The right to dream

The Right to Dream

By

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The Right to Dream explores the impact of the English language upon the Indigenous body affected through colonization, offering an analysis of Aboriginality as a social and political construct resulting in the imposition of an inauthentic subjective experience on sovereign Indigenous peoples, investigating its temporal and biological consequence.

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THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO

The Ancestors

before: after

In the everywhen

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original expect as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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(Signature)

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Abstract

Australian historicity is built on the absence of the Aboriginal subjective experience. The multiple Indigenous cultures that co-existed in the land now known as Australia became the homogenous Aborigine within Australian history and narrativity. Within the construction of the Aborigine, a single identity was imposed upon the various temporal physiognomies of the peoples comprising the Indigenous nations who inhabited every part of the Australian continent. *The Right to Dream* explores the temporal consequence of the imposition of the homogenous Aborigine, a social and political construction that effectively annihilated the right to exist as individuated bodies within the earth space and its consequence on the well being of Indigenous peoples upon whom it was imposed.

The Aboriginal subject experience or Aboriginal phenomenology as Dr Anita Heiss puts it, is the beginning for *The Right to Dream*, and based on the experience of growing up as a female identified as an Aborigine, in an Aboriginal identified community that suffers from increasing disillusionment, and extreme poverty, are deprivations synonymous with the poverty of language, denied histories, and the invalidation of one's individual story. *The Right to Dream* is especially an attempt to understand my own subjective experience as an Aborigine in the land now known as Australia, and process that would in the words of Dr Aileen Moreton-Robinson, propel me from being the known to the knower.

The Right to Dream explores the temporality of Indigenous ancient cosmologies, the intelligence inherent to Indigenous chosen modes of communication, and the ways in which Indigenous peoples 'write' and 'read' the earth-space. It is in other words, the treatment of

Indigenous cosmological, philosophical and religious practices as an expression of an Indigenous literature. *The Right to Dream* also explores the development of western textual culture, linearity and the invention of historicity as a way of controlling, language, bodies, land, by restricting individual access to discourse.

Writing is the technology that defines western ideological, epistemological and philosophical thought; indeed, writing defines western society itself. Western civilization is traditionally demarcated by the occurrence of writing, for it is the presence of writing that separates history from pre-history, making possible the idea of literate and pre-literature societies. Western civilization proclaims and sustains its authority on what qualifies first as writing and consequently literature. Within this colonial paradigm, those peoples existing in pre-history are determined to be non literate and without legitimate writing systems. This thesis explores the exclusion of Indigenous literature as the premise for legitimizing the invasion and colonisation of Indigenous lands based on the principle of writing, and what constitutes valid forms of writing that lends itself to literature.

The mechanisms of colonisation delivered the concept of western writing to the land now known as Australia. The arrival of western writing effectively cancelled Indigenous modes of story telling, authorship and legitimate claims to land tenure. This moment in history marked by the inception of western writing in the land now known as Australia, also presents a time in history where we see a reduction in the well being of Indigenous peoples. Western writing and ideology operating as a closed system is purported to be impenetrable, that to know of a reality outside of western language is impossible. But Indigenous peoples prior to the western cultural invasion existed beyond the realms of western language and epistemologies. The inability to translate these alternative realities without loss of cultural

meaning lends itself to sustaining the western architects of colonialism as the empowered author or 'knower' and the subjugated Indigenous 'known' as the authored. It is this power dynamic that informs the ideological framework of the coloniser and the colonised.

As Indigenous peoples, the ancient temporality comprised of an ongoing communication with the life-world has diminished, and instead Indigenous peoples are encouraged to identify as Aborigine, a temporal zone embedded within western space and time. *The Right to Dream* gives another understanding of the removal of Indigenous peoples from traditional lands by colonial forces; and that is from the perspective of language, and in particular writing. Indigenous peoples perceived by the colonials as not possessing legitimate forms of literature, were non-linear and therefore had a different experience of time and space than that of the west. Indigenous peoples existed outside of western time and space, and through the colonisation of the land now know as Australia, the west brought Indigenous peoples into western time and space through writing, the representation of ancient Indigenous peoples symbolically reduced to the Aborigine.

The west through ownership of valid forms of writing, literally own the concept of time and space, and see themselves as morally and legally justified in imposing its language upon the peoples and lands of the country now known as Australia. Given this, it is necessary to understand ancient temporality, the relationship between the body and the environment, and specific modes of cultural transmission employed by Indigenous cultures as ontology's capable of supporting the Indigenous body in the environment for one hundred millennia. The assimilation of the Indigenous body by western language has had devastating affects on the body as well as the land, and it is in this context that this thesis explores the notion of destruction of Indigenous peoples, their cultures and physical, spiritual and emotional well

being as being synonymous to the consequent destruction of their lands, marked by the loss of Indigenous languages throughout the country now known as Australia.

One of the strategies which Indigenous peoples have employed effectively to bind people together politically is a strategy which asks that people imagine a future, that they rise above present day situations which are generally depressing, dream a new dream and set a new vision.

- Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies

Chapter 1

Dream a new dream

Introduction

> Representations of the Indigenous 'other' have circulated in white Anglo discourse since the 1700's. The most infamous was that given by Cook, who stated that the Indigenous people of Australia had no form of land tenure because they were uncivilized, which meant the land belonged to no one and was available for possession under the doctrine of *terra nullius.* This representation of the Indigenous other as the nomad justified dispossession. Since then we have been represented in many ways, which include treacherous, lazy, drunken, childish, cunning, dirty, ignoble, noble, primate, backward, unscrupulous, untrustworthy and savage {Moreton-Robinson, 2005, p75}.

The issue of Indigenous identity, well being and rights to ancient lands are inextricably bound within the concept of representation of Indigenous peoples by western authors. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson points out in her essay *Whiteness, epistemology and Indigenous*

Representation {Moreton-Robinson, 2005, p75}, the issue of representation has been present before the inception of Australian nationhood, for it was inherent in the gaze of the first British subject to look upon the land now known as Australia. The Indigenous body was born into western narrativity as the Aborigine, and indeed positioned within Australian historicity as symbology representing the unhuman. The Aborigine did not exist before the presence of the western gaze, and it is within this gaze that the fictitious Aborigine is subjugated still within Australian society and western historicity. The possible correlation between the meanings affixed to the Indigenous body promoted through western representation more specifically writing is the impetus of this thesis, the outcome being a way for Indigenous peoples to re-imagine ourselves within a racialised society that positions the Aborigine within the margins.

Larissa Behrendt in *Achieving Social Justice* discusses the relationship between the Australian national self image and how Indigenous peoples feature in this. Indigenous peoples are not included in discussions on Australian nationalism defined by 'traditional Australian values' {Behrendt, 2003, p64}. Behrendt details how Indigenous peoples appear within the colonial meta narratives, and how Indigenous peoples are imagined by non Indigenous peoples {Behrendt, 2003, pp 64 – 65} conflict with the diversity of Indigenous peoples as they exist in real life {Dudgeon, 2000, p44}. Behrendt discusses the colonial perception of Indigenous peoples as the 'noble savage' and 'relics of the past' and 'if less than 'full-blood', as

inauthentic and void of culture {Behrendt, 2003, p62}, echoing Moreton-Robinson's litany of colonial descriptions projected onto the Indigenous body.

Indigenous peoples occupy a unique position in the discussion of Australian nationhood, as no other group in Australia have ever held sovereignty over the land now known as Australia, and that Indigenous peoples 'were sovereign before Australia was colonised, that their sovereignty was never extinguished and that means that it remains intact today {Brennan, 2005, p72}. The authors of *Treaty* go on to quote Michael Mansell who states simply that 'Aboriginal sovereignty does exist' {Brennan, 2005, p72}. The issues of representation, narrativity, Australian nationalism, sovereignty all intersect on one very important aspect of Indigenous existence, and that is the issue of health and well being. As Moreton-Robinson and Behrendt have pointed out, the appearance of Indigenous peoples within the colonial narratives have been ignoble. The representation of Indigenous peoples as constructed within the colonial gaze lends greatly to not only how non Indigenous Australian's perceive Indigenous peoples, but also influences Indigenous peoples self perception. It is then important as a means to discussing increased Indigenous well being, that the issue of representation must be held accountable.

Aboriginal Phenomenology

> Who we are, how we define ourselves and our world, what our cultural ways are, and what are our cultural differences are all questions that are fundamental in any discussion about Indigenous identity {Dudgeon, 2000, p43}.

The issue of whom and what constitutes an authenticated Aboriginal perspective is an ongoing debate that is exists in the social domain as well as the creative. While the majority of non Indigenous Australians perceive 'tribal Aborigines' as being authentic, those Indigenous peoples living in other geographical locations (urban, rural) are considered as 'unauthentic' and as people who have lost their culture' {Dudgeon, 2000, p45}. The debate of authentic Aboriginality though has its origin in anthropology and more specifically eugenics; the question is the direct consequence of colonial intervention in the lives of Indigenous peoples. Dr Anita Heiss addresses the issue of Aboriginal self representation in her book *Dhuuluu – Yala : To Talk Straight*, discussing moments in Australian literature where non Indigenous peoples have positioned themselves as Indigenous and consequently created literary works uninformed by Indigenous subjective experience. In her introductory chapter, Heiss states that in literature created by non-Aborigines, there is the absence of

Aboriginal phenomenology in these works, ultimately impacting on the cultural value of the text {Heiss, 2003, p15} . Heiss' work is valuable in that it also points out that while it is preferable that non Aboriginal people not write narratives about Aboriginal experiences, the academic domain is rife with non Aboriginal people who have made careers by positioning themselves as authorities in Aboriginal history and studies {Heiss, 2004, p11}. The ongoing construction of Indigenous identity by non Indigenous peoples conflagrates the issues of an authentic subjective experience from that imposed by the western imagination. There is the recognition of the importance of Indigenous self representation as a way of challenging colonial notions of Aboriginality, and effectively humanising the unhumanised Aboriginal object within Australian history. This is a project that the western author must necessarily extricate him or herself from in order for Indigenous peoples to clarify what it means to be Indigenous.

The important point raised by Heiss is the issue of Aboriginal phenomenology in the construction of literary works for, by and about the Indigenous experience. It is Aboriginal phenomenology which is the starting point of this thesis, taking into contention the question of representation and its impact upon the well being experienced by Indigenous peoples. This thesis will explore the question of authentic Aboriginal subjectivity, and will ultimately question the very notion of Aborigine itself as a site of identity that is the product of colonial texts, ultimately imposing western meaning and value upon the Indigenous body. Moreton-

Robinson talks about this dehumanisation of Indigenous peoples as the intention of positioning and constructing whites as not only the moral authority in the land now known as Australia, but also the human;

> The existence of those who can be defined as truly human requires the presence of others who are considered less human. The development of a white person's identity requires that they be defined against other 'less than human' beings whose presence enables and reinforces their superiority {Moreton-Robinson, 2005, p76}.

As this thesis will go on to discuss, the necessity of the unhuman object to be positioned in proximity to the human subject is a phenomenon made necessary through the implementation of the western writing system within the land now known as Australia. The human does not exist in alienation, but exists only in the presence of that symbology representative of the unhuman. In other words, the text is incapable of stating what it is, and requires the presence of other signs to say what it is not. It is this component that will ultimately provide Indigenous peoples with the opportunity to depersonalise western colonisation as a process that replicates the systematic implementation of the western writing apparatus in other colonised lands, for colonisation is ultimately a process propelled by the need to create the

human and the author within those lands previously not colonised or to which the western body was a prior authority. In other words, the colonial process is defined by western writing, and in fact is key in the act of invasion and colonisation of Indigenous peoples and their lands.

In her book *Trauma Trails*, Professor Judy Atkinson asks, 'What is violence?' Atkinson tells us that violence is both an activity, as well as feeling words – both an activity and an experience {Atkinson, 2002, p11}. The violence of colonization is both what is done and what is experienced. It is within this framework of postponed Indigenous subjectivity that Aileen Moreton-Robinson addresses in her essay when speaking of Aborigines being objects and the known, rarely as subjects and the knower {Moreton-Robinson, 2005, p75}. The distinction between being object and subject, the known and the knower is fundamental in what would become my personal journey informed by Heiss' Aboriginal phenomenology. It would in short be a journey marked by moving from the known to the knower.

It is here that an examination of western language which would ultimately lead to an analysis of western writing systems primarily located in the written word, for it is writing that demarcates history from pre-history. It is an important point that Moreton-Robinson raises, for the western notion of the human cannot exist in isolation, but instead requires the presence of non human's, the assemblage of which gives value and meaning to not only the human or

the white body, but also to the non-human body, resulting in a gradation marked by not just skin colour, but more importantly the presence of and access to language, in this case English with its highest value culminating in the production of literature. First however, in order to fully comprehend the human as a construction made possible by the presence of western language, it is important to divest the wisdom the un-human or the known as Moreton-Robinson puts it, has embedded within the ancient languages and traditions of local and non local Indigenous peoples.

The policies that have shaped the lives of Indigenous peoples throughout Australian history have all involved in some form or another, control of the body perceived to be Aboriginal, as well as the bodies access to language. The connection between social control and language is well documented, and for the Aborigine; half-caste, quarter-caste, octoroon or full blood – the access to language was quantified along with blood. Further discussion will focus on how Indigenous peoples fight for language has also been one synonymous for their fight for their physical country. In the absence of physical access to country it may be argued, speaking one's language makes country present. For now though, let us explore the role of Indigenous languages and their relationship with the life-world.

Tuhiwai Smith's urge for Indigenous folk to dream a new dream, to survive the dismal statistics of being Indigenous within western society is an experience that addresses alienation and disconnection within our own lands. It is a call that speaks from beyond the veil of western societal domain, reaching into the realms of timelessness itself. It is a plea to challenge the material existence of western society by engaging with the metaphysical veracity of Indigenous ancestry in order to reach a new place that is also old. It is most of all a call to see things that we have long been taught not to see, and to no longer deny the sensuous power of the life-world in its infinite vibration and rhythm. It is the story of song, words and music that have been negated so that a material language may be erected in its place, limiting the life and potential of all beings, circumscribing the promise of eternity itself. It is an urge that calls into question not only what popularly constitutes language, but also the utility of writing as a technology of categorization and societal organization. It is required then that not only must the idea of language be called into question, but that of writing as a distinct concept.

The Power of Language

In David Crystal's *Language Death*, he speaks of the role of language and its importance to humankind, as well as the value of the diversity of language to the earth space itself. Crystal raises some important questions and associations, but of most interest here is the relationship between language, a healthy ecology, and the kind of death equal to physical death that occurs

when a language is lost. History is implicated in this loss, and as such, it is necessary then to examine the relationship between history and language death. Crystal refers to the findings of the Endangered Language Fund, whose opening statement concurs

> Languages have died off throughout history, but never have we faced the massive extinction that is threatening the world right now. As language professionals, we are faced with a stark reality: Much of what we study will not be available for future generations. The cultural heritage of many people is crumbling while we look on. Are we willing to shoulder the blame for having stood by and done nothing {Crystal, 2000, pvii}?

Invasion and colonization have been explored from many different angles, but in this instance, it is necessary to explore western cultural incursion from an aspect of the loss of language as a consequence of historicity, and the possible relatedness of the erosion of Indigenous languages and the high morbidity and mortality rates experienced by Indigenous peoples in the land now known as Australia. In this context then, imperialism, invasion and colonization or western historicity will be examined as the process whereby western language is imposed upon the lands and bodies of Indigenous peoples, and how Indigenous folk were organized within this process, for it is this process that leads us to the present where Indigenous peoples

feature largely in western consciousness and specifically the Australian historical narrative and social space as Aborigine, for it is as the Aborigine that Indigenous peoples entered the western administration.

> Writing or literacy, in a very traditional sense of the word, has been used to determine the breaks between past and present, the beginning of history and the development of theory. Writing has been viewed as the mark of a superior civilization and other societies have been judged, by this view, to be incapable of thinking critically and objectively, or having distance from ideas and emotions. Writing is part of theorizing and writing is part of history. Writing, history and theory, have come together {Smith, 1999, pp28-29}.

It is writing that demarcates prehistory from history. Within this frame then it is easy to comprehend that at one point in time – or prehistory – Indigenous folk did not occupy a position in western society for we had not yet entered into the western writing system. It is only when the administration of Indigenous peoples in association with the takeover of land became necessary, that Indigenous folk was affixed a space in western consciousness made possible by language administration. Tuhiwai Smith in discussing the role of writing in the

era of imperialism and history in a section titled '*The idea that history is constructed around binary categories'* says that

> This idea is linked to the historical method of chronology. In order for history to begin there has to be a period of beginning and some criteria for determining when something begins. In terms of history this was often attached to concepts of 'discovery', the development of literacy, or the development of a specific social formation. Everything before that time is designated as prehistory, belonging to the realm of myths and traditions, 'outside' the domain {Smith, 1999, p31}.

Tuhiwai Smith also points out that what is termed history as defined by the presence of writing is done so as an exclusivity, for other cultures that possessed a written language are positioned as prehistory.

> Literacy, as one example, was used as a criterion for assessing the development of a society and its progress to a stage where history can be said to begin. Even places such as India, China and Japan, however, which were very literate

> cultures prior to their 'discovery' by the West, were invoked through other categories which defined them as uncivilized. Their literacy, in other word, did not count as a record of legitimate knowledge {Smith, 1999, pp31-32}.

In other words, not all writing constitutes literature, and as shall be discussed, not all marks are words, nor do all bodies that make such marks constitute the author. The unassailability of western writing and its administration presents a threat not only to Indigenous bodies and land, but to the ancient temporality of the Indigenous body in existence before the erecting of history in the lands of Indigenous peoples. Young speaks of this process succinctly when he says that

> This description of the operations of capitalism as a territorial writing machine seems not only especially suited to the historical development of industrialization, but also describes rather exactly the violent physical and ideological procedures of colonization, deculturation and acculturation, by which the territory and cultural space of an Indigenous society must be disrupted, dissolved and then reinscribed according to the needs of the apparatus of the occupying power {Young, 1995, p170}.

The identity of Indigenous peoples has been violently reinscribed through the colonial writing machine. This re-inscription was necessary for reasons relating to language, but especially the colonial acquisition of land and resources that is at the heart of the colonial process. The process of colonisation, says Young, is two-fold. It is a simultaneous process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, through which not only is the land recoded, but also out of administrative necessity, the bodies of Indigenous peoples also, for it is this process that inevitably makes the construction of a colonial power possible.

> These structures of decoding and recoding, of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, operate rather like the simultaneous antithetical categories of Roget's Thesaurus: their repetitive wave-like movements upon the territories and cultures of the earth provide a dynamic model for the process of colonization, and also have the advantage of being able to describe both the historical material procedures of colonialism and its ideological operations, whether it be the severing of the body from the land, the destruction and reconstruction of cultures or the fabrication of knowledge according to the propriety of new disciplines. In this way it can be argued that Deleuze and

> Guattari have produced a theory of capitalism to which the operation of colonialism as a form of writing geography is central {Young, 1995, p170}.

It is here that we encounter the Aborigine as a deterritorialized, reterritorialized, decoded and recoded body formerly existing beyond western temporality and language. The Aborigine is the consequence of this violent process of which Young speaks, and as such, the temporal existence as an Aborigine existing within the limits of western language and colonial administration has been imbued by the process of colonisation itself. Due to this contamination of ancient selfhood, where Indigenous peoples were open to multiple realities and existing in a 'polyphasic culture' are now immersed in a monophasic culture.

> While polyphasic cultures leave certain doors and windows open to the possibilities of other worlds, monophasic cultures attempt to cement the entire wall. Thus, western culture in general fails to prepare individuals for an easy, fearless exploration of alternate phases of consciousness {Hume, 2002, p5}.

In the monophasic consciousness of western culture, the many realities represented by the Dreaming, is collapsed into one, where the multiple become instead the homogenised world

of colonial language, caged within the non-culturally distinct selfhood of Aborigine. It's the concept of Aborigine that not only obscures the possibility of re-entering a prior temporal existence, but as a mechanism of control and containment, the term Aborigine is a consequence of the material reality that defined it. It is at the moment that an ancient temporality attempts to embody the western concept of Aboriginality that one gives one's power over to the colonial administrators.

> Put as simply as this, your identity is who you are. If someone asks 'Who are you?', the answer they expect is your name. Perfectly straightforward, unless you suffer from anomia, the form of amnesia in which you forget your own identity, or unless circumstances are such that revealing your identity might be dangerous. The first of these cases is rare enough, but when does anyone actually ask you your identity except in threatening circumstances {Joseph, 2004, p1}?

'Where are you from?' and 'Are you Aboriginal?' are questions that constantly locate Indigenous folk as the Other in our own lands. The Indigenous person enters into a tenuous space at the completion of the question as uttered, for space becomes in an instant potentially unsafe depending on the non-Indigenous person asking the question. Since 1788, the land

now known as Australia became an unsafe place for Indigenous peoples. The violence of invasion and colonization rendered the land dissolute and chaotic. This disorder at the hands of invasion and colonization visited itself upon the Indigenous body. This violent visitation has resulted in a form of anomia as spoken about by Joseph, whereby not only is there the actuality and ongoing possibility of Indigenous peoples forgetting who we are, but there is also the holistic consequence of this forgetting that resonates within the neurology of our bodies.

This inquiry then moves to the consequence of the western construction of Aboriginality as an imposed subjectivity upon the Indigenous body and temporality. Indigenous peoples in being brought into western administration as Young pointed out did not only endure the seizure of lands, but also the destruction of the Indigenous body. The Aboriginal body is the product of monophasic consciousness and within the limited reality of the west is manipulated by the terms and conditions of writing as a historical process, locating the Indigenous body in Australian historicity. The role of the Aborigine in the Australian narrative and historicity has a biological consequence on the Indigenous body, for it is through the body that Indigenous peoples become complicit in historicity by concurring to identify and be identified as Aborigine. In being offered only two possibilities; Aborigine or non-Aborigine, we enter into the 'maze' of identity.

> What difference is there between choosing and being chosen when we can do nothing but submit to the choice {Derrida, 2001, p78}?

The lived experience of the Aborigine is reflected in the ongoing trauma endured by Indigenous peoples, trauma that I shall illustrate is a direct result of becoming complicit in historicity – for some by choice, for others trickery – but generally because Indigenous folk are embedded in a monophasic culture, the idea that alternative realities and identities are a real possibility, is denied by the power and strength of western language that orchestrates this ongoing illusion. As an Indigenous person, the means to accessing an alternative reality not governed by colonial administration and western materiality, is one that must be explored as a possibility, for it has been made necessary by the incredible pain that as an Aboriginal woman, I have endured. Postmodernism tells us that there is nothing beyond language, and indeed western society functions on the exclusion of all other possible realities, and therefore any attempt to heal from western language is posed as impossibility. I will argue that the postmodernists are right, but they are also wrong.

Language and the post modern agenda

You are he who writes and is written {Derrida, 2001, p78}.

The proposition put forward by postmodernists that to know a reality beyond the dominion of western language is impossibility; an impossibility held in place as spoken according to Tuhiwai Smith by the binary codes inherent to western language, thought, and consciousness. We are told that due to this binary, the likelihood of ever being free of western language and its power as a biological and social determinant is null and void, and any attempt at liberalism and freedom is tantamount to being free of language.

> Society is not simply *like* language. It *is* language; and since we are all entrapped in our language, no external standard of truth, no external referent for knowledge, is available to us outside the specific "discourses" that we inhabit {Wood, 1997, p5}.

The role of language in manipulating the temporality of the body is the intention of western language for it is the basis through which one 'inhabits a discourse'. It is this imposed singular reality as it pertains in this case to Aboriginal subjectivity from which it is purported escape is impossible on the basis that there is only one reality – monophasic – available to us. For poststructuralists belonging to a monophasic culture perhaps, this is true. For Indigenous peoples, the notion of multiple realities is a familiar concept, for the erasure of one reality and its replacement with another is a theme of invasion and colonisation. Hume in her landmark book speaks of the impact of Enlightenment upon the concept of multiple realities,

> Since the Enlightenment, the notion of other worlds and alternative realities has been progressively devalued by the importance of rationalism. The Enlightenment ushered in a secular period from which emerged many positive and valuable changes, but it also emphasised the material dimension of the physical universe, to the detriment of the spiritual dimension {Hume, 2002, p5}.

Material reality and culture that is the consequence of Enlightenment then, contextualizes the divergent realities of Indigenous and non Indigenous peoples. The inherited theory of one reality frames Aboriginal subjectivity and ongoing subjugation. The main concern of Woods et al is that if language is all there is then one can never hope to attain freedom and liberation,

residual concepts of the Enlightenment and core values of the current state of humanity. In the introduction of *In Defense of History*, Ellen Meiksins claims that

> Postermodernists are preoccupied with language, culture and "discourse". For some, this seems to mean quite literally that human beings and their social relations are constituted by language, and nothing more, or at the very least that language is all we can know about the world and that we have access to no other reality {Wood, 1997, p5}.

The agenda of the postmodernists is brought into contention. *In Defense of History* argues that the postmodernists have contributed to the impression that western grand narratives and social discourse are impenetrable realities within which all of us are stuck. The postmodernists have accepted that the limits of language make it impossible to truly discuss and critique western culture, let alone affect a great shift in consciousness. Postmodernists are accused of rather, accepting the capitalist and consumerist benefits of western culture, rather than truly trying to disrupt the western grand narrative.

In Defense of History speaks of the role of language in social relationships, and the "social construction" of knowledge. More than anything else, postmodernism speaks of the unassailability of attempting to truly understand the human constitution as created through language. Language through postmodernism was made an independent realm, a separating of language from the historical process that makes language necessary. It is as though postmodernism conflagrates the argument it is attempting to make; that 'we must reject the left's traditional "economistic" concerns and forms of knowledge like political economy. We must, in fact, repudiate any "grand narratives," such as Western ideas of progress, including Marxist theories of history' {Wood, 1997, p6}.

The key argument is language as a separate realm to that system which produces it, threatens the concept of historicity. In order to critique language, it is assumed that the language is not a product of history, nor is the inquiry itself viewed as an ongoing production of historicity.

> Language is the immediate actuality of thought. Just as philosophers have given thought an independent existence, so they were bound to make language into an independent realm' – Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* {Wood, 1997, p26}.

It is an attempt to articulate how does one critique the language within which one is defined, decentered, and alienated, an outcome the author credits to the Enlightenment? Marxists claim that all knowledge is the result of language, and cannot come '… to us unmediated, that all knowledge is appropriated through the medium of language and social practice' {Wood, 1997, p5}. The question is contextualized by the Marxist concepts of human emancipation. The struggle for freedom and liberalism, is confounded by the fact that language is understood to bring into reality the very reality that is perceived and experienced, and that science cannot because of the constraints of language, 'speak of a common external reality'{Wood, 1997, p6}. So if everything is a product of language, how does one move beyond language in attempt to discuss western ideology, discourse and grand narratives?

> Since there are no systems and no history susceptible to causal analysis, we cannot aspire to some kind of united opposition, some kind of general human emancipation, or even a general contestation of capitalism, of the kind that socialists used to believe in. The most we can hope for is a lot of particular and separate resistances {Wood, 1997, p9}.

Within the postmodernist argument for example, it would insist that the capacity for someone like me to question Aboriginality, since Aboriginality as a site of identity positioning me

within western discourse occurs through language, there is nothing beyond this reality. Even should I attempt to speak of Aboriginality from outside the western discourse, any information would be 'tainted' by western ideology itself.

> Postmodernism sometimes looks like the ambiguities of capitalism as seen from the vantage point of those who enjoy its benefits rather more than they suffer its costs. In the final analysis, "postmodernity" for postmodernist intellectuals seems to be not a historical moment but the human condition itself, from which there is no escape {Wood, 1997, p10}.

We encounter once again the issue of the human condition. It is perhaps the assumption that 'I' am human that prevents freedom. Postmodernism, a theory of signs and symbols, the human defined through the presence of materialism; what is not discussed is the concept of the human as a product of language and is a statement of material reality itself. The core argument of this text is that the Enlightenment principles of reason and freedom are unassailable after being reconstituted by postmodernists, and that the attempt to launch an honest critique on the western social order that promotes some identities at the cost of the others, is irretrievable, and is a product of western language itself. In this, there is no way to truly call into question western ideological practices rooted in the economy of knowledge and

social labour practices underpinned by consumerism as an expression of capitalist culture. But it is necessary though, that the role of language as the organising mechanism that enable capitalism and western economic domination be analysed, since as according to Lakoff and Núñez,

> Human concepts are not random or arbitrary; they are highly structured and limited, because of the limits and structure of the brain, the body, and the world {Lakoff, 2000, p1}.

The problem of course is that while the critique of postmodernism realises western ideology as a system that is impenetrable by other modes of being, other thoughts, and other bodies, it is overlooked that perhaps this is the very intention of the system; that the system is not an arbitrary by-product of it's history, but is history itself. It is the evolution of western language to negate alternative wisdoms and beliefs of all others, thus maintaining the centrality of western epistemology and ontology. More specifically, such theories are based on and constantly reinforce the centrality of the western body in historicity. Further still, historicity is explicitly the mechanism of the western body in silencing, cancelling the other, while at the same time preserving its presence.

> If the system really did seem to have cancelled all opposition to itself, then it would not be hard to generalize from this to the vaguely anarchistic belief that *system* is oppressive as such…. for the fact is that if the system is an all-powerful, then there can be by definition nothing beyond it, any more than there can be anything beyond the infinite curvature of cosmic space {Wood, 1997, p18}.

From the stand point of Indigenous peoples, the inability for the western system to acknowledge ancient wisdoms and cosmologies is the very premise that makes notions of self recovery, sovereignty, and treaty challenging. If we are to listen to postmodernists, it is in fact impossible. That is made on the assumption though, that Indigenous peoples are human. The materialist, consumerist, capitalistic venture of western ideology is located in the fact that its system cannot be interrupted.

> If there *were* something outside the system, then it would be entirely unknowable and thus incapable of saving us; but if we could draw it into the orbit of the system, so that it could gain some effective foothold there, its otherness would be instantly contaminated and its subversive power would thus dwindle to nothing. Whatever negates the system in theory would thus

> be logically incapable of doing so in practice. Anything we can *understand* can by definition not be radical, since it must be within the system itself; but anything which escapes the system could be heard by us as no more than a mysterious murmur {Wood, 1997, pp18 - 19}.

This impenetrability of the western system as a means of dissolving alternative meanings, especially those belonging to Indigenous peoples and ancient cultural practices, it is argued, is destroyed by the system upon entry into it. The very means, through which things become known within western ideology, is the same means by which they are destroyed. It is this more than anything that is positioned as the greatest challenge for Indigenous peoples. It is necessary to find a way to discuss ancient wisdoms and cosmologies without it being contaminated, and rendered voiceless and powerless.

> Such thinking has abandoned the whole notion of system which is internally contradictory – which has that installed at its heart which can potentially undo it. Instead, it thinks in rigid oppositions of "inside" and "outside," where to be on the inside is to be complicit and to be on the outside is to be impotent {Wood, 1997, p19}.

Then how realistic and authentic are western notions of liberalism and freedom? While the contribution of the Enlightenment fostered such aspirations as a human quality and possibility, it would seem the language of the west though has within its premise the power to destroy all forms of alternative wisdoms and cosmologies that may at any time challenge western dominance and centrality. The west then to give up on the thought of ever being able to reconcile the impossibility of being free from its own language and therefore free from the social orders that promote social inequality, is referred to by Eagleton as *libertarian pessimism* {Wood, 1997, p19}.

> … libertarian, because one would not have given up on the dream of something quite other than what we have; pessimism, because one would be much too bleakly conscious of the omnipotence of law and power to believe that such a dream could ever be realized {Wood, 1997, p19}.

The power of the west is in its system, impenetrable for its rooted-ness in material reality sustained by its language, means that the system as such cannot be subverted, for all attempts to subvert the system would eventually be consumed by the system itself.

> If the more abstract questions of state, mode of production, and civil society seem for the moment too hard to resolve, then one might shift one's political attention to something more intimate and immediate, more like the living and fleshly, like the body {Wood, 1997, p21}.

The system referred to so heavily by postmodernism is the western language itself, and the agency of flesh and blood freedom can only be achieved through bodily and temporal release from the constraints of western language. As an Indigenous person then, the concept of liberation and freedom is twofold; how to find a language that affects liberation of the body from western vernacular, while facilitating the re-immersion of the Indigenous body in the life-world. It has been stated by postmodernism that this cannot occur through western language as it is the language or the system itself that prevents it from happening, and the outcome of Abrams enquiry is that writing itself is effacing the life-world and western man's relatedness to it.

The conundrum of phenomenology

> A body has a matrix of meaning imprinted on it from the external world, which influences all its behaviour, even on a neurological level {Fernandes, 2002}.

Husserl saw the need to deviate from the cold objectivity of the sciences and attempted to re-introduce the body into scientific discourse. His intentions though admirable, were limited by the language of science itself as well as his own body, the product of scientific discourse. Husserl's phenomenology was still a mode of scientific based inquiry, and therefore constrained by the language of science. Husserl influenced many disciplines, psychology, and psychoanalysis to name a few. If Husserl's intention that the edifice of scientific knowledge was to be built up through intuition without presupposition, he overlooked his own body as the product of language and knowledge, and in this, the perceptual life-world would be neuro-semantically defined, and sensorial limited and predetermined by the temporality and biology of Husserl's physiognomical existence. Husserl was actually positioning the western body as *the* sensory organism through which the world is revealed. The sciences that were influenced by Husserl's phenomenology position the western (male) body as the normative, and any inquiry into existence ideologically closed to any other way of being, any other way of seeing and intuiting. Husserl's science even in his attempt to extend it by including the body, denied the possible alternative modes of being in that phenomenology denies the wisdoms and perceptual modes of other bodies.

"Phenomenology provides a founding "first philosophy" for all knowledge by its method of describing the essence of "the thing themselves" as they are constituted in consciousness"

{Stiver, 1999, p424}. Phenomenology is the site of language production, and more specifically, is the material and mechanistic existence of a body that possesses language deployed in the production of language itself. Phenomenology ultimately serves the site of language production through the projection of western consciousness onto the experiential world inhabited by Husserl. Through phenomenology, the body became a locus of language production via phenomenological investigation. Husserl resembling Descartes believed that 'the measure of true knowledge and of adequate foundations was "apodictic" knowledge," or knowledge beyond dispute, 'Husserl's phenomenology is a search for those a-priori subjective structures which appear with self-evidence and ground logic in apodictic truth' {Palermo, 1978, p69}.

Stiver says of Husserl, "One of the first results of his phenomenology was the insight that conscious, active experience is "intentional." … Consciousness is consciousness-of" {Stiver, 1999, p424}. Husserlian notions of apodictic truth then moves us further along the trajectory, compelling one to arrive at the next concept, and that is the concept of autopoiesis and allopoietic functions of the system. The concepts of allopoiesis and autopoiesis is the finding of biologists Maturana and Valera, who in attempting to find a biological basis for cognition, observe human beings as living systems.

> Anything said is said by an observer. In his discourse the observer speaks to another observer, who could be himself; whatever applies to the one applies to the other as well. The observer is a human being, that is, a living system, and whatever applies to living systems applies also to him {Maturana, 2002}.

Husserl's phenomenology is an inquiry into how the body becomes the locus of autopoiesis – or an organism's ability to reproduce itself - in its every day activity and actions. Autopoiesis is defined on the *Web Dictionary of Cybernetics and Systems* as

> Autopoiesis the process whereby an organization produces itself. An autopoietic organization is an autonomous and self-maintaining unity which contains component-producing processes. The components, through their interaction, generate recursively the same network of processes which produced them. An autopoietic system is operationally closed and structurally state determined with no apparent inputs and outputs. A cell, an organism, and perhaps a corporation are examples of autopoietic systems {Krippendorff, 1986}.

The consequence of Husserl's phenomenology is not only limited by the scientific language that frames his inquiry, but presents a context through which western language is made transparent. Husserl's phenomenology in its assumed monophasic world view touches on the concept extrapolated by Young; and that is the concept of the dual nature of colonialism as a process of simultaneous deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Autopoiesis is further defined by Krippendorff as

> Literally, self-production. The property of systems whose components (1) participate recursively in the same network of productions that produced them, and (2) realize the network of productions as a unity in the space in which the components exist (after Varela) (*see* recursion). Autopoiesis is a process whereby a system produces its own organization and maintains and constitutes itself in a space. E.g., a biological cell, a living organism and to some extend a corporation and a society as a whole {Krippendorff, 1986}.

Western language as a site of autopoietic function then is also the site of a simultaneous occurrence whereby the system that is constantly recreating itself, concurrently produces. While the system reproduces itself, it reproduces the other that calls it into being. As Young discloses, '…the sameness of the West will always be riven by difference' {Young, 1995,

p1}. In other words the capacity of western language to systematically reproduce itself is required to also produce something that appears to be other than itself. While allopoietic systems are positioned as separate to an autopoietic system, in the instance of western language and its reproduction of the human, the simultaneous production of something that appears to be different is part of the autopoietic function. The phenomenological projection of the western male body into space positioning it at the centre of the emergent body based scientific narrative required a symbol. Like the Greeks, the symbolic function of the text is made possible by the presence of the Other, the thing that is in appearance, not of the system itself. The ongoing production of difference and the other, then, is the required allopoietic function of the colonising machine that out of necessity sustains autopoiesis.

This is perhaps the greatest contribution of Husserl's concept of truth as apodictic. While phenomenology presents a conundrum as the locale through which alternative realities are accessed, I shall now give account of this experience from an Indigenous perspective.

Phenomenology on the way to spirituality

In borrowing from Abrams 'Philosophy on the way to ecology' here, I will position phenomenology as the methodological framework through which to explain and translate Indigenous spirituality.

> We, as human beings, are living systems and become alive … as we language and emotion … with each other to form the world. Therefore, our world… is the history of our languaging and emotioning and it is continuously alive and evolving at any given moment with our languaging and emotioning. As we reflect on our experiences we provide different explanations in accordance to our histories of languaging and emotioning and as a result our experiences don't represent an objective reality independent from our languaging and emotioning {deSantis, 1998} [Italics in original].

Through phenomenological investigation, existence has become a dance between the illusion of material reality produced by western language, and the ancient world of my Ancestor's. The multi-dimensions co-existing at any one time became apparent to me, for in their appearance I gained perspective on the limited existence of the socially constructed Aborigine. The mere possibility of there being another reality temporally unlocked my senses. The world beyond – not a nothingness, but rather an *everything* – became possible.

Suddenly I was no longer trapped within the temporality of western language, defined by its restrictions and deprivation, but exposed to the infinite world of the old people. It is within this context that the illusion of Aborigine called into non being by the language of the west phenomenological emerged, dancing like a heat wave; the jurisdiction of the word, its boundary that partitioned my existence from the rest of society, visible and tangible. The term Aborigine located my body within western consciousness, simultaneously annihilating the customs and continuum of the ancient philosophies of this land now known as Australia.

> In my own quest, I was seeking movements that were not 'culture bound' but were more biologically based. Would such movements allow for a more universal connection to life? Would it be possible for human beings to feel in such resonance with their biosphere that we could become planetary beings primarily and cultural entities secondarily (Conrad, 1997, p64)?

Sitting beneath this tree, the wind gently blowing, this land is alive in me, and me in it. There is something here that speaks through and to me, and it exists beyond language, this language anyhow. The intergenerational obliteration of my original languages by colonial forces replaced with this textual alien language of English robs me of place. English, foreign and alien to the land of my Ancestors contains me, separates me from

this country, and a relationship so deep that only the language of my Ancestors could ever reveal it. Husserl felt that the west had sacrificed much in its materialist scientific endeavour, but especially, the west was no longer open to the life-world, the world of eternal and constant change. But my body, this body, is an ancient body. The DNA of my body carries the same DNA of my Ancestors, so immediately when I began the phenomenological investigation into my being and direct relationship to the world, the human world and the world beyond; the world of my Ancestors made itself known. My body began to listen and respond to vibrations, forming impressions and communicating phenomenon beyond that which I was capable of expressing through this foreign language. My body could listen and speak in an ancient language, though I was incapable of speaking it. I look out at this country, and I long to hear the stories that I know are there; still there. They are old, very old. The language of the colonizer has removed me from my land in that I cannot speak to the land in my ancient tongue. Still, I can speak energetically, communicate with the vibration of my body with this land, this earth, and she speaks back. But the stories and songlines of the Ancestors remain unknown to me at this point in time; the conceptual domain of western ideology and language seeks to keep me from my place in this country, but holds me fast in a semantic imposed identity within the western narrative and social order. I feel close. So close to this freedom beyond the veil, beyond the limits of western language, for my body is old and knows this land better than I can even imagine. But to get there, I must journey beyond western ideology, language and the limits imposed by colonial force.

In order to reach beyond the veil, it is necessary that I embark on a journey that is beyond the veil, allowing my body to lead me, learning to trust my own body in a way that colonization has equally taught me to distrust it. In this discipline, I am confronted with the limits of my being as the consequence of colonization, the fear my body has come to represent to me as an Aboriginal woman, throwing up a lifetime of chaos like the bloom of the cotton tree that floats down my street. It is chaos, yet it is directed, going somewhere. I learn to trust.

> … understand the strange difference between the experienced world, or worlds, of Indigenous, vernacular cultures and the world of modern European and North American civilization. For phenomenology is the Western philosophical tradition that has most forcefully called into question the modern assumption of a single, wholly determinable, object reality {Abram, 1996, p31}.

The very roots of phenomenology was an attempt by Husserl to move beyond the objectivity of science and to reinstate the primacy of the body, the very thing the sciences were perceived as obliterating in its attempt to inscribe an object reality. The value of an object reality of course ensure and facilitate the concept of 'absolute' – whether they be absolute truths, being,

and existence. In this, western scientific discourse has had a fundamental role in implanting western culture as a dominant social force globally.

Indigenous spirituality

> Although awareness gets programmed in thousands of ways, the most convincing are what we call beliefs. A belief is something you hold on to because you think it is true. But unlike a thought, which actively forms words or images in your brain, a belief is generally silent {Chopra, 1993, p56}.

What began as a phenomenological investigation quickly turned into a spiritual quest. Was it ever anything other than that? Personally, I know it wasn't. Like the ancients, all bodies are part of the continuum and time is but a moment which encapsulates past and future not as different and opposing temporalities as in western time, but all exists right here, right now. I listened to the Ancestors, followed their instructions, translated and researched. I was being led. There is one component that no amount of data or methodology could provide, and that is the intense belief that was required on my behalf. I was called to believe in something that I was told no longer existed. I was asked to believe in the Dreaming, not as a past concept, but a current, ongoing, unstoppable force that will exist as long as the land itself exits, and even then, as long as one believes.

Suddenly, I had a foundation, something to frame my spirit, a context for my body that wasn't western. Though I did not have access to my languages, the potential of the Dreaming was now alive in me, and me alive in it. I walked onto the path the Ancestors had laid down for me, and accepted the tests laid along the way, for each test would allow me to pass into another level of understanding, another level of existence, and as long as I responded to these tests, the path to my own freedom was being revealed also. I did not turn to books immediately at the beginning of this research, and when I did I attempted to do so with the intention of giving myself a minimalist academic framework within which to conduct my inquiry. In other words, I disengaged with the human concept of reading, and instead turned towards the world of my Ancestors, the life-world, focusing on the signs and the mystery through which they emerged.

I believed once again in the magic of communication between myself and the infinite, the world *out there* as it was manifest to me *in here*. The world as it was revealed to me is also the unravelling of my own self, my own place unique in the constant flux of things. They were always unpredictable and therefore unexpected. The beings that shared my day became more and more obvious to me in their communication. I awoke one morning, getting ready for my day I left the house, and was greeted where the steps ended, by a blue tongue lizard. I had by now granted that nothing but nothing was without meaning, and in my listening, would find out the importance of the blue tongue lizard. Granted that it would have as many

different meanings as there are clan groups and nations, but I had learned to trust what it was that was being communicated to me in the gaining trust of myself. I entered the world of polyphasic consciousness, or of multiple realities. My guidance was the omnipresence of my Ancestors, as the beings the west distinguished as sentient and non sentient, and realms defined as atomic and sub-atomic. For me now, they merged as One, and in this world, I began to glimpse the edge of western consciousness, for from the periphery of western society and language, the realm of ancient temporality began to shimmer once again for me.

During this time, a message was passed on to me through an elder, my aunty, who in consensus with my mother passed me a message stick. My aunty said the old people came to her in her dream and handed her a large book, and their message was simple; 'Just write.'

Language as a place of struggle

> Often when the radical voice speaks about domination we are speaking to those who dominate. Their presence changes the direction and shape of our words. Language is also a place of struggle … We are rooted in language, wedded, have our being in words. The oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves – to rewrite, to reconcile, to renew. Our words are not without meaning. They are an action – a resistance {Hooks, 1989, p28}.

Language is the sovereign soul, colonization the mechanism through which Indigenous folk has been deprived sovereignty, presenting for many Indigenous peoples difficulty in knowing land and body.

> As a poet and writer, I deeply love and I deeply hate words. I love the infinite evidence and change and requirements and possibilities of language; every human use of words that is joyful, or honest, or new because experience is new, or old because each personal history testifies to inherited pleasures and/or inherited, collective memories of peril, pain, and even genocide…. But as a Black poet and writer, I hate words that cancel my name and my history and the freedom of my future: I hate words that condemn and refuse the language of my people … {Jordan, 1989, p37}.

June Jordan's appeal for the legitimization of Black English captures the relationship between words and reality and the struggle of a Black poet and writer in having to use a language and technology which one is capable of loving, yet acknowledging the power of words to affect from outside in. The reality of bodies and land shaped by words is dually the

site of love and struggle and perhaps Audrey Lorde as cited by Smith says it best when she states, “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” {Smith, 1999, p19}.

Our languages were forcibly removed through the colonial process. These languages though, contained the philosophies and meanings of our ancient selves, were containers of knowledge developed over many millennia. The removal of languages equalled the removal of meaning – of ourselves and how we relate to the world. The absence of language has meant that our authentic Indigenous Self has been denied us. Our capacity to speak with each other in our mother tongue(s) was removed, and the colonisers who wanted to deterritorialize our external physical landscape, were also through the removal of language attempting to deterritorialize our inner landscape. Once deterritorialized, our inner and outer land was then reterritorialized within western colonial meaning.

> If these [primitive] societies were not destroyed from without, they might endure indefinitely. The temporal category applicable to them has nothing to do with the one we employ to understand, the development of our own society {Lévi-Strauss, 1958}.

In order to overcome the primacy of sensuous immersion in the life-world, the duality of body and mind arose out of western man’s desire to control and dominate the life-world, i.e.

humanize the life-world so that it was transformed into an environment within which he is positioned as the most powerful.

The empire writes back: recovering the body

> Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder… Decolonization is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature which results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies… The settler and 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. The settler owes the fact of his very existence, that is to say his property, to the colonial system.
>
> *The Damned,* Fanon

Colonial histories as they are written have seized the power through writing to represent Aboriginal people in ways to support the colonial position. Tuhiwai Smith speaks of the importance of Indigenous folk reclaiming the power to right our own histories, to represent ourselves in ways so we do not appear alien to ourselves. The process of colonization, though still incomplete, was a mechanism that sought to possess the lands of Indigenous peoples. It

not only stole our lands, but through the power of language and its concurrent physical force, colonialism took possession of our bodies. It is because of this, any discussion about decolonization must include the discussions about taking back our very own bodies. Tuhiwai Smith touches on writing and the power and construction represented by the historical canon. The issues raised by Tuhiwai Smith can be broken down into three important issues;

1. the pre-existing pre-colonial order of Indigenous cosmology unacknowledged and then destroyed by colonialism
2. the need for Indigenous peoples to write our own histories
3. the negation of Indigenous perspective in colonial discourse

The issues raised by Indigenous writers, scholars, intellectuals, sovereigns, pertain to one basic principle, and that is the legitimization of the Indigenous world view that existed pre-colonialism, and the need to acknowledge self empowerment and sovereignty in Indigenous well being. The loss of land and the loss of well being are notably tandem in the writings of most Indigenous sovereigns, and the need to have our voices acknowledged as a necessary part of recovery is presented as being of utmost importance. 'Part of this exercise is about recovering our own stories of the past' {Smith, 1999, p39}.

