



the dynamics of ontological representation

Eve Christine Peacock



the dynamics of ontological representation

by

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Australian Indigenous: sovereignty; creative, collaborative, participatory, community live-media-art, media-art events, media-art processes and practice, ontology, Place and place¹, customs, epistemology, practice-led research.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this Treatise has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the Treatise contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature:

Eve Christine Peacock

Descendent of Erub, Torres Strait Islands, Australia.

Date: 14th November 2014

authorial poor-traits of academic life



¹ The uses of 'Place' denotes an Indigenous concept, and 'place' the Euro-Western meaning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It can't be stressed enough at the outset how important it is for Indigenous higher degree research students to have a supervisory team conscious of the significant value of cultural and political interchange in a colonised country, and who can communicate intelligently across ontological, epistemological and ideological divides. I have been extremely fortunate in that time was on my side (synchronicity cannot be underestimated) throughout my post-graduate engagement with both Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and my own community. Communication across my Masters and PhD research with Judith McLean, Christine Comans, Zane Trow, Polly Walker, Barbara Adkins, Leah King-Smith, Keith Armstrong and (the late) Steve Dillon, was exemplary offering insightful and adept Supervision. Constant in depth conversations in my community with Aunty Florence Kennedy, Carl Fisher, Mary Graham, Andrew Hill, Janice Peacock, Michael Mace, Jenny Fraser, Sandra Phillips, Jeanie Bell, Deb Bennet, Samm Hudd, Tamara Whyte, Karen Batten, Sue Beetson, Beatrix Schumacher and (the late) Ross Watson, to name a few, dissolved the boundaries of Western academic authority by enriching exchange in universal consciousness and connectivity.

Where research and knowledge is progressed by meaningful and congenial exchange, the rigid, constraining and guild like regulations of Western academia can be decentralised and transformed; and eminent higher education programs and competent student services like those located at the QUT Oodgeroo Unit and Indigenous Studies Research Network, can progress the urgent inauguration of International Indigenous Studies Faculties.

In the preface to Manifest Manners Narratives on Postindian Survivance, Gerald Vizenor, Chippewa writer and scholar and Distinguished Professor of American Studies at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, honours those who leave a legacy of dignity and integrity for posterity. His quote from James Baldwin calling for the "operative language to be made my own" to "bear the burden of my experience" (1999, xi), explains how they leave that legacy; I follow suit.

I recall complaining in tears and frustration to my Mother about racist abuse dished out at school, how she counselled me in a tender but also dismissive way. “Oh don’t worry about it they’re just jealous” she’d say. Continuing my frustration in protest, she sought to reassure me. “Just look at them (meaning read them) they are just poor beggars, they don’t have what we have” she responded; a rich statement from a black woman robbed of sovereign rights, parenting eight children with a WWII post-traumatic-stress effected husband who worked as a railway yards man. This did not console me, though out-numbered and out-gunned I wanted to beat them at their own game; and it was me, I thought in self-pity, who had to return to that school each day. I didn’t forget and in years to come when I could read much better without words, I realised her insight - that the multitude of racist attitudes we face every day and policies of agents of power and dominance, are weapons to enforce inferiority emanating from millennia of brutal hierarchy that wages constant resource wars and has built cities and prisons over caring relations with land and between people. Many wise old people epitomise how such demeanour is unavailing in the light of human dignity, integrity and empathy at the core of our collective, un-colonised ontology. Knowing, teaching, and learning derived from this custom is my guide, without which my intellect is merely self-serving.

When I was a media trainee in the Torres Strait, my Aunt showed me the custom and value of the etiquette of congenial conversation with historical accounts of (our is-land) Erub’s ancient relations between (Nu Guinea) the north land and (Australia) the south land from the Dreaming ontology that connects us. Later when I visited Cherbourg an Aboriginal reserve north of Brisbane, I heard accounts from an Elder reaffirming our ancient connections conversed at the time Erub people were impounded there with others during World War II. Long kept memories of country reveal the impotence of manipulative, political tactics of divide and rule colonial boundaries in the face of Indigenous remembrance, survivance and connectivity, ensuring we have never left home. Countless memories preserve that resilient connectivity, life experience and ways of adaptation to and acceptance of change. This PhD is in honour of them all.



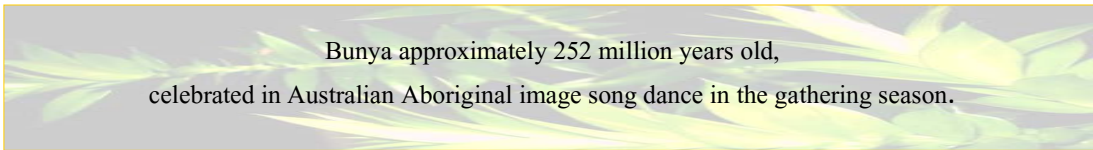
the dynamics of ontological representation

EPITOME

The creative work of this practice-led research “Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh”, is an Indigenous community mobile-live-media-art event held in Turrbal country/Brisbane city, Queensland, Australia. That is the primary Place in which over 29 years my media-arts processes and practice emerged and continue to evolve. The ontology, epistemology, methodology in customs underpinning that praxis are revealed by the practice-led research and, as an extension of the creative work, translated in a Treatise.

Collaborative, participatory, public acts of resurgent sovereignty and cognition active in experimenting with unlimited creative ways of re-imagining Brisbane and ‘redreaming’² the land through Indigenous eyes, honour the significance of the Indigenous presence in the face of coloniality. Inherited customs within creativity enact the ‘custodial ethic looking after country and kin’, a core principle of Australian Indigenous ontology, culture and sovereignty. Accordingly, acknowledgement and gratitude is extended to Turrbal, as host country and people.

Not merely our thinking about the real changes: reality itself changes as we think about it differently. History carries an ontic significance that excludes any reversal of the present (Dupré in Vizenor G., 1999, viii).



Bunya approximately 252 million years old,
celebrated in Australian Aboriginal image song dance in the gathering season.

² The challenges facing Indigenous society today invoke a redeeming while redreaming the land.

PROLOGUE

The hegemony of Western scientific knowledge systems, a specious civilizational paradigm encompassing all domains of life, is increasingly challenged, exemplified by advocates for an *'ecology of knowledges'* (Santos, 2007) based on a recognition of the plurality of heterogeneous knowledges (one of them being modern science) and on the sustained and dynamic interconnections between them without compromising their autonomy (p. 11) (in Andreotti et al, 2011, 42). According to Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2008, xix) *there is no global social justice without global cognitive justice ... which has not only economic, social and political dimensions but also cultural and epistemological ones.*

In this regard, a PhD candidacy for an Indigenous student at a Western academy in a colonised country involves plurality of intent and heterogeneous historical and contemporary social, political and spiritual concepts and concerns. This is especially so with practice-led research of a creative work applying the creative ontology rather than a scientific model of art. Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2008, xxv) propose the answer to problems posed by these circumstances *cannot be accounted for by any general theory of society ... because ... A politics of cultural diversity and mutual intelligibility calls for a complex procedure of reciprocal and horizontal translation.* Accordingly, I foreground felicitous discussion to displace the imposed centrality of Western monocultural knowledge, articulation and epistemological conventions, concepts and interpretive traditions.

You know I used to write, once upon a time, with such ease – diaries, reports, letters, essays, messages, notes, anecdotes - but alas, once enlisted in Western institutions, regulation caused an alienated-self to sneak into my consciousness. Such alienating requirements have harried my life like a predatory spectre frustrating and hampering what Gerald Vizenor (1993, 205) refers to as *revenant atavistic* genetic capabilities and abilities that, he submits, can liberate us from mundane materialistic survival to *cross the threshold into universal consciousness.* Quoting psychotherapist Carl Jung, he maintains such capacity originates from *an*

archetypal psychic structure of extreme antiquity, an idea with which I find consonance.

Serving as testimony to the validity of this approach to my practice-led research by creative work, Elaine A. Jahner (1993, 162), in her observation of the intonations and voice echoes in memory, in N. Scott Momaday's publication *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, eloquently discusses Momaday's *literary evidences of longing incarnated and personalised*, proposing:

They are evidences of a tradition that has become tested in each succeeding generation so that what is useful and life giving has become the motive for continuity.

Jahner elaborates saying:

It requires an intellectual response that allows the act of listening to the past to achieve its communicative potential. The act of listening must be formal, structured, channelled. If this is true for any response to history that recognises that the response itself is rooted in one's own psychological history, it is even more imperative in a minority context where history has been kidnapped by conquerors and its voices muffled in an effort to induce an emptiness that could be filled by the dominant people's past. Among such peoples the act of listening to the past is approached with extraordinary care as they seek responsible evidence of what they perceive to be an endangered gift. That the past stares back from one's own mirror is a constant motive for a kind of commemorative recovery of ancestors that anticipates self-acceptance. The same image of self, reflected in any mirror, reflects multiple and conflicting historical pasts and creates an imperative to situate listening so that the voices of the past do not become an indistinguishable cacophony.

Herein lays the essential value of research - its agency; connectivity and relativity abounding in the new, contemporary places that are created and entered when discourse accommodates the gathering of reasoning in many perspectives.

The availability of ideas, perspectives and context of my practice-led research, are hosted here in thoughtful discussion within the etiquette of congenial conversation which carries respect for relationality, uses open non-linear associative thinking, the occasional banter and is not without the guff that can rouse apodictic judgement. The coherence of the research unfolds through an Indigenous ethos that, to use the terminology of François Jullien (2009), does not reduce wisdom to knowledge, and the ontological and epistemological logic within my processes and practice and its interpretation, are not elevated to Western ideals.

So how to manage Western academic expectations to occupy fail/foolproof theoretical positions arguing conclusive statements representing complete truth; a method made sacrosanct through social and political dominance driven by immense desire in the quest to know and articulate everything, and offering perhaps the ultimate success, conquest? How can we know and articulate retrospectively, a collaborative participatory creative process and practice which, reliant upon a specific and historical sense of Indigenous Place and community, produced a temporal event from the context and collective experience of custom, performance, movement, sound, silence and presence in contemporary ceremony? At the “Confirmation” stage of my PhD, I proposed an appropriate framework and principle to interpret the practice-led research. Comprehensive discourse connecting me, many authors and others would enable

the purpose of knowledge [within Aboriginal systems] to fold back into the underlying principle of balance ... both constructed and transmitted around the idea of balancing relationships between all things in the universe (Kwaymullina A. and B., 2010, 196).

I was formally permitted to proceed. Weighting is practice 50% and Treatise 50%.

I know a critical interpretation is usual for a PhD by creative work, however the hypothetical regard used to mirror my creative processes and practice, which inhabits time and Place peculiar to an ontological representation of Australian Indigenous community media-art, requires a method of discourse in keeping with the ethos of this practice-led research. So with due consideration, rather than an ‘Exegesis’ a ‘Treatise’ was chosen to serve this purpose, taking us all in conversation through places of reckoning. I am restoring the old Anglo-French definition of Treatise i.e. ‘narrative’, to affect a relational dialogism creating a social bond that engages readers in the mutual intelligibility and metaphysical exchange of relating my experience. Further, a ‘Treatise’ symbolises the absence of the political instrument ‘Treaty’ in Australia and contributes indirectly to its relative dialectic.

Further, in framing the exposition of this practice-led research, this Treatise offers a composite pattern of experiential learning relative to history, custom, personal commentary, conjecture and experiment. It is delivered in a purposefully digressive

manner as a method of interpreting empirical elements within what I am learning, what I know, don't know and am yet to know, in keeping with the type of conversation occurring within what W.E.H. Stanner, commenting on terms of life as perceived by Australian Aboriginal people, described as 'a vast circulatory of reasoning' (in Willis, 1990, 1). Imposing requirements of conclusive knowledge, knowledge supplementary to the intent of the creative work designed from the research led by my practice and customs, or writing a conventional thesis/exegesis to argue, verify and consecrate knowledge, serves no purpose here.

This choice does not counter or contest academic benchmarks of excellence underpinning the Western knowledge society (knowledge and high-tech solutions being key resources of post-industrial society). I am naïvely unconcerned about retaliation which may result from breaking with the monopoly of scholarly techniques entrenched in our consciousness through colonialism. Indeed I override scholarly convention with the choice to move you, the reader, into an emergent process beyond static preconceptions to coincide, converse, collide or converge within what is increasingly defined a *culturally impoverished and ecologically destructive world system and the concomitant degeneration of ... ordinary everyday community* (Sohng, 2). Diverse apposite narrative styles (oscillating between objective and subjective), indefinite articulation of that which is semiotic and symbolic, and open non-linear thought, dialogue and textual arrangement are devices sanctioned here within an 'ecology of knowledges', for sharing and balancing notions and imaginings. Inviting unlimited readings, this Treatise not only mirrors but is an extension of the practice of the creative work. It articulates the research as an ambrosial offering of the metamorphic effect relational discourse in literature affords to deeper understanding.

From the seventeenth century, at least, the guardians of knowledge and their political masters have stigmatized poetic wisdom as a rebel against reason. The rise of modern science encouraged a critical rationalism, whose categories, general principles and facts have created an illusion of stability but are unable to explain 'the reality of inevitable epistemic change'. This, as Feyerabend points out, represents 'a failure of reason'. A similar fate has overtaken discourse. Poetic wisdom, the capacity to yoke apparently dissimilar things through a striking figure of speech, has been denigrated. The metaphorical expressions of ingegno have become associated with perversion rather than insight (Carter, P. 2004, 9).

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WARNING! Images and archival footage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away appear in this event.

Mon 8th, Tues 9th, Wed 10th, Thurs 11th July 2013

A CASUAL GATHERING OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES, IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE

Murri Mura 36 Cordelia Street, South Brisbane 2.00– 5.00pm
(Across From Musgrave Park, close To Russell St Intersection)

Conversation:

- Mary Graham Custodial Navigator – Aboriginal Ethics
- Launch of LANDED website
- Custodial Navigator Handbook to be available on line

CreActivity:

- Dawn Daylight Musician
- John Graham Poetry
- Janny Peacock Prop Making

THEN.... PUT ON YOUR WALKING SHOES TO CROSS unceded COUNTRY

Embracing dusk at last light Colourise Festival: eARTh haunts the night redreaming the land and re-imagining Brisbane through Indigenous eyes. Everyone is welcome to join our live-media-art walk along a designated track. Energise before the walk, share good company, art, music, conversation at Murri Mura. See details next page.

Event Creatives include: Teila Watson, Luke Peacock, Duncan King-Smith, Tamara Whyte, Christine Peacock, Karen Batten, Andrew Hill, Phyllis Harrison, Janny Peacock, Jenny Fraser, Leah King-Smith, Archie Moore, Mary Graham, John Graham, Dawn Daylight, Sue Beetson, Fiona Foley. Details at www.colourise.com.au Events tab

WALK STARTS 5.30 Musgrave Park ENDS 8pm CITY STREETS

eARTh is in two parts and performed twice.

The first performance is: Part 1, 8th July, Part 2, 9th July.

The second performance is: Part 1, 10th July, Part 2, 11th July.

See us at www.facebook.com/groups/colourise/

CELEBRATING THE GATHERING SPIRIT

COLOURISE FESTIVAL 2013

: eARTh

www.colourise.com.au

MON 8TH, TUES 9TH, WED 10TH, THURS 11TH JULY 2013

A CASUAL GATHERING
OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES
IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE

2.00– 5.00PM
MURRI MURA

THEN PUT ON YOUR
WALKING SHOES TO
CROSS unceded COUNTRY

STARTS 5.30 Musgrave Park
ENDS 8pm CITY STREETS

COLOURISE FESTIVAL 2013 : eARTH

'Significant meaning and power resides in the notion of Place through continual enactment of protocols, ritual and ceremony. Such a respectful relationship with both Land and Place is a guide for human relationship and social structure.'

Mary Graham 2013

**Part 1: Mon 8th July
Wed 10th July**



eARTH is in two parts and performed twice.

The first performance is:
Part 1, 8th July, Part 2, 9th July.

The second performance is:
Part 1, 10th July, Part 2, 11th July.

Follow *eARTH* at times and to places shown on our map. A moving live-media-art performance *eARTH* re-imagines the city imprinting images, sounds, dance, people and music of the land onto the streets of Brisbane. Enacting a multi-art limning of Australian Indigenous philosophy and ancestry, we move from site to site creating contemporary ceremonies at each place. Performance times and durations are approximate and we welcome you to join us any place along the way.

You'll find chalk drawn leaves wherever we've been

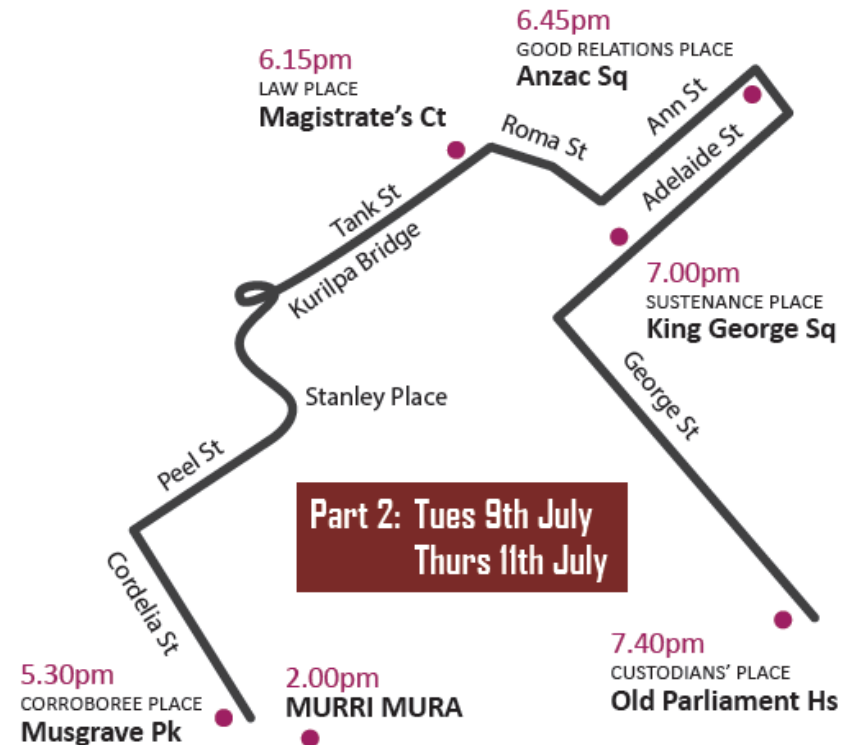
Please bring water and comfortable shoes.

Toilets: Musgrave Park, State Library, Roma St Train Station, King George Sq, QUT Gardens Pt.

Moving between performances will be on footpaths with the exception of stairs between Kurilpa Park (next to GoMA) and Grey St Bridge (*eARTH* Part 1).

Rain check: If it is raining we will advise a rescheduled date.

See us at www.facebook.com/groups/colourise/
colourise@internode.on.net 0407 379 822
www.colourise.com.au



**Part 2: Tues 9th July
Thurs 11th July**

In honour of the Turrbal people: <http://dakibudtcha.com.au/Turrbal/>
Colourise Festival 2013 Dedicated to Greg Collins 1957 – 2013



Dedicated to a better Brisbane



A CULTURAL SIGNATURE OF UMBEL PRODUCTIONS LTD



Nguni Warrup Arts and Cultural Development



Colour connects everything
COLOURISE FESTIVAL



MAAP MEDIA BANK

Background illustration by Inkahoots. Design by Karen Batten.

On a clear bright sunny morning in Kalkadoon country near Mt. Isa, I sat on a bench to wait for my esteemed broadcasting mentor. The Murri beside me said quietly, “There’ll be a storm this aftnoon.” “Oh”, I replied, “do you really think so?” “No,” he responded gruffly “I just said that for somethin to say” got up and walked away. At 4.30 big rain fell.

2. INTRODUCTION

The reader should first view the preceding Colourise Festival Program, video at <https://vimeo.com/97499703> password eARThDoc (Appendix I) and photographs at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/colourisearth/sets/72157645028321041/> (Appendix 1a), to visualise the event while reading its articulation, this Treatise “eARTh the dynamics of ontological representation”. The Treatise constructs a specific ‘pedagogical’ form to articulate the creative work, by synthesising discursive conversation with anecdotes, citations, auto-biographical narrative and repetition, in keeping with a custom of dialogue that accommodates relationality. In so doing the practice-led research, utilising practical, common and tacit knowing, resists the linear logic of the *social sciences which analyse but so often marginalise such knowledge* (Santos, 2008, xvi). The Treatise framework constitutes what we are taught, the ways we are taught, learn, think and form knowledge and creativity, which are inseparable experiences peculiar to ethos, custom, culture and society in Place.

2.1 CASING MY PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH

I resume here what I asserted in my Master of Arts (Research) A Novella of Ideas (2009, 28-29):

“ ... ultimately, relating to land and to each other, is a lived belief system, and as such, eludes objectification inherent in Western cultural theory and philosophy. Indeed the term sovereignty, whilst useful for qualifying blatantly denied Aboriginal international political status, does not convey the ontological and spiritual centrality of Indigenous relationship to land.”

“In Toward a Philosophy of the Act, Bakhtin provides analysis which can be used to consider how Indigenous ontology and epistemology is filtered through, and if it is held hostage in, the framework of Western social science disciplines:

... the world as object of theoretical cognition seeks to pass itself off as the whole world, that is, not only as abstractly unitary Being but also as concretely unique being in its possible totality. In that world, we would find ourselves to be determined, predetermined, by-gone and finished, that

is, essentially not living. Any kind of practical orientation of my life within the theoretical world is impossible; it is impossible to live in it, impossible to perform answerable deeds. In that world I am unnecessary; I am essentially and fundamentally non-existent in it. The theoretical world is obtained through an essential and fundamental abstraction from the fact of my unique being and from the moral sense of that fact, as if I didn't exist (Bakhtin, 1993, pp. 8-9)".

I further asserted:

"It is therefore in the collaborative act of Indigenous people producing an interactive creative project that the whole concept of our ontological relationship and connectivity with land and relationships between people, can materialise."

I also referred to writer, sound artist and designer Paul Carter who attributes to such work *the symbolic representation of the phenomenal, a picture of the way the world is constructed that participates in its complexity rather than eliminates it* (Carter, 1996, p. xii).

Kombu-merri Waka Waka Philosopher Mary Graham (2006, 4) poses a relative and fundamental question: *If Indigenous people were to have an analytical theory then what would that theory consist of? How would it be applied to examine a proposition or problem?* I originally had the notion it was in challenging policed positions of theoretical cognition, rigid epistemology and cogent argument, but realised instead, where enquiry is grounded in practice, it is making a choice to enact dialogic creative participatory custom/practice within what I term 'the fluid inductive reasoning of processes in Place', thus enabling old and new assemblies of meaning to unfold and become clear. I also questioned: *what and how ontological thinking and ideas shape Australian Indigenous media and other creative practices to communicate the dynamics of representation at any given time; and if a specific genre and practice of Australian Indigenous community media-art makes more visible a philosophy of connectivity?* Like-wise the answer lay in enacting dialogic creative participatory custom/practice within the fluid inductive reasoning of processes in Place. This is the rationale of the epistemology framing my community media-art processes and practices which have been put to the test in my collaborative, participatory creative work, the event Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh, and articulated in this Treatise.

2.2 COMPREHENDING ‘CREACTIVITY’/CREATIVITY

The meaning and intention of the creative work is held in ‘creativity’. I have invented this word which I now use throughout the Treatise, to both differentiate the experience of my processes and practice and emphasise the act of creativity. The word creativity derives from Latin *creare*, to make or produce. It means original and innovating in the general sense, and productive in the special sense (Williams, 1983, 82-84). The concept of ‘creativity’ is an integral part of the Christian (and other) belief system - the divine Creation of the world – creation, creature. As Raymond Williams in Key Words (1983, 82-84) quotes from Christian Saint Augustine, and Phillip Sydney (1554-95):

*The creature who has been created cannot create himself.
God, having made nature, but having also made man in his own likeness, gives him the capacity ‘with the force of a divine breath’ to imagine and make things beyond Nature.*

The creativity of my Indigenous community media-art practice is a fundamentally different experience to the Western-Christian concept in creativity. It is not an activity that occurs in isolation as praxis is embedded in wisdom, law, Place, culture, spirituality, social and community development. These elements are all related parts of practice simultaneously and no separation or rigid definition has been necessary. This is captured in the Turrbal language (Brisbane) where “gahrr”, meaning breath or spirit, is the closest word to creativity (Bell, 2005³).

Creativity takes into account also the importance of the ‘act’, Mikhail Bakhtin, 1993, Toward a Philosophy of the Act, explained by Gardiner (2000, 1-2) as:

... the "eventness" of the everyday social world" and "the phenomenological nature of the "act" as the essential "value-centre" for human existence. This in turn, involves an understanding of the alterity between self and other, insofar as we can only construct a unified image of self and engage in morally and aesthetically productive tasks through our reciprocal relation to each other.

It is used to express a perceived ontological and cultural difference. Also creativity, within the European tradition of arts patronage, is the invention and production of art and aggrandisement of artists (or theorists and intellectuals) as discrete entities. Creativity speaks to a communal/community, participatory, collaborative and

³ Bell, J. (2005). Aboriginal Linguist, advised on the word “Gahrr” from the Turrbal language, for QUT Creative Industries, Indigenous Creative Industries Unit KKB704 (2005).

shared process of custom and experience in representational, reflective and reflexive expression combining and composing the practice-led research-creative work-Treatise.

This approach is also confluent with the concept that Aboriginal creativity, as Ambelin and Blaze Kwaymullina (2010, 197) assert, *is an act of being in the world where since the whole is in all its parts, there is no distance in creation*; and is consistent with the perspectives asserted in my Master of Arts (Research) as indicated in the following extensive extract, from 2.2 The Ontology and Epistemology of Praxis (2009, 26, 27, 28):

“Mary Graham’s view is that Australian Indigenous relationships to land are explained through the Dreaming:

Aboriginal people have a kinship system which extends into land; this system was and still is organised into clans. One’s first loyalty is to one’s own clan group. It does not matter how Western and urbanised Aboriginal people have become, this kinship system never changes. (It has been damaged by, for example, cultural genocide/stolen children/Westernisation etc. but has not been altered substantially.) Every clan group has its own Dreaming or explanation of existence. We believe that a person finds their individuality within the group. To behave as if you are a discrete entity or a conscious isolate is to limit yourself to being an observer in an observed world. (1999, p. 106.)”

“The continuity of Indigenous creative practice is demonstrated in many discrete ways, and as part of *the total pattern of existence, these art forms cannot be sectionalised but must be considered as an integral part of the whole* (King-Boyes, 1977, p.88). At Yuendumu in Central Australia, for example, where Warlpiri people engage in electronic media, producing community videos, they *demonstrate their own invisibility in order to assert the work’s authority and continuity with tradition. They do not draw attention to themselves or to their creativity* (Michaels, 1987, p. 34). Similarly, when video and film production development commenced in the Brisbane Indigenous community in 1985, the production company name, “Murriimage” was used and not individual credits; but this was eventually changed as film funding criteria required that film-makers were publicly acknowledged and credits used as a form of guarantee of the practitioner’s ability. Murriimage production – seamless processes, practices and outcomes – arises from the social fabric of the community. Contributing to the well being of society, and the ability to relate and communicate in an Aboriginal way, to inform, educate and entertain is as important a skill component as aesthetic ingenuity and technological ability. However as the move toward market driven product and a national Indigenous broadcasting television station was realised, production support waned, pressing organisations like Murriimage/Uniikup, to seek other ways and means to continue to create community/self-determined media arts product.”

(Further details attached p.128 Appendix II *Developing a Unique Indigenous Screen Culture.*)

“In another context, Ravi de Costa, in Identity, Authority, and the Moral Worlds of Indigenous Petitions, identifies in the Yirrkala petition (presented in 1963 to the Australian parliament, on bark painted with Yolngu designs) *the introduction of imaginative political resources found within traditional cultures, that are drawn on in ways to give coherence and power to claims being made, and do so in ways that influence much broader communities including non-Indigenous people* (De Costa, 2006, p. 689).”

“In the absence of a power laden linear hierarchy and sense of individual acquisition, ideas, work, responsibilities and outcomes are negotiated and shared, forming the core of the collaborative and participatory process. Adding to Mary Graham’s view on individuality within the group (above), Indigenous collaborative and participatory arts practice without hierarchy, designates that each individual is observer and observed (of/by both self and others), speaker and listener in an observed world (the creative sphere of the project). Within this essentially dialogic process, a microcosm of Indigenous social organisation and custom, relationships are formed and regulated and culture is maintained.”

Creativity thus *insists upon a tradition of community versus individuality, upon syncretic and dynamic values versus the cultural suicide inherent in stasis, upon the most delicate of harmonies between man and the world he inhabits, and upon man’s ultimate responsibility for that world* (Owen, L., 1993, 143).

2.3 CREACTIVE DESIGN - ELEMENTS AND METHOD

I saw an older woman, as old as me, jogging slowly up a very steep hill. She had hand picked flowers, and a bicycle helmet on her head. Later an older man, as old as me, was strolling on the sidewalk. His left eye was artificial and he was taking in the view. There we all were she, he, me, and now you.

2.3.1 RELATIVITY OF PLACE

The context, ethos and logic peculiar to the creative work are implicit in the origins, development and history of my praxis in Place (elaborated at 5.Creative Work) from which philosophy, ideas, concepts and design arise. In 1985 I was invited to participate in a community media development project initiated by Mary Graham at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Agency in West End, Brisbane. Mary Graham’s philosophical theory of ‘Place’⁴ offers a research methodology for participatory Indigenous community action and development.

⁴ Unpublished paper *Introduction to Kummara Conceptual Framework, a Discourse on a Proposed Aboriginal Research Methodology*, 2006

This 'Place' theory is historically related to my creative processes and practice as outlined in my paper *Developing a Unique Australian Film Culture* (2006, Appendix II p.128). Place theory and praxis subsequently converged in the practice-led research to produce the creative work *Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh* and its methodology. Indeed such creativity and periods of development can be regarded as:

... a Chronotope in the life of a community where time and space intersect and fuse. Time takes on flesh and becomes visible for human contemplation; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time and history and the enduring character of a people. ... Chronotopes thus stand as monuments to the community itself, as symbols of it, as forces operating to shape its members' images of themselves (1981:84, Bakhtin, as cited by Basso 1984:44-45).

The Uniikup Optical Media Collection catalogue, Appendix III, accessible at

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7o7h8gt4yfwm4v8/AADkktyEHzXmp5ZGqGP5qOWIa> details since 1985 video recordings and productions of Uniikup Productions Ltd. (formerly Murriimage Community Video and Film Service). The collection is a comprehensive audio visual documentation of various aspects of Indigenous life in Brisbane and other communities. Captured in the footage is the specificity of creative praxis steeped in social and political relations, customs, events and issues of Place. It is also the representation of the continual development of my processes, practice/custom.

2.3.2 CONTEXTUAL, COMMUNITY MULTI-ARTS PRACTICE

Prior to attaining community/communal media and media-art skills, my creative practice was performance, with experience producing, directing and performing with community groups in Sydney and the United Kingdom. During this practice-led research the event *Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh*, detailed at 5.Creative Work, emerged from the fusion of my community performance, photography, video and media-arts processes and practices. As detailed at 4.Navigating the Ken and 5.Creative Work, in enacting this multi-arts practice, the social, political and spiritual life of community in Place combines with the processes of the collaborative creative work. The ideas and design of *eARTh* are embedded in and arise from this context.

Clarke Mackey, author of Random Acts of Culture: Reclaiming Art and Community in the 21st Century (2010), is quoted by Assistant Professor Barry Freeman of Toronto University, Ontario, Canada in his paper *Theatre for a Changeable World or More Room for a Fire* (6/2014) written pending inclusion in a new publication Why Theatre Now. The observation offers a view compatible with the purposefulness of my creative processes and practices developed over 29 years:

Clarke Mackey argues for a more expansive view of the arts that includes what he calls 'vernacular culture,' the everyday creative, expressive practices such as bedtime stories, community art-making, or street art—practices that don't necessarily have a place in the world of the institutional fine arts. Adopting a stark view of the 'now' as one wracked by the "dire consequences of a two hundred year experiment in industrial capitalism," Mackey envisions a cultural landscape in which the sole aim is not the production of commodities for circulation and sale, but of art that occasions meaningful social encounter and relationship forming. "It is the form and context of artistic works that must change," he writes, "even more than their content. Radical times call for radical forms and radical contexts. This is precisely where ideas about vernacular culture begin to take purchase."

The motive of traditional ceremony and ritual in Aboriginal societies is the sustainment of meaningful social relationships and this element, passed down through generations, continues to be practiced in the customs of 'vernacular culture' inherent in my creative community work.

2.3.3 CREATING A WRITER-READER RESPONSE

Thus, the reader in establishing these interrelationships between past, present, future, actually causes the text to reveal its potential multiplicity of connections. These connections are the product of the reader's mind working on the raw material of the text, though they are not the text itself.
(Iser W. in Blaeser K. 1993, 39)

My brain is a repository; from the past, in the present, for the future – memories, experiences, relations, ideas, concepts, senses, allegories, stories, residues of dreams and conversations with those since passed, fragments from realities that writing detracts - all will materialise in narrating the practice-led research and processes and practice of the creative work.

Reaching out, relating to you the reader, I begin to shift words from my head through my hands to the keyboard. A narrative virtual memory is materialising on

screen. I hesitate. Anxiety ... hallucination ... a flash ... alien place invaders constrain me with demands: *clarify the framework you are using for an explanation and critical interpretation of the practice-led research and creative work. Is it a valid and coherent representation of knowledge, society, and culture? What does it mean, who wants to know?* Then, just as suddenly, narratives we mind in silence and our collective imagining liberate the screen from this space cadet self. Hallelujah! ... Recomposed, I continue.

