of racism* lies unexamined in the psyche. As Irene Watson states, 'The creation of a healthy society—one that heals the sickness of colonialism—is the work ahead, for if it is not done we will continue to exist in an Australian ugliness, in a journey coming to an ugly ending' (2007: 25).

Take back the projection

In the case of this film, Bhabha's (1986: xiii) notion that the imaginary and the performative offer ways to work through the effects of colonial and post-colonising political power 'transgressively

on the borders of history and the unconscious’, assisted my own ‘deliberate act of mental decolonisation’ (Hamilton 1993: 6). It also echoes something about the process *and* the fissure in my own mind, revealed when attempting to work protocols with Tasmanian community members. It’s in direct encounters that shifts of consciousness occur – in *reality* – not as theory or protocols in a handbook, but ‘when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people engage in actual dialogue’ (Langton 1993: 35). It’s in this site of ‘intersubjectivity’ that I have to ‘take back’ any projections, objectification or stereotyping and claim responsibility for my own subject position.

It is only with exposure to Linda T Smith’s (1999) work in 2009 that I could see the clear link she is making between Indigenous protocols and Indigenous knowledges. I intuitively sensed this very distinct connection between them as the film’s protocols process in Tasmania unfolded over six years. Discussions around issues raised by the film in production – on the ground – took place in the context of *Respecting Cultures* (Arts Tasmania 2004), in dialogue and negotiation with community members. It was this interaction, in these relationships, that the ‘decolonising’ potential of protocols became clearer to me; in fact, I sensed this was an experience of Indigenous knowledges at work.

Early on in her book Smith says: ‘it is surely difficult to discuss research methodology and indigenous peoples together, in the same breath, without having an analysis of imperialism, without understanding the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices’ (Smith 1999: 2). I learned that the very process of learning to think and perceive ‘beyond the colonial construct’ is to become receptive, not only to ‘deep’ history and ‘deep’ time, but to the reality of Aboriginal sovereignty and to what Everett describes in the film as ‘living on country’.

To be writing this concluding exegesis chapter in 2010 then, is different from conceptualising ‘the premise’ or ‘the idea’ for this film back in 2003, producing the film during 2004-08, or writing drafts of the exegesis during 2007-10. The practice-led process of *make the film, make the film* meets this moment in time *now* – the time of the thesis, a time of reflection and analysis to ask – just what has been going on these last six years of film production?

It is more like having the reality depicted turn back on the writing, rather than on the writer, and ask for a fair shake. “What have you learned?” the reality asks of the

writing. “What remains as an excess that can’t be assimilated and what are you going to do with the gift I bestow, I who am such strange stuff?” (Taussig 2006: viii).

Perhaps the ‘Post Apology’ *excess* is the layered trauma still reverberating from ‘possession’ of the continent. Now it *has* to be recognised, felt, experienced, and acted upon. The *excess* is the state of denial in white Tasmania – and ‘the silence’ I grew up in – this ‘strange stuff’ of shame. Yet, paradoxically, it is this very *excess* that pushed me to dig around, to make ‘the unconscious’ *conscious* in the film. The ‘strange stuff’ of *the silence* pushed me to reflect on my own subject position as ‘white’, as ‘interloper’, as just another ‘whitey’ with *unconscious* wants – who now has to investigate if her work is perhaps just another variation of ‘white possession’?

The narcissism of white

If unconscious, the white wound bleeds relentlessly, as Curthoys (1999: 3-13) has discussed – in the white nation’s foundation myths, the suffering on the land, the white child lost in the bush, the heroic but failed explorers, the wounded soldier, the pain of Gallipoli and now my own narrative construction – *anxious white film-maker*. Ghassan Hage (1998: 58) intimates when ‘Whiteness is itself a fantasy position and a field of accumulating Whiteness’, there is a danger. Hage also suggests whiteness reinforces its own ‘mastery’ perpetuating ‘a fantasy of White supremacy’ (1998: 18).

In narrating my own whiteness as a ghostly performance, I am aware of Sara Ahmed’s (2004: para 50) penetrating analysis that such declarations may be ‘unhappy performatives’. Anti racism, she argues, is not performative, it may simply reproduce white privilege: ‘What does such an anxious whiteness do?’ (2004: para 6). The ‘instability of white’ is a fluid, uncertain space – uncomfortable. It is a space where change might happen or not; where this privileged, consolidated white colonial invader-settler is pushed into unsettlement, into being strange, into becoming ‘other’, and where ‘a fractured horizon looms’ (Butler 2003: 467). I did not set off to make a film about myself. I wanted originally to examine historical amnesia in Tasmania. Yet the protocols process pushes me to give ‘an account of myself’ (Butler 2005b) in the film, and to come from my speaking position – whiteness and coloniser.

“the boundary becomes the place from which something begins its presencing”⁶⁸

In the project’s necessary turn to critical race and whiteness studies and indigenous methodologies during the making of the film, and in writing this exegesis, I sensed that whilst the enunciation of ‘whiteness’ has its place, it may also have its limits. The montage and the narration in *Reckoning* attempts to show the ambiguity around this moment in an *affective* way. My words, ‘we’re re-editing, but it’s hard to contain the film in my mind, like in a dream I lose my thread’, sit alongside the hovering white ghost, the fire burning, Saxon’s marooned white ghost British soldier and the words from ‘the Apology’ echoing in the distance. Yet close by this, is a sequence with Everett’s discussion of ‘waiting at the border’, where he offers a sense of possibility across the racial divides: ‘Don’t be frightened to share culture...to go into collaboration with non Aboriginal people and share your ways of seeing the creative things that make people understand, or take people into the journey where they will understand what their identity is in country’.

In an earlier sequence of the film, Moni Lai Storz also gestures towards the complexity of the binaries of racial divides: ‘It’s so Australian, a town with one pub and in that pub there were two toilets, one for blacks and one for whites, obviously. And I stood between that because I’m neither black nor white’ (*Island Home Country* 2008). Lai Storz was the first person to confront me over my unconscious ‘white’ colonial ways some decades ago – habits that she considers have been oppressive to her – not listening being a major critique. Critical race and whiteness discourse has further assisted my process of becoming aware of ‘whiteness’ and white privilege, perhaps creating a further opening to consider Everett’s question: *how do you become responsible* – in country? And grounded here, alongside the sheer fact of Aboriginal sovereignty is Aboriginal spirituality and Indigenous knowledges.

Indigenous historian Vicki Grieves (2009) brings together a rich and diverse body of texts to reflect on an inclusive dimension of Aboriginal spirituality and philosophy. Grieves (2009: 25) quotes Nyungar Elder Ken Colbung’s insight that ‘the spirit has more strength in it than the pigmentation politics the government has engaged in over the years’ (2007: 78). Yet at the same time she makes a necessary caution to ‘the newcomers’ and their-our susceptibility to unconscious ‘possession’:

However, there is perhaps a fine line between appreciation, adoption and appropriation. It is most important that those people dispossessed and disregarded, the senior Lawmen

⁶⁸ Bhabha (2007: 7).

and Lawwomen, are the ones who drive the changes, informing and indoctrinating settler colonial people into the Law and their place in it as they see fit (Grieves 2009: 29).

Historian Ken Gelder (2000) suggests that it is ‘a contemporary postcolonial predicament’ of white settlers to strive to become ‘even more settled than they were before... a dialectic involving the *simultaneity* of deprivation (estrangement) and fulfilment (belonging) in relation to country’. Yet, Gelder’s dialectic doesn’t open up a third way. DB Rose speaks from a middle ground:

Simply to listen is to be drawn into a world of ethical encounter: to hear is to witness; to witness is to become entangled...I have argued for a particular kind of presence-to-the-world...situated in history and in place...Attentive and alert to the here and now of life, the kind of presence I argue for...is relational, connective, mutual and committed (2004: 213-14).

Perhaps when I began in 2004, my intention of *making a reckoning* could be seen through Gelder’s lens – a ‘postcolonial predicament’ of trying to become more settled. But the process of making the film challenged that construct. I am now more un-settled, more precarious in my ‘settler-invader-colonial’ self – waiting at the borderline, sometimes invited in, sometimes not; sometimes feeling at home in ‘country’ and sometimes not.

The “very flesh of the film”⁶⁹

Three years after filming in Tasmania, in the editing phase, both my Uncle J and Aunty M die. There’s something poignant in this historical moment and it’s not colonial melancholy on my part. It’s partly my encounter with my own subjectivity as I film the forsaken rooms in the deserted farmhouse surrounded by the hedge. In an essay called *The Fate of the Cinema Subject*, MacDougall articulates the complex nature of the filmmaking encounter: ‘For many filmmakers it is in fact most keenly felt at the very moment of filming. It casts its shadow over the relationship with the subjects—a premonition of the dissolution to which every film is subject’ (1998: 33).

The family sheep farm of many generations is *finally* gone – this pastoral industry, the ‘great wrecker’ (Stanner 1979: 221) now meets its death. The shoe is on the other foot—it’s no longer a family based in the outpost of the Empire supplying *wool for the world*. It’s a dispersed white

⁶⁹ Taylor (1998: 13).

family grappling with a sense of uncertainty about their ‘place’ in ‘post-Apology’ Australia, *and* on the island of Tasmania where the radical work of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre has so firmly put land rights, sovereignty, repatriation and compensation to the Stolen Generations in the public arena.

‘Even as a film is being shot, its subjects are in transition, moving toward a future that the film cannot contain’ (MacDougall 1998: 33). The future lies outside the film-maker’s hand. Yet the sheer fact that the film’s participants share the space of the film has unknown consequences: ‘MacDougall proposes that both subject and spectator are embodied, as is the film-maker, and that they are so in the very *flesh* of the film...and this cohabitation is a source of commonalities....as much as it is of differences’ (Taylor 1998: 13). So, similarly, for my white family and myself to inhabit *the flesh of the film* with the Tasmanian Aboriginal participants has reverberations – unknown to any of us at this moment. Perhaps there are potentially decolonising possibilities at work? Family members may become open to the stories and philosophies and world-views that Everett, Pitchford, Gough, Saxon, Atkinson, Lai Storz, Dare or Roy bring to the film.

This re-visioning of Tasmania, articulating that country and culture are *alive*, and that as newcomers living *here*, we too, have responsibilities, may also filter through. This is ‘presence-to-the-world...In accepting the challenge to be present in ethical relation and mutuality, we take a human stance that aligns us with the world...The paths towards decolonisation are many; and yet the ethics hold fast’ (DB Rose 2004: 213-214).

