PLAC E AND PRAX IS:

Valuing Australian Indigenous Place in Landscape Architecture Practice

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Doctor of Philosophy

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School of Architecture and Design
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DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work that has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Jill Orr-Young
January 2012
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I acknowledge bayside Melbourne and its traditional custodians, the Boon wurrung, Bunurong and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples for continued inspiration.

My thesis is dedicated to my parents Gwen and Noel Orr, who supported my education and modelled social and environmental action wherever they recognised a need.
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### Reconciliation and Decolonisation

*A legacy of violence against both Aboriginal people and the land requires our response in words and actions that promote care and connection.*

- **Why Reconciliation?**
- **Paths to Reconciliation**
- **Decolonisation**
- **The ‘Road Map’**

### Research Methods

*The Road to Bendigo has revealed much. How did we get to this condition? What can be learned from the journey? To answer these questions, I need to share my own passage from my former practice to my current practice. I will use this as a model to argue paths that individual landscape architecture practitioners may take. My mode of conducting this inquiring journey has involved an eclectic array of methods gleaned from various disciplines.*

### 3 ON ‘PLACE’

*Place is not where I left it*

- **My early education as a landscape architect (Relph, Seddon, Fabos; methods/limitations)**
- **Personal Introduction**
- **‘Place and Placelessness’**
- **‘Non-Place’**
- **‘Songlines’**
- **Place and Landscape Architecture**

### Searching for Place

*Useful concepts from (Western) ‘place’ philosophy (Casey, Heidegger, Malpas)*

- **Introduction**
- **Phenomenology in Praxis**
- **Six Leading Traits of (wild) Place**
- **Place, Space, Region, Landscape (part one)**
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# OBSERVATIONS ON PRACTICE

**Crisis**

*Dissatisfaction with the profession, projects, clients, everything (reflecting on a continuing colonial hegemony)*

**Perspective Transformation / Hiatus**

**Reflections on Entering the Anthropologists’ Camp**

**Reflections on Rapoport Paper**

**Case Study: Judging the 2009 AILA Victoria Awards**

*Observations on reference to Australian Indigenous ‘place’, people, culture*

**Introduction**

**Discussion:**

- ‘The Great Australian Silence’

- Acknowledging ‘Country’ and People

- Archaeological Artefacts, Extinct Relics and Past History

- Capital ‘I’ Indigenous

- A Special Case: A Special ‘Place’

- Indigenous Voice

- Sea Country

- Reconciliation

- Notes – on ‘myth’

**Key Findings**

**Limitations**

**APPENDIX**

2009 AILA Victoria Awards Entries

# REFORMED PRACTICES

**The Return to Practice**

*New direction, valuing Indigenous ‘place’ knowledge, focus on coastal ‘place’ projects, new partnerships, critical reflection, revised methods, building ‘bridges’*

**Indigenous Place Knowledge – Loss and Reconstruction**

**Reconnecting the ‘Jigsaw Puzzle’**
My journey has now reached a rest point, from which I present my key findings for thesis submission. The following insights, revisions of knowledge, and new concepts reflect my current position.

- A Western hegemony of literature, theory and practice in ‘place’ ignores the particular Australian condition
- The colonial underpinnings of landscape architecture still dominate practice, while other ‘modern’ disciplines such as anthropology have successfully reinvented themselves
- Symbols and gestures of acknowledgement are powerful: reconciliation requires acknowledgement (and regret) of the violence of past colonial actions; ‘respect’ and ‘recognition’ of first cultures; and acknowledgement and seeking out of Indigenous ‘voice’ in practice
- Approaching practice with an alternative world view is challenging, and the keeping of a reflexive journal is essential for personal transformation and practice; a cultural translator is imperative
- As a concept and perception an *enduring* ‘essence of place’ is more inclusive of Indigenous cultures (and more complex) than ‘sense of place’; ‘nested place’ is also an inclusive concept – where there are no ‘leftover’ ‘spaces’; ‘placelessness’ in an Australian context is a nonsense
• An authentic practice in ‘place’ requires ‘praxis’. My model of praxis has developed in response to my changed outlook and practice as ‘provocation ~ contemplation in ‘place’ ~ journaling and critical reflection ~ dialogue ~ document research ~ practice’
• Evidence of Aboriginal culture is all around us (as demonstrated in ‘the new road to Bendigo’)
• Decolonising practice is an ongoing project, more difficult to realise than ‘reconciliation’. It requires recognition of colonial practices continuing in the present and a change away from violence and exclusion towards co-benefit
• There is a need for professional bodies such as the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) to highlight and actively promote reconciliation -decolonisation initiatives amongst members
• There are ways to be found of making every project a celebration of reconciliation, even in writing itself

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SUMMARY

This thesis explores concepts of ‘place’ from both Western and Indigenous perspectives, uncovering meanings in ‘place’ that are unrecognised, overlooked, or neglected. By framing the exploration within the themes of reconciliation / decolonisation and landscape architecture practice, the intent is made clear, to centre ‘place’ as a bridging concept between Western and Indigenous epistemologies, and to find ways of moving towards a decolonised landscape architecture practice.

In Australia, the discipline of landscape architecture has historically looked to imported models of theory and practice for its knowledge base. In this way it inadvertently supports a continuing Western hegemony of colonialism, at the expense of recognition of diverse Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. The resulting loss reverberates in landscape architecture practice, denying its recognition as authentic Australian practice.

Traditional Australian Aboriginal people derive their way of being from localised ‘place’-based connections and complex kinship systems, which encode ecological knowledge in cultural memory - as ‘place’ names, stories, visual art, songs and dances, and connect Indigenous people with their ‘countries’. While many of these complex relationships between people and ‘places’ were lost with the death, dispersion and dispossession of first peoples in the years immediately following colonial settlement, remnants of knowledge survive, even in the most urbanised areas.

For the landscape architect trained in Western practice methods, the change to seeing ‘place’ from a different world view can be threatening and exhilarating, but ultimately empowering. The process may require ‘time out’ for transformation. Challenges to self transformation come from reflexive practice, and practice changes as the result of ‘praxis’, a multi-dimensional process, newly presented here as ‘provocation ~ contemplation in ‘place’ ~ journaling and critical reflection ~ dialogue ~ document research ~ practice’.

‘The new Road to Bendigo’, page 2, introduces the thesis as a journey, inviting the reader to witness the journey. It introduces alternative ways of knowing ‘country’ through a method of ‘hermeneutic phenomenology’ (as described by Barnacle), in response to a provocation: how would one recognise ‘an Aboriginal Australia’ in ‘place’? The findings may surprise –
evidence of Aboriginal culture is all around us - and open the traveller to a new way of seeing; they point to a similar possibility on any road journey. But such a journey requires preparation.

Preparation for the journey includes spending time in ‘the anthropologists’ camp’, learning new ways of knowing and questioning knowing itself (through self-reflexivity). This is described in ‘Indigenous Place’, page 121, and ‘Concepts of Praxis’, page 137. Preparation also requires reflective immersion in the journals of a European explorer (Mitchell, 1839) and research of earlier Indigenous trading tracks. This introduces ‘the Indigenous voice’.

Western concepts of ‘place’ are explored for their application in an Australian context in ‘Searching for Place’, page 64. The concept of ‘place’ as a-priori to ‘space’ (Casey, et al) supports an Australian Aboriginal epistemology and ontology, while an alternative Western concept of ‘place’ as made by humans out of ‘space’ continues the colonial project. A concept of ‘place’ as ‘nested’ (J. J. Gibson, Malpas) – ‘place’ in ‘place’ – with no ‘left-over spaces’, and an eco-centric rather than ego-centric epistemology are valuable in the Australian context.

In analysing the AILA Awards entries (‘Case Study: Judging the 2009 AILA Victoria Awards’, page 152), the findings are premised in reflexive insights from my own past practice (‘Place in Practice’, page 91) and highlight issues that continue in landscape architecture practice. Only 24% of entries made reference to Australian Indigenous ‘place’ or culture; 76% made no reference at all. This situation denies actions for reconciliation and decolonisation of practice.


The journey continues beyond the thesis, valuing other ways of knowing and other ways of practising that respect and recognise Indigenous cultures in ‘place’.
1. INTRODUCTION

Research Focus / Framework

My research seeks a contemporary understanding of ‘place’ as a core concept in the theory and practice of landscape architecture in an Australian context. My research is framed within the themes of reconciliation/decolonisation and landscape architecture practice.

Research Questions

What can be learnt about ‘place’ from both European / Western and Indigenous cultural perspectives? What are the key points of reference that support an epistemology of reconciled (Australian) ‘place’ practice?

How can the findings of this research reinvigorate contemporary landscape architecture practice?

‘Place’, ‘landscape architecture’, ‘practice methods’, ‘colonial’, ‘reconciliation’, ‘decolonisation’, ‘Australian Indigenous culture’, ‘Western philosophies’ are the key word-ideas that spark my research. Others will emerge as my research develops and each section extends and reinforces the previous one. ‘Place’ is the concept that connects them all.
2. THE ISSUES AND THE APPROACH

The new Road to Bendigo

I need to take you on a journey. Travel with me on the road between Melbourne and Bendigo to discover what might be known of an Aboriginal Australia from multiple observations, road maps, reflections, ‘place’ names, journals, and connections with knowledge from other ‘countries’. I discover that ‘essence’ is the key to ‘place’ and ‘placelessness’ is a nonsense; and that an Aboriginal Australia is ‘everywhere’ when we know how to recognise it.

Introduction

One can now drive north-west from Melbourne to Bendigo in central Victoria in about two hours, travelling on the new Calder Freeway and by-passing towns - Gisborne, Woodend, Kyneton, Malmsbury - which were once staging posts on the road to the goldfields. On this journey one can remain unaware of an Aboriginal Australia. The major landmarks, Mt. Macedon and Hanging Rock, are (re)named in the settlers’ tongue, but if I remain vigilant I can recognise just a few ‘place’ names which offer clues to a different past (Bulla, Tullamarine, Toolern Vale, BLACKJACK RD - Fig. 1).

The route leads us through two traditional Aboriginal ‘countries’ without our knowing: the Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) country of the south-east region and Dja Dja Wurrung (Jaara) country of the riverine region - the boundary lost somewhere in the Macedon Ranges (see Figs. 7 and 8, Appendix 1, page 235). We have passed close to the Mount William former

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1 As developed from my journal notes 2nd October 2010 and 22nd January 2011
2 My observation has developed from awareness of great loss, but may also be sub-consciously inspired by Julie Gough’s place art in another State. Her series of fifteen postcards ‘Driving Black Home’ (2000) references an Aboriginal presence (or absence) through photographic documentation of road signs as she travels around Tasmania. She states ‘I see this big ongoing journey as an act of remembering. It is also my way of considering and disclosing the irony that although our original indigenous place names were all but erased from their original sites, Europeans then consistently went about reinscribing our ancestors’ presence on the land’ (e.g. ‘Black Bobs Rivulet’, etc.).
3 ‘Woiworung’ (sic) and ‘Djadjawurung’ (sic) countries are shown on the AIATSICS map ‘Aboriginal Australia’ as separated in southeast and riverine regions respectively, but both formed part of the Kulin alliance of five nations. Spelling variations frequently occur: I have used those associated with the publications quoted, but in general I have given preference to the spellings currently in use by the individual Indigenous legal corporations appointed or seeking Registered Aboriginal Party status in Victoria.
axe-head stone quarry and axe-grinding grooves formed with the production of edge-ground hatchets – the centre of a trading network that once extended 700 km into New South Wales and South Australia.

I don’t feel at ease on this streamlined new road which leads us at high speed from Melbourne to Bendigo, and we turn off at Malmsbury for scones and coffee. On the detour road I notice the tattered remnant of an Aboriginal flag, still flying defiantly at what appears to be a private residence. There are four flag poles, but only one is in use: I wonder who lives here and what is their story? We sink into our chairs in the café garden, familiar with the scents of exotic herbs – Wormwood, Yucca, Rosemary … I enjoy this rough-edged garden with its soft tufts of grass underfoot, feeling ‘the wild’. It echoes the feel of another garden at our journey’s end. Both offer a change of pace, chance discovery and possibility for reflection.

Fig. 1
BLACKJACK RD underpass on the Bendigo Freeway. Does the road name reflect an (historic) Aboriginal camp, an individual resident, or a casino card game? The name is not registered by VICNAMES, the Register of Geographic Names in Victoria and its history requires further research. Photo by Denis Young 14 March 2011. (See also footnote 2.)

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5 The start of the Calder Freeway is where it branches off the Tullamarine Freeway in Essendon North; it finishes approximately 25 kilometres before Bendigo, near Ravenswood South, where it merges into the Calder Highway.
6 Sadly, the ‘Merchants of Malmsbury’ café closed in July 2011; there is nothing else like it.
7 http://services.land.vic.gov.au/vicnames/
The old highway survives in fragmented sections, cut off like the anabranches of a major river. But it is no longer possible to drive from Melbourne to Bendigo on this former road: the freeway has appropriated parts of the highway into its own alignment. This is a scale of engineering that takes full command of the landscape.

The new route was predicated on increased efficiency for freight operators and ‘sold’ as a local benefit:

The new freeway will redirect 12,000 vehicles per day including 3,600 trucks, away from Malmsbury, Taradale and Elphinstone. Removing through traffic from these Goldfields-route townships will enhance the living environment for locals and make them safer and more attractive for visitors.

The freeway facilitates increased traffic volumes and speeds: horizontal and vertical alignments now change in more gradual increments than was possible in a road that responded to topography and connected settlements on rivers. It makes its own path through the landscape, seemingly free from associations, and I increasingly feel the anxiety of disorientation and ‘placelessness’.

Fig. 2
View through the windscreen on a return journey - Bendigo to Melbourne – contrasting the experience of driving on the old highway (left) with that of the new freeway (right), a four-lane divided road, reclaimed from pasture land and orchards. (My journal, 22 Jan 2011, 5.30 p.m.)

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8 i.e. the 15km section from south of Malmsbury to Elphinstone
10 Here I mean ‘placelessness’ as a loss of close or familiar ‘encounter’, a ‘reduction of experience’, a bodily ‘separation’. At this point I agree with Relph who described ‘placelessness’ as ‘... cutting roots, eroding symbols, replacing diversity and experiential order with conceptual order’, in RELPH, E. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*, Pion Limited. p. 143. (Later I will reject ‘placelessness’ as a useful concept.)
My journey inspires several ideas and directions for possible research, including: the contrast of the new road experience with the old, and of both with the early cart track to the goldfields; the trace of Aboriginal culture in possible under-layers of ‘trading tracks’, ‘forgotten’ ‘place’ names and natural / cultural features; the influence on experience of the speed of movement; the travel cultures associated with different modes of passage over time; the notice of seasonal changes; the ‘placelessness’ one may feel when travelling on the new freeway (or clear of old associations, does it make space for new ones?); the different foci provided by different natural and political boundaries (rivers and watersheds, territories, pastoral leases, local government areas, towns, counties, parishes ...); and the values of a hybrid ‘wild’ garden. All of these directions may be of interest to the landscape architect, but I am following a focus at this time on the apparent obscurity of an Aboriginal Australia.

**Aim**

I am interested in finding what can be known about an Aboriginal Australia in this seeming void of ‘placelessness’. Do the journals of early explorers and settlers provide clues to an understanding of ‘place’? How does contemporary research towards reclamation of traditional boundaries, languages and word meanings collectively enrich the void? Are there clues to be discerned in the landscape which suggest an Aboriginal culture? Can stories from other ‘places’ spark recognition in this ‘place’? My journey is also an exploration. It aims to discover and revalue Aboriginal culture in landscape, within a larger theme of reconciliation / decolonisation praxis.

**Return Journeys**

I complete this journey many times, but it is never the *same* journey. Different details are revealed in a return journey from the opposite direction – Bendigo to Melbourne – or by different deviations – through Kyneton instead of Malmsbury for example. My return journey may be *physical or literary or virtual or imagined* (the latter requiring ‘cues’): each provides a different experience. I can return repeatedly with new research or reflection. But my focus or mood (or speed of travel) will influence what I perceive.

On another day trip I notice a road sign which marks the Great Dividing Range at 600 metres. We have been enveloped by a haze all the way, but north of the range it clears to blue sky
with cirrus cloud, and the temperature rises by five degrees Celsius within minutes. This is
the open, hilly country that Major Thomas Mitchell named ‘Australia Felix’:

The land is in short open and available in its present state for all the purposes of civilised
man. We traversed it in two directions with heavy carts, meeting no other obstruction
than the softness of the rich soil and, in returning over flowery plains and green hills
fanned by the breezes of early spring, I named this region Australia Felix, the better to
distinguish it from the parched deserts of the interior country where we had wandered so
unprofitably and so long.\textsuperscript{11}

I am examining Major Mitchell’s journals to discover his perceptions of an Indigenous ‘place’.
Mitchell had the opportunity to experience ‘places’ and reflect on ideas of ‘place’ in as yet
undamaged landscapes. As the first European to cross the plains of ‘Australia Felix’ he must
surely have noticed vast contrasts between this (regional) ‘place’/these (local) ‘places’ and
the places he knew? He had time and solitude for reflection; he took Aboriginal guides to
show him the ancient pathways, find water for the party and act as ambassadors in passage
through foreign ‘countries’; he took men who were responsible for collecting birds and
plants. New knowledge was all around him.

When Mitchell mapped and named this landscape in 1836, crossing in south-west and north-
east directions, it was in his role as the Surveyor-General for New South Wales, and his focus
was on finding new land for the growth of the colony. He noted: \textit{The country ... was, as far
as I could see, the finest imaginable, either for sheep and cattle or for cultivation}\textsuperscript{12}. Mitchell
was not open to learning a different world-view from his Aboriginal guides, even though he
acknowledged their vital role in the daily survival of his party:

\begin{quote}
... in most of our difficulties by flood and field, the intelligence and skill of our sable
friends made the whitefellows appear rather stupid. They could read traces on the earth,
climb trees, or dive into the water better than the ablest of us. In tracing lost cattle,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{11} MITCHELL MAJOR, T. L. 1839. Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia; with
Descriptions of the Recently Explored Region of Australia Felix and of the Present Colony of New
Murray’, plate 40 ‘Map of Eastern Australia, and Natural Limits of the Colony of New South Wales’
(accessed on-line 26 January 2011).

\textsuperscript{12} In reference to the newly named Glenelg River; ibid. August 2, 1836 (accessed 26 January 2011)
speaking to the wild natives, hunting, or diving, Piper was the most accomplished man in
the camp.\textsuperscript{13}

The expedition from Sydney, and its return, was guided by a traditional Aboriginal man from
Bathurst, who called himself ‘John Piper’.\textsuperscript{14} ‘In person he was the tallest, and in authority he
was allowed to consider himself almost next to me, the better to secure his best exertions. ... The men he despised, and he would only act by my orders.’\textsuperscript{15} While Mitchell recognised his
guide’s more obvious practical contributions, he clearly did not understand the ‘law’ of
Aboriginal land tenure (which his survey would cause to be redefined as counties and
parishes), the protocols associated with crossing boundaries or the potential dangers of his
ignorance.

Yet Mitchell was well aware of an Aboriginal Australia: his journal can be read as an
exploration of Aboriginal material culture, recording and interpreting artefacts and events as
he came upon them:

At this spot we found a very small bower of twigs, only large enough to contain a child:
the floor was hollowed out and filled with dry leaves and feathers; and the ground
around had been cut smooth, several boughs having been also bent over it so as to be
fixed in the ground at both ends. The whole seemed connected with some mystic
ceremony of the aborigines, but which the male natives who were with us could not
explain. The gins however on being questioned said it was usual to prepare such a bower
for the reception of a new-born child.\textsuperscript{16}

Mitchell’s quest for knowing the purpose of the ‘bower of twigs’ over-rove any sensibility
when confronted with a possibility of secret / sacred knowledge.\textsuperscript{17} His perception was

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid. July 3, 1836 (accessed 26 January 2011)
\textsuperscript{14} ‘John Piper’ probably belonged to the Wiradjuri tribal group, whose country included ‘Bathurst’ and
extended some 400 km (approximately 250 miles) to the west, in the direction of the expedition.
\textsuperscript{15} MITCHELL MAJOR, T. L. 1839. Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia; with
Descriptions of the Recently Explored Region of Australia Felix and of the Present Colony of New
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. September 7, 1836 (accessed 26 January 2011)
\textsuperscript{17} Secret/sacred refers to information that, under customary laws, is made available only to the
initiated; or information that can only be seen by men or women or particular people within the
Intellectual Property, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Canberra: 20. p. 317) in
limited by the culture he knew. On another occasion he presumed to enter and examine the
details of Aboriginal dwellings:

... which were of a very different construction from those of the aborigines in general,
being large, circular, and made of straight rods meeting at an upright pole in the centre;
the outside had been first covered with bark and grass and then entirely coated over with
clay. The fire appeared to have been made nearly in the centre; and a hole at the top had
been left as a chimney18.

and their contents:

In this hut the natives had left various articles such as jagged spears, some of them set
with flints; and an article of their manufacture which we had not before seen, namely,
bags of the gins, very neatly wrought, apparently made of a tough small rush. Two of
these also resembled reticules and contained balls of resin, flints for the spearheads etc.
The iron bolt of a boat was likewise found in one of these huts19.

It was a superior and objective view and in only rare instances did he allow his Aboriginal
guide a voice: 'Piper's countenance brightened up with the good news this (Aboriginal) man
gave him; assuring me that we should “find water all about: no more want water”20.

Place Names

Mitchell was also aware that the hills he passed or ascended and the waterways he crossed
were already named in an Aboriginal tongue, and went to extreme lengths to determine
those ‘place’ names while sometimes deciding not to use them: on August 10, 1836 he

... perceived at length two figures at a distance ... They proved to be a gin with a little boy
and as soon as the female saw us she began to run. I presently overtook her, and with the
few words I knew prevailed on her to stop until the two gins of our party could come up;
for I had long been at a loss for the names of localities. ... I was glad to find that she and

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18 MITCHELL MAJOR, T. L. 1839. Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia; with
Descriptions of the Recently Explored Region of Australia Felix and of the Present Colony of New
19 Ibid. July 26, 1836 (accessed 26 January 2011)
20 Ibid. July 8, 1836 (accessed 26 January 2011)
the gins perfectly understood each other. ... She stated that the main river was called Temianganegene, a name unfortunately too long to be introduced into maps

We can imagine the terror of the woman and boy at being apprehended: previously, on 27 May 1836, Mitchell’s group had killed seven Aborigines at a ‘place’ Mitchell called Mt. Dispersion. Researchers Kostanski and Clark consider that this then had a profound effect on Mitchell’s ability to obtain ‘place’ names from local tribes: ‘After the massacre the word spread to other Indigenous groups in western Victoria to avoid Mitchell’s party’. This claim is supported by the vacated Aboriginal dwellings (as described above) entered by Mitchell on July 26, 1836, in relation to which he wrote: ‘The natives invariably fled at our approach, a circumstance to be regretted perhaps on account of the nomenclature of my map’.

I had begun to wonder if Mitchell’s near obsession with obtaining Aboriginal ‘place’ names was sympathetic with an Aboriginal belief that ‘place’ names are created with the land? But I found that he had previously noted the practical value of using Aboriginal ‘place’ names: ‘so long as any of the Aborigines can be found in the neighbourhood ... future travellers may verify my map. Whereas new names are of no use in this respect’. Towards the end of his career he reflected: ‘I have put down the native names ... whereof the names will thus be preserved when the people who use them are no more’. This comment may have been influenced by nineteenth century hierarchical views such as that of English medical doctor and monogenist James Pritchard who had argued that racial differences were a result of

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21 Ibid. August 10, 1836 (accessed 26 January 2011)
22 Mt. Dispersion is not marked on contemporary maps: it is in New South Wales, just north of the Victorian border – Kulkyne Regional Park
‘differences in development and degrees of civilisation’\textsuperscript{27}, or colonial magistrate William Hull who wrote ... ‘may it not be readily conceded that the inferior race, whose origin has been here considered, will also pass away’\textsuperscript{28}? Or English sociologist Herbert Spencer, who in 1852 (predating Darwin) coined the term ‘survival of the fittest’\textsuperscript{29}. Or perhaps Mitchell was just reflecting the colonial situation of Aboriginal demise that he was witnessing?

In his expedition journal he elaborated in detail on his ‘place’ naming practice:

I have always gladly adopted aboriginal names and, in the absence of these, I have endeavoured to find some good reason for the application of others, considering descriptive names the best, such being in general the character of those used by the natives of this and other countries. Names of individuals seem eligible enough when at all connected with the history of the discovery or that of the nation by whom it was made\textsuperscript{30}.

In the absence of local knowledge Mitchell gave the ‘places’ he viewed English language names. At times he had Greek heroes in mind: naming the Campaspe River near its confluence with the Murray River and Mt. Alexander for Alexander the Great; re-naming Mount Macedon, he was making a connection between Phillip of Macedon and Port Phillip, which he glimpsed through a ‘glass’ in a distant haze. On later learning that ‘Geboor’ was the local (Woiwurrung) name of the hill, he reflected: ‘it is a much better one, having fewer letters and being aboriginal’\textsuperscript{31}. But Mt. Macedon retains its name from Mitchell.

We have been left with a considerable legacy of recorded Aboriginal ‘place’ names in the regions where Mitchell journeyed. In addition, his influence as Surveyor-General of New South Wales (1828 - 1855) ensured that this practice continued as a model for naming


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid. September 29, 1836 (accessed 26 January 2011)
‘places’ and parishes\textsuperscript{32}. Mitchell had instructed his subordinate surveyors as early as 1828 to note Aboriginal ‘place’ names on their maps\textsuperscript{33}. But all is not as true to ‘place’ as it seems, for Mitchell participated in ‘place’ name simplification: he objected to his surveyors’ efforts in attempting to accurately record the ‘place’ names as spoken, using what he considered were unnecessary letters, and sought to ensure that all ‘place’ names were euphonious to the settlers’ ears\textsuperscript{34}.

Mitchell collected Aboriginal ‘place’ names like he collected plant specimens, blind to their local meanings or story connections. His efforts recall Deborah Bird Rose’s more recent conversations about ‘place’ with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. She writes:

\begin{quote}
people spoke of Whitefellas “coming up blind” and bumping into everything. The living presence of the living country in its own flourishing particularity was not noticed by Whitefellas, whose mission was conquest\textsuperscript{35}.
\end{quote}

This profound observation could well describe Mitchell (and countless settler Australians) as it captures an essential ontological difference between Indigenous and settler cultures in their relationships with the land.

In recording ‘place’ names Mitchell never thought to ask permission of the local ‘place’ owners. Eventually this had disastrous consequences: in an incident near Swan Hill on the Murray River, Mitchell requested his three male Aboriginal guides to remain behind to learn ‘place’ names from the local tribe. ‘Piper’ later reported that his inquiry had met with an angry response: ‘I won’t tell you’ and ‘too much ask’. The tribe blamed ‘Piper’ for ‘\textit{bringing the whitefellows there}’. In defending himself against their spears ‘Piper’ shot and killed one of the local men. The incident might have caused Mitchell to pause and reflect on the deep value of ‘place’ names, his intrusion, and the ‘belonging’ of names to their particular

\textsuperscript{32}His influence extended to the Port Phillip District, which was part of the colony of New South Wales until separation as ‘Victoria’ in 1851
\textsuperscript{34}Major T.L. Mitchell, ‘Methods of Achieving Uniformity in the use of Aboriginal Place Names’, Circular, 5 September 1829, cited in ibid. p. 75
\textsuperscript{35}ROSE, D. B. 2004 \textit{Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation}, University of New South Wales Press. p. 9
cultures. But his journal reveals that while expressing regret at the incident, he was soon examining the contents of Aboriginal huts once again.\^36

... Aboriginal placenames refer to specific ancestral stories. Thus, the cultural heritage of a place can reside in the language specific placename.\(^37\)

Laura Kostanski has described the colonial practice of using Indigenous ‘place’ names as a process of ‘Anglo-Indigenous toponymy’\(^38\) whereby Indigenous cultural meanings were stripped from the appropriated toponyms, which were used by the colonial powers for their own purposes. She further traces an homogenising of the multiple pre-1788 cultures into one amorphous identity via generalist toponymic reference books in the years following Federation, which she attributes to a culture of ‘nation-building’, an attempt ‘to give depth to a formative Australian identity’ and ‘legitimise white control of the landscape through the appropriation of Aboriginal cultures and traditions’.

But Clark has chosen to celebrate what has survived. He considers that traditional Aboriginal ‘place’ names are an important component of Aboriginal cultural heritage ‘presenting and describing relationships with land and country’\(^39\) and in south-eastern Australia where much spoken language has been lost, these ‘place’ names ‘constitute the largest surviving bodies of indigenous languages in widespread currency’.\(^40\) His rigorous retrieval of ‘place’ names from nineteenth century journals, combined with modern linguistic analysis has resulted in a refinement and re-contextualising of meaning, ‘place’ and language group for the known Indigenous ‘place’ names of Victoria. Through his agency, he has reclaimed ‘Anglo-Indigenous toponymy’ as Indigenous toponymy and Indigenous hegemony. The resulting Dictionary of Aboriginal Placenames of Victoria,\(^41\) of some 3,400 ‘place’ names, is my guide for travelling the new road to Bendigo.


\(^{38}\) Ibid. p. 175


\(^{40}\) Ibid. p. 7

It is common to find more than one traditional name for a waterway or (modern) city\textsuperscript{42}, marking a \textit{particular} ‘place’ (with a particular meaning). As early as 1881, pastoralist James Dawson observed that:

\begin{quote}
... rivers have not the same name from their source to the sea. The majority of Australian streams cease to flow in summer, and are then reduced to a chain of pools or waterholes, all of which, with their intermediate fords, have distinguishing names\textsuperscript{43}.
\end{quote}

Unfortunately, the recorded traditional Aboriginal ‘place’ names for the Coliban and Campaspe Rivers (Table 1, Appendix 2) do not reveal this level of environmental information, as meanings were often not recorded with the ‘place’ names. Dawson’s work was an exception, providing a ‘gloss’ for every name he recorded. He also offered a ‘template’ for an understanding of traditional Aboriginal ‘place’ naming in relation to rivers:

\begin{quote}
The river which connects these waterholes in winter has no name. Every river, however, which forms one continuous stream during both summer and winter has a name which is applied to its whole length. ... At the same time, every local reach in these rivers has a distinguishing name\textsuperscript{44}.
\end{quote}

The language groups referred to in Table 1, Appendix 2 shared vocabularies as well as maintaining their own unique words: Ian Clark considers that:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Woiwurrung} formed a dialect continuum with Boonwurrung, with which it shared 93 percent common vocabulary, and with Daungwurrung (83 percent common vocabulary); it shared the following vocabulary with other neighbouring languages: \textit{Djadjawurrung} (45 percent), \textit{Djabwurrung} (46 percent) and \textit{Wembawemba} (37 percent)\textsuperscript{45}.
\end{quote}

(As previously noted the new road to Bendigo takes us through Woiwurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung countries: refer to map showing Reconstructed Aboriginal Language Areas in Victoria, Fig. 3)

\textsuperscript{42} Melbourne city incorporates at least seven traditional names, according to place location (see Table 1, Appendix 2)


\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

Fig. 3
Reconstructed Aboriginal Language Areas in Victoria\textsuperscript{46}. Note that RAP areas currently in a process of negotiation and refinement will provide a contemporary interpretation (and will extend to include ‘sea country’ in coastal areas).

Mitchell’s party travelled through perhaps a dozen ‘countries’\textsuperscript{47} (many of them clustered along the resource-rich Murray River floodplain). The shared vocabularies of the tribes of the ‘riverine region’ (together with ‘finger talk’) enabled his Indigenous guides to communicate with those they came into contact with\textsuperscript{48}. However, Mitchell’s observation that ‘their dialects are not so varied as is commonly believed’, based on ‘the facility with which Piper conversed with these people’, now seems a little quaint in the light of modern mapping of language boundaries: they had travelled ‘a distance of 200 miles from his native place, Bathurst’ but were still in Piper’s home (Wiradjuri) ‘country’.

Mitchell was conscious of a future-oriented responsibility in (re)naming features: ‘In adding this noble range of mountains to my map I felt some difficulty in deciding on a name. To give

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Refer to map of Australia AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES. 1996. Aboriginal Australia. Geoscience Australia and Aboriginal Studies Press.
\textsuperscript{48} For a detailed discussion of gesture language see HOWITT, A. W. 1904. The Native Tribes of South-East Australia, Macmillan and Co. pp. 723 - 735
appellations that may become current in the mouths of future generations has often been a perplexing subject with me ...' 49.

I have noticed a cluster of ‘place’ names in central Victoria that suggest a connection with Aboriginal Australia. They are neither Indigenous nor ‘place’ names of Mitchell’s ilk: ‘Axedale’ and ‘Axe Creek’ may relate to the exchange of axe-head stone sourced from nearby Mt William; ‘Mia Mia’ is an imported Nyungar Aboriginal name (from Perth, WA) for a (native) hut; nearby ‘Mia Mia Creek’ was ‘Moorangapil’ in the Djadjawurrung tongue50; ‘Ravenswood’ suggests the presence of crows. (The significance of the Crow as a moiety of the Kulin people will be further discussed.) The history of these ‘place’ names is not recorded in the state’s Register of Geographic Names51 but might be determined by further research at a local level: every ‘place’ name has a story.

Trading Tracks

There is a hand-drawn map on display in a gallery at the Koorie Heritage Trust in Melbourne that shows a network of ‘trading tracks’ connecting ‘places’ throughout Victoria. In central Victoria, one such track follows the western bank of the Campaspe River from its confluence with the Murray River at Echuca to the Mt. William axe-head quarry near Lancefield; another track to the west extends from the Darling River confluence with the Murray at Wentworth, New South Wales, to the Southern Ocean at Cape Otway (traditional Aboriginal name ‘Bangurac’)52; yet another connects the two north-south tracks in a roughly east-west direction through Lake Buloke. Important objects of ‘trade’ are recorded – axes, swan eggs, sandstone, white pipe clay, ochre, bogong moths, fish nets, (etc). This map was reproduced from a drawing by Aldo Massola, Fig. 453, who also noted the trading of ‘magic objects’, such as the possum-skin armlets of the Swan Hill people, and quartz crystals (see later discussion on quartz crystals). Elsewhere, Gary Presland has commented on the ‘distinctive, slightly

luminescent greenish hue’ of the Mount William stone\textsuperscript{54}. Perhaps the luminescence which made the axe heads ‘both desirable and highly visible’\textsuperscript{55} also signified a ‘magical essence’ (and associated cultural connections)?

Fig. 4: Exchange routes in south-eastern Australia as recorded by Aldo Massola (1971)\textsuperscript{56}. Note in particular the track from Port Phillip (Melbourne) to the Campaspe River, continuing north (near Bendigo) to the Murray River.

However, none of the hatchet heads found at Mount William was ground and polished into a finished object, and the nearest axe grinding grooves are located at least twenty nine kilometres away at Mount Macedon\textsuperscript{57}. Subsequent research by Isabel McBryde emphasised that the goods ‘exchanged’ were distinctive to the resources and ecologies of particular ‘countries’ and represented diverse modes of exchange, serving social and symbolic as well as technological and economic functions. In addition to material items, exchange included

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. p. 7
\textsuperscript{56} MASSOLA, A. 1971. The Aborigines of south-eastern Australia As They Were, Melbourne, Heinemann.
\textsuperscript{57} AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COUNCIL 2008. National Heritage List.
‘songs, dances, names (my emphasis) or services, as well as the living (women in marriage exchange)’, and the events of exchange included large intergroup meetings (sometimes ceremonial), gift giving to confirm friendships, special expeditions to the source where negotiations took place with its custodian, or ‘an event unobtrusive to the alien’ which was carried on ‘in the shadow of more impressive events’. McBryde’s map shows exchange routes and centres as evidenced by first-hand accounts in early journals (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 Map by Isabel McBryde (1984) showing range of goods exchanged in south-eastern Australia and their movement between source and exchange centre.

There are differences between the maps of the two researchers, yet not significantly so for our purpose of following a travel route between Melbourne and Bendigo. McBryde has documented ‘Melbourne’ as an ‘exchange centre’ - for rugs from the south-west, reeds and spears from the north and sandstone from the south-east. She shows ‘hatchet stone’ exchanged from Melbourne (where perhaps some of the Mt. William stone blanks were

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59 Ibid.
60 Ibid. (Thank you Judy Williams, Librarian Koorie Heritage Trust, for directing me to Massola and McBryde.)
‘finished’ by sharpening on sandstone exchanged from the south-east); and the movement of ‘quartz’ from central Victoria to the Murray River (Fig. 5). She has demonstrated that ‘trade’ was only one aspect of a complex exchange; however ‘trading track’ is a term which continues to be used by Indigenous people.

Not surprisingly, the origin of the traded objects is often revealed in traditional Aboriginal ‘place’ names (e.g. Mt. William axe-head quarry – traditional Aboriginal name ‘Willam-imurring’, meaning ‘tomahawk-house’). But the known traditional ‘place’ names, with their encoded particular ecologies and customs, are rarely acknowledged in contemporary road signs, leaving the average traveller ignorant of an Aboriginal presence in south-east Australia.

It is difficult to transpose the track alignments of Massola or McBryde on to a modern map without additional detailed knowledge of local topography, streams, waterholes, springs, or optimal walking distances, and indeed philosopher Edward S. Casey warns against literal translation:

What is important … is the course and direction of the journey itself, its tenor and import, whatever its precise path may be. To demand literalism of the path … is to convert the plasticity of places into the rigidity of sites.

It seems probable however that sections of existing highways and roads simply ‘reinforce’ ancient alignments. Foley has noted similar events in New South Wales where existing ‘permanent foot-tracks, walked over for thousands of years’ were appropriated by the ‘Redcoats’ who turned them into their roads.

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61 The traditional Aboriginal place name for ‘St Kilda’, on the Bay, south of Melbourne, is recorded as ‘Euro-yoroke’ – ‘sandstone found there, used to sharpen tomahawks’ (CLARK, I. D. & HEYDON, T. 2002a. Dictionary of Aboriginal Placenames of Melbourne and Central Victoria. Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages.)

62 In ibid.

63 CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 306. Note that Casey is a philosopher and not a geographer or designer, and caution is needed that ‘tenor’ and ‘import’ do not substitute ‘generality’ for place ‘particularity’.

64 FOLEY, D. & MAYNARD, R. 2001. Repossession of Our Spirit: Traditional owners of northern Sydney, Aboriginal History Inc. p. 57
But what of the Wurundjeri track between Melbourne and Mount William? Where does it fit in the palimpsest of city roads? Perhaps we should start at the Yarra Falls (‘Yarra Yarra’), which separated saltwater from freshwater, and provided a river crossing (now marked only by Queens Bridge)? Gary Presland writes that traditional Aboriginal men travelled north to the Mt William greenstone quarry (‘Willam-i-murring’) via the valley courses of the Yarra River tributary streams. The waterways provided both the lines of movement and the life support. Presland traces one such route ‘along the broad valley of the Moonee Ponds Creek’ ... (‘Moonee Moonee - chain of ponds’), which gave access to the plains and the foothills of the ranges, and assesses that this is the route now taken by the Tullamarine Freeway. ‘which traces the course of the creek as it wends its way past Coonans Hill and through the low rises around present-day Pascoe Vale and Strathmore.’

Tony Birch tells a similar story: the number 55 tram winds along a route once familiar to Wurundjeri people travelling to and from Mt William quarry (‘Willam-i-murring’), ‘traversing the plain just to the east of the Moonee Ponds Creek and Coonan’s Hill, before veering away (south-east through Royal Park) to the central city.’

In drawing his map, Mitchell carefully positioned and named hills and streams, but neglected to mark the Aboriginal ‘trading tracks’ that his party followed, (viz. ‘Burnett and Piper followed the native path until they came to the bed of a fine lake’.) Even as movement ‘desire lines’ - which are commonly observed and mapped by contemporary landscape architects as a basis for the planning of paths - they were not important to Mitchell in his recording of ‘Australia Felix’. Perhaps this underlines his ‘indifference’ to the traces of many thousands of years of Aboriginal movement, and ‘a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape’ as Stanner later described?
Whatever thoughts guided Mitchell’s actions, the result is the same: much material evidence of ancient path networks connecting ancient cultures gradually disappeared along with the language and detailed environmental knowledge encoded in the names of ‘places’ they connected.

One can imagine the physical destruction of Mitchell’s expedition, with its heavy carts, boat carriage, horses and bullocks, on the landscape traversed. The beauty of the ‘places’ they saw and the damage to them by their equipment caused Mitchell to briefly reflect that the landscape *had so much the appearance of a well kept park that I felt loth to injure its surface by the passage of our cartwheels*. Mitchell’s idea of ‘landscape’ was clearly based on a concept of ‘nature’ that was unmarked by thousands of years of ‘culture’, and blind to that possibility.

His cart tracks would guide pastoralists into ‘Australia Felix’. He reported: *‘Our line of route soon became the high road from Sydney to Port Phillip’*71. One such overlander was Charles Hotson Ebden, whose story I will investigate further in ‘Parallel Stories’, page 194.

**Re-evaluating ‘Treasure’**

At the end of my road journey I arrive at ‘the house that Hugh built’. Since re-discovering my ancestral grandfather’s mud-brick cottage in gold-mining country at Golden Square,72 I have regularly explored the Bendigo goldfields, looking for ‘treasure’ amongst the disruption of mullock heaps and mine shafts. As a young explorer, I was interested in collecting objects, such as the shards of blue and white crockery and discarded bottles found in sifting old ‘kitchen dumps’, which assisted my imagining of the cultural associations and daily life of goldfield settlers. Gradually I became more interested in photographing the beautiful and distinctive flora that has reclaimed the diggings, and more recently, in just the ritual of the discovery walk, with the body and senses attuned to every small change and event in the landscape. I delight in the cyclical blooming of wildflowers and the honey smell of the flowers, the distinctive ‘hum’ of the bush in high summer, and in observing the particular microhabitats of the different native orchids – noting their decline in numbers during the

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72 approximately 5 kilometres south of Bendigo
long drought and continuing recovery after fire and flooding rains. If I could walk here more regularly my experience and knowledge of the ‘place’ would be richer, but my idea of ‘treasure’ continues to change and expand.

Recently I have become aware of a prolific patch of Yam Daisies – and the evidence this may provide of a former Aboriginal presence. The Yam Daisy, Microseris spp., also called ‘Murnong’ was extensively cultivated in south-eastern Australia by traditional Aboriginal people as their staple food. Beth Gott has noted the abundance of Yam Daisies on the plains of north-central Victoria at the time of Mitchell’s expedition, their speedy destruction by the hard-hoofed, close-grazing animals that followed, and the ‘highly fragmented’ occurrence of this genus today. She also notes the use of other native tubers such as lilies and orchids as traditional food sources, and the spread of food plants by trading. Gott reflects that ‘many of the patterns of biodiversity … were of Aboriginal creation’.

The elevated area where the Yam Daisies survive is a vantage point over a plain to the west (Fig. 6) and is now part of the Bendigo Regional Park. This high ground is not where I would expect to find Yam Daisies: Gott has noted their ‘abundance … on the plains’, and Foley records that the ‘fertile floodbanks (at Lane Cove, N.S.W.) were kept clear for yam propagation’.

My focus here has been on plant species, but reflecting on the propagation and harvesting of the yams and other tubers as traditional Aboriginal food, I begin to see the interconnections. The production of this food staple was a woman’s task: ‘Areas were tilled in a formal order by the women, with the roots and small tubers re-sown to produce both a summer and a winter crop’. For propagation and harvesting she used a ‘digging stick’. Foley relates that the significance of the ‘digging stick’ was such that: ‘A woman would be buried (or cremated)…’

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73 I have used the ‘Woiworung’ word for this plant species, as recorded in MONASH UNIVERSITY CAIS 2001. Meet the Eastern Kulin.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 A road map reveals what my observation in ‘place’ does not: the plain is a floodplain of the Bendigo Creek, just over one kilometre to the west (VICROADS. 2007. Country Street Directory of Victoria, 1:25. RACV Tourism & Travel. Map 607, O-12). Bendigo Creek runs approximately parallel to the Calder Highway from near Big Hill Goom-gooredu-rum-yeran (to the south) through Bendigo city, and continues north.
79 Ibid. p. 56
with her stick, (which was) seen as her link with the spirits through the strength of the tree it came from or represented\textsuperscript{80}. With my focus readjusted to recognition of an Aboriginal Australia in the modern landscape, I appreciate this ‘place’ not only as a ‘feast’ of traditional food plants, but also as a key to associated cultural practices and beliefs, where plant tuber, Dja Dja Wurrung woman, propagation, harvest, digging stick, and the material (and spiritual representation) of the digging stick were intricately linked - each suggesting the other, in ‘place’. Perhaps the plain below was once prolific with yams, ‘quite yellow with the (spring) flowers’\textsuperscript{81} before it was taken over by pastoral interests, then miners’ camps, on its way to becoming industrial land?

Fig. 6 Amidst mine shafts and mullock heaps in Dja Dja Wurrung country, an area of great botanical biodiversity has regenerated; it provides a vantage point over the floodplain of the Bendigo Creek (panoramic image, from west to north)

Quartz Crystals

Within the Bendigo Regional Park modern-day fossickers still find, collect and trade spectacular clusters of quartz crystals - each specimen different from the next – taken from the old goldfields around Bendigo.

Major Mitchell knew that quartz crystals held great value for traditional Aboriginal men. In information added to his journal after returning to Sydney from ‘Australia Felix’, he recorded a number of general remarks, including those under the headings ‘\textit{REMARKABLE CUSTOMS}’ and ‘\textit{CHARMED STONES. FEMALES EXCLUDED FROM SUPERSTITIOUS RITES}’:

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid. p. 33
The men wear girdles usually made of the wool of the opossum ... In these girdles the men, and especially their coradjes or priests, frequently carry crystals of quartz or other shining stones, which they hold in high estimation and very unwillingly show to anyone, taking care when they do that no woman shall see them.\textsuperscript{82}

As Mitchell did not mention quartz crystals during his journey, he may have had cause to later reflect, or may have received further information from another source. We cannot know whether the quartz crystals he referred to came from this region: ‘quartz’ is noted as an exchange item from central Victoria by McBryde (Fig. 5), but ‘quartz crystals’ are also shown by Massola from a Snowy Mountains source (Fig. 4). In any case, Mitchell could only interpret the information within the context of his own culture’s Christian ideology, and sought guidance from an English book first published in 1802\textsuperscript{83}, which interpreted ‘oriental customs’ pertaining to the old testament of the Christian Bible. In a telling footnote he makes a comparison with sacred stones ‘celebrated in all Pagan antiquity’ and quotes:

\begin{quote}
... they were supposed to be animated, by means of magical incantations, with a portion of the Deity; they were consulted on occasions of great and pressing emergency, as a kind of divine oracles, and were suspended either round the neck or some other part of the body.\textsuperscript{84}
\end{quote}

Mitchell thought that he understood the Aboriginal custom from an interpretation that drew on Indian and Greek customs, and associated the Aboriginal ‘custom’ with this interpretation\textsuperscript{85}. He neatly fitted this into his ‘pagan’ mental file.

The quartz crystal is a prism through which we can recognise two very different epistemologies. For the traditional Aboriginal people, the quartz crystal was a secret-sacred object and a resource exchanged along established travel routes. For Mitchell it was of no economic or sacred consequence and neither its established exchange value, nor trade route, nor intrinsic sacredness, were respected or validated by him. The European and Aboriginal value systems were poles apart - or were they really? Paradoxically, in less than fifteen years another mineral associated with quartz would shine as the primary economic

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} An earlier sentence in the reference volume reveals that the Eastern stones were in fact ‘of a round form’ - more like river pebbles
\end{footnotes}
resource that would attract an influx of European, American and Chinese migration to the central Victorian goldfields.

A ‘Murder of Crows’

Other reminders of an Aboriginal Australia can be discerned from this road. With some background knowledge and reflection, one can find clues almost everywhere...

Homeward bound, I notice a flock of Crows (Ravens) soaring on air currents, high above the open country before we approach the ranges. I recall that the Crow is a moiety (skin group) of the Kulin nation, whose country I am traversing. This Crow has a ‘story’. Before colonisation this story could have been performed as a ‘songline’, naming ‘places’ and connections with country and other beings. The Kulin people of the ‘Waang’ moiety regard the Crow as ‘kin’.

Native Crows and Ravens are populous throughout Australia. The seven classified species are subtly different in size, build and habit, but it is the distinctive call that often identifies the species. In central and southern Victoria, the ‘Little Raven’ Corvus mellori shares range and habitat with the more widely-spread ‘Australian Raven’ Corvus coronoides. The voice of the former has been described as ‘a deep, guttural baritone, notes quick, clipped or abrupt, (ok-ok-ok), then may fade away (ok-orhk-orrh)’ contrasting with the Australian Raven’s ‘strong, ... loud, clear, then descending, fading to a deep, slow, muffled groan or gurgle (aaark, aark, aaarh, aargargh)’. Biologist Tim Low considers that ‘Crows almost everywhere scavenge from people, a habit that has probably contributed to their evolution and spread’. It is not surprising then that the Crow is significant in other Aboriginal ‘countries’. Dennis Foley, of the Gai-mariagal nation in Sydney, has discussed how he belongs to the Raven (‘Woyan’) skin group:

86 From my journal 14 March 2011
87 The other moiety is the wedge-tailed eagle, ‘Bundjil’; MONASH UNIVERSITY CAIS 2001. Meet the Eastern Kulin.
88 Stories in ibid. ‘The emu and the crow’ and ‘the origin of fire’ are recorded here as ‘public stories’ - but not as ‘songlines’.
89 ‘Waang’ is the name for Crow in the language of the eastern Kulin people, including Woiwurrung; ‘Wa’ is the name for Crow of the western Kulin people, including Dja Dja Wurrung (from personal communication with Barbara Huggins, Executive Officer, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, 27 April, 2011; see also footnote 92)
91 LOW, T. 2002. The new nature: winners and losers in wild Australia, Viking. p. 17
The existence of crows or ravens in this area is synonymous with our existence. ... Spiritually this enforced strict environmental management customs in the maintenance of species that would be protected in their respective clan areas. ... We believe that our skin group totem creature or plant is in fact our people. We are a descendant of that being. ... When the raven speaks, we believe that this is our old people talking to us and when we pass on, if we are not reborn to another child spirit we may return as a Raven. Therefore we respect our relatives.\^{92}

In the south-west Gulf of Carpentaria, the Yanyuwa people have revealed through John Bradley that the Crow, called ‘a-Wangka’, is a ‘big Dreaming’, naming ‘places’ that can be recognised.\^{93} But ‘Dreaming’ and ‘songline’ do not necessarily follow the same path, and neither equates to ‘trading track’.

The respect shown for Crow in Australian Indigenous cultures finds no parallel in Australian settler cultures. On this subject there is silence in the poetic works of two of Australia’s finest poets, Judith Wright and Les Murray: the descendants of pastoral families need no reminder of the murder of crows.

Song-Poetry

Major Mitchell recognised the poetic rhythms of ‘song’ without understanding its multiple layers of meaning or significance as sacred Law. Early in his 1836 expedition he recorded the details of a corrobory (sic), ‘their universal and highly original dance’, reflecting:

There can be little doubt that the corrobory is the medium through which the delights of poetry are enjoyed, in a limited degree, even by these primitive savages of New Holland.\^{95}
More than a century and a half later, Australian poet Les Murray placed ‘poetry’ as an ancient art by reference to the ‘vast map of song-poetry’ attached to innumerable mythic sites’ in Aboriginal Australia:

The continent on which I live was ruled by poetry for tens of thousands of years, and I mean that it was ruled openly and overtly by poetry. Only since European settlement in 1788 has it been substantially ruled by prose.

Essence and Sense

As we journey in alert awareness, seeking to experience ‘an Aboriginal Australia’, some additional knowledge will assist recognition. Yanyuwa Elder, ‘Annie’, has explained (through Bradley) that a key to understanding ‘songline’ and ‘Dreaming’ is ‘ngalki’, which Bradley translates as ‘essence’ and describes as ‘the unique characteristic of the thing being described … that goes to the core of the thing’s real nature or way-of-being-in-the-world’. Bradley provides examples of this concept: ‘the ‘ngalki’ of a song or a ‘kujika’ (songline) is its tune … , of a flower is its smell …, of food is its taste … , of a human is the underarm scent which is unique to that individual.

While ‘essence’ would seem to be known to us through our human ‘senses’, there is a key difference between ‘essence’ and ‘sense’, that provides a basis for conceptualising an Australian ‘place’: ‘essence’ exists whether humans are there to ‘sense’ it or not. ‘It is always there, even when there is no human consciousness to apprehend it’. A distinction between ‘essence’ and ‘sense’ is supported by their different etymologies in English language, as extracted from dictionary definitions:

essence (noun), from Latin essentia.
1. intrinsic nature; important elements or features of a thing. 5. philosophy the inward nature, true substance or constitution of anything. 6. something that is, especially a spiritual or immaterial entity.

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96 (‘songlines’)
99 Ibid. p. 52
100 Ibid. p. 51 - 52
sense (noun), from Latin sensus.

