Chapter One
'Care at a Distance'
Affiliations to country in a global context
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A tension exists between discourses of place-making and the theoretical paradigms of well-being that inform them. While places are conceived as localized, the systems theory (whether it is derived from philosophical anthropology, social ecology, or geographically-based concepts of region) that accounts for their distinctiveness is generalist (placeless). The same tension is played out at a community level, where insiders are distinguished from outsiders, notably in the conflict-riven interventions that Green Movement activists organize. These conflicts in place-making theory and praxis can easily be multiplied. In this context, a concept of 'care at a distance' is canvassed. Originally formulated as a response to the conundrums collecting institutions find themselves in when pressured to repatriate culturally-sensitive materials, it has since been adapted and extended to offer a different approach to place-making in Alice Springs, a locus of intense social suffering. In this presentation, the notion of 'care at a distance' is further extended to incorporate the subject-position of the outsider into the place-making process. In affiliating to others' country, it seems essential to declare where one comes from – even if, in the rhetoric of nation building, the past life of migrants must be annulled. The implication of this declaration is that creativity exercised at this place will stage a conversation with those who have departed; just as the outsider artist is, from the perspective of the environment whence they came, classified as departed and ghostlike. There emerges from this dialectic the recognition of the doubled or multiple identity of selves and places. To endow this ambiguity with epistemological significance, to appreciate it as a technique for letting back into the design of the future a complex emotional domain whose elements always come from somewhere else (even when that 'somewhere else' is here) seems to me to give a better account of historical, environmental and spiritual realities in a global context. Because of this, it suggests new ways of thinking the boundaries of places and the communities who produce and enjoy them.

Last year in Brisbane Christine Peacock, a Torres Strait Islander woman with affiliations through marriage to the Turrbal people, whose country includes Brighton and Margate, invited me to be involved in a project called 'Margate to Margate'. Under the rubric supplied by T.S. Eliot, that 'We shall not cease from exploration/ And the end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time…', she was proposing a creative research project involving, among others, the London Print Studio, the artist Leah King-Smith and artists in the immigrant communities of Margate (England). I have written about the poetic colonization of countries through names. Transposed to new places, place names like Margate embody, articulate and indeed promote complex and troubled senses of belonging that are characteristic of white settler cultures throughout their colonized world. They allude to a desire to connect but also a recognition of disconnection. They ironise a sense of not belonging; they also repress the local genealogies of place and ownership that resist their usurpation. Applied to Christine's proposal, these reflections indicate that her proposed project is not a variation on the officially-sanctioned sentimental journeys through which the descendants of immigrants reconnect to the homelands of their ancestors. Refracted through the lenses of its colonial history, 'Margate' returns to Margate with interest, opening it towards another identity. But perhaps this was always

implicit in the name as Margate, or 'sea gate', was always a hinge place, located between land and sea, a focal point of immigration and, as the recent epic art event Exodus Day, staged by Artangel and Channel 4, suggests, a site of departure.

Christine's recognition of doubling, not only as a mechanism of colonisation but as an emancipatory characteristic of postcolonial geography, provides an introduction to my theme. A tension exists between theories of place and practices of place-making. However much they are grounded, explicitly or tacitly, in the study of particular places and their communities, theories of place are, in principle, generalisable. Like the maps of geography, they may describe localities, but only in terms of a universal projection. Bachelard, Casey, Lefebvre, and other historians of place may extol and defend the aesthetic, ethical and affective values of places, but they write from somewhere else. Because of this, they invite us to behave like colonizers, taking the lessons of their examples and transporting them to other places. Thus, in the first abstraction, Pierre Bourdieu might use the Kabyle people of northern Africa to show that the physical design of a place instantiates the polarities of their worldview. In a second abstraction, his notion of habitus may then be applied to 'our' world, helping N. Katherine Hayles explain how a 'technological nonconscious' structures every aspect of cultural production. These examples could be multiplied endlessly: and they operate, of course, in the other direction, as we bring to bear on the characterization and sustaining of places perspectives derived from ecology, sociology, regional economics and planning. And the point I want to make is that these theoretical and practical antinomies may be avoided if we understand the constitution of places, and the discourse about them, as doubled.