Narrating the breath and spirit of this research for posterity and you the reader (albeit on book shelves and from the black hole of digitisation) our relationship begins with customary humility and humour, tendered in a relaxed formal style and structure; and here is a guide to what is ahead:

3. RESEARCH-EXPERIENCE

Interprets the rationale of methodology at work in the practice-led research; presents how I use myself as the researcher and how, hand in hand, my processes and practice move across a familiar terrain, but as if arriving there for the first time.

3.3 ETHICS AND CLEARANCE

Ethics predicate the calibre of the research.

4. NAVIGATING THE KEN: A CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

In keeping with my processes and practice a narrow focus on individualised artistry and unyielding knowing is desisted. Weaving threads of ideas and motivating values, concepts and principles, the practice-led research for the creative work *Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh* admits a comprehensive discussion about streams of thought, experiences and the places from which they emerge; not for argument, thesis against thesis, but for contrast, reflection and clarity. The Creative Work and Treatise converge in Place where multiple realities coincide, converse, collide or converge.

5. CREACTIVE WORK

Unfolds in each section, with this section reserved for both my interpretation of the manifest elements and applications at play in my collaborative and participatory creative processes and practice. In keeping with a custom of communal and

collaborative practice, the creative work/Treatise is not a discrete aesthetic/artistic entity or product.

6. SUMMARY

A guide to glide across unfamiliar and unprecedented terrain.

7. CONCLUSION

There is not an ex/conclusive conclusion but an offering of closure.

8. EPILOGUE

Yawo, never good-bye, and a gift of wisdom.

9. REFERENCES

Bibliography for discourse details and footnote for clarity.

10. APPENDICES

List of supporting material.

The theories of survivance are elusive, obscure, and imprecise by definition, translation, comparison, and catchword histories, but survivance is invariably true and just in native practice and company. The nature of survivance is unmistakable in native stories, natural reason, remembrance, traditions, and customs and is clearly observable in narrative resistance and personal attributes, such as the native humanistic tease, vital irony, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage. The character of survivance creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimry (Vizenor, G, 2008).

3. RESEARCH-EXPERIENCE: in perpetuity

*The world, desperately protecting its so called sanity
For fear of ending we must go faster
And old fly, how in your eyes, that you see not just one world, but many
And old beetle, who recalls the distant wanderings of lovers amongst the stars,
and all that is distant
And the wise snake, deep in the earth, and how easily that one day,
all reasoning would become homesick and uncomfortably lost
And the still spider, who showed us, that no matter what shape we live in,
there is always a chance it will be broken
And the ever present dreamer continuing tracks from world to world,
knowing the who and why of what is real.
© John Graham (1995)*

In Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward A Phenomenological Ecology R.T. Hester discusses *Sacred Structures and Everyday Life: A Return to Manteo* (1993, 277-278), revealing that research participants recounted how the value of relationship to place could only be established over time and sustained with great care. In contrast Paul Carter in his paper *Care at a Distance* (2007, 6) ostensibly laments: ... *emancipated from all traditional obligations, heirs to modernity's dispensation seek to conceal their origins ... and the important thing is not to come from somewhere but to have successfully left it behind.* Or, as Paul Faulstich (2003, 1) maintains, *Human capacities for caring, for hope and curiosity, for compassion, and ultimately for culture are contingent on our affiliation with nature. My proposition is quite simple; natural landscapes are compelling for humans, and exert significant influence on intellect, intuition, and action. Industrial peoples, though, seem intent on trivializing or annulling our relationship with nature, inasmuch as it is perceived to be a restriction on human possibilities.* The general consensus in Western society regarding progress, it would seem, is there must be a universal master plan that everyone goes along with to lead us into the future; and specified as the absence of such progress is chaos, underdevelopment, incompetence or even retardation. Perhaps this is why a wise old friend teases when I stress over the progress of my projects, thoughts wandering off everywhere. "Getting nowhere again?" he laughs.

Methodology in research, like a compass, is used to lead us somewhere, so engaging in research - heir apparent to the realm of relentless scientific progress - requires serious consideration if one has dissident ontological and cultural values. An analogy is the predetermined objectives and planning in exploration/discovery and mining/engineering that exploits local knowledge/resources at any cost.

It is curious and unaccountable, how an incident, of no importance in itself, lodged unnoticed in the mind, took root, sent out branches; and in proper season the sweet or bitter taste of its fruit flavoured everything (McNickle, 1980, 100).

As I understand it, 'practice-led' research engages specific individual experiences of context, interactivity, constructing social meaning, as well as the material processes involved in creating and utilising a creative work; an already established custom within collaborative creative processes and practices. A prerequisite to practice-led research, I maintain, is the acknowledgement of 'research-experience', the formative essence of creativity, upon which a rigorous methodology would impinge. While creativity is ethically guided by answerability inherent in the action and intent of practice, as presented in 4.Navigating the Ken, research-experience functions in the process of conceptualising the creative work and sustaining a custom of producing, maintaining and sharing tacit knowledge.

This process is consistent with the idea that knowledge as a transmissible entity through eras, people, societies, cultures and customs, is engaged as it circulates. It is also consistent with the idea that the research element of knowledge is fundamental to the experience of sustaining and maintaining life and is not a proprietary activity of academic and scientific domains. I consequently converge two ways of performing the practice-led research. One is the use of Epistemic Privilege and Authority covering research-experiences directly related to my creative practice; the other is the use of a method of knowing peculiar to an Indigenous concept and experience of Place and community wherein creative processes can transcend mundane cultural or political aesthetic expression in individualistic artistic production.

3.1 EPISTEMIC PRIVILEGE AND AUTHORITY

Osage scholar Robert Warrior, Professor of English, American Indian Studies and History at University of Illinois, interprets epistemic privilege as ... *knowing things about one's own experiences exactly because they are one's own experiences* and therefore *some such insights may only be available through the work of Native Scholars* (Warrior, 2006, 195). Also, Epistemic Privilege and Authority as *inter-subjectivity – I am part of reality and reality is part of me...* (Ho, 1994, 12) and *Knowing is activity which is by definition involvement with the real world* (Burrell, 1968 in Ho, 1994, 21), provides a process which accords with the Australian Indigenous ethos of this practice-led research, where thinking and action is collective, inclusive and extends to spirituality and relationships between land and people.

The use of Epistemic Privilege and Authority here, however, is not concerned with theoretical argument surrounding its validity. Nor is it a means to justify Australian Indigenous ontology where regarded as a *temporal order ... an amorphous, unrepresentable form beyond true and false and beyond past-present-future* (Kristeva in Margaroni 2005, 95); or the opinion that ... *the reality of spirituality is a physical fact because it is experienced as part of one's life*, as proposed by Moreton-Robinson (quoted in Martin, 2008, 67). It goes much deeper than the *aggregation of stories from lived experience ... endless production of subjective narrative to disrupt objectified accounts; or hidden wisdom ... waiting to be brought to the light* (Nakata 2007, 213-14). There is no scientific claim to new theory or knowledge (Brady Wray, K. 2010, 2); or engagement of a particular social position to argue a critical standpoint in relation to the dominant social order (Nakata 2007, 214 and Janack 1997, 130).

Rather the purpose is to apply Epistemic Privilege and Authority as a method of attentive reevaluation, unfolding transformative processes of deliberation that produce an array of Australian Indigenous thought from a retentive and dialogical oral tradition; and to subsume and promote prodigious knowing that values intuitive, insightful and sensory input as immanent aspects of intelligence,

reasoning and representation. The unique philosophy of 'the Dreaming' with the inclusion of relativity of Place (Graham, 2006, 2.3.1 above) frames ethos and experience, determining praxis at the site of the socialised body; in this research not marginal but central to everyday experience, purpose, motivation and action. The use of Epistemic Privilege and Authority in this context is substantially validated in creative research as principled intellectual, social and cultural practice and procedure.

Moreover, in relation to research-experience active in the processes of the creative project during the practice-led research, one's own multi-dimensional physical/spiritual experience needs not to be confined to the naming and descriptive methods of social science theory. An example of this evidenced perhaps in the way anthropology, in interpreting 'rites-of-passage', elevates the performance of ceremony over its collaborative, communal and participatory processes and practices, so devaluing and displacing applied contemporary custom and 'cultural vernacular'. Rites-of-passage, for example, can be regarded in ways of life, that is, the customs in multiple functions of caring, watching, comforting, waiting, teaching, learning and so on, experienced and practiced as part of living with land, and reciprocal relationship to the elements, fauna, flora and each other; enacting the caring for country caring for kin philosophy underpinning the Aboriginal world view. Consequently each phase of life unfolds carrying with it the customs of 'rites-of-passage' constantly at play across the community, discounting social science ideas dictating that cultural authenticity lives in the simulation of anthropological notions of ceremony scientifically recorded in the past.

Ceremony, as enacted in the creative project *eARTh*, is collaborative, communal and participatory performance of contemporary being, custom and vernacular. The segregation and permutation of custom into impersonalised forms of individualised theatrical performance and exhibition of art work, conforming and pacifying rather than deploying the meaningful collective engagement of society, reduces the power of ceremony as a social medium to care for country and care for kin. Indeed we stand as witness to dysfunctional and violent behaviour caused by social alienation,

where customs evincing Indigenous relationality and axiology essential to maintaining well-being, are devalued and degenerated, supplanted by simulations based on translation and theoretical interpretation.

Further, formalising what are participatory customs according to the research hermeneutics of social science theory would invalidate customary and cultural functions persisting in contemporary social conditions, assigning the living meaning to irrelevant authorities. Epistemic Privilege and Authority can release one from the fixity and uniformity of rationalised, reasoned, social science theory and methods of deductive logic in Western knowledge production, not by producing a *simple separation on the basis of characteristics* (Agrawal in Nakata 2002, 5), but to repossess and reinforce in our custom of intelligent discourse and logic, the significance and validity of insight, intuition and feeling in knowing; the functional units of research-experience steering this dissertation.

Rather than pointing to an enigmatic essence beyond it, it draws attention, instead, to the immanent material process of which it is a part ... that reinscribes the speaking subject as the product of an alternative form of relatedness despite/in-difference (Margaroni 2005, 96).

3.2 PLACE METHODOLOGY

In 'Place Methodology' Mary Graham (2006) acknowledges that Indigenous and Western research methods combined can offer benefits and equity to Indigenous community members as well as Western researchers, adding, *because Indigenous research methods stress the moral nature of physicality (especially land) and the need for relationality and interconnectedness with all life forces, the theoretical model that emerges or is identified from those methods will also have that ethical quality*. She points out that most *Western modern scientific methods reject claims of non-Western knowledges in the belief that reality is what it is, irrespective of what humans think or know about it, and that it is ordered with a universal and invariant structure across time and place*. Her philosophical theory and methodology of Place challenges *Western biases of universalism in Western methods of enquiry to, in the action of Inquiry itself, promote multiple knowledge systems* (Graham 2006, 3).

Stating that research projects may have features in common - a dilemma to address, seek further information and a selected research method to follow - she then reasons *the core value of research is that it is placed, or begins somewhere ... that agency has an origin*. This theoretical model, Mary found through her research, has community identified and determined terms of reference: *primacy of place, spiritual integrity, land as a moral entity, consensus decision making, non-competitiveness, positive group dynamics, age and gender recognition and respect, maintenance of harmonious relations, non-hierarchical structures, sharp observational abilities and Aboriginal system of logic and time and space* (Graham, 2006, 5-6). Discussing Place and change, she goes on to describe Place as *epistemologically and ontologically central to notions and discussions regarding action and intent* (2006, 7).

A methodological knowing peculiar to this Indigenous concept of Place performs naturally within the practice-led research of the open collaboration and participation inhabiting my creative practice. It supports ethical relations in collaborative, participatory, co-production processes, multiple knowing and aesthetics, and prismatic perception. As Mary Graham explains:

Place precedes Inquiry. Place defines and supersedes Inquiry. Place is a living thing, again whether place is geographically located or an event in time. Place does not hamper, confuse or attenuate Inquiry, rather place both enhances and clarifies Inquiry. Place underpins Inquiry but not ideologically so (2006, 7).

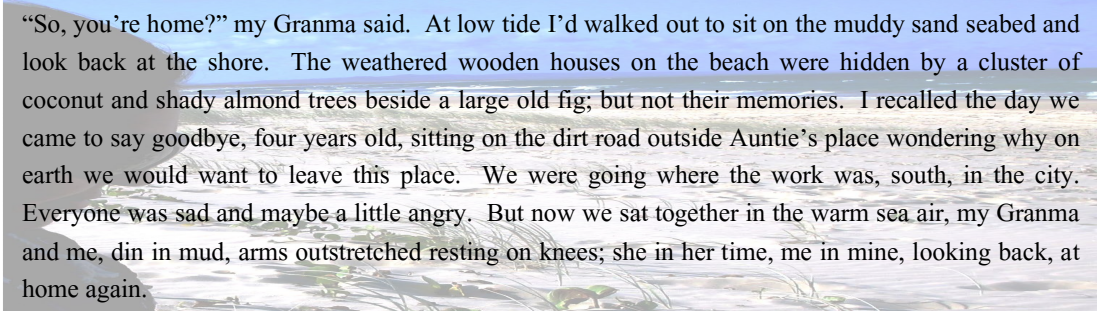
The power of belonging resting in Place (Appendix IV, attached p.137), is manifested in poignant moments of silence-timelessness-relationship-knowing; and an ontological form of theatrical constructivism through which we learn about our world. Throughout my life a range of collaborative creative processes and practices originating in family customs have taken shape in visual art, performance, photography, video and film and media-art production. Multiple dimensions of reality in remembrance, evoked by creativity, mark the layers of formative experiences, for example: Mum and Dad attending at my primary school to set-straight a teacher who had accused me, at the age of eight, of not being the artist of a self-portrait I presented as a class assignment; aged twenty, leaving home to express myself through the collaborative art of performance; in 1977 on tour in

Cardiff Wales observing the initial shock of a member of the audience that a black woman was performing the role of English literary heroine Emily Jane Brontë (published as Ellis Bell), and then the fascination at my embodiment of the repressed spirit of Brontë portrayed by her unorthodox characters of Wuthering Heights⁵; sitting on the cement floor of a restored 'settler's' hut in Alice Springs watching video produced by Yuendumu mob (Central Australia), a type of work I had not witnessed before – the relationship between camera and people holding no sense of objectivity or subjectivity – Aboriginal people not being examined or represented but being themselves; screening my first (very low budget) documentary at an international film festival, the coy resentment on the faces of Australian film-making peers at the sophisticated and candid international Indigenous political perspectives on the impact of colonial exploits in our countries (offset by the positive attention the documentary received from acclaimed Japanese film-makers); decades of Indigenous community relationality, connectivity, trust and belonging in creative praxis; sustaining the ability to keep Indigenous creativity and critical gaze evolving in relation to Place and change by being independent of government control; and not least, creatively parenting Aboriginal children to enact our connectivity and sovereignty by honouring their birthright, opposing racist violation and asserting customary integrity and dignity. The 'shadows that tease light's reason' filter knowingly through Epistemic Privilege and Authority and Place - research-experience in perpetuity.

N. Scott Momaday speaks of man's idea of himself as having old and essential being in language. *The verbal tradition by which it has been preserved has suffered a deterioration in time. What remains is fragmentary: mythology, legend, lore, and hearsay – and of course, the idea itself, as crucial and complete as it ever was. That is the miracle* (from The Names, 1964, 156, quoted in Narrative Chance, 1973, 163). Like the multiple dimensions of reality in remembrance, research-experience lives in

⁵ During the era of industrial revolution, Emily Brontë, an outcast in her time in 1887, immortalised characters shaped by Britain's dehumanising class system, patriarchal society and the land and eternal rocks of Yorkshire Moors. She reappeared in 1977 a world beyond her own, personified in the performance of an Australian Indigenous woman, an outcast in her time and incarnation of the uncompromising social and political system Britain used to colonise her country.

the interstice of processes and practice in the creative work-Treatise. It harbours insight and thought before knowledge exists, nourishing and sustaining the heterogeneity and ingenuity of cultural distinction. Epistemic Privilege and Authority and Place are not imposed or applied methodologies circumscribing the creative work-Treatise in order to achieve a conclusive outcome, but rather assemble and host central concepts to guide process and practice toward new beginnings.



“So, you’re home?” my Granma said. At low tide I’d walked out to sit on the muddy sand seabed and look back at the shore. The weathered wooden houses on the beach were hidden by a cluster of coconut and shady almond trees beside a large old fig; but not their memories. I recalled the day we came to say goodbye, four years old, sitting on the dirt road outside Auntie’s place wondering why on earth we would want to leave this place. We were going where the work was, south, in the city. Everyone was sad and maybe a little angry. But now we sat together in the warm sea air, my Granma and me, din in mud, arms outstretched resting on knees; she in her time, me in mine, looking back, at home again.

3.3 ETHICS (Greek ethika - concepts, principles) and CLEARANCE

I could make life much easier and fill out a form, answer questions and tick the boxes on this one. Ethics as required by academia for conducting research, according to Velasquez, Andre, Shanks and Myer (Fall 1987, scu.edu/ethics), hinges on two things. Firstly, *well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues*; and secondly, *the study and development of one’s ethical standards, constantly examined to ensure they are reasonable and well-founded*. This requires arduous effort *studying moral beliefs and moral conduct and striving to ensure the institution lives up to standards that are reasonable and solidly based*.

Ways of managing ethics and corruption are thus assigned to the application of various categories of ethical principle, for example: meta-ethics - concerning truth; normative ethics – moral course of actions; applied ethics – specific situations, i.e. bioethics, geo-ethics, business ethics, machine ethics, military ethics, political ethics, public sector ethics, evolutionary ethics; descriptive ethics – concerning

people's beliefs about morality, and so on (en.wikipedia.org/wiki). Ethics in Western society is paramount in the construction and acceptance of theory across disciplines, and the same concern extends to the credibility of positions of authority in public office, because institutions are culpable should research processes or authority become ethically corrupt.

It is well established however, that feelings, laws, social behaviour frequently deviate from what is deemed ethical. The public exposure of acts of perjury and obstruction of justice leading to the impeachment of a US President, his acquittal by the Senate allowing him to serve a complete term in office, and his attaining the highest end-of-office approval rating of any President since WWII, a case in point. The election to office of governments with minimal concern for the health of the planet or people, and all that entails, is a point in case. The case where, for sheer profit, corporations patent and genetically engineer seeds of the earth to prevent their use by any other - social injustices, exploitation, corrupt use of power and law ascribing them the name *the beast* - signals the absence of political and business ethics and a point of no return.

Could it be that ethics has become like an immense mammoth frozen beneath an iceberg awaiting a feat of technology to revive it, thus prompting a 'postmodern ethics' to study and interrogate the complex and relational conditions of our actions? Needless to say, in colonised countries where unethical and immoral positions prevail in acts of denial of unrelinquished sovereignty and entrenched racism (discussed at 4.Navigating the Ken) Indigenous people have Western claims of what is ethical under serious scrutiny.

In contrast to Western ethical practice, Aboriginal ethics does not begin with what humans ought to do and the study and development of ethical standards, but is *the source of morality and meaning in Australian Aboriginal society where, notions about the world, human beings and knowledge serve to ground a moral philosophy centred on the relationship with land and people – caring for country and caring for kin* (Graham, 2013, 1); as is central to this practice-led research and creative work.

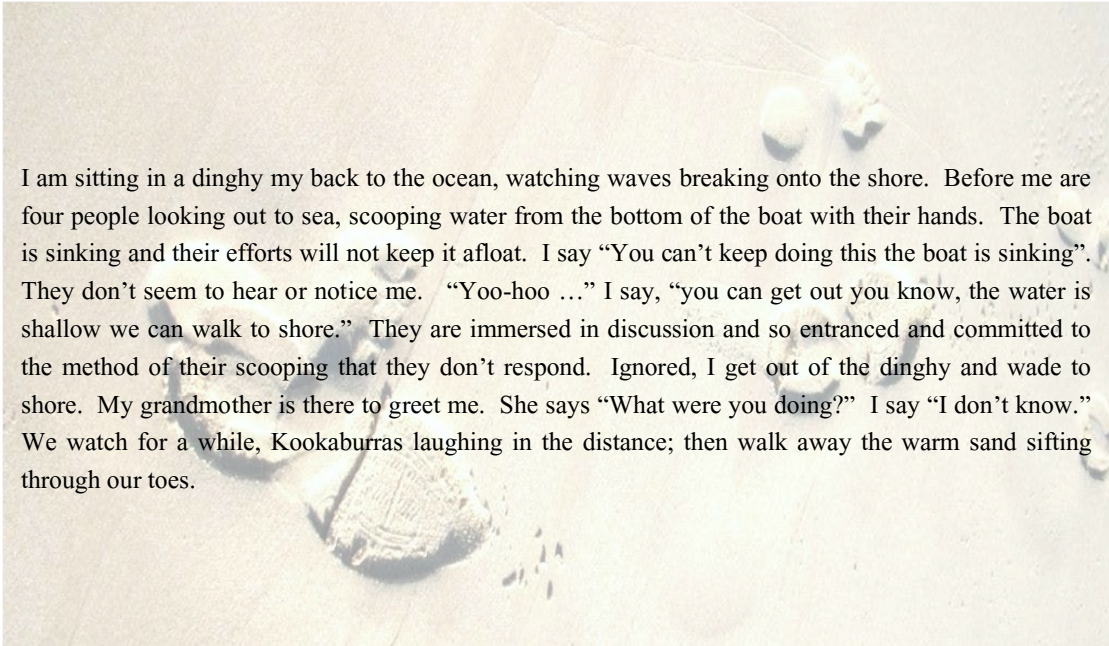
Indeed, Aboriginal ethics, a rhizome like connection of law, custom, rites and ceremony aligned to protection of the health of planet and people, has distinct sets of concepts and principles; and where these are maintained at the core of social processes of governance and management in Indigenous society, the corruption of power or conduct is not a primary concern. Ethics embedded in society's moral philosophy functions within knowledge in a natural way. Lyotard (1984, in Martin, W. 2009, 61) proposes:

Knowledge finds its validity not within itself not in a subject that develops by actualising its learning possibilities but in a practical subject – humanity. The principle of the movement animating the people is not the self-legitimation of knowledge, but the self-grounding of freedom or, if preferred, its self-management.

Despite and in accordance with this perspective on ethics, requirements of both the Indigenous community and university were duly observed. 1. Ethics Approval QUT Research Ethics Unit, 17th May 2013; 2. Participant Form; 3. Agreements for use of local Indigenous community Optical Media Collection and resources at Uniikup Productions Ltd; 4. Image Release Form – Appendix V all accessible at

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3g0w91s1n5spo37/AAJxek0eFYMmfvpZ89kHhX8a>.

Every thought along with its content is an act or deed that I perform – my own individually answerable act or deed. My whole life is a single complex act or deed that I perform; I act, i.e. perform acts, with my whole life and every particular act and lived experience is a constituent moment of my life – of the continuous performing of acts (Bakhtin, M., 1993, 3).



I am sitting in a dinghy my back to the ocean, watching waves breaking onto the shore. Before me are four people looking out to sea, scooping water from the bottom of the boat with their hands. The boat is sinking and their efforts will not keep it afloat. I say “You can’t keep doing this the boat is sinking”. They don’t seem to hear or notice me. “Yoo-hoo ...” I say, “you can get out you know, the water is shallow we can walk to shore.” They are immersed in discussion and so entranced and committed to the method of their scooping that they don’t respond. Ignored, I get out of the dinghy and wade to shore. My grandmother is there to greet me. She says “What were you doing?” I say “I don’t know.” We watch for a while, Kookaburras laughing in the distance; then walk away the warm sand sifting through our toes.

4. NAVIGATING THE KEN: A Contextual Review

Gerald Vizenor in Narrative Chance (1993, 151) quotes Vine Deloria who declares that life for an Indigenous person in today’s world *becomes a schizophrenic balancing act wherein one holds that the creation, migration, and ceremonial stories of the tribe are true and that the Western European view of the world is also true ... the trick is somehow to relate what one feels to what one is taught to think*; which I suggest has become a characteristic of Indigenous intellectual capacity. It is this perspective that is active in writing a holistic textual articulation as an extension of the creative work, in the form of a Treatise.

The focus here is the significance of ethos and the contextual, social, cultural and political life of the creative processes and practice; and communal encounters with purpose and relationality to engage you, the ever-present reader, as imager of a temporal event now past - the creative work Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh. Immersing us in the ideas processed by the creative work, “Navigating the Ken” is designed to move us beyond preconceived ideas of both media-art processes and practice and the critical theoretical application of research and its articulation.

4.1 A PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH PERSONA

Self-accusation: I practice-led researched by creative work; reciprocal processes and practices are derived from my customs; I did not hound researched sources for knowledge to dress my own intelligence; my knowledge is not derived from hermeneutical argument; I made no journey of discovery, or blazed pathway to enlightenment; I managed my candidacy traversing the customary world of Indigenous Place and the impersonal urban world of a University; Place conceives and germinates my participatory and collaborative creative work.

I can say that now but first I had to hop-scotch across research approaches and references mapping no-through-roads in a maze of contraries. Not being my own, 'the operative language' was preventing me from 'bearing the burden of my experience' (thanks to James Baldwin for the tip), and alienating the articulation of the practice-led research from my processes and practice. Addressing this dilemma is another site of the re/persistence of Indigenous identity.

Construed from a bountiful intellectual inheritance, the maze - theoretical literature framed by social science – grows and grows with more ideas or assertions on art, politics, economics, culture, spirituality, law, ethics, manners, and so on. Navigating that gaze is a useful exercise to comprehend how utilising a social science framework and applying different research methodologies delivers distinct plural knowledge, ways of knowing and ideas which can be narrated in monologic, individualised theories. Applied to Indigenous (or any) society, such theories can purport to render interpretations of reality and truth duly contested for the purposes of verification; or thesis against thesis infinitus.

In clarifying this context within which research operates in a Western academic domain and the logic behind pivotal concepts that apodictic discoveries produce 'new' knowledge in that system, I could move on confident the best place to start is from my own 'under-standing', literally, the ground beneath my feet. I know, from a lifetime's experience of creativity, the reality of my creative processes functions

within the socio-political-cultural-spiritual-intellectual particularity of an Australian Indigenous ontology and ethos, within the timeless conduit of relativity:

Multiple Places = Multiple Dreamings = Multiple Laws = Multiple Logics = Multiple Truths = All Perspectives (truths) are Valid and Reasonable

(Graham, 2006, unpublished paper, *Introduction to Kummara Conceptual Framework, a Discourse on a Proposed Aboriginal Research Methodology*, 9).

As such all perspectives are merged and each perspective is defined by the other in my Indigenous community media-art processes and practice, creative work and practice-led research, and all are open to interpretation and furtherance.



4.1.1 LOOKING AT ONESELF

Some time ago I read The Third Eye a work of Sumatran Indonesian writer Fatimah Tobing Rony (1996) analysing the effects of looking at oneself within popular culture, as an object. The 1933 film “King Kong” portrayed her people as ‘savages’; people from the same country as my own Datu (Grandfather). In the late 1800s, Datu Baco from Makassar, Sulawesi in Indonesia, was indentured as cheap labour in the new, lucrative pearling industry in the Torres Strait Islands. On Waiben/Thursday Island, Kaurareg country, he met my Erub grandmother, fathered my mother and two siblings and cared for many others. In her introduction, *How I Became a Savage, Seeing Anthropology*, Rony describes how the artful *illusion of entering another space, another time, another experience is shattered* as she watched “King Kong”, referring to the sensation of a ‘third eye’:

What we share is the ability to see with the “third eye”. In conventional terms, the third eye refers to the experience one has when, during an argument with one’s lover, for example, one has the feeling that a third eye has floated out of one’s body and is observing the altercation ... (1996, 4).

In her discourse on this condition Rony quotes W.E.B. Dubois, from his 1989 publication The Souls of Black Folk, who describes *the double consciousness that a young person of colour is forced to develop, a sense of always looking at oneself*

through the eyes of others ... or of seeing darkly as through a veil. Rony takes Dubois's insight further with *the veil allows for clarity of vision even as it marks the site of socially mediated self-alienation* (1996, 4).

Living in a colonised country where sovereignty has not been relinquished and consequently in occupied territory, double consciousness is a state of being. Working in Australian Indigenous media-arts, what confronts me from this perspective is how to effectively convey that world beyond Dubois's veil; from within a world where disparate ontology meets face to face but not in open exchange? Migrating together then into the world of Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh to divulge the underpinning rationale of the creative work, we may *discern from the continuous introduction of new elements of knowledge and experience, a coherent interpretation of the scheme of things* (Deloria Jr V. 2012, 21). To weave the warp of inextricable concepts and ideas of the creative work with the weft of my processes and practice, I traverse this threshold in circulatory discourse and reasoning. Using Rony's and Dubois' insights as a theme, the characteristics of the contextual review are framed with a serial discourse titled "BEYOND THE VEIL", creating the fabric of an *ethical metaphysics of the future* (Drabinski, 2012, 229).

4.2 BEYOND THE VEIL: double consciousness

In this beginning there was not 'the word and the word was God'. Words hung in silence like clothes on a washing line, waiting to dress a language game. At the beginning were thoughts from the shadows of my own orientation seeking clarity through discourse. François Jullien's work on the *Thinking between China and Greece* highlights philosophical and intellectual differences between cultural constructs of knowing, referring to the 'unthought of our thought' awaiting communication. Indeed stepping out of our thoughts into reflection, allows knowledge to expand through constant reorientation within new insights.

It's not only that one thinks; there's also, prior to what one thinks, the constitution of the possible frame of engaged—engageable—questioning, which itself falls under the aegis of the considerable, which is to say what one thinks to ask. Beyond that are all these questions that we don't imagine asking ourselves (Jullien F., 2009, 185).

Those are the questions that take us beyond the veil toward a spectrum of pre-colonial thinking freeing imagination and intellect from the constraints of binary, polemic and mono-cultural logic and perception. In this regard Paul Faulstich's (2003, 14) documentation of how he watched a sunset in the company of members of the Warlpiri community in the Northern Territory, provides an account of diverse experience of land and Place. Faulstich says he was captivated by the saturated hues of red and orange but his companions showed no interest; and whilst he was immersed in the external aesthetic beauty of this experience, he said the Warlpiri mob were seeing things very differently. The land held distinct elements of Warlpiri identity and this held their attention. The event of a brilliant setting sun was not an isolate in their view.

Paul Carter (2009, xv) poses the question in his work *Dark Writing: how do we unite an invisible world of ideas with a physical one invented with processes and practice; and host the drawing out of ideas and discussion of practice?* I need to ask as well: where, how do adverse perspectives meet in order to understand and share the imaginable world in which creative concepts and work belong; one which exists beyond the imposed reality of a mundanely materialistic social system? What is practice-led research, its values and principles, in the context of the creative work, as I experience it? Perception and conceptualisation of Indigenous knowing and being is steeped in the genetic and psychological inheritance of a venerable heterogeneous society and culture known to have developed more than 200 local languages, knowledge and laws specific to Place and country, evolving in a vast land over millennia. Is it prudent to expect this can be substituted with relatively new Western concepts of knowledge imported by colonialism i.e. theory, practice and its conventions? And, in this context, how useful or restraining are such concepts, described by François Jullien (2009, 185, 186, 187) in his interview on *Thinking between China and Greece: Breaking New Ground* as:

... the principles of non-contradiction and the law of the excluded middle, everything that constitutes the essence of definition itself ... but most of all predication (of an argument on facts). And, the idea that speech to be valid must determine, and, there is no possible intermediary between contraries, since one single predicate, whatever it is, of one subject alone must necessarily be either affirmed or denied?

Such analytical frameworks are part of a legacy of *forceful imposition of complete organisation in a body politic*, which in effect denies the essential reality of *chance, change and motion* (Protevi in Margaroni, 2005, 85), the essence of my creative processes and practice. Chance, change and motion, fundamental to the *self-ordering potential of an all separating, connecting, halting, diverting, scattering, transforming* dynamic (Protevi in Margaroni, 2005, 85), developed within the propensity of both cultural orientation and arts practice, is intertwined with

the purpose of knowledge [within Aboriginal systems] which folds back into the underlying principle of balance ... both constructed and transmitted around the idea of balancing relationships between all things in the universe (Kwaymullina A. and B., 2010, 196).

Consequently reproduction/imitation or repudiation of such imposed logic and analytical frameworks as referenced by Jullien, serve no purpose in this practice-led research project.

In 2006 I had the occasion to meet writer and designer Paul Carter in Brisbane, when he presented a paper that included concepts from his 1996 publication The Lie of the Land; which also involves the complexity of 'doubled or multiple identity of selves and places' for those who arrived at our shores by way of or following in the catastrophic wave of colonialism. In introducing ourselves I noticed his English accent and enquired about his country of origin. To explain: I was in England for six years in the 1970s working in performance, allowing me to travel and live in various parts of his birth country. I learned something of the history and social effects of repeated wars fought for power over English land and resources, and also in each place I lived I accustomed myself a little to the nature and characteristics of the land, people and politics. My mother had the knack of identifying people from various families in her region (I suspect a sign of her cathartic longing for home), which over time I also developed, adding to it an interest in geographic characteristics. Without family, Place and land, I think this skill became stronger as a way of self-orientation in England; and maybe I was also unconsciously attempting to psychologically connect with my own Father's family origins. In any case my exchange with Paul Carter led to deeper consideration of significant ontological

difference underpinning and impacting modern Australian society, on which later I further elaborate.