“to touch the future on its hither side”⁷⁰

Both Gough and Everett’s incisive critiques of the film’s various edits led me to examine my unconscious assumptions. This process stimulated a greater self-reflexivity. Ruth Behar (1996: 162) writes about the liminal place of *the vulnerable observer*, ‘between places, between identities, between languages, between cultures, between longings and illusions’. Bhabha, too, writes about this kind of fluidity:

⁷⁰ Bhabha (2007: 26).

...the borderline work of culture demands an encounter with “newness” that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past...it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent “in-between” space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The “past–present” becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living (Bhabha 2007: 10).

Here for the visitor, ‘the newcomer’, is a potential space of negotiation, dialogue and conversation – a sifting through of cultural differences, rights and responsibilities. Everett’s (2006b) *Meenamatta Water Country Discussion*, with non-Aboriginal artist Jonathan Kimberley, is a fertile enactment of Bhabha’s ‘newness’ – a poesis of country, articulated across the borderlines of race, moving through and beyond the history of colonialism and the binaries of black/white, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal, Indigenous/non-Indigenous, to create a potent, fecund relationship to *country*. Its regenerative possibilities refuse any ‘national’ or nation-state sentiment. Borderline works of culture reach backwards into deep history and forwards into the future. Bhabha calls this ‘to touch the future on its hither side’ (Bhabha 2007: 26).

Across time, space and cultures, Julie Gough’s sculpture *Transmitting Device* surfaces. This delicate sculpture, constructed from *lomandra longifolia* and limpet shells made into a head-dress, carries echoes of a mourning cap. Beyond words, this artist reaches back and ‘transmits’ through time the living presence of her culture. Gough invents a metaphor, an artefact, for now and the future: a listening device, a ceremonial container to protect the internal mind of her culture – as sovereign space.



Figure 18: *Transmitting Device*, Julie Gough 2005

It transmits what the ‘white possession’ tried to annihilate, yet what is always in a continuous process of becoming.

Open listening

I am listening to Indigenous visual artist Vernon Ah Kee (2008) discuss his work *What is an Aborigine* – twelve powerful charcoal and pastel drawings of his family, which deconstruct anthropologist Norman Tindale’s colonist’s gaze in his 1920s-1930s Palm Island photographs. I try to stay open to what I sense to be Ah Kee’s rage. Sometimes I close my eyes to hear the ebb and flow in his voice – now gentle, insightful about his art practice, then he shifts to another register, into pain, his rage spilling out against white privilege. To listen and stay open I have to separate out

my pain around Dad's angry violence in our family, from Ah Kee's intense feelings around white racist oppression.

...we pondered whether black folks and white folks can ever be subjects together if white people remain unable to hear black rage...A black person unashamed of her rage, using it as a catalyst to develop critical consciousness, to come to full decolonized self-actualization (bell hooks 1995: 12,16).

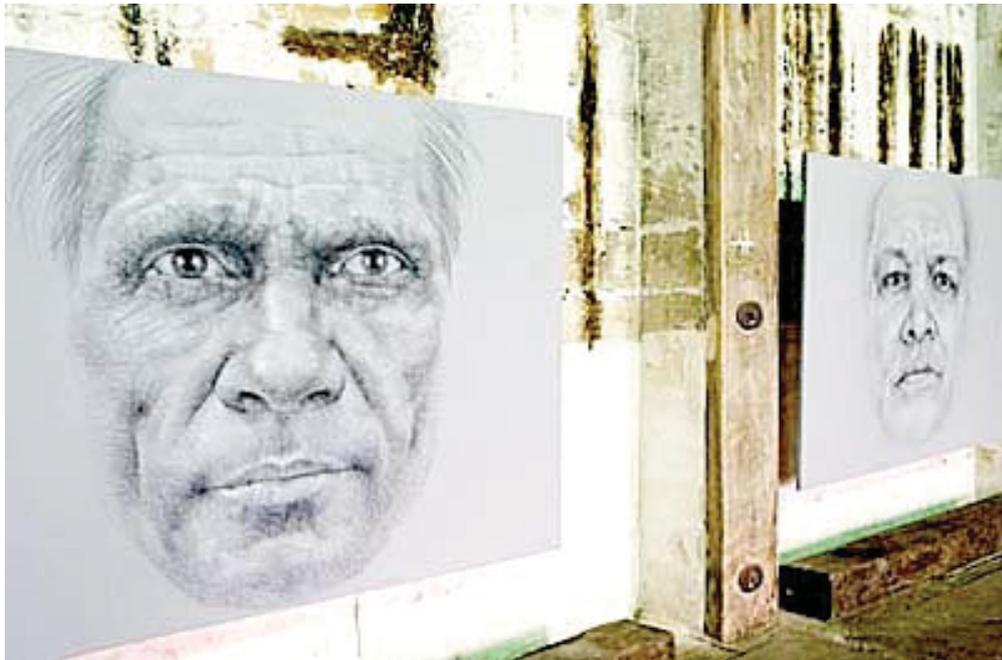


Figure 19: *What is an Aborigine*, Vernon Ah Kee 2008

At the borderline of becoming 'other' emerges exposure, inside this white skin, learning to listen, stay open and *pass through* 'anxious whiteness'. Ahmed writes about a 'double turn...for white subjects....to stay implicated in what they critique...their role and responsibilities in these histories of racism....to turn away from themselves, and towards others' (2004: para 59). In this unsettling process, there's a shift from the personal, the individual – towards community. This place of *being strange* is a place to inhabit, to feel, to listen from and to be speech-less: 'To hear the work of exposure requires that white subjects inhabit the critique, *with its lengthy duration*' (Ahmed 2004: para 57). Despite my attempts to be self-reflexive and explicate something of the negotiated protocols process in the film, I also have to investigate – does the film '*block hearing*' (para 56). Ahmed's questions reverberate.

Thinking about this *Island Home Country* project, then, not as ‘some creativity capacity of the mind’, but more as ‘the *practice of visiting* country and its associated ethics...a visitor in Aboriginal country’ (Muecke 2008: 80-84), I am reminded of the ‘visiting protocols’ I encountered along my way in Tasmania. ‘It’s simple,’ says Jim Everett, ‘It’s like the old traditions where one Aboriginal group visited another, they waited at the borderline, at the boundary of that tribal country until they were invited in and the welcoming to country was really the sorting out of responsibilities of the host group and the guests’ (*Island Home Country* 2008).

In this unsettling space of becoming ‘other’, while at the same time working through ‘Benefit to Community’ and ‘Proper Returns’, there are challenges.⁷¹ The term *reckoning* does not fit this ‘double turn’. As in Derrida’s (2001a: 211-242) ruminations on ‘there shall be no mourning’, in ‘post Apology’ Australia *there shall be no reckoning*, not any time soon, while we newcomers learn to be in this ‘meditation on discomfort’ (I Watson 2007: 30). This is not a passive process, it’s about *listening*, along with responsibilities in the here and now. As ‘newcomers’ it’s facing the implications of ‘our’ illegal sovereign status and thinking and feeling where this uncomfortable meditation may move us – a dynamic process having something to do with Aboriginal sovereignty.

⁷¹ As part of ‘Proper Returns’ a percentage of *Island Home Country*’s distribution returns go to the Tasmanian Land and Sea Council’s Trainee Land Management Program. Tasmanian Aboriginal artists received royalty payments from the ABC television sale. The Australian Teachers of Media Study Guide (ATOM 2008), the DVD in distribution and the film’s national broadcasts during NAIDOC week – linked with Enhance TV’s educational copying program, have created a practical educational role for the film (see Appendix 2).

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- Exile and the Kingdom* 1992, R. Solomon, F. Rijavec & N. Harrison, Film Australia, Australia, 110 mins.
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- Island Home Country* 2008, J. Thornley, Anandi Films, The Education Shop, Australia, 52 mins.
- Jindabyne* 2006, R. Lawrence, April Films, Roadshow Entertainment, Australia, 123 mins.
- Julie Gough: We Walked on a Carpet of Stars* 2007, Creative Cowboy Films, The Education Shop, Australia, 26 mins.
- Larapuna* 2009, radio program, Awaye! ABC Radio National, 7th November.
- The Last Tasmanian* 1978, T. Haydon, Artis Film Productions, Ronin Films, Australia, 105 mins.
- Lousy Little Sixpence* 1983, A. Morgan with G. Bostock, Sixpence Productions, Ronin Films, Australia, 54 mins.
- Mad Woman's Mountain* 2003, Woo Jung Kim, University of Technology Sydney, Australia, 15 mins.
- Maidens* 1978, J. Thornley, Anandi Films, Australia, 28 mins.
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Nanook of the North 1922, R.J. Flaherty, Revillon Frères, Criterion Collection, France, USA, 75 mins.

Night and Fog 1955, A. Resnais, Argos Films, Cocinor, Como Films, Criterion Collection, France, 30 mins.

Night Cries: a rural tragedy 1989, T. Moffatt, Ronin Films, Australia, 17 mins.

One Night the Moon 2001, R. Perkins, MusicArts Dance Films, Siren Visual Entertainment, Australia, 57 mins.

Portrait of a Distant Land 2008, M. Cummins, Roar Films, ABC Message Stick, Australia, 2 episodes, 60 minutes.

Rabbit Proof Fence 2002, P. Noyce, Rumbalara Films & Olsen Levy Productions, Ronin Films, Australia, Australia, 94 mins.

Remembering Country 2001, K. Gillick with H. Furber, Cinemedia, Ronin Films, Australia, 26 mins.

Samson and Delilah 2009, W. Thornton, Scarlett Pictures & Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) Productions, Madman Entertainment, Australia, 100 mins.

Sans Soleil 1983, C. Marker, Argos, Criterion, France, 100 mins.

Shoah 1985, C. Lanzmann, Les Films Aleph, Historia, New Yorker Films, France, Part 1, 273 mins, Part 2, 290 mins.

Stolen Generations 2000, D. Johnson, Jotz Productions, Ronin Films, Australia, 52 mins.

Two Laws 1981, Borrooloola Tribal Council with C. Strachan & A. Cavadini, Smart St. Films, Australia, 130 mins.

Ten Canoes 2006, R. de Heer, FandangoVertigo Productions, Madman Entertainment Australia, 90 mins.

Terra Nullius 1992, A. Pratten, Australian Film Television & Radio School, Ronin Films, Australia, 20 mins.

To the Other Shore 1996, J. Thornley, Anandi Films, Australia, 52 mins.