Indigenous folk forged a relationship with the life-world that bound the Indigenous body to country itself, interweaving the sense of well-being, physical and spiritual procreation through the earth's rhythm and infinite cycles. This relationship is often represented in decolonization theories as sovereignty and land title. To accept a western notion of belonging located in the concept of property is to forsake an ancient way of being. While many Indigenous scholars may well disagree with this and call it idealism, there is a depth of relatedness between body and country that is still not fully exposed or translated. Due to the very personal nature of identity and health, a legitimate discussion on decolonization must then be a structure that allows the personalized body to re-articulate, reinvent and move towards an authentic sense of self not located within colonial discourse, but in timelessness.

The problem at present is the dichotomy of human and dehumanization. The assumption is that we are all human, even though Tuhiwai Smith says that Indigenous folk are constantly struggling with not being considered fully human, to be savage {Smith, 1999, p264}. By assuming that we were first human, and then dehumanized is the trick of western language. Instead of searching for an authentic sense of self embedded within the timeless concepts of pre-colonial existence, an ancient way of immersion in and relating with the life-world, Indigenous folk have been constrained, caught up in arguments with western ideology, demanding that western sense of justice and ideology acknowledge our humanness. The human itself is a code, and writing the scaffold that frames and protects its domain. Tuhiwai

Smith's acknowledgement of the ongoing labour of Indigenous folk in defining the human is correct, for we know what is unhuman.

It is fundamental that from such a process whereby the code of the human is revealed, as well as the functions that position Indigenous peoples as unhuman. The site of the unhuman constrains Indigenous folk within a temporality that is suspended between pre-colonial time and the colonial time. Caught in the struggle to have our humanity acknowledged, Indigenous folk are tricked into forfeiting the full potential of selfhood that will establish a congruency between our biological make-up and the language that shapes our personal universe, the cosmology of our Ancestors. The colonists have been so far successful in convincing many Indigenous folk that to turn towards the past is not an option and the only solution exists within the realm of western language signified by humanity. But the human itself is a construction of language that implies a biological reality, a considered allegiance to the very history that has written Indigenous sovereignty out of existence.

> The named person is contained, to a certain degree, by their given name. However, in order to be a person, which involves being a discernible object and the member of a community, it is necessary that the person is named, and therefore determined. The act of first naming thereby allows the freedom of personhood through its determination, just as the mute world of perception allows the cacophony of thought and just as the body is granted its

> intentionality through its status as flesh within the world {Tschaepe, 2003, p76}.

The most important aspect of this inquiry is into the bodily basis of reality itself. Each and every person is but a body, and as the phenomenologist's helped us to understand, that a body is central to experience. Eastern philosophy also teaches us that the body is but a moment in universal consciousness, a manifestation of the universe itself at any one place and time. Any inquiry into the affect of the English language upon Indigenous health then must necessarily be one that explores an ancient timelessness, a way of being that predates time and fixed identity, or the object subject reflexivity of western ideology and language. In order to obtain health, the idea of dualism must be overcome.

> The late Thomas Hanna, like myself a recovering philosopher, succeeded in gaining broad acceptance for a name and theoretical umbrella to the many particular schools: he called the field "Somatics," inspired both by Husserl's vision of "somatology," a science that would unite a methodical knowledge of the body derived from experiential studies with the biological sciences; and by the classical Greek *soma*, the living bodily person, in contrast to *necros*, the dead mass of flesh {Berdayes, 2004}.

It seems dualism is making everyone sick. Hanna's involvement in the recovery of the western body 'from the existential sickness of dualism', signify the west's attempt to propose a framework through which the Cartesian mind body split is overthrown for the purpose of holistic being.

> Husserl's call to return to the things themselves caught my imagination the first time I read it… When the thing itself is our own bodies, the problem is even greater given the incrustations of ideas and habits which aggregate themselves daily onto our experiences of breathing, muscle tension, joint movement, and the endless nooks and crannies of our neuromuscularities {Berdayes, 2004}.

It is the idea of dualism that must be overcome. It is the idea of the boundary between body and earth that must be overcome. It is the idea of the Aborigine as a constructed and embodied identity must be overcome. Implicated in the recovery from dualism, is the recovery from the west's alienation from the life-world as proposed by Abrams. The west stopped listening to their bodies, and as Indigenous peoples who have been colonized, the greatest loss is the sensuous open-ness between the life-world and Indigenous body. The difference is that while Indigenous languages emerge from the experience of being in the life-world, western language is a system composed in alienation from the life-world with the

intention of shaping experience. The human conceptual domain is contained by western language, made possible through the technology of writing.

> An astute observer might discern as well the debilitating effects of writing upon the collective practice of memory, as what had previously been accomplished through the memorized repetition of ritual poems, songs, and stories was transferred to an external and fixed artefact. But it was hardly possible to discern the pervasive influence of letters upon patterns of perception and contemplation in general… Nevertheless, we may be sure that the shapes of our consciousness *are* shifting in tandem with the technologies that engage our senses – much as we can now begin to discern … how the distinctive shape of Western philosophy was born of the meeting between the human senses and the alphabet in ancient Greece {Abram, 1996, p115}.

Autoethnographic writing

> What comes to me, not what I summon up; not an "authority," simply a circular memory. Which is what the inter-text is: the impossibility of living outside the infinite text {Barthes, 1976, p36}.

In a society defined and determined by textuality, how does one then attempt to be free of the very thing that defines one's being? Notions of freedom and liberation, strong Enlightenment ideals that offer a sense of hope and provides a directive, a future temporal idea of being free; although 'The freedom of text or language would come to compensate for the unfreedom of the system as a whole'{Wood, 1997, p22}. For Indigenous peoples, the struggle to be free of the text is the same as the struggle to decolonize, to move beyond the parameters of western language that keeps us separated, alienated, not only from our lands, but each other. In the immersion within western textual culture that westerner's speak of as being beyond the veil the nothingness beyond the limits of western consciousness, language and knowledge, is the same place that Indigenous folk will begin to reconnect with a former temporality – a temporality that is still available to us. So while westerners may speak of nothingness and the void, for Indigenous peoples, there potentially exists a form of liberation that remains unknown to western commentators.

> If the system is everywhere, then it would seem, like the Almighty himself, to be visible at no particular point; and it would therefore become possible to believe, paradoxically enough, that whatever was out there was not in fact a system at all. It is only a short step from claiming that the system is too complex to be represented to declaring that it does not exist {Wood, 1997, p 19}.

Issues of health, wellbeing, mortality and morbidity are the core of issues pertaining to the process of decolonization. In the absence of original languages, Indigenous peoples in the process of decolonization are presented with a pervasive, impenetrable reality that obscures the original world view contained in the whispering, the song of Indigenous languages.

> Our language commits us to the existence of house, dogs, fire engines, and quarks. When we finally settle down into the language that we use to get our day-to-day work done, the words in *this* language tell us what is real {Gregory, 1988, p200}.

But it is not Indigenous languages that commit us to the world of house and dogs, for these are material concepts, and the language of materialism that embeds Indigenous folk in a material world, is the same language that prevents many of us from speaking about an alternative reality. The inability to speak of an alternative reality is also the inability to be free. With this, the proposition becomes how do we move beyond the totality of the text, a world demarcated and made possible through western writing, if the world we encounter is the product of writing itself, rich with notions of an absolute reality existing independent to our own selves?

> But totality might also seem something of an illusion because there would be no very obvious political agent for whom society might present itself as a totality. There are those who need to grasp how it stands with them in order to be free, and who find that they can do this only by grasping something of the overall structure with which their own immediate situation intersects… But if some of those traditional political agents' *need* of it that gives it its force {Wood, 1997, p20}.

The local Indigenous experience, and more specifically my experience as an Indigenous person whose land has been reconfigured through colonial language and western material world view, the force that shapes my subjectivity and body, is the symbolic sign of the Aborigine. Identified and identifying as an Aborigine I am entrenched within a material world, a world of hierarchical structures deployed through racism. It has been necessary to question the idea of Aborigine, but the proposition that beyond Aborigine there is nothing is the dichotomy, the chasm that this work attempts to bridge.

> Everything would become an interpretation, including that statement itself. And what would also gradually implode, along with reasonably certain knowledge, would be the idea of a human subject "centred" and unified

> enough to take significant action. For such significant action would now seem in short supply; and the result, once more, would be to make a virtue out of necessity by singing the praises of the diffuse, decentre, schizoid human subject – a subject who might well not be "together" enough to topple a bottle off a wall, let alone bring down the state …{Wood, 1997, p20}.

Thinkers such as Fanon et al propose that the process of decolonization will be a violent one. The change put in process by the mere suggestion of decolonization is often received as fearful, for both Indigenous and non Indigenous peoples alike. Talks about Reconciliation, Native Title and Sovereignty populate the figurative landscape of western concepts and postponed ideals. Who are going to be the folk who reach beyond the reality demarcated by western language, and in doing so, reach beyond the biological limits imposed by the same language? As suggested by Eagleton, the question is who might well be "together" enough' to do this?

When such topics are approached, it is usually spoken about in the collective sense; that as a people we were oppressed, and as a people we shall be freed. The point of this thesis however, is to collapse the plural, and instead of approaching any discussions of liberation

and freedom within a homogenous context, instead steer it once again to the unique temporality of each body, and in this, offer a framework whereby as colonized peoples, each person has the tools to begin his or her own retrieval from western writing, and the English language.

Changing vocabulary

> *I lack imagination you say*
>
> *No. I lack language.*
>
> *The language to clarify*
>
> *my resistance to the literate …*
>
> *Cherrie Moraga* {Smith, 1999, p40} [Italics in original]

For the majority of the research and composition of this project, I have been without language. The struggle, the intense need to be free of the reality imposed upon me as an Aboriginal person, was killing me, and the language available to express the experience of this oppression is the language that was extracting my life force.

> Baker calls psycho-social domination, in its various components, cultural genocide, cultural imperialisms, thought control or brainwashing (1983:35). Aboriginal people would call this the greatest violence, the violence that brings the loss of spirit, the destruction of self, of the soul {Atkinson, 2002, p69}.

In *Songlines and Trauma Trails*, Judy Atkinson presents subjective experiences of Aboriginal peoples in a discourse of healing. It is a recount that speaks to me, of my experience as an Aboriginal person growing up in a community. The interplay of western material concepts, the residue of Indigenous philosophy, sensibility, and cultural word view positioned me in the nothingness that Sartre speaks of. The nothingness is not beyond the limits of western consciousness, but it is here, firmly positioned within it, identified and identifiable as an Aborigine.

> The results are a group of profoundly hurt people living with multiple layers of traumatic distress, chronic anxiety, physical ill-health, mental distress, fears, depressions, substance abuse, and high imprisonment rates. For many, alcohol and other drugs have become the treatment of choice, because there is no other treatment available {Atkinson, 2002, p70}.

Indeed, what is the treatment for racism, colonialism and invasion? How does one get psychological help for racism? This is the conundrum of this inquiry – the very thing that I needed healing from, is the very system that imposes it. How does one then approach the system in order to heal the affects of the system itself, pervasive, everywhere like God where 'Identity becomes fractured and fragmented. The sense of self appears to become lost' {Atkinson, 2002, p71}.

The emotional volatility of living in an environment where one's Otherness is the basis of identity, is shaky ground. Not only was I viewed as Other, I was expected to identify as Other; to speak from Otherness in my own country, the land of my Ancestors. The disempowerment of this social location embroiders an inability to articulate, to grasp a reality solid enough upon which to build a sense of belonging, place and being. The struggle for a sense of self was one encumbered by anger; intense destructive anger.

> Anger is a normal human response to a violation of the self. For some, however, the anger becomes disabling. They cannot express it safely to others or themselves because the places in which they live are unsafe {Atkinson, 2002, p70}.

It was as though my body did not belong to me, as though it were pitted in battle against my spirit and soul. Without a body, there was no place to call home. In search of home, a place to belong in the world was the fuel of this project, for without it, I knew that any future was unimaginable.

> Rowe has described the greatest human fear as the experience that our identity, our self, is being annihilated… Cultural genocide not only works to destroy the

> cultures of oppressed peoples, it also eradicates the sense of self, of self-worth, and of wellbeing in individuals and groups so that they are unable to function from either their own cultural relatedness, or from the culture of the oppressors. They feel in a world between, devalued and devaluing who they are {Atkinson, 2002, p71}.

Postmodernists have determined that language is society. The consequence of this proposition then, is that we as beings, individuated and socially constructed through language, can never hope to be free of language; free enough to challenge the system that contains and constrains us. Notions of resistance, revolution and decolonization then, are posed as impossibility, for how does one free one's self from the very foundation of identity, in order that one may question the system that impresses identity upon the body. The great difficulty in this project is exactly as the author states, and that is how do I speak about Aboriginality from within the matrix of western language? The initial premise of the investigation originated from unease I felt, the turning in my skin as the consequence of the term 'Aborigine'.

'Cultural and spiritual genocide attacks the very heart, the locale of *who we are,* more so than physical violence' {Atkinson, 2002, p71}, and within western consciousness, I was

Aborigine, a construction of western imagination born of social intention. The right to state who I am was a fundamental denied me. But there had to be something more than the limits of this language, of the terms and conditions by which society interacted with me, or at least the symbology of my body rendered Aborigine through the western gaze.

> As our vocabulary changes, so does the world {Gregory, 1988, p200}.

It was then necessary to challenge this referent, this deterrent, and instead reach toward that beyond the limits of western consciousness, and allow the annihilation to begin; the annihilation of any understanding of myself as an Aborigine, Aboriginal woman, nomad and savage to contend with "the loss of faith that there is order and continuity in life. Trauma occurs when one loses the sense of having a safe place to retreat within or outside oneself to deal with frightening emotions and experiences" {Van der Kolk, 1987, pp2-3}. The only continuity in my life was that of being Aboriginal, and Aboriginality afforded me no safe place in the world, and so it was necessary to find a way to move beyond the reality delimited by western language, one in which I was configured as Other, unhuman.

Moving beyond

> Autobiography is a technique of self representation that is not a fixed form but is in constant flux. … In this context, ethnic autobiography is an "art of memory" that serves as protection against the homogenizing tendencies of modern industrial culture. Moreover, autobiography has become a powerful tool of cultural criticism, paralleling postmodern theories of textuality and knowledge. … This ethnographic mode of self-representation is pervasive … Autobiography becomes ethnographic at the point where … Identity is no longer a transcendental or essential self that is revealed, but a "staging of subjectivity" – a representation of the self as a performance. In the politicization of the personal, identities are frequently played out among several cultural discourses, be they ethnic, national, sexual, racial, and/or class based. The subject "in history" is rendered destabilized and incoherent, a site of discursive pressures and articulations… Autoethnography is a vehicle and a strategy for challenging imposed forms of identity and exploring the discursive possibilities of inauthentic subjectivities {Russell, 1999}.

Autoethnographic writing explores the self as constructed and performative. It challenges colonial constructions and percept by its discursive nature, allying the subjective and first person voice. Autoethnography explores the subjective self constructed through anthropological texts {Russell, 1999}, and in its articulation, premises a dialogue with authoritative western gaze that seeks to homogenize and control one's identity and destiny. There is the natural junction arrived at quite naturally of Autoethnography as a methodology and phenomenology.

> As a creature of language, the writer is always caught up in the war of fictions (jargons), but he is never anything but a plaything in it, since the language that constitutes him (writing) is always outside of place (atopic); by the simple effect of polysemy {Barthes, 1976, p34}.

The struggle for Indigenous writers is that not only must we write in order to move towards that space beyond western language, but that it is necessary to enter into the 'war of fictions' so that we may be free of it. As a writer, I entered into this war of fictions, increasingly aware of the Plato's belief that writing will affect the memory {Fernandes, 2002}, Barthes declaration of the death of the author {Barthes, 1977}, and it became increasingly aware, that

not only had writing imprisoned my body, but that I must die to be free, to move beyond the fiction of Aboriginality.

Inhabiting a body

> The first step toward experiencing your body in a different way is to change your interpretation of it. No two people experience their bodies in exactly the same way, because each of us interprets experience – including the experience of inhabiting a body – according to his own personal beliefs, values, assumptions, and memories {Chopra, 1993, p41}.

It is necessary that we then consider the role of the body since '… languages have no existence without people' {Crystal, 2000, p1}. Language cannot exist outside the body. It is through having a body that language is brought into existence, and shared between people. In this, language is continually shifting and shaping our realities, and the illusion of a permanent objective reality falls away when one realizes that it is the body in which language fully resides.

As Aboriginal peoples, our individuality, uniqueness is annihilated by the homogenizing referent Aborigine. Aboriginal peoples are encouraged to think in terms of 'our', 'we', and 'us'. This they-self is 'The world of the 'they' is the world of everyone and yet no one in particular' {Graham, 2003}. It is here then that the investigation into the English language, but more specifically writing, becomes a necessary point of contention in the struggle to be free, for this struggle to be free inevitably requires the freeing of the body from the imposition of colonial language, and its societal constraints and design.

> We shall never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing {Barthes, 1977}.

The journey then must necessarily be one that confronts the 'they-ness' of this existence, as an Aborigine and the possibility of the unhuman as referred to by Tuhiwai Smith. The Aborigine, a textual reality made possible through the technology of writing, the symbol of colonial imagination, is the word and world, a concept inhabited by Indigenous folk.

> Radical constructivism is well established in many areas of the human and social sciences, but to date has made little impact in the natural sciences. A plausible reason for this is that human social reality is easily understood as being "constructed": it is clear that there was a time when human society did not exist; it is possible (in principle, and increasingly in practice) to study the pre-historical and historical processes through which this reality came into existence … {Stewart, 2001}.

In order to understand the constructive purposes of the Aborigine, would potentially expose the basis, the function of the written word in human society, and at this, the potential for human society to no longer exist as surely as civilizations have risen and fallen before this one. Constructionist theories acknowledge that human society did not always exist, consequently there is the possibility that there will be a time when it shall no longer exist. There is an emergent need to establish a paradigm through which to renew human relations with the life-world. The ecological crisis perceived as the product of scientific rationalism is deepening, and theorists are searching for a new way of being that will establish a harmonious relation between the body and the life-world.

> The issue then is not that of “authority”, but rather that of ‘a circular memory’ and of ‘the impossibility of living outside’ of context… Traditional notions of

> the Author, of the reader, and of the Text, and thus by implication of truth and body, were called into question {Schostak, 2005}.

In order to find a space within western writing and language to speak about the construction of Aboriginality, that in which I am immersed, it was necessary to heal from its enforced subjectivity. What this means, is that I had to engage methods that would *free* my body from western language. These methods included Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), Breathwork, Neuro-Emotional Technique (NET), and Neuro-Linguistic Therapy (NLT). I had to essentially embody the concepts, utilize emergent methodologies in order to continue to find a way to speak about the social construction of Aboriginality as imposed and composed through western consciousness. The erudition that I was engaging in these methods is retrospective, for at the time I engaged in NLP for example, it was on instruction from my body. In this phenomenological research, at its core is the body, and it was my body that sought ways to fulfil this project. It was only the final phase of NET that I did so in awareness, for by that time, I understood how my body was and is shaped by words, and having come across this discipline, I was aware of its philosophical and scientific merits.

> To acknowledge that "I am this body" is not to reduce the mystery of my yearnings and fluid thoughts to a set of mechanisms, or my "self" to a

> determinate robot. Rather it is to affirm the uncanniness of this physical form … Far from restricting my access to things and to the world, the body is my very means of entering into relation with all things … not to explain the world from outside, but give voice to the world from our experienced situation *within it* … {Abram, 1996, p46-47}.

If the postmodernists are right, then it is language that Indigenous peoples need to be free from. The language of the coloniser that defines us, constrains us, and shapes our very bodies so that we may clothe ourselves in the referent like an old suit. It is of the utmost importance that as Indigenous peoples we find a way to interact with western language as an untruth. As long as we continue to accept the parameters of the western vernacular, those folk who have access to writing machines and the power of representation will continue to have control over our bodies and well being. This work is about a journey undertaken to shatter the myth that *western language possesses truth.* It is the examination of western language so that the illusion of power and control can be looked at long enough without being blinded. Western historicity is not arbitrary, nor is how Indigenous peoples appear in the imagination and metaphors of colonial occupation.

The place where freedom from western language occurs is the place where our bodies shall be returned. It is this place that represents the departure from the constraints of western language and the imposition of its limited reality, that a return simultaneously occurs, and it is to the

openness of the life-world. And even as this return to the life-world means that there is no word that can ever express this return, for the word *life-world* is in itself a departure, an ongoing separateness. For now, let us just walk towards the Dreaming.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 2 deals with the issue of writing, its epistemological and ontological control over the materialization of existence within the boundary of western society. Writing is accepted as the technology that defines western civilization, and this chapter explores the temporal qualia of writing, and how it was imposed upon Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia. Writing is temporally expressed as the deferment of happiness, and it is this deferment or the suspension of the moment that is a great temporal contrast between the west and Indigenous temporality, which are traditionally immersion in the moment.

Chapter 3 deals with the energy of the life-world, the different philosophical underpinning of Indigenous laws and the role of story in locating the Indigenous body in the infinite. This chapter introduces the concept of composition and decomposition as being the dual consequence of writing. It also discusses the concept of the author and the authored expressed through the Master and Bondsman dichotomy of theorists such as Hegel, the author being the possessor of language.

In **Chapter 4**, the creation of the logos as a symbol of western temporality, and the site of composition, is argued as being intrinsic to the concept of the human. The human and the barbarian – one whom possessed language and one who did not – entombed in the concept of the logos – details the collapse of the infinite and changing world into the measured and finite is the journey of the logos or logocentrism. It also explores of the concept of the land having agency, being an energetic expression of language as well as time.

Chapter 5 looks at the life-world of Indigenous peoples as one of unity and vitality. The universe is a song, an endless vibration. This is understood in Indigenous cosmology, and in Superstring theory. It is alive; the breath of the Ancestors who sung it into existence, and the breath of those whose stories are passed on generation through generation are expressed in the present. The sound waves were reconstituted within the visual, for writing perceived as a primary visual function, is in fact the ordering of sound. This chapter analyses the role of the cartographer in the definition of western identity and the simultaneous Othering of non western peoples.

In chapter 6, I discuss how western neurology has been shaped by millennia of textual culture, whereby its interaction with the life-world is through the object and the artefaction of living beings into breathless beings. The annihilation of the breath in the creation of the artefact reveals the western writing system as an interaction between breathless bodies. We

investigate the relationship between the author and death, and the imposition of death upon those bodies that are written into existence through the author function.

Chapter 7 looks at the role of air in western and Indigenous communication. This chapter delves into the concept of the universe being endless energy, and how this boundless energy is harnessed by western and Indigenous cultures. We explore how the same concepts are expressed differently in western culture and Indigenous cosmology, and their temporal and epistemological outcomes. Also looked at is the body as a consequence of how infinity is languaged, and how western writing ultimately shapes the breath of the body, impacting upon its emotional state and eventual well being.

In Chapter 8 looks at the machination of the colonial machine and how it implemented western writing into the lands of Indigenous peoples. It also investigates the temporal necessity of the construction of western language and systems in the lands in which the western writing system was neither the authority nor the dominant language.

Chapter 9, Aristotle's biological qualifications saw the fixing of language to body, the connection between syntax and synapse, and the transference of meaning from one body to another. The primary necessity here being the presence of language – one language – in order to control meaning, defined as an exchange of heat between bodies. I look at the human is a product of the Enlightenment and modernity, as much as notions of freedom and liberalism.

It is a generic term employed to explain the domination of the western body in western society. While all bodies are labeled as human, it is clear that human is the codification of a body that participates in the composition of western language.

Chapter 10 analyses the conundrum of Aboriginality, a temporal and biological outcome of invasions and colonialism. This chapter looks at Aboriginality as a colonial construction that is temporally distinct from the ancient temporality expressed in Indigenous physiognomy, language and cosmological practices. This chapter concludes with how phenomenology as a methodology has provided a framework through which Indigenous peoples can begin to again explore this ancient temporality through their bodies, and as a means of accessing the infinite.

Chapter 2

Writing as deferred happiness

> The universe is a monster of energy, without beginning or end; a fixed and brazen quantity of energy which grows neither bigger nor smaller, which does not consume itself, but only alters its face . . . this, my Dionysian world of eternal self-creation, of eternal self-destruction. . . .
>
> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*

The curious question of writing

> The new conceptions of persons within permanent towns and cities, and the increased dependence upon the regulation and manipulation of spontaneous natural process, could only intensify the growing estrangement of the human sense from the wild, animate diversity in which those senses had evolved. But my concern … is neither with agriculture nor urbanization … but rather with the curious question of *writing;* that is, with the influence of

> writing upon the human sense and upon our direct sensorial experience of the earth around us {Abram, 1996, p184}.

As writing is what demarcates history from pre-history, and literacy is the domain of the human, let us then look at writing.

> The *positive* and the classical sciences of writing are obliged to repress this sort of question. Up to a certain point, such repression is even necessary to the progress of positive investigation. Beside the fact that it would still be held within a philosophising logic, the ontophenomenological question of essence, that is to say of the origin of writing, could, by itself, only paralyse or sterilise the typological or historical research of *facts* {Derrida, 1967}.

Indigenous peoples are cited as being oral cultures. The restricted definition of the concept of writing has effectively disqualified Indigenous peoples from humanity. While Abrams calls forth an answer to the curious question of writing, it is the metaphysical intention that writing itself provides that is not extrapolated fully in *Spell of the Sensuous.* To continue the relationship between writing, human and historicity, the function that writing achieves must be better understood, and given that the act of writing is metaphysical, it must be understood that writing itself has a temporal outcome.

> The study of temporality is of special significance because …. temporality is perhaps the most fundamental constituent of human cognition. Thus, any modification in temporality is of significant cognitive import, empirical as well as theoretical {Shanon, 2001}.

While 'Language is the immediate actuality of thought,' western scientists postulate that language cannot precede language, or thought precede thought. While Abrams is not concerned with agriculture or urbanization, there is present within these modes of being an expression of the faculty of the author, a physical expression of western writing. When did western writing start, and what was its original intention? The free interchange of the term *language* with the concept of *writing* has made ambiguous its defining principle; and that is temporality. It is temporality that demarcates the human from the savage or the barbarian.

> What happens when we introduce time into our conceptions? One important thing is realized: and that is a peculiar movement-on, an openness. Let me illustrate this movement-on by making the drawing of any circle analogous to the thinking of a concept: What do we find in these processes? We find that: *in the practice of drawing any circle, the circle always becomes a spiral:* that is a conception that is incomplete and un-closed, open. Time

> makes the circle a spiral; only when time is ignored does the conception of a circle become complete… There can be no closure when time is involved; and there can only be closure when time is ignored in abstraction. Abstraction and closure are necessarily imaginations, fictions – and of course the root to being human; without the abstract fictions and closures of the imagination, life would become literally dead and cease to be poetic and inspiring. Above all human beings possess the innate capacity to inhabit their myths, reside in their fictions and engage in their imagined worlds *as the real world.* The boundaries between sensation, conception and interpretation is never clear near distinct. What is now understood is that privileging abstract space of conception is not a universal given {Bhogal, 1998}.

The premise of linguistic anthropology is to map the origin of man – mindful that the term man in this context refers to western man – and as such involves a contemplation of temporality. The west has been confounded by its own cultural practice, making it difficult to discuss what language is. Language long implicated in the definition of the human, still has impetus in modernity in demarcating the boundary of the human and the non-human. But human language though is a concept that is located in its production, rather than an arbitrary

existence, for the demarcating of human temporality as expressed through language and specifically writing, is an ongoing process;

> The defining feature of human life is social labor, the way in which we organize the interconnected productive activities of individuals in order to reproduce ourselves materially. Just as human work presupposes consciousness, so it requires communication among individuals, a capacity to share and exchange ideas in order to coordinate social labor. And language is the medium of such communication, the very stuff of human consciousness. Language is the form of specifically human consciousness, the consciousness of uniquely social beings. It follows that language is as old as consciousness … {Wood, 1997, p28}.

There is then, the utility of language to organise human society with an intended productive outcome, for within the definition of human is embroiled the concept of language and productivity. Language being a constitution of consciousness locates the concept of consciousness as normative, for it has become the signifying qualia of the human. The interplay between language, productivity, labour, and consciousness is repeated throughout western discourse, and it is these qualities especially that the west greatly exploited in the justification of invasion of the land now known as Australia.

The Aristotelian declaration that there are only humans and slaves predicates that the differentiation between human and the slave (unhuman) is language. While Abrams *Spell of the Sensuous* is an informed account of the process that simultaneously saw the development of alphabet writing and the alienation of the human body from the life-world, it does not and cannot address the issue that is pressing here; the use of writing to construct bodies and realities immersed in western ideology and society that simultaneously estranged the Indigenous body from the life-world or the cosmos that granted prior meaning through embodiment. Effectively, the Indigenous body lost the power of moral authority as well as the right to speak our languages, and therefore construct our own realities and histories. To understand this systematic deprivation of the right to tell story, it is necessary to excavate the true meaning of writing, and specifically western writing.

> The role of language is always easier to see when someone else's language is involved {Gregory, 1988, p185}.

David Abrams raises the question in *Spell of the Sensuous* as to what constitutes writing. The consequence of the evolution of western writing, according to Abrams, is the alienation of the western body from the life-world. The idea that oracy is the forerunner to literacy and writing conflagrates the role of the spoken and written word, for while both are produced by the body, oracy and writing are artefacts of temporal existence, rather than normative. The rather *curious question of writing* as Abrams refers to it is within western histiography, a potent and

powerful force. Abrams in his examination of writing credits the inception of the vowel by the Greeks as the final withdrawal from the life-world;

> This all changed the new Greek system: It was only with the plugging of these last pores – with the insertion of visible letter for the vowels themselves – that the perceptual boundary established by the common language was effectively sealed, and what had once been a porous membrane became an impenetrable barrier, a hall of mirrors. The Greek scribes, that is, transformed the breathing boundary between human culture and the animate earth into a seamless barrier segregating a pure inside from a pure outside. With the addition of written vowels – with the filling of those gaps, or pores, in the early alphabet – human language became a highly self-referential system closed off from the larger world that once engendered it. And the "I", the speaking self, was hermetically sealed within this new interior {Abram, 1996, p257}.

The sensual withdrawal from the life-world by western culture is the premise of its language, but implicated in this sensual withdrawal is the negation of the primacy of the body as the locus through which a world view is propagated. The 'hall of mirrors' is perhaps the most

important aspect of the invention of the alphabet, for within this hall of mirrors the human became responsive to and is shaped uniquely by other humans, for the hall of mirrors speaks of the devaluation of all beings that is not constituted as reflective. This reflexivity of humanity is a property of writing.

Abrams gives an in depth account of the origin of writing and its participation in the sensorial separation between the human domain and the more-than-human life-world, but he does not stipulate the connection between writing and the embodied subjectivity imposed upon bodies – specifically pertaining in this instance to invaded and colonized Indigenous bodies, which is the focus of this inquiry – and the realities it shapes. The most important question in this section is; what then constitutes writing? Abrams refers to the tracks and markings of animals, and asks are these marks writing? Let us explore the question posed by Abrams.

The implication of writing in biological determinacy is present in the accepted definition of writing itself, demarcating it from the non sensible signs interpretable solely by the bodies that inscribe them. It is the role of writing in biological determinacy that suggests its epistemology and ontological foundation of western language. Oracy often depicted as the precursor to literacy, speaks little of the philosophical institution of a society that relies on the written word for social and moral organization.

> Binary accounts have been referred to as '*Great Divide*' *theories*. Such theories tend to suggest radical, deep and basic differences between modes of thinking in non-literate and literate societies. They are often associated with attempts to develop grand theories of social organization and development {Chandler, 2000}.

The true role of oracy though has not yet been elucidated, and in this, to state that Indigenous cultures are oral speaks of the austerity of inquiry into the metaphysical properties of language and writing. Indigenous cultures of the land now known as Australia did utilize writing to effect cultural transmission, though the definition of writing as framed by western ideology does not purport this mode of communication as writing. To relate this back to Tuhiwai Smith's statement of historicity being the property of humans, that the markings of Indigenous folk are not considered writing disqualifies both the body making the inscriptions, as well as the information being transmitted. In other words, the ontology and episteme of Indigenous cultures are not valid. They are not valid because they are not human. Within this context, the question posed by Abrams concerning the marks of animals is that western writing excludes such tracks from being known as writing. The body of Indigenous literature

that includes the life-world and all living things, the marks of the animal are definitely a part of this cosmology may indeed constitute a form of writing not recognised by the west.

Lucien Levy Bruhl labels people in hunter gatherer societies as 'prelogical', depicting such folk as being of less intelligence than the western literate societies. While Bruhl's terminology may have caused upset, there is the presence of logic and therefore prelogical notions within western writing. Writing as stipulated within western ideology assumes the presence of logic, and thus consciousness. However, to say that someone is prelogical is inappropriate for it suggests a hierarchical and evolutionary ascent from prelogical into logical ways of being, and at its core is the assumption of a single world view toward which all other life-forms *evolve*. Western logic and the writing system devised within this premise, is one where the distinction is more than between whether words are spoken or written, for all societies can never discard its spoken word, since language occurs between people, 'For language is really alive only as long as there is someone to speak it to'{Crystal, 2000, p2}.

The spoken word is the immediate contact and exchange that occurs between two bodies, and what the Hawaiian's refer to as *aloha*, the exchange of breath, "Theirs is a faith shaped by "aloha," a word drawn from two roots, meaning "in the presence of wind, breath or spirit"{Lane, 1990}. The role of the breath in enlivening the physical body in the moment, its

connectivity with the life-world through breathing, is a distinction that requires extrapolation in order to understand the function of the body in both literate and oral cultures. In reference to literacy and oracy, the mode of transmission communicates the intention of the responsiveness of the body in its immediacy to the life-world. For the Navajo's the possibility for language exists in the wind,

> Since we speak only by means of breath, Wind itself - the collective breath – is said to hold the power of language … {Abram, 1996, p233}.

For the Hopi, they believe that the earth is alive and breathing, 'In the Hopi belief, death does not end a person's presence in the physical world, but marks a transition from one state of being to another or, in other words, from one form of experience to another. On the fourth day after death, a person's breath (*hikwsi*) leaves the body and goes to a place which represents the other realm of existence, not separated from the world of the living, but different in that this realm is unmanifested, unseen, and not accessible to the senses'{Glowacka, 1999}. But like Indigenous peoples of Australia, the metaphor of footprint appears as a way of understanding the sensual world, for the Hopi believe that '… the dead is believed to have the ability to return to the Hopi mesas in visible forms of clouds, rain (or katsinam) and act as an animating force in the sensuous world of the living' {Glowacka, 1999}.

Abrams gives good account of the invisibility of the air, how the air within western ontology and epistemology has become invisible, unseen, and its value dehumanized.

It is here that Abrams theory of the west's alienation from the life-world, the forfeiting of its immediate presence occurred with the invention of the Greek vowel,

> …by using visible characters to represent the sounded breath the Greek scribes effectively *desacralized* the breath and the air. By providing a visible representation of that which was – by its nature – invisible, they nullified the mysteriousness of the enveloping atmosphere …*by transposing the invisible into the register of the visible, the Greek scribes effectively dissolved the primordial power of the air* {Abram, 1996, p252}.

To fully understand what Abrams means when he says the invention of the vowels by the Greeks plugged the pores between the human body and the life-world, it is necessary to understand the role of air and breath as that which distinguishes the living from the non living. This is what makes the invention of the vowel so powerful, is that the west had in its possession a system of codification that could reduce all sensible and perceivable data into a form possessed by its writing system and language. In other words, the creation of the vowel was the beginning of a temporal domain demarcated by the separation of the breath from the land. It was the beginning of a language that was premised on a temporality that was not

inclusive of land represented by the breath of the life-world, but was instead a body that was totally responsive to other bodies that also had withdrawn their breath, their attention from the life-world. It was the beginning of the dominance of the written word, and the human. Leonard Bloomfield reminds us that 'writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language' {Bloomfield, 1933, p219}.

Writing removes the body from its immediate sensual interaction with the life-world. Bloomfield's definition of writing reveals its technological status, its function and intention through its utility by 'logical' societies. In this context, writing is the concern of what is remembered, and what is forgotten.

> Many communication theorists still overtly or covertly privilege the spoken word over the written word. Clearly the use of the spoken word developmentally precedes any acquisition of reading and writing, whether by individuals, particular cultures or the human species. But where speech is given a higher status than writing in general this is '*phonocentric*' bias {Chandler, 2000}.

While the spoken word may be privileged by some theorists over the written word, it is necessary to remember that it is human consciousness that has been shaped by the written

word. Effectively, the spoken word privileged by theoreticians, already privileges western epistemology and ontology over all other modes of being and temporality. Again, the spoken word as referred to by Chandler is not the uttered expression of all bodies, but relates specifically to western ontology.

> Marshall McLuhan argued that there was a shift during the Renaissance from a primarily oral/aural way of perceiving the world to a primarily visual one. He saw this shift in what he called the 'sense rations' in the 'human sensorium' as being precipitated primarily by the spread of printing {Chandler, 2000}.

Not only did the emergent literate society shift from being primary oral/aural, but the advent of the printing press consolidated space, and in this mechanized western space, signifying an evolution in the dominance of the written word in its power to certify and affix value to space.

> With the advent of the printed word, the visual modalities of Western life increased beyond anything experienced in any previous society {Sanderson, 1989, p36}.

There is something very specific occurring where the spoken word is privileged over the written word, and while McLuhan is correct in locating the introduction of the printing press as representing a shift in the 'human sensorium', it wasn't as much a shift as it was a technological advance; an intensification of the western body's withdrawal from the life-world, and the dehumanization of those things that occur beyond the increasing conceptual parameter demarcated through the presence of the written word.

Introducing history

> What Walter Benjamin uncovers in his theses 'On the Concept of History' is the temporal structure of the political affect. Historical time is founded upon political time directed toward happiness. Any theory of history – of historical cognition and of historical action - therefore will have to take this time of the affect as its starting point {Benjamin, 2006, p38}.

Benjamin's argument about the temporality of history is that it is an active pursuit of happiness, but 'Happiness is never experienced in a present without this present relating to that which has been' {Benjamin, 2006, p47}.

> Happiness … does not reside in an event that could become the subject of objective cognition but rather in a possibility, which proves to be a possibility only in the miss and which only by virtue of this miss preserves itself as a possibility for the future…. in this present, however … [happiness] becomes understandable only to envy, for only envy is the organon of cognition of that which cannot be held, what cannot be grasped as given reality and cannot be registered as possession. Cognition is essentially a manifestation of this envy … {Benjamin, 2006, pp 39-47}

The seizure of the lands and bodies of Indigenous folk is contextualised by the possibility of history, but at its core is the pursuit of happiness of the west. That envy is the cognizant that supports the possibility of happiness, is the emotional driving force that spurred the invasion and consequent colonisation of the land now known as Australia. The ideological evaluation of Indigenous peoples, cultures and philosophies is contextualised by the 'temporality of the cognition of possible happiness' {Benjamin, 2006 p39}. The Indigenous lands and peoples presented themselves as a possibility of western happiness, the incorporation through

possession into western temporality presented as possibility. The possibility though, lies in language itself. It is possibility inherent to language, made permissible and cognizant through the presence of language that Benjamin believes is at the core of happiness and the notion of possibility that is inherent to happiness as a temporality.

> Time – historical time – is nothing but the capability of the possible to find its satisfaction in an actual. As a standing-out (*Ausstand*) and exposition of that actual in which a mere possible could find its fulfilment, in which the possible as intention could find its goal, time is the claim of the unfinished and failed, of the broken and thwarted for its completion and rescue in happiness {Benjamin, 2006, p41}.

The forceful incursion of western time into the lands of what are termed as cultures of timelessness is that which makes possible western happiness. Time as discussed by Benjamin is the ongoing drama of desire and incomplete destinies of the west. 'Time is always the time of the unfinished and itself unfinished time, time that has not reached its end. It is the time of that which is not yet and perhaps never will be' {Benjamin, 2006, p41}.

The power of the west to fulfil its claim to the right of happiness, to explore and exploit all possibility, or that happiness that is not realized and can never be realized, for to possess an object merely defers, for 'If possibilities are only ever possibilities *for* someone, then they are

intentions' {Benjamin, 2006, p40}. Benjamin's principle concept refers once again to language, and that through language deferred happiness is centralized, creating temporal possibilities through language.

> History presents itself as the afterlife of unused linguistic possibilities, which demand their redemption by other languages and finally by language itself, as the temporal extension of intentions on to language, as imperative claim, which the forfeited possibilities of language raise in view of their realization {Benjamin, 2006, p42}.

That central to the invasions of the lands belonging to Indigenous peoples is not only western happiness that is necessarily deferred, for the possession of such happiness is constrained by the possibility, but also the fact that 'History can be missed' {Benjamin, 2006, p46} for 'History must be won over and again, at each singular moment, ever again in a singular way. Neither history nor unhappiness, which is striven for in the former, is reliable; only the existence of unhappiness is reliable' {Benjamin, 2006, p47}. History is an ongoing struggle, something that must be continually fought for. The deferral of the present in the pursuit of happiness, and the struggle for the possession of language that would make such happiness possible, speak of the different temporalities experienced within western historicity, and that temporality employed by Indigenous peoples at the time of invasion and preserved within Indigenous languages that are still alive.

The exploitative potential held in the lands and bodies of the Indigenous peoples, is understood in western historicity as the west's potential for happiness, a happiness though deferred. The west's deferral of happiness and required objectification and consequent possession of the commodified infinite is located in western textual language. The deferral of happiness is necessary for the text requires the deferral of the moment, of the Now. The juxtaposition of a temporality that defers happiness and the now, and one where it is only the moment that exists, means that the temporal constraints of the western language system is in direct conflict with Indigenous language systems.

The projected deferral of happiness

The invasion of the lands now known as Australia delivered a peculiar and ever-changing discipline to our shores; and that is the construction of historicity, made possible by the advent of western writing. It was an organizational procedure that would disrupt the Indigenous continuum, severing the ancient body from its place in the eternal. The Europeans held the inhabitants of the land now known as Australia in contempt, for 'Europeans had long considered the civilized superior to the savage' {McGregor, 1998, p3}.

The world that the Europeans encountered was arrested within their own world view, shaped by the emergent literacy of the west at this time. That '… cultivation of the soil that was the necessary badge of civilization' {McGregor, 1998, p2} and 'that the blacks 'like all savages in being easily swayed by 'the impulse of the moment' {McGregor, 1998, p3}, are all terms

explicitly reflective of western temporality as one being shaped by the technology of writing, a characteristic of which is denial of the moment.

Many civilizations before western civilization have used modes of writing, but the mode of writing invented by the Greeks transformed the concept of writing forever. The ancient civilizations of China, Egypt, Maya, Inca, Aztec, are all credited with having used writing systems, but it is the episteme and ontological utility of western logic inherent to western writing that has not only shaped western consciousness, but the bodies of the Indigenous peoples whose lands the west invaded and colonised. Western hegemony has developed a specialized mode of writing that at its root is a culturally specific codification process produced and reproduced by the act of writing. This is the 'mechanics of writing' that Buchanan refers to, for history is itself a formalized mode of production that operates on the principle of inclusion and exclusion made possible by writing. It is this relationship between writing and the production of western history that Tuhiwai Smith extrapolates in *Decolonizing Methodologies*

> History is … about power. In fact history is mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others {Smith, 1999, p34}.

Tuhiwai Smith speaking from an Indigenous point of view calls into question western writing as the frame through which Indigenous humanity is qualified and disqualified. Tuhiwai Smith discusses the west's negation of Indigenous humanity in justification of invasion then colonization of the lands belonging to Indigenous peoples. Tuhiwai Smith and other post colonists acknowledge that the unhuman status of Indigenous folk legitimized in the eyes of imperial powers the invasion and seizure of lands belonging to Indigenous folk, and in this, it is necessary to continually search for a definition of the human. 'Colonized peoples have been compelled to define what it means to be human because there is as deep understanding of what it has meant to be considered not fully human, to be *savage* {Smith, 1999, p26}. Tuhiwai Smith states that

> Ideas about what counted as human in association with the power to define people as human or not human were already encoded in imperial and colonial discourses prior to the period of imperialism covered here {Smith, 1999, p25}.

Bertrand Russell says that to understand a culture it is necessary to understand its philosophy, and that philosophy itself is mediation between the theological and scientific {Russell, 1946 p13}. In order to understand western writing, it is necessary to understand its philosophy and metaphysical development. Writing is both theological and scientific mode of representation

that supports the power position of the western authorial body. The mechanism that classified the human as well as the unhuman was present in western language prior to invasion, for Tuhiwai Smith states that it is this function that allowed the categorization of Indigenous peoples to take place. This resonates with Buchanan's call for the investigation into the mechanics of writing in order to extrapolate the terms and conditions that created the categorization of Indigenous folk, locating us as unhuman within western consciousness and its language. As the unhuman Indigenous peoples were denied prior authorship and continued authorship over our lands and bodies.

> One of the supposed characteristics of primitive peoples was that we could not use our minds or intellects. We could not invent things, we could not create institutions or history, we could not imagine, we could not produce anything of value, we did not know how to use land and other resources from the natural world, we did not practice the 'arts' of civilization. By lacking such virtues we disqualified ourselves, not just from civilization but from humanity itself. In other words we were not 'fully human'; some of us were not even considered partially human {Smith, 1999, p25}.

The negation of authorship is expressed through the cancellation of Indigenous folk as human. This unhuman or partly human status affixed to the Indigenous body because westerners did not see a reflection of their own material based language present, made possible what was considered a land uninhabited and owned by no-one.

> …. the British government had regarded the Aborigines as having no claims to the land because they had made no impact on it that was intelligible and worthy of European eyes {Stevens, 1972, p15}.

In other words, the land was uninhabited by bodies whom possessed the same materialistic language and technology of the west. Banks is historically recognized as the person who affixed the claim of *terra nullius* to the great southern land;

> Banks who initiated the concept of *terra nullius* to suggest that the land was open for claim and he extended this concept to Australian plants and animals because he saw little commercial potential in them {Mulligan, 2001, p16}.

Australia first appeared on *mappa mundi*, the Latin map of the world, as *terra australis*, and like all other lands unclaimed by the west, was labelled terra nullius. The mappa mundi

(Latin: “map of the world”), was a propaganda map used for national and religious purposes {Nock, 2001}. But the map more than anything represented a recodification of territory marking the exclusion of the Indigenous voice from having any participation in the construction of story from this point onwards. Tuhiwai Smith believes that

> Maps of the world reinforced our place on the periphery of the world, although we were still considered part of the Empire. This included having to learn new names for our own lands… Our orientation to the world was already being redefined as we were being excluded systematically from writing the history of our own lands {Smith, 1999, p33}.