1. each of the special faculties connected with bodily organs by which human beings and other animals perceive external objects and their own bodily changes (commonly reckoned as sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch). 2. these faculties collectively. 3. Their operation or function; sensation 5. A faculty or function of the mind analogous to sensation: (the moral sense). 8. any more or less vague perception or impression: (a sense of security). 9. a mental discernment, realisation, or recognition.

An ‘essence’ of ‘place’, then, offers an alternative way of thinking about ‘place’ which is more complex than the commonly referenced ‘sense of place’, and derived from and supportive of an Australian Aboriginal ontology.

Essence and Voice

Coupled with the Yanyuwa concept of ‘ngalki’, (‘essence’) is a duplication of the word, to become ‘ngalkingalki’, *the voice of something*. ‘... A unique feature of most living things is that they possess a voice*. ‘Voice’ is of course recognisable to us through our human senses.

I am thinking again about the Crow, its ‘essence’ and ‘voice’. In Yanyuwa ‘country’, the Crow is a different species from those of central Victoria - perhaps with a different ‘essence’ and ‘voice’? I recognise in the prefix of its name ‘a-Wangka’ that the northern ‘Crow’ is feminine but the name also contains the root word ‘wa’ which linguist Barry Blake has shown is widespread as the name for ‘Crow’ amongst the different language groups in Victoria. ‘Wang’ of the Woiwurrung, ‘Wa’ of the Dja Dja Wurrung, and ‘Woyan’ of the Gaimariagal are, however, spoken of as masculine. Is naming-word gender a part of ‘essence’? The different Indigenous names for Crow reflect something of its ‘voice’ in the onomatopoeic word ‘wa’. I recall from an earlier field guide reference that it is the distinctive

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3. In Yanyuwa language there is no corresponding prefix for masculine noun-classes
call that often identifies the species. Voice then, is part of Crow’s ‘essence’, or to put it more correctly, ‘essence’ (‘ngalki’) is found in voice (‘ngalkingalki’).

Further, in Yanyuwa country at least, the call of ‘a-Wangka’ is associated with the beginning of the cold season. ‘We hear that Crow sing out and we say “... cold season not far away now – that Crow singing out and is going to wake it up”’. But the association is not passive: both the Crow and the cold season have agency (and ‘essence’).

If Crow has more than one component of its ‘essence’, we could observe and imagine that other distinctive features may comprise ‘essence’: the glossy black of its plumage (with a purplish or greenish sheen); the intense stare of its intelligent white eye(s); the rough bowl of sticks it constructs as a nest lined with fur, wool, or emu feathers; or its need (as a corvid) to be near permanent fresh water. Each of these phenomena would have associated cultural and environmental connections in traditional Aboriginal consciousness.

As I sit at my computer in the early evening of a warm autumn day, a cricket is singing in staccato outside my window. I stop typing to listen with my body. The ‘voice’ of cricket has always been part of my recognition of this ‘place’.

While ‘essence’ and ‘voice’ can still be recalled or imagined for phenomena in south-eastern Australia, ‘songline’ and ‘Dreaming’ are more difficult concepts in this region. Both are dependent on languages that are now fragmented, and on encoded knowledge that is layered in complexity and learnt in country, including secret / sacred information that is gender-specific. In south-eastern Australia, following colonisation, much of this oral knowledge was not passed on to the next generation.

Bradley has demonstrated how much personal commitment is required to record the cultural complexities of a living (although endangered) language through ‘songlines’


107 In Yanyuwa culture for example the white-bellied sea eagle has several names, ‘each conveying some separate part of the essence of the bird’. Ibid. p. xviii

108 My journal entry, n. d. (April 2011)
(‘kujika’), which even in ‘places’ where language is still spoken, are sometimes ‘broken’ or no
longer fully remembered\(^\text{109}\). The poetry of ‘songlines’ depends on language, melody, rhythm,
performance, and pacing of the performance ‘so that it (‘kujika’) arrives in its final country
near to sunrise ...’\(^\text{110}\). While efforts to reconstruct languages, as an essence of cultures, are
currently being undertaken by communities in south-eastern Australia\(^\text{111}\), much of the
paining reconstruction is dependent on details from the journals of explorers such as
Mitchell, Aboriginal ‘protectors’, and early settlers, and on comparison between
vocabularies of different language areas, and I have found no equivalent word in
Woiwurrung or Dja Dja Wurrung word lists for ‘songline’ or ‘kujika’. Although the ‘songlines’
may always remain broken, there is ‘hope’: Bradley understands that in Yanyuwa country
the power of a broken song ‘still flows and resonates through the land and sea, ... even if
there is no one left to give it voice and amplify it’\(^\text{112}\). The old Yanyuwa men and women state
simply ... ‘that kujika still there in the country – you can’t pull him out’\(^\text{113}\). This reveals an
‘essence of place’ as alive in ‘country’, independent of human activity.

Dennis Foley makes a similar point when he discusses ‘the strength of our special places
under the concrete shrouds’\(^\text{114}\) in a contemporary prose that belies the significance of its
basis in the poetry of songline:

Even with the suffocation of urban sprawl and the constrictive death grasp of bitumen
and concrete, the beauty of Gai-mariagal land is ever present\(^\text{115}\).

Things changed ... Yet our land remained there, bruised and battered from landfills and
urban expansion\(^\text{116}\).

Within every crack, crevice and dimple of the sandstone the presence of our culture can
be found\(^\text{117}\).

\(^{109}\) Bradley notes that this description also refers to ‘songline’ paths where development has occurred
without the permission of the traditional owners; a comparison which might be made in the whole
state of Victoria

\(^{110}\) BRADLEY, J., WITH YANYUWA FAMILIES 2010. Singing Saltwater Country: Journey to the Songlines
of Carpentaria, Allen & Unwin. p. 214

\(^{111}\) Co-ordinated through the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages

\(^{112}\) BRADLEY, J., WITH YANYUWA FAMILIES 2010. Singing Saltwater Country: Journey to the Songlines
of Carpentaria, Allen & Unwin. p. 171

\(^{113}\) Dinny McDinny in ibid. p. 172

\(^{114}\) FOLEY, D. & MAYNARD, R. 2001. Repossession of Our Spirit: Traditional owners of northern Sydney,
Aboriginal History Inc. p. 4

\(^{115}\) Ibid. p. 2

\(^{116}\) Ibid. p. 3

\(^{117}\) Ibid. p. 8
If the reader should ask if I believe in the enduring ‘essence’ of ‘songline’ resonating in ‘place’, my answer is that ‘I don’t know’, and yet, I don’t reject it. Somehow ‘it just is’ – and I accept it as so. But what I believe personally is not as important as the recognition and respect for another way of knowing and being in this land that demonstrates care and connection. Acceptance provides a basis for ‘praxis’ and informs an epistemology of practice, if not an ontology.

Teacher-translator / interpreters such as Foley, Bradley and Rose offer the descendants of European settlers another way of perceiving their country, predicated on recognition, connection, environmental care and respect. ‘Being in country’ and ‘listening to country’ are essential for learning this way. I reflect that in caring for one species (maybe ‘Crow’?) we learn about and are lead to consider its life cycle, habitat, habits, ‘essence’, and dependency connections in a more-than-human world. This demands a response, both personally and as part of a praxis of landscape architecture.

‘Let’s Talk Recognition’

My explorations in this section support recognition of an Aboriginal Australia in the landscape and the fundamental significance of this to landscape architecture practice. ‘Let’s talk recognition’: this was the theme nominated by Reconciliation Australia for widespread discussion in 2011, centring on community events in National Reconciliation Week, 27 May – 3 June. As a contribution to this discussion I considered my response - a journal paper or a practice policy? But this would have continued my ‘words on paper’ at the expense of a direct interaction with the landscape. Instead, I took my thesis research back into the landscape and conceptualised a small ‘project’ as a personal gesture of recognition. It was ephemeral, unconventional, and a ‘labour of love’, belonging with a popular movement that is sometimes called ‘guerrilla art’. My small gestures were installed in six ‘places’ on my journey to Bendigo, photographed and watched periodically for ‘contributions’ (see installation photographs Fig. 9, Appendix 3).

I was pleased that all six installations survived in ‘place’ for National Reconciliation Week. But by 6 June, one installation, at the University of Melbourne, had disappeared without trace. Others gradually fell apart over time, with only their distinctive red, black and yellow

cords remaining as evidence of non-removal. My installation beside the walking track in Black Rock foreshore reserve was soon ‘protected’ by a spider’s web, and a neighbour reported that she had sometimes readjusted the work for visibility. But there were no other ‘contributions’. After about a month, remnant cords disappeared (that is, were removed) at Black Rock foreshore and at the freeway rest stop at Ravenswood. Only two cords remained (in more remote locations) at Malmsbury and Bendigo.

My project was a personal response to a provocation:

> Why do we listen to the stories of others, if not to hear? And having heard, would we not desire to respond? Simply to listen is to be drawn into a world of ethical encounter: to hear is to witness; to witness is to become entangled.\(^{119}\)

**Key Findings part 1**

*Reflecting on the nature of the journey*

My research on the new road to Bendigo was provoked by a conversation with a group of African-American women, (over dinner in Melbourne, in February 2010), who asked me how they could experience ‘an Aboriginal Australia’ (in the short time they were here). I felt somewhat panicked and inadequate in attempting a response. At first I thought about the ‘places’ of curated collections and interpretations - the art galleries and museums (the ‘white institutions’) and about the literary works (often co-authored), from which I have learnt so much. Then I thought about ‘places’ and the road that I often travel between Melbourne and Bendigo. But how would a tourist recognise ‘an Aboriginal Australia’ on this journey? How, for that matter, would I find a connection?

On reflection, part of ‘the problem’ lay in the visitors’ tight schedule, and part in their not defining the type of experience they desired. Rose sheds some light on the travellers’ dilemma in recalling Freya Matthews’ differentiation between ‘tourist travelling’ and ‘journeying’:

> The tourist experience ... involves a “packaging or purchasing of certain prescribed geographical and cultural sights and sounds. Tourism is one of the paradigmatic pursuits

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\(^{119}\) ROSE, D. B. 2004 *Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation*, University of New South Wales Press. p. 214
of modernity …” The journey, in contrast, “involves a voyage into vulnerability … [and is] open to serendipitous direction by the world”120.

The visitors had already toured Melbourne with a local Indigenous Elder, and were now dining on ‘bush tucker’, re-interpreted as exquisite cuisine. They had pre-purchased their trip as a ‘package’ from New York - the ‘tourist experience’ - but their enjoyment of new flavours and meetings was purely ‘serendipitous’. Both ‘tourist travelling’ and ‘journeying’ were being enjoyed here. Perhaps these co-components are experienced in any journey? But a greater degree of the one or the other is ensured in the planning.

If Matthews’ distinction holds true, the freeway represents the packaged ‘tourist travelling’ of modernity: the speed of travel and intention of direct connection between ‘place’ of departure and ‘place’ of arrival are available in minuted time-estimates, and the trip holds few surprises. (In reflection, it would be interesting to travel this road by tourist coach, to experience and record the details of the package on offer.) In contrast to the freeway experience, the variation in speeds required by the route of the old highway, through towns and stopping at attractions or rest points along the way, allowed more of the serendipitous nature of ‘journey’. But both types of travel can offer an experience of Aboriginal Australia if we learn to recognise it (and value it).

**Key Findings part 2**

*Naming ‘place’*

My research and reflection on the new road to Bendigo start (and finish temporarily) with ‘being in country’, asking questions, and seeking answers. The questions reflect back and forward, leading me in directions unknown at the start of the research: from the journals of first contact as written from a view based in Western epistemology and ontology, to their current use in the recovery of languages and ‘place’ names and trading tracks and nation boundaries. We have seen that in the recuperation of Aboriginal ‘place’ names lies a counter to ‘placelessness’ and also a reclaiming of ownership of Anglo-Australian ‘place’ names for Aboriginal Australia.

In reality this road neither starts nor finishes in Melbourne or Bendigo, as it connects further with other destinations: including south to my project at Black Rock, via a path taken by

120 Ibid. p. 191
Charles Hotson Ebden when Aboriginal Australia was more easily recognised. I have reflected further on Ebden’s journey in ‘Parallel Stories’, page 194.

I have looked for the sparks of an understanding of ‘place’ in Major Thomas Mitchell’s writing. His journal reveals his perceptions as he travelled through south-eastern Australia on horse-back; engaging objectively with an Aboriginal presence, and recording material details. For Mitchell, ‘place’ was only a spot location or object marker. His use of the word (‘place’), as a noun and a verb, is conversational and geographic, and provides no conceptual basis (viz. ‘at this place where we encamped’; ‘the dance always takes place at night’; ‘I place this spot in latitude 33 degrees 45 minutes 10 seconds South; longitude 144 degrees 56 minutes East’). His surveyor’s eye picked out landmarks - watercourses and hills - which he knew were already named in an Indigenous tongue. His recording of these Aboriginal ‘place’ names is significant: the act of adopting a ‘place’ name and mapping it is a ‘place’-making activity. But the adopted ‘place’ names are bereft of their meanings and as such they ignore ‘place’ by reducing it to an empty shell, no more than ‘space’, ready to be occupied. This is one tragic result of the colonial process, where mapping was undertaken only for the future settlers’ material gain. The reduction of ‘place’ to ‘space’ began in the minds of colonists like Mitchell. (The ‘Western gaze’, attributed to explorers and others is discussed further, page 128.)

**Key Findings part 3**

*Celebrating an ‘essence of place’*

In celebrating an enduring ‘essence of place’ I have accepted the Aboriginal premise that an ‘essence’ exists in ‘place’ whether humans are there to ‘sense’ it or not (see ‘Essence and Sense’, page 26) and that ‘essence’ endures in (Australian) ‘place’ through the Aboriginal ‘songline’, which even when ‘broken’ (forgotten) remains in ‘place’ and connected to a network of ‘songlines’ throughout Australia. The ‘songlines’ are not credited to human agency.

This position is of course difficult to comprehend or accept from a Western epistemological view point. Casey assumes to speak universally when he argues:
The lived body\textsuperscript{121} is the material condition of possibility for the place-world while being itself a member of that same world. It is basic to place and part of place. Just as there are no places without the bodies that sustain and vivify them, so there are no lived bodies without the places they inhabit and traverse\textsuperscript{122}.

Casey’s position can be read in two ways: one that argues for the primacy of the human-being in ‘place’, in a context of Western epistemology (and humanist geography), and another that argues for the continual renewal of ‘place’ through human rituals, as practised by traditional cultures. But he does not allow for an enduring ‘essence’ of ‘place’ that may exist without humans. Elsewhere, Greg Lehman has noted that ‘... Western culture is the only culture in the world ... that argues for the non-existence of any dimension or reality that the senses cannot perceive’\textsuperscript{123}.

In Australia, both positions are contemporaneous.

Edward Relph has previously referred to ‘the essence of place’\textsuperscript{124}. But his further discussion also reveals a subtle but significant difference in meaning from the enduring ‘essence of place’ that I have discussed. Relph’s ‘essence of place’ is dependent on, or perhaps subservient to, human association - not for the sake of ‘place’, but ‘as a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security’. This human benefit of association with ‘place’ is of course important - ‘a point of departure from which we orient ourselves in the world’\textsuperscript{125} - but my point is that Relph has combined two concepts (one about an enduring ‘essence of place’ and the other about human identity arising in ‘place’) and in so doing has preferred human existence in a binary relationship (with ‘place’ as ‘other’).

Recent research by Ingold and Bennett supports an ‘essence of place’, although neither calls it this, and their ‘material’ concepts do not allow for Indigenous interpretation (see further discussion, page 67).

\textsuperscript{121} Casey appears to be referring to the human body in the context of this extract
\textsuperscript{122} CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World
2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 327
\textsuperscript{124} RELPH, E. 1976. Place and Placelessness, Pion Limited. pp. 42 - 43
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid. pp. 42 - 43
Key Findings part 4

Connecting with knowledge from other ‘places’

In discussing Aboriginal concepts from northern Australia, I have taken my lead from the example of anthropologist Isabel McBryde, who demonstrated a credible method of gaining new knowledge in areas such as south-east Australia where much has been lost, by measuring ethnographic evidence about ‘exchange’ practices from south-east Australia against a model of known Aboriginal exchange in northern Australia. She also emphasised the importance of the observations of nineteenth-century journal writers whose observations were not dependent on a conceptual or ideological framework (see further discussion, pages 13, 17).

Key Findings part 5

Symbols of death and survival in the landscape

The wide-spread propagation of Yam Daisies by south-eastern Aboriginal clans as a traditional staple food plant has been noted by reference to Gott and Presland. Remnant patches of Yam Daisies such as those of the Bendigo Regional Park are living reminders of Aboriginal agricultural practices and clan gathering ‘places’, and the seasonal re-emergence of the Yam Daisy can be seen as representative of both the absence and the cultural survival of Indigenous people in ‘country’.

A parallel story of death and survival is commemorated throughout Australia each year in a public remembrance of soldiers who died in foreign ‘places’, by the symbolic wearing of (a material copy of) the red Poppy of Flanders on ‘Remembrance Day’ and ‘Anzac Day’. In the literature of the First World War, the Poppy came to symbolise the bloodshed on the battlefields of northern France and Belgium. As a symbol, it was inspired by observation of a flowering in ‘place’, an association with the colour of blood, and by an initial response to grief through poetry. But the invention of the lapel poppy took another step, which would be familiar to any designer. The poem provided the vital connection which brought the symbol to attention.

126 The story of how the red poppy became a symbol of remembrance is recorded by the Australian War Memorial: http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs/poppies.asp
127 ‘In Flanders fields’ by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, Ypres, 1915
Does Yam Daisy need a poetic response for it too, to become a recognised botanical symbol of remembrance?

Key Findings part 6

The freeway

By its disassociation with towns and buildings, avenues, recreation grounds, botanic gardens, railway lines, (etc.), the new freeway forces our noticing of the landscape – rolling hills and valleys, sentinel trees, mountain ranges, watercourses and sky-scapes. A seeming ‘reduction’ of ‘place’, by our removal from its built artefacts, conversely allows for the entry of a perception of an Aboriginal Australia. The landmarks now present themselves for attention as the road turns towards hills or bridges waterways.

But the speed of travel and the elevation of the carriageways above the undulating topography prevent a bodily experience: one cannot wander freely on the freeway. When I pull over and step out on to the freeway verge to photograph a road sign, I feel vulnerable in my close proximity to the speeding vehicles. The freeway does not facilitate a restful ‘Sunday drive’ and reflection comes later. It is not a ‘place’ for ‘inventing poetry’.

Bradley has reflected on a neglect of ‘country’ caused by increased speed of travel:

We travel so much faster than our senses were designed for, and much of the country that speeds by us is lost to us. The faster we travel the less we understand about our journey ... In the Yanyuwa context, places and species are ignored in the haste to get from one place to another.  

Close to Bendigo, a ‘rest-stop’ at Ravenswood offers a break from constant motion and a possibility to stretch the legs. Unexpectedly, I notice a brass plaque on a boulder and move forward to investigate. Standing on a spot worn by many feet before mine, I read that it marks the reconstructed form of an Indigenous oven mound in the landscape. It is the first recognition that we are in Dja Dja Wurrung ‘country’. For me, the installation lacks ‘poetry’, authenticity and connection. Yet perhaps it is an initial mark of an awakening of recognition.

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that could further emerge with slowing the pace of movement so that we might sense an ‘essence of place’?

**Key Findings part 7**

*Rejection of ‘placelessness’; limitations of survey analogy*

As previously discussed, the concept of ‘place’ in Australia is enriched by the identification of an ‘essence of place’, independent of human sensory functions. An ‘essence of place’ is alive in the ‘songline’ even where the songline is ‘broken’, and informs a praxis based in ‘listening to country’. In this context there can be no ‘placelessness’ - only *neglected* ‘places’.

In an analogy that could draw on Mitchell’s surveying activities, philosopher Jeff Malpas has presented an analysis of ‘place’ compared with the methods of topographical survey, whereby the region is mapped from within the region, by measurement of distance and angle, and by repeated triangulation and traverse from multiple viewpoint. This is of course how a map is made, but it has little in common with the ‘place’ qualities I have discussed.

Malpas states:

> The complexity of place is mirrored in the complex process of triangulation and traverse by which the topographical surveyor builds up her map of the region being surveyed. No single sighting is sufficient to gain a view of the entire region; multiple sightings are required, and every sighting overlaps, to some extent, with some other sighting. Thus the process of topographical surveying is one in which the complex structure of the region is arrived at through crossing and recrossing the surface of the land and through sighting and resighting from one landmark to another ... In fact, it is only at the end of the process that the view of the region as a whole can emerge in the form of the survey map itself...

The delineation of place can only be undertaken by a process that encompasses a variety of sightings from a number of conceptual ‘landmarks’ and that also undertakes a wide-ranging, criss-crossing set of journeys over the landscape at issue – it is only through such journeying, sighting and resighting that place can be understood.

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130 Ibid. p. 41
I have no argument with a ‘complexity of place’, although it is a different type of complexity from that resulting in a survey map; ‘multiple sightings’ are likewise necessary in both cases, although ‘place’ is not predicated on sight alone; ‘landmarks’ are acknowledged in both processes. But the living presence of ‘place’ is nowhere recognised in Malpas’ analogy, and by comparison, the paper map is lifeless, reduced, devoid of rhythms and connections.

‘Place’ is always changing – there can be no ‘end of the process’. The surveyor’s map encapsulates only the Western idea of knowledge, as a finished product directed to a functional purpose.

Earlier in my ‘place’ research, I considered that Malpas’ analogy was consistent with my experiences, and noted that ‘as a landscape architect I strongly identify with this analogy’. This now provides a measure of how I have changed: I now struggle to identify in this analogy the ‘place’ I have come to know. My later research has caused me to reflect that this analogy is only a partial view, and what is mapped is closer to ‘space’ than ‘place’.

Key Findings part 8

Recognising a meaningful landscape

By analysis and reflection on individual fragments of information and their collective meaning, one can discern a meaningful landscape, (although now incomplete), of Aboriginal ‘places’ in south-east Australia. I have shown in this research that Indigenous knowledge may be found in many different sources: in geographical ‘place’, extant ‘place’ name signs, recorded traditional ‘place’ names, word meanings and associations, boundaries of traditional language areas, trade routes and trade artefacts, artefact materials, early explorer and settler journals, registered sites. This body of ‘place’ knowledge is informed through dialogue with Indigenous Australians, in a context of background knowledge and reflexive approach.

The meaningful landscape is, however, not always valued. The hills and waterways of the Australian landscape were once all named ‘places’ in the traditional Aboriginal language of each ‘country’. These toponyms are now recognised in both settler and Aboriginal tongues, but some features are un-named in geographical ‘places’ and on contemporary maps. Some waterways now function only as drains (for example, the Moonee Ponds Creek) and are largely hidden from view, yet were vital links in centuries-old trade routes, as significant as
any recorded on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Their recognition is overdue. UNESCO also lists ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage’, such as ‘oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts’\textsuperscript{131}. But Australia has yet to sign on to the convention. It has been suggested that ‘colonising nations, in particular, seem to have difficulty with the convention for fear Aboriginal groups might use it to gain political leverage’\textsuperscript{132}

The research process described in this section could be repeated on any major road or in any part of (south-east) Australia to provide knowledge for all Australians and recognition of an Aboriginal culture in landscape, which is all around us when we know how to look. Road travel allows for much more than ‘a passive view from the road’.

Afterword

It is easy (and usual) to forget the intermediary ‘poem’, and its vital role in capturing an ‘essence’, and translating an event into a concept, ‘object’ / ‘thing’ or tradition. The poem provides the spark of insight and the ‘voice’ which brings the concept to life. Without it there is only a banal copying and mass production of an ‘object’, rendered lifeless. It is the poem that holds the imagery.

I was reminded of this in reading a newspaper article about the role of flora in remembrance, which began with a discussion of the red Flanders poppy, ‘first flower to grow in the battlefields of France after World War 1 ... enshrined forever as the symbol of remembrance ... worn on Armistice Day to commemorate the end of hostilities’\textsuperscript{133}. No mention was made of the red symbol of bloodshed, commemoration of the dead, or the intermediary poem.

The article continued on to discuss an ‘original Australian flower of remembrance’ – the violet\textsuperscript{134}! - worn in Adelaide to commemorate ‘the fallen’ on ‘Violet Day’ 2\textsuperscript{nd} July 1915; the

\textsuperscript{131} See www.unesco.org/culture/ich
\textsuperscript{132} GALVIN, N. Intangible Treasures. The Age, Saturday, May 7, 2011.
\textsuperscript{133} GADD, D. 2011. Remembrance: Violets regain centre stage. The Saturday Age, April 22 - 23.
\textsuperscript{134} My research found that the violet which became the symbol was in fact the fragrant Viola odorata, ‘English Violet’, rather than the purple and white flowered Australian native species: refer STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA. Violet Day [Online]. Available: http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=975&c=8514 [Accessed 20 May 2011].
tradition continuing until the early 1960s. A new Women’s Garden of Remembrance in Melbourne has selected this violet symbol, both flower and hue - the ‘colour of suffrage’. The symbol is no longer a personal choice (worn in the lapel and travelling about with its wearer) but a public garden display. Sixteen Jacaranda trees will blossom in November and ‘evoke images of the confetti thrown from windows at the declaration of the end of World War 2.’ But one cannot equate thrown confetti with falling blossoms: the ‘essences’ of the two events do not correspond, and evocation relies on personal witness and memory of the sentiments of the time. Without an intermediary poem, we (as landscape architects) can perhaps only create a cultural relic, devoid of both memory and spark of new invention.

Casey has warned against ‘literalism’ as resulting in a reduction of ‘place’ to ‘site’ (previously discussed, page18). However, caution is needed lest this view should also negate efforts to reconstruct Indigenous knowledge systems through historic document research. In my critique above I may paradoxically be focusing too literally while also critiquing what I regard as a too-literal interpretation. It is perhaps normative for the Western-trained practitioner (of whom I am one) to fall back into a default process that is supported by the easy availability of ‘literal’ knowledge, through local history societies, the internet, the GPS, maps, and AutoCAD design programs. This ‘easy knowledge’ neglects other ways of knowing: the figurative, the poetic, perhaps the metaphorical, as well as connections, insights and imaginings gained from being in ‘place’, again and again. Murray has reminded us that poetry (through ‘songlines’) was (and is) the basis of traditional Aboriginal cultures, and Bradley has discussed ‘essence’ in ‘place’ (page 26). The decolonising of practice requires that the practitioner follows a course based in critical reflection and other possibilities for ways of knowing.

Limitations of Research

The research has led me to other doors that I have not yet knocked on. For now it is complete in itself and needs to rest. I have focused my discussion on just a few ‘things’ that came to my notice while travelling and reflecting – the Crow, the quartz crystals, the Yam Daisies - all of which have their own ‘essence’ and contribute to ‘the essence of place’.

In looking for ‘Crow’ in the work of Australia’s white settler-descendant poets I searched in likely ‘places’, but perhaps I did not explore the dark corners. Judith Wright’s volume on
birds did not yield any material, nor did Les Murray’s collected poems, or the recent collaborative work of Barry Hill and John Wolseley\textsuperscript{135}.

At the beginning of this research I knew nothing about the Dja Dja Wurrung people. I may even have wondered if they had survived colonisation. My research led me to the Koorie Heritage Trust, which helped me to know a little. I have looked for cultural connections in the landscape - in person, in journals and in recorded languages - but I am well aware that my research has not had the benefit of collaboration with Aboriginal people in ‘country’. Nevertheless, this first step has developed my sensitivity to recognising cultural connections that I might easily have overlooked, and has prepared me for collaboration.

Reconciliation and Decolonisation

A legacy of violence against both Aboriginal people and the land requires our response in words and actions that promote care and connection.

Why Reconciliation?

Deborah Bird Rose has discussed the legacy of violence that colonisation brought to Australia after settlement in 1788, and the contemporary need for moral accountability and active healing. She refers to the violence against ‘first peoples’, and also against the land. Direct violence against Aboriginal people was largely unrecorded in settler journals and official histories, and alternative histories have emerged gradually (in my adult lifetime) - often through the agency of Aboriginal people who have kept the knowledge in collective memory, and have later decided to share their ancestors’ experiences publicly. In 2002, I attended an Arts performance in Melbourne that brought to life the previously hidden knowledge of an east Kimberley massacre. The performers revealed their story in music and dance to a white audience who were mostly mute in response. The audience had come to watch a cultural performance - yet the performance was an interpretation of the violence of their own culture. How do we react when the mirror reflects us shamefully, returning the gaze? Reconciliation requires that we have the courage to acknowledge past actions and own our stories, however distressing. We must first come to know, then accept and feel the pain of, our shared histories:

Reconciliation consists of efforts to acknowledge the harm of the past and its links to the present, to undo some of this painful history and to work towards new relations between and among us – relations as yet not fully imagined.

Reconciliation efforts are demonstrated in the example of the east Kimberley (Gija) people (introduced above) who revealed the story of the Bedford Downs Station massacre (previously kept hidden over eight decades for fear of retribution), and took action to have the story accepted by white people, ‘and then move on’. Can we match their courage?

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137 ‘Fire, Fire Burning Bright: Marnem, Marnem Dililib Benuwarren’, performed by the Neminuwarlin Performance Group, at the Perth and Melbourne Festivals, 2002


When the previously secret ‘joonba’ (corroboree) was adapted for a white audience and first performed as ‘Fire, Fire Burning Bright’ at the Perth Festival in early 2002, ‘cast members still feared that white West Australians might rise from the audience and shoot them down’\(^{140}\). Peggy Patrick, the creative force behind *Fire, Fire Burning Bright*, wrote of the production, that her people, the descendants of those killed:

> want everyone to look at the show, to enjoy the song and dance and to learn what happened to our people in the past. ... Before, Aboriginal people were frightened of white people. Now we hope we can all be friends together\(^{141}\).

The coded paintings of the late Paddy Bedford carry the same story. They were exhibited with others of the Jirrawun group\(^ {142}\) as a reply to revisionist historians such as Keith Windschuttle (*The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, 2002) who sought to cast doubt on massacre stories\(^ {143}\). Bedford’s paintings, in natural earth pigments on linen, ‘shimmer’ and come alive, despite their content, and are beautiful in their own right.

In the performances and the paintings of the Gija people, ‘art’ acts as an agent of reconciliation. The generous efforts, commitment and *leadership* towards reconciliation from people most harmed by past events require our response as acknowledgement:

> A moral engagement between past and present must acknowledge violence, and having done so, must acknowledge the moral burden of that knowledge\(^ {144}\). ... part of our moral burden is an injunction to hold the memory of violence within our texts. To write as if the suffering of those who were harmed never mattered would be to perpetuate violence in the present\(^ {145}\).

Our written ‘texts’ can also be agents of reconciliation.

The violence that Rose speaks of is not only against the Aboriginal people, but also against the land – in the destruction of ecosystems, losses of biodiversity, fouling of waterways and oceans, the legacy of acclimatisation societies that encouraged the spread of feral plants and

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\(^{140}\) Ibid.


\(^{142}\) In *Blood on the Spinifex* at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2002 and *True Stories: Art of the East Kimberley* at the AGNSW, Sydney, 2003

\(^{143}\) ECCLES, J. Jirrawun A unique model for Aboriginal art. *Art & Australia*, 44, 82 - 89.

\(^{144}\) ROSE, D. B. 2004 *Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation*, University of New South Wales Press. p. 13

\(^{145}\) Ibid. p. 14
animals (my list could go on); and in a failure to value the land as more than a resource, as
‘home’ and ‘place’, with names and stories.
Rose seeks to counter violence by positioning her argument for reconciliation and
decolonisation in an ethic of ‘connection’, derived from the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas:

Levinas defines violence as acting as if one were alone; it denies relationship, denies
responsibility, and thus effectively denies others ...  

Levinas articulated an alternative to violence in a concept of intersubjectivity, ‘in which each
of us is always, already, responsible for others’¹⁴⁷. His concept is fundamental to the
assertion of Western ecology: ‘that the unit of survival is not the individual or the species, but
is the organism-and-its-environment in relationship’¹⁴⁸. Thus, ‘connection’, ‘intersubjectivity’,
and ‘relationship’ forge thinking that rejects ‘homogenisation’, ‘separation’, and
‘objectification’, and provide a basis for cultural perspectives ‘that would replace violence
with responsive attentiveness’¹⁴⁹. ‘Connection’ is a recurring theme throughout this thesis.

Paths to Reconciliation

There are many paths to reconciliation¹⁵⁰.

Symbolic gestures of social and cultural reconciliation, such as spoken acknowledgements,
flag-raising and ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremonies, are now embedded (and emplaced) in
public events throughout Australia. They provide pause for reflection and a continued
consciousness of reconciliation efforts in the public psyche. The significance of symbolic
gestures to Aboriginal people was confirmed recently by their reactions to a decision by the
Victorian state government to abandon mandatory acknowledgement of traditional
Aboriginal land owners at public events. The decision was condemned by Aboriginal leaders
(and others, who wrote letters to ‘The Age’ newspaper)¹⁵¹. Joy Murphy Wandin recalled the
early struggle for recognition ‘leading up to the 1967 referendum’ and Mick Dodson was

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 13
¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 13
¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 188
¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 5
¹⁵⁰ From COUNCIL FOR ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION. 2000a. Document Towards Reconciliation
¹⁵¹ The Age, published letters, Friday May 20 and Saturday May 21, 2011.
reported as saying that the acknowledgements were at the heart of the reconciliation movement.\(^{152}\)

If the contemporary movement towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians has taken on ‘a life of its own’\(^{153}\), it is largely due to the inspired leadership of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1991 – 2000)\(^{154}\) and its subsequent replacement, Reconciliation Australia (2001 - ). Many will remember the large public events aimed at countering a negative political culture with community support – the ‘Sea of Hands’ installations in 1997\(^ {155}\) and the ‘People’s Walk(s) for Reconciliation’ in 2000\(^ {156}\). But as an ongoing process of change, reconciliation requires the sustained commitment of individuals, communities, organisations, professional bodies, and governments, in everyday life.

Beyond symbolic gestures, Tony Birch has said that it is necessary to ‘give value to your own story first ... it’s how we all got here ... our family histories ... our personal stories ... (so that) you can value the stories of other people’\(^ {157}\). Birch is reinforcing the reconciliation themes of ‘recognition’ and ‘respect’, while expanding them to include ‘self’ and ‘other’, but he is also introducing a theme of shared stories - that come together in ‘place’.

Such self-knowledge is available to, and required of, every Australian as part of their reconciliation journey. The individual stories do not sit alone, or in a vacuum, they are ‘shared’, ‘entwined’ and ‘emplaced’. ‘Place’ receives the ‘shared stories’ but also provokes their telling. My personal journey of coming to know my family’s history as settlers in Australia has proceeded in conjunction with my research in ‘place’. It has involved sorting myths from truths, discovering lost details and settlement ‘places’, sharing ancestral sadness and courage, and owning all parts of my story. It provides a core from which to proceed towards sharing stories in ‘place’.

\(^ {154}\) Established as a statutory authority under the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991
\(^ {156}\) Organised by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1991 - 2000)
\(^ {157}\) Birch, T. Australian Identity Now. Festival of Ideas, 17 June 2011 University of Melbourne. (In response to a question from the audience asking how we should proceed towards reconciliation.)
Being attentive to a particular ‘place’ introduces a path to reconciliation through environment. Rose considers that:

... we must include the environment in our journey (of reconciliation). ... Aboriginal people ask us to do this: to promote land rights, land care, co-management, ecological restoration, and protection of sacred sites. To the extent that reconciliation truly engages us, we must work to respond to the issues that matter to Indigenous people. ... society and environment are inextricably connected\(^{158}\).

The environment that Rose refers to is not separate from the cities and suburbs, but connected and part of these ‘places’, in everyday life. Our home ‘places’, as everyday ‘places’, ‘\textit{wholly common, not postmarked divine}’\(^{159}\) are often the best ‘places’ from which to start a journey towards ‘responsive attentiveness’\(^{160}\). (See further discussion of ‘the everyday landscape’ in ‘Place and Placelessness’, page 56.)

Writing between 1996 and 1999, at a time when the \textit{Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation} was active, David Tacey imagined ‘a new kind of reconciliation’, based in a ‘radical’, ‘secular spirituality’, a ‘\textit{desire for connectedness}’. Tacey argued for ‘a decolonised understanding of place’, observing that ‘the national psyche (was) split between two levels of reality’ – ‘\textit{thought}’ and ‘\textit{feeling}’ – the former being the public and official (colonial) level of authority, and the latter being personal and emerging, driven by artists and independent thinkers\(^{161}\). This split is a situation we still face in practice, when client briefs are predominantly ‘rational’, declining or discouraging poetic response. Amidst criticism that he was attempting to appropriate Aboriginal spirituality (which he defended) Tacey channelled his argument into a quest for ‘re-enchantment’. This is a theme I will return to (page 93).

Decolonisation

The twin concepts of reconciliation and decolonisation are not easily separated, and a distinction between them is not necessarily useful. Rose prefers the combination when she

writes of the actions of a farmer near Tilba (New South Wales) working to protect the land, as ‘a form of decolonising reconciliation’\textsuperscript{162}. But reconciliation and decolonisation have grown from different seeds, and only reconciliation has a public profile in Australia.

Decolonisation is the more challenging of the two concepts: it depends on a personal and collective turn of consciousness – a turning away from ‘progress’ built on violence\textsuperscript{163}, the learning of and respect for another world-view, and continued reflection on alternative responses. Originally it referred to the removal or retreat of colonial power from a colonised country, as witnessed in world-wide movements following the second world war (for example in the restructuring of the African nations), and a corresponding re-assertion of ‘identity’ by the decolonised party. But the Australian situation is somewhat different: in contrast to the African situation, settler-descendents in Australia form a majority population. Although Australia has not gained full independence from its coloniser, Great Britain, we settler-descendants are also the colonisers, and unlike earlier generations who still spoke of ‘going home to Britain’ we belong here and have no other home land to return to.

My use of the term ‘decolonisation’ is filtered through Rose\textsuperscript{164} and understood further through ‘praxis’. Importantly, Rose includes the environment in her definition:

> In considering the possibilities for ethical action, I come to use the term “decolonisation” in an extremely strong sense to mean the unmaking of the regimes of violence that promote disconnection of moral accountability from time and place\textsuperscript{165}.

In my research for ‘the new road to Bendigo’ I found social decolonisation in action in the self-determination of new Indigenous bodies such as the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (reconstructing Indigenous languages), the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (determining RAP status), and the rewritten and co-authored histories, as referenced; but I could find many more examples of a continuing colonial story.

The ethical challenge of decolonisation illuminates a ground for powerful presence. Against domination it asserts relationality, against control it asserts mutuality, against

\textsuperscript{163} As discussed by Rose in ibid. and Césaire in CÉSAIRE, A. 1972. Discourse on Colonialism, Monthly Review Press.
\textsuperscript{164} ROSE, D. B. 2004 Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation, University of New South Wales Press.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid. p. 210
hyperseparation it asserts connectivity, and against claims that rely on an imagined future it asserts responsiveness in the present\textsuperscript{166}.

The ‘Road Map’

The term ‘Post-Reconciliation’ has entered the literature as a response it seems, to a perceived weakening of government support for Reconciliation during the Howard years\textsuperscript{167}. But as a concept it is not useful: post-reconciliation promises to rush us forward in time, out of a past we have not yet redressed in the present, and out of a present that has not yet normalised the equalities required for Reconciliation. By abandoning Reconciliation for Post-Reconciliation we are left bereft of previously negotiated actions.

Writers from Indigenous backgrounds have discussed the concept. Greg Lehman has referred to ‘the post-reconciliation wasteland left by John Howard’s disassembly of this groundswell movement\textsuperscript{168}, while Kim Scott considers that there is still a long way to go on the path to reconciliation. In response to a judge’s comment that his new work ‘That Deadman Dance’\textsuperscript{169} is a post-reconciliation novel, he said: ‘I winced a little bit when I heard that description. … There is a lot of reconciling – particularly reconciling ourselves to our shared history – that is yet to happen\textsuperscript{170}. This is a theme we have heard previously, from Birch (page 45). In a video interview he stated that ‘post-reconciliation perhaps is part of … policy managerial speak\textsuperscript{171}.

Scott’s description of ‘post-reconciliation’ recalls Don Watson’s discussion of ‘weasel words’- clichés and qualifiers that ‘suck the meaning out of words’, leaving an empty shell. Watson considers ‘(t)his is language without possibility\textsuperscript{172}. The qualified ‘post-reconciliation’ denies agency, so let us reject ‘post’, and return to the ‘unfinished business’ of reconciliation as presented in the ‘Roadmap for Reconciliation\textsuperscript{173}, a result of a decade of conversations throughout Australia. The ‘Roadmap’ calls for all Australians to become involved in the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{166} Ibid. p. 213
\item \textsuperscript{167} John Howard was the Prime Minister of Australia from March 1996 to December 2007
\item \textsuperscript{168} LEHMAN, G. 2011. Fearing Truganini. \textit{Artlink INDIGENOUS.} p. 48
\item \textsuperscript{169} Winner of the 2011 Miles Franklin Award for Fiction
\item \textsuperscript{170} ABC NEWS Kim Scott wins prestigious Miles Franklin. \url{http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/06/22/3250944.htm} (Accessed 26 June 2011)
\item \textsuperscript{171} JONES, T. 22 June 2011. Lateline. ABC Television.
\end{itemize}
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reconciliation process, and confirms the importance of protocol and ceremony, symbolic meaning, working together, history that includes Indigenous perspectives, and new legislation that promotes recognition, justice and equity. While ‘the environment’ might seem to be unrepresented in the ‘Roadmap’, its underlying association is affirmed in the words of Aboriginal philosopher Mary Graham:

The land, and how we treat it, is what determines our human-ness. Because land is sacred and must be looked after, the relation between people and land becomes the template for society and social relations.

Research Methods

The Road to Bendigo has revealed much. How did we get to this condition? What can be learned from the journey? To answer these questions, I need to share my passage from a former practice to current practice. I will use this as a model to argue paths that individual landscape architecture practitioners may take. My mode of conducting this inquiring journey has involved an eclectic array of methods gleaned from various disciplines.

I began my research as ‘project’, continuing in a familiar mode as a practising landscape architect. In practice, I was usually content to allow my projects to ‘speak for themselves’, and to allow different interpretations to survive together. I was probably uncomfortable with revealing the essence of my work, which favoured ‘poetic’ interpretations - delivered within a dominant culture of Western rationalist epistemology, but I continue to support ‘different interpretations’ as a basis of dialogue. My change to thesis was at first tentative and switched back and forth between thesis and project as I gradually found my ‘voice’. Perhaps this work retains something of those early beginnings in the ‘essay’ residue of the separate sections?

From the beginning my focus was ‘place’, and I engaged with its enormous literature base, which Edward Casey largely organised and analysed in his ‘Fate of Place’\(^\text{175}\). But there was always a background whisper: ‘what if’ (Australian) ‘place’ could be known only from Indigenous knowledge? Here were 60,000 years of local knowledge to draw upon, yet we remained focused on making sense from 2,000 years of European culture. But how could one know the older cultures in ‘place’? My research drew from the two different ontologies, and proceeded in parallel. I took part in several mixed-discipline conferences, which expanded ‘place’ concepts in both world-views\(^\text{176}\). Eventually the ‘whisper’ became an imperative to ‘know’ and I enrolled in units at Monash University Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies (CAIS, now MIC) in 2009 and 2010. From this new beginning I started to write, gaining confidence in short essays that were well-received. I discovered my ideas in the act of writing itself and learnt critical self-awareness and reflexivity along the way, both

\(^{175}\) CASEY, E. S. 1997. The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History, University of California Press.

\(^{176}\) These included ICOMOS ‘Making Tracks’ Conference, Alice Springs, May 2001; ‘Fusion’ Symposium, ANU Canberra, June 2003; ‘Senses of Place’ Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, April 2006; ‘Dialogues in Place’, Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Dec 2007
essential tools for practising in parallel worlds. From this life-changing experience I found ways to ‘read country’.

My studies in Western philosophy led me to embrace ‘phenomenology’, which was always my favoured research method - I just did not know it. Here I found Robyn Barnacle’s interpretation corresponded with my own: ‘the unfolding of ideas that were to drive the research process occurred through that very process and not in advance of it’. This method informs new written works: ‘The new Road to Bendigo’ and ‘Being in Country: a Sunday Ritual’, and also the ‘Reconciliation Week Installations’. In these works I found ‘provocation’ as my starting point for ‘praxis’. The ‘Parallel Stories’ (‘Port Phillip / ‘nairm’, ‘Black Rock / ‘Boorandakandarra’, and ‘Fishing’) that contrast Indigenous and settler perspectives in ‘place’ also developed in this way.

With the change to ‘thesis’ I grew more comfortable with a narrative form, and found justification for narrative in research from my background reading. For example, Barbara Myerhoff has stated that ‘It is difficult to express your self-awareness and reflexiveness to others without employing some first person narrative’.

In the early stages of writing I had looked to ‘praxis’ as a research method, again developing an approach that was familiar in ‘practice’. But it was limited at that time to ‘Enquiry-Reflection-Practice’, and conceptualised as a circle that repeated the process and could be entered at any point. As I became aware of other concepts of praxis, particularly through formal study in anthropology / ethnoecology (Monash CIS), I progressively changed my praxis. At the current time I think of it as:

‘provocation ~ contemplation in ‘place’ ~ journaling and critical reflection ~ dialogue ~ document research ~ practice’.

Each of these components is described in ‘Praxis’, page 137. The ‘provocation’ that begins the process has proved to be a liberating concept, freeing praxis from a basis in consulting and opening up possible new directions.

I have drawn on my professional practice as a research method, by reflection on contrasting Western and Indigenous perspectives, and practice informed by new theoretical

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underpinnings. The projects are discussed in ‘place’ theme contexts: sacred ‘place’ (‘the Brighton Avenues of Honour’); technocratic briefing (Mary Bell Park), masterplanning and consultation (‘Black Rock Village’, ‘Royal Avenue (Sandringham) Reserve’, ‘Tooradin Foreshore Reserve’, and ‘Lang Lang Foreshore Reserve’).

On my journey, I have learnt to value ‘stories in place’ as living history. However, my plan to record ‘stories’ did not eventuate, due to a lack of interest or ‘agency’ of the potential interviewees. On reflection I consider that the research method in this instance was unsuitable (see discussion, page 191).

I also found ‘quiet, still awareness’ (‘dadirri’, page 181) as a practice method. It is the basis of ‘Being in Country: a Sunday Ritual’. But Indigenous researcher Doris Paton has extended the concept to ‘listening deeply’ in ‘Talking Circles’, as ‘central to the process of building trust’ and respect. This method has application for all community consultations (see page 187).

‘Quantitative analysis’ focused my research in a case study that searched for Indigenous reference in the 2009 AILA Victoria Awards entries. It provided information for immediate actions, and for comparison in future years, and material for discussion in themes of concern.

Finally, I was daily aware of new events as media reports, which added depth to my research.
3. ON ‘PLACE’

Place is not where I left it

My early education as a landscape architect (Relph, Seddon, Fabos; methods/limitations)

Personal Introduction

I first read Relph’s ‘Place and Placelessness’ in my final year of the Master of Landscape Architecture program at Melbourne University in 1981. It had been recommended to me by an American postgraduate student. As students, we learnt our skills from historic examples and studio projects, with an emphasis on desk-top conceptualisation and expert critique. Relph’s ideas were not acknowledged or discussed in Melbourne University’s Centre for Environmental Studies, perhaps because George Seddon was the in-house authority on ‘place’? I was probably influenced by Seddon’s ‘Sense of Place’, centred on the Swan coastal plain in Western Australia, but I found it oppressively didactic and uninspiring in its concentration on ‘facts of place’. A focus of class study was the quantitative, town and regional planning method known as the ‘parametric approach’, which was developed and taught by Julius Fabos. In this method, the digital mapping of landscape attributes such as soils, slope gradients, orientation, tree cover, views, etc., in separate layers, was designed to yield aggregated information as a tool for settlement planning. But in its scale and aggregation of landscape attributes it avoided the particularities of ‘place’, and promoted rationalist practice, independent of sensory perception.

At that time the depth of my understanding of ‘place’ was limited to physical ‘place’. I remember interpreting ‘sense of place’ literally, searching objectively in ‘places’ for stimuli to each of my senses (and recording them faithfully). I now recognise an empiricist influence, but perhaps in consulting the senses, there was promise of a turn towards phenomenology. If I understood anything outside this approach to ‘place’, it was probably a romantic or nostalgic reading which sought to ‘preserve’ a known condition. The university program emphasised a world of binary opposites – man-based / nature-based; subjective / objective.

180 SEDDON, G. 1972. Sense of Place, University of Western Australia Press.
181 Ibid. p. 255
182 See for example FABOS, J. G. & CASWELL, S. J. 1977. Composite Landscape Assessment: Part 2 of the Metropolitan Landscape Planning Model (METLAND), the Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.
We did not consider the middle-ground or an overlapping zone (such as a permeable boundary). ‘Culture’ was not yet discussed as a landscape attribute. Nor did I differentiate ‘sense of place’ / ‘spirit of place’ / ‘genius loci’.

As a graduate landscape architect in government employment, I soon became aware that there were other disciplines (such as land management and ecology) with something valuable to add to landscape architecture practice.

Perhaps because of the complexity of ‘place’ or because I have always practised as a ‘public’ landscape architect, the concept stayed with me as a touchstone, and changed gradually with my increased understanding.

But as I have changed my understanding of ‘place’ over nearly a third of a century, the world has changed too. Ecology, ecopsychology, ecophilosophy, and cultural studies have developed as disciplines; post-colonial theory and writing have emerged (in the late 1980’s and 1990’s) to challenge professional assumptions and disciplines; the Native Title Act became law in Australia in 1993 (and was amended by a conservative government in 1998); globalisation has risen and perhaps peaked as the dominant economic and social force. All of these factors have an influence on concepts of ‘place’.

This current research draws on selected projects undertaken since commencing my PhD candidature in 2001. During this time I have sought to broaden my practice by active involvement in local government advisory committees, participation in the AILA (Vic.) awards\(^{183}\), and by role reversal in 2005 as a local government employee. In this capacity I stepped into the client’s shoes, while continuing as a consultant in other municipalities. The client/consultant role boundaries were blurred, but not compromised. For me this was an enriching balance that offered dialogue in each context. Two projects from this early period of my research will be discussed. They are ‘Mary Bell Park’, in ‘Technocrats’, page 96, and ‘Sacred Place: Avenues of Honour’, page 99.

In spite of world change, there remains much food for thought in Relph’s seminal work ‘Place and Placelessness’, which I will now return to as a point of departure for ‘place’ enquiry and reflection.

\(^{183}\) as jury member in 2003, successful entrant in 2004 and jury chair in 2009
Perhaps the main values of Relph’s 1976 treatise were in profiling ‘place’ as a focus of (humanistic) geography; in showing phenomenology as an alternative to approaches based on the philosophy of science; and in acknowledging and alerting the reader to ‘place’ research from the perspectives of a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy (in works by Bachelard, Barthes, Husserl, Heidegger, Levi-Strauss, Merleau-Ponty), architecture (Alexander, Cullen, Lynch, Norberg-Schulz), geography (Lowenthal, Tuan) and anthropology (Berger, Berndt, Rapoport). While the written works of these thinkers date from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, they provide the basis for later thinking, and I particularly note Berndt (1970) and Rapoport (1972) for an emerging Australian perspective on ‘place’. But I will come to know all of these writers (and others) during my research. ‘Place’ research has produced a vast body of (Western) literature.

In revisiting Relph’s early writing I will now examine some of his key ideas, returning to them with knowledge of other perspectives from my research and practice. I have briefly referred to phenomenology and multi-disciplinary approaches, which I will discuss in due course. Here I want to draw out Relph’s attributes of ‘place’, by referring to ‘placelessness’, the everyday landscape, insideness / outsideness, and authenticity.

- ‘Placelessness’

From Relph I understand ‘placelessness’ as a process and result of human agency, ‘replacing diversity with uniformity and experiential order with conceptual order’. This could describe the ‘colonial project’.

In some instances ‘placelessness’ could be thought of as a reduction of ‘place’ to ‘site’. I recognise this in the removal and levelling of an established house and garden, or in township ‘framework plans’ that encourage a ‘placeless’ process to unfold. Here, a routine, desk-top planning method discourages contact with the lived ‘place’ it will affect – perhaps allowing just a few meaningless ‘photo-snaps’ on a short site evaluation visit.

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185 Ibid. p. 143
The reduction of ‘place’ to ‘site’ often proceeds incrementally: the ‘place’ is abandoned and its care withdrawn until despoiled, such that no-one recognises an intrinsic worth. This can be seen at a local level, but also regionally, where diverse ecosystems may have initially been lost due to sheep or cattle (over)grazing, the ‘place’ then abandoned to weedy regrowth, and finally taken over by ‘hobby farms’ (etc.). Here we can recognise Rose’s ‘wounded space’: ‘Places marked by loss, by the absent ones whose presence is now only memory, are sites of wounding’\(^\text{186}\). Relph’s ‘placelessness’ also defines an attitude of disrespect for diversity and beauty, even though the attitude may be unconsciously so.