In his paper *Care at a Distance Affiliations to country in a global context* (2007, 6-7) written after our meeting in 2006, Paul Carter presents his impression of our brief exchange; and I offer my response which serves as an example of where adverse and diverse perspectives coincide, converse, collide and potentially converge 'in order to understand and share the imaginable world in which creative concepts and work belong'. I sensed Paul Carter initially responded to my enquiry about his origins, thinking I was seeking to confirm that he was from somewhere else, a type of stigmatic imposition to simulate an Australian hierarchy of belonging. In asking about his birth place, in fact, I sought to geographically locate him, due to my acquaintance with his origins and in terms of our own connection to country; and noticed he seemed slightly disconcerted when I then proceeded to enquire about 'pre-historical' landmarks in that particular country. I surmise he became even a little embarrassed that I should seek to connect him personally to that place when he himself (at that time) had no conscious sense of such attachment. I didn't pursue the matter but my brief experience of his birth place made me sorry that he should not value those special characteristics and essence. In retrospect I was left bewildered by what appeared a defensive response, having assumed he had somewhere a sense of care for his birth place, given his talk, place-making experiences and ideas of 'the doubled or multiple identity of selves and places' which he later elaborated in his paper *Care at a Distance* (2007, 1).

*Because you love it this world.
Yes, this country, your country, my country ... I love im.
I don't want to lose country, somebody take im.
Make you worry.
If somebody take im your country, you 'n' me both get sick.
Because feeling ... this country where you brought up
and just like you 'n' me mother.
Somebody else doing it wrong... you 'n' me feel im.
Anybody, anyone ... you 'n' me feel
(Neidjie B., 1989, 153).*

In highlighting our exchange in his paper *Care at a Distance*, Paul Carter contrasted ontological difference in a way which also provided us both with a renewed meeting point where dialogue and understanding can inspire creative work, taking us out of what Lakota scholar, Vine Deloria Jnr (2012, 18) describes as:

... a dreadful middle ground in a process of transformation where over and over again we substitute meaningless pieces in a mosaic depiction of change. Change, even transformation of attitudes, is not an end in itself unless it leads to a more profound and comprehensive idea of the meaning of existence. We always run the risk of lapsing into a new and more sophisticated barbarism.

Deloria's 'dreadful middle ground', was like a proverbial line drawn in the sand during the encounter with Paul Carter and revealed the importance of sustaining Deloria's 'more profound and comprehensive idea of the meaning of existence' at the core of exchange and interchange derived from my customs of creativity. I concur with Paul Carter's concept of 'doubled or multiple identity of selves and places' (2007, 1) as common (in particular) to colonial societies but suggest that also at work is Dubois' 'double consciousness' and Rony's 'socially mediated self-alienation'.

Members of colonial societies, I reason, would also have 'double consciousness' (albeit latent consciousness due to power vested in them through the violence of colonialism) as they too are 'forced to develop a sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others', i.e. through the eyes of the alienated people and land of Indigenous Australia. Most important, the dark veiled sight of members of both Indigenous and colonial societies has in common potential 'clarity of vision at the site of socially mediated self-alienation', which can over time enable society (dependent upon the degree of capability) to free itself of political fetish producing uniformitarianism, and preventing the evolution of truly heterogeneous society; accessible ironically, through the recognition of ancient philosophical and cultural traditions of Indigenous Australian society. Similarly, Paul Carter considers this dichotomy in his paper *Care at a Distance Affiliations to country in a global context* (2007, 10), offering the notion of 'care at a distance' as a potential means of bridging an ontological and cultural dichotomy suggesting:

Wouldn't it be astonishing if we incorporated this strong sense of coming from [the Dreaming/from country] into the discourse of environmental caring. In our culture this means taking care of the places where one finds oneself. The entire drama of conservation therefore occurs at the termini of the life routes of the participants. But suppose that instead they were called upon to take care of the places from which they had travelled, migrated or fled. A post-national cosmopolitan regime of care at a distance would be installed, one rooting present decisions in the accumulated memories of past generations.

The creative work, eARTh, in seeking to effectively communicate a divergent world beyond the veil, marks *clarity of vision even as it marks the site of socially mediated self-alienation* (Rony, 1996). Enacted creatively, the heightened social and political insight that Rony suggests comes with 'double consciousness' could promote restoration of heterogeneity to society in this country, moving away from the competitive survivalist notions of individualism to a formalised social custom of relationality cultivating well-being. This type of significant sea change would instigate immense ethical, political and social repositioning of the nation's axiology and redeem the Aboriginal concept of 'caring for land and caring for kin'.

Traditionally, relationships to land and between people within the context of the complexity of Place – *relevant time, events and history* (Graham, 2006, 2012) - are determining factors in the unfolding of identity. At Mer, neighbour to my country of origin, Erub (renamed "Murray" and "Darnley Islands" in the "Torres Strait") the condition determining identity is interpreted by Noni Sharp (1993, 65) as:

When a Meriam le introduces himself or herself, self-identification locates that person in ged, home-place, and in a line with a clan or nosik with its particular totem or lubabat. Everything else about him or her is to be judged by the other person. Together they go to the heart of what it is to be a Meriam. Yet always that expression of identity contains within it a contrast with another nosik at another ged. In Kitaoji's words, the concept of 'Meriam' is 'multi-layered', seven overlapping meanings of Meriam coming to exist over time (1982, 68).

This is an evolving complex and sophisticated custom of socialisation, developing self-knowledge for a mature and stable society which is relative to the idea of 'doubled or multiple identity of selves and places' within the concepts of 'care at a distance', and 'caring for land and caring for kin' as discussed above. Self and Place are inseparable and both conscious and subconscious parts of a constantly evolving

identity and maturing personality; combining the way one perceives self, is perceived by and perceives others, and behaves in any given situation.



My custom affects self-identification and ensures I am never alone or without a place in the world as indicated in my placement mapping above; an immanent aspect of the functions within my creative processes and practice. I am affected by the extremely diverse experiences of, and with people from, those countries and Places, acknowledgement of which assists others to decipher my knowing, intent and values; such transparency a contribution to ethical relations.

In contrast, Paul Carter in *Care at a Distance* (2007, 6, 7), identifies a *self-reliant, mobile and rootless society ... the important thing is not to come from somewhere but to have successfully left it behind*; a psychological condition which amounts to *coming from nowhere and belonging nowhere*, which Carter attributes to a *systemic disruption of pre-industrial societies that created the well-adjusted product of human transformations wrought by the rise of capitalism*. He writes:

Internalising the notion that attachments of any kind represent a form of weakness or vulnerability, and that the ideal unit of production is one emancipated from all traditional obligations, heirs to modernity's dispensation seek to conceal their origins.

This condition also reflects notions surrounding Western archaic origins, the Greek account which has *erased what has preceded them, the very scene of their production* (Margaroni, 2005, 83) to make way for Logos (word, thought, principle, reason), the foundations of materialism and progress and all that entails. In a prelude to a paper on the topic Aboriginal Ethics, Mary Graham (2013) attributes the success of the heterogeneous system of social management across Aboriginal society, particularly prior to the disruption of colonialism, to a 'Custodial Ethic'. She writes:

'Look after Country – Look after Kin', is a relatively brilliant all-round strategy, and within this is the logic, structural form and behaviour engendered by the 'Custodial Ethic', which leads to not seeing others as 'the other'; and the essential humanity of others is never hidden from view (2013, 9).

Placing these contrary social conditions in mutual relationship, the creative work asks if potentially, a notion of a world beyond a 'socially mediated veil of self-alienation' can be effectively communicated across Indigenous/Australian society, through imaginative creative media-art projects which engender reciprocity and reflexivity. In bringing together the local population 'at a termini of their life routes' (Carter 2007, 7) to collaborate and participate in contemporary ceremonies honouring Place and country, can creative media-art projects be transformational social action? Through interchange we begin to identify commonalities that initiate renewed relationality, as detected in Paul Carter's comment:

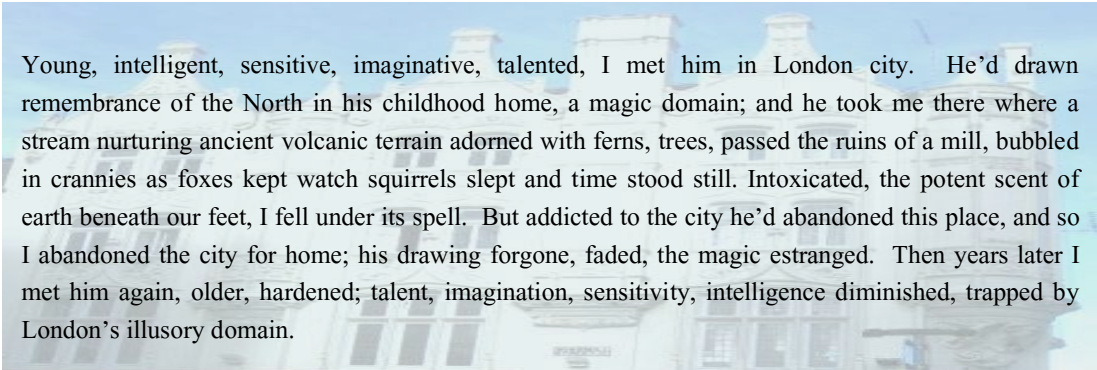
... it is the same capitalistically-fuelled alienation of common land that excluded the English peasantry that provided the ideological raison d'être of Australian colonization and rationalized the ruthless driving of Aboriginal people from their lands. Clinging to country, Indigenous people remind us of a fight for land rights we gave up generations ago (2007, 8).

Ontological and philosophical insight at play in works of the imagination can replace *meaningless pieces in a mosaic depiction of change* (Deloria Jr, 2012, 18) with *works of the imagination of sufficient seriousness and density that always enact a reflection of themselves* (Richardson 2011, 668) and a (citing Steiner in Vizenor,

1998, 124) *mature aesthetic form* which is *self-reflexive*. John Drabinski (2012, 227) speaks of:

the problem of futurity – a theoretical and existential problem of how to make the world meaningful again or for the first time – how it is crucial for any thinking of beginning after catastrophe; and that the articulation of the terms and stakes of beginning again are indispensable for imagining another possible world.

Catastrophe being the ultra-violence and devastation caused to the colonised, the dehumanised, displaced identity of the coloniser and the inevitable outcomes.



Young, intelligent, sensitive, imaginative, talented, I met him in London city. He'd drawn remembrance of the North in his childhood home, a magic domain; and he took me there where a stream nurturing ancient volcanic terrain adorned with ferns, trees, passed the ruins of a mill, bubbled in crannies as foxes kept watch squirrels slept and time stood still. Intoxicated, the potent scent of earth beneath our feet, I fell under its spell. But addicted to the city he'd abandoned this place, and so I abandoned the city for home; his drawing forgone, faded, the magic estranged. Then years later I met him again, older, hardened; talent, imagination, sensitivity, intelligence diminished, trapped by London's illusory domain.

4.2.1 BEYOND THE VEIL: marking the site

Not only history but meaning arises out of place whether place is geographically located or an event in time. The saying "the past is another country" is, from Aboriginal logic, pertinent to multi-dimensional time, that is, all events that have occurred and are occurring within any of the range of senses of time occupy a place (in time). ... Place is a living thing, again whether place is geographically located or an event in time. ... If chance is the fundamental nature of reality of existence, as described by Heraclitus, then place is the fundamental quantifier, that is to say, Place is a measuring device that informs us of 'where' we are at any time, therefore, at the same time, it's also informing us who we are (Graham 2006, 7).

In my Master of Arts (Research) (2009, 28-29) I discussed schematic speculation on being, belonging and relatedness as essential elements of Place in recent examples of philosophies of 'Place' and 'place-making' theory. Philosopher Ingrid Stephanovic in Safeguarding our Common Future (2000, xvii, xviii), proposes a *phenomenological ontology and ethics* arguing the need to move beyond *reductionist calculative paradigms of sustainability to a more holistic way of thought* about *the relationship between human beings and the world*; and Jeff E. Malpas in

Place and experience : a philosophical topography (1999, book jacket) defines a 'topology of being' where

the significance of place is not to be found in our experience of place so much as in the grounding of experience in place, and that this binding to place is not a contingent feature of human existence, but derives from the very nature of human thought, experience and identity as established in and through place.

Another interesting perspective on Place is expressed by Paul Faulstich in his unpublished paper *Natural Considerations: the Human Ecology of Place-Making* (2003) where he says:

"What does it mean to be human in place?" In answer, I offer the concept of geophilia, and assert that humans have an organic propensity to find wildlands emotionally compelling. Extrapolating from E.O. Wilson's concept of biophilia, I ponder whether geophilia might exist as a human tendency to emotionally connect with particular types of landscape. This inherent inclination to affiliate with landscape is, perhaps, part of our evolutionary heritage, associated with genetic fitness, and related to the human propensity for symbolic reasoning.

I was also referred by a colleague to Michael Hough's (1990, 3), Out of Place Restoring Identity to the Regional Landscape where he writes about:

... insights derived from natural and cultural processes that provide us with ways of re-establishing the identity and uniqueness of places in the contemporary landscape and proposes that a broad environmental perspective on the nature of the regional imperative, design can begin to make a contribution to establishing a viable contemporary landscape ... a perspective rooted in ecological and cultural diversity ... and that the making of memorable places involves principles of evolving natural process and change over time.

Hough proffers it is imperative that there is recognised a relationship to place based upon natural history, emotional and aesthetic appreciation evoked by regional landscapes which can inspire designed settlement. This being a Canadian publication, I noted the writer offers sparse mention and no understanding of the Indigenous perspective on land or Place, despite his *conviction that, in the context of contemporary life, the sense of identity and place is unique and significant in the shaping of the human environment.*

In the publication Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward A Phenomenological Ecology (1993, 277-278 - cited by Mary Graham and Michael Hough), R.T. Hester, records in *Sacred Structures and Everyday Life: A Return to Manteo North Carolina* what the participants of a planned behaviour mapping project valued about their town, and their cultural dependence manifest in daily rituals marking the culturally

determined form and substance of their place that serves their psychological needs. The marshes surrounding the town, a park, a small restaurant, locally made street signs, a gravel parking lot where people gathered to watch the sunset and where the town's Christmas tree was located, were considered the 'sacred structures' to prioritise and keep intact regardless of re-development.

Such European philosophies of place could be regarded as rationalising an incumbent need for members of modern mobile societies to write and theorise themselves into an acquired landscape, producing a legitimate new identity in order to leave one's origins (and adverse history) behind; a position of psychological limbo. However, the Australian Aboriginal perspective that *Place is epistemologically and ontologically central to notions and discussions regarding action and intent ... Time and space are in us. If time, in at least one of its forms, is like an arrow, then Place is like the calibrating mechanism or device of that trajectory* (Graham, 2006, 7), also accords with European perspectives on place exemplified above. The essential difference lies in spiritual, genetic, cultural and ethical specificity whereby the Indigenous meaning of Place is a systemic, societal organised relationship to land, a form of sovereignty propagated and transmitted generationally over millenia in mythology, history, custom and ceremony.

As articulated in the following extract from my Master of Arts (Research) (2009, 28-29) contrasting these perspectives of Place also provides the means to understand that:

“... it must be recognised placement and embodiment (of people in definitive locations) related to and by ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin, 2008, 72-80) set apart Indigenous Place philosophy (and methodology). Indigenous relationship to land - ancestors, as beings, spirits and related entities (Martin 2008, 66) - is an explicit feature of being human and of human origins. Indigenous people are specifically located, identified and related to and through particular Places or countries in the land as deciphered by the *Dreaming*. Orientation derives from a matrix of ancient mythology underpinning an Aboriginal world view holding infinite epistemological and ontological ideas of 'who, what and where we are at any given time'.”

This is not a scientific, individualistic, geophilic or aesthetic idea of land and Place, of *an observer in an observed world* to use Mary Graham's words, but one that is

deeply relational and serves as a conduit for knowledge of land, Place and people, as also elaborated in my Master of Arts (Research) (2009, 28-29):

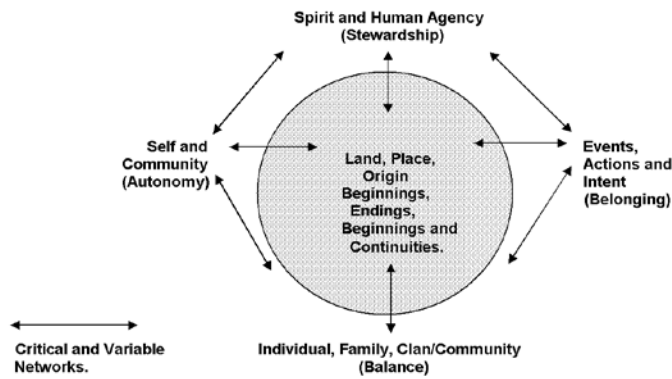
“Mary Graham (1999, 108) expands upon this position with the notion of an Aboriginal custodial ethic achieved through repetitive action, such that gradually, over time, the ethic has become the norm or innate. This is: an ethic of stewardship, of looking after, to be a custodian, curator, keeper or guardian, in particular of land, community and/or family. This ethic she maintains is not controlling nor seeks to impose by force of will or argument a particular course of action (Western) (Graham, 2006, 3). Mary further explains: For Aboriginal people, the land is the great teacher; it not only teaches us how to relate to it, but to each other; it suggests a notion of caring for something outside ourselves, something that is in, and of, nature, and that will exist for all time (Graham, 1999, 108). This notion extends into Indigenous creative practice, where there is a cross disciplinary acquisition of the sort of knowledge available to a community which acknowledges the environment to be a vital component of the total expression of culture (King-Boyes, 1977, 88).”

The Indian system of common ownership had never been understood or accepted by the white men who settled in the New World. Europe and the white man’s civilisation had grown to greatness on a system of private property in land, and it must therefore be a proper system for any people (McNickle, 1973, 79).

Mary Graham developed a distinct philosophical theory of Place from substantive experience across Indigenous affairs; particularly the initiation and research of community development projects in South East Queensland. She examines approaches to research, methods of enquiry, protocols, therapies, Aboriginal terms of reference and outcomes of community discussions, to propound a ‘Kummara Concept of Place’ concerning Place and Change, Place and Transformation (logic) and Law of Place. The idea of ‘Law of Place’ is qualified by:

Aboriginal Australia’s perspective on the nature of existence is that the Sacred Dreaming is the system of creation that brings the whole of existence into being and ensures its continuance. The Dreaming, with the Ancestral Beings as intermediaries, brings into being Place, and, along with the emergence of Place, comes the Law for that Place. Law and Place come into the world at the same time. Identity, obligation, kinship and marriage rules or the Law of Relationships now comes into being ... (Graham, 2006, 9).

In her diagram below Mary Graham illustrates Law of Place (2006, 9) in Australian Indigenous ontology which, concurring with the development of the principles of my media-arts processes and practices, provides a useful conceptual map as both a visual aid to customs and an anchor for the research.



The significance of researching and narrating the creative work and creativity through an Indigenous philosophy of Place becomes clearer in an insightful remark by Native American, Tuscarora/Saponi scholar Associate Professor A. Troy Richardson (2011, 671):

The point of view in the word indicates an internal connection, not clear to consciousness but rather arrived at through a circling of the abyss and the interaction of memory, imagination and narrative traditions.

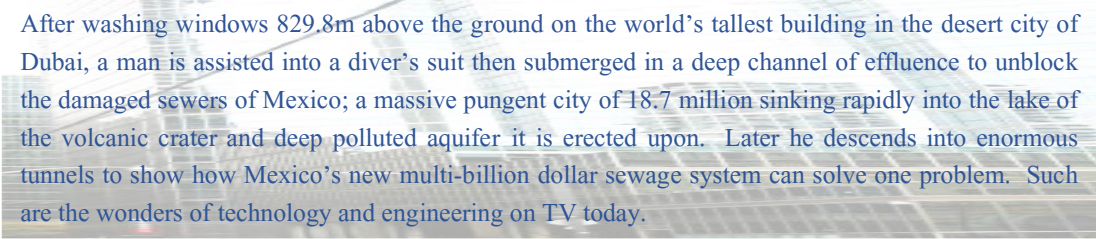
His paper, “Between Native American and Continental Philosophy: a comparative approach to narrative and the emergence of responsible selves”, explores

how continental and Indigenous intellectual traditions work against any assumed stability for the ‘I’ in the narration of the self, yet toward responsible relationality. Such affinities, he says, emerge from differing socio-cultural and linguistic horizons that are not reducible one to the other.

Likewise, Indigenous and European concepts of Place/place are not reducible one to the other, articulating the differences serving to steer understanding to where adverse and diverse perspectives coincide, converse, collide and potentially converge in order to share the dialectic imaginable world in which my concepts and creative work belong.

My creative work in juxtaposing these concepts questions European notions of place-making that sustain a persuasion leading to the permutation of land to landscape through inhabitation, enclosure, clearance or cultivation, and the transfiguration of land through maps, visual art, narrative, performance, technologies, invention and so forth. Indeed, performance of the eARTH event compares the two concepts of Place/place: in Indigenous society the resilience of

landed connection; and in colonial society, place-making - the topology or science of landscape invoking a claim to ownership, knowledge and belonging. This outlook is found in historical accounts on the subject of place articulated by Europe's renowned artists and philosophers alike - Blake, Kant, Descartes, Newton, Constable, Heidegger (Dean and Millar, 2005, 12, 13, 15, 16) and is inherent in place-making today. Indeed land itself, the very home of Place, is simultaneously violated, dissected, cannibalised, analysed, utilised, reinvented and contained, ironically, in making civilised places with the sciences of the day.



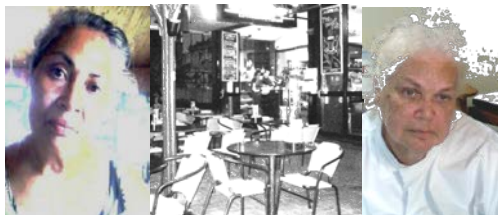
After washing windows 829.8m above the ground on the world's tallest building in the desert city of Dubai, a man is assisted into a diver's suit then submerged in a deep channel of effluence to unblock the damaged sewers of Mexico; a massive pungent city of 18.7 million sinking rapidly into the lake of the volcanic crater and deep polluted aquifer it is erected upon. Later he descends into enormous tunnels to show how Mexico's new multi-billion dollar sewage system can solve one problem. Such are the wonders of technology and engineering on TV today.

Recent place-making demonstrated in numerous site related works across the nation and the globe, also can be perceived from an Indigenous perspective as technology-driven spatial occupation arising from gestures or responses motivated by an urgent and desperate need for ecological repositioning. Often drawing upon Indigenous ideas of Place, these works remain devoid of core ontological principles: essence of being, spiritual and physical relationships in time. When Place is ontologically and philosophically related to land, it is a continuum of events occurring across time experienced as belonging; and 'place-making' is rendered superfluous. The paper, *Relationality – Attributes of Aboriginal Ethics* (Graham, 2012, Appendix IV, Attached, p.137), and media-art clip, "essense" (Peacock, 2013) Appendix VI, <https://vimeo.com/66788384> password eARThy, speak to Land as the Law and the essential nature of that law; aspects detailed later at 5.Creative work.

4.2.2 BEYOND THE VEIL: what we share

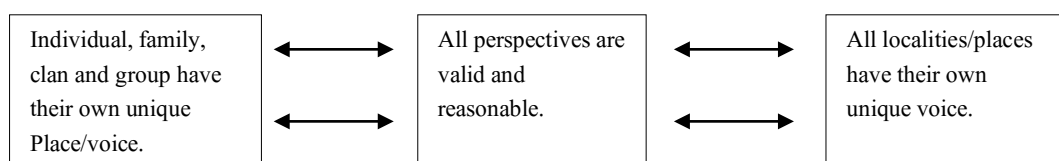
The importance of in situ conversation to interchange and transformation cannot be underestimated. Meeting Paul Carter, for instance, led to the reading of his publications *Material Thinking* (2004) - on creative research and local invention, and *Dark Writing* (2009) - detailing *the elemental marks, historical traces, place*

associations, and other phenomena that shadow our positivist history of placemaking with a richer poetic way of drawing ideas together; and further to exchange of ideas and insights reaching past the adverse social dichotomy imposed by colonialism to sharing understanding of the experience we call home and society. It would not have been easy to enter the important philosophic and metaphysical inventions in his writing if I had not first had the opportunity for dialogue. His paper *Care at a Distance* (2007), examining the tension that exists between discourses of place-making and the theoretical paradigms of well-being that inform them, included ideas arising from our first exchange leading to interchange and potential for developing a collaborative creative project concerning detachment from Place and human relationship with land, in relation to pressing contemporary attitudes and turbulent conditions surrounding the effects of migration and catastrophe. http://colourise.com.au/site_sight_cite/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 accessed 9/9/13 (work in progress, limited access to site.)



She appears before me the look on my face telling her hair is a mess, again. Taking a breath she sits, wondering if this time she'll get a word in edgewise. Chatting cheerfully to the waitress, deciding to share a sandwich, and perhaps a sweet, we recover threads of conversations past. Relationships politics deaths marriages films food concepts complaints intrigues flow across potent history in tolerant disparity despite mastication. We leave without fixing our hair.

Conversation with Mary Graham has been inspirational over a period of 29 years. I found validity of her philosophical Place theory within my collaborative community performance, event, film-making, media-art processes and practices; and our discussions on Place and change in her Aboriginal Research Methodology proposal (discussed in detail at 4.Research-experience) explained the essential value of Place to local populations as she illustrates below (Graham, 2006, 7, 9):



I am convinced conversation affects meaningful interchange opening knowing and the potential to meet in Place - the imaginable world where the concepts and creative work belong and grow – pertinent to the unfolding of all perspectives for the health of a heterogeneous society. In this regard Paul Carter’s well known works Material Thinking and Dark Writing whilst inspirational were not as relevant to this creative work as his *Care at a Distance*. In-depth conversation has allowed me to perceive the way Indigenous Australian ontology orientates the underpinning philosophy and performance of my community media-art processes and practices germinated by and in Place. It contributes to the rationale of Indigenous ontology, guiding and providing a deeper understanding of core principles and values of collaboration and participation. Evolving Indigenous philosophical concepts is a continuing custom within our venerable society, without which we are limited to performing the despair of colonialism’s materialist mediocrity.

A prerequisite to cognition and theoretical exposition, congenial informal in situ conversation offers effective connectivity and deliberation of knowledge. The manifest absence of this prerequisite at an academic conference, “Indigeneity, Performance, Globalisation”, I attended in London U.K. during the course of this research (later discussed in detail) however, prompts me to expand upon the significance of the oral tradition in Indigenous knowledge by reviewing incidents that contrast and emphasise the value of inclusive conversation as essential fluid interchange, particularly in research. I focus upon the finer points of two of 100 presentations, both concerning *nascent initiatives that make Indigenous artists/people in colonised countries more visible*, and *the mantra ‘all we need are good stories’ ... to equalise racial differences and confirm cross-cultural commonalities while promising critical and box office success* (Walseth, 2013).

Firstly at this London conference, Stephanie Walseth, a PhD candidate in the Theatre Historiography programme at the University of Minnesota and a professional artist across performance practices, presented a case for consideration where:

the rhetoric of 'good stories', when left unquestioned, allows various logics of racism to continue to operate ... and when the story that is allowed to represent [Northern American] Indigeneity on national and global stages enacts a kind of neo-colonisation, native artists are left hanging in a tenuous balance, their artistry and identities continually at the mercy of mainstream cultural tastes (Walseth, 2013).

Whilst it was refreshing to have a progressive perspective aired amongst a majority whose gaze was framed by the potential marketability of performing Indigenous subjects, the restriction of congenial and informal conversation – the Indigenous presence holding tacit and contextual knowledge – in both the situation theorised for consideration and its presentation, maintained the *deeply conflicting aesthetic and cultural philosophies within the contact zone of the initiative* (Walseth, 2013) which the presenter had defined as problematic. Also, ironically, the presentation was about an initiative intended to make *Indigenous artists more visible*. The cultural and political nature and complexity of the issues at stake cannot be captured in objective academic theory or agency because, as this Treatise seeks to testify, inclusive informed conversation as fluid interchange and relationality is necessary to effectuate live nuanced communication revealing existing Indigenous logic and critical discourse concerning the contextual, historical, social and political terrain of Place; wherein lies the pathways away from fundamentalism and toward Places revealing the means to resolution.

The second incident at the conference involved Faye Ginsberg, Director of the Centre for Media, Culture and History at New York University, and David B. Kriser Professor of Anthropology as well as recipient of multiple awards and fellowships, who presented her keynote paper *Beyond the Burden in Redfern Now: Global Collaborations, Local Stories and 'Televisual Sovereignty'* (2013). This time, however, the Indigenous voice loomed like 'the elephant in the room'; and 'the Indian in the cupboard' and 'Jack-in-the-box' materialised ready to liberate conversation on 'deeply conflicting aesthetic and cultural philosophies within the contact zone of the initiative'. Objections that this presenter and others were ignorant of the complex local knowledge, politics, 'aesthetic and cultural philosophies' within the Place of their subjects, were broached by Australian Aboriginal delegates in response to this presentation. In reinstating the reality of

the Indigenous presence the delegates exposed the inadequacy of a fixed gaze within a limited spectrum of epistemology, methodology and ethics existing in the program of research and theory which the conference was presenting. This raises the question: at the majority of academic conferences, in what way and how, is the operative paradigm assessing the calibre of research presentations and conference proceedings relevant to Indigenous people? It also attests the relevance of Place as research methodology.

These incidents serve to address my earlier question posed in 4.2 BEYOND THE VEIL: double consciousness: how useful or restraining is the Aristotelian gesture defined by François Jullien (2009, 185, 186, 187) as: *the principles of non-contradiction and the law of the excluded middle, everything that constitutes the essence of definition itself ... but most of all predication (of an argument on facts)?* And, the idea that *speech to be valid must determine, and, there is no possible intermediary between contraries, since one single predicate, whatever it is, of one subject alone must necessarily be either affirmed or denied.* It also reveals the employment of research efficacy over efficiency in academic places dominated by Western knowledge systems, as distinguished by François Jullien (2009, 204, 205). Whereas efficiency *allows the continuity of an unrolling to be heard, as well as the art of picking up on the immanence therein, without privileging a subject-ego (that projects, that acts); efficacy strives rather to spot—to detect—the factors within the situation at hand that are already favourable to him, so as to tip the situation progressively in his favour ...;* in this case favour being a claim to possessing knowledge of a particular subject when you are privileged to only a select part of its fluid conversation taking place within a distinct cognizant, social, political and cultural context.

Furthermore ignoring or suppressing Indigenous customs of congenial, informal, oral exchange can cause unnecessary conflict and offence confining us to superficial, argumentative and one-upmanship relations. The largely impersonal and hierarchal system of Western academic institutions (despite inclusion of Indigenous knowledge) renders conditions for altercation, and thwarts the opportunity to move us on: firstly away from the dominance of Western knowledge systems and the

assumed proficiency of both its thought and elucidation; and secondly out of a field of extraneous academic endeavour that will misrepresent the subject and misinform the public, until it is conceded Indigenous cultural, social and political insight cannot be simulated. It is an essential and valuable life (and research) skill to follow a custom where one relies upon and trusts a tradition of valuing knowledge communicated in the etiquette of conversation which applies insight, intellect, intuition and periphery vision that serves to broaden perspectives.

4.2.3 BEYOND THE VEIL: to see with a “third eye” ... observing an altercation

Your commissioners settled everything as they thought would best suit them and be most conducive to their interests. They pointed division lines and at once confirmed them without waiting to hear our opinion of it and whether it would be approved by us or not, holding that our country was added to them by the King of England ... We are the same opinion as the people of the United States; you call yourselves free and independent. We as the ancient inhabitants of our country and sovereigns of the soil say that we are equally free as you or any nation under the sun. (Iroquois speaker from Mohr, *Federal Indian Relations 1774-1788*, 1933, 122, quoted in McNickle, 1973, 51-2.)

The discourse on Place/place channels my practice-led research into the concerns of sovereignty, exploring not only the socio-political but ontological and ethical differences manifest in two worlds/societies coinciding, conversing, colliding and converging across ‘Australia’ today. Place is central to the meeting of the two societies, particularly in locations where there are historic models of European/Western institutionalised systemic power. Representing and reinforcing an alien presence and dominance, sites of Australian colonial society - such as churches, cultural centres, courts, police stations, war memorials, city squares and business centres, parliaments - are testimony to the denial of the venerable culture and governance systems of the ‘other’; and symbols of suppressed justice and the absence of moral resolve. The very presence of these institutions where contemporary Indigenous and colonial societies politically and socially intersect locates the complete monopoly of colonialist governance and development of/relationship to land, representing not only a huge ontological, social and ethical dichotomy, but the long term nature of any foreseeable transformation of political

dominance and power. This view makes the underpinning idea of the creative work intelligible.

Applying a concept of sovereignty defined by European law, to gain recognition of the legitimacy of an Australian Indigenous nation, would seem contradictory given the popular Aboriginal proclamation that ‘the Land is the Law’:

The ethic that grows out of the Land/Human relationship could be called a custodial ethic. The custodial ethic is contrary to a survivalist ethos of rivalry and competition over resources, and structural conflicts regarding hierarchies of power. It emerges from an ancient reciprocal relationship with nature; an ethic of looking after, stewardship, caring for, and the obligation to look after Land that nurtures. The result is a well-known term which is both an Australian Aboriginal form of protest and philosophical worldview: The Land is the Law (Graham, 1999, 1, 2013, 2).

Contrasting ‘the land is the law’ with the concept ‘the law of the land’, stemming from the iconic English Magna Carta, the Great Charter of Medieval 1215, referring to the Law of the Kingdom - God in heaven and his advocates on land, Kings as Sovereign (supreme authorities) who make laws, reveals an entirely different orientation to living and social organisation in Indigenous Australia.