The Tracker 2002, R. de Heer, Vertigo Productions, Ronin Films, Australia, 94 mins.

Van Diemen's Land 2009, J. auf der Heide, Noise & Light, Madman Entertainment, Australia 104 mins.

Yellow Fella 2004, I. Sen, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) Productions, Ronin Films, Australia, 26 mins.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Cultural Protocols

1.1. Principles

Two fundamental principles should underpin protocols for film-makers working with Indigenous content and Indigenous communities: respect for Indigenous culture and heritage, including recognition of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, maintenance of cultural integrity and respect for cultural beliefs; and respect for Indigenous individuals and communities:

Terry Janke, 2009, *Pathways & Protocols: A filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts*, Screen Australia, Sydney, p.11.

1.2. Respecting Cultures and relevant protocols for *Island Home Country*

Arts Tasmania 2004, *Respecting Cultures: Working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community and Aboriginal Artists*, Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Hobart, pp.20-24.

Aboriginal Control. Does your nominated Aboriginal community member have the authority to speak for, or on behalf of, the project proposal?

Consultation needs to occur prior to the development of projects with Aboriginal content. Projects involving Aboriginal cultural expression must be negotiated with the owner(s) or Aboriginal community-based organisations, as appropriate. It is important to locate the most relevant Aboriginal community-based organisation. The organisation should be formally recognised by other established Aboriginal community-based organisations.

Communication, Consultation and Consent. Have you received written agreement for the project? Sufficient time should be allocated for consultation and responses. Permission needs to be obtained prior to use of stories, images or creations that might infringe on artists' and communities' ownership or copyright. An agreement outlining the conditions of consent must be obtained from the owner(s), custodians or Aboriginal community-based organisations for projects to be initially considered and progressed.

Interpretation, Integrity and Authenticity. Does the Aboriginal community or artist(s) have a clear understanding of the project, including how Aboriginal culture will be represented? It is recommended that agreements with Tasmanian Aborigines include a record of consultations with Aboriginal community members and/or their representatives, including endorsement that the content is factual and authentic, and evidence that images and language do not contain sacred material or stereotyped concepts or interpretations.

Secrecy and Confidentiality. Have you acted in good faith and respected the privacy of Aborigines and community groups involved? Proposals need to clearly demonstrate that the project will not result in any form of damage to

Aboriginal cultural integrity.

Attribution. Has consultation been made in good faith to ensure that the Aboriginal cultural material and/or participants in the project will be properly credited during the project's development and implementation? Ownership of Aboriginal art works and cultural material must be acknowledged and be evident in project promotional plans. Project proposals involving Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage in the possession of non-Aborigines need to be developed in consultation and must be approved for use by an approved Tasmanian Aboriginal community-based organisation.

Recognition and Protection. Does your project ensure that Tasmanian Aboriginal artists and the community are recognised for their involvement and ownership? Project proposals need to specify that intellectual property rights will remain the property of the Aborigine(s) who provide it and specify appropriate ownership rights. Written agreements, releases and contracts should be obtained, with examples included in proposals.

Proper Returns. Have you considered ways in which the Tasmanian Aboriginal community can benefit from the use of their material? Issues of copyright, royalties and fees need to be discussed from the beginning of the project, including informing the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal artists of the potential for commercial returns.

Continuing Cultures. Does your project safeguard Tasmanian Aboriginal sensitive issues? An Aboriginal perspective should be sought on all issues surrounding the project, and outlined in the proposal. Projects must acknowledge the owner(s) of the cultural heritage and/or expression and satisfy the Tasmanian Aboriginal community on any concerns about the project. These may include: the aims and outcomes; the methodology – the way it will be done; how the results are to be interpreted – the finished/end result; and how it will benefit the Aboriginal community. The community may also have concerns about the use of images, painting, photography, language and written history. For Aborigines it also is important that there is access to artworks in public collections by artists, their relatives, or members of their community who may have a cultural link to acquired works, and that they feel their presence is welcomed.

Appendix 2 *Island Home Country* – distribution, conferences, publications, resume

Island Home Country

Awards

Best Achievement in Sound for a Documentary, Nomination, *Australian Screen Sound Awards* 2008

UTS Reconciliation Award, High Commendation, *UTS Human Rights Awards* 2008

Screenings

ABC TV 1 & 2 national broadcasts 2009-2012

National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee, NAIDOC Week, Riawunna, University of Tasmania, 6 July 2009

The Archaeology Channel International Film and Video Festival, Oregon USA 2009

Nepal International Indigenous Film Festival, Khatmandu, Nepal 2009

Film Program, '*Re-Orienting Whiteness*', Australian Critical Race & Whiteness Studies, Association, Monash University 2008

Brisbane International Film Festival, *Colourise Program* 2008

Educational Distributors Australia

The Education Shop: <http://www.theeducationshop.com.au>

Anandi films: <http://www.jenithornley.com>

Social Networking sites

The Enhance TV community:

<http://community.enhancetv.com.au/profiles/blogs/island-home-country>

Island Home Country documentary blog: <http://jenithornleydoco.blogspot.com/>

Island Home Country facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/ISLAND-HOME-COUNTRY/12226807585>

Island Home Country Youtube <http://www.youtube.com/jenithornley>

Island Home Country Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/5573016>

Island Home Country Google Video <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5706958893306466433#>

Island Home Country Internet Movie Database: <http://www.imdb.com/video/wab/vi2919563801/>

Reviews and interviews online

SMH Guide Entertainment Sunday TV <http://www.smh.com.au/news/entertainment/tv--radio/tv-reviews/natures-great-events/2009/06/27/1245961442148.html>

Island Home Country ABC TV Guide ABC1 & 2 June and July 2009
<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/guide/abc2/200906/programs/ZY9998A001D28062009T203000.htm>

'Jeni Thornley's new view of Tasmania', *ABC Northern Tasmania*: July 2008:
<http://blogs.abc.net.au/tasmania/2009/07/island-home-country-jeni-thornley-in-tasmania.html>

Publications

Raynor, K. 2008, *Island Home Country Study Guide*, Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM), Vic.

Thornley, J. 2010, 'Island Home Country: Working with Aboriginal protocols in a documentary film about growing up white in Tasmania', in A. Curthoys, J. Docker, F. Peters-Little (eds), *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory And Indigenous Australia*, Aboriginal History, Monograph Series, ANU E Press, Canberra.

Conferences, seminars

2004

'Island Home Country: Memory, History and Representation', Colonialism and its Aftermath: An Interdisciplinary Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, June 23-25, 2004.

2005

'Making Australian Histories', The Australian Documentary Forum (OzDox), September 2005, **Convenor and Chair** Jeni Thornley

In association with ASDA, AFTRS, AFC, Film Australia, Metroscreen, NSW FTO, Macquarie University & UTS. **Guest Panel** Documentary filmmakers Malcolm McDonald, Paul Rudd, John Hughes with Indigenous historian Vicki Grieves.

Panel discussion How are documentary filmmakers working with ideas of 'nation' and story telling?

2008

'Focus on Film as a Formative Media Seminar', *Colourise*, Brisbane International Film Festival, July 2008.

'Aboriginal Protocols process and the 'instability of whiteness' in the making of *Island Home Country* a documentary film about Tasmania's racialised history', paper presented at the Re-Orienting Whiteness Conference, Australian Critical Race and White Studies Association, Melbourne, 3-5 December.

2010

'Film as Practice Based Research', The Australian Documentary Forum (OzDox), 14 October 2010. **Guest Panel** Associate Professor Hart Cohen, Filmmakers Paulo Alberton, Jeni Thornley and Dr. Karen Pearlman, Head of Screen Studies, AFTRS.

Resume

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<http://www.jenithornley.com>

Current

Jeni Thornley is a documentary filmmaker renowned for her distinctive poetic essay films. Jeni lectures in 'Issues in Documentary' at UTS, FASS (p/t) where she has also completed her doctorate. She works in the film industry as a writer, director, consultant script editor and researcher. She has also served terms as Manager of the Women's Film Fund and as an assessor and co-ordinator of the Documentary Development Program, Australian Film Commission (AFC), and as a documentary assessor at both the AFC and the New South Wales Film & Television Office. Jeni is a consultant film and video valuer for film archives and the Australian government's *Cultural Gifts Program*. She has been valuing significant Australian documentary film collections since 1991.

Educational studies

DCA, University of Technology, Sydney, FASS.
MFA (film) College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 1996
Actor/Director Workshop, Women's Program AFTRS 1994
Advanced Director's Workshop, AFTVRS 1991
Camera Assistant's Certificate Course AFTVS 1978
Advanced Women's Training Course AFTVS 1977
Women's Film Workshop, SWFG 1974
Diploma of Librarianship, University of New South Wales 1972
Certificate of Teaching, New South Wales Department of Education 1971
BA Monash University, Political Science, English Literature 1969

Selected documentary credits as writer, director, producer

Island Home Country 2008, a poetic cine-essay about race and Australia's colonised history and how it impacts into the present (see Appendix 2).

To the Other Shore 1996, a diary film about motherhood

Awards

Nominated for 1996 AWGIE awards for Best Documentary Script, Australian Writers Guild; Best Music Score in Documentary, Australian Guild of Screen Composers

Festivals, conferences include

Madrid Experimental Film Week 1997, THEMHS International Conference on Mental Health 1997, Brisbane International Film Festival 1997, Calcutta International Film Festival 1997, 5th International Documentary Conference, Brisbane 1997, Mumbai International Documentary Film Festival 1998, Freud Conference, Deakin University 1998, After the Masters, Ivan Dougherty Gallery 1998, Brisbane Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies, State Library of Qld & QPIX, 1998, Crossing Boundaries Graduate Program, University of Western Sydney 1999, Films de Femmes, Creteil, Paris 1999, Cinema and Psychoanalysis course - Edith Cowan University, W.A. 2003, 'Cinema & Psychoanalysis in the Twenty First Century', Brisbane 26-28 March 2004, POPIG screening, Catholic University, Melbourne 2005.