However, ‘placelessness’ sits uncomfortably with cultural and bio diversities, where one being’s ‘place’ may be another’s ‘placelessness’ (and vice versa). In Australia, an attitude of ‘placelessness’ is demonstrated in the actions of European colonisers, supported by a legal fiction of ‘terra nullius’, and even now, ‘post-Mabo’\(^\text{187}\), ‘placelessness’ continues as a colonising attitude and process. I have previously claimed that ‘placelessness’ is a ‘nonsense’ (section two): this is not a refutation of the sorry situation I have described above, but an acknowledgement in the Australian situation of an enduring Indigenous ‘essence of place’ (see section two, ‘Key findings part 3’). Later in this section I will discuss a concept of ‘Nested Place’ (‘place’ within ‘place’) that allows a positive focus on ‘place’ without dwelling on the negatives of ‘placelessness’.

### The everyday landscape

The ‘everyday landscape’ is the setting for ‘everyday life’. Relph understands it as comprising ‘all the commonplace objects, spaces, buildings, and activities … for daily routines’, but also the ‘great and original megastructures, city halls, piazzas, and totally designed settings that are so completely taken for granted that their once exceptional features have been reduced to ordinary and unselfconsciously accepted backgrounds’\(^\text{188}\).

I consider the ‘everyday landscape’ as inclusive of other species. This is a slight mental shift that opens an everyday landscape beyond that of privileging humankind. Thus, the everyday landscape includes multiple habitats, and interconnections between life-forms; the ‘great

\(^{186}\) ROSE, D. B. 2004 Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation, University of New South Wales Press. p. 49

\(^{187}\) The Mabo judgement of the Australian High Court rejected the concept of ‘terra nullius’ on 3\(^\text{rd}\) June, 1992

\(^{188}\) RELPH, E. 1976. Place and Placelessness, Pion Limited. pp. 131-132
and original megastructures’ may be topographic – hills, bays, craggy outcrops, or ochre cliffs.

I have always found elements of ‘place’ in the sometimes chaotic but uncontrived vitality of ‘everyday landscape’, as I will demonstrate further (see for example ‘Being in Country: a Sunday Ritual’, page 211). For now I want to note a particular connection between knowledge (as perception) and ‘place’ (as local and everyday landscape) that I realised in Black Rock village (see pages 74 - 75). As Casey has argued in relation to perception as lived experience:

Local knowledge is at one with lived experience if it is indeed true that this knowledge is of the localities in which the knowing subject lives. To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in

I will return to the theme of recognising ‘place’ in the local and everyday landscape throughout my thesis.

- **Insideness/Outsideness**

From my initial reading of Relph I was uncomfortable with his division of ‘place’ as ‘insideness’ and ‘outsideness’. This dualism did not reflect my experience of the physical landscape where ecotones often blend different ecologies. The concept suggested fixed borders – solid fences and sea walls, where I would perceive fluid boundaries – verandahs and inter-tidal zones. In a re-reading I would find Relph’s acceptance that ‘places’ ‘overlap and interpenetrate one another’ and in considering Bachelard’s thinking that ‘the dualism of inside and outside is not quite as clear as it appears at first sight’. Nevertheless, Relph goes on to define seven modes of conscious or unconscious experiences of ‘place’, based on insideness and outsideness as the major emphasis of his argument. Each has implications for practice. For example, ‘existential’ or ‘lived’ space is culturally defined, and differs

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189 CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 321
191 Ibid. p. 29
192 'Outside and inside form a dialectic of division, the obvious geometry of which blinds us ... Outside and inside are both intimate – they are always ready to be reversed, to exchange their hostility.' (BACHELARD, G. 1969. *The Poetics of Reverie*, Grossman Publishers Inc. cited in RELPH, E. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*, Pion Limited. p. 49)
between cultures. While ‘modern technological societies possess space by building, and organise it mainly in terms of material objects and functions’, for traditional Australian Aboriginal clan groups it is already structured by the ‘Dreaming’ and full with significance. For both cultures, ‘... existential space is not merely a passive space waiting to be experienced, but is constantly being created and remade by (through) human activities’\(^{194}\).

Relph’s ‘existential outsideness’ defines a ‘place’ that withholds meaning from an individual: ‘... all places assume the same meaningless identity and are distinguishable only by their superficial qualities’\(^{195}\). He contrasts this with ‘existential insideness’ as ‘belonging to a place and the deep and complete identity with a place that is the very foundation of the place concept’\(^{196}\).

While this discussion provides interesting background for expanding an understanding of (human) engagement with ‘place’, it can be seen as aggregated, assumed, generic knowledge, and is not the experience itself. Further, if one regards ‘place’ and the individual as continuously changing, one’s experience of ‘place’ may belong in more than one ‘category’ simultaneously. And existential space may be ‘sacred’ and symbolic, or ‘geographical, supporting functional and utilitarian purposes’, sometimes both simultaneously. The concept of existential space could be interpreted as privileging human agency and supremacy amongst species, but it need not support only a Western hegemony.

We might expect from his emphasis on insideness/outsideness that Relph might discuss ‘border’ and ‘boundary’, and yet he does not. I will examine these further in ‘Searching for Place’.

- **Authenticity**

Relph links authenticity to his concept of insideness/outsideness: ‘An authentic sense of place is above all that of being inside and belonging to your place both as an individual and as a member of a community, and to know this without reflecting upon it’\(^{197}\). This suggests we must come to know and feel attached to the ‘place’ or ‘places’ where we practice.

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\(^{194}\) Ibid. pp. 12 - 15

\(^{195}\) Ibid. p. 51

\(^{196}\) Ibid. p. 55

\(^{197}\) Ibid.p. 65
An authentic attitude to place is thus understood to be a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places – not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, nor following stereotyped conventions\(^1^9^8\).

In summary:

- Relph’s ‘Place and Placelessness’ provokes the reader’s critique. In positing ‘place’ as a multi-disciplinary concern, approached through the perception of phenomenology, we find promise of the future development of the ‘place’ concept.

- I am uncomfortable with Relph’s emphasis on the physical and definitive layers of ‘place’, while the sub-conscious or ‘unselfconscious’ layer – psyche / soul /spirit - is relatively undeveloped. Relph’s definition of ‘place’, as comprising three inseparably interwoven components – ‘the static physical setting, the activities, and the meanings’\(^1^9^9\), reinforces this.

- Similarly, I am uncomfortable with an underlying anthropocentrism in Relph’s concept of ‘place’ (see my further discussion of ‘vital materiality’, pages 67 – 69, and ‘environmental philosophy’, pages 105 - 109).

- Relph discusses the loss of significant ‘places’\(^2^0^0\), while my concern is with every ‘place’.

- I now reject ‘placelessness’ as a useful concept: I see it as allowing a binary (‘place’ and ‘placelessness’) to continue to be acceptable in discourse, thus masking a colonial attitude and process based in violence. I prefer to focus on, and work with, the cultural and bio diversities of ‘place’ as presented. (See my discussion of ‘placelessness’, this section; of ‘essence’, section two; and ‘nested place’, following.)

- I do not relate to Relph’s British or North American examples, and yearn for research based on Australian experiences.

\(^{1^9^8}\) Ibid. p. 64  
\(^{1^9^9}\) Ibid. pp. 47, 61  
\(^{2^0^0}\) Ibid. p. 143
- Gordon Cullen and Kevin Lynch\textsuperscript{201} proceed from human experiences of the townscape and address fixed qualities of physical structure and appearance, ignoring animation and vital change agents.

- But, in a small section missed in first reading, I found that Relph has briefly addressed ‘caretaking’ and ‘sparing’, by reference to Heidegger: ‘sparing is letting things, or in this context places, be the way they are; it is a tolerance for them in their own essence; it is taking care of them through building or cultivating without trying to subordinate them to human will’\textsuperscript{202}. This theme is the genesis of an approach that I will find further developed in Rose as ‘responsive attentiveness’\textsuperscript{203} and in Casey as an ecocentric approach that replaces egocentric approaches centred in modernism\textsuperscript{204}.

If ‘place’ is not where I left it in 1981, it is not where Edward Relph left it either. He has continued to advance his ideas in later publications\textsuperscript{205} and has more recently discussed that ‘place’ and ‘placelessness’ exist together in a state of tension and a continuum of change, in various degrees of more (or less) of one or the other, thus influencing perceptions of ‘place’ distinctiveness or standardisation\textsuperscript{206}.

‘Non-Place’

As ‘placelessness’ is synonymous with Edward Relph’s research, so then is ‘non-place’ associated with Marc Auge\textsuperscript{207}. But are the two concepts the same? Augé echoes Relph in acknowledging ‘a continual tension of change’: ‘It (‘non-place’) never exists in pure form; places reconstitute themselves in it …Place and non-place … the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed’\textsuperscript{208}. Relph has claimed that ‘placelessness’ and

\textsuperscript{201} In ibid. p. 18  
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid. pp. 38 – 39, 18  
\textsuperscript{203} ROSE, D. B. 2004 Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation, University of New South Wales Press. p. 5  
\textsuperscript{204} CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. pp. 260 - 263  
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid. pp. 78 - 79
‘non-place’ are the same (‘sort of’): ‘...placelessness, a sort of non-place quality manifest in uniformity, standardisation and disconnection from context’\textsuperscript{209}. But in looking beyond the terminology to the written works, we can identify differences, resulting from origins in different disciplines and cultures. Thus Augé’s ‘Non-Lieux’ (1992) became ‘Non-Places’, (also understood as ‘non-historical places’) which he opposed to what he called ‘anthropological places’ – ‘places of identity, of relations and of history’\textsuperscript{210}. By logical reversal, his anthropological non-places thus negate identity, relations and history. Comparison with Relph’s ‘uniformity, standardisation and disconnection from context’ reveals their different foci: Augé in ‘anthropological places’ and Relph in ‘geographic places’.

Augé, advances an hypothesis that the excesses of ‘supermodernity’, which he categorises as ‘events’, ‘space’ and ‘ego’, produce ‘non-places’ (described here as rail and motorway routes, airports, hotel chains, leisure parks, large retail outlets, etc.), as they ‘do not integrate the earlier places: instead they are listed, classified, promoted to the status of “places of memory”, and assigned to a circumscribed and specific position’\textsuperscript{211}. Relph refers to the same products of excess in his discussion of the processes of landscape modification that produce ‘placelessness’. For Augé the focus is always on ‘human’ (as ‘other’), while Relph’s expanded field is the ‘life-world’.

The two written works are also opposed in that Relph proceeds from phenomenologist perception\textsuperscript{212}, and Augé from structuralist conception. Yet the ideas contained in each work are complementary: considered together they make us aware of how different (Western) cultural lenses focus variant thoughts and meanings from similar situations.

‘Songlines’

Before I begin a more systematic search, I want to briefly acknowledge Bruce Chatwin’s novel ‘The Songlines’\textsuperscript{213}, which in about 1989 introduced me to a new way of imagining

\textsuperscript{210} AUGÉ, M. 1995. Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity, Verso. p. 52
\textsuperscript{211} ibid., pp. 78-79
\textsuperscript{212} I accept Casey’s argument that ‘In a phenomenological account, the crux in matters of place is the role of perception.’ In CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World
2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 320
\textsuperscript{213} CHATWIN, B. 1987. The Songlines, Picador.
Australia and ‘place’ through intangible qualities. This was the thread of enchantment that would ultimately lead me to later intense study at Monash University Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies, as I will discuss further\(^\text{214}\).

**Place and Landscape Architecture**

Disciplines have limitations and boundaries that shift in response to broader cultural changes. A discipline’s praxis responds to local concerns that remain relevant even while global issues dominate news headlines. The way in which I practise landscape architecture in (mainly) suburban Melbourne will not be the same practise as that of my colleagues in North America or Asia or rural Victoria, even though we may have read the same literature and been influenced by the same concepts.

Related disciplines have historically colonised whole areas of expertise for their exclusive practice. From the evidence of written works, ‘place’ has been largely claimed by humanistic geography and philosophy (viz. contemporary works by Relph, Casey, and Malpas, as previously cited). Indeed Casey has remarked on a convergence between geography and philosophy disciplines, and has discussed common concerns in ‘place’\(^\text{215}\). While ‘place’ is actively discussed in geography and philosophy, it is often overlooked in landscape architecture: perhaps because it is *implicit* in practice, it simply escapes conscious notice?

As a practising landscape architect, researching ‘place’, I was initially concerned with reclaiming ‘place’ for landscape architecture. But this would require that I could somehow fix the limitations and boundaries of the discipline at a set time and specific ‘place’, before I could attempt to cross or extend them. Moreover, my preliminary research showed that ‘place’ could not be confined by discipline boundaries and that I must instead respond by


extending my own limits and boundaries - but not in a normative sense. I am already multi-disciplinary through my formal studies; my project work is multi-disciplinary, involving design teams that holistically address opportunities and issues (as required by project briefs). What I was looking for was an approach that was generated by ‘place’ itself. This would be found in a phenomenological method, and specifically in giving more attention to perception before conception, as a fundamental change in thinking practice. This is not an abandonment of discipline (in favour of geography-philosophy) or a rejection of the relevance of ‘place’ for landscape architecture: on the contrary, a focus on ‘place’ allows a bridge between disciplines and cultures, and is fundamental to the development of landscape architecture in a post-colonial Australia.

My professional body, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) has, in July 2011, developed a ‘Place Making’ policy\textsuperscript{216}. I will refer to it again in my ‘key findings’ at the end of section 3, where I will also draw attention to ‘place’ themes discussed in the research that now follows.

Searching for Place

Useful concepts from (Western) ‘place’ philosophy (Casey, Heidegger, Malpas)

Introduction

In rejecting the Cartesian influence in practice methods taught to students of landscape architecture during the late 1970s and early 80s, I began my search for other ways to position ‘place’ practice, both in theory and method. There were traces of phenomenology in my praxis before I was conscious of it as a philosophy: my approach was always open to the wonder of the particular ‘place’: ‘For wonder is itself a starting place, an origin, a beginning. Wonder can set in motion desire – the directionality of thought’\(^{217}\). Robyn Barnacle reflects on her affinity with phenomenological research methods:

... phenomenological inquiry tries to let the way that a thing is understood be informed, at least in part, through an open receptivity towards the phenomena\(^{218}\).

This approach was supported by the freedom that was natural to practice in the 1980s. In the pre-rationalised public service, budgets were flexible, and the in-house landscape architect often doubled as client and planner/designer, developing the project’s scope as discoveries were made in the field, and returning to a home base that was supported by other landscape architects. We were idea generators, and welcomed by field staff for our different perspectives. We fed off their enthusiasm, and smiled when managers adopted our ideas as their own. I often thought that this was what kept our ideas flowing – the challenge to self to always be one step ahead. In this situation I found an approach of repeated ‘being-in-place’ (in a metropolitan park or beside a creek or river) was essential to discovering its different faces, and essential to practice.

When the landscape section of Melbourne Water was disbanded in the early 1990’s I continued a similar approach in my own practice. It was now at my own expense – few clients pay for perception, nor do they provide the perceptive insights necessary for authentic outcomes in their project briefs. Somehow they expect that a concept will materialise from ‘site analysis’. (This was of course the model that I was taught as a student.) Barnacle has noted:

\(^{218}\) Ibid. p. 4
Reason is often misconstrued as the only instigator of thought, as if it has, indeed, captured the imagination. But there is more to what stirs one to think than what thought itself can make transparent.\(^{219}\)

My clients were often caught in rationalist Cartesian thinking without realising the limitations it imposed.

At the beginning of this current research, Casey’s comprehensive history of the development of ‘place’ thinking\(^{220}\) expanded my scope and ignited a new search for ‘place’ in philosophy. Here I learnt more about Martin Heidegger’s concept for approaching ‘place’ through ‘phenomenology’ and his ideas for thinking ‘place’. Heidegger, through Casey, led me to other (Western) ‘place’ philosophers, researchers and practitioners with a phenomenological outlook, particularly Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Casey and Relph in later works, Reima Pietilä, and Peter Zumthor. In 2006, at the ‘Senses of Place’ conference in Hobart Tasmania, I met researchers with a broad range of interests in ‘place’, and was introduced to the ideas of philosophers Jeff Malpas and Emmanuel Levinas. In the pages that follow I will elaborate on some key (Western) concepts that I find useful in positioning ‘place’ in theory and practice.

**Phenomenology in Praxis**

In describing phenomenology, Barnacle has stressed ‘an open receptivity toward the phenomena’.\(^{221}\) She notes that unlike empiricism and rationalism, phenomenology ‘does not project a structure onto things in advance’:\(^{222}\)

A theoretical framework that engenders wonder, or openness, in the way that we understand the world enables thought to linger in the presence of possibility – the mind’s possibilities – and thus to remain poised toward what might be.\(^{223}\)

Her definition grants freedom to explore, and I appreciate its implications as a breath of fresh air. But there are many styles of phenomenology. David Seamon cites Herbert Spiegelberg ‘the eminent phenomenological philosopher and historian of the phenomenological

\(^{219}\) Ibid. p. 3
\(^{220}\) CASEY, E. S. 1997. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, University of California Press.
\(^{222}\) Ibid. p. 4
\(^{223}\) Ibid. p. 13
movement’ who considered that ‘there are as many styles of phenomenology as there are phenomenologists’\(^{224}\). If we contrast Barnacle’s description with Relph’s understanding of phenomenology as:

... a philosophical tradition that takes as its starting point the phenomena of the lived-world of immediate experience, and then seeks to clarify these in a rigorous way by careful observation and description\(^{225}\).

we can recognise a prescriptiveness in the latter, as influenced by Husserl’s ‘descriptive empirical model’ of phenomenology. Relph’s model is not something I can work with.

Phenomenology has a long history in European philosophy. Martin Heidegger developed a strand of thought previously theorised by Edmund Husserl, who had himself responded to thinkers including Brentano, Hegel and Schopenhauer\(^{226}\). They were reacting against the domination of Cartesian concepts that gave priority to a disembodied rational mind over a sensual world, thus creating hegemonic dichotomies of subject / object, mind / body, space / ‘place’ that underlie modernism. Husserl introduced the concept of ‘life-world’ (‘lebenswelt’) as the pre-reflective lived and experienced world, ‘the world in which we are always already living and which furnishes the ground for all cognitive performance and all scientific determination’\(^{227}\), while Heidegger insisted on ‘Being-in-the-world’ (In-der-weltsein, or Dasein) as relationship. Barnacle explains this concept: ‘The central theme of Heidegger’s work is that in coming to understand the nature of phenomena we must attend to the relation that exists between things and ourselves’\(^{228}\).

Phenomenological thought continues to develop through new research, and to respond to disciplines that Heidegger could hardly have imagined during his life time (1889 – 1976). I will now discuss more recent scholarship in phenomenology as pertinent to ‘place’, by contemporary philosophers Ed Casey, Jeff Malpas, Robyn Barnacle, and others.

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Firstly, Barnacle’s ‘hermeneutic phenomenology’ as she describes it, provides a philosophical basis for how my research has developed as sometimes ‘thesis’ and other times ‘project’, such that ‘the unfolding of ideas that were to drive the research process occurred through that very process and not in advance of it’\textsuperscript{229}. Put simply, an end result cannot be known in advance. Barnacle reminds us that phenomenology has a role in forming the research question: ‘Doing phenomenology is about opening up to the question in the hope that it will come – listening for the question’\textsuperscript{230}. Her idea of an ‘openness’ that enables ‘thought to linger in the presence of possibility’, was also the genesis of new written works developed here, for example, ‘the new road to Bendigo’ and ‘being in country: a Sunday ritual’. Neither work was conceived in advance: each resulted from my simply putting myself in ‘place’ and journaling my experiences. The two pieces, in turn, informed my approach to praxis, now starting with ‘provocation’ (rather than project brief), thus allowing the freedom to respond to ‘place’ that I was seeking. I claim that freedom – as discussed by Barnacle this tradition does not offer rules and procedures for inquiry.

Jeff Malpas influenced my ‘place’ research as a leading contributor at two conferences in Hobart\textsuperscript{231}, in his unique interpretation of Heidegger’s ‘place’ thinking, and in his development of J. J. Gibson’s ‘nested place’ as a ‘place’ concept that I find useful (see ‘Nested Place’, page 87).

Ed Casey has taken a phenomenology of ‘place’ into various contemporary situations, including arguing for an ‘ecocentric’ rather than a human-centred (‘egocentric’) perspective. This is a basis of ‘deep ecology’\textsuperscript{232}. (See my further discussion of ‘deep ecology’, pages 105 – 109.)

Recent research by cultural anthropologist Tim Ingold\textsuperscript{233} and by political scientist Jane Bennett\textsuperscript{234} proceeds from similar phenomenological enquiry and ecological sensibility. Both

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid. p. 9
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid. p. 3
\textsuperscript{231} Senses of Place Conference, April 2006, and Dialogues in Place Conference, November 2007.
\textsuperscript{232} CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. pp. 260 - 263
writers reject anthropocentrism and direct their voices in support of a more-than-human world, but their ideas also diverge. In focusing on life processes, Ingold seeks to replace a creation model of matter as static, final product (the ‘hylomorphic’ model of matter and form), with a material that comes into being as the result of processes of formation, flow and transformation. He acknowledges that the ‘hylomorphic’ model is deeply embedded in Western thought: ‘Form came to be seen as imposed, by an agent with a particular end or goal in mind, while matter – thus rendered passive and inert – was that which was imposed upon’\(^{235}\). The hylomorphic model could be likened to the ‘mechanistic materialism’ that Bennett also rejects. We can reflect that much ‘place’ theory of the 1970s builds on this static model; contemporary landscape architects will recognise it in the measured drawings and quantified materials that drive normative practice and built environment construction.

Bennett develops a concept of ‘vital materiality’ – vibrant matter as ‘agent’, in an ‘assembly’ comprising human and non-human matter, the effects of which are never totally known in advance. The implications of this ‘wayward force’ for an alive and vital ‘place’ are such that ‘place’ can never be totally known, inconsistencies appear, and an inherent unpredictability sometimes allows ‘enchantment’. Here we note echoes of ‘the wild’, as acknowledged by Bennett: ‘Later, I turned to Thoreau’s notion of the Wild ... (and his) idea of the Wild morphed ... into the idea of ‘vital materiality’\(^{236}\). Her concept is an important development for ‘place’ theory and practice, removing a bias where human is in full control of (his) environment (as ‘self’ and ‘other’) and a (mis)conception of nature that it can be fully mastered. Meanwhile, Ingold offers ‘that the inhabited world is comprised not of objects but of things\(^{237}\) ... (in) a certain gathering together of the threads of life\(^{238}\) (after Heidegger). These threads form ‘an entanglement ... of interwoven lines of growth and movement\(^{239}\): their pathways are ‘lines


\(^{238}\) Ibid. p. 4

\(^{239}\) Ibid. p. 3
along which things continually come into being\textsuperscript{240}. Here Ingold could be describing the agency of ‘songlines’ in Aboriginal Australia.

These thoughts would seem to provide some common ground between Western and Indigenous ontologies. But both researchers clarify their positions further. Ingold rejects ‘agency’ as an ‘internal animating principle ... that sets it (matter) in motion’\textsuperscript{241}, arguing instead for ‘things’ to be noticed in the context of their environment with ‘the flows that bring them to life’\textsuperscript{242}, while Bennett also rejects a world that is ‘divine creation, docile matter, (or) completely lawful’\textsuperscript{243}. In rejecting (Western) god-like creation she simultaneously posits a disjunction with Indigenous ontologies (viz. ‘the Dreaming’, ‘the Law’, concepts of ‘vital’ and ‘super-vital’, ‘songline’, and enduring ‘essence of place’ – see ‘Indigenous Place’, page 121). Bennett confirms: ‘I equate affect with materiality, rather than posit a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body’\textsuperscript{244}. These clarifications are problematic when transposed to a post-colonial Australian context. What at first seemed like ‘connection’ (through vibrant matter) becomes ‘disconnection’. In a spirit of reconciliation we must at least respect multiple interpretations of ‘agency’ and ‘vibrant matter’ despite our separate personal positions.

The perceptions that result from phenomenological enquiry allow others to follow in the phenomenologist’s footsteps – to take a similar journey (literally and imaginatively) as described in prose, or poetry, or photo essay (etc.). This journey can inspire a similar experience for the reader or audience. In turn, the collective energy of the audience motivates the phenomenologist, here as artist (writer, poet, photographer ... landscape architect) to ‘give everything’ in developing their work. Sometimes musicians comment similarly on the phenomenon of audience response as driving their performances to higher levels.

The phenomenologist / artist /landscape architect is the conductor / ‘maestro’ / ‘sensei’, who encourages a client or community to develop their relationship with ‘place’. Together we explore the possibilities. The initial seeding of perceptions and the attention given to

\textsuperscript{240} Ibid. p. 3
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid. p. 7
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid. p.7
bringing the community along on the journey are crucial factors in the outcomes, and success depends on all participants being open to possibility: in a sense becoming phenomenologists themselves. In my practice experience this process only succeeds with a small working group that knows the ‘place’ intimately. A ‘site visit’ undertaken with a pre-determined purpose and a critical eye, is not a similar event as it separates subject and object in a rationalist detachment. For ‘The Seaford Experience’ a remarkable working group championed the project and their collective energies inspired me to reach out beyond my usual working method. I prepared a ‘treasure box’ of found objects and art images that were shared as ‘objects of wonder’ and became a reference for the selection of colours, textures, and patterns in the streetscape. For the same master plan I met local primary school children, who produced some wonderful drawings of their perceptions in Seaford. They depicted their bodily immersions in the sensual world as experiences of delight – while exploring marine life in saltwater under the pier, eating ice-cream while buried in the beach sand, or viewing the setting sun as a silhouetted swimmer (with shark). One work showed the artist as immersed in a blue ‘atmosphere’ of echoing lines that pervaded the picture space as a living, moving phenomenon. These works were small vignettes of perception that are rarely matched in ‘place’ practice with communities. As Barnacle reminds us: ‘Phenomenology begins with wonder’.

Six Leading Traits of (wild) Place

‘Wild places’ can be perceived in obvious locations, such as coastlines and bays, but also in townships, as I will show. They are not confined to ‘wilderness’ areas, nor do they exclude the presence of human beings. ‘Wild places’ display their own ‘vitalities’.

We have previously noted the ‘wild’ in new scholarship on vibrant matter. In recognising ‘wild places’, Casey extends the concept through consideration of ‘place’ ‘forms’ as six ‘leading traits’ - beyond an emphasis on the ‘objects’ that often preoccupy designers (Fig. 10). He explains the ‘traits’ as follows:

… ground and sensuous surface form part of the earth, that is, land and landscape, sea and seascape. Arc and atmosphere pertain to the overarching region of the sky.

Material things are found in between the archaic (and still extant) regions of earth and sky. They pin down and populate this middle zone of existence and experience. The

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surrounding array does just the opposite; diffused throughout all the regions and interregions, it acts to connect what material things serve to separate.\textsuperscript{246}

Fig. 10
Casey has identified six ‘leading traits’ as intrinsic to the phenomenon (wild) ‘place’: (atmosphere, arc, ground, things, sensuous surface, surrounding array)\textsuperscript{247}.

Casey has affirmed his ‘leading traits’ as basic features of landscape in a later paper, adding: ‘I first described these various factors in a discussion of “wild places”, and it is significant that they hold up as descriptive terms of landscape in general, whether wild or cultivated\textsuperscript{248}.

Linking these traits to a landscape, we can imagine Casey’s ‘alluring set of places … an entire region’, as glimpsed while travelling on an interstate highway, ‘exhibiting its own landform features, arc and atmosphere, things and ground, all connected by shimmering sensuous surfaces’\textsuperscript{249}. His description echoes Bennett’s ‘vital materialities’.

I have previously noted ‘feeling the wild’ in an unkempt garden off ‘the new road to Bendigo’ (section 2). In thinking myself back into that ‘place’, I recall its ‘sensuous surface’ as the dominant intrinsic trait, especially as ‘texture’. Casey notes that ‘The sensuous surface is an aspect of the surrounding array’: it acts as a porous membrane, and ‘Whatever qualifies this surface (including shape, colour, density, luminosity, texture) can also qualify the surface of the ground as well’\textsuperscript{250}. He observes that all of the senses may combine in perceiving texture, as a basis for knowing the ‘place’s distinctive configuration, its physiognomy\textsuperscript{251}.

Casey provides a powerful model of (animal) connection to ‘wild place’ as he explores a concept of two porous surfaces, one belonging to the body and the other to the

\textsuperscript{246} CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. 206
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid. p. 204
\textsuperscript{249} CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. 270
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid. pp. 205, 209
\textsuperscript{251} Ibid. p. 210
circumambient world, which intertwine such that ‘My lived body rejoins a wild place ... as the flesh of one takes in the flesh of the other. ... As I come to know it from within, such a place, despite its wildness (or rather, just because of it) becomes “flesh of my flesh”.’ This introduces a position that is central to the field of ecopsychology, as expanded upon by J. J. Gibson, Hillman, and Roszak et al (see ‘Nested Place’, page 87).

With reference to Casey’s ‘leading traits’, and Relph’s previous explanation of ‘placelessness’ as ‘replacing experiential order with conceptual order’, I will now consider a situation that was unfolding as I wrote, in Black Rock, Victoria. By carefully unpacking one leading trait, ‘atmosphere’, we can begin to recognise an essential quality of ‘place’ that is neglected in practice.

A proposed planning scheme amendment sought to allow three-storey development in the existing township, and ‘iconic gateway buildings’ on each of the three corners of the main roads junction of Beach, Bluff and Balcombe Roads (Figs. 11, 12). This was a recommendation of the Black Rock Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre Strategic Framework Plan (2009).

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252 Ibid. p. 210
Fig. 11
The proposed C90 Planning Amendment. Note 3-storey ‘iconic gateway buildings’ on each of the corners at the junction of Beach, Bluff and Balcombe Roads.
(Photograph of plan on display at Balcombe Road car park, 1 September 2011.)

Fig. 12
The existing conditions at the Black Rock roads junction (with central roundabout and clock tower), showing three built ‘corners’ designated for redevelopment as 3-storey ‘iconic gateway buildings’. The photograph provides for visual recognition of the ‘place’, but is not a substitute for the experiential qualities of ‘place’. (Panorama, June 2008.)
The Black Rock Action Group is protesting against overdevelopment, increased traffic and the ‘loss of village atmosphere’. What might they mean by ‘atmosphere’? Clearly the group is referring to an experience of ‘place’, a ‘place’ quality that they value, but this quality has not been articulated in detail. I have some insights into what may be meant from my own experience as a frequent visitor to the ‘place’ - for shopping, lunching, beach access and dog-walking, recording fishing shop updates (as per Figs. 19, 22) and meeting with a friend - colleague who lives in the village. In addition I was contracted as the lead consultant for the Black Rock Village Streetscape Masterplan (2009), which included two community consultation forums. My approach to that project was through a phenomenology of ‘place’, as informed by repeated visits, careful observations and recorded experiences.

So what could the action group mean by ‘village atmosphere’ in this ‘place’ that opens to the Bay and the horizon? As shown diagrammatically (Fig. 10) Casey has considered particular qualities of ‘place’ with reference to ‘wild places’ of sea and land. He considers that ‘atmosphere’ is one of six ‘moments’ or ‘leading traits’ intrinsic to the phenomenon (wild) ‘places’ (the others being ‘surrounding array’, ‘sensuous surface’, ‘ground’, ‘things’, ‘arc’).

He explains:

... the atmosphere is that which exists in and around everything in the landscape; .... The atmosphere permeates everything; .... As breath, smoke, and vapour move not only between bodies but inside them, so the atmosphere of a (wild) place animates all that we experience in its presence. It is as essential to that place as breath is to our bodily being. In sharing the same atmosphere, body and place realize a common essence as well as their own most intimate unity.

This essential trait of ‘wild places’ - ‘atmosphere’ - is recognisable in Black Rock village through the opening at the junction of the roads near the bay. Casey makes it clear that ‘atmosphere’ is a separate trait from ‘ground’ and ‘things’, which are ‘matters of weight’, ‘perceived as more or less “heavy” (along with associated attributes of bulk, density, girth, volume, etc.)’ –the normative foci of ‘place’ dialogue. His discussion resonates with the perception that I noted during masterplan preparation while ‘sitting a while at a table’.

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256 see further discussion in ‘Place Enquiry through Practice’, page 111

257 CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. pp. 204 - 207

258 Ibid. p. 219
outside the “Egyptian café”, and with my further association with Merleau-Ponty’s contemplation of ‘blue’ (see page 112). I pondered from these examples whether ‘atmosphere’ could be acting alone? Or could the role of connective tissue be taken by the ‘surrounding array’? But Casey assures us that:

The atmosphere not only envelopes but literally pervades by going through whatever is situated in it ... The overall effect is to alleviate and animate any given wildscape: to bestow upon it an élan vital that vivifies the whole scene\textsuperscript{259}.

In my practice experience, ‘atmosphere’, this essential ‘place’ quality, is never considered. Art critic Robert Nelson has similarly noted that unlike earlier painters, ‘Contemporary artists struggle to see or acknowledge air\textsuperscript{260}’. Until now I have not thought of atmosphere as an essential ‘place’ trait that could be articulated in ‘place’ dialogue - I have come to know it through phenomenological perception that is reinforced by Casey’s concept. But would the council planners grasp it? Casey continues: ‘... precisely because we are so immersed in it and thus have little or no distance from it, the atmosphere is often the last factor to be grasped lucidly, if it is grasped at all\textsuperscript{261}.

What might this mean for Black Rock village? My perception (from my table outside the Egyptian café) is perhaps unique to this ‘place’. At neighbouring Sandringham, a similar layout occurs where three roads meet at the coastline and a curved building line traces the former tram route. The street pattern and orientation of Black Rock are repeated in Sandringham, but here a different built environment has destroyed similar opportunities for perception. Perhaps it was once possible to sense something similar, but the value of ‘atmosphere’ was unrecognised and ‘place’ quality was lost with insensitive corner redevelopments. The development of Sandringham village demonstrates what would be lost at Black Rock if placeless ‘technique’\textsuperscript{262}, via a few symbols on a planning concept plan, took precedence over an experience of ‘place’.

\textsuperscript{259} Ibid. p. 220. Note that Bennett discusses ‘élan vital’ as the ‘vital force’ advocated by early 20\textsuperscript{th} century ‘vitalists’ Henri Bergson and Hans Driesch, and acknowledges it as close to her notion of ‘lively materiality’, in KHAN, G. 2009. Agency, nature and emergent properties: An interview with Jane Bennett. Contemporary Political Theory, 8, 90-105. p. 95
\textsuperscript{260} NELSON, R. Exhibition does not take air lightly. The Age, Wednesday September 21, 2011.
\textsuperscript{261} CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. 219
\textsuperscript{262} In RELPH, E. 1976. Place and Placelessness, Pion Limited. p. 143, Relph considers ‘technique’ as an attitude of ‘placelessness’, with an overriding emphasis on efficiency, whereby ‘places can be treated as the interchangeable, replaceable locations of things, as indeed they are by multinational corporations, powerful central governments, and uninvolved planners.’
We have seen from Relph’s early work that he considered ‘place’ as more than just physical, comprising three inseparably interwoven components – the static physical setting, the activities, and the meanings. He was responding to the concept from his position as a humanist geographer, with a phenomenological approach, forging a convergence between geography and philosophy.

Casey advances that ‘place’ is not something physical, as ‘a mere patch of ground’, but nor is there a simple definition of what ‘place’ is. If ‘place’ is more an ‘event’ than a ‘thing’, as he claims, then ‘its peculiarity calls not for assumption into the already known but for the imaginative constitution of terms respecting its idiolocality’ (peculiarity) and ‘these range from place-names to whole discourses’. Here, Casey is invoking the ‘subject of place’ – the lived body – as the bearer of idiolocality, in a humanocentric perspective.

While Casey has traced an historic separation of space and ‘place’, Malpas notes that ‘place is not a concept that can be severed from notions of extension and spatiality’. He has preferred to acknowledge a connection between the two notions.

The modernist idea gave us ‘space’ as a universal beginning, a ‘tabula rasa’ on which the particularities of culture and history inscribed ‘place’. But this was not always the case: ‘The ancient world ... knew otherwise’.

I begin with a rejection of the primacy of ‘space’, and an affirming of ‘place’ as a priori to space. In doing so I am drawing on a line of (Western) philosophical thought, beginning with the ancients Archytas and Aristotle, including the postmodernists Bachelard and

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CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 329

CASEY, E. S. 1997. The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History, University of California Press. p. 133 - 136

MALPAS, J. E. 1999. Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography, Cambridge University Press. p. 22

Ibid. p. 25

Heidegger\textsuperscript{268}, and the contemporary thinking of Casey\textsuperscript{269}. The premodern and the postmodern join in common recognition of the importance of ‘place’ as something essentially other than space, ‘something one cannot afford to ignore in its very difference from space’\textsuperscript{270}. Casey is proffering ‘place’ as a bridge to ancient and pre-modern knowledge.

For place can be considered either premodern or postmodern; it serves to connect these two far sides of modernity. To reinstate place in the wake of its demise in modern Western thought – where space and time have held such triumphant and exclusive sway - one can equally well go to the premodern moments described in ethnographic accounts of traditional societies or to the postmodern moment of the increasingly non-traditional present, where place has been returning as a reinvigorated revenant in the writings of ecologists and landscape theorists, geographers and historians, sociologists and political thinkers – and anthropologists themselves\textsuperscript{271}.

As landscape architects we often casually speak of ‘site’ (‘site plan’, ‘site visit’, ‘site analysis’), perhaps unaware that we invoke a modernist idea of ‘space’, seemingly waiting for us to remake it as ‘place’? It is a subtle shift to replace ‘site’ with ‘place’, but one that realigns us with a philosophical base that rejects an ‘objective’ view of the world, in order to embrace relationship. I sometimes catch myself thinking in the modernist language of ‘site’, such is its strong hold in our discipline, but in working with ‘places’ we must think to use ‘place’ language. This shift is a small step towards repositioning the discipline in a postmodern culture released from its modernist origins. J. J. Gibson has made a similar point in ecological psychology, discussing the replacement of the objective language of the physical world (space, time, matter, energy) with language that is more suited to the habitat of animal and environment (i.e. words that relate to structural units that can be perceived directly)\textsuperscript{272}.

\textsuperscript{268} CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. \textit{Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World} 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 319

\textsuperscript{269} I have not discussed the work of researchers whose writing falls outside my emphasis on ‘place’ as a-priori to ‘space’. This includes humanist geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, as noted in ibid. p.450, n.4

\textsuperscript{270} CASEY, E. S. 2009a. \textit{Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World}, Indiana University Press. p. xxxii

\textsuperscript{271} ibid. p. 324

In ‘place’ writing it is common to find reference to the Greek terms *topos* and *chora*, translated as ‘place’ and ‘space’. Malpas reminds us that when we speak together about ‘place’, we cannot assume a meaning in common. Yet a translation from Greek to English is even more complex. Any translation from another language or culture is fraught with difficulty. Malpas has traced the etymology and ancient use of *topos* and *chora* and found that:

... there is no warrant for the frequent assumption that *topos* and *chora* can be simply correlated with ‘place’ and ‘space’ respectively. Nor does recourse to the Greek terms provide any shortcut to understanding the concept of place or its relation to space.

In effect, Malpas is arguing that there is no reason to pursue ‘place’ within the confines of Greek terminology. Thus, he is freeing us to follow alternative lines of enquiry.

Other commonly encountered ‘place’ expressions - ‘sense of place’, ‘spirit of place’, and ‘genius loci’ - are sometimes used interchangeably. Relph initially grouped the three terms as an ‘attribute of (‘place’) identity’, ‘character’ or ‘personality’. He was considering a ‘distinctiveness that persists in place despite change’, that is ‘subtle and nebulous’, and ‘not easily analysed in formal and conceptual terms’. Casey also argued that the terms refer to ‘character’. Later, Relph acknowledged a distinction:

Spiral of place is a translation of the Latin *genius loci* (which) ... now generally refers to a mostly secular quality. ... Sense of place is a synaesthetic faculty that combines sight, hearing, smell, movement, touch, imagination, purpose and anticipation. It is both an individual and an intersubjective attribute, closely connected to community as well as to personal memory and self. It is variable.

However, these (Western) translations ignore cultural differences - the deeper significances recognised by others in relation to intangible ‘place’ phenomena as protecting ‘spirits of a

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274 Ibid. pp. 24 - 25
275 Similarly, Casey has argued that ‘chora’ is not vacant space, and that ‘place’ would be a less misleading translation of ‘chora’ than ‘space’, in CASEY, E. S. 1997. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, University of California Press. p. 353, note 57
277 CASEY, E. S. 2009a. *Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, Indiana University Press. pp. 303 - 307
place’, which are still widely honoured for example at shrines throughout Japan and in other parts of Asia. The material practices that honour the ‘spirits of a place’ may of course be perceived as a ‘sense of place’ by others who are outside the culture.

Expressions of an intrinsic vitality of ‘place’ bring us closer to home. The English novelist D. H. Lawrence (who visited Australia in 1922) recognised that ‘different places ... have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation ...’\(^{279}\). And Deborah Bird Rose discusses ‘Motj’, a Yolngu word, which similarly expresses vitality: ‘Motj is power; it is the flow of life towards growth, of stories towards the real, of a person towards awareness ... Motj ... is the source of all life\(^{280}\).

Vitality percepts have been explored by Ingold, who rejects an interpretation of ‘agency’ as an ‘internal animating principle’, and Bennett, who also rejects a world that is ‘divine creation, docile matter, (or) completely lawful’ (page 69). But Tasmanian Indigenous researcher Greg Lehman notes that ‘... Western culture is the only culture in the world ... that argues for the non-existence of any dimension or reality that the senses cannot perceive’\(^{281}\). In an interpretation that allows for both human and non-human agency, he considers that:

A sense of place occurs when we are involved in an act of creation – through the processes of art, poetry, philosophical speculation and engagement with the relational aspects of the universe – not just at a local level but at a much broader and deeper state\(^{282}\).

This echoes Casey’s argument that ‘place’ is more an ‘event’ than a ‘thing’, and Heidegger’s concept of ‘Dasein’, ‘Being in the world’, which Lehman also acknowledges. It hints at the combinations of agents discussed by Ingold and Bennett (page 69). While engaging with these ideas, I personally prefer the simplicity of ‘place’, leaving the alternative expressions for others to use as they may consider appropriate.

\(^{279}\) Quoted in RELPH, E. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*, Pion Limited. p. 49

\(^{280}\) Rose discusses Motj as disclosed by Yolngu leader the late David Burrumarra, in ROSE, D. B. 2004 *Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation*, University of New South Wales Press. p. 192


\(^{282}\) Ibid. p. 106
Casey considers that two essential traits of ‘place’ as revealed by a phenomenological description are ‘the role of the lived body’ as the bearer of idiolocality (previously discussed, page 76) and ‘gathering’. He describes the ‘gathering’ power of ‘place’ - a ‘hold on what is presented’ in four ways: - 1. ‘a holding together in a particular configuration’; 2. ‘a holding in and a holding out. It retains the occupants of a place within its boundaries; and, ‘beckoning to its inhabitants and, assembling them, making them manifest’; 3. ‘the layout of the local landscape, its continuous contour; 4. ‘Keeping – experiencing bodies, (and) thoughts and memories’. For … places gather things in their midst – where “things” connote various animate and inanimate entities. Places also gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts.

At this point I will briefly acknowledge the nested character of ‘place’ in ‘region’, while leaving a more extensive discussion to ‘Territory and Region’, (page 81).

The primacy of place … needs to be complemented by a more complete consideration of region: the region to which any given place belongs. The danger of regarding place as something autonomous … is mitigated by situating place within the compass of region, while emphasizing that region itself is not self-standing. Just as there can be no place without a region in which it is enclosed, so there is no region that is not replete with places.

Malpas and Casey frequently respond to each other’s ‘place’ ideas in their works. Both are now taking an interest in ‘landscape’. Malpas recently noted that the study of landscape is not exclusive to any one discipline:

“landscape” does not belong to the art historian or the aesthetcian alone – nor indeed is it the special preserve of the landscape architect or designer.

283 CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 328
284 Ibid. pp. 327
285 CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. xxxii
His most recent book contains essays from a diverse field of philosophy, literature, geography, anthropology, theology, sociology, art history, ecology, landscape and garden history, and contemporary social and political critique – but landscape architecture (or design) is not represented.

Left out of the landscape dialogue, how should the profession respond to this situation? Do we regard it as opportunity or threat? Do Malpas’ comments underline an urgent need to rethink our discipline from its philosophical basis? I think so, although I cannot claim to have all the answers. One glaring gap in our professional code and practice (as I will further demonstrate) is the neglect of Indigenous knowledge in ‘place’ – region – landscape – ‘country’. This is neglect not just because it is a missed opportunity to redress the colonial settling of Australia as a ‘tabula rasa’, or because Indigenous knowledge is intrinsic to ‘place’, or because it is an ethical response, but because, as a living culture that also predates modernism, Indigenous culture(s) demonstrates an original and authentic approach to ‘place’. Pre-modern and post-modern ideas combine in Indigenous ‘place’.

Our discussion of ‘place’ and ‘landscape’ continues ‘Indigenous Place – Place and Landscape (part two)’.

 Territory and Region

Casey distinguishes territories from regions ‘by the fact that they (the territories) are never simply given or found but are made up’\(^{288}\). The division of Australia into states and territories is one example of this construction, while the further division of states into municipalities is another. In 1994, the citizens of greater Melbourne witnessed a major redefinition of their local areas by amalgamation of smaller units to form new municipalities. These new territories were rarely respectful of ‘place’ or region. In my home region, Cheltenham Park was separated from the adjoining Cheltenham shopping centre/primary school/pioneer cemetery/railway station by a new municipal border, and the park which commands a view over the town and beyond to Mount Dandenong was politically separated from its ‘place’ in regional context.


\(^{288}\) CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. xxvii
A territory, then, is a part of space delimited by a carefully demarcated border that announces: This space begins (or ends) just here; inside it, the rightful inhabitants (i.e., the “citizens”) have the right to decide what they can do and cannot do. But the territory borders may change, as we have seen locally, and democracy is not necessarily the norm.

By contrast, a region is more closely aligned to concepts of ‘place’.

Thanks to its material essence, a region possesses a certain generality – a lasting (even if not permanent) sameness of aspect and constitution – that obtains for all the places contained within it: they are unmistakably the places of that region.

Casey argues that a region is unified by its material essence: ‘that is, the quality or set of qualities that gives to the region its distinctive character and that helps to make it this region and not another’. Distinctive qualities can be recognised in each of the nine ‘regions’ of Victoria (‘The Mallee’, ‘The Wimmera’, ‘The Western District’, ‘Gippsland’, etc.). Consider for example ‘The Western District’ - vast volcanic plains, distant horizon lines, strong winds, grazing paddocks defined by wind-pruned Pine and Cypress windbreaks.

Artist Kathryn Ryan has helped us to recognise the distinctive Western District qualities, painting atmospheric works that combine these elements. There can be no mistake as to which region her landscape paintings represent (despite it being a totally man-made landscape that has replaced wildflower grasslands).

The state of Victoria is a palimpsest of different mappings. We have seen mapping as local government areas and Registered Aboriginal Parties (Appendix 1, page 235), and have briefly discussed regions (above). We could find maps showing (37) counties, parishes (the latter two used as cadastral units rather than for administrative functions as in Britain), electoral districts, fire districts, water catchments and bio-regions ... A key to consideration of whether these are ‘territories’ or ‘regions’ is found in the edge definition, as border or boundary.

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289 Ibid. p. xxvii
290 Ibid. p. xxx
291 Ibid. p. xxxii
292 Ibid. p. xxxi
293 See Kathryn Ryan’s oil paintings at Flinders Lane Gallery (http://www.fig.com.au)
Border and Boundary

I have previously observed that Relph’s distinction between ‘insideness’ and ‘outsideness’ in ‘place’ experience does not lead to a discussion of ‘border’ and ‘boundary’, or any other type of spatial edge. (In turning his attention to landscapes and seascapes, Casey has added ‘rim’ and ‘gap’ to the other two.)

A distinction between ‘border’ and ‘boundary’ draws on a parallel distinction between ‘territory’ and ‘region’, (but only ‘boundary’ and ‘region’ are contingent on ‘place’). ‘Border’ is a defining limit of ‘territory’. It may be delineated on a map, fenced on the ground, sign-posted as ‘do not enter’, or, in other animal species, defended by ‘scent trail’ or ‘voice’. Different cultures mark limits in different ways. Thus, in a traditional Japanese garden, private territory may be signified (as in ‘do not continue beyond this point’), by a rope-wrapped river-stone placed on a path at the threshold of an enclosure (Katsura Imperial Villa, Kyoto). Marker stones (known as ‘Djalala’) also signify territory borders in traditional Northern Kimberley cultures. Here they have additional significance. Senior lawman Jack Dale advises: ‘Marker stones divide our land from other people’s land. The Djalala are markers from the Dreamtime. People have to stick to their boundaries.’ Sadly, European colonists did not respect the stone markers. Dale continues: ‘It was bad when we saw loads of stones smashed up in our land. Many of these stones were special stones like in my paintings.’

Casey defines border as ‘a humanly constructed entity, legal and/or cartographic ... as such it is historically and institutionally sanctioned; its concrete expression is often as a borderline.’ He continues: ‘the emphasis is on continuity (there is rarely, if ever, a gap in a border) and consistency (i.e., of construction or representation).’ We have noted examples of ‘rare gaps’ in borders where subtle markers such as special stones are placed. However, ‘borders’ represent and effect impermeability, ‘not just the restriction of traffic or trespass but their...

294 See p. 68
296 CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. xxvi
exclusion wherever possible”\textsuperscript{299}. Thus, human-laid borders often cut across the organic diversity of bio-regional life\textsuperscript{300}.

Casey’s regions are defined by a different edge: ‘Every region is circumscribed by … a boundary that is highly permeable’\textsuperscript{301}. Moreover, the boundary edge will change position and aspect over time. ‘A beach, at the edge of the sea and subject to tidal encroachments, is certainly exemplary of a porous boundary’\textsuperscript{302}. Further, boundaries are not confined to the outside of a region: they are also internal to the region\textsuperscript{303}. For example, ‘An ocean has its own regions, internally differentiated by currents and other flows’\textsuperscript{304} and a forest/woodland is also structured from within. In the woodland regrowth of disturbed gold-mining land in the Bendigo Regional Park, different indigenous plant species occupy their different niches: the Red Ironbark (\textit{Eucalyptus sideroxylon}) has recolonised the stony ridges, while Yellow Gum (\textit{Eucalyptus leucoxylon}) prefers the deeper soils. We can also notice paths and animal tracks that criss-cross the woodland, and how their edges lack the precision of borders. ‘A region is a complex of internal and external boundaries, and this holds true for urban regions as well as wild ones’\textsuperscript{305}.

The idea of highly defined edges is not easily translated into an Australian setting. The territory/border examples of walled cities, courtyard buildings and town squares of Europe are largely absent here, where regions and boundaries may be more commonly perceived. Nevertheless, the concept has found translation in local ‘placemaking’ activities that seek to demarcate town and city entry points (borders) with ‘iconic buildings’ and ‘gateway treatments’ (where once the entrances were conceived as long avenues, such as the now mature Royal Parade and St. Kilda Road avenues in Melbourne). The move to distinct border definition could be seen as a cultural change towards tighter spatial control, but it is more likely an appropriation of an imported model, than a thought-through concept.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{299} Ibid. p. 94
\bibitem{300} CASEY, E. S. 2009a. \textit{Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World}, Indiana University Press. p. xxx
\bibitem{301} Ibid. p. xxx
\bibitem{302} CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. \textit{Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World} 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 344
\bibitem{303} CASEY, E. S. 2009a. \textit{Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World}, Indiana University Press. p. xxxi
\bibitem{304} Ibid. p. xxxi
\bibitem{305} Ibid. p. xxxi
\end{thebibliography}
I have previously mentioned the on-going reconstruction of Aboriginal tribal areas in Victoria, which will map the State as Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs). These areas assign responsibilities for Aboriginal cultural heritage (under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006). The area limits of each RAP are described as ‘boundaries’ (rather than ‘borders’). But their mapping is precisely referenced (as in borders): to existing roads and streams (the ‘centrelines’ of each); distances and directions; and co-ordinates as degrees of latitude and longitude. In my reading of the ‘boundary’ descriptions, ‘border’ is only mentioned in relation to State borders. Here we have a reconstruction (of tribal lands) in response to the contemporary condition of land ownership which marks boundaries as borders.

Casey considers that all edges (borders, boundaries, rims, and gaps) have power. ‘At each of these, force accumulates, comes to expression, and brings itself to a point of power’. His examples are culturally specific, and we must discern our own examples in each situation. Only then can we be conscious of the implications of a human tendency to casually alter the ‘place’-world by converting permeable boundaries of ‘place’, region, landscape, into rigid borders.

As one kind of edge (rough-hewn, indefinite, open) gives way to another (pristine, proper, precise), often for purely utilitarian reasons, the very being of the edge is altered. What starts as an instrumentalist enterprise ends by bringing about an ontological shift, a change in kind.

Such decisions require a consciousness of what change will mean to life-worlds other than human. It is often in maintenance actions that these changes are so casually effected.