The other context for making this claim is the persistence in place studies of what I would characterize as a kind of eco-fundamentalism, by which I mean a tendency to regard places, regions and even zones of bio-diversity as closed systems. This may be ideologically-driven, and represent the survival of a nature religion attachment to the notion of sacred places, but it also reflects the bias of systems theory itself, which is towards the characterisation of the world in terms of homeostatic complexes governed by feedback mechanisms that underpin their stability, and are internal to the system's organization. Transposed to the historical environment, these theories of the inter-relatedness of parts can have the paradoxical effect of rendering other relationships, notably those with the outside world, superfluous and by definition destabilizing. There is no easy place within them for the imagined community that T.S. Eliot invokes, those constitutionally extraterritorial heirs to modernity who, if they retain a nostalgia for home, recognizing that its discovery is essential to understanding where they came from, must approach it from another place; or, more likely, from many places, all of which are part places, half open, half closed, Margates that were marred. Yet, we all come from somewhere else. Even if we stay at home this is true: not merely because, as our place names tell us, our homes have multiple provenances, but because, as many contributions to today's symposium foreground, place-making is a discursive activity, and discourse, the place of discourse is at a minimum in-between two people. The unit of place is always a relation across difference, an educative doubling in which insides and outsides produce a new locus of movement, at once psychological, spiritual and physical.

In Australia's remaining old growth forests, the construction of places around a distinction between belonging and not-belonging assumes a particularly destructive form. It is obvious that wilderness is a cultural construct, the projection of an outside point of view. It is also obvious that its semiotic reduction in this form cuts both ways:

if it enables courageous forest activists to focus media attention on their cause – as well as allowing tracts of land to be considered eligible for World Heritage status – it also encourages companies like Amcor and North Ltd to think of the forest purely as an image to be manipulated; hence their notorious preservation of roadside forest corridors, masking the clearfelled slopes beyond. It is always easy in work-forces brought up on Anglo-Saxon classicism to stir up a working class resentment against the (in this case native forest activist) elites, but it is striking how this utterly mischievous social divisionism is orchestrated around the notions of insider (represented here by the sacrosanct local community) and outsider (here invariably anyone whose address is elsewhere). The actual interrelatededness of these parties is the stuff of social history, environmental science and regional planning policy, but it holds little sway in a debate that tacitly invokes the immaculate conception of the nation state, polarizing the fate of places, and the rights to occupy and use them, around a distinction between residency and non-residency. They do not intend it but when Friends of the Earth speak of 'untouched wilderness', they pave the way for exploitation: for what has not been touched is terra nullius, that is, land that can be claimed simply by virtue of occupying it first.

The notion of 'care at a distance', which I want to introduce as a way of reconciling what I have identified as contradictions in the dominant discourses of place-making, originated in a reflection on the postcolonial responsibilities of museums. The pressure to repatriate materials that hold important personal and cultural meanings in the communities from which they are taken is often seen purely as an act of historical repair. In reality, though, it is not only the past of the museum that is in question but its presence and future. No longer a site of collection, it has yet to become another place – to find an identity, if you like, not predicated on its physical holdings of objects *belonging to other places*. The move to repatriate objects also stems from a sense that museums are dead places, not really places at all. That is, they no longer accommodate our collective memories as they used to. 'The Museum kills the vehemence of painting just as the library, as Sartre says, transforms writings which were once a man's gestures into messages. It is,' Maurice Merleau-Ponty goes on, 'the historicity of death.' In this context, the new mission of museums might be to *recollect* rather than to collect: not simply to recollect what has been repatriated (after all still a tiny proportion of its holdings) but to recollect the places from which the collections have come. While it is no longer ethically or politically feasible to add to anthropological and natural historical collections, these collections provide a unique introduction to the parts of the world from which they come. Therefore, they could be thought of as passages, symbolically mediating connections to, and between, other places. The role of the museum in fostering 'care at a distance' would seem to follow.