For Love or Money: a history of women and work in Australia 1983; Penguin tie-in book, Australian Teachers' of Media Study Guide 1983

Co-writer, producer and director with M. McMurchy, M. Nash and M. Oliver

Awards

Best Feature Documentary, International Cinema del Cinema delle Donne, Florence, 1984; Nomination for Best Screenplay, Best Documentary, AFI Awards, 1984, Highly Commended United Nations Media Peace Prize, 1985

Festivals include Young Film Forum, Berlin Film Festival 1984, San Francisco International Film Festival 1984, Women Make Movies Film Festival 1984, Internacional de Cinema Figuiera da Foz, Portugal 1984, Festival International du Nouveau Cinema, Montreal 1984, Uppsala Film Festival, Sweden 1984, 'Through Her Eyes', Women's Film Festival, Toronto 1984, 'Back of Beyond': Discovering Australian Film and Television, UCLA, 1985, Cinema du Reel, Paris 1999, 'Australian Film Event' Pompidou Centre, Paris 1991, 'Les Antipodes' Films de Femmes, Creteil, Paris 1999, International Women's Day Schools Screening, Avoca Beach Theatre, NSW 2009, International Women's Day, Australian Women's History Forum & the ACT History Teachers Association, Canberra, ACT March 2010.

Maidens 1978, a poetic autobiography about four generations of an Australian family

Awards

Best Film, General Section, GUO Awards, Sydney Film Festival, 1978, Gold Hugo: Best Short Film, Chicago Film Festival, 1979, Diploma of Merit, Melbourne Film Festival, 1979, Flaherty Documentary Seminar, 1979.

Festivals include Young Film Forum, Berlin Film Festival 1980, Cuban 12th Anniversary, National Film Week, 1980 'Women's Cinema', Curzon Cinema, London 1981, 'Women's Word, Generation' SBS 1986, 'Australian Cinema' Institute of Contemporary Art, London 1988 'Australian Retrospective', Nyon International Documentary Film Festival 1988, 'Australian Retrospective' Cinema du Reel, Paris 1991, Les Antipodes Films de Femmes, Creteil, Paris 1999.

Still Life 1974 Co-writer, producer and director.

Festivals include International Women's Film Festival, Australia 1975, Cannes Film Festival, (Musidora) Cinema & Freedom 1976, International Women's Film Festival, Rome 1976

Film for Discussion 1973 Actress, collaborator with Martha Ansara & the Sydney Women's Film Group.

Awards Best Documentary, Nomination, Greater Union Awards Sydney Film Festival 1974.

Festivals include Sydney Film Festival 1974

Les Antipodes, Films de Femmes, Creteil, Paris 1999.

Film Consultancies

Film and Video Valuer 1990-2010, *Cultural Gifts Program*, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Documentary Film Reader Assessor 1984-2009, NSW Film & Television Office

National Co-ordinator Women's International Film Festival, 1976

Film Programmer and distribution, Sydney Filmmaker's Co-operative 1974-1979

Film Lecturer

'Issues in Documentary', Media Arts and Production, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, UTS, Sydney 2002-2010 (p/t)

Guest Lecturer Documentary, Australian Film Television & Radio School 2004-08 Documentary

Course Lecturer and Co-ordinator Foundation Year, AFTRS 1990

Film and Video Valuer

1990-2010 Consultant film and video valuer for the Australian Government's *Cultural Gifts Program* valuing documentary films and associated materials for film archives: National Film and Sound Archive, Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies, Australian War Memorial and the Mitchell Library, SLNSW and independent producers.

Interviews, Panels, Lectures, Conferences

Film as Practice Based Research', The Australian Documentary Forum (OzDox), 14 October 2010.

Guest Panel Associate Professor Hart Cohen, Filmmakers Paulo Alberton, Jeni Thornley & Dr. Karen Pearlman, Head of Screen Studies AFTRS, 2010.

'Jeni Thornley's new view of Tasmania', *ABC Northern Tasmania*, July 2009:

<http://blogs.abc.net.au/tasmania/2009/07/island-home-country-jeni-thornley-in-tasmania.html>

'Jeni Thornley, 'Australia's colonised past and present', *ABC Overnights*, July 2009

'YouTube Japanese whale video-propaganda?' *666 Canberra's Drive*, ABC Radio, January 2008

'On propaganda/terrorism/cartoons', ABC Radio *Interview* Feb 2006

'Is the "chick flick" a sexist term?' 2SER Radio IWD *Interview* March 2006

'On Propaganda Today', SBS Radio, *World View*, August 2006

'Aboriginal Protocols process and the "instability of whiteness" in the making of *Island Home Country*, a documentary film about Tasmania's racialised history', *Re-Orienting Whiteness Conference*, Australian Critical Race and White Studies Association, Melbourne, 3-5 December, 2008

OZDOX Forum, 2005. Curator and chair 'Making Australian Histories: How documentary filmmakers are working with ideas of 'nation' and story': *The Colony, The Anzacs, and The Archive Project*. http://www.ozdox.org/x_2005/v080905.html

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Referee

Scan Journal of Media Arts Culture <http://scan.net.au>

Island Home Country

POST PRODUCTION SCRIPT
52 mins

A documentary film

by

Jeni Thornley

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Anandi Films © 2008

<u>Opening Frame of Vision:</u>		00.01.30
<u>Black screen:</u>		
<u>Super Title:</u> WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers should exercise caution when watching this program as it contains images of deceased persons.		
Slow motion: WHITE GHOST WOMAN running through bush.	JENI (V/O) I am white, born on a stolen island. This is my story of a journey.	00.01.40
Mountain (kunanyi, Hobart)	JIM (V/O) That country is us as much as we are it.	00.01.50
JIM to camera.	(SYNC) That is the important principle of being Aboriginal. If we lose that and Aboriginal people around the world lose that, then the colonial construct and the colonial dome of thinking right around the planet will take ah, a greater hold and there will be no understanding of why humans actually live on country, other than to exploit it. And that would be really sad.	00.01.54
<u>Super Title:</u> Jim Everett – <i>puralia meenamatta</i> Clan Plangermairreenner writer, activist		
Graphic: Map of Tasmania.	PHYLLIS (V/O) This poem I'm about to read you really came around for a number of reasons.	00.02.20
<u>Super Title:</u> Tasmania		
PHYLLIS to camera.	(SYNC) I'll just read it and I want the, the person who listens to it to accept it for how they see it. And it's called 'Sad Memories'. (READS) I'm an Aboriginal woman so proud of my race...	00.02.20
<u>Super Title:</u> Aunty Phyllis Pitchford - <i>nunarnng</i> poet, writer		
Archival Footage Cape Barren Island.	(V/O) but I carry sad memories which I cannot erase. Of so many things from back in the past though some are forgotten and there are others that last.	00.02.40
<u>Super Title:</u> Cape Barren Island		
<u>Fade to black:</u>	CHOIR (SINGING – Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Song)	00.02.54

Photo: Mountains bush track	CHOIR (CONT - SINGING – Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Song)	00.02.51
<u>Main Title:</u> <i>Island Home Country</i>		
<i>a film by Jeni Thornley</i>	WOMAN (V/O) Listen to us. Our country is very beautiful, It is our grandfather’s country and our grandmother’s country from a long time ago. It is the sacred land of the dream time. Why do you never understand?	00.02.59
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Archival Footage: Travelling through the streets and traffic in Mumbai.	JENI (V/O) When I was in India my friend Rinki said, “Tell me about your country? I know so little.	00.03.21
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>amnesia</i>		
Photo: RINKI	Wasn’t Australia colonised by the British, like India? When did you gain independence?	00.03.30
<u>Super Title:</u> Rinki Bhattacharya writer, filmmaker		
Photo: RINKI and JENI	Are you free yet?”	00.03.31
<u>Super Title:</u> Rinki with Jeni the filmmaker		
The Queen and John Howard, police and crowds gathered.		
<u>Super Title:</u> Commonwealth Day Sydney 2006		
Kitty Hawk at the wharf, US troops gathered.	Down at the wharf it felt like an occupation.	00.03.51

Protest at Sydney Wharf.	OVER MICROPHONE	00.04.00
<u>Fade to black:</u>	(V/O) We're opposed to the integration of Australia's Military Forces with the US Military. This robs us of our independence...	
Establishing city streets.		
DUR-E enters the restaurant.	JENI	00.04.10
	I meet up with my friend Dure. She taught me a thing or two.	
DUR-E to camera.	DUR-E	00.04.20
<u>Super Title:</u> Dur-e Dara restaurateur	Being colonised is a very subtle thing where you are almost ignorant about your own culture, and you adopt another and were never a first class citizen, you know. And then I came to Australia because I chose to come somewhere that, where there was no history of colonisation for my family, were I could be who I was. Only to discover that while it was a good place for personal style, once you got to think about some really true personal politics you found that to your horror that most people still just clung to the Queen. Clung to being white in the middle of Asia. Pretended their neighbours were white when they weren't. Looked to England, looked to France, were prepared for the Americans to colonise us.	
View from the restaurant window, zooming in.	(V/O) And look at where we are now.	00.05.00
	JENI	00.05.10
	(V/O) Her words follow me into the street. I'm implicated...	
Street scenes.	in the story of this country.	00.05.10
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Moving water.	I wrote to her – 'Dear Rinki. Growing up here I knew nothing about colonisation. I'll try making a film about it. Perhaps that's the way to reckon with amnesia.	00.05.20
Ocean through trees.	The colonial layer feels like skin. What if I shed it and see with different eyes.	00.05.40

JENI'S reflection in mirror.	Remember my previous documentaries. They didn't penetrate my white mind, coloniser's...	00.05.5:
JENI sitting at desk.	mind.	00.06.0:
Photo: JENI & family.	Here's a family photograph. Perhaps it gives a clue. It's as if we grew up behind a hedge, keeping history out.	00.06.0:
<u>Super Title:</u> Jericho Tasmania 1952		
Archival Footage: Port Arthur convict ruins.	JIM (V/O) There's a different way of seeing this world and their identity cannot be Australian...	00.06.1:
Sunset through a window.	in this country until such times as they get there they will always be bringing the northern hemisphere down here and constructing a landscape instead of living in country.	00.06.2:
JIM to camera.	(SYNC) Landscape is just another, ah, image of the colonial construct whereas connecting with country goes outside of the colonial construct.	00.06.3:
<u>Fade to black:</u> New Endeavour sailing across harbour. Captain Cook – The Invasion Painting: Cadi Jam Ora Botanical Gardens.		
Captain Cook statue, Hyde Park.	JENI (V/O) The British slipped in to beat the French, no treaties. There was a war undeclared.	00.06.5:
Ocean cliffs		
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>yet the white sails come with owners in their blood money for the monarch and everything of all-life is taken to another place where no heaven can be</i>		
<i>Jim Everett – puralia meenamatta</i>		
<u>Fade to black.</u>		