If, as stated by Tuhiwai Smith, the codification that made the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples and the invasion of land possible, then *The Age of Discovery* which saw the lands of many Indigenous folk invaded by the west is located in its imperial modes of codification present in the western writing system. Immediately we are presented with the dichotomy of author and authored, those things brought into being through western consciousness, and those things that remained outside of western consciousness. The power of the west though, is located in the act of writing.

The traffic of Africans exploited through slavery, the annihilation of the Taino peoples of the island of Hispaniola or modern day Haiti by Columbus {Hartmann, 1999, p39}, the people of the Americas and the land now known as Australia, are the outcome of the epistemological and ontological production of the western writing system, for the commonality of these interactions is the declaration of the human and the unhuman, or the savage. The human barbarian dichotomy plays itself out through history. In each case, the story, the subjective experience of the barbarian, is undocumented and or discredited, and they remain the nameless.

The subjective position of the *slaves* and the Taino people erased from the earth was abolished by the western authorial position. The Taino people no longer in existence, are no longer able to speak of their experience, and tell their story. History in this provides a framework of who had and who has not the right to story. This can also be understood as who does and does not have the right to participate in the making of history through the telling of story. The experience of all bodies is not present in western historicity, for those bodies that have the right to re-tell is restricted through the codification practice of writing itself.

> … historicity itself is tied to the possibility of writing; to the possibility of writing in general, beyond those particular forms of writing in the name of which we have long spoken of peoples without writing and without history. Before being the object of a history — of an historical science — writing

> opens the field of history — of historical becoming. And the former (*Historie* in German) presupposes the latter (*Geschichte*)…. The history of writing should turn back toward the origin of historicity. A science of the possibility of science? A science of science which would no longer have the form of logic but that of *grammatics?* A history of the possibility of history which would no longer be an archaeology, a philosophy of history or a history of philosophy {Derrida, 1967}?

The legacy of western expansion beginning with Columbus, establishes the time frame at 500 years, according to Tuhiwai Smith {Smith, 1999, p20}. Historicity is a discipline that emerged during Modernity {Smith, 1999, p28}. The voice of Indigenous peoples has been excluded from the historical discourse of the land now known as Australia, premised by the codification of western writing. The need to self representation in historicity is necessary, according to Tuhiwai Smith, if we are to re*write* and re*right* our position in history {Smith, 1999, p28}.

> Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes. It is not simply about giving an oral account or a genealogical naming of the land and the events which raged over it, but a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into

> existence a world fragmented and dying. The sense of history conveyed by these approaches is not the same thing as the discipline of history, and so our accounts collide, crash into each other {Smith, 1999, p28}.

The functions of western historicity and Indigenous story telling have at their core, different philosophies pertaining to alternative cosmological and cosmological views. Tuhiwai Smith draws our attention to this distinction, for the need of Indigenous folk to tell our own stories is greatly related to the recovery of the spirit as much as the recovery of land.

> There are numerous oral stories which tell of what it means, what it feels like, to be present while your history is erased before your eyes, dismissed as irrelevant, ignored or rendered as the lunatic ravings of drunken old people. The negation of Indigenous views of history was a crucial part of asserting colonial ideology, partly because such views were regarded as clearly 'primitive' and 'incorrect' and mostly because they challenged and resisted the mission of colonization {Smith, 1999, p29}.

Indigenous folk continue to resist colonial presence and accounts of history, for the paradigm that has negated our humanity and forbid our right to tell story, has as Tuhiwai Smith says, a legacy of total destruction, for 'History was the story of people who were regarded as *fully human'* {Smith, 1999, p32}. The Othering of Indigenous peoples in our land, the

demarcation of 'them' and 'us' is the demarcation of the human and the unhuman, the legacy of the human and the barbarian that continues into the present. Inherent to the function of the human, is the right to tell history, or more specifically, story. Aboriginal peoples exist outside of history, the pre-history, or the primitive body who has lost the right to tell our own stories, our own account of history. The power and authority to tell a story or history, is located in the mechanics of writing.

Shifting temporalities

> Howitt explained that examination of the 'social life of savages' would 'throw an unexpected light on the most obscure practices of antiquity – namely, on the mysteries of classical times whose origin may have been an attempt to imbue the new sciences of anthropology with the respectability of the classics. More pertinently, however it seems that classical times – especially ancient Greece – were seized upon because they represented a key stage in human progress: in Morganian terms, the transition from the Upper Status of Barbarism to the Status of Civilization. Aboriginals were ranked well below the status of barbarism; yet therein lay their significance from an evolutionary perspective, for they represented a root stock of the

> tree that came to flower in Attic civilization, and which more recently bore fruit in the form of modern Western culture {McGregor, 1998, p36}.

The human body inhabits the world of signs. The signs are authored by the human body, and correspond to human significance. In relation to this inquiry, the most important function of the sign being developed at this stage in history is the precedence of the sign over the physical body of the person.

> However non-Darwinian it may have been, the doctrine of survivals was a useful tool for evolutionary anthropologists. On the one hand, it offered an explanation for apparent anomalies in the course of human progress; on the other, it enhanced the comparative method by permitting the temporal frontiers to be pushed further back, so that a society like that of the Aboriginal Australians could be assumed not only to be primitive, but also to embody still more archaic traits from an earlier stage of primordial man {McGregor, 1998, p27}.

The alienation from the life-world has a consequence upon the physiognomy. The postulations of the early philosophers contend much with what is, becoming and being. The questions put forward by the philosophers themselves are a spotlight into what was occurring at this point in western civilization. The observations of the different philosophers; Empedocles who said that light travelled so fast it could not be observed, or Heraclitus who stated that the world was in a constant state of flux et al. The questions being put forward by the philosophers all seem to pertain to one vital question; what is, and what is not real, what does and does not exist. Whether or not they are assumptions that have since been discredited or validated through scientific discourse pertains to another question in itself, but the most important thing at this point of the inquiry – whether its Aristotles shadows in the cave and the illusion of the real perpetrated against the audience – is that Greek society is noted as the most successful civilization of all time, and that this success is largely contributed to the technology of writing. It seems that the questions put forward by the philosophers occur at time when there is a shift in temporality possibly due to the emergent technology of writing.

The immediacy of the life-world

> Michel Foucault … boldly asserted that not only is language and discourse integral to power – *it actually is power* {Attias, 2002}.

Oracy, the spoken word, is a means of communicating with immediacy; the present, visceral immersion in the moment, a living voice speaking to a life-world with directness that writing cannot. The voice sets the body in vibration, speaks to vibration through vibration. That writing is dead, is that writing is without breath, without vibration, and requires breath and a body to make it alive.

> The Word in Latin is given as *Verbum,* equivalent to the English 'verb', that which describes all kinds of action and movement. Creation is movement of one kind or another. It reverberates. For example, atoms are composed of particles of energy that are known to be in ceaseless motion, sometimes actually causing audible sound {D'Angelo, 2000, pp7-8}.

Indigenous cultures existed in the moment, in the present, and the mode of communication determined the primacy of the body in articulating the experience of the life-world. The constant change of the environment, and the body in response to the environment, is best served by oracy, language of the moment, and addressing the infinite, spoken in the Now. The interplay of breath and it's presence in the spoken word is the force that unifies the interiority of the body with the externality of the life-world. In this context, the concept of breath determines the inner and outer, knower and known, for the breath of the body joins

with the spiritus or the fire of the inner world as declared by Aristotle. In isolation, the written word is arbitrary and has no meaning. It is the interjection and the presence of the body and its essential breath that offers meaning to the written word.

> … the supreme Creator, existing in an absolute perfect equilibrium, desired to make manifest a great play of forces which we witness as the universe and call 'life'. Into the limitless void it intoned and sent out an all-powerful seed vibration containing within it all possible forms … invisible and visible, audible and inaudible. That is the Word, the vibration of vibrations, the sound of sounds, the tone of tones {D'Angelo, 2000, p8}.

The universe is vibration, the voice a medium of creation. 'The very phenomenon of light is high frequencies of vibration far beyond audible sound {D'Angelo, 2000, p9}. We begin to comprehend the use of song in Indigenous cosmology, for the whole of existence is song – the audible and the inaudible – and sound depending on its frequency, takes on a particular tonal quality.

Within this field of sound, the body itself moves and is moved. Robin Allot says that language comes from gesture, the body's muscularity at any one moment in time and space. Language then performs an incredibly important function, and in its power to alter, shift,

change and manifest is considered the faculty of the human, and is the greatest force in western ideology.

> Language is more than speech just as perception is more than the structure of the functioning of the eye. In both cases we have also to be concerned with the neural organization o underlying the functions of speech and visual perception. The theory is that language was constructed on the basis of a previously existing complex system, the neural motor system. The programs and procedures which evolved for the construction and execution of simple and sequential motor movements formed the basis of the programs and procedures doing to form language {Allott, 1994}.

The world cannot exist in entirety for the body, but the body at any given moment, is representative of the infinite, delimited by language. The body at any given moment is an expression of the universe in both part and wholeness, for cosmology and quantum physics tells us that we are all part of the whole, and the perceptual world is an expression of our own internal universe projected in an outwards direction. In this, each body occupies a world unique to itself, its contribution to the whole inimitable and irreplaceable. Language then is an expression of local temporality of the infinite, a body representative of time in space. The

body an organic summary of its existence within the infinite is a localized truth created through its perceptual immersion within an environment. The movement of the body, the language that arises from this point in time, is the orchestrated as well as the composer, the dance as well as the choreographer.

> The terms ‘sound’ and ‘vibration’ are essentially synonymous, as something must vibrate, that is to move to and fro, in order for us to hear sound … the cosmos and the phenomenon of sound are one and the same {D'Angelo, 2000, pp9 - 10}.

The Indigenous body through the spoken word, greeted sound with sound. The artefact of the written word had no place, for its vibratory existence is essentially dead without being animated by the voice or the body, ‘each person vibrating at his or her own particular frequency’ {D'Angelo, 2000 p11} was a part of this song. The spoken word, the immediacy of oracy maintained the direct communication with the life-world, and the life-world with the Indigenous body. The vibration of the body and the land was not separate, for through the song, the voice of the singer, and the speaker of language, they became one.

Chapter 3

Immortality in the stars

The author and the authored

> Postmodernism/poststructuralism sees history as an authorial creation, a conjuring up of the past only to serve the discursive content of the present {Wood, 1997, p67}.

The most important aspect to be exploited in Foucault's definition of the author is the association with death. The author in its origin is closely related to the staving off of death and aspiring towards immortality. Foucault says that at its origin the function of writing was developed as a narrative that would outlast the body, and grant the hero of the story immortality. It is necessary then to understand the function of writing and its bid for immortality, and how the function of the author is utilized within western civilization to perpetuate the original intention; immortality and the defeat of death. The body of the author though disappears, and dies a certain kind of death through the act of writing, for the role of authorship is likened to the dead.

Foucault in the definition of an author stipulates the concept of the author is a characteristic pertaining to western civilization, and is the distinguishing characteristic between current western civilization and civilizations preceding. The author function is constituted as a particular function at a specific moment in time and relegating space.

> We are witnessing today a new idealism, infecting large sections of the intellectual left, which has turned language not merely into an independent realm, but into an all-pervasive realm, a sphere so omnipresent, so dominant, as virtually to extinguish human agency. Everything is discourse, you see; and discourse is everything. Because human beings are linguistic creatures, because the world in which we act is a world we know and describe through language, it allegedly follows that there is nothing outside language. Our language, or "discourse," or "text" – the jargon varies but not the message – defines and limits what we know, what we can imagine, what we can do {Wood, 1997, p26}.

The terms *our* and *we* of course pertain to western language. The western system is a system, a world view and temporality existing in and through writing. Its purpose is to create limits where there is only infinity, with the intention of locating bodies in time and space.

> There is a political theory here too. Oppression is said to be rooted ultimately in the way in which we and others are defined linguistically, the way in which we are positioned by words in relation to other words, or by codes which are said to be "structured like a language." Our very being, our identities and "subjectivities," are constituted through language. As one … literary theorist puts it … it is not merely that you are what you speak; no, according to the new idealism, "you are what speaks you." Language is thus the final "prison-house." Our confinement there is beyond resistance; it is impossible to escape from that which makes us what we are {Wood, 1997, p26}.

The west cannot imagine who they are beyond the confines, the prison-house of its own language, and beyond the limits of time. Given this, is re-immersion, a reconnection with the life-world – timelessness - at all possible? Writing calls into question unempirical language, for bodies are required if writing is to have a vibrational impact upon the life-world. Western historical narrative, the exploitative potential of social space exists in the production of the text, with all bodies within the parameters of western social space, alleged by Derrida, perceived as text. What Derrida does not clarify is how all things come to be the text. Identity within the parameters of western society is the ongoing negotiation of language, and this negotiation is strictly performative.

> A text only means because there are strands of meaning leading to all sorts of areas of experience and language use: particularly to the conventions of writing (e.g. how things are expressed in writing, what is expressed, how different topics are written about), to previous writing, to the archive of cultural meanings and instances of their use, to the way we speak about various aspects of our lives and experience. Any text is necessarily *intertextual*, it does not have boundaries but has filiations, connections, instead {Lye, 1996}.

To be a colonized then made Other, one must both possess and be possessed by language. If, in compliance with Postermodernist thought that society is language, then not only must invasion and colonization be considered within the framework of making western language a possibility, but the original binary of the author and authored must be present.

> The author is 'in' the text only insofar as we try to read her 'out' of it {Lye, 1996}.

The text is the artefact of the body; the living, breathing body. In order to possess the text for the self, the author mustn't necessarily die, he is already dead.

> As Ricoeur, commenting on the fact that writing separates the writer from the reader, remarked, "Sometimes I like to say that to read a book is to consider its author as already dead and the book as posthumous" {Lye, 1996}.

In the act of writing, the author through the text is in the process of self artefaction or the process by which materiality emerges as a consequence of the desacralization of the breath.

> … modernism in general has stressed that the text stands apart from and is different from the author, and modernism has endorsed the idea that literature is an intertextual phenomenon, that texts mean in relation to other texts, not in relation to the lives of the author {Lye, 1996}.

Hegel's theory of the Master and Slave dichotomy reveals the power dynamic inherent in writing expressed through the binary of author and authored. This power dynamic and original duality is repetitive and though languaged differently at various stages of the writing process, can be understood to be premised by the construction and ordering of western space by the written word or the text. The text requires more than the text to function, for the text alone is meaningless.

> The text is not conceivable in an orginary or modified form of presence. The unconscious text is already a weave of pure traces, differences in which

> meaning and force are united – a text nowhere present, consisting of archives which are *always already* transcriptions. Originary prints. Everything begins with reproduction Always already: repositories of a meaning which was never present, whose signified presence is always reconstituted by deferral... {Derrida, 2001, pp265-266}.

Writing is an act of deferral, and in compliance with Benjamin, history as an act of deferred happiness. The temporality of writing and its conscription of consciousness;

> Since consciousness for Freud is a surface exposed to the external world, it is here that instead of reading through the metaphor in the usual sense, we must, on the contrary, understand the possibility of a writing advanced as conscious and as acting in the world (the visible exterior of the graphism, of the literal, of the literal becoming literary … in terms of the labor of the writing which circulated like psychical energy between the unconscious and conscious {Derrida, 2001, p266}.

It is here then, that we come to understand the physical space of the Master and Slave presented as being the only two possible positions in society; two positions involved in the reproduction of the text and the 'labour of writing'. The American slave trade in this instance, but the slave trade in general, can be considered, actually, must be considered in the

context of the culture in which it appears; and that is the west as a society and culture made possible through the written word. Writing in this context is a form of harnessing energy, a means of sustaining the master and slave dichotomy, the conscious and the unconscious, in order to produce the text, the sign or symbol, that brings western consciousness into being. Writing does not just occur anymore than it is arbitrary, for it must be continually produced and reproduced. Let us now turn to Hegel to explore this dichotomy.

> … a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash {Barthes, 1977}.

In a culture of writing, all space is determined so by the presence of the object. As bodies in western space, all peoples are both written as well as being written. Each literate body in western space participates in writing – in other words, as bodies in western space we are both the author and the authored. It is in this context that Hegel's dichotomy of Master and Slave be understood. It is here that we need to acknowledge that consciousness is necessary as a function attributable to the ongoing production of the text.

> Self-Consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by being acknowledged or "recognized" {Hegel, 1996}.

Western social space which is also western writing space, the writing of things into and out of existence, is populated by literal bodies that must at the very basic be made aware of body as object. It is here that the notion of slave as one of two possible positions is referred to by Hegel. In the moment of meeting of two bodies, one is made aware of the other as object, but also the self as object in the gaze of the other.

> Self-consciousness has before it another self-consciousness; it has come outside itself. This has a double significance. First it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as an *other* being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other {Hegel, 1996}.

The author though, the potential Master, cannot bear this double-mindedness in the practice of creation, the taking into possession the other in order to speak of one's own self-consciousness. The disparity must be collapsed.

> It must cancel this its other. To do so is the sublation of that first double meaning, and is therefore a second double meaning. First, it must set itself to sublate the other independent being, in order thereby to become certain of itself

> as true being, secondly, it thereupon proceeds to sublate its own self, for this other is itself {Hegel, 1996}.

In moments of coming into contact with the other, each consciousness though is confronted by itself. By projecting our consciousness into the world, we are simultaneously made aware of our own otherness.

> This sublation in a double sense of its otherness in a double sense is at the same time a return in a double sense into its self. For, firstly, through sublation, it gets back itself, because it becomes one with itself again through the cancelling of *its* otherness; but secondly, it likewise gives otherness back again to the other self-consciousness, for it was aware of being in the other, it cancels this its own being in the other and thus lets the other again go free {Hegel, 1996}.

An example of Hegel's proposition is the meeting of two people on the street, for all purposes, two individuals apprehended in each other's gaze. According to Hegel, through sublation, the self cancels its otherness by setting the other free. The self in reclaiming its otherness gives otherness back to the other self-consciousness. It is *by cancelling its otherness* that it gets itself back.

> This process of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness has in this manner been represented as the action of one alone. But this action on the part of the one has itself the double significance of being at once its own action and the action of that other as well. For the other is likewise independent, shut up within itself, and there is nothing in it which is not there through itself. The first does not have the object before it only in the passive form characteristic primarily of the object of desire, but as an object existing independently for itself, over which therefore it has no power to do anything for its own behalf, if that object does not *per se* do what the first does to it. The process then is absolutely the double process of both self-consciousnesses. Each sees the other do the same as itself; each itself does what it demands on the part of the other, and for that reason does what it does, only so far as the other does the same. Action from one side only would be useless, because what is to happen can only be brought about by means of both {Hegel, 1996}.

It is this otherness that is implicit to Australian nationalism, and provides a way to discuss how Australian historicity is dependent upon the otherness provided by the Indigenous body, present and visible only as the symbol of the Aborigine. Within the context of Hegel's Master and Slave theory, consciousness of the self is dependent upon the presence of consciousness of the other, and it is a process whereby self-consciousness arises then subsides, projecting then retreating, but there is that moment, that point of contact where the body of the other – a

self consciousness – acts as a marker in the temporal identity for the purpose of this argument – the primary self consciousness.

> The action has then a *double entente* not only in the sense that it is an act done to itself as well as to the other, but also in the sense that the act *simpliciter* is the act of the one as well as of the other regardless of their distinction {Hegel, 1996}.

In other words, one cannot do to the other without also doing to one's self. The second self-consciousness in observing the objective existence of the former can only be validated if there is a consensual exchange. It is the action of both in this moment that determines self-consciousness.

> In this movement we see the process repeated which came before us as the play of forces; in the present case, however, it is found in consciousness…. *Consciousness* finds that it immediately is and is not another consciousness, as also that this other is for itself only when it cancels itself as existing for itself, and has self-existence only in the self-existence of the other. Each is the mediating term to the other, through which each mediates and unites itself with itself; and each is to itself and to the other an immediate self-existing reality,

> which, at the same time, exists thus for itself only through this mediation. They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another {Hegel, 1996}.

The moment in history where one consciousness rubs up against the other, is the making of history and only possible because it occurs *as* history. The consciousness of the self is also a consciousness of the sign, interplay of forces within limits – the limit demarcated by western language and held in place by western writing. Self-consciousness is that mode of existence where the awareness of self-consciousness is not only necessary as life, but is life.

> In this experience self-consciousness becomes aware that *life* is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness. In immediate self-consciousness the simple ego is absolute object, which, however, is for us or in itself absolute mediation, and has as its essential moment substantial and solid independence. The dissolution of that simple unity is the result of the first experience; through this there is posited a pure self-consciousness, and a consciousness which is not purely for itself, but for another, i.e. as an existent consciousness, consciousness in the form and shape of thinghood. Both moments are essential, since, in the first instance, they are unlike and opposed, and their reflexion into unity has not yet come to light, they stand as two opposed forms or modes of consciousness. The one is independent, and its essential nature is to be for itself; the other is dependent, and its essence is life or existence for

> another. The former is the Master, or Lord, the latter the Bondsman {Hegel, 1996}.

The dichotomy of consciousness that Hegel speaks of occurs within the parameters of writing and being written. Hegel here is explicitly referring to the author and the authored, the interplay of forces within western space in how one positions the object – the self-consciousness of the other as other – but importantly, how one's own otherness is retrieved from this interaction.

> The master is the consciousness that exists *for itself;* but no longer merely the general notion of existence for self. Rather, it is a consciousness existing on its own account which is mediated with itself through an other consciousness, i.e. through an other whose very nature implies that it is bound up with an independent being or with thinghood in general. The master brings himself into relation to both these moments, to a thing as such, the object of desire, and to the consciousness whose essential character is thinghood {Hegel, 1996}.

The Master as a consciousness existing for itself, no longer relying on the self-consciousness of the other to understand or mediate this sense of self, defines the textual dynamics of a writing culture – in this case western writing that is also historicity. What Hegel is in fact referring to, is that the Master as one who has taken full possession of language, a complete

awareness of how to *exist* for itself. That the consciousness of the Master is no longer relying on the self-consciousness of the other,

> And since the master, is (*a*) *qua* notion of self-consciousness, an immediate relation of self-existence, but (*b*) is now moreover at the same time mediation, or a being-for-self which is for itself only through an other — he [the master] stands in relation (*a*) immediately to both, (*b*) mediately to each through the other. The master relates himself to the bondsman mediately through independent existence, for that is precisely what keeps the bondsman in thrall; it is his chain, from which he could not in the struggle get away, and for that reason he proved himself to be dependent, to have his independence in the shape of thinghood {Hegel, 1996}.

The bondsman here is one that cannot get away; chained. It is an interesting analogy used here by Hegel, and one that intersects with the metaphysical condition of being chained and one with the physical state of being chained. In either case, both can only be expressions of language; of being metaphysically or physically chained to language. Like the slaves of the America's, or the Indigenous folk who were reconfigured into bondage, rounded up and chained together, the physical chain precedes the metaphysical. The Master not only fully recovers his otherness, but one who is afforded a self through the power that results from the control over language.

> The master, however, is the power controlling this state of existence, for he has shown in the struggle that he holds it to be merely something negative. Since he is the power dominating existence, while this existence again is the power controlling the other [the bondsman], the master holds, *par consequence*, this other in subordination. In the same way the master relates himself to the thing mediately through the bondsman {Hegel, 1996}.

The Master is not only one who retrieves his otherness, but also posses the power to do so.

> The bondsman being a self-consciousness in the broad sense, also takes up a negative attitude to things and cancels them; but the thing is, at the same time, independent for him and, in consequence, he cannot, with all his negating, get so far as to annihilate it outright and be done with it; that is to say, he merely works on it {Hegel, 1996}.

The bondsman is the self-consciousness that has not the power to confront language in order so that he may be free. This is the delineation between him and the Master, whose time it is at this point in history. The Master possesses the language that keeps the bondsman in servitude, unknown to himself, and malleable in the presence of the Master. For the Master, the dependency of the bondsman is the *possession* of language.

> To the master, on the other hand, by means of this mediating process, belongs the immediate relation, in the sense of the pure negation of it, in other words he gets the enjoyment. What mere desire did not attain, he now succeeds in attaining, viz. to have done with the thing, and find satisfaction in enjoyment. Desire alone did not get the length of this, because of the independence of the thing {Hegel, 1996}.

While Hegel proposes that the Master is free from a state of bondage purely because his existence is now his own, does the fact that the Master must possess language in order to be free, and in this desire to possess language, is dually possessed by language.

> The master, however, who has interposed the bondsman between it and himself, thereby relates himself merely to the dependence of the thing, and enjoys it without qualification and without reserve. The aspect of its independence he leaves to the bondsman, who labours upon it {Hegel, 1996}.

The Master, in his ability to control existence, can though at least control language;

> In these two moments, the master gets his recognition through an other consciousness, for in them the latter affirms itself as unessential, both by

> working upon the thing, and, on the other hand, by the fact of being dependent on a determinate existence; in neither case can this other get the mastery over existence, and succeed in absolutely negating it {Hegel, 1996}.

The two, Master and bondsman fixed as interplay of forces, defer the moment, and repudiate existence all together. At this moment, the Master dependent upon the thing, becomes as much possessed by the bondsman as the Master proposes that the bondsman is possessed by him.

> In all this, the unessential consciousness is, for the master, the object which embodies the truth of his certainty of himself. But it is evident that this object does not correspond to its notion; for, just where the master has effectively achieved lordship, he really finds that something has come about quite different from an independent consciousness. It is not an independent, but rather a dependent consciousness that he has achieved. He is thus not assured of self-existence as his truth; he finds that his truth is rather the unessential consciousness, and the fortuitous unessential action of that consciousness {Hegel, 1996}.

In other words, the bondsman in his state of possession becomes as much a part of the Masters self-consciousness, a way of knowing himself, that it is an existence that requires not

only the presence of the bondsman, but the bondsman as possessed. For the bondsman is not a thing possessed; the bondsman is a language possessed. It is the Masters ability to speak of himself as Master, as an independent consciousness; as an author.

> The latter exists only for himself, that is his essential nature; he is the negative power without qualification, a power to which the thing is naught. And he is thus the absolutely essential act in this situation, while the bondsman is not so, he is an unessential activity. But for recognition proper there is needed the moment that what the master does to the other he should also do to himself, and what the bondsman does to himself, he should do to the other also{Hegel, 1996}.

The dependent consciousness achieved is that the Master is reliant upon language to ever speak of his position in time and space. The Master is able to utilize the bondsman in order to speak of this position, and importantly, the Master has access to history and the historical narratives that places him in the position of power whereby language is at his deployment; especially used and useful as a way to position the bondsman – an object – in order to speak of himself.

> But it is evident that this object does not correspond to its notion; for, just where the master has effectively achieved lordship, he really finds that

> something has come about quite different from an independent consciousness. It is not an independent, but rather a dependent consciousness that he has achieved {Hegel, 1996}.

It is this that is at the core of Master and bondsman. Notions of slavery that have focussed on the plight of the slave as being a captive within western language, deny that it is also western Master, author or slave owner that is the true captive, for he is captive to language and as he has made the bondsman a necessary component in his own self-consciousness, the Master is as much the captive as the bondsman, for the master is no master without a slave.

Imperialism and the taking into Possession of Language

> History… is a method not a truth. History is not a faithful record. It is writing. Therefore … there can be no such thing as post colonial writing, or post colonialism, as all writing as praxis is already a colonisation of a terrain not its own. Writing is …an imposed rationality – and it rationalises' symbol. Writing orders the world, composes it in terms of its own grammar, making itself the only means through which the world be made intelligible. It is the practice of Othering. Those peoples possessing writing are understood only by writers in terms of writing: without discourse they are without power {Buchanan, 1992}.

Let us continue analysing the processes of imperialism, colonisation and invasion from within the framework of writing and its requirements. The requirements of writing pertain to the author, in this instant, the colonist who through force opened up a new set of resources, and in doing so not only extracted the necessary energy required of a culture of writing, but found in the act of imperialism, access to new objects and thus new ways of expressing self and self-consciousness. Writing is the process whereby Indigenous peoples became the other, the powerless without discourse, which in the context of writing, is synonymous to being without language. The fact that Indigenous peoples did not possess discourse and therefore language is tantamount to the statement that Indigenous folk were not human. They (we) were other than human; the object at the disposal of the colonial author as he constructs historicity to which he is central.

The author through the utility of the text must be reminded that the text cannot exist in isolation, but only in proximity to other texts. The resources at the disposal of the colonial author were not only the energetic extractions by way of minerals and exploitable resources by way of land, but the bodies of the invaded became a part of this fabrication of history. The justification for the access by force to such resources was based on the absence of language – reconfigured as the absence of discourse.

> This is writing that conquers. It will use the New World as if it were a blank, 'savage' page on which Western desire will be written. It will transform the space of the other in to a field of expansion for a system of production. From the moment of a rupture between a subject and an object of the operation, between a will to write and a written body (or a body to be written), this writing fabricates Western History {Certeau, 1988, pp.xxv - xxvi} [emphasis in original].

The horrors inflicted upon the invaded to be fully understood, need to be contextualised by the needs of the west as a culture – a literate writing culture – that in order to exist needed not only the presence of objects by way of the other, but when full extermination of the other was unsuccessful, there began a process of engagement through which in a literal context were 'unconscious' bodies, needed to be made conscious through self-consciousness so that the body may be taken into possession through reflexivity. The violence and force integral to the process of invasion and colonisation, was the implementation of ordering the world, to echo Buchanan, composing it, or as Deleuze and Guattari would say, deterritorialization before reterritorialization, remaking space – and it is worth repeating Buchanan here - 'in terms of its own grammar, making itself the only means through which the world be made intelligible' {Buchanan, 1992}.

Considering this, let us now look at examples of the remaking of 'empty, unintelligible' space, or that space that has yet to be written, reconfigured within western writing and colonial authors. The lands feasted upon by the colonial gaze were perceived as opportunistic. Not only did imperialism provide the opportunity to the colonial author to rewrite himself, but also to expand the collective concept of self. The lands and bodies of Indigenous peoples were textual opportunities, a means through which the production of the text and the power of the author could be realised. The author – the colonial author – had to first establish the parameters of his textual existence, modifying the environment so that the text may be imbued with meaning. Given this, let us look more closely at the concept of deterritorialization, first the erasure of prior meaning, and then the eventual process of reterritorialization in the context that frames the massacres of Indigenous peoples in the land known as Australia.

Modernity saw a great shift in western society. The west emerging out of the Dark Ages, and into the Age of Reason, was becoming increasingly a literate society. The west would soon become a society whereby all power struggles would be centralized around the simple concepts of author or authored, i.e. power to shape and mould reality and other bodies around the centrality of the undisclosed author. It is the era when the literacy would achieve an embodied outcome, exploiting Aristotle's Human and Slave, and Hegel's Master and Slave. The human and slave are textual concepts realized as a biological phenomena. The author or the human is that biology that is literate and capable of reproducing linearity and time.

> The discovery of history as a *system,* as a decipherable norm of reason and a predictable goal of development, thus transformed *history* into *sociology* and opened the floodgates of the utopian technologies of social engineering {Al-Jamri, 2000, p2}.

Modernity more than anything represents industrial produced language. The Industrial Revolution allowed mass production of language. More than any other, the Age of Reason that precedes the Age of Discovery is about language, its constitution and its transportable utility represented by colonialism.

> … modern (Enlightenment) reason, which prided itself on its discovery of history and made the grand metaphysical claim about historical existence and not some kind of trans-temporal eternity being the true home of man, is now humbled by the most disastrous upshot of its own truth. For the logic of quis custodiet ipsos custodies (Who guards, in turn, the guardians?) compels it to acknowledge that reason itself is a product of history … {Al-Jamri, 2000, p2}.

Most importantly, occurring in the west at this time was the emergent literary culture, and its industrial development that allowed it to be transported to other lands. The force of colonial language is implicit of the force through which the western body gained access to lands belonging to other folk. The west though, through invasion and the colonial process, was not only inflicting its sense of time and space upon other folk, but in its execution determined what constitutes the human, writing, and language. Ultimately though, all of these seeming independent traits are synonymous with the other. In other words, it is the technology of writing as determined by the west that justified the invasion of the lands of Indigenous folk the world over, as the west jostled to take possession of lands appearing on the Latin mappa mundi as terra nullius.

> The very idea of, and the centrality to our culture of, 'the individual', has been seen as an ideological conception, a product of the capitalist revolution in the late seventeenth century. In support of this idea one might note that the "rights of the individual" were not theorized until the eighteenth century, and wonder whether humankind just hadn't been bright enough to think of them until then, or if the centrality of the concept 'the individual' is an historical phenomenon. There are various claims that the idea of "the author" was not a significant concept before this time. In partial support of this it might be noted that the use of the word "original" in a positive sense to refer to 'authored' texts, paintings, etc., did not occur until the late eighteenth century, not long after, for instance,

> the emergence of the idea that individual actors might give *their own* interpretations of roles {Lye, 1996}.

During Modernity, history became sociology. Put another way, the power to invade lands and transform bodies through writing became possible. The west through imperialism and colonialism, utilized writing as a means of harnessing the life force or sunlight of other bodies in order to produce material language.

> … we're all "made out of sunlight," and that the ability to increase our available sunlight … made possible our extraordinary population increase over the past centuries. Slavery has been another tool of modern civilization, and there are some historians who assert that without slavery the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, Ottomans, Europeans, and Americans would not have had anything close to the levels of affluence they enjoyed… Slavery is another way of taking the sunlight stored in somebody else's body and "harnessing" it for the benefit of the exploiter {Hartmann, 1999, p35}.

The production of the artefact forms the material basis of western language, and it is that the artefact is symbolic of Time.

> … the etymology of the word 'narrative', the Latin verb *gnare*, 'to know'); narrative is a mould in which we shape and preserve memories; narrative, in its fictional form, widens our mental universe beyond the actual and the familiar and provides a playfield for thought experiments (Schaeffer); narrative is an inexhaustible and varied source of education and entertainment; narrative is a mirror in which we discover what it means to be human…. This definition presents narrative as a type of text able to evoke a certain type of image in the mind of the recipient. But, as mentioned above, it does not take a text to inspire the construction of such an image: we may form stories in our mind as a response to life itself. … The property of 'being' a narrative can be predicated of any semiotic object, whatever the medium, produced with the intent to create a response involving the construction of a story. …'Possessing narrativity', on the other hand, means being able to inspire a narrative response, whether or not the text, if there is one, was intended to be processed that way, and whether or not the stimuli are designed by an author {Ryan, 2005}.

The notion of possessing narrativity is the power to manifest, impress and shape the consciousness and bodies of other folk as the legacy of history. Western bodies who took into their possession the bodies of the African's with the intention of making them slaves, could

do so because they possessed narrativity. In this, not all bodies possess narrativity, for the possession of narrativity itself is the human, author and master. All are conditions predicated by language, and all distinguish from one body to the next, the right to story.

> The truth is quite contrary: the author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain function principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction…. The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning'{Foucault, 1984, pp118 - 119}.

The author then is an important function in the production of western meaning, and epistemological and ontological dominance over Indigenous lands and bodies signify our return in this chapter, to the concept of flesh as the foundation of language, for language does not exist outside of bodies, but rather is the binding force of the body's neurology, like twine, tightens, constricts, releases, the being wound like a tapestry through the power of words.

> Authority may be defined as the power to enforce obedience or influence action, opinion, or belief… In one, a person gains authority by legal right, such as that held by the governor of a state, or the president of a university, or the commander of a military unit. This is … de jeur authority, as contrasted with de facto authority, that which an individual earns by his presence, fitness, excellence, character, or charisma… {Tarr, 2001}.

The westerners who came to the land now known as Australia were imbued as a consequence of historicity, with a form of authority referred to by Tarr as *de jeur.* In this, the emergent authors, those western bodies sent forth in the bid to extend the parameters of western space, through its inception created authors, folk who previously may have possessed neither authorship nor authority, suddenly found that the power to manipulate, shape, impress, and to possess language, was theirs.

Writing space

The stories of atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples, not only in Australia, but in places all over the world, are familiar to us. These incidences can be seen as acts of authorship, control, and the establishing of a perimeter where western writing could become

the mechanism of control. Colonialism requires the implementation of the praxis that not only put in place the author as the position of power, but to establish his power as unassailable. In the case of the colony that would eventually become Australia, the harsh reality of the land as unforgiving compounded the fact that initially, very few chose to come to this land in the first. It was necessary for the colonists to bring the land under control, and simultaneously required the Indigenous body also, to be seized within the western writing system.

The need to bring the environment under control in order that western writing could not only commence, but its limits be secured by force and force alone, meant that in the treatment of Indigenous peoples, the perceived hostility of the land was intrinsic to how the colonists perceived the Indigenous peoples. The requirement of the land to yield so that writing could commence, is really what Banks is considering when postulating about the economic potential of *terra nullius.*

> Banks had quickly reached the conclusion that the new land had little to excite the interest of the Europeans. The animals were exotic and the plants very unusual but there seemed little that could be eaten or even used by humans. Despite his close encounter with Aborigines, he thought they held 'a rank little

> superior to that of monkeys'. He suggested that the land was essentially unoccupied, thus coining the notion of *terra nullius.* He wrote that the soil was 'entirely void of the helps derived from cultivation' that it was unlikely to 'yield much to support of man' {Mulligan, 2001, p19}.

A primary example of the powerlessness of the colonial body in the land now known as Australia, and how the Indigenous body as an entity not yet under control, is expressed simply in the story John MacEntire, Phillip's gamekeeper. In 1790, the gamekeeper was speared, some suspected, as reprisal for the shooting of Aboriginal people {Elder, 1998 p8}. Phillips put together a punitive expedition number more than 50. The object of their attention was Pemulwuy, an Indigenous warrior solidly defending his land at this time. The expedition in accordance with Phillips instructions and led by Tench, Pemulwuy would necessarily be hunted down and killed,

> Six men of Pemulwuy's tribe had to be captured. If they could not be captured, then they must be killed, decapitated and their heads brought back to Sydney {Elder, 1998, p9}.

The land proved an obstruction to what might have been proposed as a realizable plan of attack or murder. Tench's recount spoke of the being thwarted by mosquito's and sandflies, highlighted by the ease with which Indigenous peoples, unclothed and unencumbered moved through the landscape.

> We were immersed, nearly to the waist in mud, so thick and tenacious, that it was not without the most vigorous exertion of every muscle of the body, that the legs could be disengaged. When we had reached the middle, our distress became not only more pressing, but serious, and each succeeding step, buried us deeper. At length a serjeant of grenadiers stuck fast, and declared himself incapable of moving either forward or backward; and just after, ensign Prentice, and I, felt ourselves in a similar predicament, close together. 'I find it impossible to move; I am sinking;' resounding on every side. What to do I knew not … Our distress would have terminated fatally, had not a soldier cried out to those on shore to cut boughs of trees, and throw them to us; a lucky thought, which certainly saved many of us from perishing miserable; and even with this assistance, had we been burdened by our knapsacks, we could not have emerged; for it employed us near half an hour to disentangle some of our number. The serjeant of grenadiers in particular, was sunk to his breast-bone, and so firmly fixed in, that the

> efforts of many men were required to extricate him, which was effected in the moment after I had ordered one of the ropes, destined to bind the captive Indians, to be fastened under his arms…{Elder, 1998, pp9-10}.

The invasion and colonisation of the land now known as Australia was marked by the battle not just over territory, but more specifically, over discourse and the right to language. Indigenous peoples had in place a language for more than many millennia. The fight to keep the right to language is at the core of the frontier conflicts that arose from the presence of the western body in the lands belonging to Indigenous peoples. The acts carried out against Indigenous peoples were the execution of discourse, and through discourse, the accumulation of language.

> There were stories of using Aboriginal people as target practice. One old bushranger is reported to have said that he would 'as lief shoot them as so many sparrows'. Child stealing became a popular pastime. One particularly sadistic episode involved a man named Carrotts who chased a native man and woman. Having shot the man, he cut off his head, hung it around the woman's neck, and rode back into the nearby settlement proud of his success. It was said that the bushranger Michael Howe, who was known for his cunning and his

> callousness, liked to kill Aboriginal people 'better than smoking his pipe' and that one of his favourite pastimes was to lie his gun down, wait until Aboriginal people approached, and then shoot them by pulling the trigger with his toe {Elder, 1998, pp34-35}.

The hanging of Indigenous bodies from trees, the seizure of heads in the absence of capture, the killing of peoples by the poisoning of water and damper, are all implicit in the construction of a space within western identity would be and could be written. The defining of colonial space was also the defining of the emergent object identity of the Aborigine. The society of the text – the Aborigine as an emergent textual based identity, is presented as thus by Debord in the chapter titled *Separation Perfected*.

> [1] In a society where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation. [2] The images detached from every aspect of life fuse in a common stream in which the unity of this life can no longer be re-established. Reality considered *partially* unfolds, in its own general unity, as a pseudo-world *apart,* an object of mere contemplation. The specialization of images of the world is completed in the world of the autonomous image, where the liar has lied to himself. The spectacle in general,

> as the concrete inversion of life, is the autonomous movement of the non-living {Debord, 1973}.

The massacre of Indigenous peoples, bodies hanged from trees, and the diseased and downtrodden state of existence imposed by colonial textual culture, was the means of demarcating the periphery of civility with *necros*, the dead flesh of the Indigenous inhabitants, and granted that within a textual society, the emergent identity of the Aborigine was not only spectacle, but it was fused with notions of decay and death, it was in a state of decomposition at the site where the west was composing its local identity as the natives of the land to be known as Australia.

> [4] The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images {Debord, 1973}.

Stories of the death of Indigenous peoples during the early days of contact abound. The writing space that was being fixed through force was one where the Law of the land was the Law of writing, and it is the text that assumed authority over all, for it was and is the text that grants the western author not only power, but the ability to locate himself or her in time and place. The way in which the colonists related to Indigenous peoples was and is through the text, for the Aborigine, the native and savage, are merely the artefact, the spectacle of the

former, the former being here the ancient Indigenous folk who existed beyond the parameters of western language, time, historicity and consciousness.

> The sun had set and the cold night air was rising from the creek as Anderson watched the hapless group make their way slowly towards the hills. Kilmeister hastily saddled his horse, grabbed his pistol and a sword, and galloped off to join the men. A few minutes later the Kwiambal prisoners, flanked on every side by stockmen, disappeared from sight. About twenty minutes later, the forlorn watchers at the hut heard two shots. Then silence and darkness fell upon the valley.
>
> Yintayintin was determined to see what had happened. He followed the party at a safe distance. The moon came out and swathed the bush in a ghostly light. A couple of kilometres from the hut was a newly built stockyard. As he approached it, he was confronted by a gruesome sight. Near the stockyard was a pile of twenty-eight bodies lying in a lake of blood. It seemed that the murderers, not wanting to waste ammunition, had drawn their swords and cut the Kwiambal to pieces. They had decapitated most of the babies and children. Heads had been hurled far from the bodies. One man had been burnt to death. Sickened by what he saw, and terrified that the same fate may be his, he fled.

> Arriving back at the hut, he blurted out the news to Anderson {Elder, 1998, pp87-88}.

It is death that necessarily occurs, of the author and of body of the represented. The implementation of a writing culture, calls for the death that it writes.

> It is when that which is written is *deceased* as a sign-signal that it is born as language; for then it says what is, thereby functioning, since it ceased to be *utilized* as natural, biological, or technical information, or as the transition from one existent to another, from a signifier to a signified {Derrida, 2001, p13}.

The deaths of Indigenous peoples in the early days of invasion and colonisation are not a prelude to Aboriginal identity, but are intrinsic to it; a part of it, for the Aborigine is born of the spectacle representing the periphery of western space delimited by language.

> … a subject who comes into being as a consequence of language, yet always within its terms. The theory of interpellation appears to stage a social scene in which a subject is hailed, the subject turns around, and the subject then accepts the terms by which he or she is hailed…. Interpellation, on this account, is not an event, but a certain way of *staging a call,* where the call, as staged, becomes deliteralized in the course of its exposition or *darstellung*. The call

> itself is also figured as a demand to align oneself with the law, a turning around (to face the law, to find a face for the law?), and an entrance into the language of self ascription – "Here I am" – through the appropriation of guilt {Butler, 1997, pp106-107}.

The colonial intrusion endured by Indigenous peoples was a consequence of many things; but more than any other speaks of the different cultural values underpinned by oppositional cosmologies. Indigenous peoples in finding little value in western possessions or texts, would leave them abandoned. The inability of the colonists to engage with the Indigenous peoples to a point where a sense of reflexivity could be imposed, framed the eventual parameters through which the Aborigine would emerge within western consciousness, language and historicity.

> The turning around is an act that is, as it were, conditioned both by the "voice" of the law and by the responsiveness of the one hailed by the law… The turn toward the law is thus a turn against one-self, a turning back on oneself that constitutes the movement of consciousness {Butler, 1997, p107}.

The law is the text, and the means through which the law hailed Indigenous peoples was through force, violence with the promise of death. There are only two positions available in the recurring binary inherent to western textual culture; the author and the authored, the

master and the slave; and now we shall look at these concepts within the concepts of composition and decomposition.

Divisions by two

> The problem is not so much that we are driven to dichotomy, but that we impose incorrect or misleading divisions by two upon the world's complexity {Gould, 1987, p8}.

The constant flux of the universe has never been so successfully arrested, frozen into competing opposites than within the philosophies of the early Greeks. This opposition then became the light and the darkness of the written word, speaking of the original designers' relationship to mortality, the complexity of the ever changing universe expressed explicitly within Greek thought, providing the basis of textual culture. It is here the supposedly irretrievable binary opposites of western thought, ideology and language are initially encountered. Heraclitus a mystic plays with the notion of opposites when speaking of mortality,

> Heraclitus … regarded fire as the fundamental substance; everything, like flame in a fire, is born by the death of something else. 'Mortals are immortals, and

> immortals are mortals, the one living the other's death and dying the other's life.' There is unity in the world, but is unity formed by the combination of opposites. 'All things come out of the one, and the one out of all things'; but the many have less reality than the one, which is God {Russell, 1946, p59}.

The temporality of linear thought, of a distant future becomes one of the distinctions between civilized man and savage man.

> The civilized man is distinguished from the savage mainly by *prudence,* or, to use a slightly wider term, *forethought.* He is willing to endure present pains for the sake of future pleasures, even if the future pleasures are rather distant. This habit began to be important with the rise of agriculture; no animal and no savage would work in the spring in order to have food next winter, except for a few purely instinctive forms of action, such as bees making honey or squirrels burying nuts. In these cases, there is no forethought; there is a direct impulse to an act … True forethought only arises when a man does something towards which no impulse urges him, because his reason tells him that he will profit by it at some future date. Hunting requires no forethought, because it is pleasurable; but tilling the soil is labour, and cannot be done from spontaneous impulse {Russell, 1946, p36}.

The one arising out of the many, a means to unify the world, though the world captured in opposites, rendering each in the other. The struggle at the time of the Greek philosopher's was desire to gain control over his own body and environment, resonate within the surviving texts of this era. The struggle for immortality, signified by the impurity of the body versus the divinity of thought, of the earthly existence being inferior to the heavenly domain;

> They believed in the transmigration of souls; they taught that the soul hereafter might achieve eternal bliss or suffer eternal or temporary torment according to its way of life here on earth. They aimed at becoming 'pure', partly by ceremonies of purification, partly by avoiding certain kinds of contamination. … Man, they held, is partly of earth, party of heaven; by a pure life the heavenly part is increased and the earthly part diminished. In the end a man may become one with Bacchus, and is called 'a Bacchus' {Russell, 1946, p37}.

The notion of overcoming the earthly domain of the body, and being reborn are recurring themes in early western thought; like the myth of Dionysus who 'while still a boy, he is torn to pieces by Titans, who eat his flesh, all but the heart. Some say the heart was given by Zeus to Semele, others that Zeus swallowed it; in either case, it gave rise to the second birth of Dionysus' {Russell, 1946, p37}.