‘Thing’ and ‘Object’

Casey has identified ‘thing(s)’ as one of six ‘leading traits’ intrinsic to (wild) ‘place’ (Fig. 10). Thus ‘thing’ is essential to ‘place’, and in close association with ‘ground’. In choosing ‘thing’ over ‘object’, Casey is aligning his work with Heidegger, who strongly distinguished between the two. In fact, Casey’s six leading traits (atmosphere, arc, ground, things, sensuous surface, surrounding array), combined with ‘lived body’, seem to respond to Heidegger’s ‘four-fold’

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306 See Appendix 1
308 Ibid. pp. 96 - 97
(earth, sky, divinities, mortals) as a contemporary experiencing of the world, in dwelling. Casey reflects that the earth-sky axis of his six leading traits (also found in Heidegger’s ‘four-fold’) has cosmological importance for traditional cultures³⁰⁹.

Heidegger’s distinction between ‘thing’ and ‘object’ reflects his response to a prevalent attitude of the time that promoted the authority of a detached observer over an alternative experiencing of everyday life. This detached attitude, he considered, diminished the importance of being. Heidegger argued that a ‘thing’ (such as ‘a jug’) was something more than an ‘object’, and gained its characteristics from everyday use: ‘what it was like to hold; and how it related humans to the world around them’ – as part of human being³¹⁰.

But ‘thing’ also needs ‘space’ to be - one could say space for ‘surrounding array’ and connection. The space allows for an echo of ‘thing’, as reflection or shadow, grounding ‘thing’, and in a sense completing it. In rare instances ‘thing’ may glow with reflected light, and seem to come to life. Each of these situations connects ‘thing’ in a relationship with the ‘other’ – both human and non-human. In gaining our attention it draws us into relationship. ‘Material things ... act as cynosures for our attention and interest’³¹¹. Beyond considerations of anthropocentrism, what remains of value in Heidegger’s distinction between ‘thing’ and ‘object’ are attitude and response.

Casey has identified two poles of attitude and response to the world, as ecocentric and egocentric. While the latter equates with the detached observer of ‘object’ that Heidegger sought to replace, it cannot be said that the former is equal to the experiencing ‘Dasein’. Heidegger is left in an in-between position. The issue here is not with his distinguishing of ‘thing’, but with the experiencing ‘Dasein’ as a humanocentric consciousness. Casey has taken us further, into an ‘ecocentric’ view of the world.

”Things” are densely ecocentric, drawing us out of our egological confinement and into the environing world they serve to diversify and populate³¹².

³⁰⁹ CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. 206
³¹¹ CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. 261
³¹² Ibid. p. 261
Both Ingold and Bennett would seem to agree. Their separate works emphasise animate ‘thing’ in relationship, as ‘lively materialities’ of ‘place’, and support an ecological philosophy where ‘objects’ are not reducible to human agendas.

**Nested Place**

‘Nested place’ provides a conceptual framework to consider ‘place’ from wherever one might be, and to grasp its interconnected character. This concept allows for a more intimate reading of ‘place’ context than does ‘region’. J. J. Gibson\(^{313}\) first introduced the term ‘nesting’ to consideration of the range of sizes of units in the terrestrial world with which he was concerned, and proposed that ‘Physical reality has structure at all levels of metric size from atoms to galaxies’ and ‘The smaller units are embedded in the larger units by what I will call “nesting”.’ His examples of canyons nested within mountains, trees nested within canyons, leaves nested within trees, and cells nested within leaves provoke a rich visual imagery of ‘nested places’ as appropriate to the ecological approach that he intended\(^{314}\).

The concept of ‘nested place’ provides ‘place’ with a necessary context. ‘There are forms within forms both up and down the scale of size’\(^{315}\). To me, this suggests a repeated similarity, with elements referenced in each repetition but changed by degree, unlike the self-similarity of fractal shapes or traditional Russian matryoshka dolls. It allows for transitional boundaries and overlapping zones rather than fixed, unchanging, impervious borders. (See also ‘Border and Boundary’.)

‘Nested place’ implies habitat, and by extension, a sensing organism within. J. J. Gibson reminds us ‘that the words “animal” and “environment” make an inseparable pair’\(^{316}\), but he does not mean equal in status – his ‘environment’ is ‘other’. I will use ‘nested place’ in an expanded concept that rejects the separation of ‘man’ and ‘environment’. In this shift I am influenced by another psychologist, James Hillman, who questioned ‘Where does the “me”

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stop? Where does the “other” begin? Hillman provokes thinking beyond a separation of ecology and psychology, which is discussed further by contributors to Roszak, and taken up by Casey in his discussion of ‘flesh’: ‘Flesh is not only my flesh. It also belongs to my circumambient setting experienced as a “landscape world”. ... Its flesh intertwines with my flesh, and each is continuous with the other’. This concept has profound implications for an understanding of ‘Indigenous Place’.

‘Nested place’ also suggests a fragility of components (which like nesting material may be easily dislodged), as well as the possibility of repair, decay, change, and seasonal reoccupation. This introduces the challenge or acceptance of ‘sparing’ - letting things be, not subordinating them to human will. (See previous discussion of ‘sparing’ in ‘Place and Placelessness’.)

Malpas considers that ‘it is places, rather than mere spaces, that “nest” in the way identified by Gibson’, and that ‘In being acquainted with a single place ... one is also thereby acquainted with a larger network of places’. From Malpas I understand that I can call on this concept for any ‘place’ (which may be defined by project brief boundaries) and find connections that may not be immediately obvious, but which may impact on the ‘place’ (or vice versa) in a fundamental way. (See also ‘Place, Space, Region, Landscape’, page 76.)

**Thickening**

Casey’s concept of ‘thickening’ should not be confused with the ‘gathering’ power of ‘place’ (as previously discussed, page 98), or reduced to the idea of a collection of things presented for (human) appreciation. ‘Thickening’ is distinguished as a ‘coalescence of cultural practices and natural givens’, such that ‘each party to the interaction gains in

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319 CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. 210
320 MALPAS, J. E. 1999. Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography, Cambridge University Press. p. 104
321 Ibid. p. 105
concert with the other[^322]. It emerges through the agency of nature. Casey describes an experience of ‘thickening’:

Stopping at a rest area ... I notice a snow-bound scene. I pause to look at it in its unexpected thickness. The scene itself consists merely in several rocks, a few small bushes, three trees, a flagpole. A marginal spot, offering only a modest prospect. What is going on here? Certainly not an experience of the Sublime; but also not a mere scattering of miscellaneous objects such as one might find in a razed building site. I am presented instead with an arrangement of material things that cohere as in a single composition. Nature has become connatural with culture ...[^323].

Casey’s description inspired me to conceptualise a new path in a parkland reserve. Initially I conceived of the path as a border[^324], separating the territories of skateboarders and dog-walkers, but as a path it was never a ‘no-go zone’. Rather, it would be an active ‘place’, used by both groups for access, while mindful of necessary modified behaviours that were mutually respectful. As such, the path would become a porous boundary, and would be further enriched by a ‘coalescence of nature and culture’ as described by Casey:

The conjoining of culture and nature is not just a combination, much less a compromise or a mere synthesis. Something is gained, something emerges from the conjunction itself that is not present when the factors are held apart. Let us call the process of this emergence “thickening”. By this I mean the dense coalescence of cultural practices and natural givens. In undergoing a mutual thickening, these practices and givens sediment and interfuse. The merging eventuates in an emergent thickening[^325].

The ‘path-place’ would provide a diversity of experiences, emerging from topography, stormwater drainage and materials. As a ‘place’, it did not need to be conventionally uniform in width – I could stretch and pull the path’s edge lines on my plan to allow ‘micro-places’ - for ‘habitat’, for pause or rest, to alter pace, or to witness the events of ‘wild’ nature – while also being witnessed[^326]. The conjoining of culture and nature does

[^322]: CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. p. 253
[^323]: Ibid. p. 254
[^324]: Refer to my previous discussions of ‘Territory and Region’, ‘Border and Boundary’.
[^325]: CASEY, E. S. 2009a. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World, Indiana University Press. pp. 252 - 253
[^326]: Ibid. p. 253
not result from human agency alone, but humans can build situations which allow it to develop.

My path concept was fragile and did not survive for development in this instance. The irregular alignment, as necessary here for encouraging a coalescence of nature and culture, was interpreted by the client as appropriating too much open space. As a concept, my path was not sufficiently developed to be a ‘work’ in Casey’s terminology, but nor was it abstract - I had a ‘vision’ in mind. ‘As a cultural artefact (sic), a work is a working-through of its elements and thus a thickening of them’\textsuperscript{327}.

My path concept remains with me as an idea about ‘thickening’ in this ‘place’, but the path will probably be built as simplified on plan, without a further ‘working through of its elements’. Casey has observed the results of a situation such as this: ‘… unworked things ... sheerly functional or imitative (“done in the style of”) and thoughtless public works’\textsuperscript{328}.

The concept of ‘thickening’ is a useful tool for review of design concepts, prompting a ‘working through’ of each design element for recognition of opportunities of enrichment through a ‘coalescence of nature and culture’. But the idea needs to be ‘sold’ to the client in the first instance, perhaps as a ‘worked’ example. Casey has also identified ‘thickening’ as written ‘works’ that reflect on ‘building’, the common factors being a ‘working through’ and a ‘coalescence of nature and culture’.

\textsuperscript{327} Ibid. p. 254  
\textsuperscript{328} Ibid. pp. 252 - 256
In practising her discipline, the built-environment professional is often constrained in a ‘strait-jacket’ of policies, imported models, reporting hierarchies, templates, and techniques that leave little room for creative response. We see the results all around us in the normative conversion of ‘places’ we once knew. Such ‘places’ demonstrate a detached objective approach to ‘building’ that derives from ‘rationalism’ and its instrument ‘technique’. Relph discussed ‘rationalism’ as the dominant mode of thinking in the present era: ‘... rationalism order is sought and discovered everywhere, and the mysteries and uncertainties of experience are not accepted but are investigated and explained’\textsuperscript{329}.

But Heidegger had argued for an alternative approach, which he found in the notion of poetry. ‘For him, poetry was defined very broadly, describing all thoughtful human creations’\textsuperscript{330}. He rejected the idea ‘that people make sense by arriving at a methodical outcome derived from meticulous analysis’ and considered instead that making sense was

\textit{...a moment of clarity, a smoulder of enlightenment that can’t so much be described as experienced ... a split second in which a jigsaw of thoughts click into place, the realisation of something new or a re-comprehension of something taken for granted}\textsuperscript{331}.

Here then is a distinction between two modes of thinking and acting - scientific rationalism and poetic intuition, which so rarely acknowledge each other in their public environment.

‘Place’ is diminished by ignoring ‘difference’ in favour of the application of a ‘standard’. The ‘strategic framework plans’ now favoured by municipal authorities exemplify this approach. Typically they aim to re-order existing ‘places’ by prescribing land-uses, building heights, setbacks, and ‘gateway buildings’ (etc.), while ignoring lived experiences. Less obvious is the deadening effect that this process has on the creative practitioner and the toll it takes on those who persist in countering it. But even worse is the potential effect on the compliant technician:

\textsuperscript{329} RELPH, E. 1976. \textit{Place and Placelessness}, Pion Limited. p. 125
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid. p. 84
Inevitably the technician manipulating the world of the public loses sight of the
“overarching personal structures which give things meaning and ceases to look for
meaning in his own existence”. He subsumes his individuality and that of others to a set
of procedures which are determined by the technical nature of social engineering and

Heidegger recognised that the world had become dominated by technology, and discussed
an alternative approach in *‘Building Dwelling Thinking’* (*‘Bauen Wohnen Denken’*),
emphasising the unity he perceived between the three notions, and their on-going
application. For Heidegger *‘... these activities were related through people’s involvement
have been achievable in the public realm when public authorities kept their own workforces
and the designer and foreman co-operated towards achieving a common goal (not-
withstanding the odd ‘loose cannon’). In rare situations this relationship may still be
possible. But the rationalist out-sourcing of services is incompatible with Heidegger’s
approach. The application of ‘building / dwelling / thinking’ requires a slowed pace of
development, such that the planner / designer may learn her responses from experiencing
‘place’ over time, within a community. Gordon Cullen also recognised ‘speed of change’ as a
destructive factor\footnote{CULLEN, G. 1961. *The Concise Townscape*, London, Architectural Press. p. 13}. His townscape model was based on ‘serial vision’, but was criticised by
Relph as *‘too formal and too rigidly prescriptive’*\footnote{RELPH, E. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*, Pion Limited. p. 146}. This may be so, but Cullen was aiming to
engage the public through his experiential approach. He too was concerned at a tolerance of
‘dull, uninteresting and soulless’ technical solutions and his aim was *‘not to dictate the shape
of the town or environment, but ... simply to manipulate within the tolerances ... so that an
technical solutions, and aim to *‘impact on the emotions’*, echo Heidegger’s philosophies,
although I have not found evidence in his referencing.

I have previously discussed a neglected ‘place’ quality (*‘atmosphere’*) in relation to a
proposed planning scheme amendment that was derived from a framework plan (pages
72 – 75). In recalling this example in the current context we can see an opposition
between two approaches, resulting in the neglect of ‘place’ diversity and quality (for
example, ‘atmosphere’) by application of a rationalist standard (the ‘framework plan’). In searching deeper, we find that the framework plan attempts to subsume ‘place’ in its first stated strategic objective: ‘To maintain and enhance a strong sense of place and local character unique to Black Rock’\textsuperscript{337}. How can we accept this generalist statement, which only has meaning if linked to particular ‘place’ qualities that make Black Rock ‘unique’? In examining one ‘place’ quality, ‘atmosphere’, we identified its dependence in Black Rock on a particular opening of the village to the sky and Bay, in conjunction with particular alignments of village roads, buildings and vantage points. But a further objective of the framework plan, ‘To create a stronger sense of enclosure and intimacy within the Village through appropriate height massing and articulation of built form’\textsuperscript{338} would seem to work against the openness required for retention of ‘atmosphere’ as a ‘place’ quality.

‘Place’ cannot survive in a context of rationalist prescription: the different purposes, methods and languages of the two approaches do not correspond. But as ‘place’ is diminished by its subsumption in a framework plan, so too is the framework plan diminished by attempting to prescribe an unreflected ‘place’. In all situations where careful professional responses to ‘place’ are understood only as rationalist ‘technique’, we must find a particular ‘place’-value and start a conversation around it - in ‘place’. At Black Rock village we might start with ‘atmosphere’.

I will continue the theme of ‘place’ and rationalist prescription in conflict in ‘Technocrats’, page 96.

The Re-enchantment of Place

‘Re-enchantment’ is not yet defined in the Australian ‘Macquarie Dictionary’. Perhaps this is fortunate, given the Dictionary’s limited treatment of ‘enchantment’:

\begin{center}
\textbf{enchantment} \textit{noun}\textsuperscript{339} \\
1. the act or art of enchanting. 2. that which enchants.
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{338} Ibid. p. 9
In the verbal form, which the noun references, we find connotations of ‘magic’, ‘incantation’, and ‘spell-casting’:

**enchant**  
verb (t)<sup>340</sup>  
1. to subject to magical influence; cast a spell over; bewitch.  
2. to impart a magic quality or effect to.  
3. to delight in a high degree; charm.

[... from Latin *incantāre* chant a magic formula against]

These definitions could lead us to disregard ‘enchantment’ as occult practice and witchcraft, if we did not know otherwise. The ‘act or art’ of ‘enchantment’ is poorly understood – forced underground by a ‘disenchanted’ culture. But Tacey considers that in our outwardly secular Australian society ‘... *artists are advocating (re)enchantment from the depths of a prophetic imagination* ...’<sup>341</sup>. He argues that Australian poets, writers, painters, and musicians, (etc.) have brought ‘re-enchantment’ back into the field, in a re-connection with nature, the sacred, Aboriginal culture, and decolonising practice. His examples of contributing artists are selected from ‘settler’ backgrounds: (Judith Wright, Les Murray, John Shaw Neilson, Kenneth Slessor, A. D. Hope, Patrick White, Tim Winton, Donald Horne, Robert Dessaix, Arthur Boyd, Peter Sculthorpe, Ross Edwards, etc). But in seeking ‘re-enchantment’, are there better exponents than a selection of Indigenous artists (Kath Walker / Oodgeroo, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Bangarra Dance Theatre, The Black Arm Band, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu - to name but a few)? All of these artists were well-known when Tacey released ‘*ReEnchantment*’.

In interpreting Robert Dessaix’s paper ‘*Some Enchanted Evening*’<sup>342</sup>, Tacey reflects on a ‘*double standard in our official Australian attitudes*’ whereby:

... people whom we would call “ethnic” or “indigenous” (sic) are allowed their public enchantment, but so-called ordinary Australians must remain in the shipwreck of reason, by public consent and at the risk of reprimand<sup>343</sup>.

Dessaix wonders: ‘... *if the time might not have come for us to allow ourselves much more enchantment in our lives than we do*’<sup>344</sup>.

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid. p. 549  
In aiming for a re-enchantment of ‘place’, we cannot prescribe a way forward. ‘An enchanted way of thinking is not as heavy with fact and theory, or as rigid with logic and proof, as disenchanted discourse’\(^\text{345}\). We have arrived once again at a choice between poetic and prescriptive thinking and acting (see also ‘Prescriptive Planning’, page 91).

If, as landscape architects, we are to take part in promoting re-enchantment, we must first learn to recognise ‘enchantment’ in the built environment. In my region, I have found ‘enchantment’ in the details that live in ‘place’ - the sculptural form of an old tea-tree as it elbows the ground and claims its space; the white trunk and blue-grey leaves of a young snow-gum as it presents itself outside my office window; the down-coated wattlebird fledglings that roost side by side; (the adult wattlebird that established a welcoming relationship with us all through winter); the back-lit stained-glass windows in a row of Federation-style houses on an evening walk; the view to the You Yangs at the end of my street; afternoon sunlight sparkling on water – ‘scintilla’ ... Both wild nature and built environment are referenced in enchanted ‘places’. But the details are fragile; parts disappear.

Enchantment is frequently found in what might be considered the everyday and common. I often glimpse ‘scintilla’ in the material design of urban environments: as in a sparkle of stone embedded in footpaths. If ‘scintilla’ has a shadow, I recognise it too, in the fluttering movements of the shadows of leaves on wall or pavement surfaces. But details that invite ‘re-enchantment’ are subject to economic rationalism during construction (and maintenance). Our interventions can bring re-enchantment, or not. ‘In an enchanted world ... you honor the particular qualities that make a place unique, or at least take them as a starting point for imagination’\(^\text{346}\). For example, an evening picnic in St. Vincent Gardens provided an experience of the gardens in a different light and prompted an imagining from that perspective\(^\text{347}\). The experience inspired my concept for the two sections of the gardens, thematically contrasted as ‘sun’ and ‘moon’. In master planning and design I was attempting to expand the client’s rationalist brief. From an absence of gendered words in English language, I appropriated the French words ‘le soleil’ and ‘la lune’, to distinguish each half poetically: day and night, masculine and feminine. Thus the eastern portion would be sun, dominated by active pursuits (centred on the bowling club) and yellow/orange planting.

\(^\text{346}\) Ibid. p. 147
\(^\text{347}\) This experience was filtered through an earlier experience of the moon-viewing tradition in Japan.
themes, while the western moon-section, already carpeted in manicured lawns, would be best-dressed for formal evening picnics, its borders planted with cream floral emphasis to reflect the moonlight.

In new concepts, I imagine a partial overlay on the old, in order to prevent the ‘museumisation’ of culture that Relph has discussed as ‘the preservation, reconstruction and idealisation of history’\(^{348}\). The new life does not replace the old - the ‘mysterious suggestion of what it had been’\(^{349}\), but keeps some of the old as vital and relevant.

On reflection, I realise that I have always approached heritage gardens in this way. But I start by looking for ‘original design intent’ in both documentary evidence and garden remnants. It is only in linking ‘the experience’ and ‘the evidence’ that ‘design intent’ can be known. If I do not always find it, perhaps it was never there, or not well-conceived, or not developed from plan to detail. When I find it, I find clues to ‘enchantment’, but where it is missing I seek to find ways of developing it.

In heritage gardens my concept themes preserve a colonial binary in thinking and acting, the ‘ego’ of development before an ‘eco’ of ‘sparing’. There is no way of returning to the ‘original’ landscape. Thus St. Vincent Gardens reflects a ‘control’ of the landscape - as borders, symmetry and exemplary garden maintenance, in keeping with its nineteenth century garden design. But we can still overlay opportunities for ‘re-enchantment’ as vital agency.

My change of project focus to coastal projects is an outward expression of a change in epistemology from colonial to post-colonial practice. It is significant for me, in symbolising this change, that local Aboriginal languages contrast a masculine moon and feminine sun\(^{350}\) - the opposite of how I re-conceptualised St Vincent Gardens.

Technocrats

A corner house block in Bonbeach/Chelsea, Victoria, had already been cleared as a ‘tabula rasa’ (viz. a ‘space’) for construction of a new ‘pocket park’ when I accepted the role of designer in temporary Council employment in 2005. An initial concept had been displayed

\(^{349}\) Ibid. p. 103
and some key decisions made on components: thus I inherited ‘Mulga Bill from Eaglehawk’, interpreted as a sculpture-cum-play-frame. But Council’s purchase of adjoining land provided an opportunity for new direction. In particular, I was able to retain an advanced olive tree on the second block of land as a community resource, and ‘place’ began to reveal itself in response to that one remaining feature.

A small committee of local community and council staff was enthusiastically involved in the design process, and together we developed the new concept around ideas of how the park would be experienced. The budget was modest, but so were the expectations. The park experience would allow for casual meetings or solitary respite, for a range of mobilities, and bird attraction. We discussed each element as ‘precious’. For example, one experience would be the opportunity ‘to lie on a grassy mound under a summer sky, with a slight sea breeze’. So grass had to be ‘luscious’ and special. It would have a ‘form’ and a ‘shape’ and stand out against an orange granitic sand surround. Each element was discussed in this way. The working-through of park elements was a ‘thickening’ process for the emerging ‘work’ (see previous discussion of ‘thickening’, pages 88 - 90).

As the design was developing, I received an email from my in-house client. Its immediate effect was to kill the joy of design. The email contained an attachment with a three-page ‘Quality of Public Open Space Tool’ as developed by the School of Population Health at the University of Western Australia – but there was no ‘quality’ content. It was structured thus:

‘(Question 14) Are there trees in this POS (sic)?

Yes ☐ 1    No ☐ 2 (Go to Q18)’

At about this time the old olive tree simply fell over.

I realise that a design process based in a phenomenology of ‘place’ may seem ‘mysterious’ to clients, and a data base questionnaire (particularly when sanctioned by a University) provides them with greater control, but the product that it allows to come into being is not ‘place’. Rather it represents the placeless ‘technique’ described by Relph as ‘the overriding

352 POS - Public Open Space
concern with efficiency as an end in itself’ whereby ‘places can be treated as the
interchangeable, replaceable locations of things’. In effect it produces anonymous ‘space’.
Relph has further described attitudes relating to ‘technique’ as ‘inauthentic’ and adds:

These inauthentic attitudes to place are themselves specific forms of an inauthentic
mode of existence in which both individuals and societies fail to recognise the realities
and responsibilities of existence, and do not experience the world and its places for what
they are.

As it turned out, my client admitted to not having read the POST tool in detail.
I look back at this project through different windows. One allows me to recapture my design
process. The collection of images that I shared with the community represented my own
experiences in different ‘places’. In relation to the ‘luscious grass’, I showed an image of the
sloping grass banks of the Myer Music Bowl, Melbourne, and described my experience of it; I
showed an image of mossy islands in a ‘sea of gravel’, somewhere in Japan, as (organic)
‘shape’ in design, and remnant native grasslands in Truganina, west of Melbourne, as a
contrasting type of grass, also ‘special’.

Community interpretations intersected with my own. One local resident was delighted to
discover ‘our own Chelsea Correa’ (a shrub that is widely indigenous to coastal environments
in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, and is known as the ‘White Correa’, *Correa alba*). A replacement olive tree was found: the tree had become the ‘locus’, the gathering
‘place’, gathering people, stories, events and ‘things’ to its ‘place’. For ‘places’ gather:

Minimally, places gather things in their midst – where “things” connote various animate
and inanimate entities. Places also gather experiences and histories, even languages and
thoughts.

From involvement in the design process, a responsive caring for the park was awakened in
the community. It was demonstrated in watering of new plants during the long drought,
litter picked up, and general surveillance. I remember this project as bringing happiness to

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354 Ibid. p. 121
355 CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*
2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 327
many people. At its opening the ‘Fowler Street Reserve’, as it had been known, was renamed ‘Mary Bell Park’.

Casey writes that we cannot make ‘place’, which is already given. Then how do we proceed when faced with a seeming ‘tabula rasa’? We proceed gradually, with perception, allowing ‘place’ to take the lead; imagining experiences, building stories with communities, which will engender caring. Casey reminds us, through Bachelard, that the imagining mind is not beholden to physical space: ‘in the imaginal psyche there is no room for anything but places’. This is very different from the normative design process expected of park designers.

Sacred Place: Avenues of Honour

There were once extensive ‘avenues of honour’ in south-eastern Melbourne. Planted to honour the servicemen and women of the ‘Great War’ (1914 – 1918), each tree bore an individual’s name and brief military history. Almost six hundred memorial trees are shown on a plan for Black Rock, Sandringham and Hampton. Haddow has found that a preference for Australian native tree species in avenues of honour was unusual, but at Sandringham, Red Flowering Gums (*Corymbia ficifolia*) were chosen for their signature flower colour ‘so that they would form a scarlet coated guard of honour in summer’. Avenues of honour are regarded as a particularly Australian form of memorial (even when planted with exotic species). As living memorials they captured the public imagination of the time. But the Black Rock/Sandringham /Hampton avenues of honour were not recorded in a 2004 national survey that identified one hundred and eighty four avenues of honour. By that time tree numbers had dwindled, and the three avenues of honour had largely been forgotten.

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357 The undated plan ‘Avenues of Honour World War 1’ appears to show trees and name plates as extant post world war 2; it is kept in the Sandringham and District Historical Society archives (sighted 31 July, 2011).
For my purposes of considering ‘sacred place’ I will focus on events that unfolded in relation to avenues of honour in nearby Caulfield and Brighton. In 1918, avenues of ‘Red Flowering Gums’, *Corymbia ficifolia*, were planted in ‘Point Nepean Road’ and North Road\(^{361}\) for four hundred and twelve servicemen who did not return home. For many of the grieving relatives who took part in the planting ceremony\(^{362}\), the young trees held the essence of lost servicemen:

> It is meet that each tree should have its particular personality, its own special share of tender and perennial care, so that it will live and grow from year to year …the shrine of a noble soul …\(^{363}\).

At the ‘public demonstration’ for the dedication of the combined Caulfield/Brighton avenues on Saturday 3\(^{rd}\) August, 1918, a range of sentiments were expressed:

> We choose to plant an avenue of trees in honour of the brave men from our midst; … in dedicating an avenue to the lost soldiers from Caulfield the sacred and solemn hope is felt that they will last for all time, from generation to generation, as living monuments of memory;

> Tended with loving care, may they grow and flourish, inspiring generations yet unborn;

> Thus, trees may come and trees may go, but the reverence with which they are planted will endure. What is done here today as a deed of gratitude should be continued for all time as an act of duty. No tree here named after a departed soldier should ever lack all that is needful to keep it flourishing, nor, should it perish, fail to be replaced …\(^{364}\).

None of these avenues survived intact. They were planted in a flurry of communal energy, but components disappeared incrementally, perhaps with a gradual fading of public memory, or disenchantment as hopes for peace were answered with a Second World War? It seems that the avenues were not maintained, individual name plates were lost or

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\(^{361}\) As a joint project of the City of Caulfield and the Town of Brighton

\(^{362}\) The names of those who planted the trees are listed with each soldier on a ‘souvenir program’.


\(^{364}\) ‘Appreciations’ in ibid.
removed from the trees, and the servicemen’s details were subsequently reduced and combined in singular plaques that stood apart from the avenue trees as proxy memorials (Fig. 14). Roads were widened and trees were removed.

These events seem to bear out Tacey’s discussion of the Australian sacred as a tension between public rational, reductionist forces and personal poetic sentiments and gestures.\footnote{TACEY, D. 2000. ReEnchantment: The New Australian Spirituality, HarperCollins.}

![Fig. 13](image1.png)

A mature Red-Flowering Gum (**Corymbia ficifolia**), planted in 1918 ‘sacred to the memory of ...’; part of the ‘Brighton Avenue of Honour’ on south side North Road; photographed in 2003, outside No. 230 North Road.

![Fig. 14](image2.png)

The (reduced) details from individual name plates on trees in the ‘Brighton Avenue of Honour’ on south side North Road were combined on one plaque in 1957, and became a substitute memorial; photographed with a personal floral tribute placed anonymously for Anzac Day 2003. (Structure now removed.)

In 2003, a further development prompted my involvement as a member of the Bayside City Council cultural advisory committee. Council now proposed to redesign the Brighton plaque-memorials in new locations. The avenues would not be restored (contrary to the sentiments expressed in ‘Appreciations’ at the 1918 dedication) and the remnant memorial trees would be forgotten in a data base with other street trees.\footnote{I presented my alternative approach to the City of Bayside War Memorials Working Group. One Councillor challenged my advice that there were still remnant avenue trees; another stated that the idea of an avenue of honour was a Victorian concept. The original proposal was passed.} Yet I was unaware of any community outcry.

This development prompted me to question the concept of ‘sacred’ as it related to ‘place’. Was ‘sacred’ intrinsic and inseparable from physical ‘place’ (as I had taken for granted) or was it (re)locatable as a material object (such as the composite plaque)? Were current
generations accountable to past generations? Can we forget parts of our history whenever it may be expedient to do so?

K.S. Inglis has reported on other proposals for the relocation of war memorials and a wide range of community reactions. There is some indication that ‘sacred’ is intrinsic to ‘place’ where there is a continuous tradition of memorial visitation:

Elsewhere the idea of sacred ground had a deeper resonance, signifying that a community had committed itself to maintain a memorial for ever on a particular site.

He was referring here to the relocation by local authorities in 1985 of a stone memorial that had been erected in a ‘place’ with a prior history. It had been the site of World War 1 recruitment rallies and was now known as the ‘Mothers’ Memorial’, a ‘place’ of local pilgrimage. In response to this incident, poet Bruce Dawe responded with irony:

The sacred has a time-clock on its wrist,
And, when its hour has come, will be dismissed ...

Returning to the ‘Appreciations’ recorded in the souvenir program for the dedication of the Caulfield/Brighton avenues, I find ‘sacred’ is associated with ‘memory’, ‘hope’, ‘grove’ and ‘old trees’:

sacred to the/their memory ..., your memory forever sacred ..., the sacred memory ..., sacred and solemn hope ..., the sacred grove ..., the attachment of sacredness to old trees.

There is no mention of sacred ground or sacred ‘place’. However, the intrinsic quality of a tree is such that it is situated and rooted in ‘place’, thus the ‘sacred’ that attaches to the memorial tree is implicit in ‘place’.

Inglis considers that the 1967 Referendum (which gave the Australian federal government responsibility for Aboriginal affairs, and led to the survey and protection of Aboriginal sacred
sites) was the impetus for a widespread recognition of ‘sacred’ in ‘site’. Ashcroft has argued that there was an earlier responsiveness, in art and literature. He finds evidence of ‘new forms of Australian sacredness’ in the mid-twentieth century writing of Patrick White, Judith Wright, and others:

‘... this is the sacred imagined as earthed, embodied, humbled, local, demotic, ordinary and proximate. It is also the sacred of interrelationship – an ethics which is open not just to the agency of human ego but also to the other, to the land, and to that which is not human.’

A changing consciousness has produced a confusion of responses: in some it has instilled a respectful curiosity about Aboriginal values; in others it has led to the consideration of war memorials as ‘sacred in place’ (such as the ‘Mothers’ Memorial’, described above); others have found the sacred in foreign ‘places’ (such as Anzac Cove, Gallipoli); some have considered that the avenues of honour are a European landscape form, intruding on the Australian landscape, and still others act as if the avenues never existed. Recognition of ‘sacred’ in ‘place’ by settler-descendants is personal, sometimes communal, and rarely supported by public authorities. But settler-descendent relationships with the land and the sacred are still developing. Ashcroft writes of a continuing transformation of a way of being-in-the-world from ‘meaning’ to ‘presence’, and from an ‘interpretive’ to an ‘embodied’ culture, concluding that: ‘...it is always ... place that remains the path to the sacred.’

I became entangled with proposals for the Brighton avenues of honour through my concern for a double loss: the avenues were already fragmented; soon the stories in ‘place’ would be archived and forgotten. They would be replaced by a new history, recast in new ‘places’ as a contemporary event: memorials to memorials - an inauthentic rewriting.

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375 Ibid. p. 42
Why do we listen to the stories of others, if not to hear? And having heard, would we not desire to respond? Simply to listen is to be drawn into a world of ethical encounter: to hear is to witness; to witness is to become entangled.

In presenting my research I expected a mixed response. But a feeling of personal hurt lingers on in the aggressive dismissal by councillors, who denied the existence of the remnant memorial trees. For me it echoed a continuing attitude to past history and government policies of denial - *terra nullius* - ‘they were never there’ – our tradition of amnesia.

Projects 2009

In mid 2009, three office projects were at various stages of completion, and temporarily ‘on hold’. They were: *Black Rock Village Streetscape Masterplan* (to continue as design development), *Royal Avenue Sandringham Reserve Masterplan* (at draft stage) and *Tooradin Foreshore Reserve Masterplan* (at draft stage). Each was suffering from client indecision and unclear direction. Thus, I found an opportunity to undertake formal study at Monash University Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies (CAIS - now MIC), which would both challenge and reinvigorate my practice. As I developed new understandings, I was also interrogating the masterplan process. (See my further discussion of the three projects in ‘Place Enquiry through Practice’, page 111.)

The Masterplan Process

Local government agencies frequently commission ‘masterplans’ in response to recommendations contained in open space strategies, (etc.). A masterplan formalises the relationships of its component parts and guides human behaviours. It is now common practice to involve local communities in development of the masterplans, but there are many variations in the consultation methods employed. This is as it should be: one method will not be productive in all situations.

Criticism of the masterplan has implied that it was responsible for ‘too many landscapes with no regard for history, craftsmanship, ecology or the ways in which humans interact with

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377 See my discussion of Stanner’s observations in 1968 (pages 154 - 155)
outdoor space. However, this is not a reason to abandon the masterplan process, but rather to expand its scope. Inclusion of the four perspectives mentioned above improves and evolves the masterplan process.

I would once have defined the masterplan as an object, but I now prefer to approach it as a process and a concept. Yet the masterplan process produces an artefact (a master plan drawing and background report) as reference for further fine-grained thinking or staged process (design) and development (the altered ‘place’). As such the masterplan may ‘sit on a shelf’ for some time, waiting for further consideration. I do not regard this as a problem. It allows time for the outcomes to ‘mature’. As an example, my 2003 masterplan for the Seaford village was the reference document for the 2009-tendered design phase stage seven for creekside design. If the masterplan is based on rigorous research and consultation and is clearly-communicated, new players can find their way into the process for an on-going contribution. The masterplan allows for updating by considered change over time, as opposed to ad-hoc development.

The masterplan is a representation of interconnected relationships, rather than finite layers addressing different issues, but in the Western world we are now so directed by layers of information that we often miss the interconnections. Layered thinking comes to us in AutoCAD packages, where lines of different colours and attributes are built up into complete drawings, and can be turned on or off at will. Layers also come as presentation packages from the different disciplines involved in the project. These methods can be useful in developing responses to complex systems, but the vital interconnections are not evident in the technique, and information thus presented must be interpreted holistically to produce the masterplan drawing. This is often the responsibility of the landscape architect, to sort and draw together the relevant components and facilitate their combination in one ‘master’ work. But still we might miss the interconnections.

By now the reader may have noticed a recurring theme in my reference to ‘connection/s’, ‘interconnections’ and ‘ecology’, hinting at values that underpin my practice. But this theme should not be interpreted as just ecology (a science concerned with relationships between

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379 I recall that in developing a new park (the Mary Bell Park, Bonbeach) the community referred to me as the ‘maestro’.
organism and milieu; complexity, diversity, and symbiosis)\textsuperscript{380}; rather, I am referencing a combined ecology and philosophy. I cannot say who originally influenced me in this direction - perhaps it was the landscape itself. It seems to have been an intuitive response to my experiences of long walks in Tasmania and long marches in Melbourne when ordinary citizens protested against the damming of wild rivers for short-term economic gains. My awakening to environment and political action led me to abandon my original discipline for landscape architecture: I could not find a comparable imperative in interior design.

I have previously discussed an ‘ethic of connection’ by reference to Levinas, through Rose (page 44) and introduced Casey’s ‘ecocentric’ view (pages 67, 86), but other scholars have also contributed to a major shift in twentieth-century thought. They include the English/American ecological anthropologist Gregory Bateson, Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess (as translated), and Australian environmental philosophers Freya Matthews and Val Plumwood. Their written works intersect as multiple voices addressing a common concern for life on Earth. Matthews described the major shift ‘from atomism to connectivity’\textsuperscript{381}, and Bateson argued: ‘The new ecology starts with this fundamental assertion: that the unit of survival is not the individual or the species, but is the organism-and-its-environment’\textsuperscript{382}. Naess clarified this notion (as only a philosopher could), rejecting ‘man-in-environment’ in favour of a ‘relational, total-field model’, an extension of ‘self’ to ‘Self’, ‘that expands from each of us to include all’\textsuperscript{383}. His concept has sometimes been (mis)interpreted as ‘negating difference’, as I will discuss further. Naess first used the term ‘deep ecology’ in 1973 to describe a movement for change that could embrace a diversity of environmental opinions\textsuperscript{384}. His interpreter explains that the qualifier ‘deep’ was given as an opening to a full scale critique of our (Western) civilisation\textsuperscript{385}. At the core of ‘deep ecology’ is the value that both human and non-human life forms have intrinsic value, and that ‘the value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes’\textsuperscript{386}. I agree with this value, but I am well aware that it is not universally held. For example, in 2011 we can open any landscape architecture magazine and find evidence that

\textsuperscript{384} Ibid. pp. 27 - 28
\textsuperscript{385} Ibid. p. 4
\textsuperscript{386} Ibid. p. 29
‘man-in-his-environment’ continues as the central concern in an epistemology of landscape architecture\(^{387}\), and in local government, horticultural amenity is recognised before ecology. In preferencing ‘man’ in the environment we are maintaining a fundamental difference in ontology, epistemology and axiology from Indigenous cultural perspectives, as we will see in section four. This presents a barrier to effective dialogue towards reconciliation and decolonisation.

Naess’ environmental philosophy was a source of support for his deep ecology movement. It was non-prescriptive: he encouraged readers to develop their personal environmental philosophies as a basis for action, from ‘spontaneous experiences’\(^{388}\) as could be found in practices of phenomenology\(^{389}\).

Yet Plumwood criticised ‘deep ecology’, interpreting it as continuing a Western mastery of ‘the other’ by ‘denial of difference’, ‘failing to respect boundaries’, and treating ‘the other’ / ‘nature’ as a dimension of self. She argued:

Respect for others involves acknowledging their distinctness and difference, and not trying to reduce or assimilate them to the human sphere. We need to acknowledge difference as well as continuity to overcome dualism and to establish non-instrumentalising relationships with nature, where both connection and otherness are the basis of interaction\(^{390}\).

Plumwood may have been influenced in her criticism of deep ecology by reading Naess’ work as inspired by the Hindu scripture *The Bhagavad Gita*: “... everywhere, he sees the same”\(^{391}\). But I have found that Naess acknowledged both ‘connections’ and ‘boundaries’:

... we do not intend to make everything part of ourselves and see ourselves as nonexistent otherwise. We can identify with these parts in nature precisely because they are of an equal status to us; they possess a certain independence from us and our valuing. (In Norwegian, “naturens egenverdi”\(^{392}\)).

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\(^{387}\) See for example Landscape Architecture Australia magazine issue number 132 – November 2011


\(^{389}\) Ibid. p.32


\(^{391}\) Naess quotes the *Bhagavad Gita* in ibid. p. 174

Plumwood also filtered her criticism through interpretations of deep ecology by others and from living within a settler-society that was continuing a colonising process:

The failure to affirm difference is characteristic of the colonising self which denies the other through the attempt to incorporate it into the empire of the self, and which is unable to experience sameness without erasing difference.

Yet this was not her only criticism of deep ecology. She considered the ‘particularities’ of ‘place’, and argued that a concept of ‘expanded Self’ denies ‘particularity’, requiring:

the devaluation of personal relationships and of an identity tied to particular parts of the natural world ... (as it) inherits the rationalistic preoccupation with the universal and its account of ethical life as oppositional to the particular.

For her, this was a denial of an attachment to ‘place’:

Because this “transpersonal” identification is so indiscriminate and denying of particular meanings, it cannot allow either for the deep and highly particularistic attachment to place which has motivated both the passion of many modern conservationists and the love of many indigenous (sic) peoples for their land.

These criticisms could leave us in a confused state, without a philosophical response to the degradation of ‘places’ and losses of biodiversity. But Plumwood proposed an alternative in a concept of ‘care’, such as that advocated in ‘bioregionalist’ perspectives:

This traditional model of land relationship ... (aims) to engage people in greater knowledge and care for the local areas which have meaning for them and where they can most easily evolve a caring and responsible life-style.

In a parallel concept of ‘care’ we can also find the development of Rose’s ‘responsive attentiveness’.

393 Particularly the early works of Australian philosopher Warwick Fox; at the time they were colleagues at the University of Tasmania
395 Ibid. p. 181
396 Ibid. p. 182
397 Ibid. p. 217
In her later work Plumwood would advocate a culture of cooperation between different strands of ‘green’ philosophy, considering the combination as a strengthening position.\footnote{399}

Returning to our discussion of the masterplan process, we find that our philosophical detour has found an opening to a deeper critique. We can now recognise ‘colonialism’ as implicit in the title ‘masterplan’, and explicit in the process, where ‘the master’ may continue his colonising dominance of the ‘other’ (e.g. ‘nature’). This is a challenging thought for the landscape architect accustomed to a formulaic delivery of masterplans, but if we are serious about advancing an environmental imperative that does not compromise the ‘other’, we must search for alternative processes.

A focus on the gestalt of ‘place’ could provide such an alternative. Naess suggests a conception of the world that is neither a mass of ‘things’ nor a mass of ‘qualities’, but fits into an understanding of (a ‘place’) as a whole.\footnote{400} He warned that ‘gestalts of a very complex character are easily destroyed by attempts to analyse fragments of them consciously’\footnote{401} (as in a masterplan process), and considered that ‘conventional “scientific” thought … tears gestalts asunder’\footnote{402}. Naess provided an example in the multiple meanings of the Tibetan word ‘Tseringma’: as ‘a great mountain’, ‘a wonderful white princess’ and ‘mother of long life’, combining a geographic feature and ‘mythic’ reasoning as a gestalt. He noted that mythic thought ‘characterises contents which are largely unavailable in our (Western) culture’.\footnote{403} A gestalt of ‘place’ allows for inclusion of Indigenous world views in ‘place’ practice - but I doubt that it could survive the masterplan process.

Casey has argued for inventive encounters with ‘place’:

> A given place may not permit, indeed it often defies, subsumption under given categories. Instead a place is something for which we continually have to discover or invent new forms of understanding, new concepts in the literal sense of ways of “grasping-together”\footnote{404}.

\footnote{399}PLUMWOOD, V. 2007. Ecopolitical debate and the politics of Nature. \footnote{400}ROTHENBERG, D. (ed.) 1989. *Ecology, community and lifestyle*: Cambridge University Press. p. 57 \footnote{401}Ibid. p. 60 \footnote{402}Ibid. p. 61 \footnote{403}Ibid. p. 61 \footnote{404}CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*
From these insights we might observe that ‘masterplan’ and ‘place’ do not belong together - but the masterplan process is deeply entrenched as a norm in practice.

However, if ‘a place is more an event than a thing to be assimilated to known categories’, as Casey has argued\(^{405}\), then spontaneous events and happenings may offer opportunities for different ‘place’ perspectives. Naess considered that: ‘Experiencing of an environment happens by doing something in it, by living in it, meditating and acting\(^{406}\). And Plumwood’s approach to ‘place’ depends on a culture of community care, such as can be found in the voluntary actions of dedicated ‘Friends Groups’ in parks and reserves. Here, ‘care’ should imply ‘careful’, ensuring research before action, as Yugovic has discussed\(^{407}\).

We need to be creative in thinking of alternative ways to engage with ‘place’ and build broken relationships with the ‘other’. Is there an opportunity to extend the scope of ‘community care’? Could provocations such as ‘guerrilla art’ be part of a response? An exemplary model is noted in the work of Sue Clifford and Angela King of ‘Common Ground’, an English arts and environment charity: ‘Common Ground’s quest is to create a culture of wanting to care. Statutory protection is no substitute for local understanding and pride’\(^{408}\). Their ‘local distinctiveness’ campaigns found expression in ‘Parish Maps’, ‘ABC’s’ of community ‘valuables’, essays, manifestos, poetry, postcards, and artist commissions.

Returning to their website, I recognise the words that inspired my early work in the ‘metropolitan parks’ of Melbourne Water, as I sought to introduce ‘local distinctiveness’ to a homogenised development model:

> Local distinctiveness is essentially about places and our relationship with them. It is as much about the commonplace as about the rare, about the everyday as much as the endangered, and about the ordinary as much as the spectacular\(^{409}\).

Later, in private practice, my community consultation methods for masterplan projects built on Common Ground advice:

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\(^{405}\) Ibid. p.329


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Build upon the interests of people, engage their curiosity, offer many ways in, celebrate what they know, create the circumstances for social interchange. Build trust between local knowledge and tumbleweed (sic) expertise so that local wisdom about where things are, how they work, what is known can be added into the more academic means of gathering information. Use values and subjectivity — “what do you value” enables anyone to be an expert, builds courage to tell410.

Common Ground’s mission was understood in Melbourne from Clifford’s presentation at The Creative City seminar in 1988, and government agencies created local responses. While ‘place’ initiatives at that time still reflected an anthropocentric control, they had developed to include ‘community values’ and ‘experiences of place’. But under economic rationalism, government agencies changed radically, and ‘place’ (always fragile) was given a commercial and instrumental frame as ‘place making’ - underpinning a now outdated idea of dominant human creator in a subject / object relationship.

To foster change, we need to work from within the dominant paradigm, grasping opportunities for expanded practice. Within a masterplan process I remain in touch with my personal philosophy, valuing the ‘other’ in a more-than-human world, and ‘place’ as something vital that I can never know completely. I continue to work with phenomenological methods, and to ask communities ‘what do you value?’ I take myself out into ‘place’ (again and again) and pay attention to a now-expanded praxis. But effective ways of engaging communities in the processes need on-going reflection.

**Place Enquiry through Practice**

- **Black Rock Village Streetscape Masterplan**
- **Royal Avenue (Sandringham) Reserve Masterplan**
- **Tooradin Foreshore Reserve Masterplan**

The three projects I will discuss could be seen as very different in genre, comprising township, parkland, and foreshore reserve, but they are all public projects and located on the traditional lands of the coastal Boonwurrung / Bunurong people of Port Phillip and Westernport.

Sitting a while at a table outside the ‘Egyptian café’, I become aware of the presence of ‘blue’. It permeates the space that opens to the Bay, meets the horizon, and lightly shrouds me in an infinite, connective tissue.

Certainly, I’m not the first person to contemplate ‘blue’. French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty wrote far more eloquently of a similar experience, some ‘place’, which has resonance with my own:

As I contemplate the blue of the sky … I abandon myself to it and plunge into this mystery, it ‘thinks itself within me’, I am the sky itself as it is drawn together and unified, and as it begins to exist for itself; my consciousness is saturated with this limitless blue.

In 2008, I was commissioned to develop a master plan for the Black Rock ‘village’. A phenomenological approach to practice, based in perception, was not new to me: I recall that I was aware for the Seaford Life-Saving Club Precinct Masterplan in 2003 that my method of designing an experience rather than an object was based in phenomenology. This project was known as ‘The Seaford Experience’, although I take no credit for the name.

The commission began as the ‘Black Rock Activity Centre Master Plan’, reflecting the interests of Council’s Economic Development Unit and Planning Department. But the Black Rock shop traders objected to the title and it was renamed the ‘Black Rock Village Master Plan’, to reflect their brand image. As I began to explore some of the bigger issues, my brief was reduced in scope by another renaming - to the ‘Black Rock Village Streetscape Master Plan’. I had intended to address some of the shadow issues of access in lanes behind shops, and to open discussion on opportunities for walk-throughs to existing car parks off lanes. I was encouraged by the depth of ideas that emerged in consultation with the traders: the village drycleaner promoted the recycling of waste water in the village (from drycleaner and hairdressers’ use), but I was ultimately disappointed when council removed these items from the agenda. This was a decade of drought, and the trader’s idea was visionary. My promotion of ‘roof gardens’ for new developments was similarly shelved. With the big issues of sustainability now removed from my brief, the opportunities for meaningful change were

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411 My journal entry, n.d.
diminished, but my team persisted with traffic calming, water-sensitive urban design, and ‘place’ initiatives. Looking forward to design, I inspired a manufacturer to produce a modular concrete paver based on the colours and textures of the local beach sand.

At the end of the master planning process, council decided to fund construction of (only) the two pedestrian crossings that had been flagged from the beginning. Design now proceeded ‘in-house’. At the crossings, ‘rain gardens’ became ‘garden beds’, the existing furniture suite was re-stated, and the special pavers were casually substituted. The master plan report, which documented the process, was not released to community or councillors for discussion: only the summary drawing was approved at councillor level. ‘Place’ initiatives were left undeveloped (without ‘thickening’), and a fragile trust in council was lost.

Royal Avenue (Sandringham) Reserve Masterplan

Royal Avenue Reserve is an area of approximately eight hectares. It is the setting for the Bayside Municipal Offices, (concurrently under redevelopment for additional office accommodation), but also a tennis centre on the western boundary, an Indigenous Resource Garden (in its fourth face lift) and a large dogs-off-leash area, which has drawn the most vocal community comment. The site vegetation has been modified from the original, but extensive areas of planted Coastal Tea Tree remain from a previous use of the land by the Royal Melbourne Golf Club (circa 1920s). The current master plan commission was something of an afterthought, following the planning for additional offices over several years. As such, there are lost opportunities, which I will discuss further, below.

I formed a project team in response to my interpretation of the requirements. It consisted of an ecologist, an environmental planner, an access-for-all-abilities consultant, a hydrology engineer and myself as landscape architect and project manager. (Four team members were, or had been, local residents, and had prior knowledge of the local culture and environment.) A largely unspoken expectation of my brief was that I would find ways to accommodate an unspecified number of vehicles within the reserve - a demand which would likely result from the expanded council offices. (As I hadn’t included a traffic engineer, I ended up doing the traffic counts myself, reporting on the current vehicle demand.) The title of the project was changed from ‘Parkland’ to ‘Reserve’ at the instigation of Council, when the implications of my recommendation for a changed zoning (to protect the parkland) were realised.
By August 2009 we had held two open community meetings to discuss ‘future directions’ for the reserve. The first meeting was held on a hot Saturday afternoon, in a marquee in the park. I had prepared a low-key ideas presentation to foster dialogue, and the refreshments were first-class. Before the meeting we had become aware of animosities amongst the dogs-off-leash lobby, in having not been consulted about the footprint of the new municipal offices, which were now under construction, with a large area of the park fenced off for materials deliveries. On the day of the meeting, a senior council officer ‘fuelled the fire’ by declaring that Council was not obliged to consult on plans for the building because of the zoning for municipal purposes. Our meeting never recovered from this un-thinking comment, and a chorused response to the parkland master plan direction was ‘no change’.

We had under-estimated the impact of pre-election mode amongst candidates for a new council term, and found our meeting hijacked by one councillor (who had been part of the planning team for the new offices) inciting the community in matters which had previously been decided by council and were not part of the masterplan. The chaos produced a setting that was unlikely to benefit the progress of the masterplan and several planned activities were abandoned. However, I did manage to turn the mood somewhat when I questioned the ‘no change’ chorus. There was some agreeance on the need for more shade trees and the encouragement of native birdlife, which was perceived to have disappeared. Some participants told me later that they liked the ideas for a community garden and opportunities for ‘petanque’ but had been intimidated by the mood of the crowd and hadn’t found the courage to add their voices. I had also observed and analysed (as required for good ethnographic practice) a situation where a personality clash between two participants had negatively impacted on the community meeting. (My analysis was clarified by additional information from a third party.) But in deleting details of this analysis, because it could distress those involved, I have reflected on the possible implications: I don’t consider that practitioners/landscape architects should observe without questioning ‘what is going on here?’ even though this may present some difficult truths. In some instances there may be ethical reasons for analyses to remain only in the field notes or journal of the practitioner and not be included in master plans or theses, but we must also be aware of the socio-political implications of our practice and not contribute to a continuing colonialism through silence.
The unlucky combination of events (as above) could have been avoided if my client had been more in touch with the local community. For my team, the community day was exhausting and largely unproductive. For me, I was privately wondering if I really wanted to continue in my profession, which is after all as much about communities as it is about the land.