<p>ARUNDHATI ROY Press Conference <u>Super Title:</u> Arundhati Roy writer, activist Sydney Peace Prize 2004</p>	<p>Dear Rinki, your country woman Arundhati Roy was here. She donated her prize money to three Aboriginal communities and weighed into the ‘history wars’ debate – saying in India the untouchables fared better than Aboriginal Australians because they didn’t experience an attempted genocide.</p>	<p>00.07.2’</p>
<p>JENI asks question</p>	<p>(SYNC) ...I’m interested when those connections started happening for you?</p>	<p>00.07.4’</p>
	<p>ARUNDHATI It’s important to actually reach out and make connections beyond national borders, ‘cause actually we’re the people who are pro globalisation. I’m pro the globalisation of international treaties and solidarity among people who are being oppressed by similar systems. And not pro the globalisation of capital.</p>	<p>00.07.4’</p>
<p><u>Fade to black:</u></p>	<p>(V/O) The search for the (SYNC) individual art, the individual way of expression and how does that link into a community? How does that link to what’s important, you know. These are very interesting questions and ones that you can never be comfortable with. One...a place that you always live in conflict. And that’s not a bad thing to live in, in a conflicted sense, you know, in a sense where you’re not really sure and you have to pick your way through things and you make a decision every time you take a step.</p>	<p>00.08.1’</p>
<p>Montage: Art treasures: blue bird, snake, Buddha, Shiva, earth mother altar, Balinese goddess.</p>	<p>JENI (V/O) I like this idea – what if artists live as strangers amongst nations and dwell in diaspora. No place in the ordinary world, never – roaming across time and space. No country, no nation, no war.</p>	<p>00.08.5’</p>
<p>Planes fly past buildings, night.</p>	<p>(V/O) RADIO. When Turkey gets into it....</p>	

Flag montage. US flag, Australian flags.	After 9/11 I started filming flags. They were everywhere.	00.09.1:
Dolphins swimming.	I learned of the six hundred Aboriginal nations living across the continent and the British sailing in – one cloudless blue day...	00.09.2:
Archival Footage meenamatta country, Tasmania <u>Super Title:</u> <i>yet it is my blood country from a time before people would want to take it all heeding nothing</i>	not so long ago.	00.09.3:
Jim Everett – <i>purulia meenamatta</i>		
Graphic: Map of Carigal country.	Here's where I live, Carigal country, home to the Kuringgai people.	00.09.5:
Sand, zooming in to shells. <u>Super Title:</u> Northern Beaches, Sydney	JULIE You know that that's a midden, when you see all those shells. Now these could be ancient, ancient shells and bits of charcoal all in amongst it where the fire's been, where all the Kooris have eaten all their shell fish.	00.10.0:
JULIE walking along the sand track.	JENI (V/O) My old friend and neighbour, close to home, tracking an instinct that her father's Aboriginal.	00.10.1:
JULIE to camera. <u>Super Title:</u> Julie Janson playwright, teacher	JULIE Well the sort of thing that people usually say in an area like down here in Avalon is that – oh there's no Aboriginal people here, they all died out with small pox, you know. Well it's not entirely true. There was one particular warrior called Pemulway, he's very, very famous and he's honoured by the Kooris in Sydney as being the great resistance fighter for the Sydney Basin. And ah, Pemulway and his son Tedbury fought a resistance war, well over about twenty years and resistance was crushed. But you can't crush people's spirits, and the resistance is still there today. Aboriginal people here in Sydney they never lay down. They, they still fight, their battle is still to get the recognition that they are the original inhabitants here. The fight goes on. Pemulyway's spirit lives.	00.10.2:
<u>Fade to black:</u>		

Home Movie Footage and photos. Cat on table,	JENI (V/O) Perhaps the journey starts at home. Is this where we learn to forget?	00.11.10
Garden gates, baby bathing, young woman.	Here are some film fragments. My sister's garden. Inside babies were born.	00.11.10
Old nana	Elders cared for.	00.11.2'
Kitchen window, home scenes.	So I'll send you film, photos, stories what I discover like a diary.	00.11.34
Manorah.	Here's my husband's family Manorah – he's the diasporic Jew who has no country.	00.11.40
Aboriginal flag.	The Aboriginal flag – grounded in country. Earth, red, blood, black, yellow, sun, life.	00.11.51
<u>Super Title:</u> designed by Luritja artist Harold Thomas in 1971		
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Driving across Harbour Bridge.	Returning to my birth place...	00.12.1'
Graphic: Map of Tasmania.	underneath the roads I sense another map, the original walking tracks.	00.12.20
Mountains	The coloniser's map...	00.12.29
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>possession</i>		
Graphic: First map of Australia	claiming the land as our own seeing...	00.12.31
Painting: Captain Cook raising the flag, Sydney Cove.	it as empty.	00.12.31
JENI and JAN at the airport.	I meet up with my sister, we're white, convict...	00.12.41
<u>Super Title:</u> Sister Jan		
Photos: Childhood photos of JENI and JAN. White settler family in bush.	stock from below deck. What to call us? Invaders, settlers, newcomers? I've heard that Aboriginal Australians called us ghosts. Some say newcomers can't connect...	00.12.40

Home Movie Footage Country, sunset: meenamatta country, Cradle Mt. Tas	to country, that we envy Aboriginal belonging.	00.13.04
Sunset zoom in, abstract	I remember hearing this – ‘White fella, he got no dreaming, very clever people, very hard...	00.13.21
‘Live to play’ sign at airport.	People, plenty humbug. When all the black fellas are...	00.13.29
Shop and fire burning on TV screen, zooming in.	dead all the white fellas will get lost in the bush.’	00.13.31
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Travelling into Hobart. <u>Super Title:</u> Mouheneenner territory Hobart	I learn that the Aboriginal community has re- named Mount Wellington. I write for...	00.13.41
JENI at lookout.	permission to use the words in the film. The letters dissolve.	00.13.48
Mountain rocks. kunanyi <u>Super Title:</u> <i>our culture is carried on the wind</i>		
Greg Lehman, Trawulwuy. writer		
Panning across windswept mountains. (kunanyi)	JIM (V/O) Well this is the earth mother. And here we’ve got trees, animals, kangaroos, birds, names of a whole range of things that live on this country. They are citizens of the earth mother and that we are simply other citizens and need to be responsible.	00.13.51
<u>Fade to black.</u>		
Hobart, Battery Point village, the British flag flying.	JAN (V/O) And that’s	00.14.20
JAN pointing to map.	(SYNC) before the lake has flooded? Obviously, it’s just a dot.	00.14.21
Queen Victoria, Army Band. Bus	(SYNC) MUSIC	
Archival Footage: Travelling by car		

Home Movie Footage: Family in England.	JENI (V/O) I found these home movies. My first visit to England. Colonial Tasmania begins here.	00.14.49
	I sense the sheer outer limits...	00.15.09
Rolling green hills and sheep in Tasmania.	of Britain's experiment.	00.15.11
<u>Super Title:</u> Midlands, Tasmania		
Travelling through streets of Hobart with 'Fred' the taxi driver.	(OS) So what's the exciting news of today, Fred?	00.15.20
	JAN Yeah we're out of touch. Is John Howard still in town?	00.15.21
<u>Super Title:</u> 'Fred' Anthony Bell taxi driver	FRED Yeah well he wasn't in our town. He was up in Launceston.	00.15.22
	JENI Do you really call it Launceston?	00.15.23
	FRED No I don't.	00.15.24
	JENI We were born there, we call it Launceston.	00.15.30
	JAN Even the Queen calls it Launceston.	00.15.31
	FRED Yes but there's a Launceston in England.	00.15.32
	JAN That's right.	00.15.33
	JENI Alright.	00.15.34
Salamanca Markets.	(V/O) I asked Fred about land rights and the traditional owners.	00.15.41

	FRED	00.15.4:
<u>Fade to black:</u>	(V/O) The white Europeans destroyed that. You can't bring it back. I'm Irish, I'm Scottish. I want the Poms out of Ireland, but you've got to get on with life. It's gone.	
Colonial building.	JENI	00.16.0:
	(V/O) The signs of the British colony are everywhere.	
Statue and fountain.	So how can this	00.16.0:
Travelling through streets.	Conference I'm going to speak of an 'aftermath of colonialism'.	00.16.0:
PENNY talking to JULIE.	I meet Penny and Julie and ask tentatively, "Can I film with you?"	00.16.1:
<u>Super Titles:</u> Penny X Sexon Pyenairanaa, Yorta Yorta, artist	"Well it depends," each says, "On the context. On the process. There are protocols. Perhaps. Maybe. Later." What do I want? Can I be trusted.	
Julie Gough, Trawlwoolway, artist		
<u>Fade to black</u>		
Photo: JULIE at computer.	JULIE	00.16.3'
	(V/O) I was taught that I didn't exist, because Trugannini was the last of my people. And my mother's sample school book, the words...	
<u>Super Title:</u> Julie Gough Colonialism and its Aftermath Conference, 2004		
JULIE to camera.	(SYNC) from school were written in the back – "Abo, Abo black, Abo, Abo, Abo". And she wrote those as an act and it lasts to this day like a mantra, a gunfire, a reminder, it's an impossibility and a denial of the evidence of our past and our present. And this is what compels me to make art, much as it obliged my mother to mark her book, and it's what could be seen as an act of disturbance.	00.16.4:
<u>Super Title:</u> one year later St Kilda Beach, Melbourne		
<u>Fade to black:</u>		

Prince of Wales Hotel at dusk.	JENI (V/O) You know Rinki, when I was a child this island felt like home. Now sensing deep history, it's as if...	00.17.2'
Moving water.	I'm in another country an interloper – how to proceed?	00.17.30'
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>memory</i>		
Hyde Park Barracks.		
Convict wall with photos.	Don't speak about convicts in the family. Or the small pox plague seeping from the convict transports into Aboriginal communities.	00.17.4'
Harbour ferries.	Past and present collide. The local ferries named after the convict ships. I dig around...	00.17.59'
Painting: Elisabeth Lette, moving water superimposed.	back then in the colony respectability and amnesia go hand in hand. Mum's family – Miss Elisabeth...	00.18.09'
Graphic: Map of India.	erases her convict past in British India.	00.18.17'
Painting: <i>Thomas Laurie</i> : Three sail boats into Launceston.	Returns to Launceston a proper lady.	00.18.27'
	Land grants, so called.	00.18.27'
Graphic: Map Tasmania	Millions of hectares stolen.	00.18.29'
Home Movie Footage: Sheep.	A relative was granted three thousand acres. This pastoral invasion occupies the Aboriginal hunting grounds.	00.18.33'
	JIM (V/O) The Aboriginal way of seeing the world is not about exploitation.	00.18.47'
JIM to camera.	(SYNC) It's a most important thing for us to try and get the rest of the world to see that their life and the life of this planet, really relies on how humans behave and accept responsibility.	00.18.57'