> So man is partly earth, partly divine, and Bacchic rites sought to make him more nearly completely divine {Russell, 1946, p37}.

In the notion of forethought, we can begin to see the emergence of the idea of 'deferred happiness', a promise of accessing the heavens, and defeating all earthly connections.

> Orphic tablets have been found in tombs, giving instructions to the soul of the dead person as to how to find his way in the next world, and what to say in order to prove himself worthy of salvation {Russell, 1946, p38}.

Instructions, inscriptions, are presented in the form of the written text, though at this stage, carved in stone. The Petelia tablet, 'the most nearly complete' {Russell, 1946, p38} reads as such

> Thou shalt find on the left of the House of Hades a Well-Spring,
> And by the side thereof standing a white Cyprus.
> To this well-spring approach not near.
> But thou shalt find another by the Lake of Memory,
> Cold water flowing forth, and there are Guardians before it,
> Say: 'I am a child of Earth and of Starry Heavens;
> But my race is of Heaven (alone). This ye know yourselves.

> And lo, I am parched with thirst and I perish. Give me quickly
> The cold water flowing forth from the Lake of Memory.'
> And of themselves they will give thee to drink from the holy well-
> spring,
> And thereafter among the other heroes thou shalt have lordship …. {Russell, 1946, pp38-39}.

The belief that the soul required to not forget in order to pass into the next world and granted salvation, suggest scaffolding that would allow the natural limits of the body to be exceeded, 'and it was only when the soul was "out of body" that it could show its true nature'{Russell, 1946, p42}.

> The soul in the next world, if it is to achieve salvation, is not to forget, but, on the contrary, to acquire a memory surpassing what is natural {Russell, 1946, p39}.

The temporality of future, the deferral of the present, and the text as a direction for other bodies to access the heavens, is recurring themes in modern day western textual culture.

> To the Orphic, life in this world is pain and weariness. We are bound to a wheel which turns through endless cycles of birth and death; our true life is

> the stars, but we are tied to earth. Only by purification and renunciation and an ascetic life can we escape from the wheel and attain at last to he ecstasy of union with God. This is not the view of men to whom life is easy and pleasant {Russell, 1946, p41}.

The desire of the Greeks to reach the heavens and to discard this earthly domain is still present in western thought today. They are most important in the theories of this era are properties of an emergent textual culture. It is now that we move on to a concept that was to make this possible in strict terms that relate to the technology of writing, and it is the concept of composition and decomposition as qualities present in all writing, and as will be shown, the temporal feature that is the true distinction between Indigenous polyphasic consciousness, and the monophasic consciousness of western ontology and epistemology.

Composition and decomposition

> Composition ● n. 1 the way in which a whole or mixture is made up; ingredients or constituents. ►a thing composed of various elements. ► a compound artificial substance. 2. a work of music, literature, or art. 3. the action of composing. 4. archaic mental constitution; character. 5. a legal agreement to pay a sum in lieu of a larger debt or other obligation. 6.

> Mathematics the successive application of functions to a variable. 7. Physics the process of finding the resultant of a number of forces.
>
> Decompose ● v. 1 (or organic matter) decay; become rotten. 2. break down or cause to break down into component p. 3. Mathematics express (a number or function) as a combination of simpler components. – DERIVATIVES decomposable adj. decomposer n. decomposition n. {Pearsall, 1999, p372}

There were different opinions held by Heraclitus, Thales and Anaximenes as to what made up the earth. For Heraclitus, it was fire, Thales water, and Anaximenes believed all things to be made up of air {Russell, 1946, p61}. These theories are important as they are recurring themes when discussing the text and its proximity to breath, as well as the harnessing of energy in the form of light – or as Heraclitus puts it, fire.

> 'All things are an exchange for Fire, and Fire for all things, even as wares for gold and gold for wares.'
> 'Fire lives the death of air, and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of earth, earth that of water' {Russell, 1946, p63}.

Heraclitus believed that all existence was fire and that this 'central fire never dies' {Russell, 1946 p64}.

> … the world 'was ever, is now, and ever shall be, an ever-living Fire'{Russell, 1946, p64}.

For Anaximenes, the fundamentals of air are expressed as thus;

> 'Just as our soul, being air, holds us together, so do breath and air encompass the whole world.' It seems that the world breathes {Russell, 1946, p47}.

But it is the concept of the universe as constant change, ceaseless flux for which Heraclitus is famous, 'You cannot step twice into the same river; for fresh waters are ever flowing upon you' {Russell, 1946, p65}. While there is the notion of constant change, then comes with it the desire for permanence. Again, this is an important aspect of western thought, for while the philosophers spoke of ascending to the heavens, '… if life on earth is despaired of, it is only in heaven that peace can be sought' {Russell, 1946, p63}, the desire for permanence was at the same time, a ruling feature. 'Science, like philosophy, has sought to escape from the doctrine of perpetual flux by finding some permanent substratum amid changing phenomena' {Russell, 1946, p65}. This 'permanent substratum' is proffered by the concept of composition and decomposition.

The concept of composition and decomposition begins with the Greek philosopher Anaxagoras, who is credited with bringing this philosophy to Athens;

> With Anaxagoras and Protagoras philosophical teaching had entered Athens {Ehrenberg, 1968, p226}.

Though Anaxagoras is not as well known as his contemporary's, his contribution is nonetheless, incredibly important to western textual culture. A relative obscure philosopher, Anaxagoras of Clazomenae is credited with being one of the forefathers of Greek philosophy. A friend of Pericles, Anaxagoras was on the side of rational science {Ehrenberg, 1968, p143}. Anaxagoras is not as acclaimed as Aristotle or Socrates, but appeared at a time when the Greek philosophers were withdrawing from a world ruled by Gods. It is at this time that Anaxagoras introduced the concept of '… the supreme power of *nous,* human reason and intellect' {Ehrenberg, 1968, p297}, and claimed that it is *nous* that shapes the universe, for Anaxagoras at the time was 'The only philosopher about the middle of the century who was definitely on the side of rational science … His position … may have been symbolic on the way from philosophy of nature to that of man{Ehrenberg, 1968, p337}. Anaxagoras also proclaimed, according to Bertrand Russell that different bodies suggest different intelligences {Russell, 1946, p80}. Anaxagoras introduced the concept of *nous* and bodily intelligence complying with bodily difference; he also made the

contribution to western thought of the world being ordered through the concepts of composition and decomposition. Anaxagoras

> … differed from his predecessors in regarding mind (nous) as a substance which enters into the composition of living things, and distinguishes them from dead matter. In everything, he says, there is a portion of everything except mind, and some things contain mind also. Mind has power over all things that have life; it is infinite and self-ruled, and is mixed with nothing. Except as regards mind, everything, however small, contains portions of all opposites, such as hot and cold, white and black {Russell, 1946, p80}.

It is Anaxagoras who introduced the concept of opposites as representative of composition or decomposition into western philosophy, this being influential in the movement from nature to man. It is nous that enters the 'living things' and the absence of *nous* determines that which is dead. The binary of composition and decomposition is representative of the presence or absence of *nous*. As it is the *nous* that shapes the world, the absence of *nous* pertains to the world not shaped by the mind. It is here that we encounter the roots of western writing, and the ongoing need for composition and decomposition, which occur simultaneously, one being present in the other. Anaxagoras has made an indelible contribution to western ideology for in his observation, he shaped the very core of western writing and ideology for millennia to

come, for the era of Enlightenment, Age of Discovery and modernism employed the binary of opposites that made imperialism and colonialism possible.

The binary concepts of composition and decomposition are present within western language, and demarcate the temporal domain inhabited by and configured through the presence of consciousness. Composition and decomposition are repetitive themes within western writing system, the jargon of composition and decomposition pervading western society and tradition. The concept of *nous* and the binary of composition and decomposition come together in the written word. The questions of the early philosophers and their metaphysical premise were framed by context, and that context is provided by the human body itself. In other words, the intentionality of the written language as it was being devised served and continues to serve, a functional purpose of western physical reality, 'For the language we use tells us the kind of world we can expect to find' {Gregory, 1988, p199}. Composition and decomposition is the central organising mechanism at the heart of writing.

> The foundations of Western conception of identity were formulated by the early Greek philosophers, who explored the problem of identity form both spatial and temporal perspectives. Spatially, objects or bodies were conceived of as conglomerates, composed either of elements (as suggested by Thales and Empedocles), or of atoms (by Democritus and Leucippus) {Putney, 1991}.

The text is the signifier, binding the binary of composition and decomposition, fashioning the site where one of either is perceived as occurring. The text as the site of composition and decomposition – as opposites they are bound – becomes the perimeter of western consciousness and civilization, comprising the scaffold of the imperial and colonial eras. Writing becomes the site of struggle over the composition and decomposition of the universe, collapsing the infinite into irreconcilable opposites of the binary. Western writing is inhered with the presence of nous, and it shapes the world, but more precisely delimits the emergent concept of the human as being removed from nature, a temporality undergoing ongoing composition, pitted against the decomposition of the life-world and those to whom the life-world is central in their existence.

> During World War I, Oswald Spengler wrote his famous and distasteful book, *The Decline of the West,* proclaiming that Western Civilization and its dominant values were coming to an end. The bonds and traditions that had held society together were decomposing, the solidarities of life disintegrating, together with the unity of thought and culture. Like every other civilization that had gone through its natural cycle … the West had inevitably passed from its autumn of (an already destructive)

> "illumination" or "enlightenment" to a winter of individualism and cultural nihilism {Wood, 1997, p1}.

What is the *decomposition* referred to by Spengler? The themes of composition and decomposition recur through the act of writing, and through writing, provide society with the dominant primary means of societal order and control by preserving the linguistic control over bodies and social space. What are the bonds and traditions though, that Spangler referred to as 'decomposing'? Through the presence of western historicity in the lands of our Ancestors, Indigenous folk lost the right to story, and lost the right to name. Foucault in his essay *What is the Author* speaks of the distinguishing features of western writing.

> First of all, we can say that today's writing has freed itself from the dimension of expression. Referring only to itself, but without being restricted to the confines of its interiority, writing is identified with its own unfolded exteriority. This means that it is an interplay of signs arranged less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the signifier. Writing unfolds like a game… that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits. In writing, the point is not to pin a subject within

> language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears {Foucault, 1984, p102}.

The tautness between the visible and the invisible, the present and absent, appear to be inherent aspects of western writing. It is necessary to comprehend the metaphysical aspects of western writing in order to understand the machination of history, for it is this regulation over rightful forms of writing that separates the human from the non human world, history from pre-history, and the primitive from the savage. That writing is the space where the writing subject constantly disappears is worthy of investigation, since according to Morrison

> These images of impenetrable whiteness need contextualizing to explain their extraordinary power, pattern and consistency. Because they appear almost always in conjunction with representations of black or Africanist people who are dead, impotent, or under complete control, these images of blinding whiteness seem to function as both antidote for the mediation on the shadow that is companion to this whiteness – a dark and abiding presence that moves the hearts and text of American literature with fear and longing. This haunting, a darkness from which our early literature seemed unable to extricate itself, suggests the complex and contradictory situation in which

> American writers found themselves during the formative years of the nations literature {Morrison, 1992, p33}.

There is a power inherent to western writing, and Indigenous folk have been the fodder in western historical narratives. The constant interplay of black and white is itself inherent to imperialism and the colonial process itself. There is something desperate and longing in the writings of the colonizing peoples, and it seems that the environment they encountered served as the matter with which nationhood and a sense of self could and would be built, 'What is often called the black soul is a White man's artefact'{Fanon, 1970 p12}. Black though, is that space beyond the text; the darkness that speaks of the fear of impending death, a fear that informs the western gaze and its biological and mechanical reproduction.

> … our initial sensory experiences and how we interpret them or how they are interpreted for us actually structure the very anatomy and physiology of our nervous system in such a way that ultimately the nervous system serves only one function: to keep reinforcing the initial interpretation. Anything that doesn't reinforce the initial interpretation doesn't even get into the nervous system. So if you have a concept or a notion of an idea that something exits, then your nervous system won't even take it in {Chopra, 2005, p3}.

Effectively, the human nervous system shaped by alphabetized culture cannot comprehend anything that is not corresponding to logocentrism and the reality created by western language, a language severed from the life-world. The role of western language as one alienated from the life-world has contributed to the construction of the western nervous system, the function of which is to keep those things out of awareness that do not reinforce its pre-existing belief system. Even though western science is attempting to find a Theory of Everything, it would not be able to be comprehended as such;

> That's a very particular fact because it tells us that with bits of sensory experience, we'll never be able to comprehend the whole. We never will be! After all the human eye can see only between 380 and 500 billionths of a metre. There's nothing sensed between 360 and 370. It doesn't exist for us {Chopra, 2005, p3}.

The role of language is the predicate to different ways of relating to the life-world, for though western cultures have potentially severed all possibility of being able to re-immerse them in the life-world, Indigenous cultures continue the intimate relationship represented by belief systems such as the Tjukurrpa.

> Tjukurrpa is also a synonym for Aboriginal religious laws, which must be observed properly to ensure the balance of the elements and the continuation of life in all its forms. During their epic journeys, the Spirit Ancestors sang and performed ceremonies. In the far north these song cycles are handed on from generation to generation along with body designs, which were also painted on the chests of the first Creation Ancestors at the time of the first songs {Isaacs, 1999, p5}.

The creative force of the Tjukurrpa, the Pitjantjatjara word for Dreaming{Isaacs, 1999, p4}, is ongoing and current. Tjukurrpa is not a past concept, for the philosophy of the Tjukurrpa speaks of and how the land was brought into existence, as well as constant change. Through the Tjukurrpa the Ancestor beings brought the land into creation;

> During the Tjukurrpa period, the ancestral beings or forces travelled widely across the land and performed feats of creation and destruction. The journey pathways or routes along which they travelled are remembered and celebrated … at particular sites along their routes. The present Aboriginal groups across the country trace their descent directly from these great Spirit Ancestors {Isaacs, 1999, pp 4-5}.

In this, the arrival of western language did not just alter the landscape, but has shifted the sensorial awareness, endangering the relationship between Indigenous body and the sensuous world of the Ancestors.

> To directly perceive any phenomenon is to enter into relation with it, to feel oneself in a living interaction with another being. To define the phenomenon as an inert object, to deny the ability of a tree to inform and even instruct one's awareness, is to have turned one's senses away from that phenomenon. It is to ponder the tree from outside of its world, or, rather, from outside the world in which both oneself and the tree are active participants {Abram, 1996, p117}.

The ongoing presence of ancient ways of knowing the earth are then vital to the world as a whole, for the potential to know the earth not through the lens of western ideology, science and language, but instead engage with wisdom gleaned throughout millennia by ancient Indigenous folk so that the life-world speaks in meaningful utterance, rather than the cold objective language of the west, one whose codification is so heavily related to death.

Chapter 4

A sense of timelessness

> Since the time that human beings offered thanks for the first sunrise, sovereignty has been an integral part of Indigenous peoples' daily existence. With the original instructions from the Creator, we realize our responsibilities. Those are the laws that lay the foundation of our society. These responsibilities manifest through our ceremonies … Sovereignty is that wafting threat securing the components of a society. Sovereignty runs through the vertical strands and secures the entire pattern. That is the fabric of Native Society.
>
> Ingrid Washinawatok El-Issa, 1999

Language before time

> *The minute we begin to talk about this world … it somehow becomes transformed into another world, and interpreted world, a world delimited by language* {Gregory, 1988, p183} [Italics in original].

Lynne Hume in *Ancestral Power* offers a framework through which to comprehend ancient Indigenous world view. Hume discusses the means through which Indigenous folk altered states of consciousness, allowing alternative realities beyond the immediacy of material reality. Hume refers to what is known as 'polyphasic consciousness' {Hume, 2002, p4}, or that consciousness whereby meaning of what western science would refer to as an immeasurable and unquantifiable reality.

> A person's perceptions of reality are constrained or limited by enculturation in a particular society or sub-group. In a society that operates on what Laughlin et al. call a polyphasic consciousness (waking, dreaming, trance) during which it arises. In fact, reality, conceived as existing at multiple levels, may be verified by being experienced in different phases of consciousness {Hume, 2002, p4}.

Hume makes a distinction between Indigenous cosmologies and the realities available to Indigenous peoples made possible by a non materialist world view. Hume asserts the role of western science as

> While the scientific approach is to make explicit the distinctions between what is real and unreal, between paramount reality and other realities, such distinctions are not so sharply defined in all cultures…. Many westerners … tend toward 'monophasic consciousness', viewing the 'normal' waking phase as the only phase appropriate to the accrual of information about self and world {Hume, 2002, p4}.

Western language and society as a 'monophasic consciousness' is important in attempting to comprehend the imposed subjectivity of Aboriginality as a restricted and limited reality, where the Aboriginal individual enters into the illusion of the presence of a single reality, exonerating the temporal experience in existence beyond the parameters of western language, society and knowledge. It is especially important here as it is the acknowledgement of the spirit realm, or the realm of the Ancestors represented by the Tjukurrpa or Dreaming, the primary original context for Indigenous identity and relationship to land.

> White people ask us all the time, what is Dreaming? This is a hard question because Dreaming is a really big thing for Aboriginal people. In our language, Yanyuwa, we call the Dreaming Yijan. The Dreamings make our Law or narnu-Yuwa. This Law is the way we live, our rules. This Law is our

> ceremonies, our songs our stories; all of these things came from the Dreaming. One thing that I can tell you though is that our Law is not like European Law which is always changing – new government, new laws; but our Law cannot change, we did not make it. The Law was made by the Dreamings many, many years ago and given to our Ancestors and they gave it to us {Stanner, 1979, p24}.

The Dreaming of Indigenous peoples speaks of a time before western consciousness, before the imposition of western writing and the colonising machine. The negation of Indigenous cosmology and world-view is at the heart of invasion, validated by doctrines authored by the west at the correlating times. The Dreaming is a time of incredible creativity, where the Ancestor beings sang the land into existence, and Indigenous peoples through observation of the Dreaming Laws, become integral to this creative process.

> These Ancestors were self-created and creative, possessing special powers that could be used for good or for harm. As they travelled over the land they left tangible expressions of their essence in the shape of some site or rocky outcrop, tree or waterhole, metamorphosing as part of themselves into some feature of

> the environment or imprinting themselves on to cave walls or into ritual objects {Hume, 2002, pp24-25}.

The Dreaming is a world where the environment resonates with meaning for Indigenous peoples, for the environment is the body of the Ancestors, the creative beings who grant Indigenous peoples meaning, place and purpose, imparting a sense of responsibility to the land, and in return, not only act on behalf of the Ancestors, but *become* an Ancestor as well. Abrams calls into question the dehumanisation of the life-world, the absence of a sensuous relationship between body and environment that has occurred within western consciousness.

> How can we account for our culture's experience of other animals as senseless automata, or of trees as purely passive fodder for lumber mills? ... How could we ever have become so *deaf* to these other voices that nonhuman nature now seems to stand mute and dumb, devoid of any meaning besides that which we choose to give it?{Abram, 1996, pp90-91}.

Abrams asks some very important questions; important especially since he questions the role of language – specifically western language and writing – in the sensual withdrawal from the

life-world by the western body. Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia however, inhabit – rather – cohabitate with a world where all beings – sentient and non-sentient, animate and inanimate, fill the sensorial, perceptual and conscious realms of Indigenous experience of what the west refers to as the life-world.

> Where the Ancestors bled, ochre deposits were created; where they dug in the ground, water flowed and springs formed; where they cut down trees, valleys were formed. Not only did they put form to the formless, but also instituted tribal laws, customs and rites and left an essential part of themselves, an essence, in certain places and in ritual objects. When their work was completed they returned to their place of emergence. However, their return did not diminish their power. The Ancestors were, and continue to be, an intrinsic part of the land over which they moved. The two are inseparable. Almost everywhere across the continent the land is traversed by a network of tracks along which these Beings journeyed. Because all things are imbued with the Dreaming Ancestors' spiritual essence, all share a common life force that is sacred. To Aboriginals, there is obvious evidence that the world is alive since one can see where the Ancestors left their mark: here or there, they changed the form of the country and put spirit into matter {Hume, 2002, p25}.

Indeed, the Dreaming as described by Hume depicts a world inhabited by Indigenous peoples, made possible by the creativity of the Ancestors, as very distinct to the relativity of the human to the life-world as spoken about by Abrams. Abrams though, is very clear in his insistent and urgent call to understand how the sensual withdrawal from the life-world, one that left the life-world a cold objective state of existence, unfamiliar to the western body, of a deprecating appreciation of the wondrous multiplicity offered by the life-world, increasingly known within the terms of its exploitative value.

> If perception, in its depths, is truly participatory, why do we not experience the rest of the world as animate and alive? If our own language is truly dependent upon the existence of other, nonhuman voices, why do we now experience language as an exclusively human property or possession? {Abram, 1996, p91}.

It is here the distance between western cosmology and Indigenous cosmology is greatest. Abrams of course in this question brings to light the distinction between what is perceived as Indigenous cosmology and that language and cosmology that perceives the world as an inanimate object as belonging to the human domain – the language of science. This supports Tuhiwai Smiths proposition that Indigenous peoples are not fully human, and in some cases only partly so. The terminologies and theories deployed by Abrams et al stupefies any

discussion on language, its application in creating either an animate world inhabited by Ancestors, or in the case of the west, one where the cold objective language of science has rendered the living landscape as pure object.

> What could be more detached than the spectator who views the entire universe, past, present, and future, as an object of contemplation? … The spectator perspective is an integral part of the deterministic world portrayed by classical physics {Gregory, 1988, p190}.

Inherent to western language is the positioning of the observer as not only separate to the life-world, but superior. In the language of science and western writing, the environment is an object, an exploitable domain consisting of inanimate non-beings, and in this becomes the fodder for western material existence referred to by Abrams. The world inhabited by Ancestor's calls Indigenous peoples to be employed within a role of responsibility, whereby the land in this sense, is interacted with as alive, an animate conscious being that has the right to declare the Laws that govern society. This is the greatest departure of all between Indigenous peoples and western civility.

> Our present culture lacks many things, but above all, lacks the capacity to communicate with the Supreme Consciousness, our Inner-Self, and thus ignore the cosmic vibrations {Lingham, 2006}.

There is no greater illustration of the power of language than in its ability to grant something as living or dead, present or absent. The polar relationship to land represented by Indigenous and western cosmology has at its core, a common necessity. It is first the dependency upon the earth for survival. It is also the perceptual ordering of energy required to construct a sense of place and well being. It is then required that we attempt to delve into the world of energy, vibration and light in attempt to extrapolate the function of language in both Indigenous cosmology and western cosmology. The role of western language as discussed by Abrams, as a both cause and consequence of the alienation of the western body from the life-world, is that the demarcation of the western temporal zone propositions material reality as the single reality. For Indigenous folk, the world beyond this temporal zone that substantiates a single material based reality through western language, there is the experience of deprivation as a consequence of the death of many languages and many peoples to this non-material zone; the ethos according to the ancient Greeks, or the Dreaming in accordance with Indigenous beliefs.

> Implicit in the way we use language is the notion that language points to a world beyond itself. In the everyday world, language points to trees, buildings, automobiles, cabbages, and kings. But what kind of stuff is this everyday world made of {Gregory, 1988, p195}?

The fate of the earth, the increasing affliction currently being pitted against the life-world at the hands of western economy, is one that is not only affecting people of today, but those generations to come. The depreciation in the earth's ecology can be understood – rather *must* be understood – in terms of language. The death of language as discussed by Crystal, gives a good account of the deterioration of language. But what does this have to do with anything? It has to do with the role of language utilized by Indigenous and western folk to either inhabit the earth as a continuum, or to exploit her as a resource in constructing the building blocks of story. While Indigenous story telling is deployed to preserve the earth space, western language and story is an execution; a distilling of the continuum so that only parts of it are made available to the human nervous system, and the greatest part of the sensual world is rendered absent. Since the beginning of western consciousness, the west has left it to science to speak of 'what the real substance of the world is' {Gregory, 1988, p195}.

> There is more to beauty than meets the eye. Beauty seems to life, less in the eye, and more in the mouth, in the language, of the beholder {Gregory, 1988, p197}.

Country of the Heart captures the intimacy of Indigenous being and the possibility of this being realized by relationship to land. This story resonates with the inherited place of being so delicately and intricately arising through the inter-relationship between land and body. The Mak Mak people – the clan of the white-breasted sea-eagle – speak of a commitment to land and place, revering the movements of the land and watching carefully the reactions of strangers to their land, as one would watch over a people relative.

> Kathy: When strangers visit our country, we observe with keen interest the way they respond and react to the panoramic view stretched out before them. What are they really seeing and thinking? We reckon they may be thinking about this beautiful scenery or just simply enjoying the peace and quiet or the wide-open spaces. Together we stand gazing at the same scenery. We look beyond the pristine beauty of the bush decked out in all its glory. The land contains our stories, it's enriching and powerful {Rose, 2002, pix}.

The expressions of the Mak Mak people resonate with the ancient sense of place and belonging, tenderly expressed through the relationship to land itself. But it is not Relatedness; the land is the Ancestor, alive and present in every way the people themselves are present. To return to Abrams once again, the divorce of the human sensory from an animate landscape has left westerners embedded in a reality that is in a reflection of the language it uses; cold and objective.

> Here, everything came into being by Dreaming, and Indigenous living things exist because of, and through, relationship established by Dreaming. The places where Dreamings travelled, where they stopped and lived the events of their lives and deaths are tracks and sites. The creation stories vividly recount the actions and events that brought a particular place, ceremony, group of people or kind of action into being {Rose, 2002, p18}.

An example of the anchoring of identity to place is an essential component of Indigenous cosmology and sense of place. The Yanyuwa people for instance in the south-west Gulf of Carpentaria have, like all groups, a specific connection with country, as clearly expressed by the Mak Mak people.

> Yanyuwa country represents a vast and complex social and physical world that has the character of a contested land and seascape. Both today in the past, Yanyuwa people have asserted their group identity and place in the world by anchoring this identity to the land, sea, animals, elements, phenomena, ancestral spirits and objects. The relationships that people activate with all elements of the physical, cognitive and ideational world are inherently social and necessarily linked to the actions of those people and spirit beings who came before {David, 2006, p183}.

The point of the essay by Kearney and Bradley, is to express the shift in archaeology that rather than perceive the artefacts of Indigenous culture in strictly material context, instead extends the meaning of the artefacts as being representative of a whole field of being; a perceptual field that now sees the artefacts as more than material objects, but representative of a realm of existence, populated by people, beliefs and rituals {David, 2006, p183}. The authors attempt to illustrate the importance of objects in a web of meaning, an interconnectedness that grants all things meaningful, is an attempt to counteract the dominance of western frames within anthropological discourse. They do this by showing

how stone markers are used by the Yanyuwa to assert and insert a sense of place, locating Yanyuwa peoples within the continuum.

> By reflecting on 'stone markers' – or what the Yanyuwa people have termed *kundawira* – we aim to highlight the complex relationships people have with place and objects, particularly those objects that are entangled in the past and present, with little hope of ever belonging exclusively to one or the other {David, 2006, p184}.

The story of the Yanyuwa people and *kundawira* demonstrate a material element of Indigenous culture and illuminates Indigenous people's contribution to notions of place by way of marking temporal domains. It is the ritual that underlies the insertion of markers that contribute to the construction of a temporal domain that infuses past and future in the present, the assertion that time as a temporal domain distinct from the life-world is non-existent. Importantly, any meaning of the *kundawira* are held in the present.

> *Kundawira* are created and socially located as part of an overall process of cultural construction and place making. All of this is built from knowledge of

> the Yanyuwa past and present, Ancestors and Law. People's engagement with *kundawira*, as one part of the material culture of Yanyuwa people, reflect and manifest an accumulated body of knowledge or enculturated *habitus* {David, 2006, p185}.

There is wisdom and awareness in movement, for Indigenous peoples rather than being passively responsive to the life-world, actively construct place, as well as engaging in ways to preserve it. Meaning is not arbitrary, and the nomadic wanderings captured within western texts are not only illusory, but facetious, for they are preventative in distilling the ambition of Indigenous folk as being not only responsive to the environment, but participant in preserving place, one that animates the life-world in a way particular to Indigenous cultures, for the *kundawira* are 'socially embedded and living object' {David, 2006, p185}. The knowledge to transform the stones into *kundawira* is every bit as important as the stone itself.

> Knowledge of the *kundawira*, the histories of these stones and the embedded meaning they instil in the land is part of the accumulated body of cultural traditions held by Yanyuwa people. This knowledge is as much a cultural artefact as the stone itself, with both being creations of Yanyuwa being that

> have been maintained through time, to persist in the present {David, 2006, p185}.

The *kundawira* is merely a window, a means to glimpse the temporal world of Indigenous peoples that speak of an animate landscape, one populated by the Ancestors. Far beyond the simplistic notion of belief, the cosmology of Indigenous peoples speak of an intention; the intention to continue to inhabit a world that is alive and sacred.

A world of opposites

> Have you ever wondered why life comes in opposites? Why everything you value is one of a pair of opposites? Why all decisions are between opposites: Why all desires are based on opposites? {Wilber, 1979, p15}.

Western consciousness and language plunges us into a world of opposites, of a demarcation between an illusory 'us' and 'them'. The notion of boundary informs human existence, and is at the very beginning of humanity. According to Ken Wilber in *No Boundary*, the world is made up of boundaries, and is the basis of interacting with the world. The Greek philosophers say Wilber, were great boundary drawers, so adept that the boundaries they

designed lasted for centuries {Wilber, 1979, p32}. The origin of metaphysics was in fact the utility of boundary as a way of interjecting desire into the world; 'To desire something means to draw a boundary line between the pleasurable and painful things and then move toward the former'{Wilber, 1979, p18}.

> The ultimate metaphysical secret, if we dare state it so simply, is that there are no boundaries in the universe. Boundaries are illusions, products not of reality but of the way we map and edit reality. And while it is fine to map out the territory, it is fatal to confuse the two {Wilber, 1979, p31}.

No Boundary is essentially about the unity of consciousness, the endless flux of the universe found in the original of metaphysical philosophers, awakened later in quantum mechanics, and present in Eastern philosophy. The location of the 'I' is the consequence of boundary, the contemporary understanding of 'I' being the evolutionary understanding of the location of the self in the ever changing timeless universe, driven by the language of science in its ongoing drawing of boundaries. Wilber distinguishes the notion of eternity as not that goes on forever, but instead offers eternity as

> Eternity is not, and cannot, be found tomorrow – it is not found in five minutes – it is not found in two seconds. It is always already Now. The present is the only reality. There is no other {Wilber, 1979, p63}.

In the philosophy of ancient Indigenous cultures of the land now known as Australia living in the ever-present Now, we can see examples of Wilber's definition of eternity. Wilber says that '… the real self is a no-boundary awareness, whereas all our words and thoughts are nothing but boundaries' {Wilber, 1979, p55}. Of language he says that

> A language possesses utility only in so far as it can construct conventional boundaries. A language of no boundaries is no language at all, and thus the mystic who tries to speak logically and formally of unity consciousness is doomed to sound very paradoxical or contradictory. The problem is that the structure of any language cannot grasp the nature of unity consciousness, any more than a fork could grasp the ocean {Wilber, 1979, p55}.

The problem occurring with western language is the inability to speak of the unity of consciousness, of an existence that is not demarcated by boundary, of a body and a sense of being that is not separate from all else that is the universe. Rather western language through its inception has disconnected the body from the endless flux of the universe, locating itself in the world of matter, and illusion.

> The peculiar thing about boundary is that, however complex and rarefied it might be, it actually marks off nothing but an inside vs. an outside… But notice that the opposites of inside vs. outside didn't exist in themselves until we drew the boundary of the circle. It is the boundary line itself, in other words, which creates a pair of opposites. In short, to draw boundaries is to manufacture opposites. Thus we can start to see that the reason we live in a world of opposites is precisely because life as we know it is a process of drawing boundaries {Wilber, 1979, p18}.

The notion of inside and outside permeates human existence, and 'Man had gained control over nature, but only by radically separating himself from it' {Wilber, 1979, p35}. It is this separation from the natural world that is a recurring theme in western language and existence, for this withdrawal from the life-world made its exploitation possible. Indigenous folk though did not withdraw. Unlike western cosmology, the body is not central to the story, but merely a constituent, a conduit within the whole – a philosophical stance that complies more closely with quantum mechanics, and glimpses of the ever-present Now of Eastern philosophy.

> There is us, as humans who have been given the Laws of *tjukurrpa* to apply *Kanyini* to all people. But this was never a restricting thing because the term 'people' means all of us.

> Right throughout my life, old men would point to a forest of trees or a grove of tress or just one tree and refer to it as people: 'See that mob over there.' This way of talking could be referring to kangaroos, trees, hills or humans. Any of us could be 'that mob' or 'us mob' could include the totality of that {Randall, 2003, pp16-17}.

The emergent definition of the human as one who possesses language, positioned the human at the centre of the narrative. In Indigenous story telling however, there were not terms that positioned the animals and plants as either distinct or inferior to the peopled body. All beings and dimensions were represented within Indigenous storytelling. Many ancient Indigenous cosmologies have built into their stories the teachings of the value of beings prescribing an equal right to existence between sentient and non sentient, atomic and sub atomic, animate and inanimate forms of life. In this context, Indigenous cosmology was very different to western scientific theory, where time and space treated as absolute, made possible an object reality. This object reality essentially hierarchically positioned the non human world as inferior to the human world. The possibility of an object reality is inherent then, to the idea of a universal narrative to which the human is central.

The idea of an object reality that is the result of scientific historical discourse came into question with the arrival of quantum mechanics.

> A "quantum" is a quantity of something, a specific amount. "Mechanics" is the study of motion. Therefore, "quantum mechanics" is the study of motion of quantities. Quantum theory, says that nature comes in bits and pieces (quanta), and quantum mechanics is the study of this phenomenon {Zukav, 1979, p43}.

Quantum mechanics recognizes that the universe is a whole that all things are not only made of the same stuff, but that all things are connected. Quantum mechanics perhaps as an historical point in western time, is positioned as a challenge to western notions of absolute anything – reality, truth, morality etc – but also in relation to questions of being; *where are we going, why are we here?* Quantum mechanics is a theory that says that all beings are made of the same stuff and are essentially a reflection of the greater universe, and is thematically imbued with the potential to pull into question the dominance of western narrativity that positions the western body at the apex of the human world, and indeed the concept of the *human*.

> Quantum mechanics is the realized potential of western scientific discourse, and in quantum mechanics is the presence of the first scientists, and these questions of why, how, when and where are still the lifeblood of scientific inquiry.

> Quantum mechanics does not replace Newtonian physics, it includes it. The physics of Newton remains valid within its limits. To say that we have made a major new discovery about nature is one side of a coin. The other side of the coin is to say that we have found the limits of our previous theories. What we actually discover is that the way that we have been looking at nature is no longer comprehensive enough to explain all that we can observe, and we are forced to develop a more inclusive view {Zukav, 1979, p45}.

Considering that scientific theory does not displace the former, but instead incorporates it into the emergent theory, western thought has not only reached the limits of its inquiry into the nature of observable existence, but also ways to discuss it; i.e. language. It is here that we return not only to the theories of Abrams who discusses in great detail the trajectory of western language and technology in the form of writing, and its alienation from the life-world, but also synonymously consider the thoughts of Indigenous folk who developed and inhabited a world-view that is reminiscent of quantum mechanics – a world view that speaks of an all pervading life-force that connects us all.

The notion of the human as separate to the life-world did not exist within Indigenous cosmology, for people were and are considered a part of the greater fabric, and in this, of no greater significance than the western concept of animal and plant life – or the non human domain. The stories of the Tjukurrpa speak of ongoing transformation, movement, a constant

being and becoming, of everything being connected. Quantum mechanics has arrived at this place;

> The old physics had metaphorically viewed the atom as a miniature solar system, with neutrons and protons composing the sun nucleus, and discrete planetary electrons spinning around it. But now the atom began to look more like a nebulous cloud that infinitely shaded into its environment. As Henry Strapp put it, "An elementary particle is not independently existing unanalysable entity. It is, in essence, a set of relationships that reach outward to other things." These "atomic things," the ultimate building blocks of all reality, couldn't be located because, in short, they had no boundaries {Wilber, 1979, p35}.

Indigenous philosophy and languages resonate with a quantum mechanic view of the world, although unlike quantum mechanics and western language, Indigenous languages are woven throughout the landscape, the body bound to and through it by language. The natural landmarks, which are also our Ancestors, provide the boundary between each language group. The boundaries in this instance, demarcate the field of responsibility of each language group. Indigenous folk still live in the land of our Ancestors, surrounded by the landscape given form through the songs sung throughout millennia, yet the cultural incursion of western story telling and world-view, has entrapped the majority of Indigenous folk in western questions

pertaining to origin, place and belonging of where, why and how, the ancient stories and songlines that transform the land into an inhabitable form remain unknown to many of us. Due to this, we find ourselves embedded within a colonial story constructed by western language and perspective that saw our lands as vacant, and our bodies invisible. By being co-opted into the western world view and story, it is possible that as the direct result of colonisation, our lands and bodies will remain invisible to our own individuated selves. Here lies the greatest threat of colonisation.

At the core of invasion and colonisation, is the right to tell story. Indigenous folk through invasion and colonisation essentially lost the right to tell our stories of the land as they have been revealed to us throughout millennia, and perhaps, the dispossession of the body from the land culminating in the loss of story is being experienced in the present as an ecological crisis, and a crisis in story. This crisis is not only an affliction upon Indigenous peoples, but considering that when a boundary is drawn, those entities positioned as opposites are also inextricably linked. The crisis of place and belonging that is the result of colonisation is also an affliction upon the western idea of Australia, a nation composed through language, made possible by writing, erected within the midst of ancient stories and songs. The idea of Australia is also afflicted by the loss of story and songs of the ancient folk, for these songs speak of the life force of the land, from its very inception to the present moment.

The land has agency

> I am not painting just for my pleasure; there is the meaning, knowledge and power. This is the earthly painting for the creation and for the land story. The land is not empty, the land is full of knowledge, full of story, full of goodness, fully of energy. Earth is our mother, the land is not empty. There is the story I am telling you – special, sacred, important {Caruana, 1997, p158}.

The land belonging to no-one; a familiar moniker representing the antithetical position to what it is stated by Marika in *The Painters of the Wagilag Sisters' Story*. The land now known as Australia, perceived as empty, barren land is the premise of the Australian historical narrative, forging identity and nationhood. The land as empty, object and an independent phenomenon removed from human existence is the through line of western cultural beliefs and correlating practice as explored by Abrams.

> There are 'eyes' all over this country; this is a place where living things take notice of each other. People travel across the land, and they watch, observe,

> remember, think about and tell stories. Other living things watch too; they all watch, observe, think and tell stories. This place is sentient {Rose, 2002, p7}.

The belief that the land is alive and watching is one familiar to other Indigenous cultural beliefs. The sense that one cannot move through country without being observed, watched by someone else, must present itself as a formidable concept to westerners whose language requires no reciprocity to the environment whatsoever.

> In the spiritually detached Western view of nature, land is lifeless. It is inert, a two-dimensional physical surface … to be surveyed, subdivided, and zoned. It is a commodity – valuable but no more "sacred" than a stack of cedar logs, a heap of coal, or any other economic resource. It is a financial investment – to be bought, "developed," and resold … by shuffling official titles and deeds {Knudtson, 1992, p121}.

The land conceived as alive and participatory and reciprocal in the creation of story and reality, central to the construction of Laws and guidelines by which to live and conduct social life, is an insightful wisdom of Indigenous peoples. Unlike western story telling where the

land becomes the energetic fodder for the construction of western story to which the human is central, is unlike Indigenous construction of story, to which all are participant in the construction of story. In this, the demarcation between the domain of the human and the earth as a separate entity fall away completely. Integral to this falling away of the absolute concept of 'outer' and 'inner' realms of identity and consciousness, is the ability of the land to determine the temporality of the Indigenous body, urging movement according to seasons.

> In Indigenous cultures, oral cultures, nature itself is articulate; it *speaks.* The human voice in oral culture is always to some extent participant with the voices of the wolves, wind and waves – participant, that is, with the encompassing discourse of an animate earth. There is no element of the landscape that is definitively void of expressive resonance and power: any movement may be a gesture, any sound may be a voice, a meaningful utterance {Abram, 1996, pp116-117}.

When speaking of place and belonging, Indigenous and western world views are disparate. The negation of Tjukurrpa is the negation of the Indigenous world view; the temporality of the Ancestor beings that sung the world into existence. David Tacy attends to this disparity when he frames the absence of Australian mythos and spirit of place in *Australia's Changing Spiritual Landscape*.

> White Australia lives according to the light of logos, but it needs a mythos, a story to make meaning and purpose. Aboriginal Australia understands that without mythos, which it calls the Dreaming, people are bereft of meaning and sacred value. Mythos makes life bearable, gives us a goal, dignity, and a relationship to the past and to the cosmos. White Australia cannot simply borrow or steal its mythos from Aboriginal culture: this is the tendency of the New Age, to appropriate spiritual meanings from other cultures. We have to do this work ourselves, to draw on our own traditions, ransack our own past, and make spirit come to life {Tacey, 2005, p3}.

It is with rather violent terminology Tacey utilises when he calls for the ransacking of the past in order to make spirit come to life. The obliteration of the spirit that occurred in western philosophical inquiry into being eventually displaced by material science makes this an ambitious proposition by Tacey, for at its core is not only the ransacking of Indigenous spirituality, but synonymously western language and forms of methodological inquiry that positions the western body as not only separate to the life-world, but superior. The ransacking of the past is inhered with the necessary questioning of western authority, authorship and narrativity. The polarity of western story telling and Indigenous story telling are the epicentre of invasion and colonisation itself.

> The term landscape, as it has entered into the English language is misleading. 'A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view' does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow outside or separate from the territory he or she surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on {Silko, 1996, p27}.

The disparity between western culture and ancient culture in the land now known as Australia is self evident in how the two cultures relate to land. The framework within which the western body and the Indigenous body relate to the life-world are paradoxical experiences of light and how it is perceived. In Tacey's statement that white Australian's live by the light of the logos, the disparate relationship with the life-world is located in the interplay between light and logos, and logos as a perceptual consequence of light and meaning. The logos of white Australia, i.e. its writing system and story, continues the dehumanization of the landscape, positioning the western body as superior to the 'boulder' referred to by Silko, upon which he stands. Silko's sentiment is echoed locally by Indigenous peoples who object to western terminology that continues to dispossess the ancient cultural presence and peoples, for through language, the dispossession continues.

The affection and intimate connection, compassion and love of land preserved in Indigenous world-views, clashes harshly, violently with the western world view that enables the ongoing desecration of land. The role of responsibility in relation to land, a core concept that shapes Indigenous identity spoken of so beautifully by elder Jim South, is not captured in its complexity in the dry notion of lands rights. In the article 'The ongoing war on terra nullius, Professor Larissa Behrendt responds to the emergent proposal that the concept of terra nullius was manufactured.

> These debates are about the story that non-Aboriginal Australians want to tell themselves about their country, and, more specifically, they are about the story that *white people* want to tell themselves about this country. And it seems that the latest manifestation of these "history" or "cultural" wars is the debate about whether or not Australia actually was terra nullius the way the High Court described in the Mabo case {Behrendt, 2006}.

Intrinsic to the High Court decision and the question of legal rights to story does not allow of course, the inquisition into the emergence of how the land now known as Australia was initially constructed within western cognition, for it is here that the true meaning of terra nullius is illuminated. *Terra nullius* as a concept emerged through cartography, and long precedes the concept of Australia. Egyptian born Roman Ptolemy is accepted as the first cartographer, and the Ptolemy world map drawn from exerts of Ptolemy's book *Geographia*

(circa 150) provided the basis of the Medieval Latin version *mappa* (cloth or chart) and *mundi* (of the world) in {Wikipedia, 2007}. There were many types of mappae mundi, but one in particular was to show 'the harmonious order of God's creation' {Wikipedia, 2007}. It is in the tradition of cartography that the west was able to manifest itself in character and form, facilitating it's expansion with the ongoing invasion and colonisation of lands belonging to Indigenous peoples, and is this that Young refers to when he speaks of western construction of identity inevitably involving the presence of the other.

> It was with a supremely knowing gesture towards the future that in 1884, the division of the newly homogenized temporal world into East and West was placed not in Jerusalem or Constantinople but in a South London suburb. In that gesture, it was acknowledged that the totality, the sameness of the West will always be riven with difference…The Longitude Zero, the centre of the world, has become inalienably mixed, suffused with the pulse of difference {Young, 1995, pp1-2}.

Indigenous peoples though were Othered from the first time the land now known as Australia was imagined by westerners. 'Terra Australis (also: *Terra Australis Incognita*, Latin for "the unknown land of the South") was an imaginary continent, appearing on European maps from the 15th to the 18th century {Wikepedia, 2007}. The great southern land remained fictional for some time, and was assumed to exist on the basis that a large land mass to the south was

deemed to exist to counteract the land mass of the north, giving the earth balance {Wikipedia, 2007}. The west imagined peoples and place, and it is both intention and desire that the virtual space at the cartographer's disposal was used by the west to construct its identity. But the west's ability to speak of itself is necessarily located in its capacity to speak of the other, and there is no better illustration of this than in the evolution of cartography. As such, western identity requires the ongoing presence of the other in order to know its own place in the perceivable world. The west's need for Otherness formed the ideological and perceptual boundaries of the cartographer. Terra Australis was a space that existed beyond western knowledge and though not 'corrected' until Matthew Flinders {Wikipedia, 2007}, the process of abstraction, reduction, the imposition of breathlessness and artefaction by the west had begun. These unknown spaces were inhabited by the unimaginable, deformed and unhuman characters representative of that space beyond western knowing and possession.

The core concepts of this debate – terra nullius and the findings of the High Court that recognised Native Title in the Mabo case – is in fact the central theme of this thesis, and that is the role of writing as conceived and recognisable as a methodology. The requirement of clear boundaries between that which constitutes western temporality, and that beyond western temporality – or the act of composition was qualified by the presence of light. The notion of darkness affixed to that space beyond the temporal domain of western authorship, is that space of darkness, that which is to be feared and even loathed. It is that existing beyond

western knowledge, authorship, possession and control that constitutes the other, explicitly communicated by the science of cartography, and a property of western writing itself.

It is writing that continues to demarcate the sensibly boundary between the known and unknown domains of the western body, for it is this boundary that the High Court invariably protected in the Mabo decision. Barker discusses western writing culture as the methodology that enables the continued questioning and judgement of Indigenous rights to land. Referring to Preucel and Hodder (1996), Barker reminds us that

> …writing can close down and restrict reinterpretation by stressing the authority and unimpeachable scholarship of the writer, or by emphasising the authority and scrutiny of an apparently objective science. These factors are implicit in the use of the ethnographies of both Roth and Tindale and are often linked in the production of texts, which expect the reader to be a passive consumer of the facts as stated… this has been the general experience of Australian Aboriginal people is illustrated by the Mabo judgement in the High Court in which prior ownership of land was finally recognised, but only in part because of the presence of written records from the colonial land court dealing with disputes between traditional owners in regard to garden plots'{David, 2006, p79}.

In the Mabo case, another aspect of the Native Title claim was totally overlooked because of the absence of written records. The Mabo claim originally included a corresponding claim to the sea, utilizing the same kinship based system that framed the claim to the land.