In the following weeks, my team worked through the land-based issues, and found opportunities to bring new life to the parkland. We proposed sixteen opportunities for water-sensitive urban design, bringing an environmental action to the forecourt of the council headquarters, by working with the slight undulations of the topography. My team ecologist corrected my view that the site is ‘degraded’ to ‘highly modified’. His explanation of ‘custodial philosophy’ in relation to proposed management directions for Royal Avenue Reserve reflects my approach as well as my thinking about ‘place’ and the possibility of different ‘world views’ in response to it:

Land custodianship is the philosophy that the land, by which we mean the actual site itself, has a long history going back many thousands of years, and that this ... quality should be respected and perpetuated. The land should not lose sustainability or be harmed in any way. Native (indigenous) vegetation occupied the site over that long time period and some of the original flora and fauna continue to occur there. Aboriginal ownership of land is custodial whereby every site is appreciated as important in some way and worthy of care and protection. Non custodial philosophy regards a given site as having no special qualities. The site is available for use or exploitation and may be transformed or even degraded.413

Our draft masterplan allowed for the opening up of some ‘weedscape’ areas for a picnic ground, and a path system for better and more equitable access. It also preserved some ‘wild areas’. It was too late to address the ‘lost opportunities’ in the new building plans - I would have included a small café, opening on to the parkland as an informal meeting ‘place’, as a ‘bridge’ between ‘them’ and ‘us’ – council and community, public toilet facilities and undergrounding of additional car parks. At an early stage I was instructed to remove the proposed community produce garden from the plan, as ‘no-one within council is prepared to take responsibility for it’. (Later I was told that ‘it was never on the plan’.)

413 Jeff Yugovic, ecologist, in email dated 22 December 2008 (pers. comm.)
Our second public meeting sought feedback on the draft masterplan. We had made some fundamental changes to the consultation process for the second meeting. Even so, it was not without drama. In the week of the consultation, we were called to meet Council’s community liaison officer, who voiced an opinion on the role of master plans in general (as sitting on a shelf with no funding for delivery of community expectations). On the morning of the consultation evening we were asked to meet with him again, and instructed to change some wording on the plan: ‘recommendations’ were to become ‘opportunities’ and the report, which explains the plan, was not to be released to the public. But worse was to come: the CEO wanted to abort the meeting. His concern was that the councillors had not had time to consider the future needs for municipal building extensions on the site. I suspect there was an unvoiced agenda (again informed by a third party, but too sensitive to include here). We argued strongly for the meeting to go ahead that evening, and won. Our day was taken over with last minute changes and reprinting of the altered plans for display, and I suspect we were looking very stressed when we welcomed the community back later that day.

But there was never a resolution of primary issues: path alignments were changed ad-hoc, compromising ‘landscape’ works were undertaken while the plan was in progress, and the major theme of readjusting storm water flows to benefit the parkland was abandoned in favour of normative piped stormwater systems. New ideas were simply not on the agenda. More recently, council has decided to add yet again to the area of staff car parking on the reserve with an additional twenty four parking spaces. The options of car-pooling and bus pick-up from railway stations are no longer mentioned.

Tooradin Foreshore Reserve Masterplan

The masterplan proceeded from a shaky start. As sometimes happens, I was asked by a government department for an overnight price submission for their budget purposes, on the basis of a telephone briefing. My colleague Belinda Ainley responded. We were both

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414 For example, a section of declining windbreak to the north boundary of the tennis courts was removed and replanted with plant species that did not reinforce the existing boundary theme; the boundary was raised along the street edge with a low timber retaining wall, and steps were constructed with uneven spacings; a granitic sand path was laid between the tennis courts car park and the corporate centre, to an artificially sinuous alignment; a new car park was constructed for council staff, without water sensitive design; an intended drainage channel feature was made obsolete by construction of a piped system.

415 REID, M. 6 September 2011b. Watch this space vanish. *Bayside Leader.*
surprised when the project came to life several months later. However, we were not to know that a local committee of management would be our client, that the extent of the brief would be challenged, and that we would meet many pairs of closed ears when explaining our process and proposals. From the first meeting it promised to be a difficult process. Perhaps we should have pulled out then, but we were seduced by the beauty of the inlet and our capability to make a positive difference.

My colleague’s family firm specialises in planning for boating infrastructure. Meeting as an environmental planner and a landscape architect, we speak a similar language: we both understand coastal processes and how to engage communities in fruitful dialogue. But I think there is an additional (intangible) factor: we have both been shaped by the region in which we dwell.

In small increments, we unlocked underlying agendas: such as the aim to upgrade boating facilities to a regional status, and to remove or bury large areas of mangroves for extended car and boat trailer parking. The attitude presented to us that many hectares of mangroves remain in Westernport (and therefore small losses didn’t matter) was unacceptable to us, with our knowledge of their intrinsic value, especially near a river mouth. We did not have up-to-date knowledge of the ecological health of this area as the background reports emphasised (big) boating interests, but we knew that the international Ramsar agreement for the protection of waterbird habitat includes the whole of Westernport.

Our evening meetings with the committee frustrated additional opportunities for daylight site observations or client-accompanied interpretations of site issues. As there was no suitable meeting ‘place’, our introductory meeting was convened in a public picnic shelter, with a keen wind blowing through. While the second meeting venue provided shelter, it was unsuitable in other ways: a sportsman’s club with incumbent drinks bar provided unhelpful temptation for some committee members, with obvious consequences.

The committee presented as the only site managers, but we soon learnt that Council was maintaining the lawns and the toilet block, and had been responsible for a heritage overlay on the planning scheme. Thus, our resolutions also affected Council and DSE, the government department responsible for crown land, with whom we met separately. There was no coming together of the separate site managers for discussion of the plan.
We were able to show that the site could not physically meet all of the criteria identified for ‘upgraded’ status as a regional boating facility (such as boat wash-down facilities), but that several nearby sites could be considered together to fulfil that function. Through agreement on the number of boat ramps possible, we were able to show that the required number of boat trailer parks would fit on the site without extending the car park area. But, our ‘big idea’ was to reroute the boat trailer traffic, thus freeing up the narrow reserve for pedestrian amenity. Our draft plan and report were favourably received by DSE, but the committee did not understand the status of a draft plan, looked critically at details which we had deliberately left for further discussion, and withheld our progress payment - until prompted by the funding body. Time spent on the project already exceeded our fee and yet there was further demand by the committee for wider community consultation.

I was aware of the significance of Tooradin to the Indigenous people, as ‘home of the bunyip’\(^{416}\), but was unable to engage an Indigenous representative in discussion about the masterplan. This was partly due to the inadequate project budget and the non-availability of the council-employed community representative on days set by council for meetings, but there was and still is an unresolved legal issue. Two separate groups – the Boon wurrung Foundation and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation – have sought acknowledgement as the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP)\(^{417}\) for this ‘country’. In their applications, the land and sea areas that they represent were similarly mapped, and hence both applications were rejected. This situation was hardly conducive to their sharing of knowledge. On later reflection I realised that I missed an opportunity I was seeking because I did not recognise its value: an invitation ‘to walk on site’\(^{418}\) is an offer of knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is embedded in ‘place’ and embodied in the individual, and knowledge is recalled in the subject’s movement through ‘place’.

My reflection on practice through the examples of three masterplan projects records my experiences at this point in my research journey. I have shown how outcomes are controlled by politics that reinforce development agendas (for new pedestrian crossings, expanded car parks, boating facilities), and prioritise ‘space’ before ‘place’.

\(^{416}\) Pers. comm. Bryon Powell, Indigenous Community Development Officer, City of Casey
\(^{417}\) Under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
\(^{418}\) From the Indigenous Community Development Officer
Key Findings

- My preliminary knowledge of Indigenous cultures has led me to respect ‘place’ as a *priori* to ‘space’, and to draw on Western ‘place’ literature that proceeds from this position (including works by Heidegger, Casey and Malpas).

- Western ‘sense of place’ research of the 1970s delivered an anthropocentric, mechanistic model which has now progressed to include a more-than-human world where ‘place’ is considered as ‘event’ (Casey) and ‘vibrant matter’ (Ingold, Bennett).

- ‘Vibrant matter’ and its lively forces are recognised in different languages and cultures as ‘agency’, ‘vital materiality’, (Bennett), ‘life’ (Ingold), ‘élan vital’ (Casey, Bergson, Driesch), ‘motj’ (Rose, Burrumarra) - a vital quality in ‘place’ that cannot be totally controlled by human. This anticipates a surprise appearance of ‘the wild’ in ‘place’ and the prospect of ‘enchantment’.

- ‘Place’ thinking provides a bridge for communication between disciplines and between cultures (see discussion, page 63).

- ‘Place’ exists in a context of ‘region’, as ‘nested’ in region (bioregion, ecoregion), (Malpas).

- A phenomenological method fosters necessary perception of ‘place’ qualities (e. g. Casey, Barnacle).

- Casey’s ‘six leading traits of wild place’ (atmosphere; arc; ground; things; sensuous surface; surrounding array) expand the scope for understanding ‘place’. Both ‘atmosphere’ and ‘surrounding array’ are generally ignored as ‘place’ qualities: an opening to sky and horizon enables these components.

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• ‘Place’ has been misunderstood in ‘place’ making practices that focus on human direction of spatial containment and placement of ‘objects’.

• Both perception and conception add value to ‘place’ thinking; each provokes and supports the other; together they add value to practice (Relph, Augé).

• A ‘tolerance for places in their own essence’ fosters ‘caretaking and ‘sparing’ (Relph, Heidegger), ‘responsive attentiveness’ (Rose), and ‘ecocentric’ before ‘egocentric’ approaches based in modernism (Casey).

• Client briefs and client practices often actively work against ‘place’, and deny its ‘agency’ (see ‘Place Enquiry through Practice’).

• The AILA Place Making Policy requires critical review (if ‘place’ can survive as ‘policy’). A review would consider concepts of ‘vital materiality’ (where the total control of human is rejected); the value of ‘sparing’; ‘ecocentric’ versus ‘egocentric’ practice methods (all discussed in this section), as well as the broader themes argued throughout the thesis.

• If the pre-modern and post-modern join in common recognition of the importance of ‘place’ (Casey), then they do so in the living culture of Aboriginal Australia.

As my research has developed, I have brought to consciousness an underlying premise, that ‘Western’ concepts of ‘place’ may have limited relevance for a contemporary understanding of ‘place’ in Australia, and that the influence on ‘place’ (or ‘country’) of 2000 generations of Aboriginal dwelling, has produced a ‘home-grown’ body of knowledge and research literature: for example, in the works of anthropologists (such as Deborah Bird Rose, John Bradley), philosopher (Val Plumwood), cultural researchers (Peter Read, Stephen Muecke), ‘place’ researcher (John Cameron), catholic nun and academic (Veronica Brady), poets (Judith Wright, Les Murray), and Aboriginal writers, elders and teachers (Julie Gough, Greg Lehman, Dennis Foley, Uncle Max Harrison / Dulumunnum). This offers vital and inspiring new ways to reconceptualise ‘place’. Thus, my search for ‘place’ is incomplete, and the path now leads to Indigenous concepts.

Senior Lawman and Yuin Elder
4. INDIGENOUS PLACE AND CONCEPTS OF PRAXIS

Indigenous Place

What can be known about ‘place’ from an investigation of Australian Indigenous cultures and how can it inform/transform/reinvigorate landscape architecture practice?\(^\text{421}\)

Personal Introduction

I grew up in suburban Melbourne, not knowing my home was on Aboriginal land. I had no knowing contact with Aboriginal people (in retrospect I may have had neighbours and school classmates of Aboriginal descent but none identified as outside the dominant culture.) One of my early memories is of gathering Pipis\(^\text{422}\) and cooking them on the beach\(^\text{423}\) with one such neighbour. But I was more interested in collecting the little iridescent green kelp-shells that I would later know as ‘Maireeners’. (They would lead me to research and participate in the Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural practice of shell necklace making\(^\text{424}\).)

This same neighbour was my father’s fishing companion. I have snippets of memory where he’s ‘just there’ in particular family situations - in a little dingy with my father and me on Kananook Creek at dusk; accompanying some captured eels in a heavy jute bag that was emptied into the laundry copper - to my grandmother’s great delight. What was her memory of eels? I had no knowledge of her history of engagement with ‘place’.

My family left that idyllic ‘place’ between bay and creek when my father tired of the long daily journeys between home and work, and my brother was enrolled in a school ‘further up the line’. My relationship with the coastline survived the move and deepened further. From school we were taken to see the local Aboriginal wells in coastal rock platforms (now covered over with sand for their protection). But back in the classroom we were reading Australian history - Manning Clarke’s version of European discovery and exploration. At about this time, a national referendum was held, enabling Indigenous people to be counted

\(^{421}\) See my reflection and changed perspective on this question at the end of the section (‘Key Findings’)
\(^{422}\) ‘Pipis’ are shellfish – *Plebidonax deltoides*
\(^{423}\) Probably at Shoreham, Western Port
\(^{424}\) ANU. Fusion Symposium, June 2003 ANU Canberra.
in the national census of the Australian population for the first time. Yet, in my adolescent mind, the Aboriginal presence belonged elsewhere – perhaps in central Australia, but certainly not alive in my region.

These experiences provided a formative personal engagement with Indigenous culture in ‘place’, and a background to how some cultural practices are dependent on particular ‘places’, are passed on through settler generations, and learnt as isolated units of knowledge, by demonstration and oral instruction. But there were many gaps in my knowledge, which I first had to identify. (We do not know what we do not know.) To understand my ‘place’ in depth, I also needed to know more about cultural practices in ‘place’. As an adult, I began to look into my ‘gaps’ through participation in art-craft workshops, bushwalking, photography and reading (in parallel with formal study in landscape architecture). In 1998, I had the opportunity to participate in a weekend workshop (‘Drawing on Memory’) with contemporary artist Judy Watson. Watson limited our mark-making materials to ochre, charcoal and water. We worked on the floor, such that our puddles of coloured water were absorbed in the paper, leaving the marks of ‘tidal’ washes, and any slight undulation in the ground surface registered in the applied paper ‘skin’. Watson supplemented our experience by reading excerpts from ‘books of wisdom’ while we worked.

Indigenous artists Judy Watson and Julie Gough have both told of their individual efforts to recover ‘gaps’ in knowledge, their searches for ‘belonging’, and the importance of ‘being in place’ for deepened understanding. Both artists look to official written documents and historical accounts to supplement or guide their art of ‘place’. These have been my resources, too, but I am also increasingly and urgently aware of another ‘way of knowing’, and an Australian Aboriginal ontology that informs a concept of ‘deep place’ - different from what can be learnt from mainstream European philosophers or Western scientific traditions. Indigenous knowledge is fragmented in urban Victoria, reflecting the early settlement history of Aboriginal dispersion and dispossession, but some knowledge can be recovered by learning from less-fragmented northern Indigenous communities about their

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425 The 1967 referendum resulted in a 90% YES vote. My parents never discussed with me how they voted.
426 Judy Watson was one of three artists selected for the 47th Venice Biennale in 1997.
428 In reference to Arne Naess’ concept of ‘deep ecology’ (see discussion pages 105 – 109)
deep understandings of their ‘country’. The value of Indigenous ‘place’ knowledge should be self-evident to the landscape architect practising in Australia - where no ‘place’ was untouched by an Indigenous identity - but it is rarely referenced by practitioners in the urban or suburban context.

I would not suggest that settler Australians can reinvent Indigenous knowledge, but that they can seek to be informed by Indigenous concepts, for practice in ‘place’. My task is to first understand, and then reflect on how this might happen.

Place and Country

At the time of the Hobart Place Conference I was questioning the relationship between ‘place’ and ‘country’. (Indigenous Australians use the word ‘country’ when discussing their ‘belonging places’. I have also noticed that many settler-Australians casually use this word, when they may really be thinking about ‘place’.) ‘Are place and country the same concept?’ - ‘I don’t think so’, a new colleague advised.

Indigenous Australians have borrowed an English-language word ‘country’ and given it a subtle new meaning, defining a fundamental relationship to their ‘home-places’ in a collective noun otherwise expressed in the individual languages of the many Aboriginal nations. I am interested in how this English-language word ‘country’ came to develop its particular Indigenous Australian nuance, and how it relates to ‘place’. The lexical cartographer, Jay Arthur, writes that ‘country’ is ‘used all over Aboriginal Australia to name the place where a person or a group belongs’. She has traced the nuanced meaning from the time of early British occupation, providing examples of reported Indigenous use of the word in archive documents from 1843, (mainly in south-eastern Australia), in reference to ‘belonging places’. She advises:

(Australia) was in fact more like Europe than its occupiers have recognised, with a collection of countries with different languages and distinct cultural variations within a recognisably common base.

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429 Senses of Place Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, April 2006
431 Ibid. p. 119
At the settler level of consciousness, ‘country’ is a land unit with political boundaries and a distinctive native tongue. One might for example compare France and Germany or England and Wales. But Arthur expands on this:

(Country is) the tract of land where an Aboriginal person or community belongs, to which they have a responsibility, and from which they can draw spiritual strength\(^{432}\) (my italics).

These additional meanings are a key to what is meant by ‘country’ in Aboriginal Australia.

Arthur’s archival research is informative, but I am aware of the limitations of knowledge as filtered through a Western or settler Australian’s understanding and translation. Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess has warned that communication is ‘interpreting what the other has said based on prior understanding of what the words and expressions mean’\(^{433}\).

From her long association with Indigenous communities in northern Australia, anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose discusses both ‘country’ and ‘place’ as Indigenous ‘belonging-places’. Her thoughts on ‘country’ expand on Arthur’s definition:

(A country) is politically autonomous in respect of other, structurally equivalent countries, and at the same time interdependent with other countries … Country is multidimensional: it consists of people, animals, plants, Dreamings, underground, earth, soils, minerals and waters, surface water, and air. There is sea country and land country; in some areas people talk about sky country\(^{434}\).

This introduces the idea of interdependencies as vital to the concept of ‘country’. But there is also a further level of significance, where country is recognised as sentient and regarded as ‘kin’. ‘People cry about country, they worry about country, they listen to country... In return, country can feel, hear, and think’\(^{435}\). The concept of ‘country’ is clearly essential to the ontology of Aboriginal Australia.

\(^{432}\) Ibid. p. 119
The Yanyuwa people of the south west Gulf of Carpentaria use the word ‘awara’ to refer to ‘landscape’ or ‘country’. But there is no exact translation. The word can mean ‘earth’, ‘dirt’, ‘land’, ‘place’, ‘soil’, ‘possessions’, ‘sea’, ‘reef’, and ‘home’ – all of these – and carries the full range of cultural meanings which link Indigenous people with ‘country’ as kin.\(^{436}\)

Interrogating Practice - Entering the Anthropologists’ Camp

In recent practice I have been unable to gain direct Indigenous input into projects. In general, an inclusion of Indigenous knowledge is not supported by my local-government clients, in word or budget, and the energies of Indigenous Elders are already stretched in their responsibilities to kin. But there may be another reason: Rose writes that Aboriginal people have told her ‘that because they have lost so much, they are not prepared to speak publicly about their knowledge in any detail, fearing that they will lose control of that which remains’ \(^{437}\). Still, I’m searching for a way to support reconciliation, to offer a more appropriate professional response to our ‘wounded places’, and a deepened understanding of ‘place’. To this purpose I have belatedly enrolled in an anthropology unit (‘ethno-ecology’) at Monash University’s Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies \(^{438}\). As ‘place’ is central to Indigenous culture, I find here the learning environment to foster my research. Within an ethnologically informed program of guided learning I am encouraged to question my concepts, to examine my filters and to ultimately return to my project work for reflection on possible new directions.

Levinas, Rose and ‘Espace Vital’

‘Place’ knowledge is not exclusive to the philosophy discipline, as Casey has noted \(^{439}\) but it is a philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, who has provided insights that inform a discussion of Australian Indigenous ‘place’. I was first introduced to Emmanuel Levinas’ concepts in a conference discussion about ‘phenomenology’ and ‘ethics’ \(^{440}\). But my more recent awareness of the absolute significance of Indigenous Law in an all-encompassing concept of ‘country’ has awakened my interest in Levinas’ writings on (Jewish) Law. As settler

\(^{436}\) Ibid.
\(^{438}\) ‘Hearing the Land’ semester unit, Dr John Bradley, Monash University CAIS, now Monash Indigenous Centre, MIC
\(^{439}\) CASEY, E. S. 1997. The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History, University of California Press. p. 286
\(^{440}\) Senses of Place Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, April 2006
Australians we have no equivalent: in the opinion of the Victoria River people, ‘Whitefellas ... follow dead laws, fail to recognise living ones and, in (our) power and denial, continue to promote death’\textsuperscript{441}. Rose has noted that many of her Aboriginal teachers ‘expressed views that I (she) understood to indicate that they believed that Whitefellas were in a state of epistemological crisis’\textsuperscript{442}. With regard to ‘country’, she notes:

people spoke of Whitefellas “coming up blind” and bumping into everything. The living presence of the living country was not noticed by Whitefellas, whose mission was conquest\textsuperscript{443}.

In her discussion of Indigenous ‘country’ and ‘place’\textsuperscript{444}, Rose has borrowed the expression ‘nourishing terrains’ from Levinas, who offers ‘nourishing terrain’\textsuperscript{445} (singular) as a figurative translation of the French ‘espace vital’\textsuperscript{446} (literally ‘living space’). For Levinas, ‘espace vital’ refers to ‘territory believed by a people ... to be essential to its development and well-being’\textsuperscript{447}, while for Rose, this reflects the Aboriginal English use of the word ‘country’\textsuperscript{448}. She explains: ‘Country is a place that gives and receives life. Not just imagined or represented, it is lived in and lived with’\textsuperscript{449}. While each ‘country’ is autonomous, it is surrounded by other ‘countries’ and linked to them by Dreaming tracks, trade routes, and marriage networks.

Knowledge about ‘country’ is localised, detailed, intimate, and highly valued as personal property. It is stored mentally as dances, songs, stories and designs, with multiple levels of meaning. This wealth of knowledge once extended throughout Australia, but in the earliest settled urban regions it has been largely lost, along with language. ‘Once a multiplicity of nourishing terrains, there is now a multiplicity of devastations’\textsuperscript{450}.

Despite the losses, responsibilities to ‘care for country’ remain. Rose elaborates: ‘It is not a contract but a covenant, and no matter what the damage, people care’\textsuperscript{451}. She considers that ‘caring for country has the potential to become an ethos of the settlers as well as the

\begin{enumerate}
\item ROSE, D. B. 2004 Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation, University of New South Wales Press. p. 9
\item Ibid. p. 9
\item Ibid. p. 9
\item Ibid. p. 9
\item LEVINAS, E. 1989. The Levinas Reader, Blackwell Publishing. p. 210, n. 2
\item Ibid. p. 190
\item Ibid. pp. 190, 210, n. 2
\item Note however, that Levinas was referring to the ‘nourishing terrain’ of biblical text
\item Ibid. p. 81
\item Ibid. p. 81
\end{enumerate}
Aboriginal inhabitants. This would seem to be a point of possible connection, but the concept does not sit comfortably with the dominant tools of natural resource management. There are essential ontological differences between the two approaches:

The paradigm of natural resource management is based on Western understandings of nature as separate from humans and an economic resource to be utilised to its maximum capacity by humans. In contrast, the concept of caring for country ... focuses on the relationships between nature and humans. Nature is seen as living and connected to human life.

Cynthia Ganesharajah considers that ‘caring for country’ is vital to Indigenous health and well-being. (It may well be proved vital to the health and wellbeing of settler Australians as well.) Citing Altman, et al, she reiterates that ‘caring for country’ involves:

Looking after all of the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area, as well as associated processes of spiritual renewal, connecting with ancestors, food provision, and maintaining kin relations.

She could also have added inter-generational learning and the continual creation and renewal of nature.

Place and Landscape (part two)

I have found to my dismay (as a landscape architect, sensitive to Indigenous ‘place’), that while ‘place’ and ‘country’ are central to any discussion of Indigenous culture, ‘landscape’ is almost pejorative in anthropological circles, where a translation and interpretation of the old Dutch word ‘landskip’, as a painting style, predominates. Rose contrasts the concept of ‘country’ with ‘landscape’ by reference to Indigenous Law:

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452 Ibid. p. 84
455 NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BOARD NT 2006. Indigenous Ecological Knowledge. p. 15
... the term ‘landscape’ signals a distance between the place, feature, or monument and
the person or society which considers its existence. One can ask questions about what
people will choose to conserve in a given landscape. One can ask questions about the
multiplicity of values that a landscape has for people. But these questions cannot readily
be asked within an Aboriginal concept of country because country has its own life, its
own imperatives, of which humans are only one aspect. It is not up to humans to take
supreme control, or to define the ultimate values of country\(^\text{457}\).

In Indigenous ‘countries’ where Law has survived, this latter point is fundamental. For
landscape architects working within a Western tradition, the apparent contrast in ontologies
is confronting. How might we respond? Perhaps we could consider that we are practising in
‘country’ that has already lost its complex interconnections during a process of colonisation,
and that some (human) intervention is therefore necessary in order to regain equilibrium?
Maybe. But other anthropologists have also had something to say about ‘landscape’.
Kearney and Bradley note that the notion (of landscape) ‘reflects a western epistemological
view of the world’\(^\text{458}\). They liken it to Bender’s “western gaze”\(^\text{459}\) that ‘creates a separation
between nature (the object) and culture (the people)’; whereas ‘place’ ... ‘is fully realised by
the interrelationship of human existence and practices’\(^\text{460}\). Bender is quoted widely and
presents a position that the landscape architect must address:

In the contemporary Western world we ‘perceive’ landscapes, we are the point from
which the ‘seeing’ occurs. It is thus an ego-centred landscape, a landscape of views and
vistas\(^\text{461}\).

Aboriginal philosopher Mary Graham contributes further to this discussion: ‘To behave as if
you are a discrete entity or a conscious isolate is to limit yourself to being an observer in an

Estate: Natural Resource Management as Economic Development in Remote Australia. Discussion
Canberra. p. 10

\(^{458}\) KEARNEY, A. & BRADLEY, J. 2009. Too strong to ever not be there: place names and emotional
geographies. Social and Cultural Geography, 10. p. 79


\(^{460}\) KEARNEY, A. & BRADLEY, J. 2009. Too strong to ever not be there: place names and emotional
geographies. Social and Cultural Geography, 10. p. 79

University Press. p. 121
observed world\textsuperscript{462}. This was of course the position that explorer Major Mitchell adopted and described in his journal of 1839 (see Section 2).

A singular translation and interpretation of ‘landskip’ gave us ‘landscape’ as synonymous with a painting style; it has created much mischief in assuming a separation of viewer and view that came to describe the ‘Western gaze’ of colonial appropriation. But as in most translations, this was only one of several possible meanings. Geographer Kenneth Olwig has traced a Germanic etymology for ‘ländschaf’, to recover an original meaning\textsuperscript{463}. John Wylie discusses Olwig’s finding: ‘... long before the invention of perspectival painting led to its pictorial and scenic redefinition, landscape was a particular sort of legal and political entity’, and quotes Olwig: “the primary meaning of ‘Ländschaft’ appears to have been a judicially defined polity, not a spatially defined area\textsuperscript{464}. But this interpretation could also support the politically-informed Western gaze.

Similarly, landscape architect Anne Whiston Spirn has traced original meanings - in the Danish ‘landskab’, German ‘landschaft’, Dutch ‘landschap’ and Old English ‘landscipe’ - that combine two roots: ‘ “Land” means both a place (my underline) and the people living there. Skabe and schaffen mean “to shape;” suffixes – skab and – schaft ... also mean association, partnership\textsuperscript{465}. This seems more like ‘place’ to me. But Spirn insists on ‘landscape’. She rejects contemporary dictionary definitions that define landscape as ‘static’: ‘... landscape is not a mere visible surface, static composition, or passive backdrop to human theater\textsuperscript{466} and calls for revival of the older meanings. But which meanings hold currency? Different nuances of meaning are held in different languages, cultures, and disciplines, and change over time. For example, Casey has emphasised a connection between ‘landscape’ and ‘place’:

‘Landscapes are, in the final analysis, placescapes; they are congeries of places in the fullest

\textsuperscript{464} Olwig (2002) in ibid. pp. 195 - 196
\textsuperscript{466} Ibid. p. 126
experiential and represented sense\textsuperscript{467}. And Malpas reminds us that ‘... landscape is ... not the sole preserve of any one field or discipline\textsuperscript{468}.

Malpas has considered the visual and pictorial derivation of ‘landscape’ that gave rise to the view of a detached observer, and emphasises an alternative interpretation of connection as necessary to the pictorial view:

... the idea of landscape as essentially tied to a representational, that is, spectatorial, way of relating to the world seems to neglect crucial elements in the very experience of landscape out of which any such representation or “viewing” arises. ... In the encounter with landscape, and with place through landscape, we do not merely encounter something apart from ourselves, but rather we come into contact with the place in and through which we ourselves come into being\textsuperscript{469}.

A ‘sustained interaction’ with ‘landscape’ and ‘place’ is crucial to my depiction of repeated visits to the Sandringham foreshore, as discussed in ‘Being in Country: a Sunday Ritual’.

Inasmuch as landscape architecture is a practice of designing the ‘artificial’, will it continue in the context of a modernist, dualist perspective (that gives preference to human as separate from ‘nature’), or will it develop in Australia in response to ontologies of connection, ‘fully realised’ as ‘place’?

What would it mean to think of ourselves as one species among many rather than as the highest species? Is it possible within Western knowledge systems to become more than an observer in an observed world\textsuperscript{470}?

Sacred Place: Vital and Supervital

An in-depth examination of the concepts of ‘vital’ and ‘supervital’ life forces as recognised by traditional Aboriginal people provides a different perspective from which to reflect on ‘sacred’ place.

\textsuperscript{467} CASEY, E. S. 2002. \textit{Re-Presenting Place: Landscape Painting and Maps}, University of Minnesota Press. p. 271
\textsuperscript{468} MALPAS, J. (ed.) 2011. \textit{The Place of Landscape: Concepts, Contexts, Studies}: The MIT Press. p. xii
\textsuperscript{469} Ibid. pp. 3 - 26
All living things are “vital” (they are alive), but the potential ... to become “supervital” (possessed of elements related to their original ancestral spiritual beginnings) is ever present in Aboriginal societies\(^{471}\).

Settler-descendents might recognise a ‘vital ‘(living) force in the landscape as seasonal change and growth, but the ‘potential to become supervital’ is particular to Aboriginal ontology. From within Yanyuwa culture, Bradley has identified different levels of ‘sacred potential’ which ‘are open to interpretations that are dependent upon time, place, event and the gender balance at any one moment’\(^ {472}\).

I will elaborate further on ‘Dreaming’ in a later section (page 148). Here, I want to acknowledge it only briefly as the ‘creation event’ that connects all Aboriginal culture as ‘Law’, and as the agency that is considered to be active in the ‘supervital’. This concept opposes the (Western culture) binary of ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’\(^ {473}\); rather, ‘fluidity’ and ‘interconnection’ are the key: ‘in so far as the world of human and creation ancestors reaches into the everyday world ... there is constant interaction and interconnection between them’\(^ {474}\). The ‘potential to become’ (‘supervital’) is perhaps a basis of the widely voiced claim that all land is sacred.

Of relevance to this discussion is an aesthetic property that is variously translated into English as ‘brilliance’, ‘shimmer’, or ‘shining’. Art curator Wally Caruana noted ‘brilliance’ in a technique used in Aboriginal art and design that transforms ‘a mundane state to an extraordinary one’, thus evoking ‘the radiant presence of supernatural power’\(^ {475}\). Similarly, visual anthropologist Howard Morphy has written in relation to Yolngu culture of a particular visual effect produced by a technique of cross-hatching in bark painting called ‘bir’yun’ (‘to shimmer brightly’). ‘As the surface of the painting shines it appears to move. This is interpreted as a manifestation of ancestral power’\(^ {476}\). He describes the raw materials used


\(^{473}\) I am contrasting ‘sacred’ with ‘secular’ (meaning ‘worldly’) rather than with ‘profane’, which is usually associated with discussions about religion.


\(^{475}\) CARUANA, W. 1993. Aboriginal Art, Thames and Hudson. p. 14

\(^{476}\) MORPHY, H. 2008. Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories, Sydney, UNSW Press. pp. 92-93. (Morphy acknowledges that the importance of the concept was first noted by anthropologist
for painting - ‘red and yellow ochres, blood, pipe clay, rainbow lorikeet and cockatoo feathers, beeswax and animal fats’, that have special properties of ‘brightness’ or ‘shine’\textsuperscript{477}. Morphy emphasises the importance of the transformation, from ‘dull’ to ‘bright’, in association with other elements of ritual performance, such as song and dance, to create a feeling of Ancestral presence\textsuperscript{478}. The same qualities of brilliance are repeated in the words of song and poetry, where they provoke associations at different levels. Imagine for example the dilly bags of the Djan’kawu sisters, decorated with orange and green feathers, hanging in the Casuarina tree where ‘the feathers are caught in the rays of the evening sun which intensifies their redness’\textsuperscript{479}. This is a beautiful image of transformation, dependent also on subtle movement and shadow, and an eventual fading to dullness. But the song-poem does not end here. At a ‘place’ called Djiiriniwuruma, the Djan’kawu sisters ‘laid down their dilly bags which were transformed into a rock formation’ and according to the Yolngu, now ‘radiate red and blue colours in the sunlight and produce coloured reflections in the waters of the swamps’\textsuperscript{480}.

Donald Thomson differentiates, through Morphy, that ‘the mundane or secular meaning of bir’yun refers to intense sources and refractions of light, the sun’s rays, and to light sparkling in bubbling fresh water’ - which is familiar to all as ‘scintilla’ - while ‘applied to paintings bir’yun is the flash of light, the sensation of light one gets and carries away in one’s mind’s eye, from a glance’\textsuperscript{481} (with associated ‘supervital’ connections). Morphy has discussed that an appreciation of art across cultures can simultaneously allow a reading of aesthetic values and interpretations at different levels. ‘... art provides a means of exchanging ideas and sharing values’\textsuperscript{482}. But without translation and interpretive assistance we can only perceive an aesthetic image, and remain unaware of any potential for ‘supervital’ connections. What is not immediately obvious is that Caruana and Morphy are describing gender-specific knowledge and practices, in gendered ‘places’.

\textsuperscript{478} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{479} Ibid. p. 31
\textsuperscript{480} Attributed to Berndt, R. M., 1976, in ibid. p. 31
\textsuperscript{481} Ibid. p. 28
\textsuperscript{482} MORPHY, H. 1998. \textit{Aboriginal Art}, Phaidon Press. p. 37
In south-eastern Australia where the intricate webs of Aboriginal human-nonhuman kinship relationships (as bases for culture) were disturbed and broken by European colonisation, the ‘supervital’ may still be alive, but sleeping. Visitors to country sometimes bring rare knowledge that can assist in cultural reconstructions: Jeremy Eccles relates how East Kimberley (Gija) artist and senior law man the late Paddy Bedford (on a visit c. 2002) recognised a marked tree near the Melbourne Cricket Ground as ‘a Men’s meeting place, and the beginning of a songline that carried the Cockatoo story all the way to The Kimberley’. There are still ‘signs’ in the urban landscape, waiting for cultural knowledge that can reveal their connections. Occasionally we also find reference to the ‘supervital’ in literary works, and recognise an ‘enchanted’ country.

Alert awareness leads to recognition, protection, and respectful acceptance, but does not sanction appropriation. Rose offers strong guidance on this point:

> Law belongs to country and to people. It is embedded, of course, in society and culture, and it is intellectual property which is not freely available to all. ... If there is one thing that is absolutely not free, in Aboriginal land tenure systems and in Aboriginal politics, it is knowledge. This point is often misunderstood by settler Australians who, when told something, feel free to use that information as they wish. In truth, the fact that a person has been told something does not mean that they therefore have the right to tell others.

... the best rule is ... always ask.

In Western discourses we do not encounter the same concept of ‘supervital’ – in white Australia there was never an intricate web of human-nonhuman kinship relationships that could produce a comparable ‘supervital’, even in ‘places’ that once held a story, a song, and ‘supervital’ potential.

Returning to the World War 1 avenues of honour (previously discussed, page 99), I reflect that an intuitive feeling for the ‘sacred’ as vital (living), embedded, and emplaced may have inspired their creation, but the ‘supervital’ as I have come to understand it from Aboriginal

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483 Eidelson has noted that the Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) tribe camped here during the early years of white settlement, and corroborees were held. EIDELSON, M. 1997. The Melbourne Dreaming: A Guide to the Aboriginal Places of Melbourne, Aboriginal Studies Press. pp. 14 - 15
perspectives is more remote. (‘White man has no Dreaming’\textsuperscript{487}) In the transference of avenue of honour to stone and bronze memorial, there is both displacement and explicit political control: the new memorials have no connection with the former avenues of honour.

How might this have been handled differently?

Let us consider the bi-centennial installation of two hundred hollow-log coffins at the entrance to the National Gallery of Australia. The works make a powerful political and aesthetic statement as a memorial to the Aboriginal dead. Echoing the sentiments expressed for the Caulfield / Brighton avenues of honour, the forty three Aboriginal artists who created ‘The Aboriginal Memorial’ intended that it ‘be located in a public place where it could be preserved for future generations’\textsuperscript{488}. The number of hollow log coffins in this memorial is symbolic, but each one is individually marked with the ‘cultural DNA’\textsuperscript{489} of Yolngu clan symbols and Dreamings, and could also represent a deceased person where the designs are the same as those painted on the body during burial rites. The ‘shimmering brilliance’\textsuperscript{490} of the cross-hatching provides a ‘singing quality to the imagery’ evoking ancestral power\textsuperscript{491}. In their installation in Canberra Morphy interprets that the hollow-log coffins represent ‘a movement of place’:

To Aboriginal people art is linked to land, history and identity, and in journeying to other places it carries those connotations with it. ... The exhibition space becomes (my italics) the Blyth River\textsuperscript{492} region of Central Arnhem Land. The burial poles are ordered (my italics) to reflect the geographical relationships between the clans that made them\textsuperscript{493}...

This is an interesting development for ‘place’ identity: an object that holds strong ‘place’ and ‘cultural’ associations can retain its ‘essence’ with its movement to a different ‘place’!

\textsuperscript{487} Refer to an explanation of the ‘Dreaming’ concept as ontology, pages 148 - 149
\textsuperscript{489} Here I am using ‘cultural DNA’ as an analogy to acknowledge the complexities of culture that are encoded in the hollow-log coffins and the avenues of honour (including the chosen timber / tree species, its ‘place’ of origin, ecological and cultural associations, the ‘construction’ for particular purpose, name, symbolic marking, and connections with a person, community, kin, moiety, gender, story, ceremony, ritual, ‘country’ ... ).
\textsuperscript{492} Actually the Glyde River Estuary (per ibid.)
\textsuperscript{493} MORPHY, H. 1998. Aboriginal Art, Phaidon Press. p. 37
It provokes a reconsideration of the avenues of honour as cultural constructs and suggests that they might be authentically reconstructed in different ‘places’, by inclusion of essential significations (of land, history and identity).

Morphy notes that ‘(F)or much Aboriginal art, the act of production was as important as the finished object’. He is referring here to the recognition of ancestral forces in ritual (art production) contexts, perhaps also to the selection of materials and motifs, and an ephemeral nature whereby ‘more permanent forms such as hollow-log coffins and graveposts were exposed to the ravages of the elements’. But there is no suggestion of disrespect through removal. Perhaps there is a corresponding validity in reconsideration of the avenues of honour as ephemeral objects, in the context of time-worn, imperfect, and aged.

The creation of the avenues of honour was also a community activity. A story is told of five hundred women from the Lucas factory in Ballarat who planned and planted the first avenue of honour, consisting of nearly four thousand trees, over ‘fourteen miles’. Women were also prominent in the planting of the Caulfield and Brighton avenues of honour. In contrast, the transference to stone memorials was decided by the male members of a working group of Council and the Returned Servicemen’s League (RSL). Thus, servicemen’s names were ordered alphabetically, personal details condensed, and the remnant living presence and story of the Caulfield/Brighton avenues dismissed. The transference process and resulting object represent a move away from qualities of ‘imagining’ through poetic connection, to a functionalist reductionism.

A poetic dialogue with the landscape is fragile. It may present as faded, ragged, imperfect, incomplete, marked, old-fashioned ... As a society we have not yet learnt to recognise or preserve it as a value in the landscape. But poetic engagement supports our self knowledge and vitality as a society, our diverse perceptions and connections with landscapes - through memory and imagination, and reconciliation with Aboriginal cultures through a common poetic language. As a point of connection with Aboriginal cultures, we could consider that the permanence of the product / object is not the only goal, rather the coming into being, a

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494 Ibid. p. 23
brief bright ‘shimmer’, the involvement and performance of communities in shaping an experience, and regular renewal to keep the culture alive and relevant.
Concepts of Praxis

Praxis

Praxis may be defined as ‘how theoretical ideas are translated into the world’, such as ‘through research, teaching, discussion and debate’. But this definition is too restrictive for the development of my ideas. I have previously declared my preferred practice method as a phenomenology of ‘place’ (see ‘Phenomenology in Praxis’, page 65), which allows freedom for exploration and invention. The issues that concern me are not presented for discussion in project briefs and I must find my own ways of contributing to change through a personal model of praxis.

From a limited praxis concept of ‘enquiry ~ reflection ~ practice’, reflecting my project-based life in landscape architecture practice, I have expanded my praxis model to reflect my new learning, as:

provocation ~ contemplation in ‘place’ ~ journaling and critical reflection ~ dialogue ~ document research ~ practice.

This model is demonstrated in two written works developed in this thesis as ‘the new road to Bendigo’ and ‘being in country: a Sunday ritual’; and in my ‘reconciliation week installations’. I am energised by this model of praxis.

My praxis model highlights ‘provocation’ as my intention to develop responses to issues that concern me, often independently from project briefs; my model requires ‘contemplation in place’ (‘being-in-place’; returning to ‘place’); ‘journaling and critical reflection’ allow space for re-examining beliefs and practices – turning the mirror for self reflection and making changes (see ‘Reflexivity’, below); ‘dialogue’ is essential for interconnection, moving beyond ‘ego’; ‘document research’ often provides evidence of past actions and related attitudes - that may continue their influence in the present. Praxis demands an outcome – a ‘practice’ – resulting in a ‘work’. The order of activities in my model of praxis is unimportant – it is not a prescriptive model.

Reflexivity

I became aware of inherent biases in my discipline and profession that support a continuing colonial hegemony. These include, but are not limited to: the valuing of conceptual order before experiential order, the individual (ego) before community, and references to histories that ignore Indigenous perspectives. My awareness and critical reflection were precipitated by new learning (as described in ‘Interrogating Practice - Entering the Anthropologists’ Camp’, page 125) and would lead to a transformation of my perspectives and response through changed praxis.

‘Critical reflection’ goes beyond reflection as the justification for (one’s) beliefs and involves ‘... challenging the validity of presuppositions in prior learning’. Critical reflection, then, ‘is not concerned with the how or the how-to of action (such as ‘technique’ or ‘method’) but with the why, the reasons for and consequences of what we do’. A ‘reflexive journal’ is an important tool for assisting the reflexive process. The journal may include, but is more than, a collection of phenomenological field notes. In my journal I revisit my prior learning, examining personal beliefs from different perspectives. The journal fosters the transformation of ideas and the development of new practices – I can play with concepts, link memories, ‘cut and paste’, embellish, explore feelings, review actions ... I take care of the journal’s appearance, include collage and fragments of print, and in return it gives pleasure. The journal is an artefact of praxis, but its purpose in assisting awareness, critical reflection and personal transformation, is clear.

As an adjunct to the journal I have become interested in simple print-making and ‘artist’s books’, developing my skills under a teacher’s guidance. In group workshops, dialogue, listening and activity combine in community as learning, which Doris Paton has also demonstrated in her quilt-making / story-telling doctoral research method.

499 Ibid. p. 13
500 Liz Jeneid http://www.lizjeneid.net/
But awareness and critical reflection do not lead immediately to changed practice, as I will discuss further, ‘It requires a hiatus in which to reassess one’s meaning perspectives and, if necessary, to transform them’\(^{502}\). (See ‘Perspective Transformation / Hiatus’, page 145.)

Translation and Interpretation

We have encountered ‘translation’ in various guises: as praxis - theoretical ideas translated into the world (page 137); as topos and chora mistranslated as ‘place’ and space from the ancient Greek (page 78); as poem translated into concept (page 39); and as ‘landscape’, translated from ‘landskip’, a Dutch painting style, preferring the visual and a ‘subject’ / ‘object’ binary (page 127). Whereas translation attempts to convert the same ideas into a different language or form, ‘interpretation’ attempts an explanation of meaning. Both rely on cultural context and ‘inside’ knowledge, and often function together. Malpas reminds us of the difficulties of interpretation: ‘\textit{when we speak together about “place”, we cannot assume a meaning in common}\(^{503}\).

Translation from any language to another will show up conceptual differences and misunderstandings. Even our reading of Heidegger’s works (translated from German to English) provides opportunities for different interpretations, particularly when Heidegger employed old meanings for familiar words\(^{504}\).

In researching ‘place’ in Indigenous contexts, I have largely relied on the translations and interpretations of linguist-anthropologists (viz. Deborah Bird Rose, John Bradley). Through their knowledge of languages and cultures, Rose and Bradley alert us to multiple meanings and emotions contained in words: we have discussed ‘awara’, meaning ‘place’, ‘country’, ‘landscape’, ‘earth’, ‘dirt’, ‘land’, ‘soil’, ‘possessions’, ‘sea’, ‘reef’, ‘home’ (see page 125). But consider also the nuances of observation and meaning in different words for a phenomenon that we might simply name ‘fog’.

\textit{a-wumalhu}, the thick coastal fog that was a Dreaming at Dabalarna on Vanderlin Island; \textit{a-wurna}, the chill mainland fog, the stealer of old people’s spirits, which emanated from


\(^{503}\) MALPAS, J. E. 1999. \textit{Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography}, Cambridge University Press. p. 21

the Black-nosed Python; or *durrkidurruki*, the fog that lifted up the country after sunrise.\textsuperscript{505}

With practice we can recognise the believed gender of phenomena from their naming-words. There is a hidden world of enchantment in the words of traditional cultures, which hold multiple and encoded meanings (and always attach to ‘place’).

Similarly, Naess found Tibetan words that combined geographic feature and ‘mythic’ reasoning in multiple meanings; he noted that mythic thought ‘*characterises contents which are largely unavailable in our* (Western) *culture*’\textsuperscript{506}.

Those of us who are without knowledge of Indigenous languages and their cultural context must acknowledge our dependency on ‘translators’ and ‘advisors’. Somerville has provided a research model (where English is the spoken language of both interviewer and interviewee) by partnering with an Indigenous adviser, quoting Indigenous voices, and checking her transcripts with those she interviewed\textsuperscript{507}. Martin’s work with Indigenous people established protocol strategies, based in ‘relatedness’\textsuperscript{508}:

Indigenist researchers, in order to respect relatedness must work out of an ongoing state of dialogic self-reflexivity to avoid behaviours or thoughts that disconnect, disengage or dislocate. That is, to avoid a state of un-relatedness.\textsuperscript{509}

**Key Findings**

*Understanding Indigenous concepts of ‘place’ as ‘country’*:

- ‘Place’ and ‘country’ are fundamental to Australian Aboriginal ways of being and belonging. The concept of ‘country’ extends a Western concept of ‘place’ to recognise ‘sentience’ and interdependencies in a more-than-human world. (See ‘Place and Country’, page 123.)

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\textsuperscript{507} SOMERVILLE, M. & PERKINS, T. 2010 *Singing the Coast*, Aboriginal Studies Press.


\textsuperscript{509} Ibid. p. 85
• Traditional Aboriginal cultures often give multiple meanings and associations to a single word. Thus, one word (‘awara’ in Yanyuwa culture) can mean ‘place’, ‘country’, ‘landscape’, ‘earth’, ‘dirt’, ‘land’, ‘soil’, ‘possessions’, ‘sea’, ‘reef’, ‘home’ – and hold cultural associations that connect people and ‘awara’ as ‘kin’. These associations recognise ‘awara’ as ‘sentient’. (See ‘Place and Country’.)

• Aboriginal people all over Australia have borrowed the English word ‘country’ to designate their ‘belonging places’: in Aboriginal English, ‘country’ holds multiple meanings (as in ‘awara’) and thus ‘country’ of Aboriginal English holds different meanings from the ‘country’ of settler-English. (See ‘Place and Country’.)

• Further, as ‘place’ and ‘country’ share the compound meaning of the same Aboriginal word (e.g. ‘awara’) the two words would seem to have the same meaning for Indigenous Australians, but cannot carry the same spiritual connections (from ‘Dreaming’) for European Australians. (See ‘Place and Country’.)

• While ‘landscape’ shares meaning with ‘country’ and ‘place’ (as ‘awara’), anthropologists have given it a pejorative meaning, as representing a distance between ‘place’ and observer. They regard this distancing as a binary (subject – object) of Western epistemology that allows arbitrary actions in the landscape. By contrast, traditional Aboriginal cultures are guided in their actions by ‘Law’, which comes from the ‘Dreaming’. (See ‘Place and Landscape’, page 127.)

• In Aboriginal cultures the ‘sacred’ or ‘supervital’ presents as a manifestation of Ancestral power. The potential for something to become supervital is ever present. It is recognised in phenomenal events, in the preparation of special paintings, in rituals of song and dance, repeated in the words of song and poetry, and is manifest in a brief transformation from dull to brilliant, shimmering, or shining. In as much as it is a mark of Ancestral Dreaming it is not part of the ontology of settler-Australians, but may be noticed in its secular appearance as ‘scintilla’. (See ‘Sacred Place: Vital and Supervital’, page 130.)
• A poetic dialogue with the landscape is fragile. It may present as faded, ragged, imperfect, incomplete, marked, old-fashioned, but has value in provoking memory and imagination. (See ‘Sacred Place: Vital and Supervital’.)

• Aboriginal knowledge belongs to ‘country’ and to people. Knowledge about ‘country’ is local, and stored mentally as dances, songs, stories and designs, with multiple levels of meaning. It is intellectual property and not freely available to all. Appropriation can be avoided through collaborative partnerships. (See ‘Sacred Place: Vital and Supervital’.)

• The World War 1 avenues of honour may have been inspired by intuitive feelings for the ‘sacred’ as ‘vital’: but their neglect and re-placement as stone and bronze memorials represents a rationalist reduction of ‘place’. (See ‘Sacred Place: Vital and Supervital’.)

• An installation of two hundred hollow-log coffins at the National Gallery of Australia provides an alternative approach (to the above situation), in a ‘movement of place’, through transference of ‘cultural DNA’. (See ‘Sacred Place: Vital and Supervital’.)

How might we respond in practice?

• At the beginning of this section I asked: ‘What can be known about “place” from an investigation of Australian Indigenous cultures, and how can it inform / transform / reinvigorate landscape architecture practice?’ I have found some insights into the first part of the question (as above) but the second part now seems ill-conceived in that it continues the colonial project in a subtle way, ‘taking’ from Indigenous cultures for the benefit of the dominant (Western) culture. While recognising that something fundamental is missing from the profession as I know it through education and practice in the Australian context, and that that ‘something’ might be found in Indigenous cultures, I now see that my initial question also assumes and therefore supports the hegemony of the profession, institutions and governments, which all derive from the structures of colonial Western epistemologies. Perhaps my question should become: ‘... and how can landscape architecture respond to an enduring essence of place?’ (See discussion of ‘essence of place’, page 29.) This subtle shift unsettles the power imbalance and puts ‘place’ (or ‘country’) at the centre of consideration. Paradoxically, the refocus provides an answer to the original question.

510 See footnote 489
An authentic practice in ‘place’ requires ‘praxis’. My model of praxis has developed in response to my changed outlook and practice, as: ‘provocation ~ contemplation in ‘place’ ~ journaling and critical reflection ~ dialogue ~ document research ~ practice’. (See ‘Praxis’, page 137.)

Approaching practice with an alternative world view is challenging, and the keeping of a reflexive journal is helpful for critical reflection, transformation of perspective and response through changed praxis. (See ‘Reflexivity’, page 138.)

If Western and Indigenous ontologies are incommensurable, they exist in parallel, not as ‘interrelated’. For understanding and responding to Indigenous perspectives, a cultural translator is imperative. (See ‘Translation and Interpretation’, page 139.)

‘Caring for country’ is an action of potential reconciliatory connection between Indigenous and settler Australians. (See ‘Levinas, Rose and Espace Vital’, page 125.)

Limitations

My access to concepts of ‘place’ in Indigenous Australia has been through translation and interpretation by linguist-anthropologists, and may be subject to their personal biases. For example, anthropologists have interpreted the word ‘landscape’ literally and narrowly, from translation of the old Dutch word ‘landschap’ as applied to landscape art, and have berated it as part of a binary of (landscape) ‘view’ and (detached) ‘observer’. However, ‘landschap’ had earlier meant ‘region, tract of land’, which I suggest is close to its meaning for contemporary landscape architects. (See ‘Place and Landscape’, page 127.)

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511 This reflects a discussion with John Bradley, 18 Aug, 2011
5. OBSERVATIONS ON PRACTICE

Crisis

Dissatisfaction with the profession, projects, clients, everything (reflecting on a continuing colonial hegemony)

I find myself practising in a culture of epistemological crisis. How do I bound this realisation that came to consciousness through my reflection on practice experiences in local government cultures, but is clearly more wide-spread? The following observations are linked to experiences in my home region.