At the same time, museums and art galleries do not have a brief to engage in international environmental and social activism. Their role is to mediate the public circulation of symbolic forms. How might they marry this goal to the acquisition of a place-making conscience exercised 'at a distance'? The experience of *Nearamnew* at Federation Square suggests one possible answer. After the opening of Federation Square in late 2002, the National Gallery of Victoria decided to mount an exhibition about the making of the plaza artwork. This was a notable initiative because it showed an art museum prepared to extend its curatorial brief to the care of an art that could not be collected. The NGV not only wanted to recollect a work outside its doors but to soften the identification of the institution with a distinct territory. The significance of this, though, was that *Nearamnew* itself was a symbolic form shaped by the desire to

recollect another place, Lake Tyrrell in the Mallee (itself invoked as a doubled place in which heaven and earthy were mirrored). In other words, it would take only one further step and the NGV's commitment to curating *Nearamnew* would prove to be an act of symbolic environmental recollection – and this would, of course, be an act of place-making at Federation Square, one in which, in keeping with its new role, the museum recollected the culture of another place through an act of 'care at a distance'.

I hope this story of the provenance of the term 'care at a distance' is recognized as having an immediate relevance to our discussion. It places the problem of symbolic mediation at the forefront of our activities. How, that is, are places doubly constituted, both as sites of gathering and as places generating dissipation or movement outwards (towards, these days, circulation in the global imaginary)? It places this question here because it asserts the logical contradiction of any place-making discourse operating as if it did not itself take place. The places where it takes place are always the constructions – the recollections and projections – of other places. Margate is not simply a place-name, as the name of a kind of place that is constitutionally open to other places, it is the name of the principle of care at a distance. This principle can be characterized as ethical because it articulates the need for representations not predicated on conjuring up presences – whose illusionary plenitude masks, as we know, the actual disappearance of the world at large. It counters the push to enlighten the world with a recognition that its integrity depends on the management of degrees of withdrawal. Of course, the local is always spreading outwards, intermittently scintillating to the earth's furthest reaches, but it does so under the protection of distance – which, as Giacometti showed us, is the precondition of meeting, and therefore of place-making.

The exercise of care at a distance changes the definition of places and the emphasis in place-making. It locates the beginning of places in the shuttle of movements towards and away, in a collectivity of comings and goings, and in the accumulating trace produced by these. Place-making comes to be understood in terms of creating the conditions of meeting, rather than as the provision of a theatrical backdrop to prescribed social activity. In this context care at a distance not only suggests new directions for our collecting institutions. It has applications in urban design. A recent invitation to become involved in the creation of a meeting place in Alice Springs illustrates this. The key supposition of my contribution was the point made earlier – that places are made after their stories. Just as place names describe complex, and conflicted, place-making aspirations, so with all marks associated with the marking of places: tracks, the symbolic representation of these in song, dance and poetic speech, indeed all the technologies that join up distances into narratives – they all inscribe the earth's surface with the forms of stories. Of course, these are not the same as the foundational myths of imperial cultures, whose aim is to displace any prior discourse of place-making. They are stories of, and as, journeys: passages in a double sense, constitutionally incomplete because they always await their completion in the act of crossing-over, or meeting, which, of course, is endless.

At a workshop in Alice, at which people representing black and white communities, and a range of interest groups, I tried to convey these notions in a simple form using a diagram, explaining:

> The upper ribbon represents Alice Springs' connection to the world. At the top the stars symbolize Alice's place in 'the global imaginary'. Alice has a unique iconic place in the collective Western imagination: it is the ideal 'centre' of Australia and a kind of Mecca for tourists in search of adventure. Many people

who have never been to Alice 'visit' it via the internet. Underneath this global turn is the national and regional connection contemporary Alice makes to Australia through tourism; underneath this is the road system, an older communications initiative. And below and inside that is an image of camels. In this way the ribbon both spirals inwards towards Alice and backwards in time until, with an image of the telegraph wire, it plunges into the world of Alice Springs. The global ribbon shows us that Alice was, is and will be a place where the local, the regional and the global are connected. Further, they are uniquely connected by a story about communication, by a desire to connect at a distance.