> Ironically, the Mer Islanders were principally a marine-oriented society with the same kin-based rights and ownership over sea, fringing reefs and marine resources as occurred on land, but because there were no written records of customary marine tenure – only oral traditions – this was not even presented as part of their case and thus not considered in the *Native Title Act*' {David, 2006, p79}.

It is writing – the original proposition by Tuhiwai Smith – that legitimises or disqualifies the Indigenous body. The text itself is the site that annihilates the authority of Indigenous peoples, for the textual codes of grammar that made and continues to make colonisation possible, is also the parameters that continue to exclude Indigenous peoples from an active role in land management, access to land that would facilitate cultural practice.

> Although not an archaeological example, it is reflective of the power of text and the position of oral histories in the hierarchy of western knowledge. They are invariably seen as not relating to 'tradition' or having been 'reinvented' from fragmentary remains, including non-Indigenous ethnographies, or intrinsically

> enmeshed in contemporary political aspirations and ambitions {David, 2006, p79}.

Through the text, the death of the author occurs, and it is his necessary death that immortalises his words. It is too simplistic to say that Indigenous oral stories are not recognised by the court. Rather, it is the experience and world-view of the Indigenous body that is not recognised by the court. It is the logos, or the text, that has moral authority, one that is not usurped by the presence of the Indigenous, fleshy, breathing body. The text, the dead author and their administrators, have greater claim to the lands of Indigenous folk, and at once the direct presence of the Indigenous body is annihilated.

Dance of the temporal and the real

> Language is a guide to 'social reality.' Though language is not ordinarily thought of as of essential interest to the students of social science, it powerfully *conditions* all our thinking about social problems and processes. Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are *very much at the mercy* of

> the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society {Alford, 1981}.

Invasion and colonization imported western consciousness and concepts to the land now known as Australia. Through the advent of western language, the cosmology of Indigenous folk was to collapse beneath the weight of colonial lexical baggage; and the view that the land was a thing rather than a being is the basis of emergent colonial narrative. The land as something to be conquered controlled and civilized are the central themes of emergent Australian identity. It was and remains a war waged against the environment, where heroic tales of survival began to shape the Australian sense of being in the world. The drama of these opposites; the pitting of the land against the human body, is the primary drama of western civilization; the battle of all drama's since, a struggle to assert control and authority in a place through story, controlling the environment through language, and the precision of demarcating western temporality from the temporal infinite.

> In this place – this ecological web called 'country' – living things interact. Their lives are interconnected because they are held together in this place. In the same way, their stories interconnect, past connects with the present, and

creation is part of the contemporary life of the place and its people {Rose, 2002, p18}.

The temporality of the western body – human, literate, written - as distinct from the temporality of the Indigenous body immersed in the life-world, moved by the winds of the season and waves of the ebb and flow of the oceans, is the point of conflict between western time and ancient temporality. The war waged on the earth, and any of those bodies temporality connected to the earth; whose heart quickens with the shift in the environment, whose temperature is determined directly by the elements, is the recurring theme of western language and therefore consciousness. For Indigenous peoples, the concept of past and future are inherent to the present, but for the west, the present is suspended, and the temporal deferment displaces the moment.

In order to understand the first boundary – the one signifying the withdrawal of western man from the life-world – it is important to understand the concept of time. Gould tells us that the ambition of western science in being able to design the world in order to predict and foresee future events has dually reconfigured western man's sense of place in the universe,

> Sigmund Freud remarked that each major science has made one signal contribution to the reconstruction of human thought – and that each step in this painful progress had shattered yet another facet of an original hope for our own transcendent importance in the universe…{Gould, 1987, p1}.

The eventuation that western man's place in the world is shattered by questions put forth by science is the price a culture invested in scientific thought has had to pay. Science is premised on its ability to predict, and the role of the scientist is invested in his ability to calculate from theory and evaluation, the order of the world, and those events yet to occur. But all predictions are predicated on the primary boundary.

> They can construct meta-boundaries and offer up an educated guess as to how the system, as a whole, might behave. But the crucial item is that the physicists now *know* that these boundaries are pretend and make-believe, and that the basic constituents themselves remain no-boundary {Wilber, 1979, p37}.

The impact of the trajectory of scientific discourse is that in the collapse of an absolute reality, the journey now for western man was to re-discover a sense of place and belonging. The possibility that there is no absolute reality was realized. But this is a problem; since western ideology and the reality constructed through its language supposes the existence of an absolute reality. The western language system and materiality relies on the existence of externality as a separate to the interiority of the body. It is here that the Great Chain of Being offers some reprieve in the form of a metaphor through which to grasp western man's place in the scheme of things, but this too, according to Freud, comes at a cost. Freud as cited by Gould,

> Humanity has in course of time had to endure from the hand of science two great outrages upon its naïve self-love. The first was when it realized that our earth was not the center of the universe, but only a speck in a world-system of a magnitude hardly conceivable … The second was when biological research robbed man of his particular privilege of having been specially created and relegated him to a descent from the animal world {Gould, 1987, p1}.

Western man's theorem of the descent of man, of man having been an evolutionary phase defined in the metaphor of the *Great Chain of Being*, is according to Freud, the very thing that disrupted western man's sense of his centrality to the world, and the universe.

> It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is *to a large extent* unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached {Alford, 1981}.

The perceptual world is a dance between the temporality of the body, and the potential conceptual expanse occurring through language and experience. The infinite, the eternal present, all ways of naming the same thing: the universe. The universe in its vastness, its constant fluctuation, is rendered in habitable by the body through the presence of language. In *Inventing Reality*, Bruce Gregory traces western ontology and epistemology of western science. Gregory gives account of the creation of a world constructed within the scientific

paradigm. From Pythagoras, Kepler, Copernicus and Galileo to name but a few, Gregory documents the steady change in the language of science that allowed the west to articulate its relationship with and perception of the life-world as a material and object reality existing externally.

> Once Kepler initiated the process of making observation the ultimate authority for physical descriptions, the success of science seemed to call for making observation the *only* authority for *all* descriptions {Gregory, 1988, pp26 - 27}.

Gregory tracing scientific thought that has shaped the western world view through the history of physics. 'We will trace the history of physics as the evolution of language – as the invention of new vocabularies and new ways of talking about the world {Gregory, 1988, p3}. The Pythagorean premise of the world composed of numbers survives in the language of physics, premising a world order of numbers, since 'Physics is less about explanations than about knowing how to calculate useful numbers' {Gregory, 1988, p30}.

Our perception of the world and the parameters it establishes are the primary means of how one experiences the life-world and any relation to it. Does the world consist of numbers?

According to physicists and mathematicians alike, it does. Galileo believed that, 'The Universe, which stands continually open to our gaze, cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and read the letters in which it is composed. It is written in the language of mathematics…' {Gregory, 1988, p17}. The point of contention here is twofold. To say that first in order to comprehend the language of the universe, it is necessary to *read the letters in which it is composed*. Galileo like many scientists to follow refers to the western tradition of language as a process of both reading and writing, 'While physicists can describe their calculations in words, they do not explain what lies behind the calculations' {Gregory, 1988, p30}.

The undisclosed essence of the world beyond the words and numbers of western physicists become only acceptable in their power to predict. But at any one time, the physicist does not reveal the whole, but focuses only that which is framed by his experiment. That the universe is closed off to those who do not read and write in what Galileo proposes is the language of the universe, is actually the language of the few, or scientists and mathematicians more precisely.

> For Galileo the predictability of nature implied the existence of a language that science could learn to read…. Whether or not God is a mathematician, we

> know that some human beings are mathematicians, and we will see that the language *they* speak will be interpreted more and more as being the language in which nature is written {Gregory, 1988, pp17-18}.

In other words, the predominance of mathematics and the ontological and epistemological development of western language through scientific discourse become increasingly accepted as the language of the universe, available only to those who conform to it. Science offers a way of knowing the world, or at least a way of ordering the perceptual field of the world as it is made known to the mind. The relationship between the human and the natural world is for Marx strictly for purposes of production and development, interwoven and mutually dependent.

> At the very least, we have to ask whether an emancipatory universalism amounts to the same thing as capitalist expansion or imperialism, and whether the fruits of "Western" science and technology must by definition serve the need of the capitalist exploitation, accumulation, and the destruction of nature that inevitably accompanies them {Wood, 1997, p13}.

Science according to Foucault's definition is a discourse, and all discourse's necessarily contribute to the western project, at the centre of which by necessity according to Marx, is the dominance and exploitation of nature that is necessary for western progress and development. That Newton believed that God had created the universe and set it in motion {Gregory, 1988, p26}, positioned the western scientist as the authoritative body, the being who could know Gods intentions. The scientist transgressed the realm of the author, and entered into the omniscience of divinity itself. This is explained by Foucault as

> The author function faded away, and the inventor's name served only to christen a theorem, proposition, particular effect, property, body, group of elements, or pathological syndrome {Foucault, 1984, p109}.

In other words, the contribution of the scientist is superseded by the text that he produces, the foray into language that allows the west to speak of the life-world in emergent discourse, theorems and models. That the scientist speaks the language of God is an important aspect of western historicity, for it conceals that the scientist works on behalf of the system within which he is immersed.

> The social reality of capitalism is "totalizing" in unprecedented ways and degrees. Its logic of commodification, accumulation, profit-maximization, and competition permeates the whole social order; and an understanding of this "totalizing" system requires just the kind of "totalizing knowledge" that Marxism offers and postmodernists reject {Wood, 1997, p13}.

Whilst scientists throughout the eons have each developed a specialist language built on the findings of their predecessors, intention frames the procedure and is an expression of the system the scientists themselves are immersed in. The western capitalism requires the ongoing exploitation of nature in order to develop the language that is required to sustain it. The intention of western physicists though, is devising a procedure whereby the universe, or nature, is predictable. The ability to predict the patterns in nature is the driving force of western physics.

> Aristotle's vocabulary has disappeared from the language of physicists because it does not lead to quantitative predictions, and testing predictions is the only process physicists recognize as valid in determining the value of a way of describing nature {Gregory, 1988 p28}.

An important development in the perception of the life-world occurred with the abolition of the ether. The concept of ether had been around since Aristotle, 'for whom it was the pure and incorruptible realm from which the heavens are constructed' {Gregory, 1988, p43}.

> After repeated attempts, at the end of the nineteenth century the American physicists Albert Michelson and Edward Morley, despite using remarkably sensitive instruments, were unable to detect the motion of the earth through the ether…. The evidence that the earth moves around the sun is so overwhelming that, rather than giving up this way of talking, physicists chose to conclude, not that the Earth does not move, but that the ether does not exist {Gregory, 1988, p44}.

Einstein codified the collapse of the Time and Space into the Time Space continuum. The arrival of quantum mechanics collapsed the distance between the observer and the observed, and moves towards an Indigenous sense of being, whereby the world we inhabit is one single source.

> Classical physics demonstrated the power of a language that separates the observer and the observed, the subject and the object… Quantum mechanics, however, did not fit this framework…. quantum mechanics showed physicists that when they talk about the atomic realm, they can no longer talk of a world whose behaviour can be described in the absence of a well-defined scheme of measurement. In talking about the atomic world, the observed and the observer cannot be separated the way they can be when we talk about the world of everyday experience. To go beyond the realm of classical physics, physicists had to give up the paradigm of a detached observer and an independent reality {Gregory, 1988, p181}

This is the end of objective science, where it is for a long time stated that there is such a thing as object reality. Husserl realised that the objective sciences had once again returned to the notion of the continuum, a way of speaking of being a part of the universe, rather than an objective observer.

> When physicists say that they understand a phenomenon, they usually mean that they can write an expression describing how the phenomenon unfolds in time {Gregory, 1988, p57}.

Time is a western phenomenon, and is but one way of speaking of the life-world. The west's desire to speak of the world in one way is the undertone of colonisation and western ideology. The one phenomenon that seems to be indispensable to the west is the concept of time.

> Galileo's accomplishment was made possible by his decision to talk about the world in terms of motion through space and time. These concepts seem so obvious to us that it is difficult to remember that they are concepts. Time is normally measured in terms of motion, from the swing of the pendulum of a grandfather's clock to the oscillations of a quartz crystal in a modern watch. Apart from such periodic behaviour, how could we even talk about the uniformity of time? In other words of the contemporary American physicist John Wheeler, "Time is defined so that motion looks simple"… "Time? The concept of time did not descend from heaven, but from the mouth of man, an early thinker, his name long lost" {Gregory, 1988, p70}.

Those of us existing within the parameters of western ideology are forced to interact with time as though it is a natural phenomenon. Indigenous folk are spoken about as existing outside of time. Effectively, Indigenous folk then were brought into time through western language. The westerners who invaded and colonised the land now known as Australia, brought with

them the ideology of time, Newtonian theories, God as a mathematician, and an ordered world where the western man was essentially Gods informant. Western cargo unloaded with the beginning of settlement, saw the cancellation of Indigenous experience and story.

> And we have seen this first boundary before. We called it the primary boundary: that split between the seer and the seen, the knower and the known, the subject and the object. And once this primary boundary occurs, a chain of inevitable consequences follows. A host of other boundaries ensure, each being built upon its predecessor; the various levels of the spectrum exfoliate; the world as we collectively know it leaps into existence; and man becomes lost, amazed and enchanted; distracted and complexed, loving and loathing his universe of opposites{Wilber, 1979, p74}.

The original boundary is the withdrawal of the body from the life-world, a temporality that would eventually be shaped by writing. This temporal zone, the one existing in alienation to the life-world, one whose rhythms would no longer be intimately connected to the fluctuation of the weather, the cycle of the moon, or the reading of the stars in order to locate the body in the earth-space, is the original boundary to which Wilber refers. Wilber describes the scientific procedure as '… this entire process of formulating scientific laws was based on three general types of boundaries, each building on its predecessor and each being more abstract and generalized' {Wilber, 1979, p35}. In other words, scientific languages and

theorems are representative of the original boundary, the one created by man's withdrawal from nature with the intention of controlling it. The process of fragmenting the original boundary is referred to Wilber as the 'meta-boundary',

> This meta-boundary converts measurements to conclusions, numbers to principles. Each step, each new boundary, brings you a more generalized knowledge, and hence more power {Wilber, 1979, p35}.

All incidences of meta-boundary and meta-meta-boundary must then include the original, as a constituent of the original intention. The male female binary, black/white, death/birth, moral/amoral, savage/civilized, and I will include the binary of Aborigine/Australian; all include and service the original boundary. The location of truth, morality, ethics, serve the original boundary, that being the composition of temporality and motility that services the text, invests in writing to ward off death, in the pursuit of immortality.

Chapter 5

Life is a story

If this is your land where are your stories?

> It happened at a meeting between an Indian community in northwest British Columbia and some government officials. The officials claimed the land for the government. The natives were astonished by the claim. They couldn't understand what these relative newcomers were talking about. Finally one of the elders put what was bothering them in the form of a question. "If this is your land," he asked, "where are your stories?" He spoke in English, but then moved into Gitskan, the Tsimshian language of his people – and told a story {Chamberlin, 2004, p1}.

Life is all about story. The land now known as Australia had many localized stories woven through its territories. All of these localized stories came together in one great story, and that is the story of The Dreaming, or Tjukurrpa. The proposition put forward by Ted Chamberlain in the book titled *If this is your land, where are your stories?* is the quest to discover the role of story in understanding place and belonging, and how a body achieves a sense of home. The dichotomy between us and them highlights the practical execution of story to maintain boundary, create borders within which one functions. The words uttered by the Gitskan elder and chosen by Chamberlain to explore this topic in the book of the same name, urged me to explore these themes in contemplating the role of story in Indigenous and western cultural systems.

It was Sitka Alaska, July 2005. I was struck particularly by the questions of the predominantly non Indigenous audience, on how does one become Indigenous? In an attempt to answer this question, one must first determine what constitutes indigeneity, and how story is implicated in this identity. While the west seems determined to create a story that justifies the presence of the western body in the lands of other people - the function of history and the grand narrative - it seeks to do this by establishing a new discourse rather than acknowledging one already in place prior to invasion. The stories of the ancient Indigenous peoples were and are narrative techniques designed to maintain the support of the Indigenous body in the life-world. This support structure has central to it, a most important aspect of the body life-world

dynamic, and that is respect of land. This respect of land and life-world continually emerges in Indigenous cosmology the world over, and it is made most evident through story.

Indigenous Dreaming or Tjukurrpa stories are treated as mythology by western ideology. The qualification of Indigenous stories as myth pre-empts the dispossession of the Indigenous body from the lands of the Ancestors. In *Space and Place*, Tuan quotes Chief Seattle;

> There was a time when our people covered the whole land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea covers its shell-paved floor, but that time has long since passed away with the greatness of tribes now almost forgotten. I will not dwell or mourn over our untimely decay, nor reproach may pale-faced brothers with hastening it. *We are two distinct races*. There is little in common between us… {Tuan, 1977, p155}. [Italics not in original]

The cultural differences between Indigenous and western peoples were and are apparent to Indigenous peoples, for it is present in the Othering of Indigenous peoples in our own land. Indigenous cosmology and western ideology are as proposed by Chief Seattle, and declared

by the Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia, indeed two distinct hearts opposing each other.

When speaking of story and place as experienced by westerners and by Indigenous folk, it is language that ultimately differentiates between the two. Indigenous world view, one that exists beyond the limits of western consciousness and therefore language, is constantly reconfigured to comply with the set parameters of western textual language. Equally important, is the role of the body in establishing the world view. But the body itself was declared by the Greeks to be an unreliable source of knowledge, and the systematic negation of the body in the sciences though challenged by phenomenologist's, survives today as an inherent quality to the objective sciences. The life-world in Indigenous cosmology was an extension of the body. In speaking of western cosmology and Indigenous cosmology, we not only encounter two hearts, we encounter different bodies as the consequence of different language.

> The fully sensual lifestyle of the Aborigines, their deeply spiritual communication with the earth, and their unshakable belief in their Ancestral Laws created an Aboriginal psychology that was disinterested in acquiring and possessing material things. Their lack of desire for anything outside

> their own simple tools continually baffled early explorers {Lawlor, 1991, p61}.

The sensual lifestyle of Indigenous peoples, the nakedness of the body, the absence of language that located the body as separate to the life-world, has no languaged counterpart within western ideology. The land through the western gaze was hostile, the land perceived as being in opposition to human existence. For Indigenous peoples, the life-world was and is a sensual world of vibration, sung into existence by the Ancestors.

It is necessary to analyse the metaphysical foundation of the written word as it is utilized within western ideology in order to understand this difference.

> Myth is often contrasted with reality. Myths flourish in the absence of precise knowledge {Tuan, 1977, p85}.

The declaration of Tjukurrpa stories as myth annihilated the creative forces of the Ancestors, and Indigenous peoples in the present. The land was alive and vibratory, become a space populated by objects and devoid of the connecting ether of the life-world. Each person is

gifted but one body through which the infinite is manifest locally and physiologically embodied. It is imperative conversations about self-determination are actually that; the freeing of the body from the constraints of western language and meaning whilst acknowledging the unique temporality of any given body at any given time.

The Under-Story

> Just because all we have are stories does not mean that all the stories we have are equal. A story does not have intrinsic value; it has value only to the extent that it serves a purpose…. {Gregory, 1988, p198}

The role of story in Indigenous cosmology was the ongoing intimate relationship with the life-world. The Indigenous body and the life-world were not demarcated through language, but were rather bound in a kinship system whereby the body was relative to all in the surrounds. There was not objective world as in the world of western science and language, instead, a world of 'family'. The wisdom of Indigenous language and cosmology is evident in the continuity of Indigenous occupation of the land now known as Australia, and is philosophically antithetic to Darwin's Theory of Evolution (TOE). The TOE is inhered with the proposition that language in not a fixed, absolute formulae through which to know

the world, but is merely the premise through which cultural longevity is broken into symbolically related organisms that eventually position the western male body as the most evolved.

> To paraphrase Charles Darwin, we are organisms shaped, not by getting the world right, but by surviving to leave offspring. Before we embrace the idea that survival is invariably aided by getting the world right, that is by representing the world "correctly" in language, perhaps we should look at the living things that have survived and left offspring for hundreds and even thousands of times longer than *Homo sapiens* {Gregory, 1988, p182}.

There is a wisdom in Indigenous cosmology that sees Indigenous peoples in the land now known as Australia part of a cultural continuum, an ongoing production of offspring, for 100 000 years. We inhabit a world of one-ness. These are commonalities in Eastern philosophy, Indigenous cosmology and western scientific tradition has inevitably arrived at the same point; though not quite. Western language still speaks in terms of objective reality, and of an ordering of objects in society in order to locate the individual.

Earth writing: the original Negation

The Oxford Dictionary of the English Language defines geography as "the description of the earth's surface." Its Greek root words, *geo-* and *graphein*, literally mean "earth writing." Maps are defined as "a representation usually on a flat surface of the whole or a part of an area." The English word "map" is a shortened version of the French *mappamonde*, derived from the Latin phrase *mappa mundi*, or "sheet (napkin) of the world." Maps might hence be defined as a "textual" product of geography. Thus as a "written" representation, maps might be described as something "scribed" upon landscape--an imposition. The cultural and historical implications of maps (and hence geography) as a means of representation entail an enormous amount of power. Maps and geographical representation have influenced the power relationships between European nations and their colonies and have likewise revealed the nature of these power relationships. As such, maps play a significant role within postcolonial theory and the postcolonial novel {White, 1999}.

In Indigenous cosmology, the land offers Indigenous peoples a world, a place and a meaning for being and how to be. It seems that western man's withdrawal from the life-world came at great cost, opening up the spectre of the question; what is the purpose of being? This call into being in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, he discusses the ontology of negation as being the epistemological inquiry into man's being through the question. The origin of negation is purely a metaphysical examination of the limits of language, and is imbued with the primary boundary, and that is the separation of man from the life-world in the time of the Ancient Greeks. The Greeks obsessed with mortality and writing as a means of achieving this, became a dictum of the west when the west in the concept of the historicity that came from the Enlightenment, turned to the Greeks.

> Both Fison and Howitt claimed a connection between Aboriginal anthropology and classical studies. Howitt explained that examination of the 'social life of savages' would 'throw an unexpected light on the most obscure practices of antiquity … More pertinently, however, it seems that classical times – especially ancient Greece – were seized upon because they represented a key stage in human progress: in Morganian terms, the transition from the Upper Status of Barbarism to the Status of Civilization. Aboriginals were ranked well below the status of barbarism; yet therein lay their significance from an evolutionary perspective, for they represented a

> root stock of the tree that came to flower in Attic civilization, and which more recently bore fruit in the form of modern Western culture {McGregor, 1998, p36}.

The west like the Greeks at this time, were in fact developing a language through which to speak of their own place in the cosmology. Like the Greeks, the Europeans were questioning an existence demarcated by the presence of the sign. The limits of textual language are the limits of western being. Beyond the text is the infinite, the unknown. Through language, that which is unknown became known only within the limits of the language, but more specifically, represents a seizure, a taking into possession, for writing as a technology is not only a form of artefaction, it is a form of control. Sartre says,

> In every question we stand before a being which we are questioning. Every question presupposes a being who questions and a being which is questioned. This is not the original relation of man to being-in-itself, but rather it stands within the limitations of this relation and takes it for granted {Sartre, 2003, p28}.

In the so called wilderness, or that space unpopulated by textual language, western man was faced with himself, and the construction of a language and a world through textual language reveals his own relationship to this central notion of being. For western man though, this being is the origin of negation, and the question presents 'a kind of expectation' {Sartre, 2003, p29}. In coming to the new land, the invaders were faced with their own issues of being.

> One will perhaps be temped not to believe in the objective existence of a non-being; one will say than in this case the fact simply refers me to my subjectivity; I would learn from the transcendent being that the conduct sought is a pure fiction. But in the first place, to call this conduct a pure fiction is to disguise the negation without removing it. "To be pure fiction" is equivalent here to "to be only a fiction" {Sartre, 2003, p29}.

Terra-incognita, the name for the land now known as Australia as it appeared on the Latin map, condemned the Indigenous peoples to a state of no existence, one that has yet to be retrieved through or from within western language.

> Consequently to destroy the reality of the negation is to cause the reality of the reply to disappear. This reply, in fact, is the very being which gives it to me; that is, reveals the negation to me {Sartre, 2003, p29}.

It is the reply that gives the reality. The context of invasion can be offered in terms of the west's own conundrum of being, the possibility of there being nothingness, a sense of annihilation beyond the parameters of language. The question is inherent to the eventual colonisation of Indigenous peoples, and to this day, is something that offers only two positions – a positive and negative, as well, the question 'implies the existence of a truth' {Sartre, 2003, p29}. The presence of Indigenous peoples confronted the limits of western ontology, but more than anything, disrupted the west's expectation. The presence of other beings existing beyond western cognizance and language, interrupted the western construction of self.

> We set out upon our pursuit of being, and it seemed to us that the series of our questions had led us to the heart of being. But behold, at the moment when we thought we were arriving at the goal, a glance cast on the question itself has revealed to us suddenly that we are encompassed with nothingness. The permanent possibility of non-being, outside us and within, conditions our

> questions about being. Furthermore, it is non-being which is going to limit the reply. What being *will be* must of necessity arise on the basis of what it *is not* {Sartre, 2003, pp29-30}.

It is within the parameters of the question and its relatedness to being that the Aborigine came into being. The inability of the west to move beyond its language meant that the construction of Aboriginality is essentially based on non-being, or the possibility of nothing. The Aborigine is the sign, the symbol of western concept of time and being, it is the fiction erected in place of the original reply, the original confrontation to western sense of self. The west in not being able to comprehend the infinite, that which is beyond language, would construct the fiction of the Aborigine in a way to speak of this incomprehension: "Being is *that* and outside of that, *nothing."*{Sartre, 2003, p30}. Sartre points toward that fact that destruction of anything occurs because the judgement inherent with the idea of destruction speaks of a cultural value, a world-view that comprehends anything as being destroyed, but for western man, destruction is probable because non-being presents itself as a real possibility.

> "Destruction" presents the same structure as "the question." In a sense, certainly, man is the only being by whom a destruction can be

> accomplished…. In order for destruction to exist, there must be first a relation of man to being {Sartre, 2003, p32}.

Sartre's postulations of being and non-being are contemplations and reflective of a textual existence, and speaks of the reliance upon the presence of textual language, for it is the possible annihilation of the text that presupposes the possible annihilation of all existence.

> Thus the relation of individualizing limitation which man enters into with *one* being on the original basis of his relation to being causes fragility to enter into this being as the appearance of a permanent possibility of non-being. But this is not all. In order for destructibility to exist, man must determine himself in the face of this possibility of non-being, either positively or negatively; he must either take the necessary measures to realize it (destruction proper) or, by a negation of non-being, to maintain it always on the level of a simple possibility (by preventative measures) {Sartre, 2003, p32}.

In the context of colonisation as the imposition of western language and the construction of textuality as a means by which western man enters into being and fends off non-being, we

encounter the possibility of being and non-being imposed upon Indigenous peoples. The original reply, Indigenous people's response to invasion through warfare is not included in Australian historicity because it enters into the western realm of non-being, and questions the western notion of being that has been constructed within the land now known as Australia. The Aborigine on the other hand, is a textual site that is preserved and protected – protection was the original term associated with the maintenance of the Aborigine as symbol – and it is that the Aborigine is a constituent of western being that the symbolic presence of the Aborigine endures.

> … it is man who renders cities destructible, precisely because he posits them as fragile and as precious and because he adopts a system of protective measures with regard to them… The original meaning and aim of war are contained in the smallest building of man. It is necessary then to recognize that destruction is an essentially human thing and that it is *man* who destroys his ships through agency of earthquakes or directly, who destroys his ships through the agency of cyclones or directly. But at the same time it is necessary to acknowledge that destruction supposes a pre-judicative comprehension of nothingness as such a conduct i*n the face of nothingness* {Sartre, 2003, pp32-33}.

It is here that we encounter the cartographer, the earth-writing, the conversion of that space beyond western epistemology and ontology, delving into the realm of nothingness and the possibility of non-being, into inhabitable, controllable space, that locates the western body in the universe through the presence and predictability of the text.

Mapping an inhabitable world

Cartography as a science of writing continues the west's staving off of death, a bid to immortality that if the codes are properly observed, will lead the soul to the heavens, the journey to the stars when the soul doth reside. By the age of imperialism and the emergent theories of race, developed by the need to administer the expanding colour domain within the parameters of western society, Anaxagoras' concept of composition and decomposition took on a more succinct and symbolic form; that of the black and white dichotomy. Composition could be expressed in the light of the human – or western man – and decomposition as the darkness of the unknown – the savage, primitive and uncivilized. On the basis of this dichotomy, western man began to order the world through cartography.

> Medieval and renaissance explorers mapped their travels with attention to stories and adventure, and wrote accounts that read more like tour guides than actual maps. Imperial and colonial cartographers began to clear away the 'dark' and 'unknown' territories of the world, creating a clear picture of the shape of the land while sacrificing something of the concern with understanding or seeing those lands {Nock, 2001}.

The concept of decomposition is synonymous with darkness, or that place in the absence of the western body, is also absence of composition or the text. It fulfils the unknown aspect of western ontology, expressing the relationship between writing and western being, demarcating nothingness and a something-ness.

> In most early maps created by European travellers, the details strayed little into the mainland, detailing only the coastline, which was mapped with relative clarity by Portuguese sailors in the 15th century….The inner lands often were left simply empty and undetailed, letting a mystique develop that survived for centuries, perhaps best seen in the writings of Henry Morton Stanley, who coined the phrase, "darkest Africa" {Nock, 2001}.

Cartography as a writing was made possible by the force of imperialism and colonialism, and at its roots, the polarity of early Greek thought is preserved, Anaxagoras' concept of composition and decomposition is still preserved and inherent to the process, and western man by accessing the lands of other peoples, continues his assent to the heavens, the stars, so that the limits of his body may be subjugated by the light of his intellect. Imperialism presented an opportunity for western man now to forcefully take into possession the earth itself, and in doing so, use the earth as a means of extricating the origin of western man.

> At one end of the dichotomy – I shall call it time's arrow – history is an irreversible sequence of unrepeatable events. Each moment occupies its own distinct position in a temporal series, and all moments, considered in proper sequence, tell a story of linked events moving in a direction. At the other end – I shall call it time's cycle – events have no meaning as distinct episodes with causal impact upon a contingent history. Fundamental states are immanent in time, always present and never changing. Apparent motions are parts of repeating cycles, and differences of the past will be realities of the future. Time has no direction {Gould, 1987, pp10-11}.

The colonisation of the earth is the quest of western man to fulfil the textual promises present at the beginning of western writing. Time's arrow, the irretrievable movement in one direction, supposes the existence of past as well as future. This temporality is unlike Indigenous cosmology, where there is the absence of past and future, both being only present in the moment, the eternal now. The linear narrative or the temporal movement signified through the presence of textual language, 'is the primary metaphor of biblical history' {Gould, 1987, p11}. The mapping of the land now known as Australia is not only biblical in origin, but is the context within which the Aborigine would be constructed, the temporality of the ancient Indigenous peoples would be reconfigured, taken prisoner within western temporality on the premise and promise of the possible ascent within The Great Chain of Being.

> God creates the earth once, instructs Noah to ride out a unique flood in a singular ark, transmits the commandments to Moses at a distinctive moment, and sends His son to a particular place at a definite time to die for us on the cross and rise again on the third day. Many scholars have identified time's arrow as the most important and distinctive contribution of Jewish thought, for most other systems, both before and after, have favoured the immanence of time's cycle over the chain of linear history {Gould, 1987, p11}.

Textuality requires a trajectory, an imaginary line; it cannot be reprieved of the cycle, for it is the return to the point of departure that gives text meaning. Although western man has devised a technology that would ensure his sensual withdrawal from the life-world, he cannot be acquitted from the fact that the force through which writing creates space, this space is still an earth space, one brought into being through the circle.

> Force produces meaning (and space) through the power of "repetition" alone, which inhabits it originarily as its death. This power, that is, this lack of power, which opens and limits the labor of force, institutes translatability, makes possible what we call "language," transforms an absolute idiom into a limit which is always already transgressed: a pure idiom is not language; it becomes so only through repetition; repetition always already divides the point of departure of the first time {Derrida, 2001, p268}.

The text is linear in its conception and application, but it is the cycle that imbues it with meaning.

The incentive of western writing is the economy of language, the intentions behind map making shifting through the ages, but always as a means of controlling space, and the control of this space for the extraction of resources and the funding of economies.

> Unlike modern maps, which focus on the exact lay of the land, the creations of ancient European mapmakers emphasized roads, cities, rivers, and safe harbors, since other details were not as important to travelers and traders at the time (Madan 25). As the needs of European cultures changed, so did the details on the maps. Indeed, the period of Colonialism was one of great development in mapmaking techniques, and actually led in some ways to the development of what we conceive of as the modern map {Nock, 2001}.

The expansion of western temporality made possible by technical advances in map making, as well as the ongoing development in the art of war and the technologies that facilitated the invasion of lands, locates war as inherent to the ongoing construction/destruction of writing, as well as the laws of writing legitimizing war practices. The colonial map is the artefact of such a war, and it is the present of the western body – the authority de jeur – that bears witness to the ongoing colonial expansion. For example, in India, the definition of the territory was not only different to that of Africa, but is typified by the presence of the

authority de jeur inherent to the western body that makes the moving of the periphery and western border both possible and necessary.

> Like in India, maps were used for plotting lines of railroads and telegraphs, but their other usages were quite different. The Indian mapmaking combined all the lands of the subcontinent into one group, whereas the African partition made almost arbitrary divisions that separated Indigenous cultural groups and language speakers. Many problems in the colonial period in Africa were concerned with conflicts between groups that were forced to become homogenized because of the lines on a map they had never seen. Geographical societies of scholars and government directed cartographers devoted most attention in their mapmaking to plotting out areas of likely settlement and colonization, and paid little attention to how the native peoples would receive them …{Nock, 2001}.

But what Nock overlooks here of course is that there is nothing arbitrary about human nature, writing, and maps. The perceived arbitrary division in African that caused conflict, is akin to what happened in Australia, where different language groups were put together in mission reserves. If we return for a moment to the concept of language death, and the concept of

colonialism as the forced implementation of one language upon the earth space, maps as a form of writing, are used to disintegrate language that was already in place. What is occurring in the construction of western language is the disintegration of Indigenous languages.

> The members of the community remain alive and well, often continuing to inhabit their traditional territory; but their language nonetheless goes into decline, and eventually disappears, to be replaced by some other language. The term most often encountered in this connection is *cultural assimilation:* one culture is influenced by a more dominant culture, and begins to lose its character as a result of its members adopting new behaviours {Crystal, 2000, p77}.

Map making and earth writing, reveals that the function of writing is primarily administrative one that the western language system itself is economically driven, for Marxists theory tells us that we cannot isolate language from the system through which it occurs. The shift in map making reflected the shift in strategies of implementing colonial law and order.

> The various needs of travelers influenced mapmakers, and clear differences can be seen between the maps made for hunters or slave traders and the maps created for missionaries. These maps paid primary attention to the general location of either good hunting grounds or key settlements, but also included information on the inhabitants of those areas. Before the 19th century, the European presence in Africa was overall not substantial enough to allow heavy-handed tactics, and so it was important for travelers to have knowledge of the people they would encounter … {Nock, 2001}

Map making tells us that ultimately, it is the ordering of geographical space, and as these spaces are populated by people, then the eventual administration of peoples had to be negotiated in the absence of brute force. The presence of the authority de jeur, whether it is explorer, cartographer or anthropologist, ensures the ongoing expansion of the western conceptual domain represented by writing. It is in this climate, that the Aborigine came into existence.

Representing intention

map

(n) - a representation of all or parts of the earth's surface; a representation

(vt) - to make a map of; to plan

{Weiss, 1996}

> Maps are representations of objects in space, and they succeed as representational devices because they are *selective:* because they omit a great deal of information that map-makers in fact have. Some imaginary Ideal Map that included literally everything in the territory it represented would be useless, because the territory itself could serve just as well … Cartographers call the process whereby the world is reduced to a map, or a complex map reduced to a simpler map, *cartographic generalization* {O'Hara, 1996}.

The western body when it first invaded the land now known as Australia was not the dominant body so to speak. Nor was it (and one may argue that even today) the dominant

culture. The unmapped land meant that the western body through the absence of mapped and codified space could not immediately assume a position of power. This position of power was incremental and coincided with the mapping and codification of space, and through the logos, interposed western time within a timeless land. In other words, by converting the life-world of the land now known as Australia through the process of cartography, it was only then that the western body could dominate time and space. Until that process was complete, it was the Indigenous body that remained superior in the comprehension and gathered wisdom of the land.

> "By arranging lines, angles, names, squares denoting streets and buildings in a pattern on paper, one transforms vacant space into a featured environment . . . space is understood and manageable when it is represented in symbolic form"… As such, maps do not merely represent but create our perception of reality {Weiss, 1996}.

Terra nullius was the proclamation of many things within the instant. Banks' words were more than anything else, an economical statement. He was declaring the unmapped land now known as Australia as not only unmapped, but unyielding in resources. It was a barren and chaste land.

> Reality is not given, not humanly existent, independent of language and toward which language stands as a pale refraction. Rather, reality is brought into existence, is produced, by communication {Carey, 1992, p25}

The land now known as Australia to its inhabitants though, was not absent of meaning, economy, story or light. It was and is teeming with the rhythms and cycles that denote life itself. Millennia of inhabiting this land had meant that great wisdom of how the land breathes and pulses had been garnered through story, so that each body could experience, and then through sounds-from-the-mouth, pass it on to another body so that the cycle may continue.

The arrival of western writing and forms of codification on the land now known as Australia was not an ideological clash, but rather a clash of the perception of light. How light is used in story telling techniques greatly differs in western and Indigenous storytelling. It would be this contrast that would see the inhabitants and the would be colonizers of the land now known as Australia, launched into conflict that endures to the present day.

> … it seems we create a conventional map, complete with boundaries, of the actual territory …. and then thoroughly confuse the two… thoughts and ideas are merely maps of reality, not reality itself, because "the map is not the territory."…we live in the world of maps and words as if it were the real world… we have become totally lost in a world of purely fantasy maps and boundaries {Wilber, 1979, pp26-27}.

The shifting perspectives within which westerners garnered Indigenous existence, was not isolated, but always in relation to something; this something namely being the ongoing presence in the west that facilitated the ongoing production of language. To term the treatment endured by Indigenous peoples at the hands of the sardonic invaders come colonisers as being isolated from the system for which they were perpetuated, is to disregard that such acts were the implementation of law in a lawless land; i.e. it is the function of the author, the deliverance of codes that would ultimately help the western body abscond the earth space, and ascend into the heavens, where immortality awaits him. It is in short, the arrival of the text, and the manipulation and destruction of space through force in order to erect a scaffold to support the western body.

> … all of these "objects out there" are just *projections* of a person's own being … {Wilber, 1979, p83}

The initial act of the invader and the coloniser was to demarcate that space that placed in permanent opposition, the concept of us and them, insider and outsider, human and non-human. Western writing is an act of violence that requires ongoing violence in order for western notions of writing to exist in order for western man to assert his place, familiarise the possibility of non-being through being. It is the text that demarcates this ontological and epistemological boundary – for the text is the fusion of western notions of epistemology and ontology at once.

> We artificially split our awareness into compartments such as subject vs. object, life vs. death, mind vs. body, inside vs. outside, reason vs. instinct … The result of such violence, although known by many other names, is simply unhappiness. Life becomes suffering, full of battles. But all our battles in our experience – our conflicts, anxieties, sufferings, and despairs – are created by the boundaries we misguidingly throw around our experience {Wilber, 1979, preface}.

The text cannot exist without the concept of force or warfare. The history of the text itself, is a litany of war, where new lands and peoples were and continued to be conquered, colonised, civilized or democratized, in the quest for the production of linearity, but most importantly, the western textual narrative requires exploitation and the expulsion of the breath - whether from the body, or from the land, so that the original narrative upon being brought into western linearity and textual culture, ceases to be a being-for-itself, and immediately becomes a being-for-another. Through warfare, being is reduced to objectivity, and is no longer capable of representing itself within the original context, for western textual culture renders all bodies text.

Chapter 6

The death of multiplicity

Imposing one language

> The whole concept of ecosystem is based on the insight that living entities exist through a network of interrelationships. To take just one definition: an ecosystem is 'the system formed by the interaction of all living organisms, plants, animals, bacteria, etc. with the physical and chemical factors of their environment' {Crystal, 2000, pp32-33}.

Indigenous peoples the world over sustained a healthy interaction with the environment, valued diversity and the necessary role of all organisms and the absence of hierarchical order present to western language and signification. In Indigenous cosmology, relationship to land and place was and continues to be forged by responsibility. In Indigenous cultures, all organisms have the potential to teach, and it is here that the unlikely candidate for such a lesson lies in the *mimosa pigra* weed, which provides us with a metaphor of the possible impact of monoculture upon the earth space.

This is the story of the Mak Mak people of the Wagait floodplains near Darwin. The Mak Mak people speak of the impact of mimosa on their native homeland, its colonisation depleting the native animal and plant life, and in their responsibility to land, knew the importance of removing the mimosa to revisit a healthy ecology was necessary before the land could once again support the peoples themselves. The impact of the mimosa serves us as a allegory for the imposition of single language upon an ecosystem, suffocating the diversity of the many plants and animals of the area.

> Colin: Formerly there was no mimosa here. It was all level, flat country right around, and the mimosa came and cut off all these waterholes right through, and we actually had a little walkway here for the pump to get through it – just nearly had a point where we couldn't get through it. We got an old bucket tractor and nearly killed it clearing a hole and just pushing mimosa all out the back. And two and a half year ago we got a little bulldozer and started getting ahead and pushed all this. The mimosa there was a thick wall here, right up to the fence. We pushed it back, burnt it all up…. And before, when that mimosa completely encased these waterholes here, there was no geese. They couldn't walk around. And since we've cleared it, you can see how many have come back, big mob. It's like it was before the mimosa was here … {Rose, 2002, p143}.

The *mimosa pigra* is an introduced species to the land now known as Australia, and impending ecological death as a potential outcome from the imposition of an introduced language into what was once an ecological and linguistic diverse biosphere. It is the light of all beings that is valuable and necessary in Indigenous world view, each body possessing its own language, and each language deemed necessary to exist. David Crystal discusses the importance of the diversity of language, and especially the death of languages as a consequence of the imposition of one language upon the earth space. Language death occurs as both a result of the pressure for Indigenous peoples to participate in western economy, as well as well as the death of physical speakers.

> The widespread view that language death is rapidly increasing is based largely on general reasoning: for example, we know that there has been a significant growth in the nation-state in the twentieth century, with an associated recognition of official languages; we know that there has been a significant growth in international and global lingua francas during the same period; and we can deduce that these developments will have put minority languages under increasing pressure {Crystal, 2000, page 69}.

Colonialism and the concept of *lingua francas* would be an era that introduced the rapid decimation Indigenous languages. In referring once again to Abrams findings that in its evolution, western writing is the source of negation of the life-world and the human bodies

responsiveness to it. It is the cartographer who renders the life-world mute by reducing it to measured, quantifiable and qualitative time and space, for the cartographer determines those spaces of value, and those without value. This is expressed through terms such as *light* and *dark.* The binary positioning of light and dark is present in every object. The limit of the word present in the binding of light to dark, for darkness is required in revealing light. The object to be seen requires light as well as dark. All components of western language and the production of the human require light and darkness. Heidegger speaks about the necessity of darkness in bringing forth light. Lightness is action, penetration and movement. The western body is light, penetrating, and ultimately the possessor of light who is inhered with the privilege of composing the earth space into regular and irregular, light and dark.

A culture of writing is also a culture of dehistoricising and artefaction, creating death where there once was life through the removal of the breath. The breath expunged from the body, becomes artefact, and the author exists in absence, for the legacy of the author in the written word is signified as externalized breath, or breath expunged from the body. The body that desires to compose is in this moment experiencing decomposition, or a state of existence without light or breath. The written word is force, a violence imposed upon the life-world. Derrida's logocentrism, where the spoken word is privileged over the written applies in one category specifically, and that is the mimetic reproduction of the human.

The absence of language

The early colonists did not nor could not relate to this emergent life-world, a world where civility and any signs of material culture were absent.

> There is no home in Australia and if home is blotted out of the map then the virtues of home must disappear {McKenna, 2002, p100}.

The universe, a shivering massy vibration, is a matrix of overlapping sonic realities. The song is manifest through bodies, the bodies themselves composed by and through song. Song is vibration, and it is sound that shapes matter, moves molecules and shifts atoms. All that is language is necessarily converted into vibration or song for a creative force to take place. Even visual languages must have a sonic outcome in order to manifest through vibration. Indigenous cosmologies developed over millennia a mode of existence that valued what the west refers to as the animal and plant kingdoms equally, a world view reflected in their story telling. Knowledge and wisdoms developed from the experience of cohabitating with beings that populate the life-world were and are preserved through story.

The songlines of Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia were energetic routes, giving shape and meaning through the creative forces of the Ancestral Beings. The constant movement of the life-world on an energetic level meant that Indigenous story telling and cultural practice could not be stagnant, aggressively unprogressively depicted within western construction, but in stead constantly change, growing, moving. "… their creation continues to live and evolve through their stories, ceremonies, rituals, symbols, and designs that have been carefully maintained for tens of thousands of years" {Lawlor, 1991, pp 14-18}.

> Without these ceremonies the cycle of life could be broken and the cosmos endangered. A group's claim to an area of songlines is drawn from the original dreaming and is not a physical owning of the land but a spiritual stewardship to maintain purity (Issacs 87 & 99). The concept of owning land as a material possession is foreign to the Aborigines. There are no words meaning possession in Aboriginal languages {Lawlor, 1991, p237}.

It becomes apparent that the peoples known as the Aborigines of the land now known as Australia's successful ongoing relationship with the life-world was an energetic management of the land through story, the body an energetic conduit in its own right the medium through which management was effected. It is this energetic management of the

life-world that is the basis of Indigenous existence, the kernel of language, and view of the life-world. It is this energetic reality from which Indigenous modes of conduct and morality are derived. Immediately what constitutes reality within western and Indigenous societies positions both cultures in polarity.

One of the most powerful and influential moments in the research for this thesis, was during the Yeperenye Festival in Alice Springs in September, 2001. The festival posed as Indigenous Federation, was taking place in the red soil of Alice Springs. A friend told me to hold the soil in my hand. I stooped, and held the soil. It radiated warmth like no other. And then it began to speak. It began to tell me things. During the ritual Caterpillar Dreaming story enacted by the inheritors of the Caterpillar Dreaming story, I was struck by something that had never before revealed itself, and that is the Dreaming was not a past event, but an ongoing event, the voice of the land, like a bass note so deep, it is felt as vibration. This was a powerfully transformative for until that moment, I understood the Dreaming as a past concept.

The song of the land is vibration, the increase in vibration a notational change or shift in song. This realization freed me from the constraints of western society and programmed reality. The material existence of western society, one that named me an Aborigine, was illusion, for this material illusion is penetrated by the ongoing life force of the Dreaming, an infinite ancient

song of the land herself. It seemed to shatter the colonial story at this moment, for colonialism would want me to believe that the Dreaming is a past occurrence, an artefact of past tribal existence to which me, someone considered an inauthentic Aborigine, would have no connection with. Yet holding the red soil of Centre in my hands, I heard this song of the Dreaming, and felt it snake its way like a serpent, weaving in the vast depths of the land, its secrets known only to the keepers of the many stories.