As a landscape architect consulting on public projects, my clients are similarly ‘settler-descendant Australians’. Unlike me, they work in hierarchically-structured departments rather than project teams. Invariably, there is competition and conflict between departments within the same organization, sabotage by one department claiming ‘ground’ over another, and rare meeting on common ground: separation, conflict and division are the cultural context in which the landscape architect is expected to deliver her project.

Client staff members move frequently for career advancement and better pay, leaving projects in limbo. Dialogue is often reduced to monologue by ‘pulling of rank’ in a hierarchical structure. Consultation with communities is given ‘lip service’ in the appointment of Advisory Groups (recently described to me by one group member as ‘a smoke screen – so they can be seen to be consulting the public’). ‘Place’ itself is not consulted, or at best falls into line behind ego, as ‘the other’. The professionally trained staff become technicians: valued as computer experts above knowing the ‘place’ that is represented on their seventeen inch monitors. Often they live outside the region, never witnessing the subtleties or nuances of the actions they prescribe. It takes time and presence to know ‘place’. One comes to know ‘place’ by degrees, incrementally, through multiple visits and dialogue.

There is an underlying tension between my work for ‘place’ and the clients’ continuing colonisation project. (I’m sure they would not think of it in this way, but nor do I have evidence that they think beyond this view.) The crisis I speak of affects the outcomes. As I reflect on my last three projects, they all hold components of what I have described above,
but they still hold promise of life. Because they are master plans, in various stages of completion, currently ‘on hold’ while clients rethink future implications, my reflection at this stage can still influence the outcomes. But the reflection is not based on knowledge available within my discipline. Rather, it is informed by anthropology, in an Australian Indigenous context.

Perspective Transformation / Hiatus

Critical reflection\(^{512}\) is a precursor to perspective transformation. But Mezirow has written that perspective transformation is often a response to an externally imposed ‘disorienting dilemma’ – (such as ‘a divorce, death of a loved one, change in job status, retirement, or other’)\(^{513}\). My ‘disorienting dilemma’ was precipitated by personal grief and illness, attention to a growing dis-ease with my discipline and profession, and the accompanying need to understand ‘place’ from an Indigenous perspective. Mezirow further considers that the ‘disorienting dilemma’ may be evoked by ‘one’s efforts to understand a different culture that challenges one’s presuppositions’\(^{514}\). This was indeed the environment in which I placed myself when I enrolled in a semester unit at Monash University CAIS (now MIC). My ‘disorienting dilemma’ was further evoked by my role in judging the 2009 AILA (Vic) Awards, as I was able to confirm that Indigenous reference is barely alive in the practice records of my contemporaries.

My initial reflections on the lack of Indigenous reference in the AILA Awards projects developed into critical reflection to flesh out the possible presuppositions held within the projects. From my experience, the problem is systemic rather than individual, echoed in clients’ briefs, the policies of bureaucracies, and the earliest education of the practitioner. I do not hold myself above this criticism and through critical reflection continue to challenge the validity of my own presuppositions in prior learning, and to transform my perspectives.

The reflexive process is indeed ‘threatening, exhilarating and empowering’, involving ‘the negation of values that have been very close to the centre of (my) self − concept’\(^{515}\) as a

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\(^{512}\) See previous discussion in ‘Reflexivity’, page 138


\(^{514}\) Ibid. p. 14

\(^{515}\) Ibid. p. 12
landscape architect. In accordance with Mezirow’s advice to observe a necessary ‘hiatus’ for transformative learning, I have taken ‘time out’ for this purpose.

The temporary ‘hold’ on projects, coupled with a simultaneous period of formal study in Indigenous culture, provided me with something of a ‘disjunctive moment’: a break in which to consider concepts of ‘place’ from a different world view, and ask how else might we come to recognise ‘place’? If ‘place’ is conceptually similar to Aboriginal ‘country’, and related to other spatial concepts – ‘nested place’, ‘region’, ‘boundary’ – I would argue that an understanding of Aboriginal ‘place’ can provide valuable knowledge for landscape architecture practice.

Reflection is cathartic: it has allowed me to identify the source of problems in practice, which are not within my domain, but with the profession, the client, the community and society’s continuation with the ‘colonial project’. For ‘colonialist views cannot be confined to the colonial period … they continue today to permeate the public’s consciousness’. There are many strands to this argument. One holds the stories we tell about (white) exploration and the language we use; another holds a ‘blindness’ to Indigenous cultures and their alternative ontologies in ‘place’; yet another holds Western epistemologies of rationalism and objectivity, reinforced in political structures and bureaucracies; and another connects colonisation with development: ‘... development continues the colonising project of wealth creation at the cost of water, soils, plants and animals, and marginalised people’. This situation is borne out by the Australian State of the Environment 2011 report, which concludes that global warming, population growth and economic development are the main drivers of (negative) environmental impacts across the country.

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516 See discussion of these concepts in section 3, ‘Searching for Place’ and section 4, ‘Place and Country’.
Reflections on Entering the Anthropologists’ Camp
(See also ‘Interrogating Practice – Entering the Anthropologists’ Camp’, page 125.)

Research into ‘traditional knowledge’ can cause one to reflect on ‘other ways of knowing’ – to become less sure of one’s own world view, and to revalue ‘the other’ as a source of new knowledge. My research in Indigenous ‘place’ is focused in an Australian context, but its ontology and epistemology is supported by the research of anthropologists in other ‘first nations’. In an edited collection of papers\(^{520}\), various anthropologists have reflected on their ethnographic research to support understandings of ‘science’ in common between Western and traditional cultures (for example, Goodenough, on *Navigation in the Western Carolines*; Scott, on *Cree Knowledge Construction*; and Bielawski, on *Inuit Indigenous Knowledge and Science in the Arctic*). Each of these authors draws out common threads in ‘scientific’ practices: viz. empirical observation, the inclusion of new knowledge, (etc.), while recognising that in both worldviews, science is not the only answer. Nader is critical of the direction that Western science has taken, in creating dichotomies (nature/culture) and embracing reduction (the study of ‘objects’ in isolation from their context), and considers that scientific practice is compromised by *boundaries* and *power hierarchies*, which retard its potential.

My critical reflection on ‘other ways of knowing’ has revealed knowledge that can be critiqued for parallel relevance and hypotheses in other parts of Australia (where complex culture has been lost in the colonial silencing of Indigenous languages and dispersal from ‘country’). But beyond this, anthropology has provided complementary practice methods in *reflexive thinking*, *ethnographic research*, *respectful protocols*, *dialogue*, and *working partnerships*.

Reflections on Rapoport Paper

With these insights I will return to review a research paper\(^{521}\) that is still referenced in the contemporary architecture and landscape architecture academy. Perhaps because the author, Amos Rapoport, is an architect and town planner (The University of Melbourne,


1954, 1962), his paper is seen as an interpretive bridge between anthropological insights and built environment disciplines. As its main theme is ‘Australian Aborigines and the Definition of Place’ it anticipates my research interests and demands my consideration in a reflexive response.

It is easy to take issue with Rapoport’s quaint terminology (‘the old days’), his position in an earlier time that does not acknowledge Indigenous cultural adaption to settler appropriation of the land and food resources (‘Aborigines are hunters and gatherers’), or his misinterpretations (‘hunters and gatherers have much leisure time which is used for games and rituals’). But his paper is based on the publications of anthropologists who were prominent at that time in Aboriginal ethnographic research (e. g. Falkenberg, the Berndts, Stanner, Strehlow, Spencer, etc.). It is also easy to be critical through insights from more recent ethnographic and historic research, but the paper is a reflection of its time, and if Rapoport romanticises his subject, this should not divert attention away from the more critical issues: anthropology has also moved on since that time.

Rapoport approaches his theme with full confidence in his research method and his ‘way of knowing’. At no point does he turn the reflective mirror on himself to question his knowledge. The anthropologists he draws reference from are eminent, which seems to satisfy him as evidence of ‘truth’. We might consider that ethnographic research is a Western tool, which relies on the interpretation of the authoring anthropologist, and that ‘Dreaming’ and ‘Dreamtime’ are Western terms for a complex Aboriginal world view that is life-giving and emplaced. Stanner first wrote about ‘Dreaming’ as:

...man, society and nature, and past, present and future, are at one together within a unitary system of such a kind that its ontology cannot illumine minds too much under the influence of humanism, rationalism and science.

But perhaps it is useful to consult a recent explanation of Aboriginal cosmogony as translated by Rose in relation to the Victoria River (Northern Territory) people:

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522 Ibid. p.49
523 Ibid. p.38
524 Ibid. p 38
In the beginning ... the Earth was covered with salt water. The water pulled back, and life came forth. Referred to by some people as “Mother,” Earth brings forth life. The creative and shape-changing ancestors – the Dreamings – came traveling into country, shaping it, marking it, naming it, laying down human groups and their non-human kin, ceremonies, plant communities, and animal habitats. There were men and women Dreamings, and their actions created gendered geography. Dreamings also created the territorial units known as countries ... The ceremonies, including the songs and designs, belong to the people of the country as instituted by Dreaming. Performance “lifts up the country,” people say, enhancing its capacity to flourish.\textsuperscript{527}

Rapoport does not conduct primary ethnographic research. Nor is there suggestion of his accessing the field books of the anthropologists he has quoted, or visiting ‘places’ which might reflect the ideas presented. His sketches of Aboriginal dwellings do not reveal their landscape settings, particulars of sourced construction materials (e.g. plant species), colours, smells ... or ontological connections. His work is not \textit{emplaced}. Consider for example this line from Rapoport: ‘\textit{Often the dead were oriented towards their Dreamtime camping ground}’\textsuperscript{528} (as quoted from Spencer, Baldwin and Gillen). Rapoport has considered knowledge from a particular location in central Australia as \textit{universal} knowledge, and seems to have been unaware of written accounts of ‘local’ Aboriginal knowledge \textit{embedded in ‘place’}, at less than a day’s travel from his own home town. On the wild south-west Victorian coastline, at ‘The Craigs’ near Yambuk, the sentence can be visualised in a local context – here, burial knowledge is \textit{embedded in ‘place’}. From the limestone cliffs, one can look out towards the volcanic plateau of Lady Julia Percy Island, also known by its Gunditjmara name ‘Deen Maar’ or ‘Dhinmar’ (‘The Man’)\textsuperscript{529} and learn from the point of view of Indigenous Law that the spirits of the dead were conveyed across the sea to Lady Julia Percy Island from a cave called Tarnwirring (‘the flowing of the wind’)\textsuperscript{530} at the top of the craggy sea cliff. An ‘interpretive sign’ reveals:

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{529} This name refers to Bunjil, ‘the Creator Spirit’
\end{footnotes}
Every deceased person, when buried, is laid with his head pointing towards the island. His spirit then provides itself with a firebrand ... and disappears over the intervening sea to Dhinmar. The spirits ... remain until reincarnated (R. H. Mathews, 1904).

This is unlikely to be the whole story: again it is an anthropologist’s interpretation of Indigenous knowledge. But receiving the knowledge in ‘place’ allows the ‘particular’ to re-emerge from the ‘universal’, rebalancing the privileging of Western scientific discourse. Further, it fosters a search for additional knowledge, allows an ‘imagining’ in ‘place’, perhaps a subjective involvement in events, and a symbolic reminder of another world view.

Rapoport writes that ‘The mythical landscape is superimposed over the physical landscape and they coincide at natural features’. This may seem helpful, or even inspired, on first consideration, in presenting layers of information that acknowledge and combine Western and Indigenous views of landscape, which might inform praxis. But if we only look at the landscape in layers, how can we know the connections? This is a very real problem for contemporary practice, which is dominated by a layered approach of AutoCAD drawing outputs. Again, Rapoport reflects a dominant Western viewpoint, a dichotomy (‘mythical landscape/physical landscape’), a Western science of reduction to layers, and speaks more of separation than of connection or embeddedness. Consider how this contrasts with the holistic concept of ‘Dreaming’, as explained by Rose (see pages 148 - 149).

In one sense I am retracing Rapoport’s position, as a Western-educated built-environment practitioner accessing anthropological knowledge (and I am grateful for his paper as a catalyst in helping me to form my position). As I have previously acknowledged, the discipline of anthropology has changed since that time. Stanner’s Boyer lectures of 1968 are acknowledged as an important catalyst for rethinking the history of interactions between Indigenous and settler Australians. New ethnographic works have been published,

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531 In a short documentary at the Melbourne Museum’s Bunjilaka Centre, ‘Indigenous Identity’ Jamie Thomas of the Worn Gundidj Co-operative told the story slightly differently. He referred to the traditional ceremony for the dead at this place, to Deen Maar and the burial cave (Tarnwirring - ‘the flowing of the wind’), but he described the ritual of placing grass above the cave and watching for a shooting star and wind to blow the grass away, signifying the departing spirit of the dead person.


533 Although Cuthoys suggests that ‘the change that occurred was at least as much driven by Aboriginal people, voices, and politics, and that Stanner was an important register and publicist of these voices and these changes rather than their sole originator’. See CURTHOYS, A. 2008. W.E.H Stanner and the historians. In: KINKSON, M. & BECKETT, J. (eds.) An Appreciation of Difference, W.E.H. Stanner and Aboriginal Australia. Aboriginal Studies Press. p. 235
informed by anthropologists who have learnt the subtleties of Indigenous languages by living within the culture\textsuperscript{534}. But I am not relying on written anthropological interpretations alone. Indigenous writers, academics and storytellers have published their works, and I have immersed myself in their writing, in Indigenous art and performance, formal academic study, ongoing discussions with anthropologists, and direct contact and dialogue with Indigenous people. Most significantly, I have learnt reflexive activity - to turn the mirror on myself and reflect on my knowledge - where it comes from, how it is informed, and whether there are other ways of knowing? I have also demonstrated the value of direct experience as phenomenological method.

At this point I accept an appointment to judge the 2009 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria) Awards.

Case Study: Judging the 2009 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA), (Victoria) Awards

Observations on reference to Australian Indigenous ‘place’, people, culture

Introduction

As an Awards judge, my criteria for assessment of the entries were already set out, with each Awards category having slightly different criteria. All entries were expected to respond to the (then) new AILA Landscape Principles, the Institute’s guide to practice in a context of climate change. But beyond this, the awarded entries had to stand out as exemplary practice.

The jurors received the entries on a 4GB flash drive by mail, in the week leading up to the judging day, and each juror made preliminary assessments for discussion within the group. Forty nine entries were received in the four categories: design (thirty three), planning (ten), land management (two), and research and communication (four), and each entry had four or more files!

This year the panel did not have the opportunity to interview entrants or to visit the built projects. As Awards chair, I alerted the judges to be wary of being overly influenced by the quality of the visual presentations. As the day wore on, we shortlisted and debated and reminded each other of the criteria on several occasions.

My role also provided a unique opportunity to later search for any reference to Australian Indigenous ‘place’ in the documentation of submissions. This personal interest did not influence my judgement of the entries in any way, as it was not a criterion for assessment. My premise, as previously stated in my personal introduction (see pages 121 - 123), is that Indigenous ‘place’ knowledge is rarely referenced by practitioners in the urban or suburban context.

In my initial reading of the entries I found only six references to Indigenous ‘place’ or culture (twelve per cent of entries), principally in the context of archaeological

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536 References in primary documentation
In this ‘case study’, I will explore the contemporary situation further. A survey of the entries is followed by reflection on the content and context of the included references, and by ‘critical reflection’ on inherent presuppositions. This is not intended as a direct criticism of the few projects that did make reference to Indigenous ‘place’ or culture (non reference is far worse) but as a means of gaining insights that might provide the genesis for more inclusive approaches. I am concerned by the messages that the discipline of landscape architecture is inadvertently sending out about its contemporary praxis. For my research purpose, I have not tabled the names of associated firms or individuals, and refer only to project titles or entry registration numbers.

In contrast with landscape architecture, the discipline of anthropology has redefined itself after a period of critical reflection, and now fosters partnerships with Indigenous custodians for projects that include Indigenous cultural heritage:

After much heated debate and some acrimonious litigation, most Australian archaeologists now accept that Indigenous control of Indigenous archaeological materials in Australia is legitimate and part of the overall reconciliation process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia.\(^{537}\)

I would contend that a similar critical reflection and perspective transformation in the discipline and profession of landscape architecture are long overdue. But as I have noted, the process is ‘threatening, exhilarating and empowering’, involving the negation of values that may be central to one’s self-concept as a landscape architect (see ‘Perspective Transformation / Hiatus’, page 145).

Critical reflection leads to changed praxis. Here we are concerned with how the discipline of landscape architecture engages with Aboriginal Australia. My hope is that this ‘case study’ will trigger third person thinking in others and in the words of Nita Cherry, ‘... if ... the reader

becomes interested in exploring his or her own story and praxis, then it has served a practical purpose and possibly made the most enduring kind of contribution." \(^{538}\)

Discussion

‘The Great Australian Silence’

Every fence in Australia encloses land that was once the sole or the shared possession of a particular group of Aborigines.\(^{539}\)

My most critical observation is a general lack of reference to Indigenous ‘place’ in the forty nine projects entered for the 2009 Awards. Only six projects acknowledge Indigenous culture in their presentation documents, while a further six projects make scant reference in background documents. Where the reference is negligible (e.g. one project, #10, includes only a photograph of a group of people standing in front of a mural with Indigenous content; another, #48, refers only to the client’s existing strategies, including an ‘Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan’) I have excluded these two projects from my further assessments.

This lack of Indigenous reference recalls W.E.H. Stanner’s reflections in 1968. He traced a ‘history of indifference’ on the part of the white settlers, from c.1790, which he termed ‘The Great Australian Silence’.\(^{540}\) Stanner was critical of his discipline, anthropology, in relation to its silencing of the Indigenous voice and the corresponding dominance of white authority in Indigenous anthropology. He reflected on his own complicity in the situation, and a time when ‘few people could think beyond protection and segregation’.\(^{541}\) His ‘partial survey’ of the meagre inclusion of Aboriginal reference in Australian history books from the 1930s to 1955 parallels my own survey and findings in this analysis of the AILA Awards, now more than 40 years later. Stanner writes:

A partial survey is enough to let me make the point that inattention on such a scale cannot possibly be explained by absent-mindedness. It is a structural matter, a view from

\(^{538}\) CHERRY, N. 1999. Action Research: a pathway to action, knowledge and learning, Melbourne, RMIT University Press. p. 105
\(^{540}\) Ibid. p. 207
\(^{541}\) Ibid. p. 205
a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape. What may well have begun as a simple forgetting of other possible views turned under habit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale.\textsuperscript{542}

In a repeat of Stanner’s findings, each reference to Indigenous culture in the AILA projects delivers only a few words, and the words are exclusively those of the dominant white culture. The Indigenous voice is not quoted. One project (#46) does however record consultation with ‘a local aboriginal (sic) elder’, (identified), for the \textit{naming} of a component of the larger design.

\textit{Acknowledging ‘Country’ and People}

The projects rarely acknowledge ‘country’ or Indigenous people. The particular Aboriginal nation or ‘country’ in which the project is located is identified in only three instances (#13, #42, and #45). The \textit{general} east-coast regional term ‘Koori’ is used in a further two instances (#11, #47). This could be seen as a lazy generalisation, for projects are \textit{particularly} located, and information on traditional clan boundaries is readily available (e.g. \url{www.aiatsis.gov.au}).

It is a particularly poignant oversight in one planning project (#28) where an Aboriginal cultural centre is an existing core component (see further discussion below - ‘A Special Case: A Special Place’) and also in a regional planning project (#2), where it is possible that more than one nation should have been acknowledged. Is it ‘\textit{indifference}’ or ‘\textit{a cult of forgetfulness}’ that acknowledgement is not included?

\textit{Archaeological Artefacts, Extinct Relics and Past History}

The project references to Indigenous culture are often limited to archaeological \textit{artefacts}, ‘\textit{extinct relics}’, or \textit{past history} (#2, #11, #15, #20, #22, #28, #42, #45, #47), and fail to acknowledge a ‘living culture’. The tendency to regard Indigenous culture as past history has resonance in a discussion by McNiven & Russell:

\begin{quote}
... central to any study of other cultures is the relationship between the Self (or the West) and the Other. The West is the center of the discourse of civilization, colonialism, and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{542} Ibid. p. 214
ultimately modernity. In contrast, the Other, the dark side, are those peoples who are forgotten and locked in the past, repressed and undeveloped\textsuperscript{543}.

Similarly, Fabian argued that ‘the Indigenous Other was represented as ancient to help legitimate colonial settlement of Indigenous lands’, in a process that ‘allowed colonized and colonizer to share the same space (coevality) by sharing different time periods – ancient and modern, respectively.’ He considers that this process of ‘allochronism’ ‘helps define away the morally problematic issue of coevality and usurpation by making colonialism a process of settling vacant temporal space’\textsuperscript{544}.

The references to archaeological artefacts, ‘extinct relics’, past history, (or pre-history), belong to a colonial model of archaeology that has long since transformed its methodology and language. As landscape architects we need to be aware of outdated archaeological discourses and the colonial appropriation that is inherent in reference to ‘archaeological sites’. For example, McNiven and Russell have discussed ‘negative effects’ in the language of archaeology by recalling a conflict of values between the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council (TALC) and a team of archaeologists, in which TALC asserted: “For some archaeologists the sites created by our ancestors are described as archaeological sites. What you recover from these sites is archaeological data. By describing our sites and the information they contain as ‘archaeological’ you claim our heritage as your own”\textsuperscript{545}.

Capital ‘I’ – Indigenous

Where there is reference in the Entries, ‘Indigenous’ is often written with a small ‘i’ (#2, #13, #15, #35, #46, #47), sometimes in the same paragraph that also discusses ‘indigenous planting’ (#46). This recalls Stanner’s observation\textsuperscript{546} that historical accounts often considered Australian Aborigines in the same class as the local flora and fauna - both as ‘the other’, and more recent arguments that

the colonial trope of linking authentic Aboriginality with lowliness and uninventiveness was, and continues to be, used to delegitimate Aboriginal ties to their lands to help recast European colonial invasion and expropriation of Aboriginal lands as legitimate and rightful.

‘Aboriginal’ is written with a small ‘a’ in one instance (#46).

In its ‘Editorial & Program Policies’, the Australian Broadcasting Commission advises journalists that: ‘When written, Aboriginal/Aborigine and Indigenous should always be dignified with a capital ‘A’ or ‘I’ and Aboriginal should never be abbreviated.

Government directives to national media do not govern journalism in independent newspapers, and the small ‘i’ practice of referring to Indigenous people continues there. I would not suggest that writers who use small ‘i’ Indigenous are necessarily disrespectful of Aboriginal cultures, but I have noticed that Indigenous writers capitalise ‘Indigenous’ when discussing their cultures. Further, references to ‘Western’, and ‘European’ cultures are usually capitalised. Rather than dismiss this point as pedantic political correctness, parity is recommended in all cultural referencing (viz. Western, Eastern, Australian, European, Aboriginal, Indigenous, etc.). The writer’s attentiveness in this manner offers a mark of respect (and removes the confusion with indigenous flora and fauna).

A Special Case: A Special Place

While all of the Australian projects are located on lands that were taken without legal sanction from their traditional owners (see for example Stanner’s discussion of Captain Cook’s instructions), one project (#28) is of particular interest because of its special setting: the Mersey Bluff is home to The Tiagarra Centre, which the Awards entry states is ‘Tasmania’s only dedicated Aboriginal cultural museum’ (presentation, p.6). These words introduce me to an other aspect of the Mersey Bluff, and set me wondering about its

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Aboriginal cultural significance. Why is Tasmania’s only dedicated Aboriginal cultural museum located at this ‘place’? Is the ‘place’ associated with a Dreaming story? Does an Aboriginal ‘place’ name survive? The presentation is silent on these matters, and glosses that Mersey Bluff is of equal importance for both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Is that ‘equal’ in terms of ontologies? Having sometimes wandered the parkland of The Bluff while waiting for the interstate car ferry, I can appreciate its northern aspect, Bass Strait views, and water frontage. In Western terms, it is ‘prime real estate’. But what is the subjective experience of the ‘place’? (The presentation does not reveal the common experiences of the ‘place’.) What are the Indigenous values of this ‘place’? Why are they excluded in The Mersey Bluff Urban Design Framework Plan?

I read that the Plan is conceived as a ‘journey’ – ‘a literal and metaphorical connection between the Aboriginal and European cultural assets of the precinct’ (presentation, p. 13). At one time I would have considered this language as acceptable and even positive in promoting a reconciliation of Indigenous and settler peoples. But that was before I knew the bloody history: New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria were the earliest ‘places’ of colonial frontier conflict, resulting in deaths and forced removals of Indigenous people, settler occupation of the ‘vacant’ land, and loss of languages, cultures, kinships and knowledge in ‘place’. In Tasmania this was delivered by the Black Line campaign of 1830 (see for example Reynolds\(^{551}\)). Thus, there is no level field on which the proposed ‘journey’ might be constructed, and to attempt to do so is to support an appropriation of Aboriginal culture and a continuing colonial hegemony. An Indigenous voice is needed to balance the dominant view. My map of Aboriginal Australia identifies this ‘place’ as the land of the Tommeginne people \(^{552}\) (unacknowledged in the entry documentation).

In further documentation, the importance of the ‘Mersey Bluff Journey’ is identified as ‘a regionally significant attraction’, with ‘development opportunities’, ‘which optimise land use within the precinct’ (presentation, p. 13). An ‘equal importance’ is reinforced by nominating ‘bookends’ of ‘the journey’ with the Tiagarra Aboriginal cultural centre and the Maritime Museum at opposite ends of the precinct, ‘taking in’ (and separating) ‘Tiagarra as the Aboriginal cultural focus, the Devonport SLSC as the social and recreational heart of the precinct and the Maritime Museum as the European cultural heritage focus’ (summary, p.1).


The connection is on a physical level only, and does not take account of the different ontologies.

In a key revelation I read ‘the Aboriginal heritage is evident in rock carvings along the headland’, with the bracketed comment ‘although there was much debate among locals as to the authenticity of these’ (project description, p.2). Here is a possible answer to my earlier question ‘why is Tasmania’s only dedicated Aboriginal cultural museum located at this place?’ But the ‘bracketed comment’ cannot pass without notice: where is the Indigenous voice in response to this challenge? Why was it not consulted? A Google web search reveals that Tiagarra was established at Mersey Bluff in 1976 in order to protect the more than 200 petroglyphs. I find myself critical of ‘the enquiry by design’ method at a ‘whole of community’ level, which produced ‘the journey’, ‘the bookends’ and debate about the authenticity of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Democratic process is not served when a significant ‘stakeholder’ is discredited and silenced.

Indigenous Voice

In the ‘special place’ discussed above, the Indigenous voice remains silent. This is a similar situation in most of the projects. In less than a handful of entries, consultation with ‘representatives of the indigenous (sic) people’ (#13) hints at the whisper of an Indigenous voice. But Indigenous knowledge of the particular ‘place’ is nowhere quoted in an Indigenous voice; instead it is ‘interpreted’ by the practitioner. In this way it is converted to ‘shared history’, reinforcing an historic power imbalance. Interpretation can misrepresent and mislead, as is historically the norm. It is now common practice for written works that reference Indigenous ‘place’ to be co-authored, or to at least include quotations in an Indigenous voice, viz. Benterrak, Muecke, & Roe; Rose; Somerville & Perkins; Bradley, with Yanyuwa families.

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Where Indigenous voice is recorded in the AILA Awards entries, it is in ‘place’ names (#42, #46) - but in ‘place’ names that are derived from the original.

Sea Country

Five of the total forty-nine projects (#1, #7, #28, #40, and #47) could be considered by their coastal location to be inclusive of ‘sea country’. But project briefs usually designate ‘high water mark’ as the boundary of landscape projects, emphasising changed management responsibilities between different government authorities. High water mark is an artificial and shifting boundary (as underlined by on-going erosion and ‘climate change’) that is not a ‘boundary’ in traditional Aboriginal cultures. How would the health and vitality of ‘places’ benefit if project briefs were inclusive of ‘sea country’? Would there be more emphasis on protecting and restoring fish breeding grounds, or consulting with fishermen for their detailed local knowledge? Would there be greater concern for ensuring storm water was retained on land in micro-catchments and prevented from entering ‘sea country’ as a pollutant? On three occasions in early 2011, heavy rain in urban Melbourne caused Melbourne Water, as catchment authority, to pump raw sewage into drains and waterways entering Port Phillip, reportedly ‘to keep fouled water from flowing back into people’s homes’. The environment of the Bay, the connecting oceans and related habitats remain subservient to ‘man’ in a binary relationship.

Reconciliation

Which projects take a step towards reconciliation (through respect, recognition, or other methods)? In their inclusion of some form of Indigenous ‘recognition’, the twelve projects highlighted above and in Appendix 4 (#2, #11, #13, #15, #20, #22, #28, #35, #42, #45, #46, #47) take a shaky first step. Some strengthening exercises are suggested in the previous ‘Discussion’. But ‘there are many paths to reconciliation’. In expanding our definition to include a reconciliation with ‘wounded country’ we could no doubt find additional projects

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558 Most, but not all of these five projects have presented environmentally sustainable stormwater solutions.
559 HUNTER, T. & BECK, M. Sewage reaches the bay again. The Age, Wednesday, April 13, 2011. The article reports that sewage was released on February 5, March 13, and April 12, 2011. On 17th April, I observed the ‘fouled water’ over mussel-shell beds at Sandringham.
to consider amongst the Awards entries. (See discussion ‘Reconciliation and Decolonisation’, page 42.)

My own path towards reconciliation, as taken in this thesis, has included formal study, research, dialogue and an on-going reflexive process; art installations; recognising points of cultural connection; introduction of ‘dadirri’ (quiet, still awareness\(^{561}\)) as a practice method; improved self-knowledge; seeking out translators and Indigenous ‘voices’ in published works and personal advisors.

*Notes - on ‘myth’*

In the language we use, often unconsciously, vestiges of colonial thought and practice reside. One example of this is a continuing use of the word ‘myth’ to describe Aboriginal ways of knowing. Older anthropological works hold colonial prejudices that once dominated the European study of Indigenous societies\(^{562}\). But at least by 1989, the prominent Berndt partnership was aware of a popular association of ‘myth’ with ‘false belief’\(^{563}\) and emphasised their interpretation as simply ‘belief’ - leaving open an assessment of ‘true-or-false’ as ‘a separate issue’\(^{564}\). While they sometimes coupled ‘myth’ and ‘story’, they nevertheless considered that ‘myth’ was ‘the most useful and most widely understood term’ for ‘important and significant’ Aboriginal ‘narrative material in story form’\(^{565}\) - and missed an opportunity to otherwise lead a change in perspective. This is puzzling, for the Berndts respected that the ‘living myths’ ... ‘are not simply of the past’; ‘... nor are they quasi-historical tales or folklore ...’\(^{566}\), as understood of European mythologies\(^{567}\); and ‘no myth is free-floating, without some local identification’\(^{568}\). Thus Aboriginal ‘myths’ - stories - were / are ‘emplaced’ beliefs.

\(^{561}\) For further discussion of ‘dadirri’ see pages 181 – 182, 187, 210


\(^{564}\) Ibid. p. 1

\(^{565}\) Ibid. p. 1

\(^{566}\) Ibid. p. 4


On the question of ‘myth’ (or story) as ‘true-or-false’, Stanner reflected that ‘Our own intellectual history is not an absolute standard by which to judge others. The worst imperialisms are those of preconception’\(^{569}\). This is similar to a position arrived at by historian Tessa Moris-Suzuki and her colleague Minoru Hokari in conversation. When Moris-Suzuki admits disbelief in relation to an Elder’s story, Hokari responds: ‘You are still really treating the Gurindji elder’s story as a myth. You are still claiming that you know how to determine “truth”, and can therefore say that his knowledge is false’\(^{570}\). Moris-Suzuki reflects, while still disbelieving: ‘I have gradually come to see the profound importance of continuously asking the uncomfortable question, “Why not?”’\(^{571}\).

I agree with Hokari’s rejection of ‘myth’ (in the sense of ‘false belief’) as an inappropriate connection with Australian Indigenous stories:

> It is academics, not Indigenous Australians themselves, who categorise both Aboriginal colonial histories and their Dreaming stories as “myths”. For Aboriginal people, it is not a question of a story being a myth or history, because these stories are all “real”. Instead, there is a strict difference between sacred (Dreaming) and immoral (colonial) stories\(^{572}\).

Hokari encourages us to ‘lighten the load’ through his unorthodox approaches to Indigeneity, freeing us from a disabling cultural baggage of continuing colonial models, to enable our direct engagement with Aboriginal ‘place’. Hokari’s rejection of ‘myth’ for labelling stories that comprise Aboriginal ontology is a meaningful act of reconciliation / decolonisation.

**Key Findings**

- ‘Perspective transformation’ is a challenging, necessary process in shifting consciousness from one world-view to another. The shift in consciousness should not be associated with an appropriation of Indigenous knowledge into Western epistemology. (See ‘Perspective Transformation/Hiatus’.)

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\(^{571}\) Ibid. amazonkindle location 256

\(^{572}\) Ibid. amazonkindle location 1704
With a Western focus on ‘outcomes’ rather than ‘processes’, there is little ‘space’ for thinking about alternative ontologies that could guide practice. (See ‘Reflections on Entering the Anthropologists’ Camp’.)

**Case Study:**

- Only 24% of the 2009 AILA (Vic.) awards entries included any reference to Australian Indigenous ‘place’ or culture. Do the silent 76% (who ignored any reference) realise their complicity in ‘The Great Australian Silence’ (as discussed) or in the continuing colonial project? McNiven and Russell remind us that ‘colonialist views cannot be confined to the colonial period, as they continue today to permeate the public’s consciousness’.

- There is no evidence that an assessment of the 2009 AILA awards entries in any other state would yield significantly different results. I discussed the lack of reference to Indigenous ‘place’ and culture with Paul Costigan, Executive Director of AILA in Canberra. From his perspective of coordinating the Awards entries in each Australian state, he considered that this was not an unusual situation in Victoria, but rather a more generalised situation Australia-wide. He agreed that Aboriginal culture is not given status in AILA’s ‘Australian Landscape Principles’. This situation presents an imperative for change within the profession.

- My case study findings point to a general lack of awareness of links between actions and beliefs. For example, why do projects focus only on ‘archaeology’ as representative of Indigenous cultural heritage? Mezirow has noted that ‘people are frequently unaware of their informal theories’. He suggests that facilitators ‘should help their groups design experiments to gather information about a problem and to try out different solutions to it’. Indigenist researcher Karen Martin has discussed ‘relatedness’ as Quandamoopah ontology.

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573 Indigenist researcher Karen Martin has discussed ‘relatedness’ as Quandamoopah ontology. MARTIN, K. L. 2008. Please knock before you enter: Aboriginal regulation of Outsiders and the implications for researchers, Post Pressed. p. 65
575 Telephone conversation, n.d.
577 Ibid. p. 42
I am struck by the ‘generalist’, ‘rationalist’ and ‘objective’ approaches of many presentations, which divide them from the more heart-felt, poetic and ‘particular’ approaches of Indigenous cultures in ‘belonging’ to ‘country’. In a continuing normative Western epistemology of landscape architecture practice in Australia, it seems that what is at risk is authentic ‘place’ and authentic practice.

While critique of the designed outcomes of the awards entries by the many traditional owners that are affected could find positive responses, this would still reflect an inequitable Western power base, a ‘colonial present’, that we have unfortunately normalised (that is, we are still controlling the agenda).

One of the key tenets of the Reconciliation movement, and a recurring theme in cross-cultural dialogues, is ‘recognition’ of traditional land owners. Every Australian landscape architecture project requires this acknowledgement. Inasmuch as attitudes, intentions and concepts are revealed in written work, my survey is a snapshot of the profession’s collective position towards reconciliation / decolonisation in Victoria and a valid reference for critical reflection on issues of inequity that are reinforced through practice. It provides a base reference for future re-assessments.

There is a need for professional bodies such as AILA to highlight and actively promote reconciliation / decolonisation initiatives amongst members. There are ways to be found of making every project a celebration of reconciliation, even in writing itself\[578\].

Limitations

My purpose here is not to prescribe practice methods, but rather to draw attention to practice issues that reinforce inequity, and to inspire individual critical reflection towards perspective transformation and changed praxis (page 153). As I have noted by reference to Mezirow, critical reflection ‘is not concerned with the how or the how-to of action but with the why, the reasons for and consequences of what we do’ (page 138).

An analysis of the documentation of projects entered in the 2009 AILA Victoria Awards provides a ‘snapshot’ of how Victorian AILA practices are engaging with Indigenous ‘place’ and culture. The findings may not correspond with attitudes. Nevertheless, they

\[578\] See section 2 ‘Reconciliation and Decolonisation’
provide an impression, supported by evidence, and a message that the profession is currently delivering.
## APPENDIX 4

### Table 2 – 2009 AILA Victoria Awards Entries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AILA Entry # &amp; Project Title</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All References to Indigenous Place / Culture in Place</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Elwood Foreshore</td>
<td>design</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Wodonga Landscape Guidelines – ‘The Vision’</td>
<td>planning (regional study)</td>
<td>‘Indigenous Cultural Heritage. All of Wodonga’s Landscape Units contain known or yet to be recognised sites and elements relating to indigenous cultural heritage. The Murray Valley and related waterways are areas where such sites and elements are typically concentrated.’ (Presentation, p.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. McLeod Adair Artscape, Boboli Garden Path (S. Melbourne)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. helmet (Bulleen)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Lunch with the Gnomeless (Melbourne)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Glenferrie Road WSUD Climber Frames (Hawthorn)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Geelong Youth Activities Area</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Marquis Street – Stage 2 Streetscape Improvement Works (Ashburton)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Transformative Surface (Melbourne)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Stud Park Playground (Rowville)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td>Photos of ’Stud Park Opening’ show background murals with Indigenous references (Jury Images, #22) N/A: background mural not part of this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. RACV Healesville Country Club</td>
<td>design</td>
<td>’The design/ (the Firm’s) design is sensitive to all contexts associated with this project … (including) cultural and historical contexts through reference to Koori history and current use of the site.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 12.  | Sturt Park Shared Pedestrian/Cycleway (Broken Hill)    | design     | '(The consultants) were able to undertake a fluid design approach that accommodated feedback and changes required as further information was inputted from flora and fauna assessments, geotechnical and archaeological studies.' (Project Description, p.6) 
(The consultant) ‘provided... archaeological survey.’ (Presentation, p.18)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
<p>| 13.  | Darlington Public Domain - Stage 2 (University of Sydney) | design     | (Permission to use quotations not received.)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 14.  | Werribee Watersmart Demonstration Garden                | design     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 15.  | Eastlink (Mitcham – Frankston)                         | design     | ‘The project design and delivery system was highly sensitive to social, cultural, historical, physical and natural context, including: working with government and indigenous community groups to identify and manage archaeological sites and artefacts.’ (Presentation, p.2)                                                                                     |
| 16.  | Beach Street East Shopping Centre Upgrade (Frankston)   | design     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 17.  | Creating Better Parks (City of Brimbank)               | planning   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 18.  | IT SEZ Gurgaon, Delhi                                  | planning   | N/A (India)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 19.  | Lake Tai – small and grand jiaoshan island             | research and communication | N/A (China)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 20.  | Australian Wildlife Health Centre (Healesville)        | design     | Sketch design illustrating themes: 'Local Topography/ Memory' - supported by historical photos (not referenced) showing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Cobbers (Melbourne)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td>Draft concept illustrating geographic themes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. AXA Centre Winter Garden, 750 Collins Street, Melbourne</td>
<td>design</td>
<td>- Recherche Bay, SW Tasmania - lithograph? titled ‘Sauvages du Cap de Diemen preparant leur repaz (detail), Jacques Louis Copia 1764 – 1799, National Library of Australia’ (Concept Images, p.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- La Perouse, Botany Bay - lithograph? titled ‘A View of Botany Bay’, featuring British sailing ships and a native canoe (Concept Images, p.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. VU Footscray Park Courtyard Re-developments</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Costco (Docklands, Melbourne)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Malvern City Square</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Ecolinc (Bacchus Marsh)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Lakes Reserve District Park (Taylors Lakes)</td>
<td>design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Mersey Bluff Precinct Urban Design Framework (Devonport, Tasmania)</td>
<td>planning</td>
<td>'The framework plan was prepared on the basis of consultation outcomes, which enabled the development of a list of guiding principles, addressing: ... Heritage &amp; culture.' (Presentation, p.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'The essence of the framework is the notion of ‘the journey’, a literal and metaphorical connection between the Aboriginal and European cultural assets of the precinct.' (Presentation, p.13)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'The Tiagarra Centre is Tasmania’s only dedicated Aboriginal cultural museum. It’s location on the Mersey Bluff reflects the importance of this location for both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities of Devonport and northern Tasmania generally.' (Presentation, p.6)</td>
</tr>
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The Mersey Bluff Precinct is particularly important to Devonport as it provides both historical associations and an ongoing presence from both European and Aboriginal cultural heritage, with respect to past, present and future.” (Summary, p.1; Project Description, p.2)

The ‘bookends’ of Tiagarra Aboriginal cultural centre and the Maritime Museum at opposite ends of the precinct have provided the basis for one of the key underlying principles of the UDF, namely “the Mersey Bluff Journey”, taking in Tiagarra as the Aboriginal cultural focus, the Devonport SLSC as the social and recreational heart of the precinct and the Maritime Museum as the European cultural heritage focus.’ (Summary, p.1; Project Description, p.2)

‘Cultural assets of the precinct include the Tiagarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre at the western end of the precinct and the Maritime Museum at the eastern end of the precinct, and the Devonport Surf Lifesaving Club, which is recognised as the social heart of the precinct. Heritage assets of the precinct include the historic lighthouse upon the Bluff itself, an historic cemetery at the foot of the Bluff and local stone walls which provide the only indication of some of the grand estates which originally (sic) lined the coastal fringe.’ (Project Description, p.1)

‘The Aboriginal heritage is evident in rock carvings along the headland (although there was much debate among locals as to the authenticity of these) and the ongoing presence of the Tiagarra Centre, which is Tasmania’s only dedicated Aboriginal cultural museum. The UDF acknowledges the planned redevelopment of the centre to further improve its facilities and its significance and presence within the context of the precinct, within Devonport and as a facility of statewide significance.’ (Project Description, p.2)

‘Council’s objectives for the project ... (include) maintaining: the unique Tasmanian character inherent in the precinct.’ (Project Description, p.1)

<table>
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<th>29. Cardinia Lakes Stage 1 Park (Pakenham)</th>
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<td>30. Dandenong Valley Wetland</td>
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<td>St Kilda Foreshore Promenade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interweave (Bundles &amp; Baskets) Barkly/Hopkins Planters (Footscray)</td>
<td>design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 42. Maribyrnong River Master Plan (City of Moonee Valley) | planning | 'The Maribyrnong River valley has been home for the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation for up to 40,000 years. Human remains dated at least 15,000 years old have been found along the river, with much older signs of human habitation also present.’ (Presentation - Master Plan Introduction, p.7) 
'The name Maribyrnong may derive from *mirring-gnay-bir-nong* which in Woiwurrung (the language of the local Wurundjeri people) is said to mean “I can hear a ringtail possum” or “saltwater river”. *Marriburnong* is an alternate spelling listed on a map dated from 1840.’ (Presentation - Master Plan Introduction, p.7) |
| 43. Evelyn Street Green-link Master Plan (Frankston) | planning |
| 44. Merri Creek Trail Signage Strategy (Cities of Moreland, Darebin and Yarra) | design |
| 45. Landscape Management of the Links Development, The National Golf Club (Cape Schanck) | land management | 'Archaeological Significance: The area around the shell midden within the triangular bushland area adjacent the National Park has been assessed in the Archaeological Study undertaken ... Specific details of the Aboriginal site must not be publicly disclosed. ... Any development of the area is controlled by the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council and the Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV). ... The Archaeological Study indicated that although it is unlikely that other Aboriginal Sites will occur in other areas of the property, there is a possibility that human burials occur in sandy environments. If any bone which is potentially human is unearthed during future excavation works ... the guidelines for dealing with human skeletal remains are contained in the Appendices to this document.’ (Supporting Documents - Management and Maintenance Report, pp. 64/65) 
The Archaeological Survey discusses potential Aboriginal archaeological sites and material found. One site, an Aboriginal shell midden and stone source has been registered with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, AAV ... ‘Of particular significance at this site is the occurrence of backed artefacts ... (The) site ... has been assessed as being of high scientific
It is also likely to be of considerable cultural significance to the contemporary Wurundjeri Aboriginal community. An area of potential sensitivity for Aboriginal archaeological sites consists of an extensive limestone outcrop with natural surface depressions which could have held water and there could potentially be campsites associated with it. All Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal archaeological sites in Victoria are protected by statutory legislation. Any further investigation must be carried out by a qualified archaeologist in consultation with a representative of the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council Inc. (Supporting Documents – Report Appendices, Archaeological Survey Report, 1998)

| 46. Lilydale Memorial Park – Billanook Waters, Djeernongs Walk and Yellow Gum Gardens | design | ‘Naming of a number of burial sites were undertaken in consultation with a local aboriginal elder, Auntie Joy Murphy, with names that are synonymous with the area. In particular, the ‘natural’ burial area recently developed has been named Djeernongs Walk, Djeerong is aboriginal for “a pathway” or “many footprints.”’ (Project Description, p.1) ‘... emphasising the sites locality through the use of indigenous plants ..., the use of local materials ... and local artists and the indigenous community to provide sculptures and signage.’ (Presentation, p.2)

| 47. Kananook Creek Reserve, Long Island, Dune Boardwalk (Frankston) | land management | ‘Artistic elements will be incorporated into the boardwalk design which will reference Koori usage of the area as a segment of a larger women’s trail between Point Nepean and land to the north of Frankston.’ (Supporting Documents – Environmental Management and Development Plan, page 21 of 32) A separate Cultural Heritage Assessment of the site is referred to: ‘The precinct consists of remnant coastal dunes and adjacent land, with subsistence resources know (sic) to be important to Aboriginal people (i.e. shellfish; potable water) are fairly dispersed throughout the area ... Aboriginal site material was likely to be removed or disturbed when the area was developed. The report states no Aboriginal sites were visible; however potential Aboriginal site material may exist along the primary dune or in pockets of undisturbed land within the reserve.’ (Supporting Documents – Environmental Management and Development Plan, page 6 of 32) ‘Management: Cultural heritage – Contractors are to
ensure protection of archaeological / cultural artifacts. Prior to the commencement of works the contractor must consult with the local indigenous representative.’ (Supporting Documents – Environmental Management and Development Plan, page 31 of 32)

The report refers to legislation, including:

| 49. Legends Plaza, Kardinia Park (Geelong) | design | |

**KEY**

- AILA Awards Vic 2009 - Reference to Australian Indigenous Place in primary documentation
- AILA Awards Vic 2009 - Reference to Australian Indigenous Place in support documentation only
- AILA Awards Vic 2009 – Negligible (Coincidental) Reference to Australian Indigenous Place in support documentation
- AILA Awards Vic 2009 – No Reference to Australian Indigenous Place

Note: All material referenced as quotations from AILA Awards entries (as shown in Table 2) has been cleared for inclusion here, in agreements signed and dated by the relevant practice principals. This research was approved as a Low Risk classification by the Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee of RMIT University (Register Number CHEAN A-2000529-06/11).
6. REFORMED PRACTICES

The Return to Practice

New direction, valuing Indigenous ‘place’ knowledge, focus on coastal ‘place’ projects, new partnerships, critical reflection, revised methods, building ‘bridges’

I have worried over several months about how or if I would return to practice. In 2009, I became disillusioned with my profession but simultaneously increasingly engaged by Indigenous culture, both of which claim ‘landscape’ or ‘country’ as their ground. I returned to unfinished projects, but found that my ideas for revitalising ‘places’ were not embraced by my clients, who in each case preferred a more conservative and uninspired solution.

A new direction was influenced by my reading and reflection. From ‘Singing the Coast’579 I distilled a fresh approach to practice, acknowledging Somerville’s observation that ‘the knowledge of places is never all there in front of me, presented for my consumption’580. I had found that in returning to ‘places’ again and again I deepened knowledge and provoked reflection. Somerville also articulated my experience that ‘I can go back to transcripts of conversations years later and see that some things have always been there, I was just not ready to understand’581. I am thinking of a beach walk long ago that opened my eyes to another knowledge of ‘place’. Indigenous leader Gene Blow introduced me to Ricketts Point as ‘mooroobin’582. But I already knew ‘Moorabbin’ as a municipality and as a train station on the Frankston line, quite some distance from Ricketts Point. I asked him again ‘was there a name for this place?’ ‘mooroobin’ he repeated, ‘it means ‘mother’s milk’. I was disappointed that the whole region seemed to be Moorabbin and there wasn’t a particular name for Ricketts Point. But I didn’t pause to think that this ‘place’ was ‘mooroobin’ and that the name had been appropriated by early settlers for use elsewhere. Since that time I have made other discoveries which fit together as another reading of Ricketts Point /
‘mooroobin’. And like Somerville I accept ‘There are many things that I can never know’, but ‘(I can) also hear more (things) in future conversations that help me to connect more of the pieces’583.

580 Ibid. p. 216
581 Ibid. p. 216
582 The City of Bayside commissioned Gene Blow to lead the public walk
583 SOMERVILLE, M. & PERKINS, T. 2010 Singing the Coast, Aboriginal Studies Press. p. 216
Indigenous Place Knowledge – Loss and Reconstruction

In researching Indigenous ‘place’, I am mindful that the cultural knowledge I gain is not mine by birth right – I am not an Aboriginal Australian. Ethical issues reside in a continuing power differential between settler and Aboriginal Australians, possible appropriation of intellectual property that may not be in the public domain, and respect for ‘ownership’ of culture, including stories and art, by different kinship groups. I am excited by the discovery of ‘clues’ in the landscape that suggest another way of knowing my country, but want to ensure that my praxis respects and protects the older cultures in ‘place’. The inclusive language of a Wurundjeri Elder encourages me to accept that ‘culture belongs to everybody’ but there are protocols to learn. Therefore I have resolved to include an Indigenous adviser in my future ‘place’ projects. This will mean sharing project budgets as part of my commitment to practice in a way that supports reconciliation and decolonisation.

In the context of valuing Indigenous ‘place’ knowledge, an incident that was recorded in the edited journal of Chief Protector George Augustus Robinson haunts me ... 170 years later. This is not the ‘whispering in our hearts’ that Henry Reynolds considers can only be silenced by the achievement of true reconciliation and justice, but a deep sadness from realisation of profound loss. I cannot reconcile with this loss of ‘place’ knowledge. The ‘incident’ is related by Bruce Pascoe of a young warrior who believed himself in 1840 to be the last of his people and ‘in that bleak knowledge felt compelled to ... speak up for his country and his people’:

For one whole day he ran beside the Chief Protector’s horse, calling out the name of this hill and that creek, the birthplace of this person, the places of massacre of so many others, places where they had netted fish, gathered honey, where the sun had set most spectacularly, and all this richness spanning inestimable time. Now that knowledge dwelt only in his breast and so he ran beside Robinson’s horse calling out the key words of his

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585 Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Port Phillip District 1839 - 1849


civilisation, desperate that just one more person should share that knowledge, even one such as Robinson, cantering so heedlessly on his horse.\textsuperscript{588}

This tragedy in Port Phillip (Victoria) was replayed across the continent as colonisation advanced in new frontiers. I have read of the loss of knowledge in other ‘places’ through random acts of killing:

They were gathered there, my grandfathers and father’s brothers. They were performing ceremonies – the a-Kunabibi ceremony. They were Yanyuwa speakers – the many old men there who held the Law for rain making ... From the south those white men came; they came on horseback and shot them all, for no reason they shot them – all of them, they were all dead. They then burnt them all; they burnt them until there was nothing but ashes. They killed all of the old rainmakers ... \textsuperscript{589}

Fragments of cultural knowledge survive in oral and written records and can sometimes be reconnected in ‘place’. But vital pieces are missing and depth of knowledge is lost: ‘No one can sing rain ... \textsuperscript{590} It seems that Robinson did pay attention to the young warrior (as above) for Pascoe notes that ‘We owe a great deal of our knowledge of early Indigenous culture to Robinson ... \textsuperscript{591}

Reconnecting the ‘Jigsaw Puzzle’

In another coastal region\textsuperscript{592}, Gumbaynggirr Elder Tony Perkins refers to fragments of cultural knowledge as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.\textsuperscript{593} As fragments of a culture, the pieces take many forms (physical marks in ‘place’, stories of connection, language, ‘place’ names, rituals, dance, visual motifs...). Perkins relates a strategy that was adopted by the ‘Old People’ in a time after white settlement when the young men were no longer being initiated, to pass on knowledge about country: partial knowledge was taught to different children, such that a full knowledge would only be known in their coming together. Different aspects of

\textsuperscript{588} Ibid. p. 99
\textsuperscript{590} Ibid. p. 107
\textsuperscript{592} In northern New South Wales
\textsuperscript{593} SOMERVILLE, M. & PERKINS, T. 2010 Singing the Coast, Aboriginal Studies Press. p. 9
traditional knowledge – ‘of food, plants and animals, of land and special places, of medicine, healing and spirit knowledge, of language, music and song’\(^{594}\) – were preserved in this way.