The ground ribbon is also formed of five turns. It visualizes Arrernte and central Australian Indigenous understandings of place and place-making. It also spirals inwards towards the world of Alice. Creation stories are not only about the making of this visible landscape but about the universe; they generate the patterns that spiral inwards to enclose and shape us, and which have to be recreated in our own everyday rituals if a sustainable relationship between human and non-human worlds is to survive. These creative and recreative patterns take the forms of journeys: the Indigenous landscape is a network of tracks and meeting places. The communities that converge on Alice Springs come from many parts of the network. It is their place in that network that underpins their place in Alice Springs as guests of the traditional owners. At the same time, the community made in Alice Springs ultimately draws its meaning and authority from following the ground ribbon back to its ever-present origins in the spirit landscape. It is this landscape that grounds all communication and connects the local to the cosmic.

I called the place-making proposal emerging from this summary of the discussions we had held 'Care at a Distance', again explaining: '"Care at a Distance" shows that the great stories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture uniquely meet in Alice Springs. This is because both are uniquely about the relationship between traveling and place-making, between communication and community. It is this relationship that the phrase 'care at a distance' tries to capture: *distance* is the precondition of communication, but communication is driven by a desire to *care* for what is far away. This reality shapes every facet of life in Alice today, a town, a place and a community that is constitutionally double, "Care at a distance" expresses the double constitution of Alice Spring's unique and vibrant identity, and, as indicated earlier, the phrase not only applies generally but captures the genius of specific episodes in Alice's history.' Obviously, the passages quoted are not couched in the language of cultural theory. Nor should they be. Their address is public, and responds to an occasion. They reflect the place occupied by the writer-consultant, invited into a discursive circle in the expectation that he has something to put on the table. The offering in this case takes the form of retelling a story, of transporting different threads of the collective discourse to a different place, one that is, it is hoped, interesting exactly because it emerges *inter esse*, in-between what already exist as well-marked tracks in the physical and psychic character of the place. The outsider is, in this special circumstance, a tracker who, in following the tracks of those who have gone before, allows himself to be tracked. In this way, through an act of recreative affiliation, the idea of care at a distance is to some degree embedded in the response.

These thoughts naturally lead to a reflection on the subject position of the one who comes from another place (as we all do). In my scenario, the museum is able to exercise

care at a distance because it develops the capacity for recollection. Like T.S. Eliot's traveler, it learns that the 'end of all our exploring' is not the conquest of the known world but an education in self-knowledge, which takes the form of a kind of cultural homing in which we know the place where we started from for the first time. Recollection, unlike collection, is the pre-condition of invention, indeed it underpins innovations that are ethically-grounded. Again, the extension of the idea of care at a distance to Alice Springs presupposes a capacity in all the place-makers to see their stories in relation to one another, and to understand the differences between them poetically – as the ground that can be drawn together without destroying its distances *metaphorically* – figuratively, using symbolic narratives that keep in play structural and thematic analogies. In the play of these the outsider-insider dialectic is dissolved and replaced with a discursive environment in which all the participants are players, whose goal is to create and maintain a fabric of passages, or exchange-ways, held together by the prospect of meeting. What, though, in the individual can correspond to the new self definition of the museum or the amplified polyvocal discourse of a creative community? While the desire to affiliate is clear, what is the filiation that legitimates that desire? What is recollected on arrival? When the creative outsider sets about inserting themselves into the stories after which their adopted places are made, what criteria guide their advocacy of one set of symbolic correspondences over another? These are questions for place-makers of all kinds.

To sketch a response to these issues, let me go back to my conversations with Christine Peacock. Here I should also mention Mary Graham, who discussed with me her community-based research program with the Aboriginal community organization called Kummara – which emphasizes, on the one hand, 'the moral nature of physicality (especially land) and the need for relationality and interconnectedness with all life forces' and, on the other, the 'dissension' usually caused 'between community, clients, practitioners and experts' when 'experts from outside the community [seek to] provide the theoretical understanding to solve social problems.' In the course of a conversation about parallels that can be traced between English Common Law and Indigenous understandings of land and land tenure, Christine asked me where I came from. Thinking about the pre-modern history of the countryside where I grew up in England, I referred to the Uffington White Horse, a possibly Bronze Age figure carved into a chalk escarpment, and connected in revivalist folklore with a nearby Neolithic long barrow known by its Danish name, Waylands Smithy. When Christine and Mary immediately identified the white horse with my 'dreaming', I was disconcerted. I feared I had misrepresented myself to them – these archaeological monuments were a corner of my childhood environment, but, in view of the apparent ease with which I – and our culture in general - had shrugged off any influence they might have had over our lives, it seemed like a a parody of indigenous readings of country to invoke them, let alone to compare the lately-revived folk tales associated with them with Indigenous creation stories underwriting the constitution of entire societies.