In this context the use of the word ‘sovereign’ is contrary to Australian Indigenous core values and principles, where there is no *survivalist ethos, or rivalry and competition over resources, and structural conflicts regarding hierarchies of power* (Graham, 2013, 2). Such conditions are enduring traditions within the history of European sovereignty, politically reinforced by a survivalist ethos with origins in the placing of ‘economy’, an Aristotelian idea of the art of private wealth acquisition (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_economic_thought#Ancient_economic_thought), as a social priority above the welfare of humanity and sustaining the planet. Again, Troy Richardson’s view - *the point of view in the word indicates an internal connection, not clear to consciousness but rather arrived at through a circling of the abyss and the interaction of memory, imagination and narrative tradition* (2011, 671) - applies within the semantics of sovereignty.

In his article *The Concept of Sovereignty Revisited* Professor Jens Bartelson (2006), of Lund University, Sweden, discusses change across time and space regarding the

meaning of the concept of sovereignty; but that change is instigated within a framework and across a spectrum of International Law and global relations exclusive to European historical and political contexts. Although the article draws attention to the power relationship inherent in the Western ontological perspective and linguistic orientation of the concept of sovereignty, it fails to account for societies whose ontology does not include traits typical of Western social and political systems (noted above, Graham, 2013, 2).

Sovereignty Revisited: International Law and Parallel Sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples, a paper authored by Dr. Federico Lenzerini (2006) Professor of international law and European Union law for the Faculty of Law of the University of Siena, Italy, is an excellent account of the origins and history of the concept of sovereignty, its theoretical development and application of Western international law enacted to define, protect and progress that status. Here sovereignty is framed solely by European history, political theory and international law that determines the invalidity of the original title of Indigenous lands, with discussion on occupation, native title's legal significance, delegation of powers by the state, and rules of customary international law concerning protection of identity and rights of Indigenous peoples continued under this precept. Indigenous sovereignty in its own right is not regarded as a normative condition.

In 2007 Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson's (Ed.) collection of papers, *Sovereign Subjects*, on the status of Indigenous sovereignty in Australia was published covering law, literature and history. The scholarly work of these Indigenous writers contests the dominating European perspective underpinning such enquiries as Dr. Lenzerini's, into the *Parallel Sovereignty of Indigenous People*. Predicating the basis for disputation with a brief historic account of European Sovereignty, the editor writes:

The development of sovereignty as we now know it came into being through wars carried out by kings and their knights (citing Foucault, 2003). The transition to modernity precipitated transfer of the king's sovereignty to the state which, in the form of the Crown, is the sovereign holder of land. This transference also encompassed authority over a territorial area and the people within it (Moreton-Robinson A., 2007, 87).

In her article *The Sovereign Being*, Professor Wendy Brady (Sovereign Subjects, 2007, 150) exemplifies common Australian Indigenous response to Western determination of sovereignty in countries where Indigenous ontology overrides notions of European legal possession of country:

Exclusion and denial of Indigenous Australians' right to sovereignty and self-determination are as effective as the previous attempts by governments to deny our humanity and existence.

She continues:

Whether we are in urban, rural or remote regions, we continue to exercise our right of recognition of our ancestral rights and our modern forms of kinship recognition. We may not have legal recognition of our sovereignty, but in the way in which we conduct ourselves and our relationship as individuals, communities and nations, it remains a constant in our lives.

This position sustains Indigenous people as a real and constant political nemesis to the false history and legal assumptions of Australian sovereignty.

Dr. Gary Foley in his paper *The Australian Labour Party and Native Title* (in Sovereign Subjects, 2007, 120) points out: *To understand why the issue of sovereignty is central to all debates about Aboriginal affairs in Australia today, it is important to know a little about the manner in which Australia was colonised and British sovereignty was imposed.* Foley explains the three ways used for colonising nations to legally gain sovereignty over new territories at the time of invasion in 1788, summarising ... *with a deliberate act of deceit, British officials conveniently ignored the fundamental rights of Indigenous inhabitants of Australia and declared British sovereignty on the basis of the lie of terra nullus* (citing Bourke and Cox 1994:52). Without conquest or ceded sovereignty, he states, this was the only way under international law that Aboriginal people's law could be denied, so evading the legal requirement to negotiate and provide just compensation to the Indigenous owners of the land. The Australian High Court 'Mabo decision' on June 3, 1992, declared 'terra nullius' was no longer a valid notion, and what Aboriginal people knew *was always ultimately destined to be acknowledged*, the founding laws determining sovereign rights in Australia were based on a lie (Foley, 2007, 120-21).

Clear historical evidence of the illegitimate act of taking possession of Australia by colonisation is mounting. A Notice of Want of Jurisdiction, by Australian Aboriginal

activist Minjerribah, Noonuccal Dennis Walker in 2010 <http://treatypublic.net/content/test-1>) states clearly the grounds for his challenge:

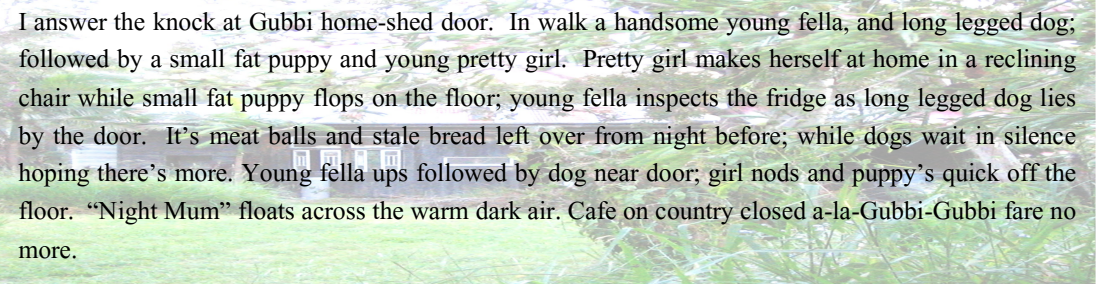
TAKE NOTICE that pursuant to the following facts the Complainant is not subject to any law, Act, Regulation, Rule or other instrument issued, decreed, given Royal Assent to or any way otherwise enlivened, enacted and or introduced, in respect of Australia which has, or had, its or their basis of legality and or power and or authority seated in a Foreign Parliament and or Power.

The Complainant, in the absence of any legitimate enforceable laws, other than the laws of the Sovereign Origine Peoples of Gondwana Land (Australia), being proven to be in effect in Australia at law, relies upon His Traditional and Customary Noonuccal law, International law and non-fiction fact as the grounds of this Notice.

Prominent Australian Aboriginal activist, Euahlayi tribal leader Michael Anderson, was nominated as the spokesperson at the '40th Anniversary Corroboree' (2012 Tent Embassy) to promote the formation of a National Unity Government, the Sovereign Union of First Nations Peoples (<http://treatypublic.net/content/indigenous-sovereignty-confirmation-expected-soon>). He leads a campaign to have recognised an Order in Council issued from England in 1875, the Pacific Islanders Protection Act which, affirming the High Court Mabo judgment (No. 2), gives Aborigines rights in ownership and title to all Crown lands in Australia. Anderson asserts an Order in Council is law and can be taken away only by another Order in Council from the monarch and not by Parliament.

The campaign to redress denial of Indigenous sovereignty in Australia is clearly gaining stronger momentum. Declarations of sovereignty of their lands are instanced with the "Murrawarri Republic" in the Culgoa River region of northern New South Wales, the work of organisations like the "Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy" and the formation of the "Sovereign Union of First Nations and Peoples", amongst others. Indigenous research concerning Australian Constitutional law and legal structure, the economic estate and functions of the Nation State, and the challenge to laws in Canada and the United States with similar histories of colonisation, are also revealing other means of contesting the suppression of Indigenous sovereign status. The sovereignty movement also brings pressure to bear upon the Australian Government in meeting its obligations under the terms of

the United Nations “Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (signed in 2009).



I answer the knock at Gubbi home-shed door. In walk a handsome young fella, and long legged dog; followed by a small fat puppy and young pretty girl. Pretty girl makes herself at home in a reclining chair while small fat puppy flops on the floor; young fella inspects the fridge as long legged dog lies by the door. It's meat balls and stale bread left over from night before; while dogs wait in silence hoping there's more. Young fella ups followed by dog near door; girl nods and puppy's quick off the floor. “Night Mum” floats across the warm dark air. Cafe on country closed a-la-Gubbi-Gubbi fare no more.

4.2.4 BEYOND THE VEIL: socially mediated self-alienation

Despite claims of conjecture in discrepant views, Aboriginal ethics and sovereignty bring a vital dimension to the meaning, purpose and understanding of my creativity and greater depth to the development of the concept for the creative work. Having examined European perspectives on sovereignty through ‘the third-eye’ that Rony (2006) used as an allegory to describe how one’s consciousness can operate when in an altercation with another, the research now, obviously, moves into race relations and its trajectory the indisputably ultra-violent force of imperialism, colonialism and capitalism. The resultant corruption, disadvantage and uncompromising imposition of beliefs can be viewed by Indigenous people as *the site of socially mediated self alienation* (Rony 2006) reinforced by the self-serving ontology, epistemology, and methodologies of the concomitant knowledge system.

Professor Emeritus Charles H. Long (2004, 89) writes:

The term indigenous is called forth within the structure of those who have chosen to understand the source of human value through the processes and practices of “not being at home.” ... all indigenous cultures must of necessity admit of the impingement of the “other” roving cultures upon them as a dimension of their identity. Thus, although the notion of the indigenous implies the identity and reality of a people prior to the impingement of the worlds of modernity, in point of fact the “indigenous” has little meaning apart from the colonial and imperial cultures in the modern period.

Taking the point of this perspective, that Indigeneity is a political identity and status imposed by colonialism, how contradictory to the point of totally corrupt and farcical is it, that an appeal for reinstatement of sovereign status can be made only

within Western/European international law which perpetuates the enforced statelessness of 'Indigenous' peoples?

The mindset of European global politics and domination has origins in what Professor John Mohawk (2004, 116), recounts as:

... the earliest moments of Western philosophy, where, people in positions of privilege wrote rationalisations for their positions, argued the justice of people in subordinate positions and rationalised social hierarchy; and these ideas, thoughts and stories contributed to the meta-narrative of Western superiority, which would evolve into the foundations of white supremacy when those who had been subordinated through history could be identified by colour. Racism had for centuries been defined by membership of groups, but until the European expansion, within the Western discourse, those groups had been arguably white. Racism in Western history began as white-on-white racism. Also such an institution as slavery had previously tended to place the victim in his position temporarily and was often not hereditary. That also changed in the sixteenth century.

Indeed, Gerald Vizenor (1999, xiv) denounces race, naming it *a simulation*, and stating *the "science" of race is political not biological; human differences are genetic, but the notions of four races are dubious traditions and faux science.*

Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2007, 88) cites Charles Mills (1997) who argues that *the social contract underpinning the development of the modern state was racialised.* Moreton-Robinson's expertise in the area of Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies provides adept analysis of how race and whiteness shapes the political relationship between Australians and Indigenous people. Moreton-Robinson states:

The racial contract originally stipulated who counted as full, moral and political persons, setting the boundaries for who could contract in to the freedom and equality that the social contract promised. The contract constituting European men, who collectively identified as white and fully human, allowed the treatment of Indigenous people as sub-human, enabling them to appropriate Indigenous lands in the name of patriarchal white sovereignty. Thus sovereignty within Australian modernity is both white and patriarchal and, as a regime of power, is constraining and enabling. That is, it is both productive and oppressive – for example, all citizens have equal rights but not all citizens have the resources, capacities and opportunities to exercise them equally.

The overarching legacy of the social contract enacted in this way across all strata of Australian society, is evident in popular belief rife with misinformation reinforcing the uncompromising colonist mold of Australian sovereignty and ensuring the

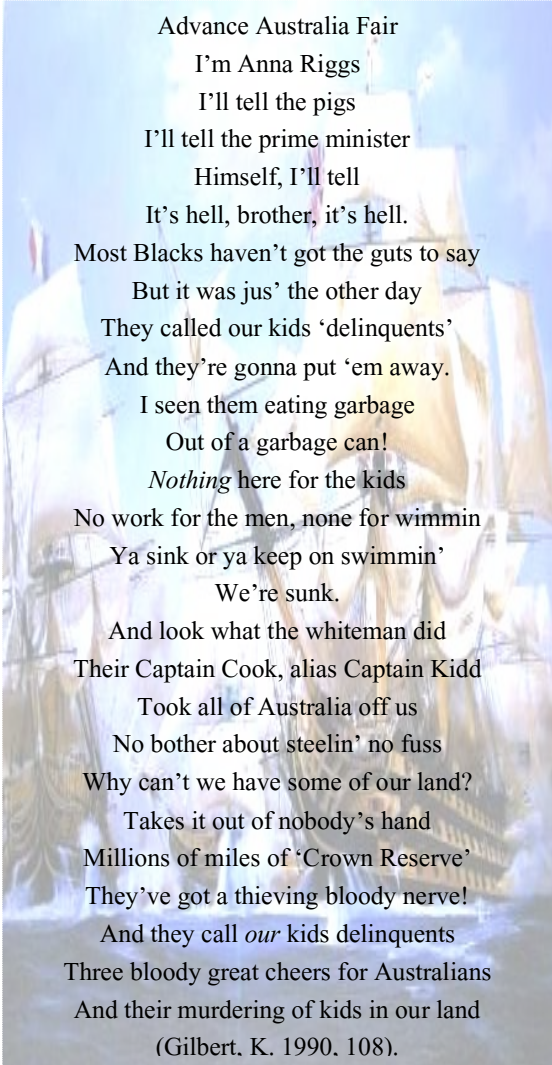
population stays racially discriminative and ethically bereft. Exposed in one of my recent email exchanges (parties will remain anonymous) on the subject 'the difference between 'tall ships' and 'boat peoples' is the ineptitude of average educated Australian citizens with regard to political and social comprehension of both sanitised historical ideas justifying colonialism and accustomed soft power at play in the privileged dominance over Indigenous society. I quote the point of view from that email:

Early colonisation was brutal especially on indigenous peoples and many 'so called whites' were also brutalised. Many were political prisoners from Ireland, early on, almost 50% and were made to wear chains on hands and legs while working on road-building projects across the state. Many died of septicaemia, gangrene and sheer exhaustion. However, neither all of our forefathers nor members of the early colony were indecent or inhumane. Both Philip and Macquarie were humanitarians and worked with the indigenous culture around the Cove, instructing all in the colony to respect indigenous culture and land. Macquarie as well, robustly voiced his desire to see the end of the worldwide slave trade, give more power and respect to women and planted the seed of egalitarianism in Australia. I am not making excuses for the brutality perpetrated against indigenous Australia and the result of this horrific and inhumane behaviour is with us today and still we are finding it difficult to bring about a true healing. None-the-less, to tar everyone in the colony with the same brush I believe is a little indiscriminate.

The email correspondent went on, expounding the great advancements in human rights, the rights of children, women's equality, democracy, conflict solving, fairer distribution of wealth, wealth sharing, and of course included the comparable brutality of Indigenous cultures 200 years ago; it was then I detected the faint 'wind shuttle'.

The late Kevin Gilbert, writer, poet and radical proponent of Aboriginal Sovereignty, voices the racialised grounds upon which Australia as a nation was founded, and as such how that condition will always determine the rate and areas of any progress made to reinstate Aboriginal rights to statehood - humanity, land, resources and governance. His poetry from *The Blackside, people are legends and other poems* (1990) is *without apology, without politeness, without hypocrisy, fashioned directly from personal experience and built upon captured sentences, singular words of anguish, love and pain and glorious pride, uttered with all the conviction and determination of a People set on liberation.* As public media shamelessly grants immunity by simulating and sensationalising insolvent crimes against humanity and

the planet, at local, national and international levels, Gilbert's work and that of many others target change. They also bear witness to a reality that many prefer is kept hidden and at bay; resented by dominance, such powerful voices and insights are tactically ostracised.



Advance Australia Fair
I'm Anna Riggs
I'll tell the pigs
I'll tell the prime minister
Himself, I'll tell
It's hell, brother, it's hell.
Most Blacks haven't got the guts to say
But it was jus' the other day
They called our kids 'delinquents'
And they're gonna put 'em away.
I seen them eating garbage
Out of a garbage can!
Nothing here for the kids
No work for the men, none for wimmin
Ya sink or ya keep on swimmin'
We're sunk.
And look what the whiteman did
Their Captain Cook, alias Captain Kidd
Took all of Australia off us
No bother about steelin' no fuss
Why can't we have some of our land?
Takes it out of nobody's hand
Millions of miles of 'Crown Reserve'
They've got a thieving bloody nerve!
And they call *our* kids delinquents
Three bloody great cheers for Australians
And their murdering of kids in our land
(Gilbert, K. 1990. 108).

Australian Indigenous creative work which sustains its unique cultural, ontological and socio-political understanding of the world within the environment we inhabit today, in performing unrelinquished sovereignty discloses the expedience in colonialism. As such it requires much more than an aesthetic venture to communicate and perform Indigenous sovereign status in and to a nation which, firstly, violently and illegally installed a complete social system diametrically opposed to the ontology and culture of Indigenous society; secondly, maintains

denial of the brutal criminality of its origins and ideology; and thirdly exercises power to refine and defend that position in preferencing financial support for an arts culture that prioritises aesthetic excellence in spectacle over relevant, socially and intellectually challenging and creatively innovative content and styles. The Queensland Government in 2014, for example, defunded and reduced funding in particular to diverse politically and socially relevant cultural organisations while maintaining high levels of funding support to traditional European mono-cultural artistic pursuits like conventional ballet, opera, art gallery, symphony orchestra and theatre, under a new Arts and Cultural Investment strategy and so called austerity policy. Also, this type of enforced ideological change signals the denigration of progressive moves toward diversifying political, social and environmental governance and management occurring at state, national and international levels.

Drawing on what Gerald Vizenor refers to as 'revenant atavistic' genetic capabilities and abilities, acknowledges what Carl Jung says is a capacity originating from 'an archetypal psychic structure of extreme antiquity'. Indigenous ontological processes and practice from such a sovereign domain, can and do make extraordinary cultural and social offerings. In a constantly uncertain political and economic environment perhaps it is wise to embrace change and be guided by Indigenous customs in creativity that communicate the wonderment within gahrr, breath and spirit, and create work which crosses *the threshold into universal consciousness* (Vizenor, G., 1993, 205) and so withstands the mundane materialism and fetish politics of the modern world? In this way concepts such as a proposal of *Universal Citizenship ... the purest form of citizenry available to all human beings*, (Arabena, 2006, 39) are promoted, augmenting the dialectics on critical problems related to adverse aspects of 'double consciousness', like racism.

Not so long ago we were all together on the airport boat; me on my return to the mainland, my Aunt to yawo me, and he, who I watched from the corner of my eye, a mission accomplished ensign of native affairs. Feigning interest and care in patronising drivel to my Aunt, he removes his cowboy hat, the sea wind styling his peculiar hair. My Aunt discreetly nudges me; I don't respond. "This is my niece" she says, with her native accent in a diplomat's voice "she is training in media". Turning my head slightly in curt acknowledgement, I note the sway in his detached response and lack of wisdom in his eyes; my Aunt nudging me softly again. I look; her understanding smile is lightly seasoned with her disappointment that surrendering to his dominance I betrayed ancestral ingenuity. Seagulls dive as the fish jump high synthesised with the turbulence of our passing by.

4.2.5 BEYOND THE VEIL: through the eyes of others

As expressed in the Treatise Prologue, an Indigenous PhD candidature in a Western academy involves plurality of intent and heterogeneous historical and contemporary social, political and spiritual concepts and concerns. 'Through the eyes of others', in relating certain cognizance during the research, considers the way *the site of socially mediated self-alienation* (Rony 2006) impacts upon Indigenous peoples' contributions to knowledge and creativity. In so doing it questions conformity to the concomitant self-serving ontology, epistemology and methodologies of the colonial knowledge system.

Consistent with increasing validation of rights in Indigenous sovereignty, recognition of ontology unconnected to Greek and Christian origins, could be on the horizon (but maybe not coming to a town near you). Such recognition seemingly offers re-focused dialectics in terms of Indigenous international political and cultural status, as detected in the promotion of two events that occurred at the time of writing this Treatise: "Alternative Sovereignties: Decolonization through Indigenous Vision and Struggle", May 8-10, 2014, at University of Oregon in the United States; and "In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization", 24 – 27 October 2013, funded by the European Research Council and organised by the Centre for International Theatre and Performance Research based at Royal Holloway, University of London.

The Oregon conference proposed to address the concept of sovereignty

as both an international political norm and expression of cultural distinctiveness and political autonomy central to American Indian and First Nations discourse in the United States and Canada. It deems: Yet this language is often an imperfect reflection of the goals that tribal nations seek to pursue, suggesting rigid political and social boundaries around and within indigenous nations. This stands in stark contrast to political relationships based in tribal epistemologies that acknowledge social flexibility, interdependence, reciprocity and non-coercive, respectful relationships between and within national communities
[\(http://blogs.uoregon.edu/alternativesovereignties/conference-goals/\)](http://blogs.uoregon.edu/alternativesovereignties/conference-goals/).

Processes considered for reinstating the legal political status of Indigenous people in Australia, which includes acknowledgement of Indigenous society in the Australian Constitution, formalising a Treaty/ies and declarations of sovereign domains, have been discussed in communities over many years prior to and following the Native Title Act of 1993. It is important to note, in this regard, relative observations made by others in similar circumstances. D'Arcy McNickle in Native American Tribalism (1973, 85, 143-44), notes that long before the concept entered the literature of social science, Native Americans clearly recognised the function of "ethnic boundaries", complete with political identity, governance and an acceptance of cultural diversity. This is counter to the tactic inherent in European concepts of sovereignty, where unitary power is exerted over relationships within and between national boundaries. Refusing recognition of Native American concepts of sovereignty, a treaty system was enacted *as a barrier protecting "Indians" in their "traditional" notions about land but honoured only while "Indian" friendship and support was needed by the nation to come to power*; with treaties eventually devalued to a symbol of a commitment of governments to native populations, and losing the power of mutually binding legal compacts. D'Arcy McNickle's observations also point out a basic difference between Australian and American Indigenous land rights:

in a succession of opinions handed down by United States courts ... it has been held that the Indian right of occupancy was "sacred" and could only be extinguished by consent and for acceptable consideration. This right obtained even in the absence of treaty recognition and validation. Tribal reservations were not grants of land from the United States, but were residual estates retained by the tribes out of the larger areas conveyed by the nation ... the tribes with consent, formalised by the Indian Claims Commission Act, could always bring legal action to compel the United States to grant redress for wrongful action.

It is no coincidence that as corporate power globalises nations and further erodes recourse to human, ecological and land rights, Indigenous concepts are being included in the dialectics of sovereignty. These issues are pertinent to the ideas underpinning the choice of the tour site for the creative work, eARTh; and to the type of conversation the event intended to elicit. (A link to Oregon's sovereignty conference was also posted on the website www.indigenousoverigntyaustralia.com.au launched at the eARTh event.)

The Royal Holloway, University of London's conference "In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization" is part of a five year research initiative, "Indigeneity in the Contemporary World: Performance, Politics, Belonging", described (my emphasis) as:

*... a transnational and interdisciplinary project that explores how indigeneity is expressed and understood in our complex, globalising world. The aim is to determine **what indigeneity has come to mean** in particular places and at key moments over the last several decades, and what **kind of cultural, political, ethical and aesthetic issues are negotiated within its canvass**. ... While the research will focus on regions **settled during the great era of European imperialism**, notably Australia, the Pacific Islands, the Americas and South Africa, the project also addresses the **transnational circulation of indigeneity as a highly marketable commodity, particularly in Europe** (www.indigeneity.net).*

The In the Balance conference considers (my emphasis):

*If Indigeneity and globalization are seen to articulate (with) each other in cultural as well as political spheres, what hangs in the balance? Working through **the analytical window of performance in a range of sites and modalities**, this interdisciplinary conference examines the power and the precariousness of Indigeneity as a politicized cultural force in our unevenly connected world. The growing visibility of artistic networks and ideological coalitions among indigenous peoples on a transnational scale urges a fresh look at **the mechanisms of cultural entanglement** and the particular rights and insights afforded by Indigeneity in that process. Cast as **an ethical touchstone in some arenas and a thorny complication** in others, Indigeneity now matters in **global debates about natural resources, heritage, governance, representation and social justice**, to name just some of the contentious issues that continue to stall **the unfinished business of decolonization** (www.indigeneity.net/conference/).*

Firstly, as both conferences are initiated by non-Indigenous institutions which in effect auspice Indigenous input, we can assume recognition of Indigenous scholarship, institutional power and capacity remains 'underdeveloped' and therefore does not warrant Indigenous initiation of the avant-garde in this move to

address 'the unfinished business of decolonisation'? It is of course an ironic 'catch 22' situation signalling entrenched dominant European conservative custom across academia, symptomatic of an acute deficiency of ethical will, is alive and well. In the credible Australian institution supporting my PhD research, for example, Indigenous scholarship, teaching, research and student support is managed by Indigenous academics who maintain the highest standards; but embedding Indigenous 'perspectives' across the curriculum is preferred over policy to progress incorporation of Indigenous 'knowledge' in an Indigenous Studies Faculty. Such discrimination also presents at the University of London which, in prescribing the context and custom of the research project "Indigeneity in the Contemporary World" and the program for the "In the Balance" Conference, it has effectively set the agenda and benchmark for which/how Indigenous knowledge and practices can participate, and consequently, the kinds and modes of 'global debates about natural resources, heritage, governance, representation and social justice'.

Secondly, these conditions also reaffirm that Indigenous people and affairs in colonised countries are still defined by those *who have chosen to understand the source of human value through the processes and practices of "not being at home"* (Long, 2004, 89). Also, in the light of our preceding discussion - on *the doubled or multiple identity of selves and places* (Carter, 2007) and *the double consciousness that ... is forced to develop, a sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others ... or of seeing darkly as through a veil* (Dubois, 1981, in Rony, 1996), at a conference about Indigeneity held in the imperialist homeland, the relationship between Indigenous and coloniser becomes concrete in face to face communication inducing increased scrutiny of hermeneutic research practices.

I adhered to the University of London's conference criteria inviting abstracts on Indigenous arts theory in the older colonies and, as one of 34 Indigenous presenters, flew in amnesty to the coloniser's roost to participate in academic exchange. However, my presentation would not be from the 'thought of the other', but 'the other of thought', as Glissant writes:

... thought of the Other is sterile without the other of Thought. Thought of the Other is the moral generosity disposing me to accept the principle of alterity, to conceive of the world as not simple and straight forward, with only one truth – mine. But thought of the Other can dwell within me without making me alter course ... the other of Thought is precisely this altering. Then I have to act. That is the moment I change my thought, without renouncing its contribution. I change, and I exchange. This is an aesthetics of turbulence whose corresponding ethics is not provided in advance (Glissant, E. in Drabinski D., 2012, 243).

So reader, we are now at the threshold of the web of Indigenous local and global relations and I count on you, as I continue in this vein of discourse, to creatively contemplate how lateral observations I make within my account of this research experience relate to the context of research practice at the heart of any Indigenous PhD project.

My Abstract for *In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization* signalled the demeanour of my presentation and an appropriate place in the program. Addressing ‘the mechanisms of cultural entanglement’ by stating the obvious ‘ethical touchstone’ and ‘thorny complications’, I suggested the social and political situation in Australian Indigenous society makes dubious the single idea that an ‘analytical window of performance in a range of sites and modalities’ offers an intermediary position in the immense societal imbalance stemming from the ‘great era of European Imperialism’ and enduring in economic globalisation. In seeking an un-entangled clearing for our engagement I noted both key words and differing perspectives had been omitted from the promotional material of this international conference, which concerned the ‘great era of European Imperialism’ in the period 1750 – 1914; a history shared by Indigenous Australian and English people, and a catalyst of this gathering.

These key words and differing perspectives, I assert, can’t be ignored or substituted by any other - crimes against humanity and the planet, massacre, decimation, genocide, usurpation, theft, lawlessness, occupation, corruption, violence, brutality, suppression, oppression, incarceration, deaths in custody, apartheid, the list goes on - and warrant acknowledgment precisely because they are also denied full acknowledgement across education curriculums, and are politically managed and

manipulated in public media and performance/art so as not to stigmatise Australia's national and international identity. The outcome of this situation is that Australia's Indigenous society continues to reel from the trauma of these transgressions today. I question: if ethical relations are to prevail, how can discussion and analysis of 'transnational circulation of indigeneity as a highly marketable commodity' exclude and precede acknowledgement and recourse to resolution of these acts of Western Imperialism; revamped and re-witnessed as they are currently, in both overt and covert neo-colonial/imperialist globalism?

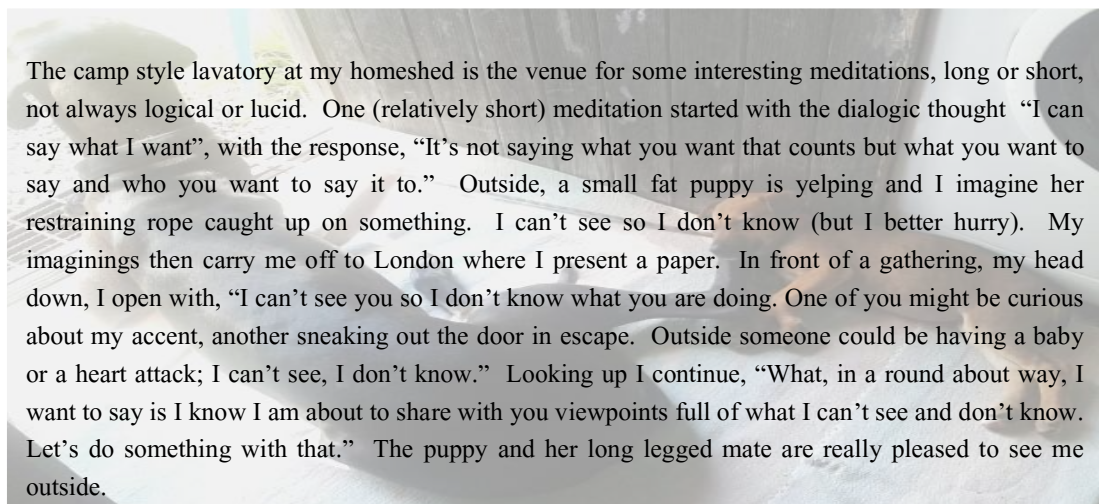
The creative processes and practice I wanted to share with the Indigenous delegates to the conference are specific to Place; and while the question of the 'kind of cultural, political, ethical and aesthetic issues' negotiated within the canvass of a globalising world is possible to address from the tenor of my creative work, the aspect of 'transnational circulation of indigeneity as a highly marketable commodity particularly in Europe' is rife with 'thorny complications', and could be an ambush in hiding with the above missing key words. Our lands and resources already out of our control and traded off to foreign corporations, could this well resourced research focus on the marketability of Indigenous arts and culture, aptly named 'in the balance', imply the tipping point? My presentation, Appendix VII, elaborating this discourse, is accessible at

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/45jwih4hnmuzate/AAA9LPWpklh6G6jFxX_0u6Gya.

The intention to participate in the Conference was to increase my understanding of which/how/where performance (across areas and work albeit selected by the conference organisers – 'theatre, film and dance, but also mixed-media and site-based work, Olympic pageantry, festival events, political protests and cultural displays within tourism ventures') is positioned in relation to the socio-political realities of Indigenous people in their countries; and how we are managing and inventing processes and practices firstly relative to our own ontological, cultural, political and economic developments specific to Place. Circumventing various power games at play during an international academic conference, I thought, may lead to like minded people - those descendants who share experiences of

catastrophe and whose creative practice makes our worlds meaningful again; and that it could be possible through exchange, over time, to create, expand and strengthen our own rhizome like connectivity of multiple, non-hierarchical global relations. I took the cue from Dupré here (*Passage to Modernity* in Vizenor G., 1999, viii), who suggests - *not merely our thinking about the real changes: reality itself changes as we think about it differently. History carries an ontic significance that excludes any reversal of the present.*

I suspected though, the dominant voice at the conference would be aligned with academia's investment in social science and creative industries theory, given discourse was to be versed in 'performance as a means of communication and the material processes involved in its making'. What one day-dreams and reality are rarely compatible, but instinct can often be reliable.



The camp style lavatory at my homeshed is the venue for some interesting meditations, long or short, not always logical or lucid. One (relatively short) meditation started with the dialogic thought "I can say what I want", with the response, "It's not saying what you want that counts but what you want to say and who you want to say it to." Outside, a small fat puppy is yelping and I imagine her restraining rope caught up on something. I can't see so I don't know (but I better hurry). My imaginings then carry me off to London where I present a paper. In front of a gathering, my head down, I open with, "I can't see you so I don't know what you are doing. One of you might be curious about my accent, another sneaking out the door in escape. Outside someone could be having a baby or a heart attack; I can't see, I don't know." Looking up I continue, "What, in a round about way, I want to say is I know I am about to share with you viewpoints full of what I can't see and don't know. Let's do something with that." The puppy and her long legged mate are really pleased to see me outside.

Failing to facilitate congenial exchange which could further what we know or allow us to become more conscious and curious about what we don't know in relation to the 'kind of cultural, political, ethical and aesthetic issues negotiated within the canvass of a globalising world', the conference and its location provided instead an extraordinary opportunity for a research riposte. Presentations given freely by 100 participants, 34 and just two key note speakers of whom were Indigenous, at this conference on 'Indigeneity', provided perfect sites to assess ethical, relational and ontological difference and disparity, and the interpretation and representation of

Indigenous subjects molded by Western epistemology, methodology and academics. In addition an arts/performance exhibition complementing the conference, “Border Crossings, Origins Festival of First Nations”, revealed the deep political and social entanglement of peoples, cultures and sovereign status that highlights the unfinished business of decolonisation. Consequently, on-going political tension between Indigenous and Western societies was a tacit topic in the conference program, begging the question: who are we performing for and to what ends? Who do we become in obligingly performing to unrelenting dominance?