Logging.	(V/O) Not making a new culture which becomes the market place, but keep the old cultures alive because they are proven to have been the working way with living on country. The impacts have been far less, for thousands and thousands of years.	00.19.04
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Super Title:
*and trees become logs
of woodchip planks
of clear-felled country
taking over from all-life
so that water will sicken
across country...
yet the country mother
will survive and heal*

Jim Everett – *purulia meenamatta*

Fade to black:

Travelling towards farmhouse.	JENI (V/O) The farm house of our childhood, the hedge still maintained.	00.19.34
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Photo: 1950's mother with children.	In the fifties to a white child a lively farm.	00.19.44
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Home Movie Footage. Sheep farm.	No knowledge of stolen country. The farmers grim bearing – we worked hard for the land, it's ours. Is that why the nation has struggled with saying sorry?	00.19.49
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Panning R across country.	The local people fight the British invasion – to protect country, their food, water, sacred sites.	00.20.09
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Super Title:
Big River People territory

Abandoned houses, ruins of settlers' cottages, convict made stone walls.	PHYLLIS (V/O - READS) When I was a small girl at	00.20.34
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Fade to black:

PHYLLIS to camera.	(SYNC) my mother's knee, I heard old ones talking of what used to be. At times there was laughter but then they'd grow sad, as they dredged up old memories of times that were bad. I was too young to know then so could not relate, to the blows that were dealt by the cruel hand of fate. The shame, degradation, the anger and scorn that was heaped on my people, long before I was born.	00.20.30
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Fires burning.	JENI	00.21.09
<u>Super Title:</u> 1828 - 1832 Martial Law	(V/O) No one in my family talks about Aboriginal resistance, their warriors. Or the two thousand British soldiers and panicky settlers rounding up traditional owners, sending them to the islands in Bass Strait, out of sight, out of mind.	
Sunset sky over roof tops.	Eventually I learn about it. How to connect this war to the peaceful island of my memory.	00.21.27
Photo: Diggers World War I.	Did the men in our family volunteer for this ethnic cleansing? They fought for Britain in the Great War of 1914.	00.21.40
Photo: 1940's happy white settler women.		
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>We have been very happy here in the territory of the Nuenone people. Has any one of us paused to do a reckoning?</i>		
Cassandra Pybus, historian		
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Travelling towards the farmhouse.		
Tracking through the different rooms of the farmhouse.	I track the house looking for any clues. There are stories here ,but no one will talk to my camera.	00.22.10
	The hedge, always the hedge.	00.22.30
	The kitchen, feeding lambs by the open fire.	00.22.40

LEIGH in the kitchen.	And our cousin.	00.22.50
<u>Super Title:</u> Cousin Leigh	LEIGH ... to you know re-tell old tales.	00.22.50
LEIGH outside with the cat.		
Bakery where LEIGH works.	JENI (V/O) The bakery where he now works since the loss of the farm.	00.22.50
	LEIGH (V/O) You couldn't let your heart rule your head. It's a decision that had to be taken.	00.23.00
Travelling through the streets in the rain.	RADIO ANNOUNCER (V/O) ...of Pakistani origin and will execute him unless detainees in US led prisons, coalition prisons aren't freed...	00.23.00
	LEIGH (V/O) Well there's another guy you wouldn't	00.23.10
LEIGH pushing crates of bread.	like to be in his shoes.	00.23.10
	(V/O) I'm with the green point of view	00.23.10
LEIGH driving.	(SYNC) in that I don't think old growth forests should be logged.	00.23.10
Logging truck passing by.	We can only hope that some sort of compromise is reached before resources...	00.23.20
City streets.	(V/O) that are only finite are no longer there.	00.23.20
LEIGH to camera.	(SYNC) I don't remember anything being really taught to us about convicts and transportation. And I don't remember anything - ah, in fact I'm sure there was nothing about our Aboriginal past. Nothing. We were taught about British history, not even Australian history in any way.	00.23.30
LEIGH looking out window of farmhouse.	(V/O) Strange wasn't it? Or maybe it wasn't strange, maybe it's just a reflection of how it was considered at the time. That it wasn't important or was it something to be best forgotten.	00.23.50
<u>Fade to black:</u>		

Travelling along road.	JENI (V/O) Today we're visiting...	00.24.20
JAN holding flowers.	Mum's sister.	00.24.20
Photos: Family photos.	It's impossible to hold these happy photographs in my mind with the reality of the forced removals.	00.24.30
MERLE looks at camera.	MERLE Oh darling, what have you got there?	00.24.40
<u>Super Title:</u> Auntie Merle		
JENI shows MERLE a photograph.	JENI Have you ever seen that photo before?	00.24.40
Photo: Aborigines at Oyster Cove 1850		00.24.40
	JENI (V/O) But they weren't...	00.24.50
MERLE looks at photograph.	(OS) part of your history growing up, were they?	00.24.50
	MERLE No.	00.25.00
	JAN Or ours.	00.25.00
	MERLE No we were...	00.25.00
	JENI (OVER) Or ours.	00.25.00
	MERLE ... never shown photos of Aborigines.	00.25.00
	JAN We never learned all...	00.25.00
Photos: Empire Day. Family photos on farm, Deddington Tasmania.	(V/O) that at school. And I don't think you...you probably didn't learnt it, did you?	00.25.00

	MERLE (V/O - OVER) No we didn't. English history.	00.25.09
	MERLE (V/O) Mum grew up with a great feeling of royalty and Nana Lette – when she heard that Queen Victoria had died...	00.25.14
MERLE talking.	(SYNC) she threw her apron up over her head and cried.	00.25.20
	JAN (OS) Ohhh! Did she?	00.25.29
Photo: Family photos.	MERLE (V/O) And Mum was only seven, she remembered that. And another relative of Nana Lette's wanted to have six sons for the Queen.	00.25.30
	JAN (V/O) Ohhh!	00.25.39
	MERLE (V/O) They would have all gone to war sooner or later.	00.25.41
	JENI (V/O) I ask Aunty what she feels about the stolen generations.	00.25.52
MERLE to camera.	MERLE I do feel sorry for them. Especially the children that were taken away from their mothers, their parents and brought up on what, sheep stations or somewhere?	00.25.57
	JAN (OS) Orphanages and...	00.26.09
	MERLE Yes. That was a terrible thing to do. Why did they think they could look after them any better than their mother?	00.26.10
	JENI It's a good question.	00.26.19

Archival Footage: Archaeological dig.	JENI (V/O) Digging around is disturbing, graves are excavated. Sacred remains sent to European museums for scientific experiments.	00.26.20
Moving water.	Many convicts survive as bounty hunters. Did they in our family?	00.26.30
	JIM (V/O) The Tasmania Aboriginal Centre has a big role to play.	00.26.40
JIM to camera.	(SYNC) It's important to have these strong political people seeking to achieve things like the return of Aboriginal human remains from overseas and challenging what they want to do in research with Aboriginal human remains for instance.	00.26.40
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Moving water.		
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>To pay respect and honour to the spirits of the old ones after so many years of desecration and indignity is our most important obligation.</i>		
Greg Lehman, Trawulwuy, writer		
JIM to camera.	Especially our young people. If they are going to understand why these politics exist they need to know the roots of who they are, what their country is, what the foundation of the discussion and arguments have been with colonisers and where colonising has got to now. They've got to understand there's no such thing as post colonialism. And that means giving us back our country and letting us rule our own country.	00.27.00
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Photos: 1920-1930s Family photos from Invermay.	JENI (V/O) This is Invermay, where Nana and Pa raised a family, grew their veggies and tried to make a go of it.	00.27.30
	Born and raised in 'the secret'.	00.27.40

'Race' photo: fancy dress 1950s	Don't talk about convicts or Aborigines. I found one trace - this photo. I'm the pixie.	00.27.49
Photo: Queen's visit.	Curtsey to the Queen in your white organza dress.	00.27.57
<u>Super Title:</u> Launceston, 1954		
Photo: Zoom into 'race' photo. Family photos. Mayoral photo.	My sister in black. I wonder did our family know about the assimilation policy? Removing children from their families – making them white. Mum and Dad were the Mayor and Mayoress. They must have known something.	00.28.00
Aerial Footage of island.	I remember my uncle saying, "What are you going to Cape Barren for? There's nothing there."	00.28.20
<u>Super Title:</u> Cape Barren Island, 1982		
Home Movie Footage Travelling along a road on Cape Barren Island.	That night we camp. The local islander boys ride their motorbikes into our tent shouting, "Get off you lot – this is our land". Listen!	00.28.30
<u>Super Title:</u> Since 1866 the Aboriginal community fought for ownership of the island.		
2005-08 the community succeeds. Finally the Tasmanian Government hands back title, apologises and pays compensation to the Stolen Generations.		
ISLANDERS fishing.	Islander stories – mutton birding, shell necklace making, languages, songs – links to traditional life... to country, to land rights, sovereignty.	00.28.54
PHYLLIS (V/O) All I've ever asked for		
		00.29.09

PHYLLIS to camera.	(SYNC) was to be recognised for who we are and accept us for who we are. And, that's it.	00.29.10
<u>Super Title:</u> Aunty Phyllis Pitchford – <i>nunarnng</i> poet, writer		
Cape Barren Island waters	(V/O) When I was a little girl growing up in Cape Barren the community was ninety nine percent Aboriginal. So, my tender years were really good.	00.29.18
PHYLLIS to camera.	(SYNC) Maybe we were too sheltered and too protected. But I always remember I never ever saw the old women smile. I could never ever remember it you know and there was aah, a real sternness about them. They were very strict but yet we had a lot of, we had all the good times. But strict on us as children. So a few years ago I started thinking about all this when, when I was taking journeys in my mind and I, I saw a reason for it. And lately I've seen two images. And one was um, were they so still so sadly connected with their past which, which kept that smile away. Or was it their way of preparing us for what was going to happen when we ah, went off the Island, when we went out into the mainstream.	00.29.27
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Cape Barren waters		
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>mourning</i>		
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Truganini Walking Track.		
JAN to camera.	JAN I can hardly ah... it's like it was a dream even reading in the books. I haven't been to those places where I really can feel that it's actually real, seeing Truganini's um, memorial up on the hill at...	00.30.42
Truganini's Memorial.	(V/O) that National Park, it just seemed um, that it wasn't real and it's hard to imagine – there are sites we're on, we're on Aboriginal land.	00.30.52