The experiences of the early colonists were the disorientation of the western body in a land yet reconstructed around the centrality of the western body, and the importation of western language systems. The absence of civilized markers had a sensorial and temporal impact upon the western body, for the western body pushed up against the frontier of what they perceived as a harsh and uninhabitable land was adrift in space in the absence of western language to orient and locate the western body in the land, and indeed the larger universe. In other words, the colonists had entered into a meaningless, disordered space signified by the absence of textual language. The euphemisms of 'opening up the land' had a physical reality in the desecration of the Indigenous peoples who belonged to that particular area. Not only did it mean conflict with the original custodians of the land, but it was also the removal of ancient temporal existence. The abolition of pre-existing temporality was of significant importance in establishing a dominant alien language and culture.

The land now known as Australia has many stories woven throughout its territories. The ancients - Indigenous people past and present - of this land acknowledged and indeed, danced to the rhythmic fluctuation of the life-world in the ritual of life. Stories and cosmologies were developed that inherently responded to this eternal beat and constant rhythm, cosmologies that wove the internal rhythm of the body with the rhythm of life itself. The rhythm of the earth was a continuum of the body's internal symphony, this continuum harnessed through story. The British invasion of the land now known as Australia was justified through a story. That story was the doctrine of terra nullius – or the land belonging to no-one. The land belonging to no one not only was already mapped, and had been for millennia, it bore the secrecies of stories since time immemorial. This land is a weave of songlines. Songlines kept meaning in place, the responsibility and duty of clans of the land now known as Australia, were and are repositories of the most sophisticated and intimate wisdom of the cosmos itself.

Imposing the author function

In the beautifully crafted book *Gwion Gwion, Secret And Sacred Pathways of the Ngarinyin Aboriginal People of Australia,* a most poetic account between the sacredness of ritual, body, story and land is given. It speaks of the responsibility with which Indigenous folk interacted with the life-world. The life-world, the most vital component of Indigenous existence, is woven through all aspects of existence.

> The Ngarinyin people are custodians of the oldest known figurative art in north-western Australia that records a distinct society. The fine, blood-coloured paintings of graceful people that are preserved in sandstone rock-shelters throughout their homeland create a rare cultural resonance and residue of extraordinary antiquity. Every painting is a story, every painting is an Ancestor, every painting marks a place of cultural significance. When Ngarinyin gives the name of the artists, they say Gwion Gwion {Doring, 2000, p11}.

The sacred relationship with what the west refers to as the life-world is spoken of by the Ngarinyin with great affection. That the Ngarinyin say 'Gwion Gwion', explained as 'Gwion Gwion was a secret … to protect man … blood … law'{Doring, 2000, inner sleave} The anonymity of the painter, the storyteller, the conduit is in stark contrast to western principle of authorship, a phenomenon as explained by Foucault of the author function, where the revelation of the name of the author is imperative to the status of the text produced. "An anonymous text posted on a wall probably has a writer – but not an author. The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society'{Foucault, 1984 p108}. In Indigenous culture, the author function did not exist. The notion of the individual and reciprocal authority is not a part of

Indigenous cosmology, and in some instance for colonial enterprise, the author function was inscribed upon Indigenous bodies.

The practice of giving natives a gorget was a colonial practice employed by the military in the America's. Indians leaders or warriors were given gorgets by both French and British colonizers {Troy, 1993, p5}. The gorget was given to Aboriginal people whom the colonizers believed had great authority in the community. An inherited practice from previous colonial expeditions, the gorget was the remnant of the knights armour of which was made obsolete with the invention of firearms. The gorget is an expression of individuation alluding to the author function imposed upon Indigenous peoples by the colonists.

> It is clear that the gift of a gorget was considered by the colonists and at least some Aboriginal people to be an honour. An Aboriginal person wearing a gorget was, certainly from the colonists' point of view, considered to be a leader within the Aboriginal community… As military duty signs worn only by officers, gorgets had public recognition as symbols of authority and importance. Therefore, when the colonists were looking for a way in which to honour individual Aboriginal people, the gorget was the logical model {Troy, 1993, pp5 - 6}.

The logical model of the gorget is interesting in that through its application, the colonists sought to locate an authority within the Indigenous communities with which to communicate their needs and wants. The gorget though, intended to create an authority as a point of contact, was the effective imposition of a materialist driven culture upon a non-material culture for the economic purposes. The gorget was a textual symbol that located the bearer as an elected authority appointed by colonial administration.

> By the 1830's it was common practice among pastoralists to present the Aboriginal man perceived to be the local leader with a gorget stating his position of authority in the vicinity of the settler's new property. In return, the Aboriginal leader was expected to prevent his people from interrupting the settler's pastoral endeavours and where possible to supply labour or information about the land {Troy, 1993, p6}.

The era of the gorgets represents the incursion of textual culture into Indigenous social order. The election of a leader – predominantly it would be a King – meant that the appointment of authority as a point of contact for the colonisers came to be a reflection of colonial social order itself. It is documented that it was mostly the men who were perceived as being the 'Chief' or the 'King', and were those who showed great leadership within the Aboriginal tribe then community, 'The main criteria for selection were the person's loyalty and usefulness to the colonists…'{Troy, 1993, p13}.

The gorgets administered by the colonists represent more than anything else, the presence of a textual culture, whereby the author function is a necessary component of colonial expansion via access to Indigenous land and resources. The gorgets represent the imposition of western textuality upon a social system that was so far removed from colonial material existence that the true cosmological order of Indigenous philosophy has been confounded with and by the intrusion of textual culture, driven by its need for an author function. The role of the bearer of the gorget was to offer information about the lands as well as to build an amicable relationship between the Indigenous peoples and the colonisers. The invisibility of the nameless, faceless Indigenous peoples, those whom did not bear the gorget, faded into the landscape, while some of the bearers of gorget have entered western history. The gorget in this context, served the primary function of individuating the Aboriginal body by anointing him with a gorget, a text, and in this, the Aborigine was allocated a name through western textuality represented here by the gorget, facilitated by the author function.

The purpose of creating an individuated body by granting a gorget to a perceived, chosen leader of the 'tribe' marks not just an incredible different social structure, but the basis of this social structure is the different relationship to land. The colonists attempting to access information of the land utilized textual culture, employing the power of the symbol of colonial authority, to do this. The Indigenous people who were co-opted into the colonial project eventually came to be either a symbol of reverence or contention within colonial and Indigenous communities. Eventually though, the original high esteem the bearer of the gorget

held in both societies, eventually eroded, and the gorget lost meaning in both colonial and Indigenous societal contexts.

The *Gwion Gwion* is a way of being that individuating with the intention of imposing an authorial function upon the Indigenous body, is absent. It is the story of the continuum, of the centrality of the life-world, the land, and how it is revealed and venerated through story. Unlike the colonial story, Tjukurrpa stories are labelled as myth and are not legal tender. As a consequence, Indigenous peoples have no legitimate right to the land occupied by our Ancestors for more than 100 millennia. The disparity that protects western legal ownership of our lands is not only about the story, but how that story is told, as well as the proposition put forward by Foucault as to what is constituted as work, refers to the body telling it.

> Once a system of ownership for texts came into being, once strict rules concerning author's rights … at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century – the possibility of transgression attached to the act of writing took on, more and more, the form of an imperative peculiar to literature. It is as if the author, beginning with the moment at which he was placed in the system of property that characterizes our society, compensated for the status that he thus acquired by rediscovering the old bipolar field of discourse, systematically practicing transgression and thereby restoring danger

> to a writing which was now guaranteed the benefits of ownership {Foucault, 1984, pp108-109}.

The absence of the author function in Indigenous culture is an important junction in the unwillingness of the west in recognising prior ownership of the land now known as Australia. At the centre of this author function, is the relationship to the life-world, or as in the case of the west, a language premised on the alienation from the land.

> Marxism value theory … designated labor (power) as the source of all value, thereby denying any intrinsic value to nature {Wood, 1997, p150}.

That nature has lost all value to the west aside from that which is contained in its exploitation, is a recurring theme in critical analysis of western culture.

> "Nature," it would seem, has become simply a stock of "resources" for human civilization, and so we can hardly be surprised that our civilized eyes and ears are somewhat oblivious to the existence of perspectives that are not human at all, or that a person either renting into or returning to the West from a nonindustrial culture would feel as startled and confused by the felt absence of nonhuman powers {Abram, 1996, p28}.

The absence of nonhuman powers is the defining moment of the body and its relationship to the life-world. Perhaps it is at this point, this very moment, when the life-world ceases to yield any power, vibrational force and impact upon the body and psyche that the Indigenous body has been truly colonised. Perhaps when we as Indigenous people are no longer responsive or in communication with the life-world, then project colonisation has been successful.

Subjugation of the life-world is integral to the western system. In order to achieve alienation from the life-world requires the destruction and or the reordering of two chief components; language and the body. The consequence of postmodernism is the revelation that the constraints of ideology premised on language and the futility in attempting to speak of anything outside of the system. This is present in the administering of the gorgets, and confounds issues of identity and Indigenous experience of the life-world, locating them within the logical bounds of western language. It is then necessary that the wisdom of Indigenous cosmology is best understood at an energetic level, for the role and function of story had and has the ultimate intention of energy management.

In an Indigenous context, the outcome of the relationship between body, land and story is a healthy environment sustained through energy management practices developed through millennia. That the body has an affect upon the environment was understood and accepted, for the life-world constituted a reflection of what the west refers to as the 'self.' By

implementing the system of the gorgets, Indigenous folk were effectively being coerced into the western system through the application of textual symbology. The Aborigine, unhuman, nameless, absent, became present when adorned by the gorget. The Aborigine in this introduction to textual culture had to now negotiate the parameters of textual cultures, while attempting to maintain openness to the life-world, the core of Indigenous being.

Authorship and death

> And when the soul hath departed, a man seethe corruption, and the bones of his body crumble away and become stinking things, and the members decay one after the other, the bones crumble into a helpless mass, and the flesh turneth into foetid liquid. I shall not decay, I shall not rot, I shall not putrefy, I shall not turn into worms, and I shall not see corruption before the eye of the god Shu. I shall have my being, I shall have my being; I shall live, I shall live; I shall flourish, I shall flourish, I shall flourish, I shall wake up in peace, I shall not putrefy, my intestines shall not perish, I shall not suffer injury.
>
> My eye shall not decay. The form of my face shall not disappear. My ear shall not become deaf. My head shall not be separated from my neck. My tongue shall not be removed. My hair shall not be cut off. My eyebrows shall not be

shaved away, and no evil defect shall assail me. My body shall be established.
It shall neither become a ruin, nor be destroyed on this earth.

Egyptian Book of the Dead, {Budge, 2003}

We cannot deny nor remove the fact that inherent to writing the concept of death. Perhaps given this, it is not hard to recognise the pervasiveness of death where the imposition of western writing occurs. Massacre, the spectacle of death, was the deployment of western textual language, and in it was the proposal of a restricted reality, a calling away from the former reality in existence before invasion and colonization, that now required the attentiveness be given to the introduced Law – or the text.

Let us now take up the concept of the King Plates as not just an imposition of the author function, but in its implementation, the simultaneity of death. The breastplates, circulated as objects of officialdom, intended to fill the Indigenous person around whose neck it hung with a sense of power and pride. It was a statement, a creation of discourse, a phenomenon of textuality. There can be no denying that the early instances of western writing 'captured' the Indigenous body, and in this apprehension, sought to manipulate it through the western gaze and meaning. The breastplates were an epithet and an epigraph, a form of representation, a signifier, the making of a real into an unreal. Foucault defines representation as such;

> … representation … implies the active work of selecting and present, of structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean {Foucault, 1984, p102}.

In western man's fear of the life-world, and his own fear of mortality, present at the inception of philosophical thought, the breastplate is but one expression of this fear of mortality. Chris Healy speaks of the image of the breastplates as evoking 'captivity' and those 'frontier photographs' of Aboriginal prisoners in the desert bound together' {Creed, 2001, p24}. The heaviness of the breastplate, the weight of the manacles placed on Indigenous peoples in order to bring them in from the desert or in response to 'criminal activity' is the weight of textual language that effected the criminalization of Indigenous peoples in our own lands.

> This initial impression is right in that it recognises some of the ways in which colonial captivity is not only about actual imprisonment but equally about how captivity is understood, represented, interpreted and made historical {Creed, 2001, p24}.

Healy refers to the breastplates as 'a remembrance that belongs not only to dead generations but also burdens the living', and asks the question, 'Whose plates are these anyway?' {Creed,

2001, p25}. The breast plates in this context proposed by Healy, is the imposition of colonial signs and referents upon Indigenous peoples.

> All these objects were given to Aboriginal people, so in this sense they belonged to Aboriginal people. But for gifts to be owned they have to be accepted or avowed in the terms offered by the exchange {Creed, 2001, p26}.

Healy speaks of how western interpretation of the breastplates is recognised only through the intention within which the breastplates were granted. The colonists interpreted the wearing of the breastplate through their own cultural lens, speaking of the great pride with which Indigenous peoples wore them. But the framing of Indigenous peoples inflicted with the breastplate as 'an authentic lone indigene'{Creed, 2001, p26} that provides a point of contact between western culture and Indigenous peoples within an framework that defies the presence of a returning gaze, an interaction that is while imposing subjectivity annihilates the subject, or the execution of Hegel's master and slave dichotomy. Healy states,

> Because the history of colonial dispossession, violence and inhumanity hangs heavily over my sense of an Australian landscape, I view the breastplates with a kind of pre-emptive foreboding {Creed, 2001, p29}.

The Aborigine then is a character in western writing and Australian colonial narrative that is required in the warding off of colonial death, for the construction of identities is not arbitrary, but necessary.

> Our culture has metamorphosed this idea of narrative, or writing, as something designed to ward off death. Writing has become linked to sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of life: it is now a voluntary effacement which does not need to be represented in books, since it is brought about in the writer's very existence. The work, which once had the duty of providing immortality, now possesses the right to kill, to be its author's murderer … {Foucault, 1984, p102}.

Writing not only kills the author, but in creating the artefact, the death of a subject body, or that body apprehended in the writer's gaze, occurs simultaneously in the creation of the object. Writing then is incurred with a dual death; the death of the subject writing, and the death of the subject situated as object to the authors subject, with the collapse into immortality with the death of both. Writing then is the artefact of both the author and subject of his exploitative gaze.

> That is not all, however: this relationship between writing and death is also manifested in the effacement of the writing subject's individual

> characteristics. Using all the contrivances that he sets up between himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels out the signs of his particular individuality. As a result, the mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing {Foucault, 1984, pp102-103}.

According to Foucault, 'None of this is recent; criticism and philosophy took note of the disappearance – or death – of the author some time ago. But the consequence of their discovery of it has not been sufficiently examined, nor has its import been accurately measured' {Foucault, 1984, p103}. The themes of death and disappearance inherent to writing are what Indigenous peoples have been fighting against since the arrival of the western writing system to our lands. The need for the west to constantly reinvigorate itself through its narratives has done so in the exchange for authorial immortality. Western history is made up of immortals, whose stories have ensured that they stave off death. But the immortality of western authors comes at the necessary death of those whose existence becomes the artefact of their imaginings.

The Aborigine is an artefact of one such colonial narrative known as Australian historicity. The author of the Aborigine is both authoritative and immortalized, while those folk, who become Aborigine in the gaze of the colonial author, belong to another time, another way of being, is brought into western language and time. In the moment in which the

Aborigine is created, two things occur: the composition that immortalizes the author decomposes that which existed before his gaze fell upon the body or the lands of Indigenous folk. But more importantly, it is the demarcation of the temporal domain that is necessarily protected against decomposition, and that is the conceptual domain inhabited by the western author.

While Barthes speaks of the death of the author, Foucault speaks about writings close association with death, utilized to conquer or at least ward off death;

> The second theme, writing's relationship with death, is even more familiar. The link subverts an old tradition exemplified by the Greek epic, which was intended to perpetuate the immortality of the hero: if he is willing to die young, it was so that his life, consecrated and magnified by death, might pass into immortality; the narrative then redeemed this accepted death. In another way, the motivation, as well as the them and the pretext … was also the eluding of death: one spoke, telling stories into the early morning, in order to forestall death, to postpone the day of reckoning that would silence the narrator…. narrative is an effort, renewed each night, to keep death outside the circle of life {Foucault, 1984, p102}.

Writing not only bought the idea of western time and space to the lands of Indigenous peoples, but also the concept of death: death as irretrievable longing and destruction previously foreign to Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 7

The world is a song

Songs of the infinite

> A song moving out into space immediately surrounding an individual—for example, a horseman riding at night or anyone alone and fearful -- establishes a zone of protection that gives comfort, -- for within it is the person who dissipates the evils by the compulsion of sound and words at the same time that he buoys up his own spirit.
>
> By This Song I Walk: Navajo Songs {Natonabah, 1978}

Songs were the main organizing feature of Indigenous cosmology. The land now known as Australia was mapped by song.

> Songs that extol the deeds of one or more totemic Ancestors of the Dreaming are also verbal maps of the country and can be mnemonic devices for remembering tracts of countryside and ancient stories associated with them.

> Since songlines can be extremely long, it is not surprising that ecological cues … might trigger a series of associations for remembering {Hume, 2002, p93}.

The use of song locates the person in the countryside, as well as functioning as a transmission device between bodies. The stories of the Ancestors and their movement through country are recounted through song. This phenomenon is referred to as the Songlines.

> Many songs are connected with songlines – a series or sequences of songs representing one particular place or event in a myth sequence. Songlines trace the pathways taken by the creative Ancestors on their travels across the land, highlighting both notable and ordinary happenings. Ancestral journeys usually begin at the place where the Ancestor emerged from the ground and are completed at the place where the Ancestor went back into the ground – not necessarily the same place {Hume, 2002, p93}.

There are songs that are 'purely for entertainment' {Hume, 2002, p94} and can be sung by everyone, but there is the role of song for educational purposes, marking the sign of maturity with the child being taught 'the deeper meanings of some of the songs' {Hume, 2002, p95}. The song is a body of wisdom, passed through time from body to body, the vibrational force of one body impacting, shaping another. But songs are powerful. Songs 'that are powerful contain magic virtues that give power over nature and environment in the locality of where

they originated', and in these powers of creation and destruction, the most powerful are known as 'closed songs' {Hume, 2002, p95}. Because of this power, 'sacred songs are handed down carefully, usually in a system of age graded musical education that is combined with secret knowledge' {Hume, 2002, p95}.

The song – and the possession of song – is what grants the body a place in the landscape, as well as consolidating a place within the infinite. The performer of a song has the ability to allow the audience to transcend material reality and to 're-establish links with the Dreaming, therefore revitalising the unity of present and past, and of human and non-human' {Hume, 2002, p95}. The song in Indigenous cosmology is a form of currency, and 'Ownership of certain songs proves ownership or custody of certain lands' {Hume, 2002, p95}. The song is vibration, and through the song, the Indigenous body becomes one with the unified consciousness of the life-world, the body as conduit for the song, has the power to locate the singer within the infinite, the temporality of the body's proximate immediacy to the life-world interpreted through song.

> Songs contribute to a person's cognitive map of their physical world, while at the same time describe and explain metaphysical interpretations of that world {Hume, 2002, p93}.

Songs not only prove ownership and custodianship, but grant passage through country. Songs contain wisdom and knowledge of place, and how to relate to and through place, and are

> … fully intelligible only through the perpetuation of a prescribed religious life, one that is steeped in the gradual acquisition of religiously significant knowledge… the person 'knowing many songs' was the most knowledgeable person in a tribal community {Hume, 2002, p93}.

The relationship between the song as a valuable possession and inherited right suggest the cosmological wisdom that preserves the song as a sacred means of communication, for the song transgresses what is 'seen' and moves into the world of energy.

> We do not separate the material world of objects we see around us, with our ordinary eyes, and the sacred world of create energy that we can learn to 'see' and 'hear' in this inner way from a young age. It took me a long time to understand that white people do not experience the world in this way. We work through 'feeling'. But we are not using this word feeling to mean ordinary emotions like anger, desire or jealousy, or our sense of physical touch. When we use the English word 'feeling' in this way we are talking

> more about what white people call intuitive awareness. We use this to feel out situations, to read people, and to talk to country {Randal, 2003, p3}.

In this way, country is felt, and the primary function of communication within Indigenous cosmology is energetic, and this energy is given form through story, song and language.

Phenomenology – the science of sitting and listening

Sitting and listening, the Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia passed on these accounts generation through generation through story, speaking of the breath of the Ancestors, their great travels, recounting how they sung the world into existence. The phenomenological investigation into the relationship between the English language and my Indigenous body placed me back there. I once again, sat and listened. I listened to my body, to the land, to the energy exchange occurring around me. I learnt things, remembered things, simply by sitting and listening. I came to call phenomenology the scientific term for 'sitting and listening', and in this, I was returned to country, my body, and a sense of oneness, what Wilber would refer to as unity consciousness.

> In Indigenous, oral cultures, nature itself is articulate; it *speaks*. The human voice in an oral culture is always to some extent participant with the voices of

> wolves, wind, and waves – participant, that is, with the encompassing discourse of an animate earth. There is no element of the landscape that is definitively void of expressive resonance and power: any movement may be a gesture, and sound may be a voice, a meaningful utterance {Abram, 1996, pp116-117}.

Abrams is right when he says that for Indigenous peoples, there is no part of country that is inexpressive, mute, and this within Indigenous cosmology is articulated no better than through song, and the role of the body not only as a conduit for the song, but is at once, part of the song – the creative and the creator.

> Each Gitskan house is the proud heir and owner of an *ada' ox.* This is a body of orally transmitted songs and stories that acts as the house's sacred achieves and as its living, millennia-long memory of important events of the past. This irreplaceable verbal repository of knowledge consist in part of sacred songs believed to have arisen, *literally from the breaths of the Ancestors.* Far more than musical representations of history, these songs serve as vital time-traversing vehicles. They can transport members across the immense reaches of space and time into the dim mythic past of Gitskan creation *by the very quality of their music and the emotions they convey.* {Knudtson, 1992, p128}

As I sit, the language of the cotton trees speaking in clapping language sounding like gentle, breath like castanets, surrounding me in their applause, I feel a wisdom to my body, a direct exchange occurring between me and what the west refers to as the life-world. I refer to it as my Ancestors. When I speak of Ancestors, I am not merely speaking of bodied folk who are still here in spiritual form or those whom merely existed in human form, but I am speaking of the animate and inanimate beings that populate the world through which I move. Sitting in the park, the songs of birds fill the air. Why, I wonder, is their language, their music, their songs, relegated to an otherness, an expression from which humans turn, and in this, the songs of the birds – messengers in Indigenous culture – are rendered mute? The loss of 'ourselves in relation with another expressive power, another centre of experience' for Indigenous peoples imbedded within western language is a true possibility {Abram, 1996, p129}. The ability to listen to the land and all being as expression of the cosmos, is inherent to ancient Indigenous temporality, for it is here that the creative self is realized and practiced.

> Trees, for instance, can seem to speak to us when they are jostled by the wind. Different forms of foliage lend each tree a distinctive voice, and a person who has lived among them will easily distinguish the various dialects of pine trees from speech of spruce needles or Douglas fir. Anyone who has walked through cornfields knows the uncanny experience of being scrutinized and spoken to by whispering stalks. Certain rock faces and boulders request from us a kind of auditory attentiveness, and so draw our ears into relation with our

> eyes as we gaze at them …for it is only through a mode of listening that we can begin to sense the interior voluminosity of the boulder, its particular density and depth. There is an expectancy to the ears, a kind of patient receptivity that they lend to the other senses whenever we place ourselves in a mode of listening – whether to a stone, or a river, or an abandoned house {Abram, 1996, pp129-120}.

To listen, and avail one's self to the life-world, the cosmos, in its ceaseless and continuous change. The potential of the song, the language of the life-world falling silent is made more real the longer Indigenous peoples turn from the polyphasic consciousness and shift into a monophasic consciousness. Or, turn from the animate world brought into existence through Indigenous languages, and are instead contained, circumvented from being sensorial entrenched within the life-world, and move into the material reality forged by western language. Abrams speaks of the conversion of the two senses of hearing and seeing, where the 'senses are functioning here as a single, hyperattentive organ; we feel ourselves listening with our eyes and watching with our ears, ready to respond with our whole body to any change in the Other's behaviour' and in this, the opening up to an experience where one is 'suddenly confronted, caught up in a dynamic exchange with another entity, another carnal intelligence' {Abram, 1996, p129}.

But the song, the ability to be responsive and attentiveness to the life-world is one that speaks of a belonging and relating to an infinite present, where the centrality of one's own self – the ego identity of western culture – melts in the vibration of the continuum. But while the song keeps the ongoing exchange between body and universe constant, Abram reminds us that the west in devising the alphabet and technology of writing, the primacy of the life-world and the body's responsiveness to it, decomposed.

> It is the written text that provides this new locus. For to read is to enter into a profound participation, or chiasm, with the inked marks upon the page. In learning to read we must break the spontaneous participation of our eyes and our ears in the surrounding terrain (where they had ceaselessly converged in the synaesthetic encounter with animals, plants, and streams) in order to recouple those senses upon these printed marks and immediately hear voices. We hear spoken words, witness strange scenes or visions, even experience other lives. As nonhuman animals, plants, and even "inanimate" rivers once spoke to our tribal Ancestors, so the "inert" letters on the page now speak to us! *This is a form of animism that we take for granted, but it is animism nonetheless – as mysterious as a talking stone* {Abram, 1996, p131}.

There is a trading here that takes place in the shift from an oral culture to a literal culture, where it is that the world no longer speaks, nature no longer animate, and the communication between body and life-world ceases.

> And indeed, it is only when a culture shifts its participation to these printed letters that the stones fall silent. Only as our senses transfer their animating magic to the written word do the trees become mute, the other animals dumb {Abram, 1996, p131}.

There is great loss incurred in the advent of writing. For Indigenous peoples, this loss is monumental, for it is the world of the Ancestors, the land their body, the ochre sites their blood. The disconnection represented by a total movement from an oral culture into a literal one is representative of an ongoing depletion of the energy force of the Indigenous body. It is this that Bob Randall speaks of when he speaks of the Tjukurrpa.

> Only our way of thinking, the thought that we are not an essential part of the universe, lessens our belonging, or our being part of what is, what has been, and what will always be. For me, I am part of the whole of *tjukurrpa.* It is the same when I hear the song of a bird, or find the tracks of an animal. When I tell *tjukurrpa* stories or sing the songs, I too am part

> of the past, present and future of all creation. Caring for the land by telling the stories, singing the songs and doing the dances and paintings is my responsibility. Separating me from that makes me weak {Randall, 2003, pp17-18}.

As long as acquisition of western language – specifically writing – become the select means through which Indigenous folk access a state of greater well-being, such so called advances shall come at a cost. The cost shall be the animate life-world, the one inhabited by our Ancestors, whose vibratory rhythms and songs resonate within our being. The prospect of ancestral voices falling silent, our bodies rendering the ancients mute, will see not only the Indigenous body enter into an irretrievable silence in being culturally assimilated through western language, but the total immersion within the monophasic consciousness of western material reality the Indigenous body reconfigured within western consciousness as the Aborigine, will be vulnerable to the terms and conditions which signalled the prior entry into the western administration. This can be simply understood as the loss of song.

Superstring theory – the universe is a song

The role of the song in Indigenous cosmology reveals the vibratory manifestation of the cosmos. The universe as a vibration, a song, has its equivalent in western science in the form of *superstring theory*. Superstring theory speaks of existence ranging from the molecular to

the larger organizations constituting 'bodies' dance and weave, the vibrations and waves since time immemorial sung into this very moment, the distance between the prior and the present collapsed through song, for they are ultimately One and the same. Superstring theory like Indigenous polyphasic consciousness, acknowledges the presence of multi realities, in the form of vibration.

The west is gradually beginning to reverberate with the principles and observations of ancient Indigenous people the world over. Theories of oneness and connectedness, of materialism as an illusion, and the attempt to control and civilize the earth space are an ineffectual practice. The west through its scientific instruments and observations, are returning to the point that the ancients recognized through the mechanisms of their bodies and immersion it the life-world. The west within the limits of its language, are attempting to re-immerse and reconnect itself within the earth space. String theory or superstring theory is one of these theorems that reiterate what the ancients have been speaking of for millennia. Ironically, the west in arriving at what the ancients have always believed, now bringing into western consciousness concepts that western ideology once declared primitive, amoral and un-human. But because these concepts are being brought into consciousness through western thought and language, the essence of these stories though still present in part, are altered.

> *Walytja,* our system of family relationships, is the thing that holds Aboriginal society together. We live it out in our relationship to our immediate family members, but also to our wider kinship connections associated with our totemic links, to the people with whom we have done ceremony, and to the people with whom we share country. It is also important to realize that we don't just limit this to people: we use the *Walytja* way of thinking to relate to everything in our environment {Randall, 2003, p136}.

The song: a kind of time travel

> Some trained listeners have said that a well sung song that contained the correct structural pattern enabled them to 'touch, reach out, feel and even smell the Ancestor's as though he or she were right there in front of them {Hume, 2002, p94}.

There is something in the power of song that transports folk through time. The rich vibration of the voice, a cosmos fermented by the body, and drank by the soul of the receiver, the listener, gently receives yet shifts the universe for having been heard. The use of song by Indigenous peoples for millennia testifies to the power of the song.

The singers and the listeners are like the Gitskan people, temporally transported. It is both the mode of communication and the belief system that allows this transportation to occur. Previous experience is preserved through song at no expense of the present. The life-world, an ongoing living being, is one that is ever changing for the life-world too is in this constant state of atrophy and entropy. The flux of the universe is acknowledged through song as homage paid to the experience of the bodies prior to the moment, for it is through them that descendents are able to exist.

The definition of story within the western system is a negotiation of time and linearity. What constitutes a story is the question proposed by Aristotle;

> Two thousand years ago, Aristotle stated in The Poetics that narrative events must be arranged so that 'if any one of them is differently placed or taken away the effect of wholeness will be seriously disrupted. For if the presence or absence of something makes no apparent difference, it is no real part of the whole {Plowman ,1996}.

This proposition has had resounding impact upon the localised stories of Indigenous people. The story as proposed by Aristotle placed the western author at the centre, around which the drama unfolded in sequence, or in accordance to time. What is necessary in story affects the

whole, said Aristotle, and its order is imperative to the effectual intention and outcome of the story. A fellow speaker at a Sitka Symposium in 2005 Mary Clearman Blew of spoke of her grandfather, who as a landscaper, it was his responsibility to convert irregular forms into regular; 'What is kept, what is swept away?' she asked. Indeed, this is the question of existence itself, affected through language, song and story.

The centrality of the earth to Indigenous cosmology ensures that the land as localised phenomenon is not regular, but idiosyncratic. The localised wisdoms of Indigenous nations and language groups positioned them as the owners of parts of the songline that winds itself through the land now known as Australia. The multiple stories that form the Tjukurrpa meant that the notion of one model through which to predict the universe is unsuitable. To propose one model, one framework through which to know the universe measured by the capacity of the physicist to predict nature much has to be stripped from the life-world so that the concept of homogeneity can exist, in the words of Mary Clearman Blew, *what is swept away and what is kept.*

> Physicists have gained enormous predicative power by letting the agreement between predictions and observations tell them which ways of talking to keep, and which to discard {Gregory, 1988, p198}.

Within a capitalist framework, the west is still seeing the universe as numbers and God as a mathematician. This world view has a consequence upon the natural world, for that which is dispensable and disposable is determined through the application of numbers, with science as the forerunner in devising ways through which to know the world. Western ideology then is a process of elimination, marking what to remember and what to forget. What is remembered and what is forgotten occurs within Indigenous language also, though it is based on the direct experience of the body in relation with the life-world.

> Within the traditional cosmos of the Yaralin community, the ancient roots of the creative Dreaming epoch grow fresh green shoots and tendrils that intricately entwine and encounter every thought, feeling, and action in the present. Its ancient Laws remain timeless, eternally binding human beings to live in harmony with respect for other species. In this context, the Yaralin people view Europeans, who for more than a century have ravaged and displaced them and other Aboriginal communities in the Victoria River region, as tragically out of synchrony with Aboriginal Dreaming Laws. In their cultural detachment from the true dynamics of life's origins, from the fundamental burdens and boundlessness of time, these arrogant intruders are hopelessly confused. *Not knowing what to remember and what to forget, they*

follow dead laws, fail to recognize living ones, and in their power and denial promote death. {Knudtson, 1992, p40} [Italics in the original]

Superstring theory tells us that the universe is threads of vibration experienced as rhythm, what is remembered and what is forgotten then can be imagined as an infinite thread of rhythm along which each body travel in its own vibratory destiny so to speak. The culture of songlines, of an ongoing manifestation by the body's direct sensorial exchange with the an animate life-world is the guiding principles of Indigenous cosmology, for in this is the instruction of what is to be remembered, and what is to be forgotten, which Laws are to be kept, and what is to be disregarded.

The universe is constant. The appearance of growth and progress then are illusory. The west is engaged in a game of theatrics, an illusion, shifting molecules, particles and atoms, manipulating waves and energy, in order for the western story of civilization and progress to take on a material form and in this, invests in illusion. Indigenous peoples, unlike westerners, did not consider the notion of death as an end, but another stage in the cycle. The spirits of the Ancestors were not cast from the life-world, but walked and continue to walk amongst us. The story of Creators and Ancestors who walked the land laying down songlines, words and

music, are still here. The energy of these beings and the bodies that followed their lores are still with us.

The energy of 2,500 generations who obeyed the laws of ancestral beings compose the energy of the life-world itself. Further still, the energy of the many folk who died there as the violent consequence of invasion, whether disease, massacre or murder, their energy populates that place now, requiring order through story, for the body requires story so that it may metabolize energy. The energy displaced and fractured, is still a part of the story of this land, although it has been re-arranged. The story of violence, murder and warfare upon which the Australian narrative is built, is still present. The west may continue to deny the rights of the Indigenous folk from whom they unjustly seized the land, but they cannot avoid the energetic consequence. The Australian nation can profit from its myths and stories, the historicity that Indigenous culture has loaned to the Australian narrative, but perhaps Australia will learn as Indigenous peoples have learned through experience, and that is, the power of the land itself is not one that can be colonized.

The colonial story that birthed the western nationhood of Australia does offer support and order to human bodies, but unfortunately, as it will be discussed, the original meaning of human has been eroded through its discursive use, concealing that the term does not apply to all bodies that present as a physiologically human. Human is a biological phenomena, as well

as a site of privilege and access to ideologically relevant support, and the greatest form of support is the technology of writing, but equally important, story.

> Physics has been so immensely successful that it is difficult to avoid the conviction that what physicists have done over the past 300 years is to slowly draw back the veil that stands between us and the world as it really is – that physicists, and every science, is the discovery of a ready-made world. As powerful as this metaphor is, it is useful to keep in mind that it *is* a metaphor … {Gregory, 1988, pv}.

Gregory defines language as '… any symbolic system for dealing with the world a language' {Gregory, 1988, pvi}. Abrams defines language as '…rather like a *code*; it is a way of representing actual things and events in the perceived world, but it has not internal, non-arbitrary connections to that world, and hence is readily separable from it'{Abram, 1996, p77}. Language is a great point of contention, for it is the presence or absence of language that is inherent to the definition of the human. The role of language can be found in the justification for the taking of Africans with the intention of imposition of the subjective 'slave'.

> The equation between African and animal, sustained by the issue of language, which gave moral validity to the slave trade, continued in the nineteenth century, the Age of Imperialism and Anthropometrics. African skulls, lips, teeth, and mouths were scrupulously measured by leading white scientists to reveal black cultural and moral primitivism and therefore the necessity of continuing colonial rule. Science underpinned the imperial process. It was also quite obvious, however, that Africans had language, and this posed a problem to white conceptualization since language was an undeniable *human* characteristic {Ricks, 1990, p7}.

The language referred to by Abrams is specifically western language, more specifically, *writing*. The evolution of western writing as separable from the life-world is the true distinction between western writing and Indigenous language. Indigenous cultures are promoted as being oral cultures, as opposed to peoples who utilized writing. While Indigenous cultures employed both writing and oracy, it is the philosophy of Indigenous language that is paradoxical to western values. Though to stipulate that oracy is merely a forerunner in the evolution of language is to impose the Theory of Evolution onto systems of communication, rather than extrapolate the world view that was being created, maintained and sustained through its various forms. The ongoing need for speech though in both western

material culture and Indigenous non-material culture, is the manifestation of a world based on different cultural values.

Western terminology categorizes Indigenous cosmology and its chosen mode of communication within material language, defining it as well as the Indigenous body as a primitive state of being, or that condition from which western man eventually evolved into a higher state of being. What in effect is evolving is language, and the perception of the inevitable movement of oral cultures into literate cultures, for it is popularly stated that orality is a predicate to literacy. Rather, western language is rooted in an ideology that is paradoxical to Indigenous cosmology and in this; both writing and spoken communications are functions that serve to support different modes of being. As Abrams states, the earth is central in Indigenous language and societal order, if 'Merleau-Ponty's assertion that active speech is the generative core of all language …' Abrams asks, '… how can we possibly account for the overwhelming prevalence of a view that considers language to be an ideal or formal system readily detachable from the material act of speaking?'{Abram, 1996, p77}.

The chasm that exists between western cosmology and Indigenous cosmology is the function of language, and its intention. The role of language within the western system serves the western body specifically in its detachment from the life-world, while in Indigenous

cosmology its function is to maintain a connectedness, a sensual interweaving through the life-world itself. Abrams employs phenomenology '… in order to understand the strange difference between the experienced world, or worlds, of Indigenous , vernacular cultures and the world of modern European and North American civilization'{Abram, 1996, p31}. Phenomenology was a way to counter the absence of the body in western science, for Husserl 'would turn toward "the thing themselves," toward the world as it is experienced in its felt immediacy' {Abram, 1996, p35}.

The west having undergone complete alienation from the life-world is the promontory that marks the transformation from cosmology into cosmological thinking – or the infinite world of possibility as experienced within Indigenous language, and the limits of western material language encoded in its writing system. It is a cosmology marked by the erasure of the sensible presence of the body, according to Abrams, and the consequence of the sensorial withdrawal of the western body from direct immersion in the life-world as a result of language. The body though, is the impetus through which one experiences, and it is the body in both western and Indigenous language through which experience occurs; 'The body is precisely my insertion in the common, or intersubjective, field of experience' {Abram, 1996, p44}.

The west in its desire to find a Theory of Everything looks to science to achieve an absolute theory. The west in composing a Theory of Everything, avoids looking at the roots of metaphysics, a way of seeing the world as unconnected while at the same time acknowledging that the universe is a whole. In attempting to reconnect everything, explain everything from within the parameters of science, the west is using the very language that fragmented the universe in composition of consciousness.

The unification of quantum theory at its roots contains the west's increasing need for re-immersion within the life-world, an understanding of the life-world that is more aligned with an ancient Indigenous place of being. The west in wanting to unify quantum theory are actually searching for a language of connectionism, a language that alludes not of the subject object world created through western language and the composition of the human, but one that precedes the human, and therefore precedes consciousness. The west is looking to consciousness to explain consciousness, impossible according to phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty. The Theory of Everything though, would serve to continue to impose a single language onto the life-world. Indigenous peoples acknowledge the regional characteristics of the life-world, and it is this system from within which nations and language groups co-operated with the life-world, sustaining a lifestyle for millennia.

The vibratory, sensual presence of the life-world increasingly closed off to western bodies as a consequence of language, is the cohesive sensuousness of Indigenous cosmology and being, one that requires the immediate presence and ongoing openness of the body. In Indigenous cosmology, the role of the body in maintaining its connectedness to the life-world is a vital aspect of the body acting as a conduit through which the life-world as the authority, speaks its lore's and laws. Uncle Jim South in his book *Law, Lore, Accountability and Responsibility* speaks of the relationship between the body and the land as being one of responsibility, the notion of unrestricted access an alien concept within the parameters of Indigenous law and lore.

> The education of these things began with the *unda-nous* (children). They were taught about the creator… How the birds, the animals and the things came to be. How the Mun-da-gutho woke from his deep sleep and moved around the land. In his travels, he formed the land. This serpent made the waterways, he formed the mountains and hills. This serpent is known as the spirit of the waterways and the land {South, 2004, p9}.

The most important aspect of Jim South's story is the role of responsibility in accordance with the old ways that grants the body the status of black. 'We as black people have to earn this right to call ourselves black. Here are some of the things my old people have taught me

about how to go about earning this' {South, 2004 p7}. Recurring in the elder accounts of indigeneity, it is a role that is granted through the awareness, the presence of the Tjukurrpa, an energetic manifestation that exists beyond the parameters of the western system and the language that determines its boundaries. This stance is reiterated by Uncle Bob Randal in his book, *Songlines*;

> *Kanyini* is the principle of connectedness through caring and responsibility that underpins Aboriginal life, linking four main areas of responsibility: *tjukurrpa* (philosophy, Law, and religion), *ngura* (country), *walytja* (kinship and family) and *Kurunpa* (spirit, soul and psyche) {Randall, 2003, p16}.

The awareness of the energy of one's body as integral to and upon the universe or life-world, is woven through Indigenous cosmology, and is the basis of our story telling. It is a perception better articulated through quantum physics than postmodernism, poststructuralism and the social sciences;

> *The quantum field transcends everyday reality, yet it is extremely intimate to our experience. To fetch a word from your memory, to feel an emotion, to grasp a concept – these are*

> *events that change the entire field.… Sir James Jeans once remarked, "When an electron vibrates, the universe shakes." There is no flicker of activity in any of your cells that goes unnoticed across the entire quantum field. At it's finest level, every physiological process registers in the process of Nature. In other words, the more refined a process is, the more connected to the basic activity of the cosmos* {Chopra, 1993, p73}.

Bodies are energy, and every thought that is thought and word spoken, becomes part of the energy field of the earth. In this, the energies of our bodies, and that energy which we generate, directly comprises and creates the world in which we live. All energy vibrates, its vibration felt throughout the entire universe. All bodies – sentient and non sentient - are energy, molecules vibrating at different speeds to give the illusion of matter. There is a need to revisit ancient cosmological awareness of the impact of one's own body on the universe, our power to transform the universe through our very presence; the sound of our voice, the inhalation and exhalation of breath, and the vibratory impact of language, and its construction of reality.

> There is a great oneness of spirit, of *Kurunpa.* Maybe there is only one truth, but different paths to that truth. This truth cannot be discovered in words, but

> only in action. But it has a universal language and that is love and compassion. My path is that of Aboriginal spirituality, *kanyini* … Kanyini is my … path to … oneness with the creative consciousness of our world {Randall, 2003, p235}.

The awareness of connectedness of each of us participating in the ongoing-ness of the life-world has been compromised greatly through the advent of western writing. The concept of the author function, that the shift in consciousness and the energy of the universe as malleable, realities reconstituted within our own being that speak of not only of diminishing awareness, but the loss of control over self representation and definition – that we are 'a part' rather than *a-part*. While superstring theory or theory of everything may tell us that we are essentially immersed in a song, the propagation of the invisibility of a most vital element is achieved through western writing.

> I cannot act, cannot speak, cannot think a single thought without the participation of this fluid element. I am immersed in its depths as surely as fish are immersed in the sea… Yet this air, on the other hand, is the most outrageous absence known to this body. For it is utterly invisible {Abrams, 1996, p225}

The air, the breath of our bodies that connect us, locates us within the song that is the universe, tuning the interiority of our bodies with the orchestration of the universe.

Mystery of the air

> What a mystery is the air, what an enigma to these human senses! On the one hand, the air is the most pervasive presence I can name, enveloping, embracing, and caressing me both inside and out, moving in ripples along my skin, flowing between my fingers, swirling around my arms and thighs, rolling in eddies along the roof of my mouth, slipping ceaselessly through throat and trachea to fill the lungs, to feed my blood, my heart, my self {Abram, 1996, p225}.

In the culture of native Hawaiian's, the term haole was used to label folk whose skin was white, but it was also used to distinguish from '*kanaka maoli*, a true-person-from-here'{Mailly, 1997}. The Hawaiian's cultural primacy and significance of the breath and was encapsulated within a mode of communication conceived as 'sounds-from-the-mouth' {Mailly, 1997}. The kanaka maoli whose primary communication by sounds-from-the-mouth viewed the western system as one associated with death, for the kanaka maoli perceived westerners and their communication as haole. As explained by Mailly, 'It was then

that the word *haole* meant "who-do-not-breathe". In fact, it was used to describe the dead' {Mailly, 1997}. The term haole provides a framework that allows the analysis of western communication from within the framework of breath, for the kanaka maol*i* essentially viewed westerners as breathless and dead. In doing so the kanaka maol*i* arrived at the same junction as many western thinkers, and that is that western language is a form of death.

> The skin of the English was as white as the huge squares of bleached cloth tied to the masts of their ship. This was considered to be more proof that they were spirits, because only men who do not breathe could possibly be so pale {Mailly, 1997}.

The presence of breath in configuring a vital body is recognized by the Ancient Hawaiian's, and it is in fact this term that partitions Indigenous Hawaiian's from non Indigenous Hawaiian's or westerners. In fact, the Hawaiian's term 'ea' is associated with the western concept of sovereignty, life and a harmonious co-existence with the land.

> … the term "Ea" has several meanings that are dear to the hearts of those sympathetic to the native Hawaiian fight for self-determination: it means sovereignty, rule, independence; life, breath, vapor, air, spirit; it can also mean to rise up {Pacheco, 2005, p4}.

The cosmological force of the breath conveys vitality not only in its connectedness between the body and the life-world, but a potent expressiveness of the life-force itself, is wonderfully recognized within kanaka maoli culture. Breath within kanaka maoli culture provides a way of comprehending what Indigenous peoples of Australia speak of when we speak of connectedness. That land management can be understood as breath management, and sovereignty as a control over one's own breath is a powerful and important conception.

> Natural laws of renewal are practiced within the ahupua'a systems of Ka Pae 'Aina Hawai'i. Ahupua'a systems are natural land systems…Within this way of life, the family systems within each ahupua'a evolved intelligent responses to the unique ecosystems and life systems of the 'aina, that which feeds, nourishes and sustains life (in English referred to as "land"). These natural communities also provide what is needed to sustain life for everyone and are the foundation of the evolution of creating abundance as an integral responsibility of human beings in a culture based on sharing. The spiritual and genealogical relationship of the people to the 'aina is the source of the culture and the cultural integrity, values, practices and skills that sustain the culture. The cultural identity of the people comes from the 'aina and is profoundly expressed as ea, the life, breath, spirit. Ea has been inadequately equated with the Western term "sovereignty" {Nalani Minton, 1999}.

The belief system of the kanaka maoli reverberates with a similarity of the Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia. The land as the lawmaker is also found in the tradition of the kanaka maoli. For example,

> According to Kanaka Maoli traditions of Ka Pae 'Aina Hawai'i, human beings are not the law-makers. The spiritual life givers of land and water that sustain all life are the law givers, and human beings have the responsibility to harmonize their life through a sacred response to the laws of the natural world, thus honoring the sustaining of life energy and life renewal systems throughout time. Laws of renewal that follow from these cultural practices include: asking permission before taking anything needed from the natural world, taking only what is immediately necessary, sharing with others what is taken, not wasting or contaminating, respecting the needs of all living generations and respecting the needs of all generations to come {Nalani Minton, 1999}.

Let us continue with this connection between ‘ea’ and the notion of connectedness. The breath is a vital component of wellbeing, connectedness with the life-world while at the same time acknowledging the interiority of the body, the breath as a present force is crucial in

Indigenous cosmology, while in western ideology, the desacralization of the breath is at the root of haole; in this instance, the text. According to Uncle Bob Randal, the removal of the body from the whole is what weakens us.