Prior to this event I was a guest at the “14th Annual imagineNATIVE Film and Media-arts Festival” in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, from the 16 – 20th October, where the website www.indigenousoverigntyaustralia.com.au complementing my creative work had been selected for exhibition. ImagineNATIVE has all the indicators of a highly marketable commodity. Modelled on counterpart European events, the festival is driven by excellence in programming film, media and visual art exhibitions, celebrity and entertainment, with an organisational and artistic hierarchy that brings the status of Indigenous film-making and media-art into play within popular culture in one of the largest cities in the world. It engages a spectrum of International Indigenous film-makers and media-artists and supports, promotes and showcases international and Canadian Indigenous film production, film-makers and films. The festival venue is the prestigious Tiff Bell Lightbox in Reitman Square, King Street, and five other venues are contracted to host complementary events. ImagineNATIVE enjoys the financial support of a multitude of sponsors, public funders as well as hospitality and community partners. Other screen culture festival events are staged throughout the year across Canadian Native communities, including Biindigaate Thunder Bay, Cowichan British Columbia, Anchorage Alaska and “Dreamspeakers” in Edmonton. All events support and promote Indigenous film production, but imagineNATIVE, in short, is a pinnacle of success, being *regarded as one of the most important Indigenous film and media-arts festivals in the world* (imagineNATIVE program 2013, 8). The experience of this event in relation to the practice-led research, allowed me to assess and ponder

what Colourise Festival might have, could and shouldn't become and the reasons why.

The Conference and Festival had more than one thing in common but from the perspective of Indigenous Australian cultural custom what was most conspicuous was the wanting relationality between participating Indigenous peoples, caused by the framework of both events. Social structures used to frame events and utilise venues create alienation both politically and morally demoralising when Indigenous customs of cultural and social gathering are not appropriately accommodated; discernable in the low levels of participation by local Indigenous community people despite the financial viability and success of the event. Most disconcerting was the way in which Australian Aboriginal participants in both events were socially fractured without designated space for formally observing protocol – introducing, meeting, greeting, supporting and conversing with each other and other Indigenous peoples attending the events about relevant issues or concerns.

In most Aboriginal Australian communities, cultural and social protocols such as the above are a priority and it is considered ignorant and offensive when not observed. Such disregard for protocols can be interpreted as a sign that there are other priorities, which in these instances, I suggest, were the mining of Indigenous cultures and intellectual property. It further indicates the lack of will to meet the need for a process to be identified and included in these events, in addition to the academic or aesthetic, which signifies a role in ethically, realistically, effectively and imaginatively addressing the dire political and social conditions forced upon Indigenous societies through imperialism and colonialism. Although the Festival, Conference and Exhibitions presented undeniable aesthetic and insightful commentaries and depictions of contemporary Aboriginal life and/or history, the framework of the events diminished the integrity of their intent, credence and utility; and stifled dialectical conversation about the politics, history and impact of colonialism and globalisation. In this way, rather than contributing to significant, even if gradual, social, political and economic change, Indigenous participants play a part in competitive environments and cosmetic appearances which

colonist/dominant societies apply wittingly and unwittingly through apolitical agents, and thereby camouflage the absence of arraignment of abuse of power and crimes against humanity and the planet.

Memories of London when working in avant-garde/fringe theatre in 1970 were ruptured by my visit to this vastly changed major international city in 2013, inducing a heightened sense of awareness. London 2013 compared to 1970 seemed a parallel future world where globalisation desensitises the population by robbing it of the genesis of belonging and relations that nurture humanity. Similar to the experience of my return from London to Sydney in 1980 - when I became more aware of the evidence of the brutal founding of the city of Sydney in the colonial architecture and society and the subsequent catastrophic effects upon Indigenous lands and people - in London 30 years on I now could see the plundered wealth of imperialist global exploits embellishing this metropolis, shamelessly paraded in grandiose architecture and exotic artefacts displayed in various cultural institutions. George Monbiot (2009) observes, Britain's imperialist plunder of other nations (to say nothing of its relentless exploitation of its own citizens) has always been the means to an end⁶:

*For the past 300 years, the revolutions and reforms experienced by almost all other developed countries have been averted in Britain by foreign remittances. The rebellions in Ireland, India, China, the Caribbean, Egypt, South Africa, Malaya, Kenya, Iran and other places we subjugated were the price of political peace in Britain. After decolonisation, our plunder of other nations was sustained by the banks. Now, for the first time in three centuries, they can no longer deliver, and we must at last confront our problems. There will probably never be a full account of the robbery this country organised, but there are a few snapshots. In his book *Capitalism and Colonial Production*, Hamza Alavi estimates that the resource flow from India to Britain between 1793 and 1803 was in the order of £2m a year, the equivalent of many billions today. The economic drain from India, he notes, "has not only been a major factor in India's impoverishment ... it has also been a very significant factor in the industrial revolution in Britain". As Ralph Davis observes in *The Industrial Revolution and British Overseas Trade*, from the 1760s onwards India's wealth "bought the national debt back from the Dutch and others ... leaving Britain nearly free from overseas indebtedness when it came to face the great French wars from 1793.*

⁶ Refer also to How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Rodney, W. 1974, Howard University Press, Washington, U.S.A.; Native American Tribalism, Indian Survivals and Renewals, McNickle, D. 1973, Oxford University Press, London, U.K.

Colonialism in the southern hemisphere was no less enterprising in terms of capital and resources for the industrial revolution in Britain and another catastrophe for Indigenous peoples. Dr Bernard Attard (2008) lecturer in Economic History at the University of Leicester U.K. writes in his on-line paper on *The Economic History of Australia from 1788*:

The impact of the original penal settlements on the Indigenous population had been enormous. The consequences of squatting after 1820 were equally devastating as the land and natural resources upon which indigenous hunter-gathering activities and environmental management depended were appropriated on a massive scale. Aboriginal populations collapsed in the face of disease, violence and forced removal until they survived only on the margins of the new pastoral economy, on government reserves, or in the arid parts of the continent least touched by white settlement. The process would be repeated again in northern Australia during the second half of the century. For the colonists this could happen because Australia was considered terra nullius, vacant land freely available for occupation and exploitation. The encouragement of private enterprise, the reception of Wakefieldian ideas, and the wholesale spread of white settlement were all part of a profound transformation in official and private perceptions of Australia's prospects and economic value as a British colony (<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-economic-history-of-australia-from-1788-an-introduction/>).*

*It was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a London land agent's son, who proposed to transplant British society without the many social evils evident at home. Colonial land sold at a high, uniform price would produce revenue to pay for the immigration of free settlers. Newcomers unable to afford land would constitute a labouring class. Economic growth would result, and by concentrating settlement, a civilized society capable of self-government would evolve (www.yourdictionary.com).



Australian Embassy



School of Economic and
Political Science



Zimbabwean Embassy

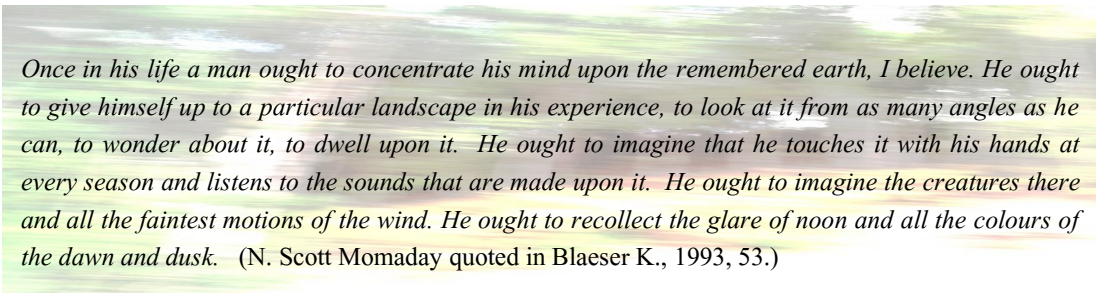


The emblematic Australian embassy in all its glory, located on The Strand beside the London School of Economic and Political Science, stands in brazen testimony; while the closed doors of the Zimbabwean embassy, its showcase windows in disarray, symbolise Britain's imminent economic and political diminution.

I am more appreciative of belonging to a Place/country where Indigenous sovereignty is still operative, if only, through persistence and resilience in cultural

and political commitment and sapiently withstands the destructive aspiration of Australian society to emulate the hallmarks of civilisation achieved at any cost to the planet and humanity. The governing principles of the Indigenous sovereignty movement across Aboriginal countries are also clearer: restoring both connectivity to the land and relations between people for sustainable economic development, governance and society, safeguards the future for all children, the nation state and the planet.

Living outside the city on Gubbi Gubbi the paternal country of my children, I walk by a creek where the platypus still lives, tall trees still grace the sky, the smell of rain on the earth and changing colours of the landscape still pleasure my senses, native animals can feed, the sounds of birds and insects still cheer my soul, rain water still rejuvenates my body; light, land, shadows evoking streams of in situ connectivity. I stood as testifier to the dehumanisation and desecration experience that is London, enforced by a globalised world and camouflaged by the propaganda of civilisation. Indelible as a result of this travel experience is affirmation of the rationality, validity and distinct value of Indigenous media-art processes and practices derived from customs of belonging, relationality, and co-production within the Place of my community. Specific and distinguishing ontological, cultural, philosophical, ethical and political resilience keeps Australian Indigenous community media-art locally, nationally and internationally relevant, innovative, creative and sustainable.



Once in his life a man ought to concentrate his mind upon the remembered earth, I believe. He ought to give himself up to a particular landscape in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wonder about it, to dwell upon it. He ought to imagine that he touches it with his hands at every season and listens to the sounds that are made upon it. He ought to imagine the creatures there and all the faintest motions of the wind. He ought to recollect the glare of noon and all the colours of the dawn and dusk. (N. Scott Momaday quoted in Blaeser K., 1993, 53.)

4.2.6 BEYOND THE VEIL: clarity of vision

It can be said that knowing through research transpires in a range of most unexpected ways. A digressive encounter, but a part of the scheme of things, meant I missed a seminar by visiting Native American, Tuscarora/Saponi scholar

Associate Professor A. Troy Richardson of Cornell University, USA, who was invited by the QUT Indigenous Studies Research Network to deliver a paper, *Indigenous Well Being as Aesthetic Ethical Acts: Rethinking the Generative Sites of/for Well Being in Contemporary Indigenous Knowledges* (7/2012). I set about finding the paper as his *probe of Indigenous Philosophies of well-being as formulated in and through aesthetic form* related directly to my research. I was unable to locate that paper but read Richardson's PhD dissertation submitted in December 2006 to the faculty of The University of Utah: Rethinking Multiculturalist discourse with Indigenous and Continental Philosophies; a touchstone of scholarship corroborating distinct Indigenous cognition. This comprehensive philosophical inquiry into the conceptual foundations of multicultural education, discusses *how multicultural education works to build relationships to Native peoples through the rights based language of democratic law and the descriptive categories of the social sciences; and the way "law" and "culture", privileged terms in the production of meaningful relations, works against the conceptual foundations which Native peoples themselves rely on to enter into meaningful relationships* (2006, Abstract).

Richardson's dissertation references *postindian wonderment away from multicultural confessional closures*, citing Zembylas and Michelides's (2006, 167) who are *advancing the manifestations of difference, rather than the wonderment, of the inexpressible of the Other*. They propose: *The inexpressible also points out an aesthetic of silence that runs contrary to mainstream contemporary educational systems [and art forms] and their tendency to emphasize language as the only way we know or learn about the world*. Their ideas, Richardson says, *meet the fading black of shadows and traces of natural reason at the stone bench in the call to an aesthetic dimension to learning silence and silent learning* (2006, 167); what Zembylas and Michelides argue is *the most passionate and exhilarating moments of learning, because they have a built in sense of mystery, of something that is inexpressible*. Effective education systems are vital to our thinking and impact on the custom of our creativity and Richardson offered liberating insights which resonate with an innate, intuitive manner in my creative processes and practice.

Richardson extensively cited Chippewa, Native American, writer/novelist, Professor Gerald Vizenor, the philosophical context and thought in both Richardson's and Vizenor's works inciting the 'un-thought in my thoughts', creating significant insight. I consequently grew increasingly confident about my own manner in method, style and practice, realising how applying Western academic traditions manifest in post-graduate study and writing had become retrogressive. The introduction to Vizenor's 'trickster discourse' legitimated and liberated sophisticated, progressive and relevant Indigenous ontological thinking that has 'a built in sense of mystery, of something that is inexpressible'.

The trickster, is a sign, a communal signification that cannot be separated or understood in isolation; the signifiers are acoustic images bound to four points of view, and the signified, or the concept the signifier locates in language and social experience, is a narrative event or a translation. The listeners and readers become the trickster, a sign and semiotic being in discourse; the trickster is a comic holotrope in narrative voices, not a model or a tragic configuration in isolation (Vizenor, 1993, 189).

I enjoy continuing realisation and comprehension of Gerald Vizenor. While he was speaking in language and terms according on many levels, his work belonged in a familiar clearing within thought, which I had arrived at as if for the first time. Unravelling the complexity encountered in his work exercises ways of viewing the world that speak to the heart in Indigenous memories which challenge *definitions of self and concomitantly the world defined in relation to that self* (Owens L., 1993, 142).

We will follow Vizenor further into that clearing, but firstly I want to share a 'shimmer' of insight or perhaps an epiphany, as my daughter would say, formed by the discourse of the research so far, to exemplify how both clarity of vision arises from an underpinning ontology, and the concept and ideas of the creative work are formed through creative processes: Planet Earth we know is organic, an organism that spawns all life making each and every part of what constitutes Earth connected and reliant upon the other. The view 'look after land, the land looks after you', makes caring for each other easier and as the essential rationale of Indigenous ontology, testifies that Aboriginal societies understand well the profundity of this simple equation stemming from millennia of maintaining sustenance by both living

as closely with Earth as possible and enduring the historical particularity of every era. The life force in flora-fauna-elements-humanity-geology-atomism-bacteriology and so on, is the organic process through which Earth evolves in connectivity within multiple and ever changing worlds, across time, location and Place; and we are here where all together we are genetically and biologically connected to multiple worlds in essence and infinity. We are all party to shifting existences and realities according to our capabilities to be insightful, or not, share good will, or not, learn how to be in the ways of Earth's heterogeneous multi-dimensional world, or not; and then there is the unfathomable logic of the universe. This perspective finds resonance in Gilles Deleuze's empiricist idea of 'a pure plane of immanence' proposing there are only complex networks of forces, particles, connections, relations, affects and becomings (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plane_of_immanence).

Viewed from this perspective, relentless attempts to unravel and master the intricacy of Earth's complexity is ambitious, extremely speculative and has proved to be perilous scientific fetish. While the desire to resolve damaging political, social, material, health, environmental conditions evolving from all and any action or event is ethical conduct vital to the whole planet, because each and every part is connected and reliant upon the other, the orchestration of fixed ideologies or theories – countless interpretations-conclusions-solutions – is irrational if, ultimately, *the purpose of knowledge [within Aboriginal systems] folds back into the underlying principle of balance ... both constructed and transmitted around the idea of balancing relationships between all things in the universe* (Kwaymullina A and B., 2010, 196). Again, as Vine Deloria Jnr (2012, 18) reminds us, *even transformation of attitudes, is not an end in itself unless it leads to a more profound and comprehensive idea of the meaning of existence*. This perception clarifies the potential positive effect of culture inherent in Indigenous societies, activism and organisation that is required to create cultural philosophy, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, as a means of addressing irrational political power and the social, economic, spiritual and environmental attrition which results from abuse of power.

My very own 'shimmer' of insight affirmed for me the value of the research process, how knowledge occurs in fluid consciousness and is interpreted through narrative event across time. It revealed that the processes practice and Treatise of the creative work are an organic process unfolding in reflexive flux; rather than as propositions or perspectives presented as truth, or veracious analysis leading to positions or notions that dominate conversation and constrain thinking. Our characteristics, the way we are, determine ways we learn, individually and collectively.

The Indian no more worshipped the Sun than the Christian adores the Cross, writes Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa, Santee Sioux graduate of the Dartmouth College and Boston University School of Medicine, and a physician in 1890 at the horrors of the Wounded Knee massacre), in "The Soul of the Indian" (cited in Vizenor, 1999, 50). The Sun and the Earth, by an obvious parable holding scarcely more of poetic metaphor than of scientific truth, were in his view the parents of all organic life. From the Sun, as the universal father, proceeds the quickening principle in nature, and in the patient and fruitful womb of our mother, the Earth, are hidden embryos of plants and men.

The work of Mary Graham (2006) on the social and personal bearing pertaining to Place and concepts of Aboriginal ethics in the notion of custodial relations to land, considers how society can collectively, lawfully and culturally manage connectivity so it *folds back into the underlying principle of balance* (Kwaymullina A and B., 2010, 196); discussed in detail in "Custodial Navigator a Preamble" (2013, Appendix VIII, accessible at <http://www.indigenousoverigntyaustralia.com.au/landed-home-page/ethics/>). It is imperative that the continuum of concepts, knowledge and wisdom of peoples from the oldest cultures on the planet are across these consequential conversations locally, nationally and globally. We are also, as Meriam woman Professor Kerry Arabena writes, 'citizens' of the planet and universe:

Universal Citizenship is the purest form of citizenry available to all human beings, one in which the full range of rational characteristics and all the modes and expressions of citizenship can flourish. It is the largest geographical and ecological context in the phenomenal world. The notion that we are all Indigenous to this world, and this universe, offers a radical vision of future modes of citizenship. She maintains that our vast understanding of the universe and how it functions can overcome the 'disconnect disorder' inherent in Western cultural paradigms of the late twentieth century. As such, it is the fusion of these knowledges that underlie the model of a Universal Citizen (Arabena, 2006, 39, 40).

Nonetheless, as one wise old fella once said, (who remains anonymous, “they can’t catch me ...” he says), “We’re like sittin ducks on this planet; it all depends on what’s gonna get ya first.” I had to laugh; especially after he wisened me up to my dog as I exercised on a treadmill. “I’m worried she might try to jump on too because she thinks I’m going for a walk somewhere”, I said. “No that’s not it” the old fella replied “she’s worried you think ya goin somewhere when ya not, and ya haven’t feda yet”. (A refresher interlude for the intrepid reader.)

Returning to Vizenor his publication Manifest Manners (1999), through comprehensive research offers ingenious clarity of vision on the ways Indigenous people have been subjected to representative discourse across literature, just as papers in his publication Narrative Chance (1993, Ed.) similarly offer extraordinary insight. What Vizenor refers to as the ‘literature of dominance’ has perpetuated interpretations and notions of Indigenous identity and reality at best idealised and at worst audacious. In the processes and practices of creativity, working without awareness of the context, scope, subtleties and constraint of such interpretation is apathetic or mendacious, imprisoning our imagination, creativity and expression behind the ‘veil of double consciousness’. Consciousness and intellect aroused by Vizenor’s insightful, critical, poetic and humorous spectrum of trickster discourse redeems our selves in Indigenous ontology and political, intellectual and social orientation, confronting compromise, self-deceit and self-interest in susceptible arts and research practice; in this regard his Earth Divers Tribal Narratives on Mixed Descent (1981) and The Trickster of Liberty (1988) offer the perfect trickster treatment. So here we all are she, he, me, you and now Vizenor too.

This brings me to clarify insights relating to my practice brought about by this research. Between my Confirmation stage paper (April 2012), and the production of the creative work (July 2013), my community film-making mutated to community media-art practice. Media-art allows a broader spectrum of process and practice and leads me out of the fixed form of film-making, a site of vehement political power evolving since the invention of the camera in Europe in 1816. Leah King-Smith (2006, 15, 16) writes in her PhD thesis Resonances of Difference:

Creative Diplomacy in the Multidimensional and Transcultural Aesthetics of an Indigenous Photomedia Practice: *The naming associated with image capturing devices emphasise violence and control. A camera shoots, it fires off. A picture is achieved with an image-capture device. It is then manipulated, burned, cropped or trashed. This language suggests the barbaric violation of an original, intact, untouchable state.* Citing Landu (1973, *Photography and Colonial Vision*, 3) King-Smith also draws attention to, *the connection between violence, guns and camerawork in the period of the new imperialism*; e.g. films produced as entertainment, news and other propaganda depict capacity for ultra-violence and the scope of carnage able to be incurred in the resistance zones of resource wars.

Contrasting the use of imaging technology for imperialist purposes with a modern personal response of the 'other' to photography (so often invented and defined by photography) presents a benign aspect of the above viewpoint. My mother, Eva Peacock (1924-2012, nee Mingo/Salam) was an avid photographer from age 17 when, waitressing in a Chinese café in Darwin during WWII, she was given a cardboard Box Brownie. Taken over 60 years, Mum's photos are a contribution to well-being, a tribute to the strong spirit in shared customs of her extended family (and 'the silence in memories'). As adults her children have used and adapted inherent creative custom to photography; my brother David excels in landscape photography with images that transport you to share the silence of moments in the Places he loves; my sister Margaret creates family portraits from photographs she has taken; and sister Janice uses photography in her acclaimed multi-arts practice. The camera is my constant companion; my photography and video work projected throughout the creative project event.

Moving into film-making from performance I expected the relationship with the camera as I had experienced it would not change considerably, but training in a television broadcasting corporation transformed that sentiment forever. Hierarchal structures, elitist ambition, budget requirements, conservative politics demarcating content, audience targeted programming, marketing and distribution constraints, are prerequisites of industrialised film-making. Retreating to advance into

Indigenous community filmmaking - where the processes were organic, reciprocal, ethical, multi-purposeful, financially viable, and socially relevant, without censorship, hierarchal control or claims of representative authority - I was able to collaborate in the production of an audio visual community archive upholding values not unlike that of my Mother's photography. Significant is the freedom to image and voice Indigenous ontological, sovereign and creative perceptions of the world. However, when government enforced, stringent economic policies, implemented through funding agencies, insisted on production standards regulated by television and/or marketing and distribution outcomes, development of collaborative and participatory community film-making as a specific Indigenous form of 'cultural vernacular' became devalued.

Looking to exhibition to counter the monopoly of commercial film-making, I heeded the advice of Indian filmmaker Mrinal Sen (1987, 170):

What we have to do - and this is a prescription not just for us in India – is to make films at a very low cost. We have to show the monopolisers, who claim that film-making is a capital intensive business, and their monopoly, that film-making is everybody's business and nobody's monopoly. We have to think in terms of economics getting the minority spectator who is interested in such films and then building a larger audience base.

Over 20 years I organised exhibitions of local national and international Indigenous produced films in Indigenous community multi-arts and family friendly environments, participating in the customary cultural celebrations of the annual NAIDOC gathering season. (Appendix II attached, p.128 provides a detailed account of that development era with Murriimage Community Video and Film Service and Uniikup Productions Ltd.)

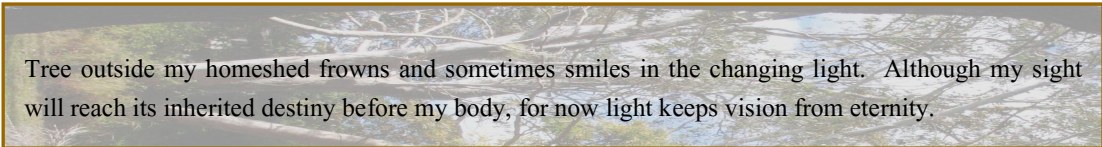
However, representations of Indigeneity outside the comprehension and expectations of the colonial status-quo and presented in congenial local Indigenous environments, do not attract audiences in large numbers. My response to limited audiences was to give more attention to the advantages of the internet and associated digital media platforms; and to featuring media-art in collaborative performance and other art forms. This change of focus allowed ideas on the use of image (still and moving) to flourish, as media-art provided a more sophisticated,

suitable, satisfying and productive way to present ideas and cultivate the transformative dynamics of representation. Jenny Fraser, an accomplished media-artist from Yugambah Country, comments on the move away from conventional arts practices (www.newmediafix.net/daily/?p=2282):

But, something different happened with the uptake of New Media-arts. It was 'new' so things were fluid. There were less rules and less reasons to care about them. As with all things experimental, there was and still is confusion around the area of new media-arts, even in the mainstream, the edges are blurry and its definition as an art practice bleeds across forms. Perhaps a musical form to associate it with would be 'jazz fusion' or 're-mix?' In that context Aboriginal Artists could fit into the relaxed modus operandi, or all rounder approach, a little more readily

And in that imagiNATIVE clearing Gerald Vizenor poetically illuminates such change:

Postindian consciousness is a rush of shadows in the distance, and the trace of natural reason to a bench of stones; the human silence of shadows, and animate shadows over presence. The shadow is that sense of intransitive motion to the referent; the silence in memories. ... Shadows are honoured in memories and the silence of tribal stones (1999, 64).



Tree outside my homeshed frowns and sometimes smiles in the changing light. Although my sight will reach its inherited destiny before my body, for now light keeps vision from eternity.

But then it is also necessary to take into consideration that representation is about power and power is about representation; as encountered when using Indigenous determined forms of open discourse rather than the conventional form of arguing academic theory. In Antisemitism (quoted in, Vizenor G. 1999, 33) the German-American political theorist Hannah Arendt says *the persecution of the powerless may not be a very pleasant spectacle, but it does not spring from human meanness alone. What makes men obey or tolerate real power, and on the other hand, hate people who have wealth without power, is the rational instinct that power has a certain function and is of some general use.* This equation relates to the power vested in money generated by Native American owned casinos. Thinking laterally it is relative also to the power existing in acts of unrelinquished Indigenous sovereignty, most visible in the continuous concern for and determination to sustain the livelihood of people and communities.

Quotidian acts of sovereignty born of Indigenous ontology, imagination and creativity disrupt the conception that power vested in colonial institutions and populations is incontestable. Such acts, I propose, are consciously and subconsciously evident to coloniser society which instinctively retaliates with numerous tactics. This is evidenced in government policies that sanction directives, like the Northern Territory Intervention, formally titled National Emergency Response, to dictate Western regulations for living; and the continued removal and assimilation of children, tactics to demoralise and weaken families and communities. Such social conditions make collaborative creative work which intellectually and physically reconceptualises types and the disposition of power, clarifying and liberating acts of sovereignty.

Consequently, creativity arising from the Place where colonialism and Indigenous sovereignty coincide, converse, collide and potentially converge, is dynamic, not just as protest, contention or demonstration of political analytical prowess and courage, but for nourishing the seeds of ingenuity, envisaging and realising the power of our own continuous revolutionary processes. It also follows that *our identity is that of a particular historical being, and this identity can persist only through the continued integration of ongoing experience* (making Indigenous sovereignty as alive today as at any time in our past), *because we bring our history along with us, as a more or less clearly configured horizon, new experiences will tend to flow into this story of our lives, augmenting it and adapting themselves to it* (Kerby A., *Narrative and the Self*, cited in Vizenor, 1999, 64).

It was one night to remember. The end of our media conference in Arrernte country and Warumpi Band was to play to a full field. Two friends and I joined some of the mob slowly arriving to make themselves comfortable while the band set-up. My friend was walking behind as we discussed making a trip into town to buy drinks. Suddenly she shrieked. I looked back to see her limping, blood gushing from a wound on her foot; in the evening light she had not noticed some broken glass. We wrapped her foot in a t-shirt someone offered as they disposed of the glass, carried her to the car and drove quickly to the hospital. We'd been away for a couple of hours, brought drinks and returned to the event, then helped our friend to the fridge in the shed to keep our drinks cold. There was no lighting outside and the band was loud. I put my drink away and we walked into the night. I stopped, mesmerised by the scene. The whole mob had arrived filling the field with people sitting in groups and families or dancing in the dark and in some places by small fires; not a white fella in sight. The night and stars reuniting us with each other, land and ancestors, reassured we were only three generations from our pre-colonial relations, customs and land; a temporary release from colonialism.

Constraints surrounding representation are central to the research; the mutation of my community film-making processes and practice to media-art, as such, a reflexive response to restrictive regulations inhibiting representation. Discussed in depth in the chapter *Shadow Survivance*, of Gerald Vizenor's Manifest Manners, representation is seen as *no more than nuances in the best translations. Representation, and the obscure manoeuvres of translation, "produces strategies of containment" and "are deployed across a wide range of discourses, allowing us to name translation as a significant technology of colonial domination"* (citing Tejaswini Niranjana in *Siting Translation*, Vizenor, 1999, 70). The textual formula of the classic three act script, beginning middle end, for example, too often induces two dimensional transitively structured stories that do not effectively render the dynamics of representation that can be served by the multi-dimensional capacity of cinematic expression. It is imperative to understand, in this regard, that the traditions of societies aligned with the natural world present another reality, as Vizenor explains:

a venture of sound and shadows and the outcome of the oral tradition is not the silence of discoveries, dominance and written narratives. The natural development of the oral tradition is not a written language. The notion, in the literature of dominance that the oral advances to the written, is a colonial reduction of natural sound, heard stories and the tease of shadows in tribal remembrance (Vizenor, 1999, 72).

Defining this reality clarifies for me that it is Indigenous customs in processes and practice of the creative work – communal collaboration, participation, reciprocation - that host the capacity to perform the dynamics of ontological expression and representation.

I had in the first stages of the research sought to find the dynamic of representation in analysing the philosophy at work in the films of film-makers with processes and practices reflecting *shadows are that silence and sense of motion in memories, that reach of lonesome silence between the signifier, the signified and their signs* (Vizenor, 1999, 70-71); as I experience in my Mother's photography. I did find this dynamic in the work of Iranian Abbas Kiarostami, Irish Neil Jordan, Austrian Michael Haneke, Indian Deepa Mehta, Chinese Kar Wai Wong and Jia Zhangke, German Wim Wenders, French Claude Sautet, Yves Ulmann and Agnès Jaoui and Danish Lars von

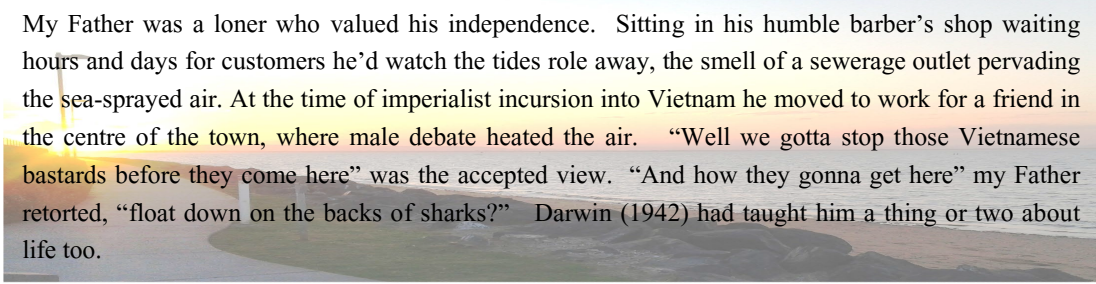
Trier, to name just a few. However the dominance of Australian colonial society's cultural fixation on economic and industrial frameworks that favour and support spectacle in superficial linear stories, stereotypical and archetypal protagonists, burns to the ground the energy required to pursue creation of a cinematic form that portrays Indigenous ontology, philosophy, dignity and integrity in dynamic representation. As Franz Fanon observes in *Wretched of the Earth* (1963, 28): *The settler and the native are old acquaintances. In fact, the settler is right when he speaks of knowing 'them' well; for it is the settler who has brought the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence.* This is consistent with the notion of a "national imaginary" operative in Australian colonial society, what Lacan sees as *the mirror-phase in human development ... Imaginary relations at the social, collective level can thus be seen as ourselves looking at ourselves while we think we are seeing others* (Hamilton 1990:17 in Ginsberg 1993, 561). Coming to the dead-end of cinematic pursuits inadvertently lead to fertilising and vitalising new concepts, processes and practices in media-art. Jean François Lyotard (cited in Vizenor, 1999, 169) proposes:

it should be made clear that it is not up to us to provide reality, but to invent illusions to what is conceivable ... the post-modern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes or the work he creates is not in principle governed by pre-established rules and cannot be judged according to a determinant judgment, by the application of given categories to this text or work. Such rules and categories are what the work or text is investigating

4.2.7 BEYOND THE VEIL: summary

The discourse throughout "BEYOND THE VEIL" relates the context of the conceptual process underpinning the practice-led research, presenting *the social situatedness of knowledge production and the different realities that are produced and experienced* (Moreton-Robinson 2011, 413) which initiated the creative concept and project. The concept and collaborative process and performance of the creative work, without sacrificing simplicity, were underpinned by the discourse themes of "BEYOND THE VEIL". eARTh allowed participants to connect, experience and absorb the event as a heterogeneous social and political experience according to their own vernacular, sensibilities and intellect, reconciling their relatedness to Place, country and people.

In this regard also I found Gerald Vizenor's Manifest Manners (1999) and Narrative Chance (1993) to be catalysts for recognising how 'remembrance' and 'survivance' (using his words) are active in the lives of Indigenous people beyond social science theories, ontological idealism and ideologies which diminish the importance of another dimension of context. This is the intuitive relationality and the manner of social and intellectual exchange which, as children, we witnessed in casual conversation between adults. I realised that in the specific Indigenous ways we recall and share memories, are re-enacted our customs opening the whole repertoire of what is real to us consciously and subconsciously in experiences combining our sensibilities, imagination, knowledge, intellect and creativity within our own vernacular.



My Father was a loner who valued his independence. Sitting in his humble barber's shop waiting hours and days for customers he'd watch the tides roll away, the smell of a sewerage outlet pervading the sea-sprayed air. At the time of imperialist incursion into Vietnam he moved to work for a friend in the centre of the town, where male debate heated the air. "Well we gotta stop those Vietnamese bastards before they come here" was the accepted view. "And how they gonna get here" my Father retorted, "float down on the backs of sharks?" Darwin (1942) had taught him a thing or two about life too.