Reinforcing this strategy (in a different ‘country’), Australian architect Greg Burgess has referred to his ‘need to consult widely’ for the design of the *Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre*, as ‘different people held parts of the story’\(^{595}\). This is an important awareness for practice: ‘knowledge is held collectively’\(^{596}\).

In the current post-colonial era, the reconstruction of Indigenous knowledge systems for an holistic ‘caring for country’ proceeds by piece work and makes use of modern technology. Tony Perkins established a contemporary meeting ‘place’, ‘to get the message out so that others could learn about how to know and protect this country’\(^{597}\). His countryman Gary Williams considers that ‘You’ll never get the jigsaw back but there’s enough there and you can consolidate on things’\(^{598}\). And Somerville reflects:

> In the space of just over a generation they (the Gumbaynggirr people) had moved from transmitting cultural knowledge about country through initiation, to passing on selected aspects of knowledge to particular individuals, to recording oral stories and places using modern technological equipment\(^{599}\).

The combined ‘agencies’ of Somerville and Perkins resulted in the production of new knowledge – reconnecting story to country in a collaborative support of reconciliation. The generous sharing of knowledge for the survival of ‘country’ is a recurring contemporary theme and may be available to all who respectfully seek it. The jigsaw puzzle comparison seems appropriate to an immersed and repeated experiencing of ‘place’ and a valuing of oral ‘place’ stories for a more-inclusive practice. It fosters an approach that values ‘change’ in cultural expression as a means of keeping a culture alive and vital. This was an important factor, for example, in the design of the *Tjibaou Cultural Centre*\(^{600}\) in Noumea, New Caledonia, where the ‘unfinished appearance’ of the roof structure is a design expression of

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\(^{594}\) Ibid. p. 9  
^{596} SOMERVILLE, M. & PERKINS, T. 2010 *Singing the Coast*, Aboriginal Studies Press. p. 162  
^{597} Ibid. p. 12  
^{598} Ibid. p. 177  
^{599} Ibid. p.12  
^{600} Designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano
the belief of deceased Kanak leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou that: ‘to return to tradition is a myth ... our identity lies ahead of us ... Kanak culture is still in the “process of becoming”’.

Communication: Simile / Metaphor / Analogy

In repeated readings of Somerville’s transcripts, I hear the nuances of expression in Indigenous stories and I am struck by the repeated use of ‘simile’ (not metaphor) as an act of translation and bridging of cultures, e.g. ‘like Central Railway Station’\textsuperscript{602}, ‘like those dots on the dot paintings’\textsuperscript{603}, and ‘like a jigsaw puzzle’\textsuperscript{604}. I reflect that I have heard this style of communication through simile before, for example in Wurundjeri Elder Annette Xiberras’ description of the Mt. William (Lancefield) stone-axe quarry (now included on the National Heritage List). She is reported as saying: ‘It is like (my emphasis) our Bunnings. It is where the land and the rocks gave us everything and because we could trade the axes, it also brought prosperity’\textsuperscript{605}. The use of simile by Indigenous leaders reveals a generosity towards a predominantly white-settler audience, in attempting to bridge cultural divide. Xiberras comments further on Mt William as a ‘place’ of reconciliation: ‘it’s not a black place or a white place, it’s a university for everyone’\textsuperscript{606}. Ngangikurungkur (Daly River) leader and educator Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Bauman would seem to agree, while projecting the idea further:

‘… we have learned to speak the white man’s language; we have listened to what he had to say. This learning and listening should go both ways’\textsuperscript{607}.

I have noted that Somerville refers to the Indigenous concept of ‘jigsaw puzzle’ knowledge transmission as metaphor\textsuperscript{608} and analogy\textsuperscript{609} - the former an holistic term and the latter aspectual. But in none of the transcriptions does an Indigenous Elder make this whole or partial transfer between cultural knowledge and jigsaw puzzle. (A jigsaw puzzle is after all only a manufactured pictorial object.) Rather, Perkins relates: ‘My grandfather was telling me that it’s like (my emphasis) a jigsaw puzzle’\textsuperscript{610}. As a simile, there is a subtle but important difference: simile provides an holistic and explicitly imaginative comparison. One might use

\textsuperscript{602} SOMERVILLE, M. & PERKINS, T. 2010 Singing the Coast, Aboriginal Studies Press. (Perkins) pp. 205 - 206
\textsuperscript{603} Ibid. (Williams) p. 211
\textsuperscript{604} Ibid. (Perkins) p. 217
\textsuperscript{605} KENNEDY, B. Proud elder reveals ‘ancient Bunnings'. Macedon Ranges Leader, 13 October 2008
\textsuperscript{606} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{608} SOMERVILLE, M. & PERKINS, T. 2010 Singing the Coast, Aboriginal Studies Press. pp. 127, 217
\textsuperscript{609} Ibid. p. 150
\textsuperscript{610} Ibid. p. 9
alternative similes such as ‘patchwork’ or ‘collage’ to denote a layering of information, but this is not the point: as researchers and practitioners we need to listen very carefully and be vigilant against misinterpreting Indigenous content. To understand the act of translation requires active participation from both partners in dialogue. This brief example demonstrates a value of recording dialogue to ensure careful cultural translation by a verbatim quotation. (But the distinction could also have been heard in conversation and confirmed in dialogue.)

‘Metaphor’ is frequently alluded to in discussions in the academy about design in the built environment. It may well be a ‘white thing’ and confused in its application to Indigenous concepts. For example, when Indigenous artist Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu sings about the storm clouds forming in his country (in ‘Wukun’ and ‘Baywar’ he is celebrating the storm clouds as ‘kin’ - non-human kin. This is not metaphor: it is the basis of another way of knowing. I consulted John Bradley of Monash University Indigenous Centre (MIC) on the use of metaphor in Indigenous cultures: ‘In your experience, do speakers of Indigenous languages use “metaphor”?’ He replied:

In my experience with the Yanyuwa, Marra and Garrwa people metaphor is something we use when we do not understand the links that people contain within themselves and their country; it is our (Western) struggling word, for what they might call the Law and therefore a truth. ... what we so often want to ascribe to metaphor when dealing with Indigenous ways of knowing is quite often to the people involved no metaphor it just “Is” – no separation and no twisted philosophical debates to describe what is going on.

In addition to linguistic contexts, I have found a contemporary etching by Torres Strait Island artist Dennis Nona that portrays a constructed rock formation in the shape of a turtle, as seen on a hill on the artist’s island of Badu. This too could be interpreted as metaphor. But the story of the origin of the Turtle Rocks is lost and we cannot presume to know if this is metaphor ... or something else.

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611 In the words of Indigenous artist Richard Bell’s work: ‘ABORIGINAL ART IT’S A WHITE THING’ [BELL, R. 2003. Scientia E Metaphysica (Bell’s Theorem) ABORIGINAL ART IT’S A WHITE THING.]
613 BRADLEY, J. 29, 30 Sept, 1 Oct 2010. (Personal communication by email)
A direction for a revitalised return to practice was right under my nose, and revealed itself when the time to return was right ... If my future work in ‘place’ was to include greater Indigenous content, and perhaps contribute to the reassembling of a multi-dimensional ‘jigsaw’, I needed to look for projects which could allow Indigenous content, whether implicit in the Brief or not. Coastal projects were an obvious choice, as coastlines are likely sites of cultural activity and archaeological interest. I was already experienced in coastal work and the coast has been my inspiration since childhood. But importantly, my friend and colleague Belinda Ainley was thinking in a similar direction. Our individual professional development had brought us closer in practice. Now we would look for opportunities to collaborate on coastal projects. We had found a new commission, through success in an invited tender, and now set about determining strategies for delivering a product inspired by ‘place’, people and culture. This project, the *Lang Lang Foreshore Reserve Coastal Management Plan* continues our association with the traditional lands of the Boon wurrung / Bunurong peoples.

The oral storytelling performances of Australia’s Indigenous peoples add depth to their stories. In the voices and movements lie inflections, silences, repetitions, emotions - nuances of meaning. Thus, *recording* will add value beyond the transcription of stories. Margaret Somerville makes a subtle distinction between oral history and the work she calls ‘oral place story’, noting:

> Oral history implies the recording of oral stories that tell us about the past. Oral place stories tell us about the relationship between places and people in the present, layered through deep time.⁶¹⁵

This thought now informs my future direction (as inclusive of all communities). Could the recording of ‘oral place stories’ provide a complementary addition to community engagement? As an alternative to ‘oral place stories’, I would prefer to facilitate ‘oral stories in place’ signifying ‘being-in-place’, but there are often logistic issues that prevent recording in ‘place’. Perhaps then, oral storytelling ‘in-place’ is more important than its recording? I think so. A similar decision was made by Japanese historian Minoru Hokari in his field research with the Gurindji⁶¹⁶ people:

> I normally took notes while we were talking. I also often asked them for permission to record their teachings on tapes. Some people did not mind at all. Some said all right, but

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⁶¹⁶ Located in the upper reaches of the Victoria River, Northern Territory
then became nervous about speaking. If so, I gave up recording; for me, hearing the stories was much more important than recording the stories.\textsuperscript{617}

The different situations will inform the method. I will use ‘oral place stories’ as a generic term, and ‘oral stories in place’ in special circumstances of bodily emplacement. The special circumstances of ‘being in place’ require further exploration.

**Place as Embodied**

How, then, do we get back into place? In the very way by which we are always already there – by our own lived body.\textsuperscript{618}

I have previously referred to the birth of ‘phenomenology’ in European philosophy as presenting an alternative to the disembodied rationalism of Cartesian influence (see page 66); and to Ashcroft’s perception of a development in Australia towards an ‘embodied’ culture (page 103). Barnacle has noted the paradox, however, that Heidegger’s ‘hermeneutic phenomenology’, with its emphasis on ‘being in the world’ and relationality of understanding, does not mention embodiedness.\textsuperscript{619} The body / ‘place’ relationship does not figure in Heidegger’s work.

‘Being in place’ assumes a ‘vital body’ open to ways of knowing through body / ‘place’ connections. I can think myself back into ‘place’ through recalling body / ‘place’ interactions. In the desert of central Australia I lie warm in my swag, with a beanie pulled down over my ears as the night temperature plummets. The dry sandy bed of the Finke River adjusts to the contours of my body and I open my eyes to the cloudless, dark sky that is alive with the twinkling of countless stars. Sometimes the ‘places’ are so beautiful that I contemplate them in stillness. Ormiston Gorge is one such ‘place’. Here, ‘... place integrates with body as much as body with place’.\textsuperscript{620} Still-contemplation focuses movement, and I catch a glimpse of Rock-wallabies in the shady rock crevices. Ngangikurungkur elder Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Bauman knows this quality of ‘being-in-place’.

\textsuperscript{617} HO\textsc{KARI}, M. 2011. Gurindji Journey: A Japanese Historian in the Outback. UNSW Press. (Kindle) location 1144

\textsuperscript{618} CASE\textsc{Y}, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 324


\textsuperscript{620} CASE\textsc{Y}, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 325
place’ as ‘dadirri’. ‘It is perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians. It is inner deep listening and quiet, still awareness’\textsuperscript{621}. I understand Ungunmerr-Bauman to be referring to a way of engaging with ‘place’ through a quiet, still awareness that allows ‘place’ to present itself. She does not require ‘special places’ for this. But perhaps the appearance of ‘beauty’ is a catalyst for changed perception? Sometimes we need to be struck by ‘place’ beauty - for it to stop us in our tracks (as ‘Mal’ describes in interview with Rose, see page 213) – the ‘ahhhh’ moment of held attention, as ‘beauty arrests motion’\textsuperscript{622}. Yorta Yorta artist the late Rosalind Langford also recognised this quality. In a beautiful painting she remembered her country through a translation of its colours on to woven hessian bags that lined the walls of her Goulburn River childhood home: ‘In stillness, I breathe in the colours of my mother’s country; I am once again at peace and healed’\textsuperscript{623}. From my experience of contemplation at Ormiston Gorge I bring my awareness to everyday ‘places’. In contemplation / ‘dadirri’ we find a point of connection between Western and Indigenous approaches to ‘place’.

Somerville has told of her experience of a ‘profound mind / body split’ - in a Cartesian sense - as she grappled intellectually with a writer’s block: ‘I had fallen into the abyss of Western dualistic thinking predicated on separation rather than connection’\textsuperscript{624}. She writes of a difficult walk that forced a body / ‘place’ (re)connection: ‘The panting, heart-lurching, slithering hardness of the walk forced me back into my body’\textsuperscript{625}.

But a reconnection to ‘place’ may also come in a simple daily walk, the bodily experience remembered in the knowing of ‘place’:

I can know it by moving through it, heavy mud underfoot when raining – and puff of lungs uphill. There is feral food to gather … I inhabit it through its different seasons, weathers, times of day and night, over months and years. There are other more spectacular walks in gorges and by inland rivers, but this very ordinary walk, the one I do daily, this imperfect, infinitely colonised space is “home”\textsuperscript{626}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{621} EUREKA STREET TV 2010. Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Bauman
\item \textsuperscript{623} LANGFORD, R. 2011. Weaving Yorta Yorta Country. ART MOB.
\item \textsuperscript{624} SOMERVILLE, M. 1999. Body/Landscape Journals, Spinifex Press. p. 12
\item \textsuperscript{625} Ibid. p. 12
\item \textsuperscript{626} Ibid. p. 4
\end{itemize}
I have brought the practice of contemplation to project work. At Lang Lang beach, a long walk to Stockyard Point in mid-winter results in my gradual perception of a now familiar ‘immersion in place’. A quiet awareness and unhurried pace bring feelings of balance, wholeness and pleasure to life, and I can identify with those who come here for no other reason than to ‘just be’.

Introducing the Lang Lang Foreshore Reserve Coastal Management Plan

In preliminary meetings with representatives of community groups for the Lang Lang Plan, I have caught fragments of stories that suggest: a sense of loss (of the public swimming pool and the jetty); ownership and belonging; celebration and communal sharing; and detailed knowledge of the coastal environment with actioned responsibility for its care. Three strong directions have emerged for the framing of ‘oral stories in place’: they revolve around the boatshed people, the old fishermen, and the traditional owners of ‘country’. But the initial positive responses to the recording of ‘place stories’ would not develop, for various reasons.

Recorded interviews are recognised as the norm in anthropological and sociological research (e.g. Rose, Somerville, as previously cited). They ensure accurate quotations for translation and interpretation (as in my discussion of simile and metaphor, pages 178 - 179) and allow one to return to what was said to re-examine it in a new light. But they also bring formality to a conversation and do not hold long silences comfortably. They may emphasise the interviewer’s voice as controlling the story, and generally do not allow cross-pollination of ideas as in group discussions. In preparation for a taped interview, the interviewer will often form questions that will guide the conversation and may even feel compelled to ask each interviewee the same questions for comparison of responses. There is often no time for getting to know the interviewee, and the resulting recording reflects a meeting of strangers.

The boatshed lessees are united by their previous actions. Location of the boatsheds along the dune is tenuous, challenged by continuing dune erosion and government policies. Our preliminary discussions indicate that the boatsheds are passed down through generations of families, that boatshed ‘owners’ move (upgrade) within the precinct, and that boating and fishing activities are rarely the purpose of repeated visits. We’ve been told that ‘most of the

627 From my journal, 29 July 2010
people have a warm fuzzy connection with it’ (the boatshed). This suggests feelings of ‘belonging’, with the boatshed as ‘place’ rather than as merely a physical building. The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) proclaims that the use of the boatsheds is not coastal dependent, as boats are no longer stored in the sheds. (But the boatshed lessees claim that the boatsheds were never used for boat storage.) The boatsheds cannot legally be used for overnight accommodation: they are not ‘beach shacks’.

I consider that use of the boatsheds for quiet contemplation and creative work is indeed coastal dependent. (I have heard of one writer who has a boatshed here.) In her journey through the landscapes that inspired Australian poet and environmentalist Judith Wright, author Fiona Capp visited Wright’s family holiday shack at Boreen Point near Noosa, and noted ‘one of the things Judith most loved about their shack was its view of the lake’ ... where ‘the blues of the lake shone through its windows’\(^{628}\). She adds ‘I knew that the lake was a haven for bird-life, and that a number of Judith’s poems from her collection “Birds” were (sic) inspired by what she saw here’\(^{629}\).

So too is Stockyard Point at Lang Lang beach ‘a haven for birds’, protected under International treaties. It is a long walk to the Point from the boatsheds. What influence does this ‘place’ have on the lives of the boatshed lessees? My aim to record and collect the ‘oral stories in place’ of the boatshed people will be a long-term project. While I am also consulting to DSE on the Management Plan there is a potential for conflict of interest: the boatshed owners are not secure in their tenancies – and despite early promise, no-one responded to my request for interview.

The old fishermen have a detailed knowledge of the seasonal movements of fish species, the impacts of tidal changes and the diversity of fish habitats, born of a will to secure their catch. On land they fish from the beach and from rods placed along the sea wall. But the old timers remember the prolific sea grasses and the ‘whiting’ that could be caught there at low tide. Again, these oral stories can provide knowledge of ‘place’. But old fishermen are not so easily found or ‘retained’ for story recording. I reflect that their ease of dialogue at community meetings occurs in a social context, while ‘recording’ is a more solitary occasion. I begin to see a pattern: a comfort in sharing knowledge while doing something else ... such as walking or fishing ... and a reluctance to participate in formal dialogue of recording. I am

\(^{629}\) Ibid. p. 134
now reflecting on how ‘place’ stories might be captured. The passing on of knowledge ‘while doing something else’ is also recalled by Bradley in his learning in Yanyuwa ‘country’:

Learning comes out of being with people on their daily round of experiences, seeing their daily interactions with kin and country – a walk to the store, riding in a boat on rough sea, sitting around a fire on an island beach or on the verandah watching the world go by. All the senses need to be attuned ...

Lang Lang beach is a part of the traditional lands of the Boonwurrung / Bunurong people. Mindful of our past difficulties in engaging Indigenous people in planning projects, I sought advice from Wurundjeri Elder Annette Xiberras. My research through Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) established that the whole of Westernport Bay is considered culturally sensitive, and that artefact scatters have been found at two prominent locations – the red bluff and stockyard point. But Xiberras has reported that in her field work over many years she has retrieved and reinterred human skeletal remains from the red bluff on several occasions. It is not known whether the retrieved bones were released by erosion of the bluff, were transported from the Lang Lang River or came from points further north during king tide events. But the evidence confirms the sensitivity of the project area and results in immediate contact with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. Preliminary dialogue had revealed information that government departments and written documents could not provide. However, subsequent follow-up with Bunurong and Boonwurrung Elders did not yield further insights: the masterplan was perceived as a ‘desktop study’ and presumably not urgent business as no excavations where ‘cultural heritage’ might be accidently uncovered, were planned. Because of the lack of response I did not pursue this enquiry further, and did not seek Ethics Committee approval to conduct interviews.

Shifting Boundaries

A Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) application by the Wurundjeri tribe for recognition of an extended southern boundary to their traditional lands is under consideration by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council. In applying for an additional area, the Wurundjeri

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631 Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) with regulatory responsibilities under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*

632 The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council was created under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*; it consists of eleven Traditional Owners appointed by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
consider that the north side of Mordialloc Creek is their southern boundary. This has profound implications for the Boon wurrung and Bunurong peoples who have previously been declined RAP status in the land corridor along the east coast of Port Phillip - from Melbourne city through the municipalities of Port Phillip, Bayside, and part of Kingston - including sites known to have Indigenous names at St Kilda, Brighton, Black Rock, Ricketts Point, and Mordialloc. This situation seems to have resulted from a misinterpretation by academic Ian D. Clark (1996) of anthropologist Norman B. Tindale’s 1974 map of tribal boundaries. A decision will be determined by Indigenous people in control of their heritage. But will it divide communities? My home ‘place’ could be Wurundjeri country: an outcome that would lead to the rewriting of local histories (and cause profound grief to the rejected parties). Inexplicably, this shift also has an impact on my own sense of belonging to ‘place’.

Sensitivity to political nuances is a critical factor in any project’s success. Our project ‘place’ at Lang Lang remains unchallenged as traditional Boon wurrung / Bunurong country, but as neither party is currently acknowledged as the RAP for the area, responsibility for the cultural heritage of the ‘place’ defers to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and practitioners must attempt to consult with both Boon wurrung and Bunurong representatives. How, given our lack of response, might dialogue proceed?

I have previously conducted community consultation and engagement programs as a Western epistemology of practice (see discussion in ‘The Masterplan Process’ and ‘Place Enquiry through Practice’) and have noticed that participants do not always come prepared with prior knowledge of the ‘place’ to be discussed. Ideologies (rather than ontologies) are their common reference. (Ideology is demonstrated for example in the mantra ‘no commercial development on the foreshore’, while an ontology might lead us to explore ‘connections’ in ‘place’.) In aiming to foster better dialogue, what might we learn from Indigenous practices? In as much as consultation is research (rather than persuasive marketing of a favoured concept) we will look to Indigenist researchers for insights.

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634 The complication arises from the death and displacement of Aboriginal people during the early years of contact with Port Phillip colonisers: the Boon wurrung and Bunurong have regrouped in Victoria as descendants of women who were taken by European sealers to the Tasmanian islands in Bass Strait.
Doris Paton approaches her doctoral research from an Indigenous viewpoint. She emphasises a concept that we have previously discussed – ‘listening deeply’ (‘dadirri’), but she uses this concept in a community context, as a research methodology: ‘It describes a way of listening and learning from each other in new ways. Deep and respectful listening lies at the heart of this approach to research. It is central to the process of building trust.’

Paton has identified five principles of research:

- Cultural way of knowing (‘listen deeply - beyond the human’);
- Reciprocal and respectful relationships (‘I need to be connected and engaged with the people participating in my research’);
- Talking Circles where everyone has a chance to speak (‘the core characteristics of Talking Circles are to show respect to each other’);
- Stories in conversation (communal sharing of knowledge);
- Community protocols (inter-relations, inter-connections: ‘We don’t see things in isolation, which is sometimes why it takes us a long time to make decisions and why we sit and think sometimes rather than speak.’).

In my reflexive journal I revisit a meeting with Wurundjeri Elders from some years ago, when I was engaged to prepare a plan for ‘the Keilor Man site’, a significant archaeological ‘dig’ for Western science, but a burial ‘site’ for the Wurundjeri people. The meeting was held in a room at Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, and convened by an archaeologist and a Wurundjeri community officer. I was not involved with the protocols that must have been part of the preparation for the meeting – negotiating who would attend, how they would get there, or ensuring their preparatory inspections of the site in question, but I remember, and was part of, the tone of the meeting. Firstly, and lastly, there was ‘respect’. The hosts ensured that the small gathering was comfortable, seated around a table with food and drinks. It was a calm and focused meeting – no-one attempted to shout anyone down and everyone contributed to the discussion. Our purpose was to consider why the ‘site’ was significant, and to compose a ‘statement of significance’ as a Wurundjeri response to the Australia...

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636 Ibid. pp. 38 - 39
637 Paton’s method of sharing stories is based in ‘quilt-making’.
ICOMOS Burra Charter. I remember how clearly the ideas were articulated and discussed by the Elders, until consensus was reached.

At that time I had had no formal cross-cultural training, but I thought I was sensitive to the situation. I now wonder how I was perceived, in my apparent support of a Western binary categorising of ‘country’ as ‘significant’ or ‘non-significant’? And did I ask too many questions? Paton has commented on this approach: ‘I have seen people come up to Elders and say “Tell me about this” but they choose not to. You have to wait. It’s all about waiting and listening and if you miss it they may not say it again.’ Similarly, from her research with the Burungu, Kuku-Yalanji community of Far North Queensland, Karen Martin advises against structured interviewing methods: ‘… direct questions are considered intrusive, disrespectful and damaging to relatedness … they are not part of the epistemological processes of Aboriginal knowledge acquisition’. As an alternative, she discusses ‘Storywork’ – ‘sharing experiences, meaning making and learning’:

Storywork occurs not as a question-answer exchange, but in the tendering of an observation as a comment for the consideration of those present. These first offerings are not the core of this engagement but are almost ‘throw away’ observations that soften the atmosphere to gauge receptiveness and mood … the response could come as a parallel observation or comment, or change of topic. Silence is a message to back off and if this is pursued, one response could be that someone walks out, indicative of damage to relatedness.

I return to Paton’s five principles of research and now recognise them as formative in the meeting at AAV. The ‘cultural way of knowing’ was reflected in the ‘statement of significance’, in that the cranium that had been excavated at the ‘site’ and scientifically dated, lent ‘proof’ to the Indigenous oral-story of their ancient inhabitation. In the Wurundjeri statement, two knowledge systems, Indigenous and Western scientific, were combined. The ‘reciprocal and respectful relationships’ were evidenced in the conduct of the meeting, which operated as a ‘talking circle’ where everyone had a chance to speak.

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642 MARTIN, K. L. 2008. Please knock before you enter: Aboriginal regulation of Outsiders and the implications for researchers, Post Pressed. p. 95
643 Ibid. pp. 95 - 96
weren’t ‘stories in conversation’ - communal sharing of knowledge about the ‘site’, and ‘community protocols’, which I cannot have knowledge of, but which sometimes allowed long ‘thinking-times’. Martin confirms (through Wilson) an explanation for this: ‘Indigenous methodology means talking about relational accountability … you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you’644.

I now recognise that the Burra Charter - while written in a language of ‘place’ - was (and is) an institutionalised heritage management tool that privileged (privileges) an archaeological past. Recourse to an ‘archaeological past’ is a deeply embedded mind-set that continues in practice (see my discussion in ‘Case Study: Judging the 2009 AILA Victoria Awards’). McNiven and Russell have delved into the problematic of equating Aboriginal cultural heritage with ‘archaeological sites’ - giving value to ‘material traces of a scientifically legitimate, examinable, and significant past’ thereby omitting sites without ‘archaeological evidence’ - ‘such as many Dreaming sites, sacred sites, and sites of “historical” association’645. They note that many Aboriginal (nonarchaeological) sites are thus in danger, ‘due to lack of legislative protection’ (a situation that is potentially present at particular ‘places’ along the Port Phillip and Westernport coast). They caution: ‘it also tells Aboriginal people that sites are only recognised to have cultural heritage significance if they are significant for archaeological research and Western scientific-historical voyeurism.’ This point may explain a misunderstanding with regard to Lang Lang foreshore, where in my preliminary approach, Indigenous custodians interpreted my concerns as ‘archaeological’ and responded within that paradigm. It highlights a critical issue to address in future dialogues, for in the words of Maori artist Toi Te Rito Maihi, ‘we are (were) talking past each other’646. McNiven and Russell’s observation that ‘Aboriginal culture sites are defined narrowly along archaeological lines at the expense of non-physical attributes’ was of course the issue I was hoping to address, but failed to effectively communicate, at Lang Lang foreshore.

From our discussion, the key points for successful consultation may be summarised as: prior relationship/introduction (including Indigenous advisor), preparation of participants (including ‘place’ inspection), facilitation, respect, careful listening, dialogue confirmation,

644 Wilson, S. 2001 in ibid. p. 99
protocols for allowing each voice to be heard, involvement of respected community representatives by invitation, and consensus agreements.

As an adjunct to Paton’s ‘Talking Circles’, it is worth noting the further advice of Karen Martin. In her published thesis, she has discussed the importance of a meeting ‘circle’ in a more literal translation:

Circles are important because there is no beginning or no end and therefore no completions but continuous cycles. Standing in a circle allows everyone to see each other as they stand shoulder to shoulder. In other words, circles are formations where power relations are structured differently to ensure agency of each member of the circle is a necessary part of its function\textsuperscript{647}.

These points can be utilised for improved behaviours in all community meetings. Most importantly, protocols for participation need to be established and followed: democracy is not served by the domination of any one participant at an open meeting.

**Key Findings / Limitations**

- Oral ‘place stories’ and ‘oral stories in place’ focus attention on relationships between people and ‘places’ in the present, as an alternative to the ‘oral histories’ of the past favoured by historical societies\textsuperscript{648}. But recording of individual ‘place stories’ is not always feasible. My aim to record the ‘place stories’ of individual boatshed owners and fishermen at Lang Lang had seemed to be a sound proposition, but was abandoned when initial interest did not translate into confirmed participation. I had previously observed that many researchers had had success with this method. But their interviews had resulted from long-term relationships and commitments that had built trust, and combined with the ‘agency’ of those interviewed who wanted ‘to get the message out’\textsuperscript{649}. My situation now forced me to critically reflect on my unexpected outcome and the particular circumstances.

\textsuperscript{648} SOMERVILLE, M. & PERKINS, T. 2010 *Singing the Coast*, Aboriginal Studies Press. p. 19
\textsuperscript{649} Ibid. p. 12
- There were no confirmed responses to my request for recorded interviews, and hence ‘agency’ was unilateral. ‘Agency’ is often over-looked as a vital force in story contribution: both parties need to perceive benefit from action.

- Potential interviewees may have been uncomfortable with speaking ‘solo’ to a recording device, or may find ‘recording’ culturally offensive. (I have noticed that information of a private nature is often forthcoming in conversations about ‘places’.)

- Perhaps a relationship of trust had not been adequately built? Yet at public workshops, individuals were often eager to tell their stories to (and within) a larger community. (I caught only fragments, while conversing with others.)

I now consider that the ‘recording’ of individual ‘place stories’ was an inappropriate research method and that ‘recording’ is unnecessary for my practice purposes: an informal or casual meeting in ‘place’ will draw out conversation more readily. Bradley has described the oral transfer of knowledge ‘while doing something else’ and Paton has used ‘quilt-making’ as a story repository. Our challenge is to take the ‘informal’ seriously, or regard the informal as ‘serious’ business.

- From Indigenist researchers and critical reflection, I am learning new methods of research. These include the practice of contemplation - quiet still awareness in ‘place’ (‘dadirri’); ‘being-in-place’ and returning to ‘place’ ‘again and again’; the transfer of knowledge ‘while doing something else’; a ‘jigsaw’ method of reassociating stories and ‘places’; and (reflectively) being aware of slipping into a Western epistemology of question-answer dialogue. As an alternative, I am aware of the value of ‘deep and respectful listening’ in community engagement. In an Indigenous context the tendering of an observation as a comment (rather than a question) is respectful protocol, responses are nuanced and long silences are often a meaningful part of the conversation.

‘Storywork’ dialogue requires heightened awareness, intense concentration and serious intent.

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650 I already knew this from my father’s life-long example of engaging total strangers in conversation.


• I cannot return to old consultation methods. In recent ‘open meetings’ I have found a simmering aggression and lack of respect – for ‘place’ and ‘other’ (viz. initial community consultation for the Royal Avenue Sandringham Reserve Masterplan.) Often the consultant gets caught up in the ‘unfinished business’ of previous poor decision making or multiple political agendas. I have learnt from Indigenist researchers that ‘respect’ is a condition of meeting participation and have reflected that a similar expectation can be transferred to any community meeting as a required protocol. This may mean that ‘open’ meetings are replaced by invitation and registration.

• In cross-cultural dialogue we cannot assume that meanings are interpreted as intended by either party (see my discussion on metaphor, pages 178 - 179; and archaeology / misunderstanding of purpose at Lang Lang foreshore, page 189). I have resolved to include an Indigenous adviser in my future ‘place’ projects for guidance on protocols, introduction to communities, and interpretation of meanings. My aim is to develop a relationship of trust for co-creation of knowledge in ‘place’, in a way that supports reconciliation and decolonisation.

• Martin has asked the rhetorical question ‘… can a non-Aboriginal / non-Indigenous person do Indigenist research?’ And considers ‘… the answer needs to address the capacity to fully, respectfully and safely use Aboriginal terms of reference while at the same time, undertake continuing processes of self-reflexive interrogation’. In referencing ‘interconnection’ and ‘relatedness’, I am linking directly with Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies.

In the following section I will explore themes in my home region that make ‘connections’ between Western and Indigenous epistemologies.

654 We have now completed our first small project, and another has commenced.
656 Ibid. p. 140
Sea Country

Variations on a theme; provocations

Introduction

In the coupling of two words, ‘sea country’ represents a transcendence from separation (sea and land) to interaction and interdependence, the boundaries fluid and porous. As a concept, ‘sea country’ extends land to sea, but also sea to land, such that one is not ‘primary’, rendering the other ‘secondary’. ‘Boundaries’ are not ‘borders’. In the landscape one cannot say definitely where one influence starts and the other ends: is the summer sea breeze that I smell and feel at five hundred metres from the mapped coastline a defining element? In Yanyuwa country\(^657\), traditional Aboriginal people recognise the beginning of the sea country at some thirteen kilometres inland. Here there is a change in topography, ‘a sudden shallow descent’, a change in vegetation, and the saline flats and clay pans are subject to inundation by ‘king’ tides\(^658\).

The term ‘sea country’ appears to have originated with Rose\(^659\), when she spoke in 1996 of an Aboriginal concept used in connection with gaining legal control over portions of the sea adjoining Aboriginal land in the Milingimbi area\(^660\). While the English words were a new combination\(^661\), the concept was not: around Australia, Aboriginal people regard the sea as subject to the same custodianship responsibilities as the adjacent land. ‘Sea country’ is considered to contain evidence of ‘Dreaming’ events, by which all geographic features, animals, plants and people were created. ‘Sea country’ contains sacred sites from these creation events, and ‘songlines’ along which Ancestral beings travelled during the ‘Dreaming’.

In contrast, our Western legal and management agencies mark a distinction between land and sea, separating responsibilities at ‘high water mark’. This division permeates practice and constrains project briefs.

\(^{657}\) in the south-west Gulf of Carpentaria, Northern Territory


\(^{660}\) Milingimbi is an island community just off the coast of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

\(^{661}\) Not noted by Arthur in her study of Aboriginal English in the same year (ARTHUR, J. M. 1996. *Aboriginal English: A Cultural Study*, Oxford University Press.)
Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) boundaries represent a significant change in thinking about land and sea in Victoria\textsuperscript{662}. The boundaries of ‘country’, determined by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council assessments of RAP applications of individual communities, are inclusive of adjacent coastal waters. ‘Sea country’ is fixed \textit{ spatially} by map and description\textsuperscript{663}, extending RAP lands an average three nautical miles seaward of the mean low water mark (see Appendix 1 for a mapped interpretation). This would seem to recognise the Indigenous-inspired interconnection of sea and country as ‘sea country’, while also satisfying state government legal and management agency requirements for precision as ‘border’ definition. Perhaps it is a promising indicator of a decolonising process, but currently it has only limited application - to the material \textit{artefacts} (the archaeological indicators) of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Moving beyond legislation to ontology and epistemology, I hold ‘connections’ as a key principle, and support the conceptual implications of ‘sea country’ in all coastal research and project work.

**Parallel Stories**

- **Port Phillip / ‘nairm’**

In this story I introduce local Indigenous knowledge with its parallel in Western scientific evidence. The stories describe the origin of Port Phillip in different voices.

Changes in sea levels (and coastlines) over thousands of years of Aboriginal dwelling in Australia are recalled through oral stories, with different eras of change intermeshed in a time structure that Stanner described as ‘everywhen’\textsuperscript{664}. In Melbourne, Boon wurrung Elder Carolyn Briggs has related a story that recalls how ‘Hobson’s Bay (Port Phillip) was a \textit{kangaroo ground}’ before ‘the sea broke in’ at The Heads\textsuperscript{665}. Briggs quotes from a written record of a Boon wurrung (Bunurong) head man, who was revealing his grandfather’s story to a magistrate, in the ‘Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Aborigines, 1858 – 9’. ‘Today, the wurneet (river) that once flowed through this large flat...’

\textsuperscript{662} The appointment of RAPs is required by the \textit{Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006}

\textsuperscript{663} According to distance, direction, longitude and latitude


\textsuperscript{665} BRIGGS, C. 2008. \textit{The Journey Cycles of the Boonwurrung}, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages. p. 4
plain still flows under the nairm’ (the Bay)\textsuperscript{666}. In this way the story officially entered the public domain of the coloniser and survived for recall through Indigenist research some 150 years later.

But Snapper fishermen in the Bay know this feature, it seems, from folklore:

… we make the two-mile trip off shore to the Ansetts Reef area … The currents change lines through here along the old Yarra riverbed, and there’s a theory that the snapper will breed in this spot. But it’s just a theory\textsuperscript{667}.

Bay fishermen have seemingly forgotten the original source of their knowledge, which cannot be credited to observation alone. Did they receive the story in ‘place’, passed down through their families? Early settlers such as George Gordon McCrae learnt their fishing skills from the Boon wurrung / Bunurong people. Mc Crae wrote of his life at Arthur’s Seat, on the eastern side of the Bay in the 1840s:

In fishing, whether with net or lines, we had great assistance from the blacks, a fishing tribe, who camped in our paddocks\textsuperscript{668} … We found it to our advantage … to take blacks with us on our hunting and fishing expeditions, for they not only guided us accurately, but taught us many lessons in bush-craft, and in the mode of approaching game, which perhaps we should never have picked up otherwise. They showed us the exact bait for different fish, as also how to spear them with good effect\textsuperscript{669} …’

Despite his general recall, Mc Crae does not provide particular details of the Bay’s ‘different fish’, their habits, or their Indigenous names, and Briggs records just a few: gurnbak (‘fish’); talum (‘flathead’), illk (‘eel’) and tuyang (‘shellfish’)\textsuperscript{670}.

Recent scientific research has corroborated the oral story of the old Yarra riverbed, by establishing that Port Phillip, (originally formed at the end of the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago), largely dried up, with mud islands, barrier systems, sand dunes and beaches blocking the entrance to Bass Strait. The Yarra River and its (then) tributary, the Werribee River,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{666} Ibid. p. 19
\textsuperscript{667} MARSHALL, K. Snapper! The Age, the(melbourne)magazine
October 2010. pp. 54 - 58
\textsuperscript{668} MCCRAE, G. G. 1911. The Early Settlement of the Eastern Shores of Port Phillip Bay - With a Note on the Aborigines of the Coast. The Victorian Historical Magazine, 1. p. 19
\textsuperscript{669} Ibid. p. 25
\textsuperscript{670} BRIGGS, C. 2008. The Journey Cycles of the Boonwurrung, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages.}
meandered across the low plain to a salt lake, ‘no more than one-third of the size of today’s bay’. Scientists and Indigenous knowledge custodians agree that some catastrophic event ‘perhaps an earthquake’ caused the sea to break through the Heads and flood Port Phillip. This is estimated to have happened between 2,800 and 1,000 years ago. The Indigenous material I draw on here could relate to knowledge of Port Phillip over the last 1,000 years or 10,000 years: in Stanner’s terminology it could be said to belong in the ‘everywhen’.

Carolyn Briggs has published a collection of traditional stories from this ‘country’. While the stories do not always emplace knowledge, a careful reading provides keys to further knowledge and emplacement. In one story Briggs reveals an ‘essence’ of eel, in the ceremony celebrating their return in the spring season (‘Pareip’):

The women ... drummed on drums made from possum skins stretched tightly over their knees. They beat the drum with a rhythm that represented the pulsating beat of the eels as they made their long journey.

Briggs does not reveal a ‘songline’ for eel, simply a ‘rhythm’, connecting the women, their performance, being and ‘country’. Bradley has described the significance of ‘rhythm’ in Yanyuwa culture:

I became aware that, in the older Yanyuwa view of things ... breath is the nexus between oneself and country. ... I learned that the most sacred of ceremonies ... were accompanied not by song or kujika (song line) but purely by rhythm – the breath of dancers to the pulse of country. In the most sacred dances there is only the rhythm of the breath. It is breath being purposefully used that creates the matrix of sound which is the kujika, and represents the unity of Law.

- **Black Rock / ‘Boorandakandarra’**

There are several parts to this story: they combine as recognition of an Aboriginal culture in ‘place’, which is otherwise fragmented or simply ignored in the several published local

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671 Based on a journal article, as reported in CAUCHI, S. 10,000-year bay theory doesn’t hold water. *The Sunday Age*, May 8, 2011.
The story parts are an adjunct to two office projects which raised questions for further research, and reflect back on research in earlier sections of this thesis. Here I match pieces of evidence from public documents with clues found in ‘place’.

Black Rock was already a named ‘place’ when the first government survey of 1852 prepared land for auction, dividing it for purchase as privately-owned lots. It was called Boorandakandarra in the language of the local ‘Boonwurrung’ tribe, the name emplaced near Half Moon Bay. In the survival of the traditional ‘place’ name lies evidence that the name was known at least orally at the time of survey, although possibly not to the surveyor: by that time the Boon wurrung / Bunurong population was in serious decline.

Only a handful of traditional Aboriginal ‘place’ names appear to have survived along the north-eastern side of Port Phillip, and I have not seen them recorded on any early maps. ‘Nerre-nerre-minnim’ (South Melbourne), ‘Euro-yoroke’ (St. Kilda), ‘Warrown’ (Brighton) and ‘Mallum Mallum’ (Red Bluff) are listed in the Dictionary of Aboriginal Placenames (2002). In addition, Briggs records ‘Narlumbubber’ as the ‘Bluff at Brighton’. As we have seen in section two, traditional Aboriginal ‘place’ names have meaningful associations and are particular to ‘places’: they do not translate to larger areas of modern construction such as towns or cities. ‘Place’ names provide cultural and environmental information about the ‘place’. For example, the above-mentioned ‘Euro-yoroke’ was associated with the (red) sandstone found there and used to sharpen tomahawks. It was probably at Point Ormond, where ‘Little Red Bluff’ is shown marked on an early map and a small red bluff can be seen glowing in early sketches and paintings. But the bluff has been lost to memory. It was completely removed sometime after white settlement, and probably crushed as road-making material. The survival of its traditional name encodes its significance.

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674 As referenced throughout; I refer to ‘guides’ as they are alternative histories, published as annotated historical photograph folders or as a series on local themes
676 ‘Merrimerriwinnum’ has also been recorded as a place name for Brighton, in MONASH UNIVERSITY CAIS 2001. Meet the Eastern Kulin.
The ‘Red Bluff’ at Half Moon Bay is of a similar red sandstone material, which can also be found under various engineering works in other ‘places’ on the eastern side of Port Phillip. It is known and valued in traditional Aboriginal cultures as ‘ochre’, and associated with the blood of an Ancestral Dreaming, such is its sacred significance. Briggs has recorded the use of ochre collected from pits around Sandringham, Black Rock and Beaumaris for ceremonial purposes and as a pigment for artwork, including the glyphs on possum-skin cloaks.

But the meaning of the ‘place’ name ‘Boorandakandarra’ has not been recorded. From my earlier research I know that the ‘essence’ of the ‘place’ lies in the sound of the ‘place’ name, and I search ‘The Dictionary’ for similar sounds in other ‘place’ names. It reveals: ‘Boroondara’, meaning ‘dark or shady place’ (from ‘burrun’ meaning night); ‘boo-re-arm’ (Prahran) meaning mist; and ‘Buurr-a’, which is now ‘Bora’, ‘place of initiation’ in the related Dja Dja Wurrung language. This last ‘place’ name may provide a key to local knowledge. By sounding the first part of ‘Boorandakandarra’ aloud, (‘Booran’), we can hear something like the sound and pitch of a ‘bullroarer’ - the musical instrument used in (male) initiation ceremonies. I already know from the advice of a tour guide that this ‘place’ was a ‘men’s place’ (although the guide referred only to English-language ‘place’ names). In the sounding of the word there is a clue to ‘essence’. The significance of the ‘place’ is encoded in the ‘place’ name.

I am making a leap of imagination to make sense of something which may no longer be held in memory. In this possible meaning, ‘place of initiation’, we begin to make sense of other possible meanings (‘dark or shady place’; ‘night’; ‘mist’) and associated events - men’s initiation ceremony, night performance, ‘voice’ of the bullroarer, and the seasonal enveloping sea mist. Further, the Yarra River (which once flowed across a plain that became the Bay) was known by the Boon wurrung / Bunurong as Birrarrung (meaning ‘mist; through

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681 It should not be inferred that these places were the only sources of ochre – the context of the written stories is that they were originally commissioned by the city of Bayside.
683 I am using the place name version as adopted by the Dictionary of Aboriginal Placenames
684 As before, the Dictionary of Aboriginal Placenames
685 The public tour was sponsored by the City of Bayside and led by an Aboriginal man who had received local knowledge.
The ‘place’ name ‘Boorandakandarra’ evokes a number of associations rather than the sole definition we expect in the Western rationalist tradition. But this is a ‘men’s place’, and I have intruded far enough. Bradley has advised in relation to ceremony that ‘kept secret it maintains its power but if revealed it has none’687.

Imagination is all that is available when memory is lost. Gibson advises that ‘... we need to IMAGINE very boldly ... as we try to understand how to alter the world and ourselves’688. I have valued this insight in developing heritage public gardens. However, imagination in this ‘place’ must be tempered with self-reflexivity, for I am venturing beyond the published ‘stories’ – Briggs does not mention ‘Boorandakandarra’. As a fledgling Indigenist researcher, I have learnt that ‘relatedness’ is more important than ‘cleverness’, and a reconstruction of the ‘jigsaw’ of culture and ‘place’ must proceed in the company of an Indigenous custodian. But as I have previously stated, the situation in my home region is politically complex689.

I first came across reference to a traditional Aboriginal ‘place’ name for ‘Black Rock’ in my research for the Black Rock Village Streetscape Masterplan, an office project in 2008, and from the beginning of the project I was keen to bring the ‘place’ name into contemporary consciousness in some way. In developing the masterplan I recommended that the traditional name be acknowledged (translate ‘interpreted’ in local council language) by incorporation in the pavement design. My intention was that it would be a mark of respect to the Boon wurrung / Bunurong people. The recommendation was allowed to remain on my plan and in the accompanying report, but it provoked no discussion or public comment ... just my old friend ‘silence’.

During formal studies at Monash University CAIS (MIC)690 in 2009, I came to reflect that my idea of recalling the traditional ‘place’ name as a mark of respect could also be seen as appropriation of a ‘place’ name belonging to a minority culture, and I remained unsure about the integrity of my recommendation for some time. (In the mean time, another firm picked up all of my recommendations and repeated them, with acknowledgement but no discussion, in the Black Rock Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre Strategic Framework

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689 See pages 185 - 186
690 Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies, now Monash Indigenous Centre
Plan.) This would not be the only time that my developing understanding of a different culture would cause me to critically reflect on my previous recommendations, or to have doubts. Mezirow has noted that a ‘disorienting dilemma’ is necessary for perspective transformation. When I subsequently found ‘Boorandakandarra’ in ‘The Dictionary’ (with this alternative spelling of the ‘place’ name) I was relieved that the ‘place’ name had been reappropriated to Aboriginal ownership through publication by an Indigenous body. But still I was unsure of an appropriate action. Now, with my later research, built on Aboriginal concepts of ‘essence’ and ‘voice’ (in ‘the new road to Bendigo’) I know that an authentic direction can only be found in a collaborative dialogue with the appropriate Indigenous elders. What can be clearly stated is that the traditional ‘place’ name did not belong to a town, but to a particular landscape feature and an equating of ‘place’ name and town is simplistic. But I have no further role in the project development: my design ideas were partially documented by Council in a normative interpretation and failed to make the cultural and environmental changes I had intended.

In thinking about possible futures for Black Rock village, I was at one time attracted to the idea of ‘planting the seed’ in community consciousness for acknowledgement of a dual ‘place’ name – ‘Black Rock’ / ‘Boorandakandarra’. (I had previously noted this practice in southern Finland, where dual Finnish and Swedish ‘place’ names reflect the cultural and political history.) But my research and reflection proved this idea was invalid. Firstly, a traditional Indigenous ‘place’ name relates to a particular ‘place’ – in this instance some part of ‘Half Moon Bay’ - and not a town; and secondly, current Victorian government legislation does not allow dual naming of ‘towns’ or ‘cities’, only ‘features’. I have also noted the difficulties and cautions of introducing dual ‘place’ names as discussed by Kostanski and Clark in their reflection on the ‘Grampians’ / ‘Gariwerd’ experience. My position would now be that community knowledge-building of the ‘place’ name ‘Boorandakandarra’, as it relates to ‘Half Moon Bay’, is a first step towards acknowledgement of a significant Indigenous ‘place’. But this can only proceed in consultation and agreement with RAP Elders - as the owners of the ‘place’ name. Acknowledgement in itself is a reconciliatory action.


In local history guides, ‘Black Rock’, the registered ‘place’ name, has been credited as derived from Charles Ebden’s ‘Black Rock House’\(^{694}\). But each local history publication borrows authority by repeating information from a predecessor, and there is often no reference to a primary source. Oral history in the wider community does not seem to attract the responsibility of ‘truth’ that it does in traditional Aboriginal societies where it is ‘Law’. Instead it often becomes part of a local (white) *mythology* as I will show here and in relation to ‘Black Rock House’.

The earliest connection between the ‘place’ name and Ebden appears to be in a tourism pamphlet, which surmises:

> Part of Ebden’s youth was spent at Black Rock, an English village which is much the same distance from Brighton, Sussex, as our Black Rock is from Brighton, Victoria. It may be for that reason Ebden called his new home ‘Black Rock House’ from which the town that grew around it took its name\(^{695}\).

‘Place’ name associations are easily forgotten and misappropriated over time. Other theories abound: ‘The house was named ‘Black Rock House’ after Blackrock Castle near Dublin associated with Mrs. Ebden’s girlhood ... Mrs. Ebden named the house after Blackrock near Dublin or after Black Rock near Cloyne in Southern Ireland ... Mrs. Ebden’s father was the Anglican Archdeacon of Blackrock in County Cork, Ireland’\(^{696}\). The naming stories have now been selectively perpetuated by a radio play ‘*The Jewel by the Sea*’\(^{697}\), in which performers in the roles of Ebden and his wife discuss naming ‘Black Rock house’ as a tribute to Mrs. Ebden’s childhood and her father’s title.

It may well be that the town ‘Black Rock’ took its name from Ebden’s estate, but perhaps there is an earlier source for the name ‘Black Rock’?

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\(^{697}\) *The Jewel by the Sea* radio play (written by Cheryl Threadgold, c. 2007) was recently broadcast as part of the 2011 *Bayside Literary Festival*. In the Festival program it is described as ‘historically compelling’.
I have found documentary evidence which presents an alternative ‘place’ name origin. I believe that the name of Ebden’s estate (and later the town) was taken from ‘THE BLACK ROCK’, a geomorphic feature at Half Moon Bay. On January 4, 1869, a telling article and accompanying wood engraving appeared in ‘The Illustrated Australian News’. The engraving clearly shows ‘The Black Rock’ from a back of beach viewing point, as a (ferruginous sandstone) outcrop (Fig. 15), while the accompanying article identifies the ‘place’ as:

a well-known spot for snapper fishing during the season, which lasts from November to the end of January ... a very convenient anchorage for fishing boats, being sheltered from the strong south-westerly winds so prevalent during the snapper season.

The commentary is informative in its detailing of relationships between season, winds, tides and habitat. It marks Half Moon Bay as an important fishing ‘spot’ in 1869. As well as the prized ‘snapper’, rock cod, mackerel, and flathead are noted, and ‘Clinging to the rocks may be found periwinkles of very large size, and beyond these rocks at low tide cockle beds may be searched with success’. Briggs notes that in earlier times this period ‘November through to February’ focused Boonwurrung / Bunurong activities along this coast: ‘the return of the snapper ... signalled by the flowering in early November of the coast tee- tree; ... tulum (flathead) and flounder were caught ...’. And Dennis Foley recalls a similar custom amongst the Gai-mariagal people of northern Sydney: ‘In summer we lived on the harbour ... flathead were a favourite source of food due to their taste and ease of capture.’ But the Gai-mariagal never took large fish, ‘as the large fish were known to be female.’

The wood engraving - a ‘poetic’ image based on an artist’s impression - is of course open to interpretation. If we compare a photograph of the same ‘place’ taken some forty years later (Fig. 16) or one hundred and forty years later (Fig. 17) it is tempting to make comparisons across the different depictions of reality (engraving and photograph). But we cannot be sure that the summit of the Black Rock has eroded in that time or that more vegetation once clung to the Bluff, or even that the fishermen’s cottages were in this bay, and not the one

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698 Two geological formations are recognised on this coastline: they are the softer ‘Red Bluff Sands’ which erode to iron-red sand and the underlying hard ‘Black Rock Sandstone’, frequently exposed as rock platforms in the Bay. (MINES DEPARTMENT. 1970. Geological Survey of Victoria, 1:63,360. Melbourne: C H Rixon, Government Printer.)
700 Ibid.
beyond. ‘Half Moon Bay’ is actually the furthest bay, glimpsed in the images behind the Black Rock, and not the bay in front. (This confusion caused me to initially think that the Black Rock had been levelled under the car park of the Half Moon Bay car park - until I took a copy of the engraving to the ‘place’ for comparison.) The shallow waters no longer team with the actions of fishermen. In spending time here alone at beach level, an impression of scale dominates, such that the photographs do not convey: the Bluff is incredibly high and steep when one stands below it, and the Black Rock outcrop is not easily reached. For me, momentarily, there is a feeling of menace in the isolation and enclosure. Susan Sontag has described photographs as ‘confirmations of that reductive approach to reality which is considered realistic’\textsuperscript{703}. Certainly I had not anticipated my reaction. As I stand there, I notice food plants that are indigenous to the coast, and a sudden movement catches my eye. Amongst the *Atriplex* and *Myoporum* thickets at the base of the Bluff is a colony of Fairy-wrens. Their movements and ‘voices’ are of course not captured by the still and silent image, and my photograph is thus a reduction of ‘place’.