> *Kurunpa* is the living energy of the relationships between things. The life-force is in the now, that which connect us to all forms of life. You can see it and feel it. In some people it is very powerful, while in other people it can be very weak. It is usually weak in people who are very sick, particularly on a mental or spiritual level. Kurunpa is life. It is reality, not a mystery. Everything has got that as its base. So this unites us, whether we judge something to be good or bad. That judgement comes from us living beings in terms of how it affects us, but the spirit is beyond that. From the point of view of spirit, everything exists for its own purpose, it is already perfect that way. It is only our judgement which creates the sense of good and bad, not the living energy itself {Randall, 2003, p220}.

In Indigenous cosmology, the body was immersed in the life-world. Not only was the body immersed in the life-world, but was related to every aspect of it through kinship systems and language. The potential to remove one's self from this relationship was not possible, for this concept was not available in the language, and was the very foundation of *Tjukurrpa*, or the

Dreaming. The ancient economy of the Indigenous life-world is a world where body and movement through the life-world were propelled not by human designated force, but in response to the life-world itself. The connectedness of the air, the breath, or the ether as science would refer to it; the belief of ‘ea’ as within kanaka maoli tradition is an expression of this connectedness, as well as the constant renewal of life force inherent to living in a harmonious and balanced life is simple in its complexity.

> Ka 'uhane lokahi describes the well being of spirit in harmony within oneself and with all levels of community, including the cosmos. When people live in this state of well being they interact in right relationship with themselves, their families, their communities, and the natural world. This is being pono. Each person carries personal responsibility to create and live pono relationships on all levels. Pono relationships are nourished by the loving compassion of sharing and caring for all life as family with aloha. Aloha is the energy of synchronous relationship between mind, heart, body and soul by which the alignment of each pono person connects them in right relationship with the whole universe. When aloha becomes the energy of the people, life is sustained within and without. We say that by caring and sharing, called malama, the people carry light. A natural state of enlightenment based on a profound practice of caring and sharing is called

> malamalama. This way of life honors the reality of i ke kahi i ke kahi, one shared consciousness which connects and integrates all life as one living intelligence. In this way, human beings increase the mana, the life force energy that they were born with, through the good deeds of their lives which honor right relationship, and are spiritually guided in conscious communication with the whole continuum of life. This natural state of being, meaning and life purpose restores lokahi, harmonious relationship, health, wellness and life renewal {Nalani Minton, 1999}.

There are common themes emerging here. The kanaka maoli like Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia, speak of not only the connectedness with all beings, and the preservation of ancient meaning and temporality, but significantly, this open-ness with the life-world suggests the presence of polyphasic consciousness, or a comprehension of life as many experiential dimensions. The ancient pathways laid down by the Ancestors are the same paths walked by the Indigenous body. The pathways are instructional points of song and breath. It is more than an ancient score, for it is also tutelage of breathing techniques integrated with the vibration of the land. The body's immersion in the life-world that is common throughout Indigenous cultural practice, it's utility as a conduit through which social order is manifested, is the basis of the language system of Indigenous folk relied on the life-

world, its visceral presence, the sensuous play of the elements upon the skin, the interaction with rocks as with one's own kin.

> The great ancestral beings were vast, unbounded, intangible, vibratory bodies, similar to fields of energy. They created by drawing vibratory energy out of themselves and stabilizing this energy and by specifying, or naming – the inner name is the potency of the form or creature. The comparable image is *the creation of sounds, words, or songs from the vibration of breath*. Aborigines refer to the Dreamtime creation as the world being "sung" into existence {Lawlor, 1991, p36}. [emphasis mine]

Stories were composed by the weaving of the body throughout the land itself. The body following the paths of the Ancestors who in their wandering sung the land into being is an unbroken movement, the story in a state of constant becoming, as was the land itself. The body too, bearing the scars of initiation marks performed a part of the story, and through its presence and movement, enabled the body and the land to become through the process of story. The breath of living bodies intermingled with the breaths of the ancients, the songs instructions of breathing, on maintaining a connectedness with the infinite.

> Breathing is the mark and reminder of our mortality, and, in particular, our exposure to ongoing time. Some of our most telling words for the passage of

> time involve reference to breath (expiry, transpiring). Breath is life (Lear, looking on the dead Cordelia: `Why should a dog, a rat have life and thou no life at all?'), but is also associated with death (we expire when we die). As long as we breathe, we can remain alive; but, inasmuch as we must breathe in and out, every breath has a little death in it {Connor, 1999}.

It is perhaps then that the breathing as the mark of mortality that the western writing system found a way to harness the breath, so that some may achieve the illusion of immortality at the expiry of others mortal coil.

> Breathing is never complete; it exposes us to the continuing necessity of the next breath. As long as we remain alive, there is the necessity of the next respiration. Breathing is the enactment of the essential state of becoming that is being alive {Connor, 1999}.

The breath is the demarcation between life and death. It is simple: living bodies must breathe in order to be alive, dead bodies no longer breathe or need to. A child's hand held against the wall of a rock cave. A mouth filled with ochre, is mixed with saliva, and then blown onto the hand. The child removes his hand. With breath, an outline of the physical body is made upon the inner cave wall, a stencil of this moment that will survive for over 34, 000 years. The

breath, the preciousness breathing body, has taken earth in the mouth, and left an imprint, homage for those breathing bodies to come. Is this homage to the cave, the body, or the breath? Perhaps fluidly, it is one and all.

The breath as artefact

> Breathing lies between the condition of the natural and the cultural. Breathing is a biological invariant, that is nevertheless capable of being subjected to significant forms of variation. All human beings breathe, all the time and involuntarily. But it is also possible to take control of our breathing, for the purposes of speech, song, making music, etc. If human history depends on language, and if language is interrupted breath, then our capacity to effect complex regulations of the breath lies at the bottom of our humanity {Connor, 1999}.

Steven Connor's proclamation that breathing is at the root of humanity, illustrates that breathing is fundamental to the human organism, as well as societal organisation. Given that breathing is perhaps at the root of humanity, then it is also necessary to examine breathing, in terms of constraint and liberalism, being as the core of human language. Given this, we can look at the manipulation of breath as core to textual communication and hierarchical

organisation in western society, and within Indigenous culture, the role of the breath in maintaining the continuum.

Indigenous rock art in western comprehension is yet to be valued as a form of writing and is instead categorized as primitive art. Like western writing though, the imprints upon the cave walls are created by an exhalation of breath. Those folk who breathed onto the walls of the cave so many thousands of years ago, reach out through time, unhindered by the concept of death, dying and birth, instead chose to depict the love they have for the life they were experiencing.

> … the strong association between breathing and the idea of the sacred: when one breathes in a substance that changes one's physiological functioning, it is hard to dissociate that pleasure from the long history which associates breathing with sacred intoxication and the taking in to the mortal self of the powers of the divine {Connor, 1999}.

I hear, feel, see my Ancestors sitting in a circle, the breath of this existence, the experience, resonating through their bodies, and shaping the landscape itself. There is no past and present in this moment, for it is the song that sings everything into the present. The vaporous breath cools this fire, and the fire, the sunlight, transforms into a vibratory ripple that affects everything in existence – seen and unseen. The word that is fire sears the past and future for

they are here, in this moment, being shaped by the fire of my inner world. Breathing lies between the condition of the natural and the cultural.

> Breathing is a symbol and enactment of the relationship between the inner and the outer which constitutes us. It tells us renewedly that we can only remain entire by mingling with the world (no air is ever truly fresh). But, because it condemns us to sharing the world, and mingling our substance with other creatures, it can also provoke hostility and borderline-anxiety. The reason that thinking about breath and breathing always seems to give rise to ideas of purity is that there is something intrinsically impure about it. We breathe out through the same organ as we breathe in: we breathe through the mouth, which also takes in food: and the nose, which also takes in smell, or tainted air. Breathing is both sacred and sinister partly because it is invisible: it is associated with touch and smell rather than with sight, or even hearing {Connor, 1999}.

The breath in western cosmology has its origins in the ascent to heaven, the leaving of the earth space, and fulfilling the quest of immortality.

> … throughout the history of Western consciousness there has been a conception of two selves – a natural self, which is earthy and "wild", and

> tends downward, and a spiritual or mental self, which is airy and ethereal, and tends upward {Metzner, 1993}.

The relationship between writing, the breath and the condition of the body is inescapable. What of this strange near easily overlooked relationship between the breath, body and the relationship with the life-world. That breath is the key component of life is unarguable. We must all breathe to exist, to have a body within this physical domain.

> The breathing body, as it experiences and inhabits the world, is very different from that objectified body diagrammed in physiology textbooks, with its separable "systems" (the circulatory system, the digestive system, the respiratory system, etc.) laid bare on each page {Abram, 1996, p45}.

The breath importantly became associated with notions of purity and impurity, composition and decomposition, and in effect, the breath transgressed the ubiquitous and became a concept that spoke of the conditions of bodies.

> Because breathing has two aspects, inspiration and expiration, it is apt for dichotomising thought of all kinds. Breath has two aspects: sacred and profane. Holy or sanctified breath is pure: unholy or profane breath is putrid and decomposing. Breath became the sign of the insubstantial, the trivial, the

> unappealingly vacuous (In *Divine Songs*, Isaac Watts speaks of `Hard names...and threatening words that are but noisy breath'.) A *breath-seller* was a seller of perfumes:, transferred in Florio's insulting gathering together of `Lawyers, breathsellers, and pettifoggers' (Montaigne, I, xxii, 1632). In such usages, the breath therefore as something inessential, an excrescence. But this meaning crosses and cooperates with the idea of the breath as coextensive with the soul, as precisely what is most essential {Connor, 1999}.

Words, ideas, concepts, are all afloat in the cosmos, continually recycled but always existing. The body is the conduit that brings the voice of the universe, the land, into being, and it does so through the breath. There are many references that equate the culture of writing with death, and thus it is necessary to examine how the breath of the body is implicated and manipulated by the culture of writing. We are all born into story, and through story come to know our place in the world. While the story is unknown at the moment of birth, it makes itself known to us from the moment we are born and onwards, some even argue that story begins before conception. Story is energy, and the organization of energy within the life-world, and the predilection to order and establish a reality then should be the premise of consciousness.

Consciousness is considered a human condition and one relegated to and regulated by writing. Indigenous being in this context was never acknowledged as a moral right to ownership, to

tell story, but most importantly, our own breath. To reiterate Connor, if language is interrupted breath, the imposition of western language on Indigenous peoples, is not only the interruption of breath, but is removal. Kanaka maoli's concept of 'ea' then is of great use to us here, for it reassociates the concept of sovereignty with breath, and poses the possibility that Indigenous sovereignty is located in our capacity to recontrol our own breaths. In order to do so however, we must understand how western writing and society have managed to conceal the power of western language over our bodies through by its impression upon our breath.

Writing as codified breath

> Stories, like rhymed poems or songs, readily incorporate themselves into our felt experience; the shifts of action echo and resonate our own encounters – in hearing or telling the story we vicariously *live* it, and the travails of its characters embed themselves into our own flesh. The sensuous, breathing body is … a dynamic, ever-unfolding form, more a process than a fixed or unchanging object {Abram, 1996, p120}.

Our thoughts and words shape the life-world, and while Indigenous folk have this aspect inherent within ancient cosmologies, within western society the notion of consequence of our actions upon the life-world is often too huge a cross to bear. Within Indigenous cosmologies,

the consequence of the body's energy system upon the life-world, thoughts, words, bioenergy, is a crucial element when considering the wisdom of Indigenous philosophy and cosmology. There is wisdom in the witnessing of the air, the sacredness of the breath, the testimonial evident in the longevity of Indigenous cosmology and the continuum of cultural practice. It is here that we acknowledge the breath of this continuum in the structuring and ordering of experience in the ancient Indigenous body.

Western writing, as we have explored, is a way of taking things into possession. In this, writing can be seen as literally the seizing of another's breath, the consequence being the text, a word, a symbol of the desire of the body who seeks to possess another's life force.

> Breathing is also used to convey aspiration, that word that signifies desire for something that cannot be held in oneself: J. Smith, *Selected Discourses*, 1652: `Those breathings and gaspings after an eternal participation of him' {Connor, 1999}.

The western man consumes the life-world by 'breathing it in'. By breathing in the life-world, the human declares who he is in the consumption of who he is not. He renders bodies into object through the removal of their breath – the perfunctory act of breathing as necessary for living the inhalation and exhalation, I create, I am created. The body as a fixed entity or an ever changing phenomenon is a body understood as having the presence or absence of breath;

body capable of breathing and one whose breath has expired. The living organism that is the body requires oxygen, air, breath or spiritus – these terms are interchangeable. It is required that we comprehend how the body's organisational system converts the constant so that it may be organised as a story.

Air is vital to the living body, and it is the body that breathes that distinguishes it from the dead body, or the dead flesh of *necros*. The body gets 90% of its nutrients from air, with only 10% coming from food and water. A language that is created therefore from the expulsion of air from the lungs, as well as the primary imposition of material reality upon the physical body in the form of the written word is one where social cohesiveness is achieved through controlling the breath.

Biogenetic Structural Theory outlines '… experience and knowledge are produced by organizations of cells within the nervous system' {Laughlin, 2000.}. The body's homeostasis is essentially the relationship between the nervous system and the environment. The body is the product of the interaction between the individuated nervous system and the environment. Every thought and emotion ever experienced by the individuated nervous system contributes to the form of the body, and the transformative powers of the individuated body to shape one's experience and consciousness, contributes to the universe as a whole.

> In order to stay alive, your body must live on the wings of change. At this moment you are exhaling atoms of hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen that just an instant before were locked up in solid matter; your stomach, liver, heart, lungs, and brain are vanishing into thin air, being replaced as quickly and endlessly as they are being broken down. The skin replaces itself once a month, the stomach lining every five days, the liver every six weeks, and the skeleton every three months. To the naked eye, these organs look the same from moment to moment, but they are always in flux. By the end of this year, 98 per cent of the atoms in your body will have been exchanged for new ones {Chopra, 1993, p12}.

There is no fixed identity; the constant flux of the universe is the constant flux of the body. The vibrations of the universe shaping the Indigenous body throughout millennia, has been interrupted by western writing. Writing captures the breath, performing as instructional intake and outtake of breath. Punctuation is designed to instruct the reader when to pause, or when to breathe, every letter a signed instruction that reverberates in your body as sound, and the full stop that tells you when to begin a new breath, a new sentence, another intake of breath. In this way, the body is shaped through the writing and reading process, at its most basic, it is the instruction on how to breathe. In this instruction how to breathe, the responsiveness to the sign, the connectedness with the infinite, the eternal world of the Ancestors, breathing is shallowed, attention turned toward the sign, and the sacred breath that

connects all beings, is relocated as a hermeneutic practice, a means through which the breath of the body, the very thing that tells us that we are alive, is made breathless, for what is writing, but the act of the dead in order to sustain the language of the dead?

Emotions and the breath

> Breathing is like inhaling food for the soul. We breathe in divine substance from the invisible and, with it, when we breathe out, we are bringing something else into manifestation. So, through extracting life force from the air and exhaling transformed matter we are actually bringing spirit into matter {Begg, 2004, pp64-65}

There is an in depth field of knowledge regarding the relationship between emotion and breathing. Emergent theories abound in how one can control one's emotions by apprehending breathing patterns, shifting breathing in order to shift emotions. Emotions are the body's response to the environment. The internal world of the body is made external through languaging these states of consciousness. The breath stimulates the nervous system, affecting a chemical response that is read as an emotion. These interruptions of breathing

bring on anger, anxiety, fear etc. Thus the language and presence of emotions, is the languaging of the neurological responses to the shift in breath and breathing.

> Aaron Sloman has reduced the argument about emotions to simple mathematical terms…. Our agent, which is limited, would never reach a conclusion on what to do if it blindly analyzed all factors. Therefore, in order to survive (to move at all, actually) it must be endowed with mechanisms that cause emotions. In other words, emotions are the result of constraints by the environment on the action of the intelligent being. An emotional state is caused by a situation, through a somewhat mysterious chemical reaction in the nerve system {Scaruffi, 1998}.

The object reality that is perceived as existing separate to the body in western language is in fact an externalized construction. How a story is told is as significant as what is communicated, positioning the teller and the audience in proximity to that which is being storied. The language of the story, the teller and how the listener is positioned is then a part of the story. The purpose for story, or why stories are told at all, can be understood in terms of energy, for the telling of a story requires an expenditure of energy.

> Your own inner pattern, the pattern of experience, is, as I have said, an energy pattern. Why an energy pattern though? Because everything in the Universe is energy. Not just energy as matter, but energy as thought, energy as emotion, energy as experience. An experience *must* be some type of energy, because *everything* is {Bonewitz, 1986, p89}.

The breath is the conduit of change. It is the means through which our body metabolizes the moment, the chemical responses recorded on a neurological level as emotion. Emotion is a way of understanding the body's response to the environment on a chemical level. But it is not solely that the environment impacts upon the body, for the body impacts upon the environment, shaping it and being shaped, an exchange of breath occurring between organism and environment. Put more simply,

> Each dot is an experience – each experience is energy; therefore each experience must obey the laws of energy. Circles and balance. But this also implies an exchange of energy, since energy must flow both ways…. As you experience a thing, so a thing experiences you {Bonewitz, 1986, p89}.

Breath then or the kanaka maoli's concept of *ea* or Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia's concept of Kurunpa, speaks of the energy exchange, of the land

experiencing the body as much as the body experiencing the land, as the guiding principles for millennia, are philosophies from whom the west have much to learn. In the words of Abram,

> … the primordial affinity between awareness and the invisible air simply cannot be avoided. As we become conscious of the unseen depths that surround us… This breathing landscape is no longer just a passive backdrop against which human history unfolds, but a potentized field of intelligence in which our actions participate {Abram, 1996, p260}.

Breathing in the moment

The physiological and physiognomic role of air is the primary requirement of the living body and the chemical articulator of emotional states as understood within the western language. It is the different cultural relationships with the air as experienced by western and Indigenous language systems that determines the body's openness to the life-world, and the body's participation in the vibratory rhythm of the earth as she breathes. While the Hopi believe that the earth is alive and running out of breath, the strong association of western writing and death suggest that the affliction of western writing upon the life-world is that it has the power to remove breath.

> Speech and text are the linguistic artifacts of culture. They are extensions of the species … which evolve and influence the evolution of the species…. The artifacts produced by language are the means of production which human kind uses to sustain, shape, and recreate its existence {Ryder, 1995}.

The text in western language is that which demarcates the known from the unknown. The body in responsiveness to the environment in western language is a body responsive to the text.

> Derrida's assertion that there is no outside-text means that there is no aspect of our 'experience' – that interpretive way in which we navigate our being-in-the-world – that escapes the play of signifiers or the conditioning of *difference*. To say that there is nothing outside of the text is to say that there is nothing outside of textuality – there is no engagement with or inhabitance of the world which doesn't live off the mediation of signs… There is no 'access' to either the world or *our selves* which is not subject to the differings and deferrings of difference;

> as such, the world and even consciousness are never simply or full 'present'{Smith, 2005, pp44-45}.

There is perhaps no more a potent symbol of the dismantling of one belief system with another than in the concept of the language, specifically the text, as artefact of a once vibrant and energetic order. The artefact fractures the whole and instead replaces it with an alienated symbol – a text – placed in a system of meaning at the discrepancy of the author. Deferral, temporality that is future bound rather than in this moment, the ever-present now represented by the text, ensuring western consciousness' disassociation from the life-world, means that the western body is responsive to the world of signs, but Smith reminds us,

> Derrida is not out to deny the reality of a world outside of texts, nor is he out to demolish the self or self-consciousness – only to point out its conditions and limits {Smith, 2005, p45}.

Writing is an act of consumerism, for through writing the light of other beings is captured and harnessed. Writing is the process of shaping the earth through the singular primary organism that is the eye.

> "By taking food, the human being produces his own body"… In the digestion process, an object is decomposed to its lowest elements. The body discharges what it cannot appropriate and attaches the remainder to exiting physical structures. In consumption, the object is deconstructed, then personified (p91). We are what we eat. More precisely, what we eat and appropriate becomes us… Consumption of knowledge is equally productive. Consumption of text necessarily involves decomposition … and reconstruction. What is not tested by the reader, what is not through into fresh combinations of thought becomes inert … In the construction of meaning, the reader deconstructs information, appropriating only that which combines with existing cognitive structures … In consumption of text, the object is deconstructed, then appropriated and personified. We are what we read. More precisely, what we read and appropriate becomes us {Ryder, 1995}.

Through writing, permanence is imposed upon the impermanent. Through words and concepts exchanged freely within the human domain, what *is* in all its potential that exists as openness to the body, is lost to western language and ideology. Through the act of writing, bodies that had value to families, communities, and ultimately, to themselves, became lost to their ancient homelands when the west desired to rewrite them as the slave body. The artefacts and abstractions of the breathing world rendered breathless, becomes one that where the human through western writing inhabits a breathless existence, the trajectory being one of an inevitable state of breathlessness, a kind of drawn out death.

> The great danger is that I, and many other good persons, may come to believe that our breathing bodies really inhabit these abstractions, and that we will lend our lives more to consolidating, defending, or bewailing the fact of these ephemeral entities than to nurturing and defending the actual places that physically sustain us {Abram, 1996, p267}.

The price of western writing, its utility in controlling the environment, the bodies of colonized peoples, in its quest for immortality, is the imposition of death as a state of breathlessness. In other words, death is not here just a physical death, but the unknowingness that arises in the organism that is the body and its disconnection with its own breath, and that

breath as a part of the greater breathing organism of the cosmos, 'The land that includes us has its own articulations, its own contours and rhythms that must be acknowledged if the land is to breathe and to flourish' {Abram, 1996, p267}.

The formal writing system of the west, one that constructs a solitary world out of multiplicity, is called to task by Abrams,

> Such considerations must lead us to wonder whether the strange sense of human commonality made possible by the spread of formal writing systems is not something very worthy after all {Abram, 1996, p269-270}.

The earth as breathing, possessing its own agency, hailing openness from Indigenous peoples within a local context rather than a uniform language system, is the place that Abrams eventually arrives at.

> Sooner or later … technological civilization must accept the invitation of gravity and settle back into the land, its political and economic structures

> diversifying into the varied contours and rhythms of a more-than-human earth {Abram, 1996, p272}.

Indigenous folk immersed and forming an intimate relationship with the life-world realized that existence within its constant state of flux required one essential thing; and that is the call to immediacy. The immediate ever present now as described by Eastern philosophy shaped Indigenous being. This immediacy, this radical immersion within the moment, forged stories and within stories, guides to living through maintaining an intimate relationship with the life-world. Given this, the absence of a formal writing system, one that artefacted the earth, converting breathing states into breathless ones, the concept of Indigenous cosmology as an oral culture only is overly simplistic. Indigenous cultural modes of transmission are characterised by the continuum of breath and due to this, the openness to polyphasic consciousness and multiple realms of being.

> Words make the absence present… The body is informed by that capacity to make the absent present {Stern, 1997}.

The refutation of a monophasic consciousness as represented by a single material reality invested in the removal of breath means that literacy whilst the lingua franca of western civilization, is also the mechanism that is systematically robbing our cosmos – and all beings within it – of our very breath. Western writing in its broadest sense though can best be understood then, as resistance to place.

Chapter 8

Body of language

Language and vibratory manifestation

> Language is a series of sounds or air-vibrations produced by the articulating organs of the speaker and received by the auditory organ or ear of the hearer, and implying a highly complex network of adjustments in the nervous systems and the brains of both speaker and hearer {Potter, 1960, p10}.

The superstring theory that declares that the universe is made up of strings of vibration, is the true beginning in comprehending the visual language of the west as being primarily located in the world of vibration, or sound.

> 'Brightness' [*Helle*] comes from 'reverberate' or 'echo' [*hallen*] and is originally a character of tone or *sound*, that is, the opposite of 'dull'. Brightness, therefore, is not at all originally a character of the visible, but

> was transferred over in language *to* the visible, to the field where light plays a role. So we speak of a 'bright sunny day'. But such linguistic transferences from the realm of the audible to that of the visible are never accidental, and generally indicate an early power and wisdom of language – although we freely admit that we have only a very inadequate and superficial knowledge of the essence of language {Heidegger, 2002, p40}.

The basis of an articulatory visual language of western writing has its roots in sound, or more specifically, vibration. There are two forces that need to be considered in an attempt to bridge the ontological and epistemological divide that exists between Indigenous cosmology and western cosmology, and it is both sunlight and breath. Light is the essence of western thought, for light is expounded by the early philosophers and the phenomenologist's as being present in the human.

> If bodily space and external space form a practical system, the first being the background against which the object as the goal of our action may stand out or the void in front of which it may *come to light*, it is clearly in action that the spatiality of our body is brought into being, and an analysis of one's own movement should enable us to arrive at a better understanding of it {Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p117}.

The consequence of being outside of western writing then is at once invisible, soundless, voiceless, deprived of the right to manifest a world to which one's body is central. The phenomenon of sunlight and breath come together in story, for light is the energy source of all things, and it is breath that shapes a perceptible reality, calling forth a world from its unhiddenness.

> 5000 years ago, ancient spiritual tradition of India spoke of a universal source of all life. The energy called prana. This universal energy is the breath of life moves through all forms to give them life…. 3000 years ago, the ancient Qigong masters in China … called this vital energy that pervades all forms, both animate and inanimate, Qi {Alvino, 1996}.

The availability of the light of other beings as an energy source is managed through story. That is to say, how a being is represented within story is synonymous with its potential exploitation. In Indigenous storytelling, the function of light and the light of all beings existing-in-themselves for themselves as I will explain relied on a crucial understanding of the whole in the promise of the Indigenous body inhabiting the continuum and an inhabitable world, and is the basis of ancient Indigenous temporality. It is in this that Indigenous peoples exercised a comprehensive understanding of the whole, and should

the removal of any part of that whole be altered, then was altered Indigenous cosmology and being in the world, perhaps more intensely than Aristotle could have ever imagined.

Agriculture, the tilling of the soil, if we recall the days of ancient Greece, is an act of temporality, of foresight, unlike the savages. Here, the labour of tilling the soil, becomes synonymous with civility, but most importantly, the temporality that is the mark of the civilized. In agricultural times, energy was stored through the act of cultivation. The land forced to yield, season after season, was never rested, only depleted. The agricultural practice imposed upon lands about which the western body has limited knowledge about its cycles, rhythms and the breath required for the proximity of health, depletes the land. In Australian, there is the shortage of water being experienced. With discussions of water being pumped from the ocean, boar wells being tapped all over the country to access the underground water, it is only a matter of time that the interruption of the cycle of water will have a resounding effect upon western society and civility.

> There is no production without consumption. In a factory, a farm, or a feedlot, production always implies consumption. A few ounces of gold is the yield from a mountain side of tailings. A gallon of milk was once a field of grass. The illumination form my desk lamp was once a flower, a tree, or a dinosaur. Every act of production consumes the means of production and involves the expenditure of labour. And in production, the producer

> objectifies himself … The product of writing issues forth from the "infinite sea of the already written"… Writing involves consumption of text and the expenditure of labor. In the act of writing, the author objectifies herself {Ryder, 1995}.

The western economy that has established itself in this land now called Australia has through the act of writing, created a surplus of energy in the form of bodies. The human bodies that populate the country are made through codification, energy supplies. These bodies, identified through western language, fulfil a space in western society, but most importantly, are the potential exploitative energy. Bodies are policed, regulated, and a body being in space generates economy simply because it generates meaning. The body in society is a text, the logos, moving through time and space, and other bodies in that space respond to it. Concepts are produced, ideas are formed and heat is generated between these bodies. The definition of technology differs between Indigenous cultural parameters and western ideology.

> Writing, here, is *techne* as the relation between life and death, between present and representation, between the two apparatuses… In this sense writing is the stage of history and the play of the world {Derrida, 2001, p287}.

In the western concept of technology the externalization of rhythm resulted in time, and was eventually to become machinated time, since 'Time is the economy of a system of writing'{Derrida, 2001, p284}. However, the writing machine that has its origin in agriculture, is permanently bound to the need to convert and consume bodies, for the machine itself, Derrida tell us, is lifeless,

> That the machine does not run by itself means something else; a mechanisms without its own energy. The machine is dead. It is death. Not because we risk death in playing with machines, but because the origin of machines is the relation to death {Derrida, 2001, p285}.

The machine then requires the ongoing consumption of energy, and bodies are required to perform the administrative requirements of the machine, for the machine can not do this, and though Freud feared that the machine would eventually run itself {Derrida, 2001, p285}, Derrida negates this, saying,

> But what was to run by itself was the psyche and not its imitation or mechanical representation. For the latter does not live. Representation is

> death. Which may be immediately transformed into the following propositions: death is (only) representation. But it is bound to life and the living present which it repeats originarily. A pure representation, a machine, never runs by itself {Derrida, 2001, pp285-286}.

The machine is death, and cannot run itself. It requires the psyche, bodies that believe in its realness to function. Given that western language is a symbolic system reliant upon representation, one could suppose that the development of language itself is located in the performance of the machine, a way of comprehending language as machine-like in its utterance and application, the speeding up of time signified by the collapse of distance between signs leading to a rapid increase in the speed of the signal or data transference between signs.

The creation of writing into its present usage was a process. The creation of the alphabet was intrinsic to the development of the human. It was with the invention of the vowels that the temporal domain of the human was contained, and it was conceptually severed from the life-world. The relationship between the human and the life-world mediated through language, and through writing, being one of consumption and representation; both forms of death. It

was thus the vowel that allowed for the production of the human domain, for all physical space could be affixed a value, and the vowel made it possible.

> … we cannot say that in Egypt or Mesopotamia or the Indus valley or China there were no signes: written and spoken language, arithmetic and geometry are well documented. However, we have no trace of a theory, or also of just an explicit employment, of formal and syntactic knowledge, and we shall see that from this point of view the Greek miracle represents the greatest breakthrough in the history of mankind {Borzacchini, 1995}.

Thought is a powerful mechanism and though in itself transforms the world; thought alone does not shape matter. For this, language is required.

> We human beings vastly underestimate the power of our own thoughts, and if enough people believe or think a certain thing, a self-sustaining thought-form is created, which essentially becomes an overriding consciousness, ultimately having the power to perpetuate itself {Bonewitz, 1986, p31}.

The body is part of the great vibration that is existence, has the power to shape its world, install order where order is absent. The body requires order on a physiological functional level, as well as a societal level. Language becomes relevant within a societal context, through communities who build meaning through structures, laying down pathways through which the body moves. The action of the Indigenous body as it moved through the landscape of the land now known as Australia was following ancient paths set down by bodies before. These trading routes and songlines were the legacy of the experience of a country populated for more than 100 millennia.

It is through language that societies or tribes were formed, and it is through western language that these tribes have been dismantled and atomized, creating individuated bodies, separate unconnected entities. The songline was an ancient map. Through the songline and the walkers knowing of the songline, the walker located him or herself within the cosmos. Sound, a string of vibration, connecting all things, and all things connected as sound. But sound transforms the body, which is in itself vibration.

The phenomena of sound are the vibrations of light waves, causing hair to vibrate as it passes through the ear passage. The nexus of light, vibration, air and transformation is present in

this description of how the body hears sound. The very thin membrane that demarcates the boundary of the body – as a physical body – from the life-world is but an interplay of air, vibration, and sound. These are but the qualia of the universe pushing up against the body, the body in any moment languaging the sensation as perceived through the sensory organs of the body. The moment the phenomenological world of the lived environment enters the temporality of the body is but an instance. The potential of converting that one instant into an inhabitable environment is one that has a neurological resonance that ultimately becomes language itself.

The tonal shades of black and white, light and darkness has its roots in auditory senses. The auditory was converted to visual, sound translation into physical matter being the functional basis of the written word, for sound can achieve something that light cannot, for light in itself exists, but does not transform temporal domains in the way that sound does. In human language, it is necessary that a visual language in the form of western writing is spoken, 'for it is between bodies that language occurs'.

Body as the locus of experience

The experience of the ancient body cultivated the life-world, making it an inhabitable place alive with meaning and potential. It is this country that the west would construct another narrative using the temporality of the ancient body's of the Indigenous bodies, i.e. using pre-

existing maps to construct western maps that would eventually position the western body as the author and authorial. In order to do this, the experience of the Indigenous body was not deemed as moral and as a consequence, its experience was subsumed and consumed by the western narrative without acknowledging the ancient cosmologies and stories that kept meaning in place. The west invaded, colonized and developed the land now known as Australia, then proceeded to produce an historical narrative based on the absence of the Indigenous body.

> No living being can live in a vacuum. Life in a vacuum is an oxymoron. Life needs an environment. Life is transformation, and, without an environment, physical laws forbid transformation. Transformation requires energy from an external source. Life is a continuously changing equilibrium between an organism and its environment {Scaruffi, 1998}.

In order to further discuss the dismissal of Indigenous storytelling as a mythical belief system, we must turn to the body, for Merleau-Ponty declares that it is the body that is the conduit of life experience, and that it is the body that positions us within the life-world. The body in this sense, is central to our own personal stories; narratives constructed from our lived experience. However, it is not merely the construction of narrative based on experience, but it is also the

ordering of events and experiences that provide the order of the personal story. The arrival of the British in our lands was the meeting of stories, belief systems, neurology and perception.

The Indigenous body immersed in the land for 2,500 generations was dispossessed by the western gaze. This is the beginning of the textualisation of Indigenous culture, being, and the Aborigine. According to Autopoiesis, the Indigenous body itself is a consequence of the body's relationship with the land for over 100 millennia. At the core of the Indigenous body's presence in the life-world is the concept of Autopoiesis, or the potential to constantly reproduce itself. The capacity to organically reproduce itself speaks of many things; being able to comprehend changes, the need to articulate change and incorporate it into a belief system, and the effective management of energy.

> Both experience and knowledge are produced by organization of cells within the nervous system {Laughlin, 1999}.

Laughlin's summary of bioenergetic structuralism attempts to articulate ritual. The biological function of the body cannot be considered without taking into consideration the environment within which this organism exists.

> Any explanation of a living system (including its behaviour, perception, cognition or experience) must take into account any and all levels of organization efficiently present (or “co-producing”; see Ackoff and Emergy 1972) in that system and the interaction between that system and its environment {Laughlin, 2000}.

The body in both Indigenous cosmology and western ideology is important in cultural transmission, though utilized differently. The textual body referred to by phenomenologist and the body that occupies a place within the life-world has a commonality; and that is they are both constructed through language. The process through which meaning becomes matter, or language shapes the body needs to be neurologically understood.

> What most of us usually mean by "being conscious" is our moment by moment shifting awareness within the field of experience(we are "conscious" of this or that feeling, thing, thought, sensation, etc. Our individual awareness at this moment may or may not include the sound of an air conditioner, the feeling of the pressure of the seat on our behinds, or the sensation of our tongue pressing against our teeth. When we do become aware of such a phenomenon, it means that a new neural model has become entrained to our conscious network {Laughlin, 1999}.

The body as a living presence is accepted as a pre-condition of humanity. There is a fundamental relationship between the breath, language, body and the condition that is called 'life'. It is perhaps more than any other how breath is utilized in ancient Indigenous languages and western languages that the forms the basis of the inter-relatedness between bodies and the life-world. The rise to prominence of the text in western ideology one begins to see it is the very breath of the body that has been expunged for the sake of civilization.

Indigenous cosmology employed both writing and materialism in structuring the laws and lore's. The distinction however, is the value of material based culture and its dual alienation from the life-world with the intention of conquering that distinguishes how Indigenous cosmology is different to western cosmology. The securing of the Indigenous body to the land is made possible through story. Indigenous cosmology is a world brought into being through the immediacy of the lived body. It is an existence though free of western time, relying on the temporality of each and every body.

The psyche to which Derrida refers; its need for repetition can be understood as an autopoietic function

> "Autopoiesis" is the process by which an organism can continuously reorganize its own structure. Adaptation consists in regenerating the

> organism's structure so that its relationship to the environment remains constant. An organism is a structure capable of responding to the environment. The organism perceived the environment as stimuli. The stimulus, therefore, can be viewed as the part of the environment that is observed by the structure. Autopoiesis is a pattern of organization common to all living systems. Living systems are organised in closed loops. A living system is a network in which the function of each component is to create or transform other components while maintaining the circular organisation of the whole… The product of a living system is a new organisation of itself. It continually produces itself. The being and the doing are the same. Autopoiesis is self-maintenance. Organisms use energy (mainly light) and matter (water, carbon, nitrogen, etc) to continuously remake themselves {Scaruffi, 1998}.

Let us return once again to the phenomenon of light, for like the Chewong and the Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia, the light of all beings were represented in story, for story was and is not strictly the domain of the human, unlike western drama to which the human is central to all.

> *Different conscious beings*, say Chewong elders, posses different *med mesign*, or *different eyes*… each animal species in the rain forest inherits a set of *med*

> *mesign different from those of other species*…. Embedded within the Chewong notion of animal *med mesign* is the conviction that what each creature sees through its eyes constitutes a "truth" that is equivalent to that of human experience. In the Chewong cosmos … *as far as members of a particular species are concerned, the world that they view is the true one* {Knudtson 1992, pp90-91}. [Italics in the original]

Chewong cosmology articulates the truth inherent to all beings and states of consciousness. In western language systems the light of beings came to represent 'being for others', and was eventually harnessed for the purpose of exploitation and became the premise of the western economic system. This will form a crucial philosophical divide between Indigenous and western language systems, story telling and economies, for through story, light is captured for the purpose of exploitation.

World War I unsettled many European theorists, in particular Freud. Europe had a sense of self that believed that as civilized folk, it was beyond the barbarity of warfare. Freud greatly unsettled by the war, penned his much discredited Death Drive. The theory of the death drive was rejected by the academy, but perhaps there was some truth in Freud's theory. The culture of writing is a culture of death. Western civilization and society is premised on the technology of writing, and is engaged in converting the living or breathing into the dead or non breathing conditions as a cultural premise.

Writing is an act of the dead, and making artefacts of the living. Through writing, what was once alive and breathing becomes dead and breathless. Writing is itself a centralization of power, the ordering of objects around the author body made necessary by the fact that a body cannot state who it is in isolation, for language is an occurrence between peoples. On a daily basis, folk interact with writing as though it were real, possesses an authority greater than the physical body. This is a component of writing signified by the initial negation of the body by the west, the hierarchical organization of higher and lowers senses, and the gradual sensual withdrawal from the life-world. Thus, the illusion that anything can exist outside of the body is premised in the original conceptualization of the human in his withdrawal from the life-world; a withdrawal encased in his desire to dominate nature, rather than remain responsive as is the case with Indigenous cultural philosophy and cultural practice.

Within western culture, textual and linear language is used to locate the 'human' body in western time and space. The rules of grammar are about location: the need to communicate this location as well as to be located, the subject and object synonymity with language. Language is the conceptual as well as the physical boundary represented by the text. Language through meaning is what the body internalises by way of boundary. In Indigenous society, place was made known to the body through the bodies interaction with the physical environment or earth space. The song and the body's capacity to reproduce or know the

song, is what located the body in space. Though space as it is conceived in western context, does not have the same meaning in Indigenous context.

Western society is a literal society, and in developing literacy to its current standard has obscured the position of power that writing and those who write hold over other body's in today's western society. The history of western literature can be consolidated in two frames of reference; the struggle for authorship, and the struggle for narrativity. In becoming being-for-others, the lights of bodies became the fodder for the author, the individual who through possessing the technology of writing, can order the world around his centrality, obscuring his own intention, body and mortality, for in the stroke of the creation of the word, the author disappears, or as Barthes put it, necessarily dies.

The sensual withdrawal from the life-world consolidated through the technology of writing, grants the illusion of there being an 'absolute' anything – truth, time, language. Writing makes possible the assertion of absolutes, but while writing negates the presence of the physical body, it also requires a body – a physical, literary indoctrinated organism – to bring it to life, to transform its death into an energetic and vibratory authorial voice.

Motility and the environment

The ancient Indigenous body moved through the life-world in response to the cycle's and rhythms of the universe. The neurology of the ancient Indigenous body tuned like a violin string to the rhythm of the earth, the breath of the life-world that moves the leaves of the tree moves the lungs of the body, offering fuel to propel the body through space. The propelling through space though, is in constant time with the rhythm of the earth, no faster no slower than need demands. When the wattle is in full bloom, the lobster is fat. When the kookaburra sings at any time other than dawn or dusk, rain is coming. During the summer months, the bogon moths were harvested upon the land of the Monaro people. The movement of the body was put in motion by the rhythms of the earth which were in fact law. Only in response to the law, could the body sustain itself. The body was shaped by the earth, her rhythms, and the biorhythm of the body moving in response and interwoven with the greater rhythmic schema.

There was and could be no separation from the life-world, as the body definitively depended and was reliant upon the life-world, but more important, the gathering and preservation of the experience of the body, their experienced passed on generation through generation 'communicated by sounds-from-the-mouth. Not only could things be shared through sight and sound, but also by feeling the way words were uttered' {Mailly, 1997}. The lore of the

spoken word or sounds-from-the-mouth then not only preserves the experience of bodies prior to the moment, but in communicating them from body to body through the spoken word, meaning was preserved. The immediate presence of the body in this form of communication, one begins to see the importance of being open to the moment, as well as having body and breath in tact. It is through this technology, medium or lore through which stories were manifest, and importantly, space was produced, not for the purpose of consumption, but out of necessity if the body continued to *be*.

> Muscle is designed for movement and is known as the motor system. The qualities and tone of our individual muscles are reflected in our posture and actions, from the minutest movement to our broadest gestures. Muscle accounts for 70-85 % of our body weight, and defines our size, contour, and feel. In addition, the musculature helps generate heat in the body: 70% of the energy produced by the muscles is released as warmth which permeates the body {Carroll, 2001}.

The physiognomy of Indigenous peoples shaped the life-world itself. The body's muscularity shaped by the land, and the land in turn shaped by its muscularity. The visceral relationship between Indigenous body and land shaped the terrain of the land now known as Australia

itself. The perceivable and inhabitable continuum between inner and outer universe sustainable by a language that lacked the objectivity of western language, centralised Indigenous being as a concentrated point in the infinite, the eternal. The world does not exist 'out there', but exists within us, our bodies being the locus for the reality we create and occupy. It is through our perception, and the meaning given to our interactions with the world, which resonate within our bodies on a cellular level, the environment itself imprinting upon our bodies neurologically, and in this, we internalise the world of which we are a part, exchanging energy and meaning through every action, thought and response to being-in-the-world.

Life is rhythm; the beat of the heart, the rush of blood, the falling of thoughts. The body imbued with its own experience of time, is embodied rhythm. Indigenous folk believed that it is the beat which is always constant. The beat, the potential of energy unrealised, is infinite. The beat is infinite and constant, is the beat of life itself, not measured or metered as within western time and space. The Indigenous body, living in the land and the land in the body, moved across the Earth space as guided by the appearance and disappearance of other bodies, atomic and sub atomic. When each body spoke, it was from within it's an expression of its unique temporality. The languages then, in place since time immemorial, were records of ancient time inherited by each body. Each body was and is, a record of time and the only real time which exists in this earth space, and conscious universe, for it is through the locus of the body, that we experience the world, and through which the world becomes or is real.

> Active, living speech is … a gesture, a vocal gesticulation wherein the meaning is inseparable from the sound, the shape, and the rhythm of the words. Communicative meaning is always, in its depths, affective; it remains rooted in the sensual dimension of experience, born of the body's native capacity to resonate with other bodies and with the landscape as a whole {Abram, 1996, pp74-75}.

The movement of the Body through the landscape was a state of being and temporality. According to Merleau-Ponty, the body is what grants us an existence in the world

> … far from my body's being for me no more than a fragment of space, there would be no space at all for me if I had no body {{Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p117}.

Hegel attempted to reconnect with the earth through body, but the body – a western male privileged body – a product of millennia of western writing culture, at the point of his inquiry, was already alienated from the life-world, the bodies neurology programmed by codification would have meant that Hegel and western phenomenologist's are limited by their very own bodies.

> …. Maturana explored … ideas in *The Biology of Cognition*… and this led him to see humans as autopoietic (self-producing) systems with nervous systems structurally coupled to bodies and through this to the environment. From this perspective "the body and the nervous system are structure-determined systems; the changes they undergo depend on their own prior structure and can only be triggered, not determined, by interactions with other systems"… the capacity for language (including that of mathematics) has opened up new domains in which we make descriptions, descriptions of descriptions, descriptions of ourselves, leading to and including the emergence of ourselves as observer. Such descriptions are not determined by the nature of what is described, but by the describer/observer, they do not reflect an objective reality, they remain subjective constructions {Begg, 1999, pp6-7 }.

The body's nervous system is a filter of sorts, allowing that information to be processed, its capacity predetermined by the nervous systems structure. An objective world does not exist, for perception is bound by the body's nervous system. The written word however, has allowed to some extent, the control of the air, the control of our bodies, and the control of our emotions to exist external to our own being, our own selves. Within each body is the

power to become aware that the realities we create are of our own doing. This phenomenon has everything to do with language, and the relation between one's breath and the infinite.

In Indigenous cultures, the concept of time does not exist. Time is a phenomenon of the west, and it is necessary to understand the imposition of time in order to fully comprehend the impact of dispossession and the destruction of the life-world to grasp the impact of invasion and colonization. The cycle of time and time can move both forwards and backwards. Through observation, light collapses from wave into particle. In this moment objects are created. But time also, through observation, ceases to be part of the continuum, and becomes the moment.

> Whatever it is that we are observing *can* have a determinable momentum, and it *can* have a determinable position, but of these two properties, *we must choose,* for any given moment, which one we wish to bring into focus. This means, in reference to "moving particles" anyway, that we can never see them the way they "really are", but only as we wish to choose them … {Zukav, 1979, p135}.

The body is the primary sensory organ. The skin is the largest sensory organ of the body. The universe is made known to the consciousness through the body. The Indigenous

cosmology was the process of internalizing the life-world, the rhythm of the body determined by the cycles of the life-world. Unlike western cultural practice, time and story was not imposed upon the life-world, but was created as a response to it. The human body would be defined by its desire to impose an observed cycle upon the land. Story perceived only through the eye, is a flat Euclidean model of the earth space, where time became separate to space, and the body became separate to the earth. .

Every decision made by a body is correct. It is correct in that it is the organism's decision that is made – both aware and unaware of the consequence. None the less, it is the only means the body as an organism possess' in its soul purpose. The pathways created by the passage of the Indigenous body, has a neurological correlation. The songlines that meander through the country, laid by the Ancestors as they sang the country into being, are held within the bodies of Indigenous folk. The geographical pathways are also neurological pathways.

Ancient Hawaiian's culture of *kanaka maoli* speaks explicitly about the relationship between breath and land. String theory supports the understanding of the universe being vibrations, the body whether of the kanaka maoli, or the Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia, are examples of peoples whose stories and longevity are preserved through song. The primacy of the voice in transmitting meaning is well recorded, and within the context of string theory, translates what these ancient peoples have always known; all the world is a song.

The Indigenous belief systems though used the body in its interaction with the life-world and gave primacy to the body and the role in comprehending the phenomena of the universe within which the body found itself immersed. We can only experience the life-world through our physical bodies. The ancient Indigenous body is a pre-egoic body. Through the writing of the Indigenous body into history through western authors, many assumptions have been and continue to be made that are quite fundamental in understanding Indigenous cosmology, but most importantly the role the body played in Indigenous cosmology.

> … much of the vegetation encountered by the white invaders was not natural at all, but the product of Aboriginal 'fire-stick' farming … Aborigines manipulated their diverse ecologies according to temporal, religious, technological and social considerations … In conjunction with the Dreaming cycles, they would move across the land when it signaled its readiness for visitation {Donaldson, 1996, pp131-133}.