Engaging the dynamics of ontological representation with the underpinning context outlined in "BEYOND THE VEIL", the projection of archival community video and an array of relative images with sound, symbolising the dynamics of living transformation, enabled experimentation with the potential to take us beyond the veil of double consciousness and into the clarity of vision. The effect upon my media-art processes and practices, including this Treatise, was to disregard formulas and stereotypes that so easily inhabit and inhibit us; instead trusting insight, periphery vision and sanctioning the simplicity of humour, relationality and reciprocity in creativity, to shape interaction, world views and change. Like the 'travelling bones' of our ancestors, in the song of the same name, by Gunditjmara songwriter, musician and performer Archie Roach, the commonality shared in the lyrics of the Pigram Brothers songs from Broome and the homesick and uncomfortably lost reasoning in the work of Kombu-merri Waka Waka poet John Graham (3.Research-Experience above), thinking and knowing come home,

welcomed by custom in creativity. Longevity assures its return, with traces of our thinking and knowing re/emerging in consciousness over time to reaffirm the reality of origin and Place. Re-engagement with these complex aspects of our ontology, cultures and customs assures psychological and physical balance in well-being.

Representing the beginning of a change to new-media creative practice is “Interstice”, a media-art video clip, Appendix IX at <https://vimeo.com/38208229>, password eARThy, a four minute semiotic rendition depicting silence, thinking, feeling, intuition in Place, the interstice between theory and the essence of ontology during research and creative practice. “Interstice” marks the beginning of conceptualising and realising ideas for eARTh and the accessible creative possibilities for expressing clarity and change conveyed through Place, bringing the past into the present to re-imagine the future. Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh is a creative project/event which consequently has consolidated, expanded and refined my creative practice. Seeking to go ‘beyond the veil’ to a better understanding of some of the complex layers of ontological representation has also revealed the way to further develop eARTh events.



5. CREACTIVE WORK

If words could show and sound a fanfare I would gift them. You, reader, have crossed intense literary terrain to arrive here. No fanfare ... but there is another anecdote from my stockpile ...

Once upon a time in a university I experienced the good fortune of landing a big empty office from which to do my thing. In a competitive environment, good fortune can bring thieves to your door; and they swopped their broken printer for my good one. In the resolute course of its retrieval Jean François Lyotard's words arrived unsolicited, in the print tray, to admonish them in his own way. *The stories that one tells, that one hears, that one acts out; the people does not exist as a subject but as a mass of millions of significant and serious little stories that sometimes let themselves be collected together to constitute big stories and sometimes disperse into digressive elements* (1985, 85).

“Creative Work” is in three parts. In 5.1 you wade through the processes that make my practice; 5.2 paddle around the purpose of creativity/creativity; dive into customs and ideas at 5.3, to then find the context and a virtual re-construction and response to the creative work at 5.4. And no, you won't get wet; but you may think I am as we commingle during this textual gestalt of the creative work. You need to have already viewed the video documentary of the event Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh at <https://vimeo.com/97499703> password eARThDoc. At various points in this section, you are invited to view samples of material projected during the creative performance with vimeo links provided for video, and still images (on flickr <https://www.flickr.com/photos/colouriseearth/sets/72157645028321041/> accessible at

5.1 WHAT GIVES YOU THAT IDEA?

First light is beautiful in Petrie a northern suburb of Brisbane the capital city in the State of Queensland Australia - where my thinking about the PhD research began to consolidate; as it is at Wolvi in Gubbi Gubbi country, my home, two hours north – where multiple dimensions of intellect and reality are at one. In the advancing light, Place illuminates with colour liberating life from darkness. At that time my sister Janice Peacock lived in Petrie caring for my aged Mother, and was commenting on her colleague and friend's latest visual art work, 'she had nailed her ability to capture the abstract in her practice', she explained, 'and had developed that from finding and applying the process'. Her friend, she continued, 'had not developed enough process in her new work and this is why, it was not there yet'. This revealed to me (at last) the meaning and sense of 'practice' – the act of doing something until it was a skill and ability both practically and intellectually; and 'process' – the many things that come into play to realise practice i.e. research-experience, Place, context, perception, ability, skill, aspiration, a social organisational aesthetic, morality, ethics, reflection, intellect, interaction, collaboration, communication and so on. Although I knew this intuitively after 40 years of collaborative process and practice in community performance, film-making, and media-art, I had not needed to either name or describe what I, individually, did and therefore had not fully comprehended what these terms meant, until Janice a visual artist who completed a PhD in 2004, translated them in conversation.

This understanding and definition of process and practice complements what I have come to value from experience - whilst praxis develops, the way knowing and skill is attained (process) fundamentally remains the same: local, Place-based sources and customs are primary resources for formation of creative concepts and direction; while practice reciprocates the development, needs and aspirations peculiar to both people and Place. This form of process and practice is collaborative, co-operative participatory and co-productive.


Historically and intellectually, there has been a gap between theory and practice, which is really a knowledge production problem, that is, the language of theory and the language of practice is all too often far apart (Graham, 2006, 5.)

Understanding the meaning of process and practice was a revelation, taking me to the origins and propensity of my praxis. My cultural heritage and history is Erub, an (eastern) island in what is now known as the Torres Strait, part of a land bridge connecting the mainlands of Australia and Papua New Guinea before the sea rose some 10,000 years ago ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torres Strait Islands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torres_Strait_Islands)). Intrinsic to those origins are everyday customs of participatory performance, dance, music, song, oration, gatherings, rites and ceremonies. The impact of colonisation brought multiple changes and social adaptation to these customs, but genetic inheritance cultivates in the breath and spirit of participatory activities and events. Photography, film-making, dance, performance, music, song, visual art, games and gatherings (amongst other life skills) are acts essential to our well-being in my large extended family. I did not formally learn to be 'artistic', 'creative', or recognise and embrace 'culture', as it is a custom, a way of life, not a simulated cultural identity.

Formal training in performance skills came from drama school courses and work at community repertory theatre companies in Sydney and later in the United Kingdom during the 1970s; and training in electronic media skills from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in Sydney in the early 1980s. I was invited to co-ordinate development of audio-visual communication based in the Indigenous community of South Brisbane in 1985; consolidating a collaborative media-arts practice from performance and television production experience, through the work of Murriimage Community Video and Film Service (est. 1986) and community media-arts organisation Uniikup Productions Ltd. (est. 1994). My collaborative processes and practices evolve from inherited customs and values and sixty years of personal and political history; constantly under review in the light of social and personal change.

My maternal family history is oral passed down over generations and in more recent records of "native" peoples kept by the colonial regime of the 1800s. My maternal family land is in the village of Isem, on Erub/Darnley Island, where we belong to the Samsep clan, whose primary totem is the green turtle (Nam) and language Miriam Mir. Our family also extends to Tudu/Warrior and Mer/Murray Islands, and to Sri Lanka, Denmark and Indonesia due to colonialism which brought men who were either working in or indentured labour for the bêche-de-mer and pearling industries; later on the mainland, it was extended to England and Ireland due to WWII which brought men in the Australian defence forces north to Darwin and the Torres Strait.

The psychology of interpretation, which Norman Holland (1980) considers a 'function of identity' and others regard as personality, is implicit in Epistemic Privilege and Authority (as discussed at 4. Research-experience). The above and following especial accounts⁷, revealing a type of 'standard deviation' from many Australian Indigenous experiences, enable greater appreciation of the particular and personal context of perspectives active within my processes and practice.



In 1884 my Mother's Mother, Annie Salam (nee Randolph), was born on Nepean, a copra (coconut) bêche-de-mer and pearl shelling station near Erub in the eastern islands of the Torres Strait; the daughter of Erub woman Balo, and Danish pearling lugger master Thomas Randolph. Denmark is a nation of islands, and Thomas Randolph experienced a level of geographic familiarity in the Torres Strait attractive enough to work and father children there. According to brief accounts in colonial history Thomas Randolph had found a place for himself in island society filling the role of middle-man on occasions when other Europeans visited, housing and provisioning them during their stay (Haddon, 1901, p.75. an account from Yam Island). My Grandmother consequently could observe European customs and their ontological orientation at close range, becoming conversant with this new population in relation to her Mother's family, country, society, customs and oppression of colonialism. When her Father died from ill health in 1894, my Grandmother was fortunate, due to her Father's social standing, not to be segregated as were many Indigenous people herded onto missions far from their countries.

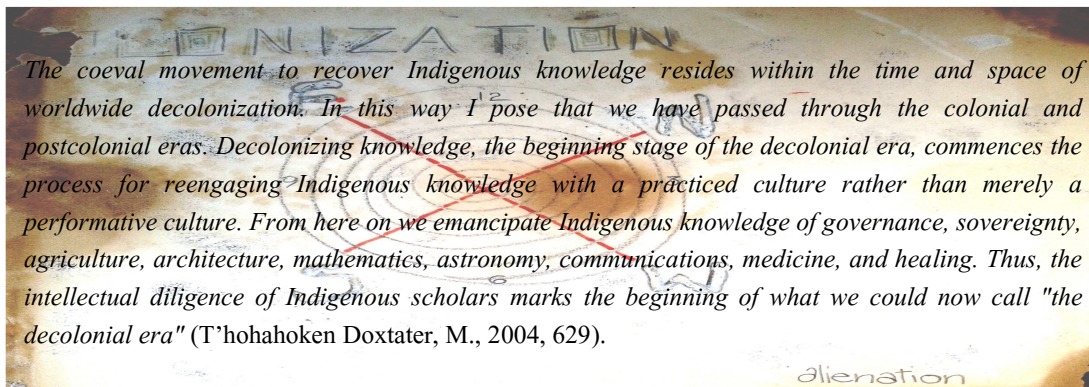
Contrasting the dual cultures in which she lived, gave my Grandmother a certain regard for both the values of her own society and the customs introduced by her Father; despite the overt disparity in racialised relations inherent in colonialism. My own Mother's accounts of her history indicate her Mother Annie Randolph was confident; she knew the value of her island society and customs and had insider knowledge of the other. My Mother's Father, Baco Mingo from Makassar Sulawesi Indonesia, an indentured Muslim pearl diver working on European owned luggers, met my Grandmother on Waiben (Thursday Is.). He also was not culturally or personally diminished by the dominant European society (yet met an early death due to ruthless exploitation of labourers in the pearling industry).

My Father, Jack Peacock, is a third generation Australian with English and Irish ancestry born at Coolamon on Wiradjuri country New South Wales into a sheep droving family. During world war two he served with the army stationed in Darwin where he met my Mother Eva Salam who had been evacuated from Waiben. This union brought closer relations between the two societies; Eva's children, myself and seven siblings, although isolated from Eva's country and relatives and stigmatised by Jack's society had freedom of movement, albeit tempered and our customs diminished by colonialism and racism. My Father, although like many Australians of his generation not conversant with the politics of colonialism, was of sound intellect and morality which guided the quality of his relations with my Mother and her family, tempered his place within their society and customs and shaped his own citizenship.

These circumstances were unlike those of Indigenous people who subject to the "Protection Act", were confined to reserves, missions and fringe dwelling to be suppressed by barbaric and oppressive action enforcing assimilation that impinged on every aspect of life. My siblings and I were also privy to both a model and the complexity of Australian-Indigenous race relations.

⁷ My Sister Janice Peacock, who completed her PhD *Inner Weavings: Cultural Appropriateness for a Torres Strait Island Woman Artist Today* in 2004, refreshed family customs by extensively researching and recording our history a little of which is précised here.

It can be asserted, in retrospect, that my Indigenous perspectives are peculiar to the experience of revolving relationships with colonial society and contribute to survivance in this dangerous eruptive era. Specific genetic, social, cultural and political heritage affords complex insight and thought influencing identity and actions in a deeply personal way, which induces what Rony describes as ‘a third eye’; not only as an aspect of the double consciousness posed by Dubois, but which simultaneously renders ‘clarity of vision even as it marks the site of socially mediated self-alienation’, discussed at 3. Research Experience and 4. Navigating the Ken.



5.2 EMANCIPATED CREATIVITY

I was at Wolvi on Gubbi Gubbi country (S.E. Queensland) walking across the land from my home-shed to the neighbouring house, as the Turrbal word ‘gahrr’ – meaning breath or spirit, the closest word to ‘creativity’ – occupied my thoughts as two interacting concepts: gahrr meaning both a physical act of life giving breath, and spirit the ‘plane of immanence’ in being. (“Gahrr” was also the title given to the Unit I co-ordinated in 2005-06 at QUT Kelvin Grove on Turrbal country, about creative knowledge in an ‘Indigenous creative industry’.)

The history of the English word ‘creativity’, its many interpretations and uses are the subject of Camilla Nelson’s paper *The Invention of Creativity The Emergence of a Discourse*. Tracing its origins, she writes: *creativity is from the Greek word for art, techne, commonly translated as ‘to make’ or ‘the making of things, according to rules’ ... and applied to all forms of human endeavour ... the opposite of which was*

not art but nature (Nelson C. 2010, 55). In his publication On Creativity David Bohm (1968, 6) speaks of a modern, broader principle attributed to creativity: *originality producing a new order [which] leads eventually to the creation of new structures having the qualities of harmony and totality, and therefore the feeling of beauty*; while Ambelin and Blaze Kwaymullina (2010, 197) assert, creativity in an Aboriginal sense *is an act of being in the world where since the whole is in all its parts, there is no distance in creation*. Revealing the differences between the meaning and purpose of creativity is not to devalue coexistent perceptions but reveal a need to proceed from thought processes befitting the ideas, inductive logic and understanding of Indigenous creative work. Indeed, applying Glissant's 'the other of thought' (discussed at p.55), it opens the space for interchange.

In this regard, the Turrbal word 'gahrr' also signifies the restrictions on our intellectual and creative processes when single, definitive concepts, e.g. 'art', 'artist', 'artistic', reinforcing European cultural structures and perceptions, philosophies, aesthetics, and those defining spirituality and social organisation, are imposed or used without question; and the many challenges presented when they are discarded. Universalised through knowledge systems, publishing, media and cultural systems, colonialist concepts are neatly embedded in our subconscious (Progler 2004, 2, 3, 6; Campbell 1995), requiring contemplation, analytic processes, discussion, to decolonise our logic and understanding to be part of the processes and practice of creative performance. As the Mexican novelist the late Carlos Fuentes proposes (cited in Jahner, 1993, 160):

... moral heritage and artistic creations have a staying power that persists, that remains ever the living past's threshold to a forbidden future. Artistic creation embodies the moral heritage, formalises it, encodes it in ways that elude conquerors and allow communal recollection.

The relativity is now revealed, of a constantly imagined scenario I experienced in England during the 1970s when working in performance - shattering with a hammer the plate glass of a shop front window. It symbolises an imperative urge to break the separation of self, an imposed double consciousness occurring with coloniality; a liberating act affirming the presence and unveiling the view of people Indigenous

to this southern hemisphere continent, and simultaneously disabling the coloniser's detached observation and construction of 'the other' in exotic fantasies and as curiosities. Then perhaps we will share the enjoyable treasures of relationality.



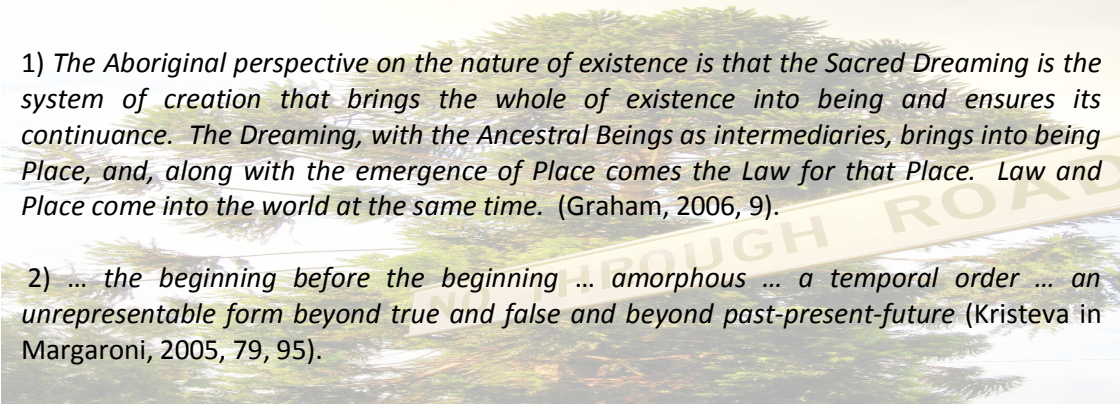
5.3 CUSTOM AND ONTOLOGY

As the creative work incubated and matured within the dynamics of living transformation, my concepts regarding ontological representation emerged from the customs within my processes and practices. Elaine Jahner (1993, 165) in discussing N. Scott Momaday's notion of "*the idea*" insofar as it can be thought of apart from language in which it always realises itself, says the idea is an active intentionality shaping and interpreting language. I equate this to how the creative project eARTh has been shaped and interpreted by ideas conceived contextually; detailed at 4.Navigating the Ken. Jahner points out the idea:

... belongs both to time and to place; for where one is shapes a fundamental relationship between self and land that, in turn, leads to a particular way of formulating that relationship in language [or creativity] that corresponds to the matching of self and place. Such correspondence may reach through time to take into account how someone else used language [or creativity] in similar circumstances and therefore, the forms by which language [or creativity] is preserved through time become the means of contact between persons responding similarly to place and circumstance.

I speak to the creative work, eARTh, from this perception and the corollary: creativity in an Aboriginal sense is an act of being in the world where since the whole is in all its parts, there is no distance in creation. (Kwaymullina A and B., 2010, 196).

eARTh is not an act of creation but part of the organic nature of life, its underlying principle of balance and responsibility arising from the relational sense of universal citizenship (discussed at 4.2.6 BEYOND THE VEIL: clarity of vision). It is what Julia Kristeva defines as anamnesis, *the putting of memory into words* [in this case creativity], *the repetition through “narrative enunciation” of a traumatic past that “permits a renewal of the whole subject”* (Margaroni 2005, 84). The creative work is therefore not representative, performing instead creative dynamics of representation contrasting political and cultural perspectives and the following Aboriginal and European ontological and existential notions:



1) *The Aboriginal perspective on the nature of existence is that the Sacred Dreaming is the system of creation that brings the whole of existence into being and ensures its continuance. The Dreaming, with the Ancestral Beings as intermediaries, brings into being Place, and, along with the emergence of Place comes the Law for that Place. Law and Place come into the world at the same time.* (Graham, 2006, 9).

2) *... the beginning before the beginning ... amorphous ... a temporal order ... an unrepresentable form beyond true and false and beyond past-present-future* (Kristeva in Margaroni, 2005, 79, 95).

**Bunya approx 252 million years old
celebrated in Australian Aboriginal image song dance in the gathering season.**

The first notion above conceives human origins as a continual process of multiple events in time and Place and, I surmise, gahrr (breath and spirit) – creativity, part of the organic nature of the planet, is essential to those origins. The other notion suggests origins remain as a circling of the abyss and seeks material assertions to determine the nature of the beginning i.e. idea or matter, the word or the deed, what precedes or indeed exceeds it; while Plato’s semiotic Chora (prime matter for creation) as interpreted in his ambiguous work *Timaeus*, suggests a matrix of existence before the imposition of Logos (word, thought, principle, reason). Most importantly Mary Graham (2006, 9) offers the concept: *Multiple Places = Multiple Dreamings = Multiple Laws = Multiple Logics = Multiple Truths = All Perspectives (truths) are Valid and Reasonable*; while Margaroni tells us, *what is at issue here is not the truth value of the fiction narrated to us but the difference it makes in how we understand and intervene in the real*. What both notions share is *the turning of*

bios [life] into narrative [which] guarantees not only subjective but also communal renewal (Kristeva in Margaroni, 2005, 84).

5.3.1 IDEAS AND EVENT

Spheres of interaction between Indigenous people over millennia have consistently sustained development of processes and practices from our customs and countries that excite the potential of holistic, sustainable, socially and politically relevant, multiple forms of creativity; evidenced by the increasing presence of Aboriginal creativity locally nationally and globally. As such, Place generates, germinates, fosters and nourishes the core values and principles of creativity evoked in the creative work Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh.

A collaborative and participatory mobile-live-media-art performance and exhibition, eARTh intervenes monologist practices of portraying Indigenous people as simple, tragic and/or heroic protagonists encapsulated in the on-going (and relatively recent in Indigenous terms) historic political event of colonisation; or as vying for an esteemed place in the philosophical, artistic, cultural and political empires of Western civilisation. The dynamics of Indigenous ontological representation in eARTh engages multi-arts practices and performance with congenial social gatherings of participants collaborating in immediate, public, innovative, contemporary ceremony and rites, on unceded country.

The participatory walk across country - perhaps one of the oldest Indigenous customs maintaining familiarity, reviving memory and enacting caring for country and kin - on a tour of the following Brisbane city sites, specifically located the coinciding, colliding and converging of Indigenous and colonial society:

Musgrave Park a traditional Place for Aboriginal gatherings - St Mary's Catholic church an archetype of theological/spiritual controversy - the cultural centre where marketable forms of Aboriginal Art are revered - police headquarters representing historic relations of coloniality - law courts symbolic of the deep divide between Indigenous and Australian societies - war memorial evincing the ruthlessness of power - and civic centre and parliament institutionalising rudimentary oppositional governance devoid of the harmony in consensus and the ethical resolve for enacting sustainable living.

These tour sites were re-named to denote an Indigenous system of governance, symbolising an act of sovereignty to highlight the absence of justice, lawful co-existence and connectivity. The event Program, herein pages xiii-iv, maps the tour route with re-named sites. The city construct, subject to profane and constant civic re-design, represents a temporary existence continually renewing itself out of a conflict between the old and the new, that alienates relationships and connectivity. Conversely the permanent land beneath the concrete orientates being, relationality, connectivity in the law and culture of Turrbal country. The concept of Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh arose from Place and time and is not an isolated, individual creative act, but a continuum of creative ideas for Colourise Festival gathering events, within and for the Indigenous community of Brisbane on Turrbal country, past, present and future. Place and community compose my collaborative and participatory media-art processes and practices.

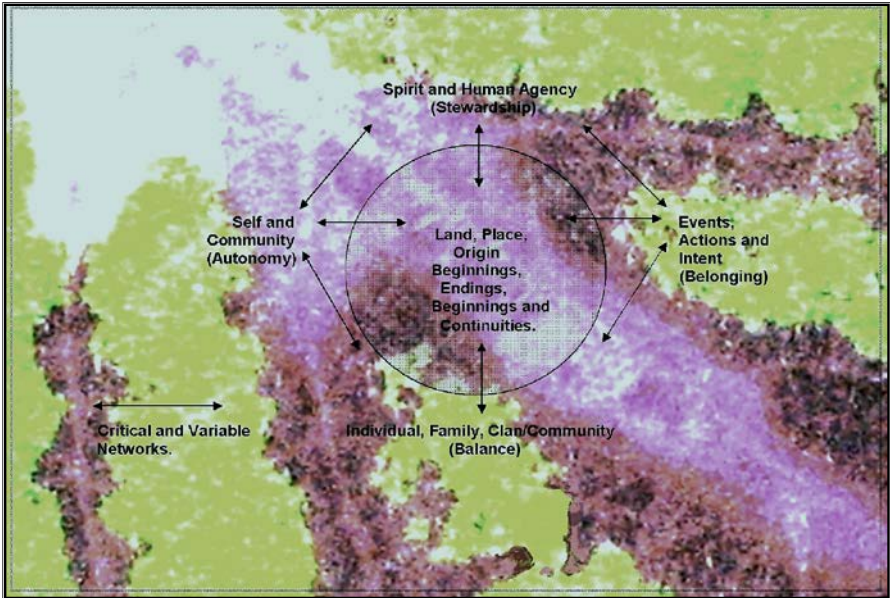
The mobile-live-media-art performance eARTh originated as “Live First” (countering the idea of secondlife.com) an element of the “site\sight\cite” website, my Master of Arts (Research) creative project which commenced in 2006 (http://colourise.com.au/site_sight_cite/index.php - a work in progress, access limited). Site\sight\site is a virtual tour of Brisbane city sites symbolising the coinciding, collision and convergence of Indigenous and colonial society. Community participation and a collaborative creative team employing hybrid new media-arts practices at each virtual site, propose a contemporary, local Aboriginal system of governance, laws and customs. The site is designed to engage the general public locally, regionally, nationally and internationally in a virtual interactive relationship to foster philosophical interchange. The website has yet to be produced, its delay due to the complexity of securing financial support to realise the project. I am focused in the meantime on creating various elements of the website as research and experimentation that will support its production. The PhD practice-led research for eARTh, for example, simultaneously enabled firstly the realisation and further development of the mobile-live-media-art tour element Live First; secondly, to advance ideas on Indigenous sovereignty, creation of the website <http://www.indigenousoverigntyaustralia.com.au> in 2013; and thirdly

piloting the “polyXpress” mobile device application to create a Chronotope, or time and space experience, of specific Colourise Festival tour locations in 2014. These activities also further advance skills, processes and practice for the production of the site\|sight\|cite project.

5.3.2 METHOD, HISTORY AND CONTEXT

The performance of eARTh is dependent upon engagement of collaborator and participator creativity with the idea and framework of the event. An informal and fluid method of working makes creativity sustainable and inclusive, and the development and realisation of projects attainable without total dependence upon funding sources; where criteria is often biased toward idealised Western aesthetic excellence and technological competence limiting comprehension or support for complex socio-political creative content and experiment within a ‘cultural vernacular’, and therefore also impeding capacity.

Central to my creative method, is the synthesis of the history and context of my community, collaborative and participatory creative processes and practice with the context of ideas composing eARTh, discussed at 4.Navigating the Ken. I now return to the schema of ‘Law of Place’ as illustrated below (Graham, 2006, 9) to formulate and articulate the creative notions, methods and essence of the creative work; to the extent that an exposition can effect adequate communication of this cognition.



5.4 LAND, PLACE, ORIGIN, BEGINNINGS, ENDINGS, BEGINNINGS AND CONTINUITIES

The practice-led research for eARTh was conducted as part of the continuing community research/experimentation/development projects of media-arts organisation Uniikup Productions Ltd. a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee incorporated in 1994 (formerly Murriimage Community Video and Film Service, 1985-2009). The most significant aspect of the organisation is its inauguration in 1985 as part of an Indigenous initiated development program to establish community media in Brisbane S.E. Queensland. Murriimage/Uniikup exercises self-determination, enacting sovereignty in producing a range of video and media-art, and organising and exhibiting at annual gathering season events in the community. Uniikup began to develop Colourise Festival in 2003, the original objective being to create unique screening environments in which to exhibit and promote Indigenous community film-making and film-makers. This remains part of the function of Uniikup but film-making is absorbed by media-art processes and practices, producing a spectrum of screen integrated creativity and expression.

Details available at Appendix III

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7o7h8gt4yfw4v8/AADkkyEHzXmp5ZGqGP5qOWIa>

Uniikup functions independent of government funding control, allowing uncompromised development of relevant creative community media-arts processes, practice and projects. Over 29 years the organisation has not enhanced its status by producing or promoting work that does not advance political, sovereign and creative interests of Indigenous Australians. I am a Murriimage/Uniikup founding member and one of seven on the Board of Directors (refer history Appendix II, p.128).

5.4.1 INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, CLAN/COMMUNITY - BALANCE

Creativity is sustained by both the core values and principles of the organisation, and Uniikup and Colourise Festival investment in the maintenance of long standing congenial work relations. Varying groups of the organisation's membership act in collaboration on the development and performance of creative projects and

manage the corporate functions of the organisation mostly by casual voluntary work. Details of the program of work undertaken are accessible at the organisation's website, <http://www.colourise.com.au>.

A rhizome like ancient connection sustaining sovereignty socially and creatively, is formed by individual members whose origins are across Aboriginal Australia; making local community collaboration a regional and national affair. Membership is open to community people engaged in media-arts and associated areas, the organisation's core values and principles determining who contributes to the work of the organisation, and how. Creativity is relational and responsibility is accounted by our actions rather than driven by corporate rules, regulations, ideology or profit. The organisation's website provides transparency for its business and creative operations.

The relationship with local custodians, ancient proprietors of Turrbal country, is informal. Members of the Turrbal Aboriginal Nation are consulted when planning Colourise Festival, in particular song and law-woman Maroochy Barambah, to relate the content and intention of events. Turrbal Aboriginal Nation has no set guidelines or terms of reference for creativity on their country, advising they rely upon open and ethical relations to evolve between people and land. Turrbal initiates its own cultural and business activities relative to its governance of country and where possible and desired engages with creative projects initiated by others, in *celebration of the history and rich culture of Turrbal to gain a fresh appreciation of their land* (www.dakibudtcha.com.au/Turrbal/).

5.4.2 SELF AND COMMUNITY - AUTONOMY

The informal connective nature of Uniikup's operations ensures the autonomy of individuals and provides models of independent community development. The organisation did not incorporate under government controlled Aboriginal associations legislation, choosing a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee under Australian Securities and Investments Commission legislation. Corruption is countered by the core values and principles of the organisation imbedded in the

autonomy of self-determining operations. The creative work collaboratively and individually is inspired and also balanced by autonomy; not adhering to ideology that may cause division and distress when idealist expectations are unfulfilled.

Operating autonomously, the group and individuals assess any given creative situation with general and relevant questions, for example: How can we be sure about where we stand and our own Place in the creative work? How can this exercise make us wiser, more creative, for the sake of earth/our home and new generations? How does one factor in the protesting, challenging element of our senses most prominent in youth, to be in balance with a wide scope of understanding and wisdom? What elements of our venerable culture, society and customs lend themselves to an event that fosters exchange between historically estranged people in a congenial, meaningful and ingenious way? Therein are some principles and values that determine creativity and are aspects I sought to balance in eARTh using praxis developed over 43 years.

Walking country which exists beneath the built environment in remembrance of its ontological value, virtues, relationality, is an act of autonomy which can resolve a sense of loss induced by the overpowering negativity of survival in cities that, history teaches, value neither land nor people. The absence of spirit, relationship, companionship, reflexivity is addressed in the need to gather, converse, share and work together, creatively. eARTh presents the community potential freedom to revitalise relationships with land and between people, in multiple varying experiences and senses.

5.4.3 SPIRIT AND HUMAN AGENCY - STEWARDSHIP

In my community media-art practice experience, synchronism-coincidence-simultaneity across dimensions of time and Place is what binds relations actions and customs between people, land, fauna, flora and all the elements. This connective phenomenon in the essence of Place determines values and principles in philosophical and ethical concepts motivating purpose, direction and action in my Indigenous creative praxis. Continuous ancient in situ connectivity between

people, Place, countries, is held within spheres of interaction or collaboration that drive creativity. The people entering those spheres have brought with them tacit spirit and knowing of their ancestors and countries, making interaction and relations dynamic, congenial, reciprocal, respectful and representational. This notion generates *a moral idea of ourselves which in order to be realised completely, has to be expressed* (Momaday, in Jahner, 164).

Examples among many communal and personal experiences of the manner of human agency in my creative processes and practice are: the construction of a website model for my Master of Arts (Research) in 2009, (http://colourise.com.au/site_sight_cite/index.php work in progress, limited access) with Andrew Hill, a young Goreng-Goreng man, who had learned computer science from his uncles (constructing and deconstructing them from age 12). Andrew greatly influenced the way in which technology could be married with my media-arts practice; his interest in technological development leading to the use of hand-held mini-projectors in the Colourise 2013: *eARTH* event and mini-amplifiers for sound. Carl Fisher, a Birri-Gubba and Gubbi-Gubbi man, and the father of my children, is also self-taught and became adept with video cameras, sound and computer video editing technology. Carl is a major contributor to the development and sustainment of Uniikup media-arts and also assisted my technical capacity. Conversations with both these Murri men during the course of creative collaboration, have cultivated concepts and design that produce socially and culturally specific and relevant Indigenous media-arts projects. A long relationship with Jenny Fraser who created the on-line Indigenous media-arts agents “cyberTribe” and “Blackout” also has significantly influenced the development of my media-art processes and practice and that of Uniikup Productions Ltd.; and the political-cultural visual art concepts and work of my sister Janny Peacock, and social and spiritual photo-media concepts and work of colleague Leah King-Smith, have inspired and given confidence to the expansion of my practice.

Over 29 years during which community film-making co-produced within Brisbane and other Indigenous communities was the focus of operations, the Uniikup Optical

Media Collection was produced - an archive with audio-visual, photographic and audio recordings of families, clans, friends, country, Place and events in the everyday life of our venerable society. Using mini hand-held projectors, segments of that material were projected at Colourise Festival 2013: *eARTh*, re-imagining country by re-populating the streets of inner city Brisbane on Turrbal country with rich visual memories conveying the spirit and reality of Indigenous Places, events, people, flora, fauna and elements of land; a continuum of 60,000 years of Indigenous cultural, customary and political presence that makes sense of contemporary reality. The Uniikup Optical Media Collection archive, Appendix III, is accessible at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7o7h8gt4yfwm4v8/AADkktyEHzXmp5ZGqGP5qOWIa> with samples of video footage projected during *eARTh*, Appendix X, at <https://vimeo.com/98250718> “re-populating” and <https://vimeo.com/98264820> “enduring”, password eARThy.