Travelling towards Bruny Island.		
JAN at Bruny Memorial. <u>Super Title:</u> Iunawannaalonnha Bruny Island	JENI (V/O) We're in Truganini's country. She cries my sister. I forget to turn on the microphone. Her words are taken by the wind. But it's not guilt. Perhaps it's sadness at the trauma of what happened here.	00.31.20
Isthmus at Bruny Island	JIM (V/O) We always knew we were black fellas because we were treated like black fellas at school and in public and stuff. But...	00.32.00
JIM to camera.	(SYNC) we didn't know what kind because my parents and grandparents wouldn't talk about where our roots were as black people. And I always suspected, although we're at school, we're being taught there's no Tasmanian Aborigines – so what the devil are we? Well, when I got back here and met our mob on Flinders Island I knew straight away, it just was like a, a lightening strike, ah! I knew we were Tasmanian Aboriginal, although they say we're not. From that time on I pursued um, my own journey of who I am as an Aboriginal person, and of course I got mixed up in the radical, political movement and so on.	00.32.04
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
City streets by night. Moon.	JENI (V/O) Dear Rinki, leaving Tasmania unsettled – a few tenuous encounters outside the hedge.	00.32.30
Night bridge.	PHYLLIS (V/O) Now today I still question which was the worst kind, the rape of the body or that of the mind. They never told all that was hidden inside and though deeply wounded they salvaged their pride and this they passed on where it's proven today...	00.32.50
Arriving at airport.	in the pride that we carry as we pave the way.	00.33.10
Dawn through window of plane, zooming in.	JENI (V/O) You know the mind is like mercury	00.33.20

Archival Footage: Young girl.	like film, slippery like truth and history. Memories waking us up.	00.33.2'
Home Movie Footage: Street scenes, Freud Museum, London.	Here's some old super eight I filmed. Didn't Freud say what we choose to forget comes back to haunt us in history?	00.33.3'
Archival Footage: Port Arthur Historic Site.	There was a massacre at the convict ruins. A crazed gunman opens fire and murders thirty five people.	00.33.4'
<u>Super Title:</u> Port Arthur Historic Site Tasmania, 1996		
Australian Flag.	Or at that Sydney beach where violent racial riots break out.	00.34.0'
Port Arthur.	The secret exposed.	00.34.0'
Slow motion: WHITE GHOST WOMAN running through the bush.	You know, this world, this history can drive us mad. White Australia's history has haunted me, there are ghosts, spectres.	00.34.1'
Street scenes Freud Museum.		
Home Movie Footage: Anna Freud's loom.	I remember filming Anna Freud's loom – weaving threads impossible to hold in the mind – remembering, repeating, working through.	00.34.2'
Archival Footage: Anzac Day March.	Here's some film I shot of white Australia's national day of mourning – where we remember the dead – fallen in World War 1 at Gallipoli. The old diggers remind me of our Pa...	00.34.4'
<u>Super Title:</u> Anzac Day, 1982		
Photos: Family photo. JAN & JENI with their Pa.	The World War 1 gunner dying of mustard gas poisoning in his sick bed.	00.34.5'
Archival Footage The Light Horse Brigade.	A historian says Australia can mourn these soldiers, but what about the Aboriginal warriors who fought for country when the British invaded? Can they be mourned by the nation as well?	00.35.0'
<u>Fade to black:</u>		

Painting: Bennelong <u>Super Title:</u> Woollarawarre Bennelong of the Wangal people	I remember a smoking ceremony to release...	00.35.28
Bennelong Precinct notice board, zooming in.	Bennelong's spirit, his hut buried deep beneath the great white sails of the Opera...	00.35.31
Opera House.	House.	00.35.30
City skyline by night.	Smoke enveloped the skyscrapers, the city dissolved into fire, earth, water, air. Years later I film from a distant cliff top. I still hear the chanting, a moment in time before the white ghosts sail in.	00.35.41
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Graphic: Map. wurrunjerrri & boonawrung country (Victoria).	I'm on my way to film with Julie, the artist I met in...	00.36.01
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>encounter</i>		
Melbourne cityscape.	Tasmania.	00.36.10
Melbourne tram.	She raises protocol issues...	00.36.11
<u>Super Title:</u> Wurrunjerrri & Boonawrung territory Melbourne		
Melbourne street.	ethics, dialogue, benefit to community.	00.36.14
JULIE waiting.	She encourages me to return to Tasmania...	00.36.19
<u>Super Title:</u> Julie Gough Trawlwoolway, artist		
PHYLLIS and JIM standing by the water.	and film with more community members – opening up the film's process.	00.36.21

JULIE directing a shot.	JULIE (V/O) Here I am trying to figure out with you what we're doing here together in St Kilda, working on different...	00.36.28
Big Dipper, Luna Park.	histories.	00.36.34
JULIE to camera.	(SYNC) I like the irony of it all and that, and the effort we put in to understand each other, that's what I think is the valuable thing. And it's a discussion, but in a film sense, I'm talking to the camera, it's not you, it's um...	00.36.36
	JENI But I'm operating the camera. I'm here.	00.36.49
	JULIE You're turning the camera on and you're, you're there behind it.	00.36.51
Big Dipper and street roller blader kids.	(V/O) Living in St Kilda I think's pivotal to...	00.37.00
JULIE to camera.	(SYNC) my understanding of the past, how people, you know, can move anywhere but still carry it with them.	00.37.02
Spirit of Tasmania moves past.	(V/O) When I feel most calm it tends to be in...	00.37.11
JULIE to camera.	(SYNC) Tasmania. But it's um...I think home is where you are most in yourself, of yourself.	00.37.11
JULIE by the water.	(V/O) If anyone says where's my homeland I would say automatically...	00.37.21
Graphic: Map of Nth Eastern Tasmania.	it's Tasmania and North East Tasmania. Along this whole coastline most of the Aboriginal community today...	00.37.24
JULIE walking through the bush.	of Tasmania come from this area in fact, so it's traditional country for most of us. If I know of something that has happened here or if something happens to me here I can relate it directly through the materials of the place.	00.37.31
Photo: JULIE at the beach.		
Montage:		

Various art works by JULIE.

Super Titles:

Intertidal, 2005

*I am present as this work and
bound by a sense of wading;
marked between land and sea.*

*This connection with the seas and
salt waters gives me some
courage and much comfort and I
feel the pull wherever I am.*

*Transmitting Device
... to enable me to travel back in
time in my maternal home country
north eastern Tasmania.*

JULIE in art supply shop.	JENI (V/O) I ask Julie about ethics and public use of the photographs of the elders - Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors.	00.38.10
	JULIE (V/O) The way that the photographs have become...	00.38.20
JULIE to camera.	(SYNC) publicly owned. That's what I find deeply disturbing. And there's a sense that anyone can use them for their own purposes all the time.	00.38.20
	JENI Without you mean going through any protocols?	00.38.30
	JULIE Yeah, well yeah, yeah it, it is a sense that Truganini's Tasmanian and belongs to everybody...	00.38.30
JULIE in art supply shop.	(V/O) nobody's responsible for her. But I think collectively the whole community feels responsible about her.	00.38.40
JULIE to camera.	(SYNC) I think there's a protectiveness about that and, and about all the old people who were photographed.	00.38.40
<u>Fade to black:</u>		

Train travelling.	JENI (V/O) I'm heading out west of Melbourne to film with Penny.	00.39.0:
	Just beyond the skyscrapers...	00.39.2:
Graphic: Map, Yorta Yorta country.	lies another story.	00.39.2:
<u>Sequence:</u> Travelling by train through countryside/Train station, cockatoos flying over the train tracks.	Penny adopted out from her Tasmanian Aboriginal family into a white family.	00.39.3:
	PENNY (V/O) I remember the day I got off the bus and I, I sort of looked at her and I thought, oh this is my birth mother you know and um...It's sort of, it was a really exciting feeling, but a really strange feeling because we never had that motherly bond or there was no connection really. It was very difficult.	00.39.5:
PENNY driving.	I was really lost and I ended up going around Australia and meeting different...	00.40.1:
<u>Super Title:</u> Penny X Saxon Pyenairraanaa, Yorta Yorta artist		
Travelling along road in the bush.	People, and seeing Aboriginality...different cultures.	00.40.1:
CLIVE to camera, PENNY sitting beside him.	CLIVE I've known Penny now for quite a few years and I understand her pursuit in, in doing what she's trying to do. And I go back to ah, say the early days of our people at Muloga where they were moved from that spot to Cumeroogunga. And then you could probably say the mission masters, the white mission masters then decided to cull the group. Where the full bloods were moved to a certain area and the fairer ones to other areas, and actually what it was was a complete breakdown of the family groups...	00.40.2:
<u>Super Title:</u> Clive Atkinson Yorta Yorta Elder artist		
PENNY and CLIVE walk together.	And that was part of the experiment that they were trying to do at the time.	00.41.0:

	PENNY (V/O) I am Aboriginal.	00.41.10
PENNY to camera.	(SYNC) It's a part of the colonisation of breeding the colour out of me. So this is where my connection lies. There's a very strong connection with Yorta Yorta, my people are Yorta Yorta, also Palawa... Tasmania.	00.41.11
PENNY in the bush.	CLIVE (V/O) The problems she's had are the problem with a lot of people that have been dispossessed of their country.	00.41.29
Charcoal drawings by Penny: Two faces.		
PENNY drawing.	PENNY I've been influenced by these through my dreams, and listening to stories of colonisation – it's what's drawn me to study and draw.	00.42.11
	JENI And what are the feelings?	00.42.24
	PENNY Oh, sadness um, a lot of feeling of sadness which, which has happened. But what I'm trying to capture is the spiritual aspects of culture and how it's been damaged and, and nearly lost.	00.42.27
	I always call it a mirror image when I'm doing self portraits. 'Cause I'm, I'm doing a mirror image of my ancestors... as myself, because um, they were my mothers and fathers. I'm representing here the, the pain of change... because we used to live in peace and harmony and with the land and all of a sudden this invasion, this big ship comes in.	00.42.40