It is this reaction I want to question. The first point to make is that their question has, of course, a particular inflection in modernity. Coming from somewhere else is perhaps the defining human experience as a result of the systemic disruption of pre-industrial societies due successively to the human transformations wrought by the rise of capitalism, the normalization of imperialism, the technological triumph of quantification, and the annihilation of distance that these separately and in combination facilitate. The well-adjusted product of these processes is self-reliant, mobile and rootless. 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. The important thing is not to come from somewhere but to have successfully left it behind. In this powerful context of subjection to the poetics of living in the present, to be asked the question Where do you come from, or, more confrontingly, to be the victim of its corollary, Go back where you come from, is to be understood as a criticism of mal-adaptation. The one thus addressed has been caught out, their cosmopolitan pretence of belonging anywhere (and therefore here) unmasked. In any case, the point is that a culture like ours, illusorily globalizing and in thrall to the notion of independence, can, when it comes to the question of origins, bear very little reality. Its particular aggression is reserved for those who insist on the ontological meaning of being migrant, who, like Ingeborg Bachmann's character, lives 'in flight'.

I am sure most here can transpose these remarks to their own lives. Spatial anomie of the kind described here is the other aspect of the objectification of places: if, as Bachmann's character does, we 'lived amongst it all', we would not have to find out places where we can become ourselves. In any case, reflecting on the question addressed to me, it was evident from the context in which it was asked – and from the way in which my reply was interpreted – that the constructions I was placing on it were misplaced. The question bore a different inflection. When Christine asked me where I 'came from', she did not seek information about a place I had left behind. She wanted to know the place I had brought with me. Implicit in the question was a non-modern understanding of identity. Her question presupposed a relationship between motivation and country, and could have been recast as: what country propelled you here, allowed you to carry it everywhere you go, impressing itself on every life decision? Such a country is not a geographical unit but a kind of characterological gestalt, a psychic impression stamped in the mould of consciousness. Offering a perspective on the world, the experience of this spatio-temporal environment does not impose itself, but it provides the ground of every subsequent encounter. It softens, or comes between, the harsh opposition implied by the figure of 'doubling', with its threat of imminent collapse as copy and original struggle for pre-eminence. It allows for a dappled co-existence of levels and degrees of belonging, in which nearness and distance are both operative.

Writing about the processes through which Tjungkaya Napaltjarri (Linda Syddick) has gone in acquiring the right to tell her father's dreaming stories, anthropologist Fred Myers explains, 'Persons literally come "from" The Dreaming, from named places of ancestral potency; the relationship to these places is understood as central to a person's identity.' Such places acquire their meaning through ritual and mythological practice – or active recollection. As Francesca Merlan puts it, 'However absolute the 'dreaming' significance of places may seem, they were also always constituted … within and through the range of practices which linked people with places.' Merlan's observation is perhaps a familiar one – it can be legitimately extended to our everyday practices through which a phenomenological apprehension of the environment in which we live translates into a set of practices designed to secure and sustain it – thus improvising a *habitus* in Bourdieu's sense. But Myers is, I think, gesturing towards something more radical. Some foundational structuring of the world is taught us: it is not mystically bequeathed us by the accident of birth. It is not a Wordsworthian intuition of God in nature uniquely apprehended in childhood. We grow into it, are initiated into it. In principle, if not in cultural tradition, this place of ancestral potency could, for an explorer freed of T.S. Eliot's nostalgia for home, be the world at large. That is, the

preposition from – which is cognate with the word 'forward' – evokes a to-and-fro, a process of education, or leading out. The power of 'The Dreaming' is not that it constantly draws you back to a place but that it gives you a place from which you can go out. You come '"from" The Dreaming", but the emphasis is on the origin of movement.