Performance/event materials were not produced specifically for use in *eARTh*, but are those gathered over years in relationship with Place either at Brisbane on Turrbal or my home in Wolvi on Gubbi Gubbi country. This practice makes Place the event rather than making Place from an event. It is relationship to Place, as with land, that emerges from connectivity over time and which is not material, casual or causal. Event and Performance Plans (Appendix XI, at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/382ujdfkl6ooe4/AADGL9OsuASutmOOyHMfLDxFa>) were devised to indicate and guide potential elements rather than manufacture a fixed idea of the event; and accordingly what was conceivable and practical was performed by participants. Relationality gave the visual material, an eclectic compilation of community photographs and video clips from the Uniikup Optical Media Collection archive, the quality of ‘a life of its own’ when projected onto and in contrast to solid city surfaces; the alluring effect holding *eARTh* participants/residents together throughout the city walk across Turrbal country. Participants also performed the rationale of caring for land and each other while bonding in congenial conversation; although luring and bonding participants was not part of a premeditated approach to the event. The consistency and persistence

of recognising, valuing and developing creative customs beyond the dominance of Western traditions and concepts of art and culture came into play during the event in a natural and joyous way.

The spirit and human agency creating *eARTh* in an act of resurgent sovereign reality draws more public awareness to the fact that the benefits of Indigenous people, ethics, knowledge and philosophy in the governance of our country is absent, suppressed. The ontological logic that ‘the Land is the Law’, enacted over many years within the processes and practice of collaborative performance, media-art expression and communication in Place, precedes the grounding and germination of any Uniikup creative work concept.

5.4.4 EVENTS, ACTIONS AND INTENT – BELONGING

Having conceived and instigated this creative event, an act of total collaboration and participation, as contemporary ceremony, there were no divisions denoting artist, audience or participant. *eARTh* creative participation composed a sphere of interaction mobilising the event through inner city streets over four nights and 22kms. (Refer *eARTh* Program at pages xiii-iv.) Congregating in congeniality preceding the walk, participants prepared for performance that materialised customs which the coloniser/ed mentality falsely believes are only valid if encrusted in pre-colonial traditions verified by anthropology. In an informal atmosphere people shared food and used natural materials to make performance props. Wreaths were created in recognition of countless Indigenous massacre victims at numerous locations, and laid in a remembrance ceremony at the memorial site, “Witnessing to Silence”, a public art installation by renowned Badtjala artist Fiona Foley, appropriately and controversially embedded at the front of the Brisbane Magistrate’s Court.

The tour and event began at Musgrave Park a pre-colonial ceremonial ground for the local population, where, also, tributes were paid to people recently passed who had played significant roles in the political and social well-being of our community; as well as to the park-land, a significant Place to many generations of Indigenous

people. A celebration of land and people in Place, eARTh exercises power to unite undeniable realities and differences using temporal dimensions to re-vision who and where we are at any given time; the impact of the event being in durational presence and in situ connectivity. The documentary video, Appendix I, is accessible at <https://vimeo.com/97499703>, password eARThDoc, and documentary photographs, Appendix Ia <https://www.flickr.com/photos/colourisearth/sets/72157645028321041/>

As eARTh travelled along city streets, participants bonded in conversation as they casually moved to designated city sites. A holistic ceremony with shared reconstituted rites was transpiring, appropriate to each of the tour sites - St. Mary's Church, Gallery of Modern Art, Police Headquarters, Magistrates' Court, Anzac Square War Memorial, City Hall and Parliament House. (The tour route is illustrated on the event Program pages xiii-iv.) Props made for performance were used and placed at these significant sites along the tour route; mini-hand-held projectors were shared to imprint images of fire, land, people and poems of love and laughter onto industrial city surfaces and the clothing of participants; a mini amplifier vied a range of Aboriginal music mixed with natural sounds over the noise of city traffic; coal drawings were freelanced on sidewalks while video and still cameras captured the moment. Images projected at eARTh, Appendix XII, are accessible at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/colourisearth/sets/72157645130203776/>, and samples of media-art video-clips, Appendix XIIa, password eARThy, at <https://vimeo.com/97986052> "eARThWalk", <https://vimeo.com/66907427> "spirit of the land", <https://vimeo.com/98292930> "fire", and <https://vimeo.com/38898267> "flood". A sample of the eARTh soundscape is not accessible due to copyright restrictions.

At each of the tour sites the youngest creative participant informally and assertively performed her vivid rap lyrics, confidently articulating the brutal reality of Indigenous and colonist history, relations, politics and the absence of ethics and responsibility. Examples of Teila Watson's rap performance are accessible at her

Ancestress sites <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEcf45TJrkc> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NudEpP88zhl>).

Part of the tour is a mobile-visual-art exhibition, Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh “escapees”, which screened in Kurilpa Park, beside the Gallery of Modern Art, on the South Bank of Brisbane city. “Kurilpa”, Place of water rats, has been frequented by Aboriginal people over millennia. Sponsored by Brisbane based Arts and Cultural Development organisation Nuguin Warrup, as part of their event “Black History Month”, the exhibition offered Indigenous artists a way to present work as an ‘alterNATIVE’ to the exclusivity of gallery exhibitions, and an escape from the confinement of colonial cultural traditions and institutions. The work, Appendix XIIB, is exhibited at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/colourisearth/sets/72157644771944930/>.

A general description and explanation of eARTh’s performance corresponds with the collaborative, participatory and spontaneous nature of this community event, where only physical presence could value and make the experience fully comprehensible. Furthermore, it is important to note that it is the history and context of the community creative method, practice and customs threaded through 5.Creative Work, rather than a detailed description and analysis of the creative work, which holds the key to understanding the rationale and philosophy of Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh.

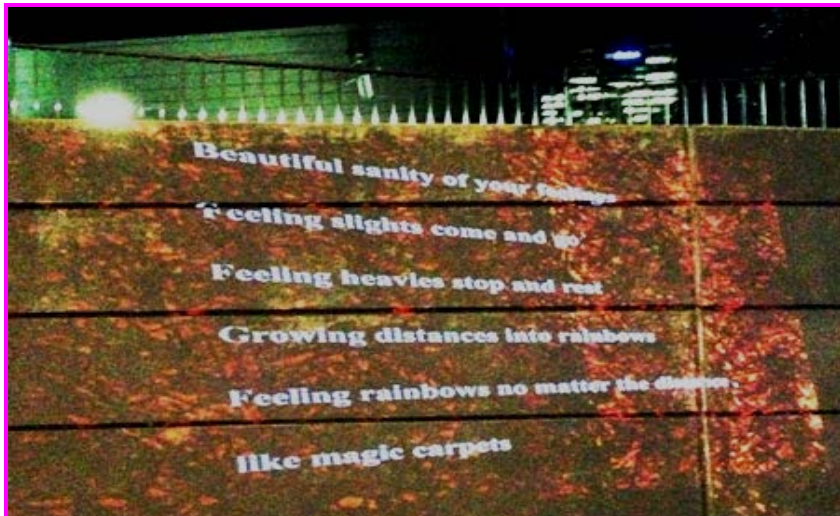
A Brisbane city walking experience in another dimension
building connections through conversation silence and shared experience



Teila Watson's lyrically astounding Ancestress' RAP



John Graham's words to breach concrete structures



Capturing an Aboriginal essence of relating to land and people, the extraordinary poetry of John Graham (1995) against backgrounds of natural and abstract images was projected onto the stark concrete of pavements and buildings. His symbolic words and unorthodox enigmatic and humorous style, breaching these structures gently, imaginatively and temporally, heightened the intrinsic presence of Aboriginal land and law. More samples are accessible <https://www.flickr.com/photos/colourisearth/sets/72157644716809949/>.

The Spirits' Lisp
 Souls, elast after joining
 Like petals of anything
 joining the spirits' lisp

Mouth of the river speaks,
 'fish in the old language,
 you are of this school,
 now live and be lived'
 Dreaming with those who have ever slept
 The nights' blue prickles,
 graters of the moon,

sheet into dawn blue
 'Now live and be lived'
 Spirits' lisp
 Live and be lived...
 © John Graham 1995



Falling Down
 The forests are falling down...
 But they are not drunk
 Nor is it a safety drill
 Or a new dance
 No!!! They're actually falling down
 Not on our heads, or our cities
 I don't think they're falling down on our future
 They just seem to be falling down everywhere
 Now!!!
 © John Graham 1995

An experience of the event was captured informally in this impression offered by a participant:

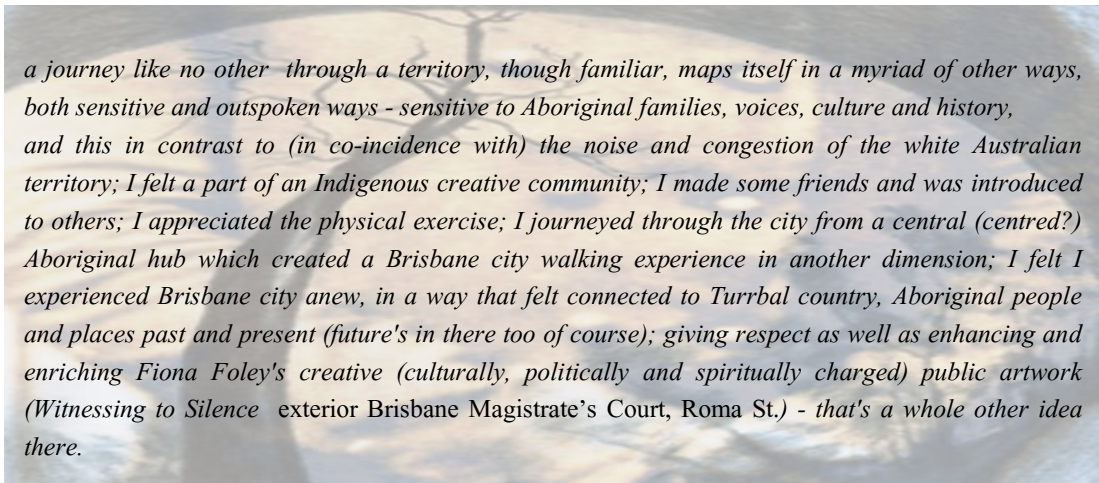
Being initially involved with organising wreath and leaf prop making workshops for Colourise Festival eARTh brought an interweaving of feelings of reverence and ritual, gathering and belonging, and respect and excitement about what was to come. Then at last we gathered to venture into city night life in recognition of Country, Traditional Owners, Ancestors and community life of Aboriginal peoples; placing wreaths at certain sites to also remind us of our present; witness to powerfully confronting, lyrically astounding Blak RAP verse; serenaded by recorded sounds of the bush and Aboriginal music; visually entranced by haunting images of land and people across the night sky projected onto buildings, ceilings, footpaths and clothing; chalk leaves and silent charcoal drawings left on pavements. All brought new freshness an altered state of awareness as never experienced in Brisbane city streets before ... and a longing for more.



A project created simultaneously, “Superhighway”, initiated by Jenny Fraser for the Indigenous media-art collective Blackout <http://www.superhighwayacrossthesky.net/>, engaged myself, Susan Beetson, Wiradjiree, and Australian Karen Batten. This project made it possible for eARTH’s core principles and values also to be realised as a media-art website. The site, “LANDED”, can be accessed at www.indigenousoverigntyaustralia.com.au. Its content contrasts Indigenous and European concepts of sovereignty for the purpose of engaging Indigenous people in international conversation. It highlights and combines the wisdom of Aboriginal elders Mary Graham, Kombu-merri Waka Waka, on the subject of Aboriginal Ethics (2013), and (the late) Ross Watson, Birri Gubbi, Gungaloo, who authored Aboriginal guidelines for the health of the planet. Sharing their wisdom and inviting conversation also opens a space for Aboriginal voices in the discourse and dialectics of environmental and ecological politics, locally nationally and internationally; addressing the need to engage in dialogue with younger societies about the ever present dynamic of ancient Aboriginal ontological origins, which honours the sacred reality of earth and living ethically and sustainably. The site was launched at Colourise Festival 2013: eARTH and entered into competition at the “imagineNATIVE Film and Media-art Festival” in Toronto Canada where it was selected for exhibition on the 15th October 2013. Mary Graham’s paper, for the purposes of the eARTH event entitled “Custodial Navigator a preamble” (2013), was also published as a handbook to provide participants with a comprehensive reference to the custodial ethic underpinning the eARTH event.

The handbook, Appendix VIII, is accessible at <http://www.indigenousoverigntyaustralia.com.au/landed-home-page/ethics/>.

Indigenous ontological philosophy and expression in the research and creative project determines its distinctiveness. eARTH emotionally and intellectually drew upon the phenomena of its immanent symbolism, inducing reflection, memory, analysis, and the potential to transform ways of seeing, being and believing in the world, as experienced by one Indigenous participant:



This response indicates the essence of being, spiritual and physical relationships and time specific to an Indigenous social reality; a *self-ordering–separating, connecting, halting, diverting, scattering, transforming* (Protevi J. in Margaroni 2005, 85) dynamic, charged with symbolism. Chance, change and motion are common and essential to the creative process, practice and work, and *since the whole is in all its parts, there is no distance in creation* (Kwaymullina A. and B. 2010, 197). The informal comment below, expressed by a non-Indigenous participant indicates strengthened connectivity.



The eARTh event performs complex ideas in subtle and at times subterranean ways. Re-populating and re-imagining Brisbane's inner city through Indigenous eyes in the present, took Indigenous and non-Indigenous people into an ontological and philosophical dimension which is rarely shared and difficult to contemplate; given the social and cultural difference coupled with largely superficial and coarse relations camouflaging Australian society's politico-historical dichotomy.

In conscientiously walking unrelinquished Indigenous country together as contemporary ceremony, eARTh performed connectivity, exercising the possible and releasing the imaginable in the present. The sites of continuing mono-cultural controls of coloniality - city centres, church, cultural institutions, police headquarters, law courts, war memorials, local and state government - provided a focus for reviewing the past and assessing the efficacy of Western governance and its oppressive dominance of Aboriginal people and land. Participants in the media-art processes and practice which created eARTh experience the capacity to *develop linkages and explore reciprocities, collectively explore the real commitments that define their lives as human beings, and create a vision of self-actualisation in its social environment* (Herrick and Sohng, 1995, in Sohng, 1995, 11).

These shared experiences validate my earlier statement: "Creativity arising from the Place where colonialism and Indigenous sovereignty coincide, converse, collide and potentially converge, is dynamic, not just as protest, contention or demonstration of political analytical prowess and courage, but for nourishing the seeds of ingenuity, envisaging and realising the power of our own revolutionary processes." It also follows that:

... our identity is that of a particular historical being, and this identity can persist only through the continued integration of ongoing experience, because we bring our history along with us [making Indigenous sovereignty as alive today as at any time in our past], as a more or less clearly configured horizon, new experiences will tend to flow into this story of our lives, augmenting it and adapting themselves to it (Kerby A., *Narrative and the Self*, cited in Vizenor, 1999, 64).

Out of practice-led research, the pilot event eARTh generated limitless possibilities for the annual Colourise Festival, the next planned for late 2014. The event has

continued sponsorship from the Brisbane City Council; which Uniikup translates as support to reclaim the city as a Place of congenial, meaningful and sustainable living. The event has also attracted the interest of David Gillette of the California Polytechnic State University USA with whom Uniikup will collaborate to use the polyXpress mobile phone application for the 2014 event. Embracing *the formation and combination of two Principles forming the Custodial Ethic* (Graham 2013, 8), ensures that relevance, meaning and purpose are present in the healthy evolution of creativity.

1. *The ethical principle of maintaining a respectful, nurturing relationship with Land, Place and Community; and*
2. *The organising principle based on autonomy and identity of Place.*

5.4.5 CRITICAL AND VARIABLE NETWORKS

Paul Carter eloquently draws us to the rationale of Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh creative practice and research when he lucidly states:

...the practice of practice-based research opens out onto the broadest questions about the kind of society and culture we espouse and wish to inhabit and promote. ... It is a notable skill of practice-based research to route these socially constitutive transactions through the materiality of our lived time and space. In this sense, our local inventions always resist generalisation. They are work in Henri Lefebvre's sense, which is unique, rather than products, which are repeatable. Lefebvre foresees a time when this distinction will be overcome. It is in our interest to ensure that, if and when this happens, it is the heterogeneity of work that is recognised as valuable (Carter 2006, 14-15).

Scrupulous attention was not given to either cosmetic aesthetic effects rendering excellence or complex technological invention and proficiency. The land, the Place, the people, the event and time, took charge of the creative experience and aesthetics; purpose, meaning, materials and tools being placed in the capable minds and hands of all event participants. As said, creativity denotes the importance of the 'act', ... *the 'eventness' of the everyday social world' and 'the phenomenological nature of the act' as the essential 'value-centre' for human existence. This in turn, involves an understanding of the alterity between self and other, insofar as we can only construct a unified image of self and engage in morally and aesthetically productive tasks through our reciprocal relation to each other (Gardiner, 2000, 1-2.).* eARTh is in this way an inclusive and purposeful experience.

The practice-led research sought to reveal and articulate a pre-existing conscious element of customs within processes and practices, the creative capacity informing the dynamics of representation. That ‘vast circularity of reasoning’ (Stanner in Willis 1990, 1.) engendering Indigenous intellect and inductive reasoning, led the research and eARTh away from an aesthetics of excellence, returning to “aesthetic seeing” (Bakhtin 1993, 63-4) active in many Indigenous creative processes, perhaps the best known example being Warwick Thornton’s film “Samson and Delilah”:

Aesthetic seeing does not abstract in any way from the possible standpoints of various values; it does not erase the boundary between good and evil, beauty and ugliness, truth and falsehood. Aesthetic seeing knows all these distinctions and finds them in the world contemplated but those distinctions are not drawn out of it and placed above it as ultimate criteria, as the principle of viewing and forming what is seen; they remain within that world as constituent moments of its architectonic and are all equally encompassed by an all-accepting loving affirmation of the human being. Aesthetic vision also knows, of course, “principles of selection”, but they are all subordinated architectonically to the supreme value-centre of contemplation – the human being.

I do not analyse either other media-art works or new contributions to dialectics concerning processes, practices or knowledge to compare meaning, values and purposes peculiar to my creative performance. Whilst some people may produce revolutionary, socially relevant creativity to progress their values, others will use the aesthetics of excellence and technology to make their mark on the world. Then there are those who will unite both for greater social impact, the few who emit the mystery of genius and the majority who are content with a vernacular creativity that gifts the warmth of relationality. However, all creative practice carries processes of relative renewal and when uncompetitive and simultaneously at play, there is a subterfuge of radical change. As Kerry Arabena proposes: *We are approaching a new age of synthesis, one in which the amalgamation of universe-referent intelligences has to make the greatest contribution to the community of life systems on the planet* (2006/2, 43). Society and culture reflect the value systems, core principles, beliefs and customs in which creative processes and practices are embedded and evolving. An evaluation of their effectiveness is part of the on-going ‘vast circulatory of reasoning’, not a bid for theoretical, conclusive evidence of exclusive value and meaning.

Three presentations at the “In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalisation” conference in London (10/2013) made interesting contributions to the ways in which Indigenous performance *circulated uncontained continuing identities* (Couture, 2013). University of British Columbia Doctoral Student, Selena Couture’s paper *Iterations of Marie Clements’s The Road Forward*, discusses the use of performance, music, song, projections of archival documents, live streaming of video and a Twitter feed, dedicated to murdered and missing Indigenous women and to the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. In a similar vein to eARTh, Couture says *The Road Forward*

... responds to pressures of globalisation to package one-dimensional indigenous cultural commodities to be consumed, by instead circulating uncontained continuing identities presented through the use of modalities of performance that insist on connections and presence.

Dr Sergio Miguel Huarcaya from Royal Holloway University of London, presenting *Indigenous Protest as a Performance Genre* (2013), considers:

... explicit, self-conscious cultural performance is a recent development enabled by contemporary globalisation which have become a ... conventional style for the staging and reading of Indigenous protest ... structured by the nature of the audience to which it is geared and the alliances it enables.

In this context eARTh is a genre of protest as performance, in the use of innovative, contemporary, Indigenous multi-arts ceremony, as symbolic of ‘redreaming’ the land in resurgent sovereign authority, staged on city streets and at sites where Indigenous and colonial societies coincide, converse, collide and converge. eARTh revealed the potential to strengthen and make more prominent innovative protest performance elements within the creative work.

University of Toronto’s Dr Barry Freeman (2013) spoke to:

... exchange across cultural difference in Theatrical and Social Performance of the De-Ba-Jeh-Mu-Jig Theatre Group’s Radically Unstructured Global Savages which for Debaj is not just about showcasing work, but taking the time to listen and understand one another within radically unstructured time and unhabituated space. This is not in the service of fashionable ‘relational aesthetics’ he explains, but is rooted in their profound empathy and desire for connection, as well as their ongoing unravelling of a long history of colonialist or unbalanced exchange.

Learning of similar processes, practices and objectives to eARTh in the work of Debaj, based in Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island in

Northern Ontario, lends to creativity confidence that the underpinning dynamics of representation in eARTh's performance, maintains immanent cultural integrity and ontological dignity as sovereign persistence. Further information on the socially, culturally and politically immersive work of Debajeymujig is accessible at <http://www.debaj.ca/> and <http://www.theglobalsavages.com/>.

The creative work Colourise Festival 2013: eARTh was in effect an experimental pilot event to experience what happens when Indigenous creative processes and practices across art forms ignore dominant cultural expectation and depart from institutional arts venues to break out onto the streets. An ontological and sovereign creation eARTh is a reminder to citizens, of lost but retrievable ethical values and relationships with each other and the land beneath the concrete, still under our feet. In congenially congregating to re-view our social and political value centre, we consciously and unconsciously support and desire renewal, and enact Indigenous sovereignty; a revolution in the face of the dehumanisation of colonialism and globalisation. The ways Place as event can develop to reconnect us to 'the supreme value-centre of contemplation – the human being', the essence that reunites us with the earth and universe, and the political will and action to redress our problems, are limitless.

The creative work process also reunites and activates the full spectrum of arts practices, taking them out of the compartmentalised categories supporting the production-line and commercial intent of creative industry. It is a revaluing and revitalising of the spiritual, sensual, emotional and intellectual encounter in ceremony and rites that gather people in events unfolding the essence of life that is inherent in land and Place. Bringing together people across generations, genders, and countries in participative arts practice is to celebrate and energise the life-force despite its constant degradation in heinous crimes against humanity and the planet. Suffice to say, in summary, creativity takes its place in constructing 'a unified image of self and engages in morally and aesthetically productive tasks through our reciprocal relation to each other', according to the value systems cultivated by a given society and its constant evolution in time.

In regard to the Treatise, during the course of the research I caught myself moving toward greater realisation of my own customs in processes and practices with growing confidence in the Indigenous experience of knowing and its articulation; how the essence of knowing lies within the nuances in dialogue, discourse and mutual intelligibility rather than a monologic exposition. So it sits well here, to consider the many informal approaches to “narrative” in the translation of this practice-led research, and understand its function.

Roland Barthes (1966, 251) explains:

The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances – as though any material were fit to receive man’s stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting ... stain-glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation.

Julia Kristeva (in Guberman, 1996, p1) proposes:

... yet because the whole truth can never be known - at least, this is what psychoanalysis along with other disciplines has taught us - inserting a bit of autobiography into a narrative guarantees a grounding in reality.

Galen Strawson (2004, 2) suggests we are divorced from the immediacy and relationship of oral narrative and discourse, or the intimacy of dialogue, through the powers of technological reproduction, and may be exposed to addiction to *a relentless story telling, a pernicious new narrative orthodoxy.*

Mary Graham (2006, 4) regards narrative as:

... one method of both therapy and research that segues well with the notion of Place. The recounting of stories, personal and collective, is premised on the idea that the lives and the relationships of persons are shaped by the knowledges and stories that communities of persons negotiate and engage in to give meaning to their experiences. A narrative therapy, she writes, assists persons to resolve problems by: enabling them to separate their lives and relationships from those knowledges and stories they judge to be impoverishing; assisting them to challenge the ways of life that they find subjugating; and encouraging persons to re-author their own lives according to alternative and preferred stories of identity, and according to preferred ways of life.

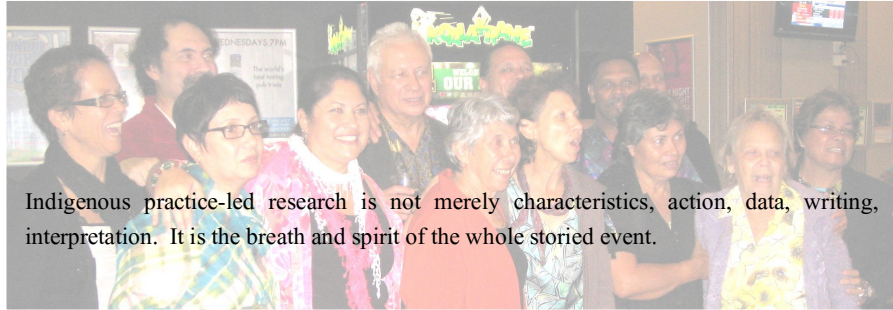
Mary Graham’s perspective on narrative opened my thinking to Gerald Vizenor’s (1999) critique of manifest manners – the ways in which Indigenous people,

through literary translation, representation and interpretation, are manipulated and made malleable for dominance and/or containment. Coupling a gift of releasing his readers into the metaphysical universe with his trickster use of words and style of writing, Vizenor liberated me from a sense of obligation to meet the requirements, definitions and conditions of Western academic conventions steeped in social science. My renewed confidence in our oral-aural custom and capacity encouraged me to keep the Treatise in dialogic relationality more than monologue; and out of the mediocrity occurring when one surrenders principles, customs, ontological and creative orientation in performing to the dominance of oppression.

The task of writing, analysing and interpreting the experience of *eARTh*, however, has required me to be most reflective about and of my Mother's customs, as throughout our lives our world was communicated in storied memories, discursive conversation and the congeniality of gatherings with feasts, music, dance and song; wherein communal forms of wisdom and knowledge are implicit. It occurred to me, in that sense, the idea of 'remembrance' and 'survivance', as conceived by Gerald Vizenor, does not refer to coerced memory of factual history, incidents or events, but to innate custom in oral societies passed down through generations; and remembrance is the spirit of survivance.

A heritage of gathering, ceremonial and oral traditions is still fresh across generations of Indigenous people in Australia, adapted as always to change and presence. Remembrance does not limit itself to anthropological interpretations of where why what or how life is remembered encountered and lived. Traces of history passed down through oral tradition operate in and through us, especially when we allow it to be imparted, unlocked and unblocked, by rejecting the dominant narrative pathway, usually ideologies dressed in cultural formulas, social science theories, technologic fantasies and political catch-phrases distracting us from everyday reality. The fluid way *eARTh* occurred in Place/event/time, existing in its own right through countless casual and intuitive creations in contemporary ceremony, left indelible and eloquent memories or, as Vizenor would say, a

shimmering in Place and wisps of stories told by others. eARTH graces presence and relationality, the essence of being there.



Indigenous practice-led research is not merely characteristics, action, data, writing, interpretation. It is the breath and spirit of the whole storied event.



the dynamics of ontological representation

6. SUMMARY

Metalinguages, with their capacity to totalise or destabilise, construct or deconstruct, have evoked responses of cautious wariness on the part of most critics of American Indian oral or written literatures. Among the best critics, this caution derives from an intelligently informed awareness of how easily a way of life gets broken into data to satisfy someone's need for a particular form of scholarly tidiness. It also derives from knowledge of how critical language is always thoroughly implicated in philosophical traditions whose relationships to the native literatures of this continent are what we question, not what we want to assume as the origin of our descriptive categories. Critics of tribal literatures whatever their race, ordinarily think and write with more than the scholarly audience in mind. They think in terms of communities, urban or reservation, where traditions live on, their origins in a barely imaginable history and their current existence showing a determination not to face the world on terms dictated entirely by a dominant culture. So the critic, by definition educated in that very dominant culture as is the creative writer, believes in the possibility of using language to mediate among what we still call different traditions, even though many traditions have been interwoven and the very act of mediation on the part of writer and critic becomes one more variable in shaping the traditional process. For the writer and critic the engagement with whatever language is meant for public consideration and debate becomes a process of trying to perform at the limits of language and culture, where it is less a matter of answering questions than it is one of performing the questions themselves (Jahner, 1993, 115-6).

Claiming sovereign authority on winter night walks across unceded Turrbal country, eARTH gathered participants, without divisions denoting artist or audience, to tour the streets of inner city Brisbane in a contemporary innovative mobile-live-media-art performance of ceremonies and rites. eARTH in performing the dynamics of ontological representation draws upon Indigenous customs that have evaded the conformist grid of Australian colonialism's arts, cultural and intellectual fixations. Our customs are imbedded in the relationality of our kinship, connectivity and belonging, having the reverential and inciting qualities of presence in dialogue, innovative contemporary rites, and the ceremony of gatherings. Left to Western social science interpretations of our customs elements of Indigenous ontology essential to our well-being, and active in the constant multitude of sovereign manners we exercise daily, are devalued and disregarded with despairing consequences.

In order to realise the full dynamic potential of this practice-led research both the form and given field of relativity of this Treatise serve as a catalyst. The contextual review at 4.Navigating the Ken, for instance, offers extensive discourse on the context of the practice-led research and creative work. That is a social and political Place informing the creative work which warrants unimpeded processes and practice, and in translation, digressive discourse, ethical inductive reasoning and fluid methodology. The Treatise thus engages reading to stimulate critique.

The Treatise also consolidates the idea that there is a 'vast circulatory of reasoning' (Stanner, in Willis, 1990) functioning within Indigenous perceptions, practices and exchange of knowledge which requires as a prerequisite, the etiquette of respectful conversation to accommodate adequate and congenial interchange that leads to shared understanding. In this way the creative work eARTh is re-set in motion by the Treatise and, rather than arguing a position, solicits multiple open responses to the manner in which my creative practice functions within the philosophical equation *Multiple Places = Multiple Dreamings = Multiple Laws = Multiple Logics = Multiple Truths = All Perspectives (truths) are Valid and Reasonable* (Graham, 2006, 9). This timeless conduit of relativity is symbolic of the socio-political-cultural-spiritual-intellectual particularity of Australian Indigenous ontology and ethos; and in Indigenous community media-art which engages the relational power of Place, it evokes infinite creative possibilities.

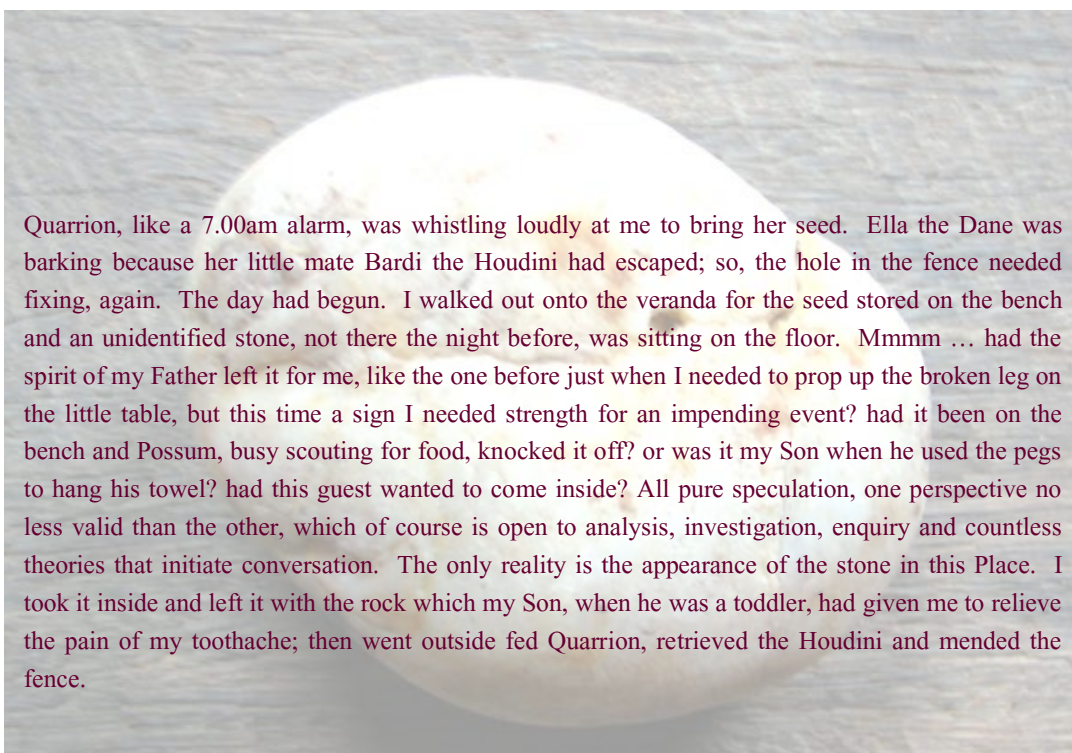
The event tour, as illustrated on the Program pages xiii-iv, marked the sites representing the Place where Indigenous and colonial society collide, converse, coincide and converge:

Musgrave Park a traditional Place for Aboriginal gatherings; St Mary's Catholic church an archetype of theological/spiritual controversy; the cultural centre where marketable forms of Aboriginal Art are revered; police headquarters representing historic relations of coloniality; law courts symbolic of the deep divide between Indigenous and Australian societies; war memorial evincing the ruthlessness of power; and civic centre and parliament institutionalising rudimentary oppositional governance devoid of

the harmony in consensus and the ethical resolve for enacting sustainable living.

eARTh offered participants presence in the essence of gatherings, rites and ceremony, kindling relationality, in situ connectivity and belonging. In this environment, the public disclosure of the ontological, political and social divide created by colonialism, represented at these sites central to the performance of eARTh, offered social balance in well-being and change. The creative work served as a pilot revealing a framework for future Colourise Festival eARTh events, where collaborative and participatory creative interchange to incite potentially revolutionary social processes are limitless.

Abbey Lincoln (1930 to 2010) a renowned Afro-American jazz lyricist and vocalist, writes: *music is the magic of a sacred world, a place where the spirit is home, a world that is always within* (2007). This, I believe, is analogous to the imaginary and visionary world that is always within creativity, and *as a moral idea of ourselves, to be realised completely, has to be expressed* (Momaday, in Jahner, 164).