Obviously THE BLACK ROCK was in ‘place’ when Charles Hotson Ebden bought land nearby in 1856, within sight and sound of the sea. But apart from the 1869 newspaper article there seems to be no other mention of it.

We have already met Ebden as a young man following Major Mitchell’s cart tracks to claim new pasture land in ‘Australia Felix’ (see section two, ‘the new road to Bendigo’). There is no clear record of his relationships with the Aboriginal people over whose lands he travelled, and whose ‘country’ he claimed for his sheep runs - at ‘Mungabareena’ (near what is now Albury, New South Wales), ‘Bonegilla’ (Victoria) and on the Campaspe River in central Victoria, which he named ‘Carlsruhe’. His method was to send hired men ahead of him to find and secure the land.

Fig. 15 ‘THE BLACK ROCK, HALF MOON BAY’
Creator: Harrison W. H., engraver; Cooke Albert Charles (1836 -1902), artist; Date: January 4, 1869; Print: wood engraving; Publication: Melbourne, Ebenezer and David Syme
Source: State Library of Victoria (Accession no. IAN04/01/69/SUPP/20)

‘The engraving shows a boat just hauled close into shore from which baskets of these fish are being brought, for sale to those who make it their business to sell them either in the market or to shop-keepers in the city.\textsuperscript{704}

\textsuperscript{704} SYME, E. & SYME, D. The Black Rock. The Illustrated Australian News, January 4, 1869.
The BLACK ROCK over time

Fig. 16 ‘Beach and cliff at Black Rock’
Contributor: Norman Carter; Date: c.1910; Transparency: glass lantern slide, 8.5 x 8.5 cm. Source: State Library of Victoria (Accession no. H91.29/50)
This view from the cliff top, shows Red Bluff, the BLACK ROCK and Half Moon Bay. The extended rock platform visible in the background is now underneath a public car park

Fig. 17 A contemporary photograph from the beach shows the BLACK ROCK and Red Bluff. Date: 27 May 2011, 4.24 p.m. (low tide at 3.32 p.m., 0.4m)
A coastal track above the Half Moon Bay is shown on an 1865 survey map, meeting a second track that arrives at this ‘place’ from the north. This track was eventually straightened and widened for Bluff Road. Indigenous leader Gene Blow has revealed that the track that became Bluff Road was a ‘trading track’ of the Boon wurrung / Bunurong people. But the 1865 map shows that it changes alignment near a junction that would have become Cheltenham Road, and veers to the north-west. At its southern end, the track leads to Half Moon Bay, and would possibly have extended through an imaginary footprint of Black Rock house - before the first land sale in 1852 - to meet a southern coastal track.

A number of myths and counter-myths are associated with Black Rock house:

Brown stone ramparts and steel spiked gates were modelled on Mr. Ebden’s former home in South Africa ...

Ebden brought some of his architectural ideas from South Africa where he had lived ...

The 20 feet high walls were for protection against possible attacks from Aborigines ...

The high walls were the result of the influence of Ebden’s house in South Africa and were not necessary for protection from Aborigines as only the peaceable Bunurong (sic) tribe were in this area ...

The secret passage from the wine cellar was said to be a way of escape if necessary from hostile Aborigines ...

It is doubtful if the secret passage (as rumoured) ever existed and no evidence of same can be found ...

Two Moreton Bay fig trees are said to be as old as the house itself.

We can unpack these ‘myths’ collectively or individually. In relation to the local Indigenous people, the stories appear to have been the ‘imaginings’ of later generations of local residents, rather than a whisper of Ebden’s experiences. Historian Weston Bate’s description of an earlier house in Brighton may have influenced this myth-making, as parallels in the description of J. B. Were’s ‘Moorabbin House’ - built ‘in a commanding position two hundred yards from the shore’ – illustrate:

Stone from the beach was used in the walls, which were three feet thick, partly for coolness in summer and partly, it is said, against the possibility of an attack by

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706 The City of Bayside commissioned Gene Blow to lead this public walk
aborigines (sic), who were frequently numerous in Brighton when the house was being built in 1842. Inner defensive sliding-doors were fitted at the front entrance and there was a secret refuge chamber\textsuperscript{708}.

The myths surrounding Black Rock house continue in references to Ebden’s former home in South Africa ... about which we have no knowledge. Ultimately all of these myths show settler attitudes and mistrust of ‘the other’ and we have no evidence that they reflect Ebden’s attitudes, as their content implies.

The Red Bluff was not respected by later settlers. Wolfgang Sievers bore witness to this (Fig. 18). His photograph is a rare environmental response amongst his otherwise industrial, mining and architectural themes, and must signify his personal outrage on those who would destroy beauty. Author Susan Sontag considered that ‘Any photograph has multiple meanings’\textsuperscript{709}, but Sievers was quite clear about the meaning he intended for this photograph when he pencilled the date and a description on the reverse side: ‘Red Bluff, used by Sandringham Council as a rubbish tip, 1963’ (and sold the image to the State Library of Victoria). The photograph still shocks viewers today. Sontag considered that ‘The ethical content of photographs is fragile’ and ‘... most photographs do not keep their emotional charge’\textsuperscript{710}. Perhaps it is a measure of Sievers’ art that his image, or the ‘event’ it captures, has retained its potency over nearly fifty years. But beyond art and skill, I consider that the image is a clear expression of his strong inward conviction that stories must be documented and ‘violence’ redressed\textsuperscript{711}. A respect for ‘sacred places’, ‘places of beauty’, ‘wounded places’, all ‘places’, is part of the original human condition, and also part of the ethics for reconciliation and decolonisation. ‘The land, and how we treat it, is what determines our human-ness’\textsuperscript{712}.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}

\bibitem{708} BATE, W. 1962. \textit{A History of Brighton}, Melbourne University Press. p. 43
\bibitem{710} ibid. p. 21
\bibitem{711} Sievers was forced to flee Nazi Germany in 1938 and was later active in researching the emigration of war criminals to Australia
\end{thebibliography}
- Fishing

A fishing culture continues a timeless tradition at Black Rock, supported by ‘Melbourne’s most progressive Professional Fishing Tackle Shop’ where weekly fishing reports are displayed (see Figs. 19, 22). Advertising signs hint at old-fashioned ‘folklore’ — ‘where fishermen meet ... free information and a cuppa’. And fishing boats launch from Half Moon Bay ramp.

But we now have to question how long can this culture survive? I have documented the fishing shop reports for over a year: Snapper are always first on the list; various unexpected absences are noted. But a recent new menace is now footnoting reports (Fig. 19). In the same week that dead fish were found floating in Half Moon Bay, and regular swimmers reported that poor water quality had forced their decisions to stop swimming at Bayside
beaches\textsuperscript{713} aquatic scientist Sheree Marris released her hope of an awakening to the Bay’s treasures, in ‘Melbourne Down Under’\textsuperscript{714}.

I have found references to ‘fishing’ in many works on ‘Indigenous places’. Fishing is a theme that threads through this section. We have discussed early settlers such as McCrae at Arthurs Seat, who learnt fishing skills from Boon wurrung / Bunurong men, and Brigg’s Bayside stories. Half Moon Bay and Black Rock continue a fishing tradition. I have noted Foley’s advice on traditional ways of conserving fish species:

\begin{quote}
The large (elder) fish that formed the lead fish of the school were never taken … The lead fish are the elders, holding the knowledge to bring the young fish back each year to spawn. We only take therefore, those fish from the side of the school or the tale of the school. They are usually the youngest, and often the sweetest and most succulent\textsuperscript{715}.
\end{quote}

And Martin’s lovely analogy of research through ‘storywork’, as fishing:

\begin{quote}
To go fishing in freshwater relies on understanding the relatedness amongst Waterways, Animals and People. The tackle and bait is chosen according to knowledge of the Waterway and the fish and sometimes, a particular fish. The line is baited and thrown in
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{713} REID, M. January 10, 2012. Dead fish not dandy. Bayside Leader.
\textsuperscript{714} REID, M. 10 January 2012. Port Phillip’s bay of hidden treasures. Bayside Leader.
\textsuperscript{715} FOLEY, D. & MAYNARD, R. 2001. Repossession of Our Spirit: Traditional owners of northern Sydney, Aboriginal History Inc. p. 50
to see if the fish are biting. Sometimes they bite better at sunrise or at sunset. Sometimes they bite better after good rainfalls or after the Waterway has been flushed by the release of dam water. As the fish nibbles, the tension on the line is loosened ever so slightly for the weight of the fish to be felt. Pull on the line too soon and the fish will back off and maybe even disappear. Sometimes the fishing line needs to be withdrawn, the hook re-baited and the procedure then repeated\textsuperscript{716}.

Often a solitary, male activity, fishing demands awareness - of line tensions and changes in tides and currents. What is (line) fishing if not the practice of ‘dadirri’ – quiet still awareness in ‘place’?

Key Findings

Multiple insights of connection are available to us from these parallel stories.

In Port Phillip / ‘nairm’, we notice that Indigenous stories and Western scientific evidence often complement each other in identification of features in ‘place’; we reflect that oral knowledge can be reconnected in ‘place’ through recovery of a written transcript by an Indigenist researcher; we might wonder at the knowledge sources of the Bay fishermen and recognise fishing skills passed down from Indigenous sources.

In Black Rock / ‘Boorandakandarra’, we reflect that a traditional ‘place’ name holds many levels of meaning; the on-going re-emplacement of traditional stories and ‘place’ names connects knowledge in a ‘jigsaw’ that is currently incomplete; ‘place’ stories are a vital alternative to local histories; a questioning of ‘white myths’ often reveals other truths (Black Rock House); a photograph does not capture the multi-dimensional ‘essence of place’, but sometimes one image conveys a powerful message (Sievers).

In Fishing, we learn that fishing connects Indigenous and settler epistemologies - and has done so since European settlement; in fishing culture, respectfully learnt, are lessons in conservation; an Indigenist researcher must practice constant self-reflexivity to know when to withdraw and what not to reveal; the practice of ‘quiet, still awareness’ (‘dadirri’) connects us with ‘place’.

\textsuperscript{716} MARTIN, K. L. 2008. Please knock before you enter: Aboriginal regulation of Outsiders and the implications for researchers, Post Pressed. p. 96
Being in Country: a Sunday Ritual

Each Sunday I walk to the Sandringham cliff to meet Port Phillip. This exercise began as a flight from my computer, a need to be out in the landscape and taking notice of changing tides and light and other small happenings, connecting with nature and community. I did not intentionally choose what would become my regular ‘meeting place’; it was simply the closest ‘opening’ to the coast, well-worn by many before me - an ‘everyday’, ‘ordinary place’, slightly ‘scruffy’ - not ‘designated’ for viewing or sitting (Fig. 20).

Fig. 20
My regular ‘meeting place’ is ‘ordinary’, but popular; an opening to the sea. Sometimes I wait for others to vacate it. [27 March 2011, 1.45 p.m. DST]

Fig. 21
Directly below is an in-shore reef: the focus for my continuing series of Sunday photographs. [27 March 2011, 1.51 p.m. DST, falling tide (0.3m)]

I am guided by a phenomenological perspective of ‘being-in-the-world’ and noting my experiences as part of that world. But here I am conscious of an underlying tension between ‘connection’ and ‘separation’ that could give rise to a visual preference\(^7\). The tension is reinforced by ‘place’ context: my vantage point is itself overlooked by an artificial cliff top of three-storey townhouses, such that I could be the ‘object’ of an unseen ‘subject’. The tension is broken by immersion in ‘place’ – with a calm relaxation of the breath, a quiet still awareness of life (including human), and the reinforced connection of repeated visits.

At first the photographs were unimportant: I was simply enjoying the coastal experience as it brought all of my senses alive. Even now (back at my computer) I can ‘think’ the smell of the

\(^7\) See discussion of the ‘Western gaze’, page 128
coastal shrubs in ‘place’. But it was the enduring beauty of the changing landscape that enticed me to start recording it as photographs.

I observe that the coral rocks just under the surface display a mottled pattern, and the waves are broken by the submerged rocks. The two effects combine as a complex, animated texture. The *Atriplex cinerea* in the foreground is a luminous presence. (Journal, Sunday 14 November 2010 (12.49 – 12.52 p.m. DST718.) This is not a static beauty.

In this section I reflect on my experiences of ‘being in country’, taking photographs, and finding ‘beauty’ in the ordinary. In linking ‘beauty’ with the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘everyday’, I am drawing on Hillman, Moore and Rose, and rejecting subjective / objective concepts of beauty in favour of a ‘cosmic’ value. Here I use ‘cosmic’ as derived from the Greek word ‘kosmos’, which Hillman advises: ‘is an aesthetic term, best translated into English as fitting order – appropriate, right arrangement, so that attention to particulars takes precedent (sic) over universals’719. But this is not a static beauty.

... suppose we were to imagine that beauty is permanently given, inherent to the world in its data, there on display always, a display that evokes an aesthetic response. This inherent radiance lights up more translucently, more intensely with certain events, particularly those events that aim to seize it and reveal it, such as artworks720.

Hillman could have been thinking of ‘artworks’ in any range of genres, including (for example) photography, painting, poetry, even landscape architecture. Although he provides examples of ‘ordinary things’ they are drawn from a domestic environment; whereas I am finding beauty in the ordinary landscape, and ‘certain events’ as an (ephemeral) extension of the ‘given data’ in landscape - such as thunderstorms, bird calls, and enveloping sea mists. Hillman continues his discussion of the ‘ordinary’ with reference to the translated words of the Greek philosopher Plotinus:

We do not habitually examine or in any way question ordinary things, ... and encounter the extraordinary with astonishment, though we should be astonished at these ordinary

718 Quotations from my journal are shown in this format throughout the section
720 Ibid. p. 267
things too if we were unfamiliar with them and someone presented a detailed account of
them and explained their powers.\textsuperscript{721}

In the speed of modern living, we often fail to notice the \textit{particularities} of ‘place’ and hence
do not recognise beauty in the ‘ordinary’. My Sunday ritual aims to redress this situation by
slowing my pace. I am mindful too of Aboriginal epistemologies that demonstrate an alert
noticing of the display of the world, ever ready for the possible appearance of the
extraordinary in the ordinary (‘supervital’ in ‘vital’), paralleling the thoughts of Plotinus,
above. Consider for example the Yanyuwa account of the ‘Blue-ringed Octopus’
\textit{Hapalochlaena sp.} (A different species is occasionally found in tidal rock pools in my local
area.)\textsuperscript{722} For the Yanyuwa people this is a powerful Dreaming story and song, \textit{connecting}
the Blue-ringed Octopus with the seasonal (cold-weather) brightness of the ‘Seven Sisters’ star
constellation\textsuperscript{723} and with the heavy sea fog, which is a revitalising force over ‘country’\textsuperscript{724}. I
have not heard this story in my ‘country’: all the elements are here, but the story cannot be
appropriated. Perhaps instead I can feel a \textit{connection} to ‘country’ through John Wolseley’s
poetic description of ‘the earth exhaling the morning mists’\textsuperscript{725}? (See also Figs. 27, 28, 39.)

Both Thomas Moore and Deborah Bird Rose link their valuing of ‘beauty’ to an embodied
experience of nature. Moore considers:

\begin{quote}
A real relationship with nature has to be fostered by spending time with it, observing it,
and being open to its teachings. Any true relationship requires time, a certain
vulnerability, and openness to being affected and changed\textsuperscript{726}.
\end{quote}

Rose relates the real-life story of Mal Dibden, a beef and dairy farmer in the Tilba area of
New South Wales, who has lived that ‘real relationship with nature’ and realised ‘the folly of
thinking you are in control.’ In relation to the environment he considers:

\begin{quote}
You’ve got to … be hit by the beauty. It’s almost got to startle you … to stop you in your
tracks and just make you change yourself to a degree while you’re enjoying the beauty of
it\textsuperscript{727}.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{721} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{723} also known by its European name as the ‘Pleiades’
\textsuperscript{724} BRADLEY, J., WITH YANYUWA FAMILIES 2010. \textit{Singing Saltwater Country: Journey to the Songlines
of Carpentaria}, Allen & Unwin.
\textsuperscript{725} WOLSELEY, J. 18 June 2011. The Pull of the Landscape. \textit{Festival of Ideas}. University of Melbourne.
Publishers. p. 270
It has sometimes been popular for municipalities to promote ‘beautification works’. These works are often interpreted as ‘tidiness’, ‘neatness and attractiveness’, ‘landscaping’, ‘upgrading amenities’, and ‘interpretive signage’ – and have no connection with ‘beauty’. Where volunteers are involved in implementation, there is a value in the creation of community cohesiveness, but ‘civic pride’ is also evoked in the accomplishment. I once heard a parks manager express pride in his city by reference to the number of kilometres of well-maintained grass verges he was responsible for: tidiness and monoculture combine in his vision of beauty.

Hillman advises that beauty cannot be manufactured by ‘personal rational will’ (‘ego’) and ‘the road to beauty begins in pleasure’. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Australian artists including Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts, and Frederick McCubbin made their summer camps along this coastline, and found beauty from the sensory pleasure of dwelling in the landscape they painted:

I close my eyes and see again the soft red sandy road, the velvety green of the ti-tree (sic) tops – the sweet salt air about the beach during the rosy afterglow at Sandringham – the march home.\(^{728}\)

Today it is easy to dismiss such observations of pleasure and beauty as unfashionable Romanticism, but the alternatives (such as municipal beautification works) result in a rationalisation of the particularities that allow ordinary, everyday outdoor ‘place’ to be extraordinary, and beautiful, and supportive of biodiversity.

Hillman lists some of the ‘defences against beauty’, as ‘wit and parody, appeal to the mind before the senses, sentimental literalism, sweetness, slickness without complexity, surface without depth’\(^{729}\). We can all find material examples of these descriptors in the landscape. They have sometimes ended up as attachments to my concepts, commissions that cannot be changed.


\(^{728}\) Letter from Arthur Streeton to Frederick McCubbin, 1901, proposed for pavement insertion in ‘Sandringham Gardens Lookout - Concept Design’, Sept 2003, by Jill Orr-Young Landscape Architects (unbuilt)

I began to journal my experiences as *praxis*\(^{730}\), and after downloading the weekly photographs, would often compare them with tide times and levels\(^{731}\). I was interested in the textured, moving patterns on the water surface, but I was also drawn to the meeting of water and land, and the long reef (Fig. 21):

Today, the reef is a dark shadow under the water surface and only two rocks are exposed. They each mark their own ‘place’ as the advancing tide washes over them; the ripples from each little island expand out and join each with the other. This reminds me of the meditation garden of raked sand and island rocks at Ryoanji temple, Kyoto. (Journal, Sunday 3 October 2010.)

I often found a *connection* between my experiences on the Sandringham cliff top and the weekly fish reports at the Black Rock fishing shop. This information is updated on Fridays, and advises the community of ‘places’ where fish have been recently caught; as a result, fishing boats appear in the bay, in drifts and clusters:

A light wind is blowing from the south (south-east?); mid-tide; ... a colony of Fairy-wrens is chattering its way along the Salt Bush *Atriplex cinerea*; eighty to one hundred fishing boats are spread out across the water ... (Journal, Sunday 24 October 2010, 9.28 – 9.43 a.m. DST), (see Fig. 22.)

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\(^{730}\) Elsewhere I have defined ‘praxis’ as ‘provocation ~ contemplation in place ~ journaling and critical reflection ~ dialogue ~ document research ~ practice’

My experiences are not confined in binary categories, such as nature - culture. Rather, they connect phenomena in ‘place’.

A lone cormorant dives and advances along the outer edge of the reef. (Journal, Sunday 10 October 2010, 10.33 – 10.42 a.m. DST.)

On the cliff above, extensive Aboriginal shell middens have been piled up in a car park (and the construction work has stopped for several months while archaeological investigations are completed). How did this situation develop? Why was the connection between reef and shell midden not anticipated? Could it be that ‘place’ was misconstrued as ‘site’ (i.e. objective, unconnected)? This is a complex question that centres on issues of decontextualisation and globalism, as represented by ‘modernity’ and enacted by government instrumentalities. (In this case, the objective was the engineering of ‘rain gardens’).

A recent local history attempts a connection in its brief discussion of ‘Local Aboriginal People’ through European eyes:

The bay also provided a large variety of shellfish to add to the rest of the larder. Fresh-water “wells” among the rocks were an important factor in deciding where the middens were established.

It should be obvious that shell middens are associated with coastal reefs. Here, both local historians and engineers (etc.) have failed to make the connection. But perhaps I am forgetting my own journey of learning?

On the cliff top I met a professional photographer. He pointed out that the dark areas of the reef that are rarely exposed are mussels. This fits with the shell evidence in the Aboriginal middens above. (Journal, Sunday 21 November 2010, 9.56 – 10.11 a.m. DST.)

Connection, I suggest, comes gradually, from ‘being in country’, in a regular embodied experience.

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732 Middens are protected by law.
734 Note that the Common Mussel Mytilus planulatus is the most commonly represented shell species in middens surveyed around Port Phillip Bay (ANDREW LONG & ASSOCIATES 2003. Draft Sandringham Rotunda Lookout: A Cultural Heritage Assessment Bayside City Council.)
The photographs were finding their own purpose in my weekly walk:

I have discovered that I perceive details and changes (in the landscape) in the space between sequential photographs. Often I see additional details in studying the prints. (Journal, Sunday 7 November 2010.)

![Fig. 23](7 Aug 2011, 4.58 p.m. EST, rising tide, 0.7m)

![Fig. 24](7 Aug 2011, 4.59 p.m. EST, rising tide, 0.7m)

But they were also becoming a series with a different agenda. My visual sense was overtaking all others, and threatening the simple act of just being present. But I did not realise this yet.

![Fig. 25](17 Oct 2010, 7.24 p.m. DST, rising tide, 0.6m)

![Fig. 26](Tues) 16 November 2010, 4.57 p.m. DST, low tide, 0.4m

I am attracted to the dancing silver light of the water; sea country is vital, alive. (Journal, Tuesday 16 November 2010), (Fig. 26)

The automatic flash on my camera has captured ‘invisible’ insects as white spots of light. (Journal, Wednesday, 8 December, 2010, 8.50 p.m. DST.)
My weekly walks to the cliff top at Sandringham have been overtaken by uncertainty and indecision. I started taking the photographs as an aid to taking notice/mindfulness and reflection – coming to know ‘sea country’ in its particularity. But now I am considering that each photograph should be framed in the same way, so that change is made visible. My supervisor Peter Downton has referred me to the example of photographer Edward Steichen \(^735\) and his multiple images of a shad-blow tree. (Journal, Sunday 7 November 2010, 10.59 – 11.19 a.m. DST.)

Uncertainty led me to experiment with ‘framing’. There is no exact mark on the uneven ground of the cliff to establish my weekly vantage point, but two distinctive rocks stand as sentinels in my viewing frame. I am conscious that changes such as converging wave patterns often appear to the right of previous framings. This week I try alternative frames and panoramas to spread my field. But my phenomenological approach has temporarily been replaced by an emphasis on framing each photograph in the same way as the previous week. Freedom is lost, and with it the joy in connecting with ‘place’.

I turn to Steichen’s example to understand his approach and method. Steichen’s focus is a shad-blow tree *Amelanchier canadensis*, observed from his bedroom window in Connecticut, in its context of treed slope and pond. He probably felt a connection to the tree in that he had planted it some twenty years earlier, and had watched its development.

I find that Steichen was unconcerned with matched framing: in a set of four photographs, close examination reveals subtle differences. In this set, a dominant branch approximates the centre field, but its position is not exactly the same in all four photographs. In other sets, the framing and scale are quite different for each photograph. A distinctive branch configuration of adjacent trees provides a reference point for the observer, as my two sentinel rocks do likewise. But in neither case are the reference points the subject. Steichen documents ‘change’ in his living subject: I am also interested in ‘change’ – as an event or series of events. Steichen documents changes in colour and lighting, and so do I.

Steichen writes that he took ‘several hundred pictures’ of the shad-blow tree over three or four years. He photographed it in every season and at all hours. (I have now taken more than four hundred photographs in every season, at all hours, over more than a year.) Later he

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found that in projecting the pictures as slides, the interruption between each slide ‘made the flow of any sustained mood impossible’. He writes:

I tried to weave them into a consecutive series, thinking of it as a concerto, with the little tree the solo instrument and the neighbouring trees and pond the members of the orchestra.\footnote{Ibid.}

Steichen’s eventual solution was to start his series again, as a motion picture that would also record movements, reflections and sounds - of the water, wind, rain, birds, ... life!

I had thought to display my accumulating prints as files in a custom-made box, but also realised the inherent problem of separation, negating the necessary comparisons. The problem lay in the stilling of ‘life’. Working with a digital camera, my photographs are downloaded and reviewed on a back-lit computer monitor. As transparent images they come vibrantly to life. This quality reconnects me with the original lively ‘place’ and I feel disappointment in seeing them dull as paper prints. For now they will remain as a resource for a possible future use or practice.

Significantly, Steichen spoke out about the need to resist attempts for photography to be frozen into a philosophy, ideology or system of aesthetics, stating ‘the most precious factor in the creative life of an artist in any medium is freedom’.\footnote{Ibid.} In my research of Steichen’s photographs and writings I have reaffirmed my creative freedom.

The bay is calm like a lake, but a slight swell is creating a texture; my photographs are in the shadow of the cliff. Earlier there was a thick sea fog (and a smell of wood fires). Pink bands in the sky are caused by volcanic ash of the Chilean volcano Puyehue-Cordón Caulle, erupting since 4th June, (Journal, Sunday 12 June 2011), (Figs. 27, 28).
Over the year I have sometimes witnessed events that threaten the health of the Bay and its surviving ecosystems. (Figs. 39, 40)

My observations, photographs and journal entries in early 2011 reveal a serious threat that was not reported until April 13\textsuperscript{738} when The Clean Ocean Foundation alerted the media\textsuperscript{739}. The resulting newspaper article confirmed that Melbourne Water had released raw sewage on Tuesday 12 April, following torrential rains, and similarly on 5 February and 13 March, into the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers, Merri, Moonee Ponds, and Gardiners Creeks, and drains in Elwood, Brighton and Hampton. During that period I noticed many beach users who were obviously unaware that they were swimming with sewage in the Bay.

The silt from flooded rivers appears in the water as a brown stain, or is it raw sewage? (Journal, Sunday 16 Jan 2011.)

‘Silt’ from the rivers still in the water. (Journal, Sunday 30 Jan 2011), (Fig. 29)

Beach water very dirty. (Journal, Sunday 17 Apr 2011), (Fig. 30)

\textsuperscript{738} HUNTER, T. & BECK, M. Wednesday, April 13, 2011. Sewage reaches the bay again. The Age.

My experiment with panoramas is not successful: the waves can’t line up across the stitched image, and the exposure is darker, with a reddened hue. I return to my earlier style of multiple single images, each framed in accordance with the events of the day. (Journal, Sunday 14 November 2010.)

The beauty often draws me back on week days. (Journal, Tuesday 16 November 2010.)
The reef lies exposed like the ancient bleached bones of a whale. (Journal, Sunday 21 August 2011), (Fig. 36)
In unusual atmospheric conditions, I am drawn to *glance beyond* my usual reef focus. To my right are the northern sky and the AD 1926 band rotunda setting, here in sea mist (Figs. 37, 38).

To my left are the Red Bluff and Half Moon Bay (Fig. 39). Here, the Bluff glows as ‘alive’ in the morning sun. From my usual vantage point on the cliff top at Sandringham, the Bluff can be seen reflected in the calm water of the Bay, but the long rock-groyne at Southey Street interrupts the reflection and spoils the *beauty* of the ‘place’. The view on this day decided my position against proposed additional rock groynes in Half Moon Bay\(^\text{740}\).

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\(^{740}\) This contentious issue was resolved when the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) abandoned their proposal for a permanent structure to manage erosion in favour of an alternative beach renourishment. (ANDREWS, J. 2011. Half Moon groyne plan abandoned. *Bayside Leader*, Tuesday, August 16, 2011.) (Later the community rejected the trucked-in sand.) Resolution of these issues is within the scope of landscape architecture practice.
My photo series records a time and ‘place’ which is radically changing. Climate change effects are expected to result in tidal rises of 0.8 metres by AD 2050. Thus, a low tide of 0.6 metres would rise to 1.4 metres. The subtleties I am recording will be lost to view; the reef will no longer be periodically exposed, beaches will be submerged and the sandstone cliffs eroded.

These changes will provide new challenges for survival of all life forms. (Journal, Sunday 21 November 2010.)
As I approach, a resting cormorant stretches its wings; I’m joyed by its graceful presence; … the water moves in circles. (Journal, Sunday 24 July 2011.), (Fig. 42)

My sudden perception of the cormorant produces ‘the aesthetic response’ described by Hillman. ‘You draw in your breath and stop still’\(^{741}\). Arrested motion gifts arrested moment, as captured in still photography. ‘The moment of attention does not last; it breaks the flow of time for an instant, but time returns’\(^{742}\). Soon my eyes are following the circular motion of the water. If ‘the road to beauty’ requires that the personal rational will, or ego, ‘enters conditions like those of beauty’, through ‘pleasure’ or ‘arrested motion’\(^{743}\), then my regular walk to the cliff as an ‘ordinary’, ‘every sunday’ ritual provides a tangible model.

Postscript

My photographs have helped me to recognise ‘beauty’. They were not conceived as art prints, nor were they hurried or routine. I decided to use a small ‘everyday camera’ to capture the ‘ordinary’. Now with a large body of work, I regret that decision: the ‘ordinary’ could have been recorded as so much more ‘extraordinary’. Perhaps I will start my series again with the knowledge of hindsight, or I may start a new series with a macro-lens focus? This is not however to value the photographic images over the ‘place’, but rather, to share recognition of a ‘place-world’ and its intrinsic values, for in the words of Casey:

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\(^{742}\) Ibid. pp. 271 - 272

\(^{743}\) Ibid. pp. 270 - 271
If ‘place-worlds’ are to regain primacy in human experience, landscapes and seascapes must be reappraised and revalorized. For this to happen, the edges of these smooth spaces\textsuperscript{744} have to be recognized in their incontrovertible importance. Such recognition will bring its own inexorable evidence; but this will happen only if we can find our way back to the very ‘place’ where such evidence becomes once again accessible\textsuperscript{745}.

\textsuperscript{744} Casey has discussed ‘smooth spaces’ by reference to Deleuze and Guattari, in CASEY, E. S. 2009c. Smooth Spaces and Rough-Edged Places: The Hidden History of Place. Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World. second ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 365

7. INSIGHTS, REVISIONS OF KNOWLEDGE, NEW CONCEPTS

My journey has now reached a rest point, from which I present my key findings for thesis submission. The following insights, revisions of knowledge, and new concepts reflect my current position.

- A Western hegemony of literature, theory and practice in ‘place’ ignores the particular Australian condition

- The colonial underpinnings of landscape architecture still dominate practice, while other ‘modern’ disciplines such as anthropology have successfully reinvented themselves

- Symbols and gestures of acknowledgement are powerful: reconciliation requires acknowledgement (and regret) of the violence of past colonial actions; ‘respect’ and ‘recognition’ of first cultures; and acknowledgement and seeking out of Indigenous ‘voice’ in practice

- Approaching practice with an alternative world view is challenging, and the keeping of a reflexive journal is essential for personal transformation and practice; a cultural translator is imperative. This is not about taking new knowledge into an existing disciplinary framework, but about challenging knowledge itself, to reflect on ‘how do we know?’

- As a concept and perception an enduring ‘essence of place’ is more inclusive of Indigenous cultures (and more complex) than ‘sense of place’; ‘nested place’ is also an inclusive concept – where there are no ‘leftover’ ‘spaces’; ‘placelessness’ in an Australian context is a nonsense

- An authentic practice in ‘place’ requires ‘praxis’. My model of praxis has developed in response to my changed outlook and practice as ‘provocation ~ contemplation in ‘place’ ~ journaling and critical reflection ~ dialogue ~ document research ~ practice’

- Evidence of Aboriginal culture is all around us (as demonstrated in ‘the new road to Bendigo’)

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• Decolonising practice is an ongoing project, more difficult to realise than ‘reconciliation’. It requires recognition of colonial practices continuing in the present and a change away from violence and exclusion towards co-benefit

• There is a need for professional bodies such as the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) to highlight and actively promote reconciliation - decolonisation initiatives amongst members

• There are ways to be found of making every project a celebration of reconciliation, even in writing itself

• **Reflections on Practice: ‘Making Peace with the Land?’**

At one time I was inspired to practise by Israeli landscape architect Schlomo Aronson, who said: *There are many different ways of practising landscape architecture: my way is to make peace with the land*. Aronson seemed to define his practice-base in ecology, at a time when horticulture was a more usual basis. His actions resonated as an appreciation of ‘wild nature’ and as a mission to repair environmental destruction, so urgent in my own country. However, an appreciation of ‘the wild’ and ‘a mission to repair environmental destruction’ do not equate in traditional Aboriginal culture.

As a ‘translator’ of an ancient culture in ‘place’, Deborah Bird Rose provides an interpretation of ‘the wild’ in Australia as ‘uncared for country’. By contrast, ‘quiet country’ is the result of the care of generations of (Aboriginal) people, *evident to those who know how to see it*. Wild nature was simply a colonial illusion, sometimes popularly expressed in poetry. Aronson’s idealistic perception of a once *immutable world within the folds of which we must find our place* is nonsensical in the Australian context: Beth Gott has affirmed that the rich biodiversity of Australian (plant) species and ecosystems is the result

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746 University of Melbourne lecture, c.1998
747 ROSE, D. B. 2004 *Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation*, University of New South Wales Press, p. 4
748 Recall for example Dorothea Mackellar’s topophilia in her poem ‘My country’ (first published in 1908 and later learnt by generations of Australian school children)
of past Aboriginal agricultural practices and Tim Low has detailed how bio-systems continue to change with the agency of on-going (settler) humans.

I did not see then that the premise behind Aronson’s words – that the landscape architect should accept the challenge to ‘maintain the world as we want it to remain’ – could be interpreted (in an Australian context) as ‘colonialism’ in action. His premise begs the question, who is the ‘we’ and what are the other points of view? Perhaps I was blinded by Aronson’s lyrical prose and I did not reflect on its interpretation. Aronson’s ‘making peace with the land’ was of course referring to his war-ravaged country, where ‘Jerusalem was without a single tree in a public space’ when he opened his practice. But his war-ravaged country has a parallel in Australian history: other researchers have revealed evidence of Aboriginal resistance to invasion, and massacre and destruction wherever colonial frontiers spread, supporting an oral history which recorded these events in stories and corroborees and handed them down through surviving generations. Henry Reynolds laments ‘why weren’t we told’? Possibly the visual metaphor of the pastoral landscape provided a ‘smoke screen’ or a welcome palimpsest over all that had been before: but an ethical responsibility remained for later generations to penetrate the well-guarded secrets of the pastoral landscape as enshrined in the art of nineteenth century landscape painters.

Yet ‘making peace with the land’ could guide the action of a reconciliatory gesture which looks beyond landscape fabric to engage with first peoples. Now, when I think about the geographical space we inhabit, the ‘wounded space as impacted by settlers, I make additional associations: for ‘wounded space’ holds ‘wounded cultures’, and an imprint of events which have damaged the perpetrator as well as the victim.

‘Making peace with the land’ represents one side of a coin with a human face on the reverse that reminds us that ‘making peace with first peoples’ is irrevocably connected. Practice

753 Ibid. (back cover)
756 As described by ROSE, D. B. 2004 Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation, University of New South Wales Press. p. 148
ideas imported from elsewhere cannot respect the reality of ancient cultural heritage in
Australia, which is varied, complex, and dependant on an immutable ‘essence’ of ‘place’.

While I can admire the fine work of colleagues in other parts of the world, I can also reflect
on its message. What might it say about a continuing colonial project? Landscape
architecture as imported ‘in a suitcase’ (or via Amazon.com) can never form an authentic
practice or discipline based in an ‘essence of place’.

• Reflections on Practice: Colonial Underpinnings

My research has caused me to reflect on the historical development of my discipline
‘landscape architecture’ in parallel with other ‘modern’ disciplines such as anthropology and
sociology. In particular, I have noted Raewyn Connell’s analysis of the development of
sociology in Australia, based on literature, research and concepts as seen through
metropolitan eyes758. Connell refers to ‘metropole’ as the supposed centre of civilisation (viz.
British Empire; Western civilisation; the American Alliance) and contrasts the notion with
‘primitiveness’. ‘The places where the discipline (i.e. sociology) was created were the urban
and cultural centres of the major imperial powers at the high tide of modern imperialism.
They were the “metropole” in the useful French term, to the larger colonial world’759. There
are many parallels here for landscape architecture (first introduced into Australian university
curricula in the 1970s, in Canberra and Melbourne). As in sociology, ‘metropolitan’ theory
remains hegemonic to landscape architecture.

But what might a landscape architecture founded in an Australian Indigenous culture look
like? Would it have an Indigenous name? While mindful of significant differences between
the estimated 500 tribes that were extant at the time of colonial occupation in generalising a
practice or ‘praxis’ of ‘Australian’ landscape architecture, I am also mindful of the power of
unification implied by universal symbols of Aboriginal identity, such as the Aboriginal flag760.

758 CONNELL, R. Extracts from Southern Theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science.
Australian Humanities Review [Online]. Available:
February 2011].
759 Ibid.
760 Designed by Indigenous Elder Harold Thomas in 1971, and recognised under Federal legislation
along with the Torres Strait Islanders’ flag in July 1995
My approach to practise considers Indigenous artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye’s response. When asked about the contents of her paintings, she described them as having meaning based on all aspects of her community’s life:

Whole lot, that’s all, whole lot. Awelye (my dreaming), Arlatyeye (pencil yam), Arkerthe (mountain devil lizard), Ntange (grass seed), Tingu (dingo puppy), Ankerre (emu), Intekwe (small plant, favourite food of emus), Atnwerle (green bean) and Kame (yam seed). That’s what I paint, whole lot\(^{761}\).

Her art was not separate from other aspects of her life. As a senior law woman she was expressing all that she knew, her connections to country through ‘essence of place’. Rather than encouraging a rejection of ‘discipline’, ‘awelye’ holds a responsibility for landscape architects to look beyond boundaries, to respect the ‘everywhen’ of Stanner’s description, and to respond directly to ‘place’, ‘landscape’, ‘country’ (or ‘awara’ of the Yanyuwa people). This means consciously drawing value from world views outside a settler-Australian culture, and from a breadth and depth of disciplines and practices that could include: ‘place’ studies, phenomenology, ethnoecology, reflexivity, and Aboriginal art (as I have found useful in challenging the ‘metropolitan’ models of my earlier university training in interior design and landscape architecture). Creativity in design disciplines has been the continuous thread in my own multi-disciplinary professional development, but so too has social justice, environmental care, freedom of choice and team work.

‘Place’ practice gives expression to my multi-discipline outlook. However, I now seek out support literature that contains an Indigenous voice, as resistance or alternative to a Western hegemony. I am also conscious that meaning can be found in the ‘place’ itself, through contemplation and reflection from repeated visits (see for example ‘Being in Country: a Sunday Ritual’, page 211), and that this too is part of praxis.

- **Place Concepts**

My research has caused me to critically reflect on fundamentally different epistemologies of ‘place’ in theory and practice:

- ‘place’ as made by humans out of ‘space’ – ‘place in space’ (the views of Plato, ... Tuan) and
- ‘place’ as a-priori (the view of Casey who also cites Archytas, Aristotle, Bachelard, Heidegger); including ‘nested place’ in ‘place’ (e.g. J. J. Gibson, Malpas), with no ‘left-over spaces’.

While the former supports a normative Western epistemology and ontology (anthropocentric, a colonial view, experienced by humans, a ‘sense of place’, my formal education until its turning point in 2009, the viewpoint of my local-government clients, employment), the latter supports an Australian Aboriginal epistemology and ontology (a more-than-human-world, holistic and interconnected, ‘lively’, a post-colonial view, reconciliation / decolonisation, an ‘essence of place’). This is my conscious path.

• Changes in my Practice

A casual observer might notice that my practice has changed significantly in my choice of projects during the period of my candidature (for example, from conservation for public heritage gardens to a commitment to coastal planning). But my change in practice focus holds far greater challenges as it progresses from reconciliation practice to decolonisation of practice. This does not mean I would want to change the layout or detailed design of ‘places’ such as ‘St Vincent Gardens’: it is important to conserve representative examples of colonisation in garden design, and this is a most significant example. Such projects hold instruction about garden design and materials in the Western tradition and are a product of a former time, with an on-going relevance. They also remind us to remember the impacts of colonialism.

A more astute observer might observe changes in my practice method, now based in a praxis of ‘provocation ~ contemplation in ‘place’ ~ journaling and critical reflection ~ dialogue ~ document research ~ practice’. In ‘the new road to Bendigo’, in my simple ‘guerrilla art’ installations, and in ‘being in country: a Sunday ritual’, I invented and developed ‘works’ that commenced with a self ‘provocation’, and found that ‘praxis’, rather than ‘practice’ provided a re-energising purpose to my interdisciplinary activities and opened up other areas for practice. The observer might also note my inclusion of ‘quiet still awareness’ in ‘place’ and ‘critical

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762 CASEY, E. S. 2009b. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World 2nd ed.: Indiana University Press. p. 319
reflection’ as practice methods, my emphasis on ‘stories in place’ as ‘living history’ and my attempts to ‘connect’ with Indigenous epistemologies through ‘place’. But my practice has also changed to reflect connections with a ‘more-than-human world’, conscious of the ‘lively materialities’ of ‘place’ and humanocentric practice models that negate it.

Finally, my research has shown an absence of landscape architecture in ‘place’ research and dialogues. I have drawn on a growing body of Australian Indigenous and Indigenist researchers to show that ‘place’ and how it is treated are central to Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies and therefore central to landscape architecture practice that aims to reconcile damaged relationships.
Fig. 7
Map of Victoria showing Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)\textsuperscript{763}, major towns, rivers, highways and local government areas (May 2012).

\textsuperscript{763} RAPs have responsibilities relating to the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.
Since the passing of the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, Aboriginal people have been painstakingly renegotiating the boundaries of their ‘countries’ lost through colonisation.

The Act recognises Aboriginal people as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage. At a local level, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are the voice of Aboriginal people in the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage.  

RAP boundaries are mapped and described through reference to the *VicRoads Country Street Directory of Victoria* and the *Melway Street Directory of Greater Melbourne* - by street names, compass directions and measured distances, as well as longitudes and latitudes. The map represents an incomplete and on-going process, with large areas remaining ‘uncoloured’ and ‘gaps’ between.

The road from Melbourne to Bendigo passes through two ‘countries’ which are divided amongst six local government areas. Three RAP areas are represented in the Macedon Ranges Shire, which also includes an unresolved ‘gap’ in between. The ‘gap’ is near Mt Macedon between the current boundaries of Woiwurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung ‘countries’.  


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Fig. 8

Map of Victoria showing Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and RAP applications currently before Council (1 August 2012).

Note the inclusion of ‘sea country’ which is further discussed, page 193.

APPENDIX 2

Table 1  Place Names, Melbourne - Bendigo

Table 1 compares known traditional Aboriginal ‘place’ names in relation to the Calder Freeway and Highway between Melbourne and Bendigo (in travel sequence from Melbourne)\(^{765}\), with extant ‘place’ names observed from road signs and supplemented by information from road maps. Many of the ‘place’ names were first recorded in nineteenth century journals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extant Place Name</th>
<th>Traditional Aboriginal Place Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Language of Origin of Aboriginal Place Name / History of Extant Place Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yarra Falls (#1)</td>
<td>Yarra-yarra</td>
<td>Ever flowing; waterfalls</td>
<td>Eastern Kulin [Aboriginal Language Area Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung]; rapids or rock falls which separated saltwater from freshwater, where Queens Bridge now straddles the Yarra River. The falls were formed by a row of basalt boulders about 60 – 70 cm above the level of the water; an important means of crossing the river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra River (#2)</td>
<td>Birrarrung</td>
<td>Mist; through mist</td>
<td>Eastern Kulin [Aboriginal Language Area Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung]; Birrarrung given for Derrimut’s and Boonwurrung country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra River (#3)</td>
<td>Ngindabil</td>
<td>A rushing wind and a noise like thunder</td>
<td>Woiwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung];</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra River (#4)</td>
<td>Nurtpubbellekoorun</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Eastern Kulin [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; Robinson jnl 30/08/1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra River (#5)</td>
<td>Tichunggorruc</td>
<td>Gagarruk = sand</td>
<td>Daungwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung, Boonwurrung]; Robinson jnl 19/07/1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra River (#6)</td>
<td>Warringal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung];</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra River (#7)</td>
<td>Wongete</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Woiwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; recorded by Robinson in 1839 at Melbourne. Robinson records Wong.ete and Yarro Yarro as the respective Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung names for Yarra River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra River (#8)</td>
<td>Yarro-yarro</td>
<td>Ever flowing</td>
<td>Boonwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Boonwurrung]; according to Robinson, Yarro Yarro is the Boonwurrung name; and refers to the Yarra Falls and the Yarra River around Southbank – South Yarra, as this was where Robinson was based in 1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (#1) –</td>
<td>Barebeerip</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Boonwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Boonwurrung; Woiwurrung]; (Robinson)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Aboriginal Language Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (#2) – Batman’s Hill</td>
<td>Bikjomangy</td>
<td>Woiwurrung</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung; Woiwurrung]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (#3) – city centre</td>
<td>Bareberp</td>
<td>Woiwurrung</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung] Fawkner and others assigned this to the Melbourne village site, however G.A. Robinson was told that it referred specifically to Batman’s Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (#4) – city centre</td>
<td>Narrm</td>
<td>scrub</td>
<td>Eastern Kulin</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Boonwurrung]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (#5) Flagstaff Hill</td>
<td>Brejerrenywun</td>
<td>Boonwurrung</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; (Robinson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (#6) Parliament</td>
<td>Narloke</td>
<td>Boonwurrung</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; (Robinson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (#7) Queens Wharf</td>
<td>Narrm-jaap</td>
<td>Boonwurrung</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Boonwurrung; Woiwurrung] Robinson (25/10/1839 in Clark 2000:34) notes Narrm-jaap as representing ‘Melbourne’ [in 1839 would encompass at least the southern portion of the city grid, from Flinders St. to Lonsdale St.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonee Ponds (Creek) (see also Mt William Quarry)</td>
<td>Moonee Moonee (chain of ponds)</td>
<td>Personal name Woiwurrung</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; Moonee Moonee was Wurundjeri willam man (of Billibellary’s people) who died in service as Native Police Corps member in Wimmera 1845; Moonee Ponds and Moonee Ponds Creek country of Billibellary’s people of Wurundjeri willam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pascoe Vale (Road)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulla (Road)</td>
<td>Bulabili</td>
<td>Having two</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Woiwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamarine (Freeway)</td>
<td>Tullamarine</td>
<td>Personal name Woiwurrung</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; In 1837, George Langhorne informed surveyor Robert Hoddle that Tullamareena was a small Wurundjeri boy; name after a flower, according to Howitt poem (Blake 1997: 261)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keilor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Gully (Road)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribyrnong (River) (#1)</td>
<td>Mirrangbamurn</td>
<td>Mirrang = eye; barmurn = ringtail possum</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Woiwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; (called Saltwater River until 1906)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribyrnong (River) (#2)- locality</td>
<td>Mareingalk</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Woiwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; Robinson jnl 21/10/1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribyrnong (River) - (#3) locality</td>
<td>Tennendap</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Woiwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurrung]; Robinson jnl 21/10/1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacksons Creek</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydenham</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toolern Vale</td>
<td>Talling</td>
<td>Woiwurring [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurring]; name of Woiwurring patriclan(^{766}) Talling-willam; (Robinson journal 21/10/1840)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylors Lakes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diggers Rest</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunbury</td>
<td>Koorakoorakup</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurring] Samuel and William Jackson settled there in 1835 and called district after place on Thames River; another theory is that it derives from Sunburra, representing Jackson’s Creek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap Hill</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Aitken</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riddells Creek</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisborne</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedon, Mount (#1)</td>
<td>Geboor</td>
<td>[Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurring]; named by Major Mitchell after Phillip of Macedon; Mitchell jnl 30/09/1836</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedon, Mount (#2)</td>
<td>Tarehewait</td>
<td>Woiwurring [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurring]; Robinson jnl 21/01/1840; 31/01/1840; 14/06/1844</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Mile Creek</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlruhe</td>
<td>Woiwolmome</td>
<td>Djadjawurring [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurring, Djadjawurring]; C.H. Ebden’s Carlruhe station taken up in 1837; Robinson jnl 25/11/1842</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancefield</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt William Quarry (see also Moonee Ponds)</td>
<td>William-i-murring tomahawk-house</td>
<td>Eastern Kulin [Aboriginal Language Area Woiwurring]; quarry near Lancefield where greenstone for axe-making was sourced; strong associations with Wurundjeri people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging Rock</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodend</td>
<td>Cucerangmome</td>
<td>Djadjawurring [Aboriginal Language Area Djadjawurring]; Site of old public house, by 5 Mile Creek near Woodend; Robinson jnl 29/11/1842</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipers Creek</td>
<td>Moybe kulin</td>
<td>Kulin = man, person Daungwurring [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurring]; named by Hume and Hovell after Captain Piper of Sydney; 'the small creek running in front of Brown’s station into the Campaspe’ (Robinson) Robinson jnl 31/05/1840</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaspe River (#1)</td>
<td>Boregam</td>
<td>Daungwurring [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurring]; the Campaspe below Hutton’s (Robinson) Robinson jnl 27/05/1840; part of the Campaspe River between Kyneton and Heathcote; Campaspe named by Major Mitchell near its confluence with the Murray River (‘Campaspe’ was Alexander the Great’s concubine). See also Mt. Alexander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{766}\) A clan with membership determined by patrilineage from a common ancestor
| Campaspe River | Yerrin | - | Djadjawurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurrung, Nguril-illawurrung] |
| Kyneton | - | - | no entry |
| Boggy Creek | - | - | no entry |
| Spring Creek | - | - | no entry |
| Girvans Hill | - | - | no entry |
| Forest Creek | - | - | no entry |
| Coliban River (#1) | Coliban | uncertain | [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurrung, Djadjawurrung]; overlander A.F. Mollison squatted by this river near Malmsbury in 1837 |
| Coliban River (#2) | Dindelong yaluk | Yaluk = river | Djadjawurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurrung, Djadjawurrung]; Robinson jnl 21/01/1840 |
| Coliban River (#3) | Pe-er | - | Daungwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurrung, Djadjawurrung]; Robinson jnl 19/01/1840 |
| Coliban River (#4) | Teeranyap | - | Djadjawurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurrung]; Robinson jnl 29/11/1842 |
| Malmsbury | - | - | no entry |
| Black Jack Road | - | - | no entry |
| Daylesford | Munal | dust | Djadjawurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurrung, Djadjawurrung]; Stanbridge located the Monul-gundidj clan at Daylesford; probable that Monul is the name for Daylesford |
| Taradale | - | - | no entry |
| Elphinstone | - | - | no entry |
| Faraday | - | - | no entry |
| Mt. Alexander | - | - | no entry |
| Harcourt | Kone de bregerr | bregerr = sand | Daungwurrung [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurrung, Djadjawurrung]; Konedebiggerre is the valley now known as the Harcourt Valley; Henry Monro had stations on both sides of the Coliban River and tributary creeks to Mount Alexander, in early 1840; Robinson jnl 27/05/1840 |
| Barkers Creek | - | - | no entry |
| Ravenswood | - | - | no entry |
| Buckeye Creek | - | - | no entry |
| Mount Franklin | - | - | no entry |
| Big Hill | Goom-gooruduron-yeran | - | [Aboriginal Language Area Djadjawurrung]; large hill dividing Harcourt Valley and Ravenswood from Kangaroo Flat south of Bendigo |
| Kangaroo Flat | - | - | no entry |
| Bendigo – Lake Weeroona | Weeroona | - | [Aboriginal Language Area Daungwurrung, Djadjawurrung, Daungwurrung]; lake in central Bendigo, on the Bendigo Creek |
APPENDIX 3  Reconciliation Week Installations

In support of National Reconciliation Week 27 May – 3 June 2011, I made six ephemeral art works and installed them in public ‘places’. Each promoted ‘respect recognition reconciliation’. My installations were symbolic gestures of reconciliation.

Installation in Black Rock foreshore reserve

Installation at the University of Melbourne

Photograph by Denis Young

Installation in the Bendigo Regional Park
(with Red Ironbark, Eucalyptus sideroxylon)

Installation at Calder Freeway rest stop at Ravenswood (one of two)

Fig. 9 The photographs above show four of the art works installed in public ‘places’. In viewing the photographs, I realised that each work gained additional qualities, ‘came alive’ in the context of its ‘place’ment, e.g. movement/stability, light play, colour, texture.

Materials used: Eucalyptus branchlets, black and white gesso, commercial rug wool twisted as cord, coated recycled sugar cane paper, permanent marker, wire staples
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