These reflections have interesting consequences for the way in which notions of place, identity and belonging are construed in Australia. The white myth of nation-making, for example, symbolically excludes anyone who arrived too late to be part of the foundations. In a sense, authority is possessed in direct proportion to the nearness of one's family to the legitimate members of the First Fleet. Despite the embrace of multiculturalism in the 1980s, the recrudescent nationalism of the present period underlines the accuracy of Adorno's dictum, that the ÈmigrÈ is acceptable on condition his past life is annulled. The inability of our culture to imagine, let alone commemorate, the presence here of other landscapes, communities and cultures, is not due to a lack of imagination, or the effect of a collective memory lapse: it is due to a discursive inadequacy, an incapacity to articulate the doubled identity that is inhabited by any (and perhaps all) of us who are conscious of coming from somewhere. Be that as it may, by putting this unspeakable other place firmly in the realm of discourse about the shared public space occupied here, some interesting inversions occur. For example, the definition of those who can claim to 'belong' here suddenly changes. It is no longer the imagined community of white Anglo-Celts that can lay claim to 'Australia'. As we, and they, know: because of the refusal to acknowledge the act of dispossession on which their ancestors' settlement was based, they remain uneasy and tentative in their behaviour towards the country. They cannot 'come from' here – at least from an Indigenous point of view – because they choose to be ignorant of this country's history.

On the other hand, though, they do not come from somewhere else, for they have made it an item of communal faith that, as an independent nation state, they are autochthonous. Logically, then, lacking spiritual authority here, they come from nowhere, and therefore can belong nowhere. In this situation, where 'coming from' has this positive sense of providing the psychological motivation of movement and therefore the precondition of arrival, it is the formerly marginalized migrant who suddenly possesses exceptional qualifications for belonging in Australia – precisely because they *do* come from somewhere else. Of course, Australia's white settlers did come from somewhere else (and continue to, culturally). I don't mean simply that they are descended from families many of which continue to have branches in Great Britain. I mean that ancestrally Australia's white settlers did, once upon a time, occupy named places of ancestral potency. Before the Enclosure Acts of the late 17th to mid-19th century alienated the great part of England's common land, ordinary folk in England held the land where they lived in common. Then, as Marcia Langton has pointed out, the conditions of land tenure structurally paralleled those under which Aboriginal people continue to lay claim to country. The cultural parallels between an agrarian society in the past and a hunter-gatherer one in the recent past should not be overstated. What is compelling, though, is a shared historical fate: it is the same capitalistically-fuelled alienation of common land that excluded the English peasantry that provided the ideological raison d'etre 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.

Mary Graham addresses her discourse on a proposed Aboriginal Research methodology to the challenge of gaining acknowledgement within the Western legal system of Indigenous, place-based understandings of rights and obligations. I should insert here that 'place' in Graham's proposal is not our unstoried, nakedly surveyed geographical datum, but a *habitus* woven of stories, a discursive locus where belonging is figuratively defined and renewed. In any case, there is no reason why Graham's paradigm should not be extended to describe the conditions of belonging more generally. As she writes, 'People flee from and flee to Place both physically and psychologically. Place is a reference point to guide to and from. Place is a physical point in the landscape, but also a point in time, an event, an imagining or even a landscape itself.' But essential to places, to their constitution and maintenance is the movement they engender: as she says, 'Multiple Places = Multiple Dreamings" – and, it follows, multiple guides. In this case the experience of coming from another place – the acknowledgement of this – is a critical precondition of gaining lawful access to country here. Filiation and affiliation do not need to be opposed modes of belonging: understood as providing the ethical ground of passage – of life's journey as a whole – they serve to individualise one's location in the world, to generate places of strength when the forces of globalization – which by the way now as in the colonial period feed on the commodification of places – do all in their power to eliminate these.