Quarrion, like a 7.00am alarm, was whistling loudly at me to bring her seed. Ella the Dane was barking because her little mate Bardi the Houdini had escaped; so, the hole in the fence needed fixing, again. The day had begun. I walked out onto the veranda for the seed stored on the bench and an unidentified stone, not there the night before, was sitting on the floor. Mmmm ... had the spirit of my Father left it for me, like the one before just when I needed to prop up the broken leg on the little table, but this time a sign I needed strength for an impending event? had it been on the bench and Possum, busy scouting for food, knocked it off? or was it my Son when he used the pegs to hang his towel? had this guest wanted to come inside? All pure speculation, one perspective no less valid than the other, which of course is open to analysis, investigation, enquiry and countless theories that initiate conversation. The only reality is the appearance of the stone in this Place. I took it inside and left it with the rock which my Son, when he was a toddler, had given me to relieve the pain of my toothache; then went outside fed Quarrion, retrieved the Houdini and mended the fence.

7. CONCLUSION

In her paper *Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews*, published in *Worldviews: Environment Culture Religion (3)* (Graham 1999, 105), Kombu-merri Waka Waka Philosopher Mary Graham begins with contrasting questions which reflect Aboriginal and Western tenets relative to their world views, thus revealing a dichotomy:

Western: What's the meaning of life?

Aboriginal: What is it that wants to know?

In enquiring 'what is it that wants to know', humanity is placed 'at the supreme value centre of contemplation' (Bakhtin, 1993); and in making significant the action and intent of 'caring for something outside ourselves – caring for country caring for kin' (Graham, 1999), Aboriginal society applies deeper existential comprehension than seeking to interpret the meaning of life:

Indigenous Australian philosophy is more than just a survivalist kit to understanding nature, human or environmental, but is also a system for realising the fullest potential of human emotion and experience. Humanness is a skill, not developed in order to become a better human being, but to become more and more human. Indigenous understandings of the land are as a spiritual entity and human societies dependent upon the land (Graham, 1999, 108).

Furthermore the concept proposed by Ambelin and Blaze Kwaymullina (2010, 196) that - *the purpose of knowledge [within Aboriginal systems] folds back into the underlying principle of balance ... both constructed and transmitted around the idea of balancing relationships between all things in the universe – expresses the fluid function of logic in an Indigenous knowledge system. In contrast the scientific model of enquiry devised for Western knowledge systems and research to answer 'what is the meaning of life', produces multiple idealised scientific theories in propositions and interpretations that suppress contingent uncertainty.*

Professor of English at the University of Oklahoma, Alan Velie (1993, 130) proposes, *in the growing rebellion against mainstream culture and ideology a new sensibility is manifesting itself in a variety of ways.* He quotes the renowned American Professor Gerald Graff, educator, historian and theorist, who sees these ways

... in a refusal to take art “seriously” in the old sense, the use of art itself as a vehicle for exploding its traditional pretensions and for showing the vulnerability and tenuousness of art and language; in the rejection of the dominant academic tradition of analytic and interpretative criticism, which by reducing art to a set of intellectual abstractions tends to neutralise or domesticate its potentially liberating energies; in a generally less soberly rationalistic mode of consciousness, one that is more congenial to myth, tribal ritual, and visionary experience, grounded in a “protean” fluid and undifferentiated concept of the self which is opposed to the repressed “uptight” Western ego.

The question ‘what is it that wants to know’ brings the creative-work-Treatise full circle. Contrasting such tenets is a prerequisite to the practice-led research of the creative work, because it assists to identify ontological difference in the Place from which enquiry emanates; and invites response to the political imposition and impact of Western logic and knowledge systems.

The creative-work-Treatise is active in the interstice of the immanent cultural and political dichotomy in Australian colonial society. Projected digital imagery and sounds of bush and people were imprinted across unceded Turrbal country to re-imagine and re-populate inner-city Brisbane through Indigenous eyes in the collaborative and participatory multi-art performance of Colourise Festival 2013: eARTH. Like so, city sites and their political and environmental conditions were contrasted and scrutinised, this mobile-digital-live-media-art creative work unmasking the adverse in the colonial presence and exposing a contingent double consciousness that obstructs the potential to perceive other realities. The question is, can eARTH as the dynamics of ontological representation effect that disclosure as social balancing for well-being and change; and realise the significance to the future of Australian society, of the ethics, ethos and logic inherent in enacting Indigenous Australian ontology and sovereignty?

Drawing upon Indigenous philosophical and customary ways of knowing, being, doing, and on concepts of sovereignty as well as history, politics, and race relations, the practice-led research, I believe, has consolidated my Australian Indigenous media-art process and practice in the creative work Colourise Festival 2013: eARTH, to successfully perform ‘the dynamics of ontological representation’. The

performance of intrinsic connectedness in temporal and spatial relationships created in eARTh is a small chronotopic contribution to the vast body of creative and theoretical work produced by Indigenous people over the last century.

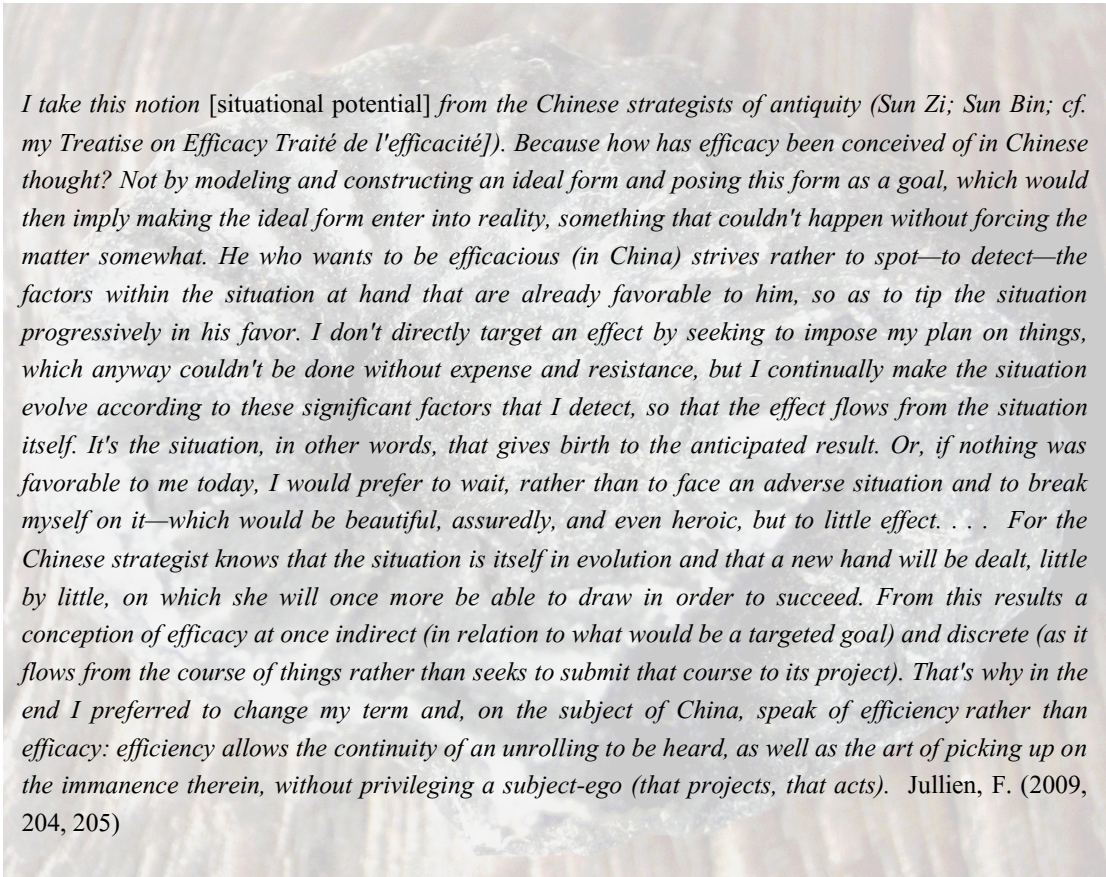
In conclusion, this practice-led research asserts overall that knowledge and creativity are 'everybody's business and nobody's monopoly'; and *Multiple Places = Multiple Dreamings = Multiple Laws = Multiple Logics = Multiple Truths = All Perspectives (truths) are Valid and Reasonable* (Graham 2006, 9) a concept that can harmoniously connect all on the planet.

The Other who can sovereignly say no to me is exposed to the point of the sword or the revolver's bullet ... In the contexture of the world he is a quasi-nothing. But he can oppose to me a struggle, that is, oppose to the force that strikes him, not a force of resistance but the very unforeseeableness of his reaction. He thus opposes to me not a greater force, an energy assessable and consequently presenting itself as though it were part of a whole, but the very transcendence of his being by relation to that whole; not some superlative of power, but precisely the infinity of his transcendence. This infinity, stronger than murder, already resists us in his face, is his face, is the primordial expression ... There is here a relation not with a very great resistance, but with something absolutely other; the resistance of what has no resistance – the ethical resistance (Levinas E., Totality and Infinity, p.199, cited in Richardson, 2006, 159).

And as one other old blackfella always said, *Not resistance, persistence – it takes us further.* And as his good old mate once told me, *I often reflect on the days of my boyhood, eating at the common table at the One Mile on Minjerribah when I lived with my Grandmother, where meals were served with the Grannies present, smoking their pipes and speaking softly in language. Those images constantly revisit me and are the source of my strength. During the full impact of what was happening beginning with the colonial era – warfare, massacres, confiscation of the land, dispersal of families – somehow throughout all this they retained their capacity to endure, their elegance, serenity and dignity. In the midst of this overwhelming hardship this was remarkable and astounding (Anderson R., 2001, 6).*

8. EPILOGUE

I end with a quote from French Sinologist François Jullien (a man of my vintage) on *situational potential or silent transformation or regulation*. Jullien confesses he came to the study of Chinese language and literature not out of a passion for things Chinese but a desire to gain a clearer perspective on the roots of his own traditions in Greek philosophy. His subject and manner of thinking contributes to an insightful mode of dialectics which can also inform community media-arts processes and practice.



*I take this notion [situational potential] from the Chinese strategists of antiquity (Sun Zi; Sun Bin; cf. my Treatise on Efficacy *Traité de l'efficacité*). Because how has efficacy been conceived of in Chinese thought? Not by modeling and constructing an ideal form and posing this form as a goal, which would then imply making the ideal form enter into reality, something that couldn't happen without forcing the matter somewhat. He who wants to be efficacious (in China) strives rather to spot—to detect—the factors within the situation at hand that are already favorable to him, so as to tip the situation progressively in his favor. I don't directly target an effect by seeking to impose my plan on things, which anyway couldn't be done without expense and resistance, but I continually make the situation evolve according to these significant factors that I detect, so that the effect flows from the situation itself. It's the situation, in other words, that gives birth to the anticipated result. Or, if nothing was favorable to me today, I would prefer to wait, rather than to face an adverse situation and to break myself on it—which would be beautiful, assuredly, and even heroic, but to little effect. . . . For the Chinese strategist knows that the situation is itself in evolution and that a new hand will be dealt, little by little, on which she will once more be able to draw in order to succeed. From this results a conception of efficacy at once indirect (in relation to what would be a targeted goal) and discrete (as it flows from the course of things rather than seeks to submit that course to its project). That's why in the end I preferred to change my term and, on the subject of China, speak of efficiency rather than efficacy: efficiency allows the continuity of an unrolling to be heard, as well as the art of picking up on the immanence therein, without privileging a subject-ego (that projects, that acts). Jullien, F. (2009, 204, 205)*

I assert from within this dialectical mode, that a mundane business plan or mission statement as is imposed by arts funding agencies and economic policies could never have foreseen eARTH, or assisted its realisation (notwithstanding this Treatise may serve as a strategic plan). The systemic dissuasion, constraint and mediocre policies imposed by agents of Australian colonialism maintain a veil of double consciousness, causing a blindness toward the ways to effectively address underdevelopment and serious damage to the quality and potential of spiritual,

political, cultural, social well-being, educational and economic aspects of society across this country; calling for another long story.

Lastly, consistent with the narrative style of this Treatise, it is fitting to end with the great wisdom of another old fella, one of the best, the late Bill Neidjie. Born in Alawanydajawany country, Bunitj Clan, from the western side of East Alligator River, Kakadu, Bill Neidjie's Story About Feeling recorded and edited by Keith Taylor (1989) is a poignant and unique sharing of Place, caring for country and kin.

*If they [children] hang on this culture for us they'll say ...
"Oh, we got culture, we got story,
we got "business", we got oh!
So you stay there, I stay here.
If you don't want me, well you can stay there because I got this."
"What for?"
"This one I can't give it to you.
This one is mine. Another one is yours.
Because little bit heavy this one
and that ... little bit light.
I think so, I reckon. Because you coming ask me.
You know, you ask me anything ...
I'll keep it this one ... in my pocket!
Something like that. Should be.
No-matter you hard, me hard
but you must understand this ...
in my culture, in my story, in my Djang [sacred power from the Dreaming]
you got to understand first ... after, I give you.
But if you rush ...
I might be wrong, you might be wrong. I don't know.
But I might be right, you might be wrong.
That's it you see
(Neidjie, 1989, 119)."*

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mass produced
canned knowledge for the post-modern cannibal

10. APPENDICES

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- Ia) 2. Introduction, page 1 - event photographs at
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- II) 2. Introduction, page 4 - *Developing a Unique Australian Media-arts Culture*,
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- IV) 2. Introduction, page 6 - *Relationality – Attributes of Aboriginal Ethics*,
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- V) 3.1 Ethics and Clearance, page 75 – 1) Ethics Approval received from the
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- VIII) 4. Navigating the Ken, page 66; 5. Creative Project, page 98 - *Custodial
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- X)** 5.4.3 Spirit and Human Agency, page 91 - projected video from Uniikup Optical Media Collection at <https://vimeo.com/98250718> “re-populating”, and <https://vimeo.com/98264820> “enduring”, password eARThy.
- XI)** 5.4.3 Spirit and Human Agency, page 91 - Event and Performance Plans at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/382ujdfkl6ooe4/AADGL9OsuASutmO0yHMfL/DxFa>.
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- XIIa)** 5.4.4 Event Actions and Intent – Belonging, page 93 - eARThWalk media-art clip, dur: 6min wmv, at <https://vimeo.com/97986052> password eARThy; <https://vimeo.com/66907427> “spirit of the land”, <https://vimeo.com/98292930> “fire”, and <https://vimeo.com/38898267> “flood”.
- XIIb)** 5.4.4 Event Actions and Intent – Belonging, page 93 - eARTh “escapees” exhibition at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/colourisearth/sets/72157644771944930/>
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eARTh : the dynamics of ontological representation

APPENDIX II – NAVIGATING THE KEN

DEVELOPING A UNIQUE AUSTRALIAN FILM CULTURE

CULTURE AND CREATIVITY – Indigenous Perspectives QUT CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Presenter: Christine Peacock Week 4, 20/3/2006, 3.00pm – 4.00pm

INTRODUCTION

Introducing myself, I am Christine Peacock. I am descendant of the village of Isem on Erub in the eastern islands of the Torres Strait. I was born in Mareeba in Tjapukai/Mulurdji countries and have lived on the mainland all my life, having grown up in Ningy-Ningy country at Redcliffe. I have a home at Wolvi, east of Gympie, in Gubbi Gubbi country which is a country of origin of my children. We have lived there, since 1991, until this year, when I returned to the city for work. I have two children who were born in Ninghy country and that is where we currently reside. Like many Indigenous people, I have never lived in the country of my origins, with my countrymen, due to the many and varied circumstances created by the onslaught of colonisation. Nevertheless, we are the Indigenous/sovereign people of this area of the Asia Pacific region and, consequently, regard ourselves as sharing the responsibility of continuing sustainable development across countries.

I worked in community theatre in the 1970s, performing and directing, mostly in the U.K. When I returned I took up a Producer traineeship with A.B.C. Television in 1983. In April 1985 I graduated from the ABC Television Producer's Course and was invited by the Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agency to co-ordinate the Black Women's Film Group in West End, on Turrbal country. The ABC supported this development until December 1985, after which we were independent.

Which brings me to describe our "DEVELOPMENT": to unfold; to reveal or be revealed; to bring, or to come, from a latent, to an active or visible state; to make or become known; to make or become fuller; to make more elaborate, systematic or bigger; to convert to new use so as to realise its potentialities. I think the opposite of development would be to imitate - to reproduce, to make a copy of and to settle for a counterfeit, in the context of cultural development, is to reach a stalemate.

DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT –

MURRIIMAGE COMMUNITY VIDEO & FILM SERVICE

In 1985 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Agency had purchased VHS camera and recorder to support the development of Indigenous television and film media. The Black Women's Film Group was abandoned after eight months when it became apparent that we could not secure funds for permanent wages. Murriimage was created to carry on television and film development. Gradually, those who had permanent employment carried on in their jobs, others found paid employment and some went to work with Murri Radio. Carl Fisher, the father of my children, a descendant of Birri-Gubba and Gubbi-Gubbi/Kabi Kabi in North and South East Queensland, was coerced into camera and sound operations, at this stage, in between taxi driving.

We operated from home (wherever that may have been) and financed our activities from production fees and program sales. We weren't career motivated, but picked up skills on-the-job by providing a community video service, videoing concerts, meetings, exhibitions, protests, cultural events etc on VHS, and selling the programs (edited in the camera) where we could. When we were fortunate enough in 1987, to get a training attachment with Film Australia in Sydney we learned about production on 16mm film.

We then won an overseas study award, and toured around other Indigenous film and television developments in Brazil, Cuba, Canada and the UK, recording interviews, shot on Super 8 film. We continued to shoot developments around Australia in 1988. We completed the shoot on 16mm recording local Indigenous people, and edited all on 16mm film in our own facility. In this way we produced "Makin Tracks" the first film documentary on international Indigenous relations and politics, by Indigenous people, for Indigenous people in an Indigenous facility. It was funded over an eight year period, through D.E.E.T., the Aboriginal Arts Board and Cultural, Film Development and Marketing branches of the Australian Film Commission.

Makin Tracks, a 58 min, 16mm film documentary, represented a vital and steep learning curve in our development of Indigenous screen culture. It was first exhibited at an International Documentary Conference in Melbourne in November 1995 where it was best received by Japanese guest documentary producers. It has never been broadcast and is now used primarily for educational purposes by Indigenous teachers.

In 1988 we rented space in the Jagera Arts Centre South Brisbane with Kamaga Arts. We had managed to borrow some money for a bit more equipment and were loaned a TV set, with which we made slightly more refined programs. We also began to receive more support - one example, Jeanie Bell through the ATSI Unit at UQ, paid us to cover public lectures by prominent Murries. We have a lot of excellent community archival material dating back to 1985.

In 1989 and 1990 we had nine people in training and four others on the payroll due to training scheme funding availability. This was a very productive time but it was too much, too soon, too fast and after the training-funds-policy was changed, we were back to three people. A very expensive Feasibility Study was funded, to prove our small business viability but the recommendations to fund that viability went under the carpet that was rolled out for ATSIC.

During that fervent period of activity, however, we had managed to attract capital funding from the Dept Aboriginal Affairs and Australian Film Commission, to equip a production facility with off-line editing and broadcast quality recording, so it was business as usual. Now we were able to take commissions and tender for producing corporate videos on health issues etc, as well as produce short documentaries and cover community events. We earned enough to keep up with rent, telephone and our travel costs.

At this time we incorporated the Indigenous Information Service Association Inc. as an umbrella, organisation with the intention of developing more media activities, so consolidating the community cultural development model created in the 1980s by

Mary Graham at the Child Care Agency. It was intended that I.I.S. be a support base for community people, encouraging self-determination by sustainment and progression of project development.

As part of our development plan, Murriimage, in 1996, finished a three year funding period with the Australian Film Commission and Film Queensland, then under the direction of Richard Stewart, where those organisations provided subsidies for the operations costs of our community service. Operations subsidies from ATSIC through the Indigenous Information Service assisted operations costs for a community media consultation service and production funding paid wages and all other costs. In this way we continued to produce information videos and media information as part of the I.I.S. as well as focusing on other IIS development activities.

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

I would now like to offer you, some words to conjure up images that, by association, reveal the context in which we continue to develop an Indigenous screen culture. CONQUISTADORS are/were to INCAS , what COWBOYS are/were to INDIANS, and, what SETTLERS are/were to ABORIGINALS.

The propaganda machine for Western ideology, mass/popular communications media - television, cinema, radio, print - manufactured history and legitimised it through popular modern legends told in an industrialised, dominating form of entertainment. Consequently, this communications environment, in itself, is inhibitive to any other stories being told (in any other way by people from any other cultures) and to reaching a wide audience. This has far reaching implications, described by Mpoya-Buata, writing about the works of film-makers Sembene Ousmane ("Ceddo") and Med Hondo ("West Indies")

The problem posed is that of our origins. Now our origins have been dried up at their source, by which I mean that they have been denied. Put another way, we have been denied all possibility of history. This deception hid nothing less than the straightforward presumption of our lack of humanity. (Film and Politics in the

Third World, edited by John D.H. Downing (a prominent member of the international organization Ourmedia.)

From the outset, developing an Indigenous Screen Culture, meant taking on a mammoth task, embarking on a complicated journey through a maze of production technology, techniques, values and methodologies; broadcaster networks and market and distribution monopolies. We are immediately placed in unfair competition with media organisations (both national and international) that have been established for many years, in the business of making profit. As Sembene Ousmane, a film-maker from Senegal in Africa comments:

We are no longer in a period when industry was born. We are in a period of monopolies, trusts, multi-national corporations.

And from Indian film-maker Ketan Mehta:-

Everyone was at the mercy of the speculative commercial distributor and it was in their interests not to let these films be distributed at all because they posed an alternative to the commercial product.

At the same time that the Hollywood machine expands its tentacles to appropriate new product, its commercial interests are protected by control of what is marketed and distributed for popular consumption. (Academy Award nominations to Australian actors - Academy Award winner Geoffrey Rush of the Australian film "Shine" - demonstrate the colonisation of the Australian film and television industry and its locations.)

SUSTAINING DEVELOPMENT

Back in 1985 there were several community development projects supported by the Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agency. There was the Black Women's Film Group, Murri-Time radio began broadcasting on FM Radio 4ZZZ, the Link-up organisation was bringing families back together, the Murri Independent School started up in a couple of rooms on Highgate Hill and there was the Youth Scheme. It was an exciting time around Woolloongabba then, because of the significant, active presence of a lot of ATSI organisations along Stanley Street, which is the original Aboriginal pathway through that area of Turrbal/Jagera country. Now,

Murri time radio is radio station *98.9FM, Link-up Queensland* is part of a national network, the *Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community School* is fully functional at Acacia Ridge in its own buildings, and Youth Scheme became *First Contact* which ran many successful training and cultural programs.

Out of the Black Women's Film Group came Murriimage, now a broadcast quality video and film production facility; Uniikup Productions Ltd., set up for the production of documentary, drama, CD-rom; the Indigenous Information Service was taken over by *Cyberdreaming* which specialises in ground breaking multi-media projects, assisting language and various cultural revival programs, as well as newspaper publishing. Most importantly, these developments, (and there are many to which other people have the histories) have had consistent input from their founders: people like Mary Graham, Ross Watson, Bev Johnson, Carl Fisher, the late John Newfong, Bob Anderson, Jeannie Bell, Andrew Dunstone, Glenyse Barney, Michael Mace, Di Vogan, Tiga Bayles, Brett Leavy.

It has been this consistency which sustained development - unfolding potentialities. By creating these spheres of interaction, between Indigenous people we have unleashed the potential of development, expanding growth and opportunity. If in this way Aboriginal art has put Australia on the map, think what can happen with screen culture? Also important, the continuous growth of Indigenous culture impacts subconsciously on the attitudes of the wider population and the colonial society in general, in that its great longevity proves there exists and has always existed, a successful way for all to live in the Southern Hemisphere.

SOME FEATURES OF SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT

Firstly, sustaining the effort and the vision and to keep revealing it, elaborating on it and never losing sight of our potential. Secondly and more difficult, realising that the essence of development is founded on aspects peculiar to the Place, the group and the activity, which take time and discretion to identify and practice, and that can't be replicated. Thirdly, by sustaining development, we give substance to the

arguments for regionalised film and television production.

True development is often curtailed or damaged by the drive for outcome, measured and regulated by performance indicators and strategic type planning, enforced by Government funding agencies. Often their funding guidelines and conditions conflict with development because they come from very different agendas based on very different experiences and expectations. Moumen Smihi, a film-maker from Morocco puts it this way:

Personally I am convinced that the ideology of capitalism, to be sure both private and of the state, is primarily interested in cultural linearity and monolithicity (novelistic or cinematic) to the extent that it sees menace in diversity, in multiplicity, in haziness ... The third world, itself a world of explosion and the exploded, has to be interested in this problem.

In the experience of Murriimage two main approaches have emerged, that have created our tracks: One has been that our independence is maintained by taking responsibility for our own development - that is, determining what it should be, how it should be done, time frames, adapting what we get from the mainstream to the needs of our own unique development, and, consistently reappraising our progress and knowledge. The other approach is that unless we have the means to produce we are not able to control what we produce. This has meant that we have foregone the funds for consistent wages or short term production, in favour of securing capital grants to purchase equipment; creating an environment in which we facilitate production and generate wages. Purchases are researched to ensure that we equip according to our practical needs at that time, and we are not just chasing technology. Being driven by production, means we are furthering development of our own authentic styles, methods, critiques, networks, plans - culture. Mrinal Sen, a film-maker from India, advises:-

What we have to do - and this is a prescription not just for us in India - is to make films at a very low cost. We have to show the monopolises, who claim that film-making is a capital intensive business, and their monopoly, that film-making is everybody's business and nobody's monopoly. We have to think in terms of economics getting the minority spectator who is interested in such films and then building a larger audience base.

THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE FUTURE

It has been twenty long years since we joined that Aboriginal pathway on Stanley Street. Slow, discreet and focused cultural development means we now offer a community video service coverage of events where fees are negotiable (still often voluntary work); a production service - community, corporate and television broadcast programs; and produce documentaries and features for national and international cinema.

In 1995-96 Murriimage upgraded to broadcast quality non-linear video editing equipment, and in 2004 to digital, which allows production to take place entirely in-house. We continue to seek production financing for Indigenous producers and how and where to market and distribute Indigenous product for television broadcast and education outlets. As well, we are further developing financing skills, for higher budget production.

We developed a policy of training on-the-job (i.e. project based), participating in mainstream training to adapt it to our needs, and keeping up to date with industry business and changes. This way, we are constantly upgrading and increasing our skills to further production capability and quality. Consequently, we only take trainee attachments when we have production work and funds for wages. Experience has taught us, after the failure of so many training programs to increase the numbers of Indigenous people working in the industry, that, because employment is not regular, is highly skilled and carries a great deal of responsibility and a high level of creative motivation, successful recruitment and training is a slow process of trial, error and encouragement.

We now stage the annual screen culture based Colourise (formerly Colourised) Festival event; initially in partnership with Queensland University of Technology and the cultural flagship institutions in South Brisbane. Colourise has a complex program to encourage, present and promote the production of video, film by Queensland Indigenous filmmakers and media-art which is inclusive of national and

international Indigenous works. Enhanced by the collaboration and work of various local Indigenous creatives - musicians, visual artists, dancers, performers, writers, story tellers - philosophers and activists, Colourised imports the vital contribution of communities and the exciting potential of film making as a hybrid art form. **(Program details available on www.colourisedfestival.com.au site.)** Uniikup/Murriimage also offers consultancies and advice specifically on the development of Indigenous screen culture.

We are optimistic about the future direction and development of Indigenous screen culture and its valuable contribution to Australia as a reinforcement of the national identity. This is particularly relevant in this time when interaction with our Asian neighbours is foremost on the national agenda. We are focused on that development and on identifying those opportunities that await us all. Lastly statements from film-makers Med Hondo, from Mauritania, in North West Africa and Moumen Smihi of Morocco, signalling that we are not alone in our attempts to develop Indigenous films and television that impact on screen culture:

Let us keep our diversity; let us be suspicious of the concept of universalism, which is a dangerous thing. I think we do not have to copy one another, whether amongst Africans or by continent. Above all, let us avoid copying the European and American cinema. We all have our specificity.

And:

The cultural universality of American and Hollywood-style cinema results from a historical violence. Isn't it appropriate today, by way of rejecting this homogenising universality, to research specific modes of expression?

I am currently working part-time as Associate Lecturer, Indigenous Perspectives with the Queensland University of Technology Creative Industries faculty, delivering the Indigenous Creative Industries unit KKB004. I am also enrolled in a Masters by Research Degree doing a comparative study of screen cultures, with a focus on the factors that impede the development of a unique Indigenous screen culture in Queensland. I am the Director of Colourise, a Uniikup screen culture based creative consultancy service, for existing cultural and educational organisations, events and festivals. This service is a cultural catalyst acting to **Colourise** venues and events, with unique ideas and philosophy, processes, and practices that live within the oldest cultures on earth.

Relationality – Attributes of Aboriginal Ethics

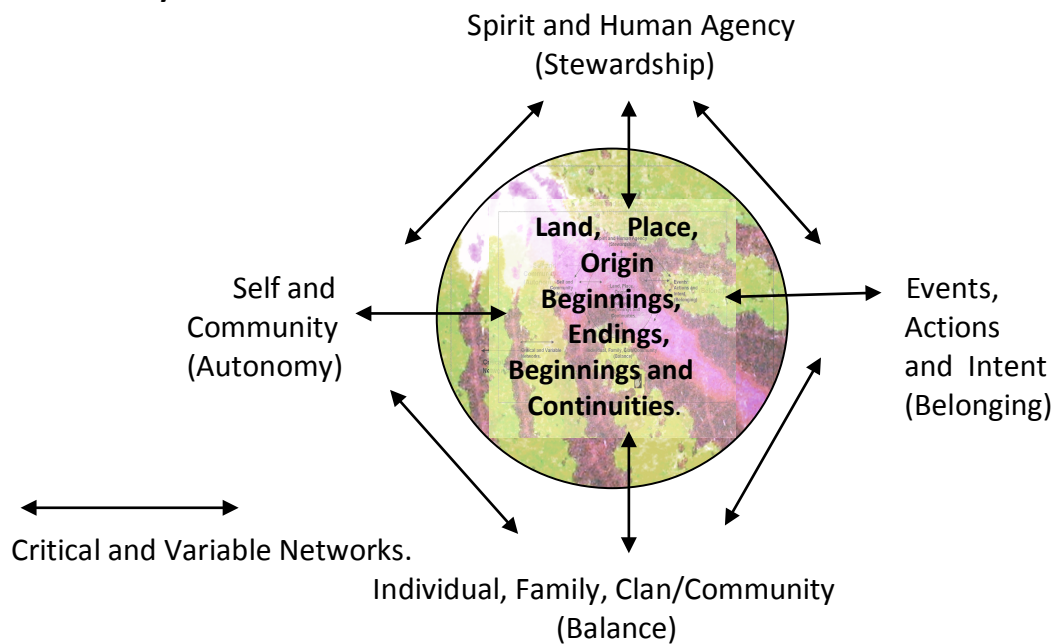
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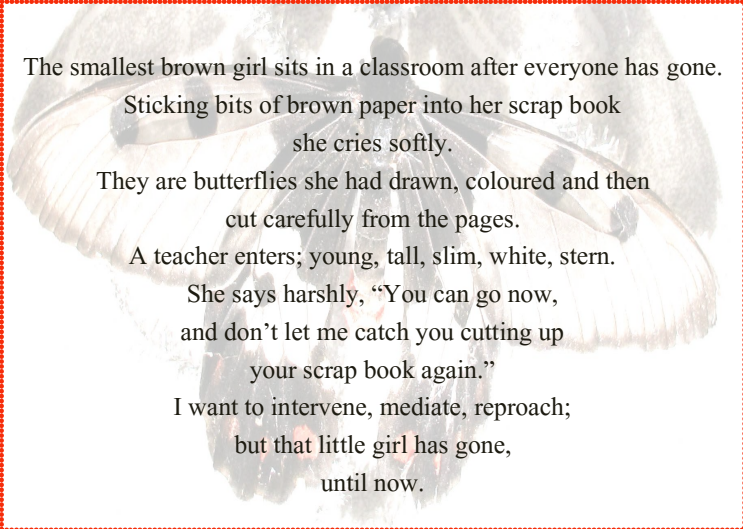
For Aboriginal people Land is the Law what’s the nature of the Law?

It could be said to be an essence, or an accumulation or accretion or mass of essences so when Aboriginal people are relating to Land - their Land – this essence (s) manifests itself in all ways of being an Aboriginal person – within themselves, with other selves (other roles in life), with others, with spirit, with environment, with change, with time and space and with death and after death. This is not to argue for a kind of Aristotelian essentialism where essences become properties of objects. (Nussbaum – thick, vague concept of the Good.)

Social Goods	Underpins	For
Belonging	Place and Identity	Individuals, Family, Clan and Community
Balance	Decision making and Conflict management	Events, Actions and Intent
Autonomy	Conduct/Stance and Perspective	Self, Family, Clan and Community
Stewardship	Empathy and the beginning of an Ethical Existence	Spirit and Human Agency

Relationality





The smallest brown girl sits in a classroom after everyone has gone.
Sticking bits of brown paper into her scrap book
she cries softly.
They are butterflies she had drawn, coloured and then
cut carefully from the pages.
A teacher enters; young, tall, slim, white, stern.
She says harshly, "You can go now,
and don't let me catch you cutting up
your scrap book again."
I want to intervene, mediate, reproach;
but that little girl has gone,
until now.