PENNY explains her painting Mother's Nest.	Here again I use the symbol, the nest. And the egg...represents identity. And over here are the eyes, and the eyes have been speared. There – represents the sorrow and the pain and also out of sight out of mind. A lot of people don't want to talk about sensitive issues of adoption and stolen generation. The egg represents myself and it's been removed from this nest. And it's more like at this stage the nest becomes the womb and I'm actually removed away from the nest.	00.43.11
<u>Super Title:</u> Mother's Nest, 2006		
<u>Fade to black:</u>	(V/O) The shock of racism really hit me in...	
PENNY to camera.	(SYNC) the bars. That was an experience because we had white bars and black bars.	00.43.51
Artwork by Penny arms in barbed wire.	(V/O) In the black bars it was like a jail environment, it had bars on the windows and black people were not allowed into the white bars.	00.43.51
<u>Super Title:</u> Hands of Time, 2006		
PENNY to camera.	(SYNC) At Broome and Alice Springs and police would be racing through the streets chasing Aborigines and I couldn't believe it. And, and I have Indigenous people coming up to me and, and saying, "You know you're my sister girl". You know, and I found that really amazing - how fair I was but, yet they knew I was Aboriginal.	00.44.01
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
PENNY sits by a fire.		
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Train coming into the station.		
Track lines through train window.	JENI (V/O) I started to wake up to race in the sixties.	00.44.51
Graphic: Map. Pitjantjatjara Lands	We'd gone, us anthropology students, to build transitional...	00.45.01

Photos: Work camp.	houses for the Pitjantjatjara people.	00.45.0'
	I went with my best friend Moni.	00.45.1'
<u>Super Title:</u> Abschol Work Camp, 1967	MONI (V/O) You go to a foreign country and that's what it was, Central Australia, the Aboriginal Reserve. It was just a, a trip into a completely unknown world.	00.45.2'
MONI to camera.	(SYNC) And at that time, in that sort of, what, nineteen or twenty year old head it was just, just responding to the situation in terms of a strange experience. Strange in the sense that it's unfamiliar.	00.45.3'
<u>Super Title:</u> Moni Lai Storz cross cultural consultant		
Photos: Work camp.	(V/O) And do you remember...	00.45.4'
MONI to camera.	(SYNC) that night where the Aboriginal people came and built – I don't know where they came from? They just came and built fires around, trenches of fires so that we slept under the stars.	00.45.4'
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Photos: Work camp.	JENI (V/O) We thought we were doing the right thing bringing education, housing, assimilation – yet we weren't invited. We didn't understand country, ethics, protocols.	00.46.0'
	MONI (V/O) The most powerful one of almost an identity...	00.46.2'
MONI to camera.	(SYNC) crisis was that toilet incident - where you and I went to look...	00.46.3'
Photo: MONI outside motel.	(V/O) for a toilet, just outside Cooper Pedy. It's so Australian, a town with one pub and in that pub...	00.46.3'
MONI to camera.	(SYNC) was two toilets, one for blacks and one for whites, obviously. And I stood between that, 'cause I'm neither black nor white.	00.46.4'
Track lines through train window.		
Melbourne city by night.	JENI (V/O) I'm drawn back here, one of Julie's sites of instability...	00.47.0'

Painting by Penny: White ghostly British soldier.	and disturbance. And the way these two artists depict country, memories, the past.	00.47.08
<u>Super Title:</u> The Hands of White Man's Destruction Penny X Saxon, 2006		
PENNY drawing.		
Luna Park.		
Artwork in the water.	Out of the blue I remember Julie's installations.	00.47.28
<u>Super Title:</u> Whispering Sands (Ebb Tide) Julie Gough, 1998	Am I like them? This process is confronting.	00.47.38
Archival Footage: Child lost in the bush.	Whiteness, privilege – yet instability.	00.47.48
<u>Fade to black:</u>	Now, there's no turning back.	00.47.58
	JIM (V/O) Well, how do you become responsible? Well it's simple. It's like...	00.48.18
JIM to camera.	(SYNC) the old traditions where when one Aboriginal group visited another, they waited at the borderline, the boundary of that cultural country, until they were invited in.	00.48.18
<u>Super Title:</u> <i>reckoning</i>		
Abstract footage, rear shot of people walking and gradually coming into focus.	(V/O) We're all the same species, we're humans. And we all have different cultures. That is up for people to have their identity and their cultures the way they want them. But if they want to actually know what they are as human beings on this planet connecting with the country that they belong to and it's their belonging place, then they need to understand the Aboriginal connection. They don't have to be Aboriginal. They just need to be able to say, "Oh, I can share that connection with country and my identity will be whole."	00.48.28
<u>Fade to black:</u>		

JIM to camera.	(SYNC) If, for instance, Australia maintains the course of assimilating Aborigines away from their Aboriginality, away from their connection -to live in the cities and become part...firstly to get rid of the issues that Aboriginal people bring with them because it's that connection, and white people don't want it – we are going nowhere. If they want to learn then they've got to start bringing out the Aboriginal educators and give them a place in developing a new Australia that's going to understand the connection and their identity with this country.	00.48.50
Water, sky, Iunawannaalonnha: Bruny Island.		
PHYLLIS and JIM.	JENI (V/O) Discussing the edit of the film with Jim and Auntie Phyl, they think it's telling too much of their story, not enough mine.	00.49.20
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
Moving water.	We're re-editing – but it's...	00.49.30
Charcoal drawing.	hard to contain the film in my mind, like..	00.49.35
Train track. Supers. Ghost.	in a dream I lose my thread.	00.49.40
Painting: The Hands of White Man's Destruction.	PRIME MINISTER RUDD (V/O) For the pain, suffering and hurt ...	00.49.45
	JENI (V/O) This film is dissolving...	00.49.45
Painting: Mother's Nest.	PRIME MINISTER RUDD (V/O) ... of these stolen generations. Their descendents and for their families...	00.49.45
Fires burning.	left behind, we say sorry.	00.49.50
People walking.	JENI (V/O) Now, there's just waiting at the border.	00.49.50
<u>Fade to black:</u>		
JIM walks towards camera.	JIM (V/O) As I've got older into my sixties I'm starting to feel that I want to be a teacher in the Aboriginal community.	00.50.00

JIM to camera.	(SYNC) And getting people to think and not just accept blindly that the way the world is in front of them is the way the world should be. So, I made that shift and now I'm starting to delve into areas where, say, don't be frightened to share culture.	00.50.0:
Photos: JIM, JENI and PHYLLIS.	(V/O) Don't be frightened to go into collaboration with non Aboriginal people and share your ways of seeing the creative things that make people understand or take people into the journey where they will understand what their identity is in country.	00.50.2:
Panning right across Iunawannaalonnha: Bruny Island waters.	PHYLLIS (V/O) One of my ways of healing myself. I said, when a lot of our people read it, especially the women...	00.50.4:
PHYLLIS to camera.	(SYNC) and it's like they're living it, and it, to me it's almost as though when they read it - it's a little part of their healing process as well. (READS) As I think of the old ones I now understand the pain that they carried for the loss of their land. Though I live with their memories of things that were wrong, as an Aboriginal woman, I am proud, I am strong.	00.50.5'
Ocean rainbow Iunawannaalonnha: Bruny Island..	JIM (V/O) The water flows through the veins of human beings. It flows through the veins of the trees.	00.51.2:
JIM to camera.	(SYNC) It flows through the underground veins of this country. It flows through the water and it floats through the air in the clouds, the rivers and streams. It is in that bird, it's in that tree, it's in that white person over there, it's in that black person over there. Say hello to your brothers and sisters.	00.51.3:
Iunawannaalonnha: ocean zoom out.		
Reverse JENI at airport.		
Travelling across Harbour Bridge.		

Reconciliation March across Harbour Bridge. Travelling across Harbour Bridge.	JENI (V/O) Dear Rinki, my last letter approaching home...	00.52.10
Dolphins swimming.	facing the history, coming to know it. Perhaps then we might learn to...	00.52.14
Ocean, cliffs: Carigal country at sunset. Closing CREDITS roll over.	come into country the proper way.	00.52.20
CREDITS continue.	CHOIR (SINGING – PITJANTJATJARA LAND RIGHTS SONG) (V/O) I always speak like this. Don't take our country or we will die.	00.53.0'

CLOSING CREDITS:

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ART WORKS

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First Map of Australia, Nicholas Vallard's Atlas,

National Library of Australia 1547

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Quiet Country maps, Jessie Ginsborg Newling 2007

Thomas Laurie, Laying in the River Tamar off Launceston, John Glover,
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Julie Gough, We Walked on a Carpet of Stars, Creative Cowboy Films 2007

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Maidens, To the Other Shore, Jeni Thornley 1978, 1996

Manganinnie, John Honey, Archives Office of Tasmania 1980

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PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE FOOTAGE

Anne Bickford, Creighton Family, Cape Barren Island

Cadi Jam Ora: First Encounters, Botanic Gardens Trust, NSW

The Freud Museum, London

Hyde Park Barracks Museum, Sydney

Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, Tasmania

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service

To The Other Shore - Leah O'Reilly, Xenia Natalenko, Anne Tenney

Wellington Park Management Trust, Tasmania

PHOTOGRAPHS

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Abschol Work Camp Amata, Musgrave Ranges, SA, photographs

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Private collections Thornley, Archer, Ginsborg & Lai Families

Rinki and Jeni, Aditya Bhattacharya 1984

POETRY

Jim Everett, *Meenamatta Country* 2006

Aunty Phyllis Pitchford, *Sad Memories* 2000

SONG

Pitjanjatjara Land Rights Song written & recorded by Bill Davis,
assistance from John Trogenza, performed by singers from the
Ernabella Community, CAAMA (CD NF&SA) 1980

TEXTS

- James Boyce, *Van Dieman's Land* 2008
- Ann Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile', *JAS* 1999
- John Docker, *1492 The Poetics of Diaspora* 2001
- Jim Everett, 'This is Manalargenna Country', *Keeping Culture* 2006
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- Cassandra Pybus, *Community of Thieves* 1992
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- WEH Stanner, *White Man's Got No Dreaming: Essays 1938-1973*

SPECIAL THANKS

Judy Spielman, Lette, Jessie, Kaiani, Stephen
Jan Thornley & Family, Archer Family, Carole & Jacinta
'Bill' James William Thornley 1952-1971

dedicated to Lili Fraser 1930 - 2004

documentary filmmaker, mentor,

social justice activist

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Land & Sea Council

receives a percentage of

Island Home Country's distribution returns.

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