Graham's remark that places are also 'points in time' – which is another way of talking about the character of meeting places – illuminates another aspect of my argument. Not only does a positive interpretation of coming from another place give migrants their place in the place-making, the spatial history, of Australia. It emancipates it from the modern myth of immortality, cognate with the notion of living in the eternal present. My mother, whom I miss more now that she lives in the other country of death, nevertheless said some hurtful things. For example, she coupled my announcement of coming to live in Australia with the much later news of my divorce and the discovery of my father's terminal cancer. We worked through all of these processes together, and I don't want to enlist your sympathy for announcements that had, even at the time, a comic disproportion. Still, the emotional classification of migration with death and the destruction of the family is widespread. Certainly, it was felt that, in migrating, I had voluntarily said goodbye to the upper world and condemned myself to a living death. And this will be a widely shared experience, not only because of the assumption that people go together with their places and that the unplaced lives, if at all, in a kind of limbo. But what happens when, taking heart from an Indigenous understanding of coming from, we see migrancy in terms of doubling rather than in terms of separating and dying – and their attendant senses of abjection, enslavement and withdrawal?

We speak of 'doubles' in relation to the departed. We make the dead present to ourselves by imagining them on a journey. In this sense, haven't migrants a privileged understanding of processes of departing? Do they not in a certain way stage the journeys of the ancestors, all of whom have departed only in order to stay where they belonged? Migrants will also possess this sense of a privileged access to the history of places and their making because they remember what later-comers have forgotten. Just as Italian TV comes to Brunswick to study regional dialects lost in Italy, so, for example, in going back to the country of my upbringing I can contribute to a process of recollection sharpened rather than weakened by many years of living in a new country. I am in touch with the dead there in a way that the living cannot be. This limitation on my capacity to affiliate to a country here is also my qualification for understanding what belonging here entails: bringing this knowledge of mortality, this impulse to recollect not only

where I have come from but where my family, my ancestors have gone, I can perhaps understand better what Graham refers to as 'the whole repertoire of what is possible continually present or [] expressed as an infinite range of Dreamings … the *transformative dynamic of growth*.' The logic of the Margate project becomes, in this light, all the more compelling: it is not about the repatriation of memory but about diplomacy, about finding the protocols for living in another's country and learning to belong there.

Wouldn't it be astonishing if we incorporated this strong sense of coming from 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. You could imagine a lightly touched environment of shared memories and life paths, which claimed connection to places, without predicating this on property rights. It would be a genuinely postcolonial experience, one that transformed the meaning of 'globalisation' to comprehend the repatriation of identities in so far as they come from certain places: of course, it is the experience of the places to which one has come that influence the character of the spiritual return, and ensure that it is not a kind of earth fundamentalism or anti-modernism. But the result would be to give a serious, and constructive, ring to the jibe; Go back where you belong. The extra-territorial citizenship engendered in this way, in which people (including those who stayed where they were born) enjoyed a double identity – with physical home and spiritual home, with a local community and a global community would be a bulwark against nationalism and its geographical isolationism.

From the point of view of the later comers, this exercise of care at a distance would provide a different perspective on the character of the place where they now live: coming into contact with the stories of the departed, they would be made aware not only of a past imagined in terms of generations of stably-located folk, but in terms of a history of comings and goings. They would be able to see in what is present the passages of those who left, and understand what is left not as a swarm of positivities but as a legacy of unsustainable practices, broken-off relations, failed enterprises and the inequitable distribution of resources. The prejudices against admitting these environmental revenants is deep-seated. After thirty years in the Mallee, the poet John Shaw Neilson left the area and worked for the remainder of his life in Footscray. But the biographers, critics and local historical societies pay no attention to this departure, instead treating him purely as a poet rooted in place. As a consequence the entire human achievement of recollection, the synthesis of experience and the discovery of its significance at another place is blotted out. I like to imagine Neilson as a man who imagined coming back – and when if ever he made that journey finding a land not as he saw it once but as he imagined it might be. These are also legitimate dimensions of place-making, and they stem from the concept of 'care at a distance'. Without the intrusion of the outsider, it is hard to see how the tight economy of functional relations promoted by the ecological sciences and by human sciences deriving from anthropology can place to hand a collective human mechanism for the management of change.

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