In other words, terra nullius was not terra nullius at all, for the land that the colonisers gazed upon was not absent of production, but the consequence of Indigenous existence. The landscape of the land now known as Australia as perceived by the west as unoccupied and absent of production was an illegitimate claim, for it was an environment ordered by the

neurological needs of the Indigenous body, and as the body is reflective of the environment, the environment is a reflection of the body. The body of the Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia however, did not constitute a human body as defined in relation to the power of authorship and storytelling.

Silvia Hartman says that metaphor is experientially based, whole bodied interpretation of energy streams of endless data. The Greek philosopher's interpretation of 'what is' were inscribing and subscribing to absolutes in that the development of the language has metaphorical basis and value, but through the development of material language, the language itself circumscribes the experiential basis of life itself, and in doing so depriving the experience of other bodies. This is the instance of the conceptual human.

Writing as a term applies largely to western conceptualization of the technology. However, other cultures have used writing, and the term itself must be expanded to acknowledge how the body shifts the energy and creates order that is compliant to story. The west uses physical text represented by architecture. Non textual cultures use the combination of so called mythology and writing. The body is the product of the interaction of the organism with its environment. Through the ritual, the body energetically orders the life-world, and at the same time, is giving order to the body. The concept of order is made homogenous through story and ritual, the physical participation of the story itself. In this, the cultivation of the life-world

took place. The land then is the grand space within which story is offered and generated by the body.

The Platonic, Socratic, Dogmatic and Skeptical traditions of the Greek philosophers brought the western world into being. Not only did they bring western consciousness and ideology into being, they placed the body of the philosopher at the centre of the phenomenal and sensual universe.

> We make perception out of things perceived. And since perceived things themselves are obviously accessible only through perception, we end by understanding neither. We are caught up in the world and we do not succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world {Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p5}.

The metaphysical and scientific foundation of the human is constant and necessary in that it is through scientific discourse that the conceptual world of the human can be increased or produced. Merleau-Ponty states that the limitation of consciousness is consciousness itself. In speaking about sensation as a unit of experienced, Merleau-Ponty discusses the limits of consciousness and object reality as predetermining the experience of the life-world through

the senses. In discussing a red dot on the carpet, Merleau-Ponty asserts that 'the quality is only in relation to the play of light upon it, and hence as an element in spatial configuration' {Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p5}.

The western body through its very presence propagates its reality, the social and hierarchical ordering of objects in space. Merleau-Ponty acknowledges the limitations of the emergent world due to consciousness itself {Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p5}. However, Merleau-Ponty himself speaks from within an ideology that negates the possibility of other meanings and interpretation of the same object. To state that a 'red spot is red' for instance is the product of cultural production. It is not the shade that dances across the spot or the wooliness of the carpet that deems it red, but it is the very language – red, carpet, texture – these are expressions of cultural production of consciousness, but more intriguingly, it is the consequence of cultural indoctrination on the perception of light itself.

Western perception is brought into sensorial existence through the presence of objects. But as we have just seen, this pure sensation would amount to no sensation, and thus to no feeling at all. The alleged evidence of sensation is not based on any testimony of consciousness, but on widely held prejudice. We think we know perfectly well what 'seeing', 'hearing', 'sensing' are, because perception has long provided us with objects which are coloured or which emit sounds. When we try to analyse it, we transpose those objects into consciousness.' At this

moment ‘what we know to be in things themselves’ become incorporated into consciousness, the being of the thing formerly of themselves dissolves through contact with consciousness.

The ongoing presence of the western body in the life-world and its attempt to know the composition of the universe represents the slow erasure of things formerly of themselves through consumption by consciousness. Once the light of beings are deemed object, the act of becoming object through the imposition of consciousness, the prior meaning of the thing as a thing for themselves, disappears. At this moment, it is the light of the organism, like the Chewong cultural practice that must maintain their character in the life-world, or possessing the light of their own bodies, is removed from its position in the life-world through the culturally produced western conscience. The development of western ideology and language then is the increase of thought processes and visual primacy that would keep the body vibrating at the lower levels, for in this lower vibration, the world of higher vibration, or as Indigenous cosmology would term the spiritual, remains absent within western consciousness, for this absence is the premise of western consciousness itself.

Ideology as a closed system of thought is premised on the limits of the human nervous system. The human nervous system is limited in its way of perceiving, for the universe is made visible through Reason, and in this, the concept, language and consciousness precedes perception. Indigenous cosmology however, is a system of being where the nervous system of the body has not been indoctrinated with how to see, between the dark and lightness of

being or composition and decomposition. Rather it is a way of being that the life-world is made known without the constraints of language, and in this, that which is perceptible is infinite. Western ideology is about constrained perceptibility, as in this quantifiable time and space and its gradual increase, it must conform to pre-existing value systems. In other words, that which enters western ideology through perceptibility framed by language, is executed through reduction, for in reduction, the infinite becomes finite, and the finite is affixed a value.

Pythagorean universe composed of numbers would eventually have a consequence in that the human body is inscribed with how to see, and what not to see. This is the premise and intention of Greek philosophy, and the contribution of Pythagoras is great in its contribution to the world of lower vibration materialism that sustains the illusion of matter, object and subject, of a universe divided by composition and decomposition. The lower vibration density of the human body would secure it in the world of matter. The body secured in the world of matter and materialism, is embedded in a value system that is representative of the lower energy vibration that would eventually have a consequence on how that body perceives. It is in being taught how to see through Pythagorean mathematics formulae that the lower vibration of the body would perceptually be alienated from the life-world in the body being perceived as an energy system alienated from the life-world. The lower vibration of the body would also be constrained by time for it cannot perceive non material. The non material or sub atomic world is invisible to the human eye because the human eye itself has been

programmed to accept that which only corresponds to truth, truth as it is proposed by western ideology and language system.

The Raven an important deity to the peoples of northern Canada and the Alaska region is balanced by the Eagle clan. The premise for the duality of these clans, whose moiety symbols are the Raven and Eagle, is for the purpose of harmony. It is the constant struggle to maintain harmony that is present in the story telling of most Indigenous peoples. While it may seem an unusual shift into discussing the concept of the human, it is here that we must turn to the concept of human as the possessor of light. A very important story in this region is *The Raven Steals the Light*. The world was once in darkness, and all the light was possessed by one man.

> "I have a box and inside the box is another box and inside it are many more boxes, and in the smallest box of all is all the light in the world, and it is all mine and I'll never give any of it to anyone, not even to my daughter, because, who knows, she may be as homely as a sea slug, and neither she nor I would like to know that" {Reid, W. & Bringhurst, R, 1984, p20}.

Like the old man who kept the light of the universe in a box, it is the concept of the human which through its conception and inception began to progressively remove the light from all other beings, so that the human may alone possess all the light of the universe. And like the

old man, that which has been cast into darkness is still unknown to the human, who long ago chose to forget and conceal in the darkness, the riches of the universe.

The most important contribution that emerged during the reign of Greece was the correlation between story and the power to enforce and transfer cultural cargo. It is here that we see the relationship and interdependency of western narrative upon the use of force, or warfare, for western writing is synonymous and representative of violence and force.

> Writing … is taken to be an interruption and violence that befalls the pristine purity of speech… Writing even if it is deemed 'necessary', is nevertheless seen as a corruption – a 'dangerous supplement' - that inserts the word into the dangerous labyrinth of signs and signification… This violence of naming, occasioned by the foreigner, is akin to the violence of *writing*, itself foreign to language, exterior to the purity of speech {Smith, 2005, pp39-40}.

In compliance with Aristotle's narrative formation, there is a necessary motivation as to why the philosophers arrived at the postulations that they did in order to propel the action in a linear forward trajectory. In a warring country and the designing of the instruments of war, the premise can be found in *jus ad bellum*, which translates as *a just war* {Encylopaedia Britannica, 2007}. In Indigenous existence meaning was imbued with

belief, action, and perspective. The word was not separated from action, and action gave meaning to words, beliefs realised through the Bodies movement, and where there was movement, that space was given meaning. There was a unified, holistic philosophy through which the body internalised the land, and space was created and imbued with meaning through the movement of the Body.

When one looks upon the river and the way in which she sways with the contours of the land, it is like the embrace of an old friend. The land, and as Indigenous folk when we gaze upon it, it is as though gazing upon kin or perhaps even looking into a mirror, for every living thing has meaning in that it is every living thing which our Ancestors gave meaning to, and in this application of meaning which was upheld through the very movement of the body, its actions and words, were allowed to Be, their existence noted in the Ancient inma, or 'the epic song cycles of the *tjukurrpa*, which are sung, danced and painted, vividly imprinting them in our minds and every cell of our being'{Randall, 2003, p5}.

The premise of the human is located in the established conceptual domain offered forth by the postulations of the Greek and Roman philosophers. These conceptual parameters are not arbitrary, for in devising the western canon, European theologians returned to and turned to the philosophers with the intention of controlling the conceptual parameters articulated through writing.

The Greeks through philosophical enquiry, were not merely discussing the terms of words nor indulging in the emergent self reflexivity occurring at the site of the interlocution between the body and textuality, but they were establishing the parameters between what is (seen) and what is not (unseen). The conversion from an oral based culture immersed in the life-world, into one increasingly alienated from the life-world where human based knowledge is the logic that would shape the perceivable world, required such instruction. The interplay between what is (and on what grounds it is a 'thing') and what is not, precedes the material symbology of the logos as a visible referent of 'limit' as it is applied in the physical lived space of the human.

It is interesting that the term *harmony* is the one that speaks of a balanced reciprocal relationship between body and life-world, for it suggests that at the core of all stories is sound.

> From molecular science to string theory, modern researchers are proving what ancient sages have taught for millennia—that our body responds to vibration and that the trillions of cells inside of us form one grand symphony of sound... {Spadaro, 2004}.

Transmitting meaning - Neuro semantics

> The oral tradition (from the latin *tradere* = to transmit) is the typical instrument of transmission of the oral codes or, in a more general sense, is the complex of what culture transmits of itself among generations … {Wikipedia, 2007}

Masaru Emoto talks about a family who conducted their own experiments based on his data. Words – labels – are attached to jars containing water. He then examines the crystals of the water to document any shift in the molecular structure of the water. The family conducted their experiments on rice. In the first jar was rice with the label, Hello, which the family spoke to the jar every day. On the other jar, the words, 'You're a fool', which the family said to the second jar every day. The family though had a third jar containing rice, which they ignored altogether. The rate of decomposition in the jar labelled 'You're a fool' was more accelerated than the first jar, which had positive affirmations spoken at it. However, the third jar decomposed greater still. Basically, greater decomposition occurred where the thing was ignored altogether. But Emoto tells us, is that the jar of rice that so badly decomposed, when spoken to nicely, began to regenerate {Emoto, 2006, pp20-21}.

Emoto's work is experiments on the power of thought to transform energy. This is especially important in regards to an oral culture, where the emphasis is on the power of language to transform the environment, as well as the body transmitting the message, 'The ability of the spoken word to give life is much more powerful than we can imagine {Emoto, 2006, p21}. In the days before colonisation, Indigenous peoples were the creators of our own stories, lands and bodies. The power of language to shape the energy of our land was utilised to give form to our existence. The Dreaming stories that speak of endless transformation, are the means through which the energy of the life-world were articulated and then inhabited. It is by the name that the infinite is given form, becomes a localised concentration of energy. Naming is a means of localizing experience through language. To give it a name, is to give it meaning.

> Naming is foundational as the act of creation. Naming shatters the darkness and divides the darkness and light, at the same time, spanning both in the naming {Stern, 1997}.

This experience now named, can be incorporated into the organism of the body, and its world-view. How things are languaged then, is an insight as to the meaning they constitute within the organism. Through language, we apply meaning. In essence, the experience of vibration and light is the experience of the life-world. The Indigenous body did not mindlessly wander the land, as the colonial terms such as *nomad* and *walkabout* suggest. Such terms speak of an

unwilled body, motivated by instinct rather than wisdom, experience and knowledge. But the body – our bodies – were and are the consequence of language, how the apparent external word not only shapes our matter, but the maps and codes by which they are known, *are* our matter. One such discipline that explains how meaning becomes matter is Neuro-semantics developed in 1997 by Michael Hall and Bobby Bodenhamer {Hall, 2001}. Neuro Semantics is about language, and how we as bodies make sense of our external world, and internalising it through what Hall refers to as 'mapping'. In this mapping, our world is made internal through our senses, with every thought resulting in a neurological impulse. 'Neuro-Semantics incorporates higher level "meanings" into the structure of subjectivity. Our "states" involve the primary level neuro-linguistic thoughts-and-feelings in response to something out there in the world' {Hall, 2006}. According to Neuro-Semantics, the external world is made internal through our senses, with every thought impacting and experienced within our Bodies on an neurological level. In this, how we think and communicate with the world and our own selves, results in a mapping in the Body itself.

The British entered a land that was sonically mapped, and intricately named. There were no unknown parts of the land now known as Australia, as the recent debate over the use of wilderness highlights. In this, the life-world through language constituted the Indigenous body's experience and relation to the land. In language, there is no partitioning of the 'human' body from other bodies, or even from the earth herself. The concept of the human is

a western construct, one that speaks of a biological phenomena developed in its alienation from the life-world.

The field of neuro-semantics was founded by Alfred Korzybski, and he claimed the body is an ordered system. Language shapes and moulds the malleable flesh of the body. Words *become* the body. How things are perceived is inherent in the ordering of the body, its mechanics and function, is determined by its interaction with the environment. It is this component of *becoming* that belongs to language.

> The human body is always working to maximize its individual fitness and the fitness of the landscape in the context of the larger landscape of the world. The NS is one example of this but it is not the end of the story. Valera includes also the Endocrine and Immune Systems in his model of human cognition and perception. His Santiago theory (with Maturana) states that the mind should not be thought of as an object but a process, involving all of these systems as well as the outside environment {Pollitt, 2003}.

The raw data of the universe is organized into meaning through the bodies nervous system. The emergent field of neuro-semantics is a discipline that addresses how words create the body, fundamentally organizing the world through the body's nervous system.

> The study of Entropy is the study of the amounts of this energy being dispersed in a given process at a certain temperature. Although this is a founding law of nature, life does not rise from nature through entropy but through the blocking of entropy. While each particle carrying a potential amount of energy will unload that energy and spread it to as many other less energetic particles as possible, systems work to use the energy by creating boundaries and walls, both physical and chemical{Pollitt, 2003}.

How the body responds to and within an environment is a chemical reaction occurring within the body itself. In fact, it is chemical responsiveness to the environment that is the initial interaction and the beginning of language. How a body means therefore, is chemical. How a body categorizes this chemical reaction is what constitutes language itself. The terms neuro-semantics and neuro-linguistics was first coined by Alfred Korzybski, and was his attempt to look at the extensive data constituting the life-world, and this endless stream of information existing beyond the body's nervous system.

> The human body presents us with a tangible example of this process in action. Still thinking about tiny particles dispersing their energy to other tiny

> particles, entropy can be observed in just about every human biological process as there is always energy flowing in or out of the body. The human body therefore exists as an open system in a state that is far-from-equilibrium. This state is marked by the disorderly movement of energy always leaving the system and the constant need for replenishment through the metabolism of food and oxygen {Pollitt, 2003}.

The body is an organism that is constantly processing raw data, and it is never fixed. The body's metabolism is an important function, for the body does not only process food, but it processes new experiences, un-named data, and in this metabolizing, needs to order it so that it can become part of the body itself. In a world of energy, the human nervous system is itself a bundle of energy, the protoplasm of the human nervous system wired with sensory modalities that allow the world to become sensible to the body through neurological wiring. In other words, it is our bodies that give order to the world we inhabit, for the body is naturally designed to circumvent what is an immeasurable and infinite amount of energy, into a form that allows the body to interact with this information on an energetic level. Our bodies in this instance construct a map from this endless stream of data.

In this, the Indigenous Body was and is neurologically mapped by its experience within the Earth space, and as the Earth is central to Indigenous languages, it is the Indigenous Body's relationship with the Earth that gives it Meaning. This Meaning, according to Hall, is felt and charged on a neurological level. What then, if such a Body is denied its connection with the Earth, the centre of its Meaning, felt on a neurological level, this familiarity charging it with Meaning? The Indigenous Body interacted with the Earth space in an intimate and familiar context, as the language of Indigenous cultures facilitated the importance of every life form and Being – sentient and non-sentient. In this, the language of the Earth meant that this Earth space, the homelands, country belonging to each clan, would have been embodied on an neurological level, and in being forcibly removed from the land, impacted on the social order of Indigenous culture, but the neurology of the Indigenous Body.

The rhythm of the body

The ability to harmonize the temporality of the earth space with the temporality of the body is perhaps the most important aspect of Indigenous cosmology. The role of sound in shaping matter, the vibration of all bodies, atomic and sub atomic, and the bringing into existence through sound, the transparency of having the spoken word as the primary mode of cultural transmission becomes apparent. The formative powers of sound and indeed the healing abilities of sound especially in relation to the voice, reveals an organic relationship between

body and life-world. Western ideology is better understood as harassed sunlight, and contained sound. The west through the written word has removed the voice from the body, and in doing so, the transparent relationship between the transformative powers of sound and the use of vibration to shape matter, and indeed the life-world and or universe.

The body is an energy system and this energy system functions as a conscious organism through its capacity to internalize the environment in attempt to maintain its temperature, and homeostasis or the concept of balance and harmony within a neurological level. The body is never a fixed state of being. Rather it is constant state of flux, and it is this constant state of flux that required order and regulation as the premise to a conscious existence or an existence ordered through story.

The function of the body essential to life, living or breathing, is to maintain temperature. The heat of the body that must be mediated during one's life is what determines the body's survival and standard of living. The controlled temperature of the body is mediated through the body's nervous system. So, the need for the body to sustain it's heat, and this heat mediated through the body's nervous system becomes essential components when language is introduced. The body requires homeostasis – or a state of balance – to live. Homeostasis and its relation to language, and then story, becomes the focus of how the story shapes the body, modulates its heat, as interpreted through the nervous system.

The capacity to determine what does or does not exist then, becomes the essential in the functioning of the nervous system. Through this framing, the nervous system is being conditioned and programmed to mediate between interior and exterior modes of existence. What exists out there forms our interior worlds, and comes to exist in here. Immediately the capacity to name, to state what does or does not exist, what is and is not, is relevant to the nervous system and the body's capacity to organize itself functionally. It is here that the role of story becomes imperative to the body's ability and right to self regulate. The body's self regulation then has a vital correlation with story, for all bodies are stored sunlight and potential energy. The Indigenous body, the organism central to the ordering of Indigenous cosmology, indicates intelligence in relation to the life-world unparallel in western language. The Indigenous body, having survived for one hundred millennia, is the measurement, the means through which the infinity of the environment was converted into language, and then maps.

> If my intention is to live in harmony with my environment, my single best indicator of success is my body's feeling of comfort {Chopra, 1993, p143}.

The Indigenous body in being able to sustain itself in the environment for eon's shows intelligence that in mastered the environment, it mastered the language through which this environment was 'embodied'.

> Living in harmony with the body's rhythms overcomes entropy by allowing a frictionless flow of biological information. Living in opposition to the body's rhythms produces an increase in entropy, leading to disorder {Chopra, 1993, p142}.

The body like the earth has rhythms – biorhythms. The songs of the ancients can be considered the cycles that linked the biorhythm of the body with the rhythm of the earth space, and the wisdom of choosing the mode of communication such as oracy, begins to become more clear.

> What is fundamentally important about biorhythms … is that they provide the basis for the state of dynamic non-change. I used this phrase to describe the balance of opposites that must be maintained in order for the body to resist disorder {Chopra, 1993, p145}.

The cultural continuum achieved by the ancients must be inhered with a wisdom that is missing in western society. The Indigenous body in western monophasic consciousness is exposed to the material reality of western language, and the high morbidity and mortality rates of the Aborigine speaks of the disorder experience by the body, the inability to metabolize the external environment and order it within the rhythm of the body. The Aboriginal body is experiencing disorder, but this need not be a comment on the body, but on

the language, for western language is itself alienated from the life-world, and the Aboriginal body as a western construction, is experiencing disorder as a consequence of also experiencing the alienation imposed upon it by colonialism.

Chapter 9

Bodies that write

Language as localized temporality

> "Typically, everyone in camp would be multilingual. They'd speak four to five languages but they'd own a language in relation to their country. They might not live there all the time, or even most of the time, but they were connected to country through language" {Tiggelen, 2005, p27}.

All events are temporal experiences. The body ultimately knows itself in place and space through its temporal experiences, and all subjective experiences are temporal events. It is the status of temporal events within Indigenous and non Indigenous cultures that point to a different embodied experience of time.

> Wittgenstein… was clear that this meant that language mirrored reality, mirrored the world. The picture theory was an account in essence of the relation between a word and what it referred to in the external environment,

> or between a sentence, a proposition or sachverhalt and the event or situation to which it referred {Allott, 2003}.

As Indigenous folk immersed in colonial cultural practice and language, the resonance of our Ancient languages are growing increasingly distant. David Crystal's *Language Death* examines the relevance of the death of a language, and correlates it to the loss of personage. When a language dies, something is irrevocably lost to the life-world that is synonymous with the loss of the physical being in the form of personage.

> … when language transmission breaks down, through language death, there is a serious loss of inherited knowledge: 'Any reduction of language diversity diminishes the adaptational strength of our species because it lowers the pool of knowledge from which we can draw' {Crystal, 2000, p34}

Crystal speaks of the immeasurable loss to the life-world and the repository of knowledge with the passing of each language from the earth space. Crystal quotes Labillos who believes

> A native language is like a natural resource which cannot be replaced once it is removed from the earth {Crystal, 2000, p34}

In an article about Roger Hart, the last speaker of his language, the elder isolated in his status as the last speaker physically removed himself from the rest of the family also.

> "Uncle Roger was always trying to teach me his language," recalls Sonya Gibson … "It was a tongue-twisting language, very nice and soft, like a song. It really was beautiful to hear it spoken" {Tiggelen, 2005, p 25}.

There were at least 250 languages in the land now known as Australia made up of 700 dialects {Tiggelen, 2005, p25}. 'Yet it puzzled people that Hart should care so much. They'd see him sitting under a tree with his lists of words and say, "Why you bother with all that, old fella?" And he'd say, "When I speak language, it makes me feel home" {Tiggelen, 2005, p25}. There is something profound in the statement spoken by Roger Hart - 'when I speak language, it makes me *feel* home' {Crystal, 2005, p25}. Language, an accumulation of wisdoms gathered by generations of speakers vanishing from the earth space, is a great loss of experience and knowledge. Hart's statement is not metaphorical, for he insists that language makes him *feel* home, expressing a sentient, neurological connection to place.

Language is disappearing from the earth space at a rate of one every two weeks. Language utility represented in the ancient earth centric modes of being are easily lost if compared to properties of English or colonial languages and their intended function, for to compare one mode of being to the other is a condition that is non translatable, a condition beyond western language itself that will ultimately corrode the former. Geoff Clarke when speaking of language said '… language is like your sovereign soul' {Tiggelen, 2005, p27}.

John van Tiggelen quotes David Crystal in his article 'The sound of one man chatting' as predicting "The prospect in a few hundred years of just one language per nation, and then just one language for the whole world … is indeed real" {Tiggelen, 2005, p27}. The article dealing with the loss of Indigenous languages in the land now known as Australia attempts to establish links between the sense of self, home and belonging to one's native tongue. The loss of language is a national crisis, and it is indeed the crisis of civilization itself, for at the core function of civilization is the annihilation of languages in replacing them with a hegemonic vernacular. The process of colonization has successfully disguised its true intention. Civilization as a system of thought is predicated by the abolishment of pre-existing languages in order for its system to become optimal. The annihilation of language is the annihilation of temporality, specifically that temporality that has been developed as a result of being culturally immersed in the life-world.

The loss of languages is the annihilation of ancient wisdom. The death of Indigenous languages, ancient earth-centric temporality or time, is both the intention and the consequence of the colonial machine. The prospect of a one-language-world is the physical and accessible loss of ancient earth languages, or to put it another way, language of the earth herself, localized within the temporality of ancient bodies who through their cultural practice, were an intricate function of the life-world. Unlike the western ideological perspective that man dominates the life-world, ancient language systems saw themselves (and continue to do so) as part of the life-world. Through these bodies, the earth was given a language and through them the earth spoke.

The earth speaks instructions, and teaches the bodies how to exist, live and breathe in union with her, rather than pitched in opposition. These languages exist as knowledge systems, instructions on how to live in close proximity to the life-world, and in return, one is granted with a sense of home, belonging and purpose. In exchange for speaking earth language, a body has meaning, and the life-world itself is revealed to the body as infinite meaning. The earth was and remains sacred, and in this, the body, breath, impermanence and the present moment remain the vestibule through which all life and temporality pass, and are brought into being.

> We as a species, have forgotten something our Ancestors once knew and practiced – certain attitudes and kinds of perception, an ability to empathize and identify with non-human life, respect for the mysterious, and humility in relationship to the infinite complexities of the natural world … that we as a species are superior to other species and life-forms and there have the right to dominate, control and use them for our own purposes as we see fit … It has also been referred to as human chauvinism, or species-ism … The *exploitation and destruction of the natural environment by technological means,* developed in the Middle Ages, increased dramatically during the times of the scientific revolution of the sixteenth century, and then again with Newton, Johannes Kepler, Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes came the shift away from the medieval worldview toward the mechanistic – materialistic worldview of the modern era … Thus the stage was set for a further and complete desacralization of the natural world …{Metzner, 1993}.

The death of Indigenous languages is the loss of instruction in how to live as one with the life-world.

Writing biology

> The nature of subjective conscious experience, and its consequences in intentionality, remain the central unsolved problem in science and one of critical importance to humanity's future as sentient observers and autonomous participants in a world history we are coming to have ever more pivotal influence upon. Each of us who read this paper are subjective conscious observers, making an autonomous decision to carry out a volitional action. All our knowledge of the physical universe is gained through the immediate conduit of our subjective experience and our intentionality in turn has major impacts on the physical world around us {King, 2003}.

The physical body of the human is the visceral, muscular representation of words, the body itself a summary of every thought and emotion generated by the kinaesthetic interaction with the environment. But perhaps Aristotle himself could not articulate the extent to which writing could allow for the construction of an object reality, of truth, separate to the body itself.

> The conscious mind can also be described functionally as an *internal model of reality*. While such an explanation does not address the basis of subjectivity, it does help explain some of the more bizarre states of consciousness and is supported by many actively constructive aspects of sensory processing. Such an internal model can be described in terms of dynamical brain processes which undergo unstable transitions to and from chaos {King, 2003}.

Though the written word is not directly referred to, in his paper, Design for a Theory of Meaning, Mark Turner discusses the contribution of Protagoras who 'proposed that man is the measure of all things … offered a design for a theory of meaning … congruent with … its conception of meaning not as a static property external to human beings but rather as an aspect of dynamic human thought grounded in human nature {Turner, 1992}.

Turner compares Protagoras' proposal with present century beliefs, during 'which prominent theorists have attempted to explain the nature of meaning as quite independent of the human person' {Turner, 1992}. The power to construct such an illusion of an object reality requires the control of meaning and incredible resources. However, the west has harnessed such a power, for it is made possible by the written word. Turner explains that according to Alan Newell and Herbert Simon

> … who saw intelligence as an aspect of a physical symbol system, which is to say, as the result of manipulating symbols by means of formal rules… In practice, these traditions work from the largely unargued assumption that it is merely incidental that the interpreted form system happens to be instantiated in a human brain for a human body. The human being is not the measure of all things, the interpreted formal system is. No accommodation is required in the theory or in the fact for the humanness of the brain and the humanness of the body in which the system happens to have been implemented. The human being is the platform on which a portable utility is installed {Turner, 1992}.

Turner considers that there are though, levels of conceptual fitness speaking in terms of the human brain and its ability to extract meaning from its environment. The fit brain must be able to

- attribute a vertical up-down gradient to the environment;
- distinguish between the interior and the exterior of one's body, with the skin as boundary
- partition the world into objects and actions;
- understand certain objects as agents; and

- attribute purpose to agents{Turner, 1992}.

Turner goes on to say that 'Inabilities to attribute meaning in these ways would count as fundamental deficits in the organism: someone lacking them would die. It is hard to even imagine that someone lacking them could count as a human being. Evolution is likely to be extremely conservative in regard to such features' {Turner, 1992}. That Turner should accept that there are certain features of object reality that should be accepted as object meaning, the capacity to view the world through western time and space and extract meaning is accepted as conceptual fitness or 'the fitness of a conceptual system. We can therefore feel perfectly respectable in believing that certain meanings and patterns of meaning are just indispensable, which is not to say objective. Fitness is not a measure of correspondence to object reality but rather a measure of success' {Turner, 1992}. In other words, the cosmology that informs western philosophy and writing systems is granted as normative in being present before language, a universal ubiquitous world view, and bodies' representative of alternative cosmology and philosophies, their respective conceptual systems would be declared as being unsuccessful if not predisposed to western language rules and regulations.

A successful body or system within western society is that body whose system is the cultural reproduction of western ontology and epistemology, i.e. a literate organism whose adequate possession of western textual language complies with the corresponding definition of human.

It is writing that is the foundation of the human biology and its modes of production and reproduction. Through writing and especially the development of the Roman alphabet, the conceptual realm of the human was secured through the act of writing. In order to understand intentionality and the concept of will, one must fully understand the technology of writing and its impetus in shaping the biology that would ultimately become the human, and in doing so, the neurology of the human body became the site of this technological production and reproduction.

Synapse and syntax

The alienation from the natural milieu signifies the west's sensual withdrawal from the life-world necessitated by its primary technology. However, speech as a forerunner to writing should not be mistakenly considered as synonymous with oracy, for speech within western civilized culture was the primary mode of communication, but it was the conceptualization of the human by the Greek philosopher's that was the first instance of withdrawal from the natural milieu.

Racism is a form of stress, and it does not interrupt one aspect of our lives, but our whole being and indeed, our lives. Through racism, social order is reinstated repeatedly, enacted through citizens who absolutely believe that there is such a thing as race at all, and that someone like me, an Aborigine, am a body with no rights, privacy or privilege, and there have

been those who have said to my face, constitute the lowest race on earth. Understanding the nervous system is fundamental when examining the stability or instability Indigenous peoples feel within their primary or secondary environments. It is important to then examine how a sense of 'self' and 'safety' has been procured through the experience of the Body, whether in the wider community, or in the domestic or primary environment of the home.

> Stress is the greatest contributor to the ageing process, and those organisms which are under stress or primed to experience stress at any given moment, not only age faster, but die quicker, as stress ages such bodies internally. Perhaps it is time to consider that Indigenous folk are not dying younger, but are ageing quicker through the pressure of living in colonial informed and constructed environments.

The Indigenous body, whose neurology and DNA is the consequence of being immersed in the life-world for millennia, speaks of the power of language to shape bodies, its nerve endings and muscularity forged by the rivers, mountains, and ritual of an ongoing presence in the life-world. The interiority of the Indigenous body is reflected in the land. It is then that the neurology of the western body is the consequence of its sensorial withdrawal from the life-world, possessing neurology and muscularity that is the product of the western body's desire to conquer nature, bring it under control.

> Our concepts are deeply inseparably linked to our neurophysiology and our sensorimotor experience of the world around us… Our qualia are deeply dependent upon the peculiar character of our embodiment. The nature of our sensory apparatus largely determines the qualative aspects of our experience and concepts develop through our conscious interaction with the world {Ferraiolo, 2002}.

The power of the author then, is to manipulate the muscularity of bodies around it, shift its nervous system, and impress the meaning of the authorial body onto bodies that are other and Othered. It is here that the imposed subjectivity of Aboriginality and the colonization of Indigenous peoples are made possible. Tuhiwai Smith refers to Hegel as the father of history;

> The German philosopher Hegel is usually regarded as the 'founding father' of history in the sense outlined here. This applies to both Liberal and Marxist views. Hegel conceived of the fully human subject as someone capable of 'creating (his) own history'. However, Hegel did not simply invent the rules of history. As Robert Young argues, 'the entire Hegelian machinery simply lays down the operation of a system already in place, already operating in everyday life {Smith, 1999, p32}.

As the father of history, Hegel essentially ensured that the episteme and ontological sensorium of the western male body became the centre of the historical narrative and in doing so, Othered all bodies that did not comply to this emergent human paradigm.

Imperialism is the era during which the west invented and imagined itself. History is the manifestation of physical language. The properties of language produced during the industrial revolution meant that the ownership of physical language extended into all the classes, and through colonialism, the possession of language was signified specifically through materiality, the difference being the propertied and the unpropertied.

> Aristotle's term for actuality is *energia* – meaning vividness, a way of representing things inanimate as animate, a process of actualization – which is closely connected with *dynamis,* another important term of Aristotle, which means potentiality, faculty, natural capacity and virtual existence of action, as opposed to *energia* as actual existence of action {Oesch, 1996}.

Western writing and language requires as body in which to take hold, to have root, to secure itself to the land and the life-world. That technology is both an interior and exterior phenomena occurs in the colonizing of Indigenous folk described Guittari and Deleuze refer to as 'deterritorialization and reterritorialization.' The internal support system, a neurological

map shaped by the written word and its progress, is one whereby the it is 'fit' to be the locus of language, its production and reproduction, and in doing so, western ideology itself.

Considered illegitimate forms of writing, Indigenous writing is that writing not born from western consciousness. Indigenous writing itself is writing that is susceptible to change simply because the present is considered more important than the past. Western forms of writing are about the past projected in both directions to create past and future.

> Once we drew our paintings on the sand as part of the ceremonies by which we passed on the deepest knowledge of the *tjukurrpa*. After the ceremonies these sand paintings were dissolved into space, scattered into the wind, the knowledge now a part of us, informing every aspect of how we lived our lives, in our relationship to one another, to country and to the mysteries of creation itself.… There is such a gulf between the traditional Aboriginal way of understanding reality and the way white society seems to understand. For us, everything is intimately interconnected. But white people separate things out, even the relationship between their minds and their bodies, but especially between themselves and other people and nature…. This seems really crazy to our way of thinking and experiencing

> reality … underpinning all of these are the deeper stories of our links to our ancestral creating, the vibrating hum of existence that is recorded in the Dreaming tracks and in our sacred sites {Randall, 2003, pp3-4}.

In other words, Indigenous modes of writing are writing that occurs outside of western time, generated by non-western body. A western body is identifiable as is a conscious, experiencing body produced by its conflict of higher and lower senses, its neurology shaped by its withdrawal from the natural world.

The spoken word and the living present is the underlying force of Indigenous cultures, ensuring a continuum that would span millennia, in some places quadruple the collective era of civilizations that sprouted up throughout the world at various times. The Navajo say the greatest potential for language exists in the wind.

> Since we speak only by means of breath, Wind itself – the collective breath – is said to hold the power of language … {Abrams, 1996, p233}.

The earth breathes, and the body an harmonic organism gifted with language as it gently brews the wind of the earth so that in speaking, the wind is gently distilled but gently shifted through the spoken word of the body. The presence of the body in space shifts the earth,

moulds it so that it can only be changed for the body having ever been present at all. The great unfathomable story that is the universe can never be known in its entirety, for even should it be known within one instant, within the next, it is different.

Aristotle was a botanist and biologist, and conducted many experiments on plant and animal life. In his experiments, it was the application of language to the components that gave the organism structure – a codified structure contained by the written word. In other words, Aristotle was not only dissecting organisms, he was designing a syntactic connection that would predict logic of the function of independent parts within the perceivable whole. This modus operandi is best explained by the discipline of *Molecular Biology*;

> Like written language texts, genome sequences can be represented as letters (nucleotides) and words (genes). However, understanding the lingual information of such texts requires knowledge not only of the letters and words, but also of the syntax, that is, the ordering of and relationship between the words in phrases and sentences. Likewise, understanding the biological information of genomes requires an understanding of not only the nucleotides and their arrangement into genes, but also of the syntax of biological information. A key part of such biological syntax is the organization of the elements encoded by the genome, particularly the proteins, into functional units such as complexes and organelles and the dynamic interactions between these

> units to control and carry out their various and complex biological functions. Thus, I would propose that systems biology can most simply be defined as *the search for the syntax of biological information*, that is, the study of the dynamic networks of interacting biological elements {Aebersold, 2005}.

The human body is the literate body, the body whose muscularity is shaped by the text, its sinew moved in response to the written word, and is the location of writing itself.

Biology as a signifier of language

> Human concepts are not random or arbitrary; they are highly structured and limited, because of the limits and structure of the brain, the body, and the world.
>
> *Lakoff and Nuñez* {Gallese, 2003, p3}

Robert Young in Colonial Desire makes the correlation between language and biology. Not only, says Young, is the west forever fused with difference, or more succinct, made possible through the presence of difference, but he explains this difference in terms of desire, for the west he says, 'are concerned with meeting and incorporating the culture of the other, whether of class, ethnicity or sexuality; they often fantasize crossing into it… This transmigration is

the form taken by colonial desire, whose attractions and fantasies were no doubt complicit with colonialism itself' {Young, 1995, p3}.

> English culture is lacking, lacks something, and acts out an inner dissonance that constitutes its secret, riven self. For the past few centuries Englishness has often been constructed as a heterogeneous, conflictual composite of contrary elements, an identity which is not identical with itself. The whole problem … for Englishness is that it has never been successfully characterized by an essential, core identity form which the other is excluded. It has always, like the Prime Meridian, been divided within itself, and it is this that has enabled it to be variously and counteractively constructed {Young, 1995, p3}.

The contact between the English and the other through colonialism resulted in the English spurred an attempt at 'a fixed English identity' {Young, 1995, p3}.

> The fixity of identity is only sought in situations of instability and disruption, of conflict and change. Despite these differences, the fundamental model has not

> altered: fixity implies disparateness; multiplicity must be set against at least a notional singularity to have any meaning {Young, 1995, p4}.

The colonization of Indigenous peoples that spurred the economical growth of the British during the 19th Century came at great cost, says Young.

> The globalization of the imperial capitalist peers, of a single integrated economic and colonial system, the imposition of a unitary time on the world, was achieved at the price of the dislocation of its peoples and cultures {Young, 1995, p4}.

The imposition of unitary time and economy on the world, poses the greatest threat for Indigenous peoples in that if Indigenous peoples are to earn a living in order to support ourselves, then we are encouraged to turn increasingly, to have to acknowledge this material existence of the colonial system. An important correlation raised by Young, is that in order to preserve a pure culture in the form of English identity, desire, bodies and language was and is greatly policed. This is the consequence of a textual culture that is indebted to the presence of the other in order to express notions of identity. 'If language preserves one

major product of contact, a second, less usual model … is equally literal and more physical: sex {Young, 1995, p5}.

It is through sex, a physical expression for the desire of the other, a need to possess, and in this possession of the other, a possession of an object, an artefact, and language betrays not only colonialisms inability to state who it is without coopting the other, but it is indeed a characteristic of textuality that the text is unable to state what it is, requires the presence of object; of other. But Young states it clearly that colonialism in coming into contact with other peoples, in order to administer its expansion, required that the people and the lands be possessed.

> The historical links between language and sex were, however, fundamental. Both produced what were regarded as 'hybrid' forms (creole, pidgin and miscegenated children), which were seen to embody threatening forms of perversion and degeneration and became the basis for endless metaphoric extension in the racial discourse of social commentary {Young, 1995, p5}.

The administration of difference required that all bodies – coloured, black, red, yellow, brown – different biology's that represented different threats to English identity and language, were to be hierarchically ordered. This order was found in the Great Chain of Being.

> In the nineteenth century, as in the late twentieth, hybridity was a key issue for cultural debate. The reasons differ, but are not altogether dissimilar. The question had first been broached in the eighteenth century when the different varieties of human beings had been classed as part of the animal kingdom according to hierarchical scale of the Great Chain of Being {Young, 1995, p6}.

While initially, the African was placed at the bottom, the expanding British boundaries meant that the Aborigine eventually displaced the African as the link between the animal kingdom and the human family. The term human is an interesting metaphorical device, perhaps one that has been overlooked in attempt to explain the unhumanness of Indigenous peoples. While the term human is applied to all peoples, it is deployed as a form of boundary control, its primary purpose is to protect the purity of language, and in this, biology as a signifier of pure language; i.e. in this instance, English. The potential

corruptibility of language is expressed in the presence of pidgin, defined as by Young 'crudely, the vocabulary of one language superimposed on the grammar of another', and preserved in pidgin language, the history of cultural contact {Young, 1995, p5}.

The emergent concept of a family of humans expressed in ascension, or descent, is where the true power of the west to obscure that when it comes to pure language, not only are not all equal, but all can never be equal, for the purpose of the Great Chain of Being is to provide a framework, a metaphor that will in its deployment preserve the pristine nature of western language – a language for westerners by westerners. The body in this – known as human by the 20th century scientific discourse, is really an expression of the state of purity of western language, and the racial categories are merely expressions of divergence from this state of purity. The unity of the human species provided an administerial framework, but an ideological one that disguised the use of the term human as a statement of pure language signified by the western white body (primarily male). In the Indigenous experience, the deviation from a 'pure [western] language' implicit to Indigenous bodies of mixed heritage, terms such as 'half-caste', 'quarter-caste', and 'octoroon' were fixed. Bodies known by such terms were also vigorously controlled by the colonial administration throughout Australian history. Young cites Theodor Waitz,

> If there be various species of mankind, there must be a natural aristocracy among them, a dominant white species as opposed to the lower races who by their origin are destined to serve the nobility of mankind, and may be tamed, trained, and used like domestic animals, or may, according to circumstances, be fattened or used for physiological or other experiments without compunction. To endeavour to lead them to a higher morality and intellectual development would be as foolish as to expect that lime trees would, by cultivation, bear peaches, or the monkey would learn to speak by training. Wherever the lower races prove useless for the service of the white man, they must be abandoned to their savage state, it being their fate and natural destination. All wars of extermination, whenever the lower species are in the way of the white man, are not only excusable, but fully justifiable {Young, 1995, p7}.

In other words, war is an act of protecting language, preserving narrativity, and assuring the power of discourse remains western, and specifically, white. The concept of the human then, is not just the alienation from the life-world, it is specifically that biology that is assigned the responsibility of reproducing western language; i.e. writing, and the preservation of discourse. A concept that neatly brings the signified and the signifier, language and biology neatly together is the concept of race.

The human as production

> Marx and Engels did not condemn idealism for taking thought and language seriously but, rather … for giving these "an independent existence." Human beings, they insist, produce ideas as part of the production of the totality of their conditions of life. The production of ideas and concepts, therefore, "is directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse" that take place among people. Indeed this, they suggest, is "the language of real life" {Wood, 1997, p28}.

There are many theories and theorists who believe that language only occurs between people as a communal and communicated phenomenon. The 'historical materialism' {Wood, 1997, p27} referred to by McNally requires the inquiry into language as just that; the history of materialism.

> "Why the primary boundaries?", we are really asking what came before the primary boundary. But nothing precedes the primary boundary. That is, nothing causes it, nothing produces it, nothing brings it into existence. If there

> were a cause to the primary boundary, then that cause would itself be the new primary boundary. In theological terms, if the first cause had a cause, it wouldn't be the *first* cause. And so, unsatisfactorily as it initially seems, the only possible answer to the question, "Why the primary boundary?", is that there is no why. Rather, the primary boundary arises of itself, as one's own present activity, but as an activity which is itself uncaused. It is a movement in and by one's unity consciousness, a movement that has many results, but is not itself a result {Wilber, 1979, pp74-75}.

The primary boundary, that boundary between human and the earth, saw a shift in the life-world, as well as a neurological re-ordering of the human body. What precedes it, is beyond the language that bought it into being. The consequence of poststructuralism is that the outcome is that we are all imprisoned within the language that demarcates the human temporal domain as being separate to the life-world. The social structures deified through social linguistics is loaded with the pessimism that liberation then from our social position is ineffable, for each of us is a product of that very construction. That the production of language is separate to the constraint of the bodies that produces them is a fallacy. According to McNally, the view of Marx and Engels is that the 'new idealism' that separates the production of ideas from language is problematic as this radicalism

posits the 'word *as* deed' {Wood, 1997, p27}, making such notions of liberation unthinkable and untenable.

> Imprisoned within language, we may play with words; but we can never hope to liberate ourselves from immutable structures of oppression rooted in language itself {Wood, 1997, p27}.

While McNally believes this linguistic idealism is a shirking of responsibility 'whether it goes by the name of poststructuralism, postmodernism, or post-Marxism'{Wood, 1997, p27}. The intention of McNally's argument is to counteract the separation of language and its ideas from the labour force that produces them. That language is consequence of labour and production and is present and made necessary within the specific modes of production, creating communities and temporalities that constitute the lived experience of that production, is what challenges the idealism of poststructuralism and postmodernism.

> … Marxism has the resources for an account of language and its position within the constellation of human practice that is richer and more profound than these idealist views, and that this account can understand language as,

> among other things, one site of social interaction which is decisively shaped by relations of work and conflict, i.e., as shaped by class struggle {Wood, 1997, p27}.

That language is the consequence of human production arising not separate to ideas but as a constituent of those very ideas itself, is an important point when discussing the phenomenon of not just western language, but specifically, western language in the history of materialism. In other words, the language that occurs within the west is the product of materialism itself, underpinning the 'material activity' {Wood, 1997, p28} of western society. This material activity of western society is inalienable from the language that is at the core of its productivity and the idealized outcome of its material productivity.

> A defining feature of human life is social labor, the way in which we organize the interconnected productive activities of individuals in order to reproduce ourselves materially. Just as human work presupposes consciousness, so it requires communication among individuals, a capacity to share and exchange ideas in order to coordinate social labor. And language is the medium of such communication, the very stuff of human

> consciousness. Language is the form of specifically human consciousness, the consciousness of uniquely social beings {Wood, 1997, p28}.

The conflagration of language and the concept of speech need to be disentangled in order to understand the role of western language as a 'system of things'. Western language is a product of materialism itself, and given this, western speech also is a material based language, for it is premised by and structured by the presence of material signs. McNally summarises Voloshinov views from *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929) as

> First, all signs – from words to traffic signals – are material, they are embodied in some physical form or other. Second, signs are social in nature; they exist on the boundaries between individuals and have no meaning outside of communicative interaction. Third, because signs are social, any comprehensive approach to language must focus on speech, on that medium through which most linguistic interaction occurs. 'Outside of speech, language is lifeless, it is a collection of means of communicating without the act of communication itself, a form without substance. The life of language, its very dynamism, thus resides in speech, in verbal interaction among people {Wood, 1997, pp28-29}.

There are two considerations being made here. One, that humans require speech to communicate, and that speech itself are formulated on the presence of the sign, the sign being the artefact of material historicism and western existentialism. The great distinction to be made here between western language and Indigenous language is that the language of western society is the product of its material existence, with the intention of constantly reproducing material historicity. This is the foundation of western production, and that is the production of language itself. While Foucault may discuss the power relations present in the different institutions; hospitals, asylums – the distinction is that these are purely discourses, and organise the speaker and the listener within those spaces within hierarchical social order. Indeed, Foucault was right to say that 'language as a terrain of power and domination embodied in particular social institutions' {Wood, 1997, p29}. All experience, interaction between bodies made possible by language, in western society is premised by language being necessitated by labour while also the consequence of labour itself. The west requires the presence of language in order to reproduce its material existence located in the materialism of the sign.

> But official discourses, the rhetorical systems of ruling classes, attempt to deny the multiaccentuality of the sign. Ruling classes aspire to depict a single worldview through discourse; as a result they try to assert a unified set of meanings and themes as the only possible way of describing things… It

> attempts, in other words, to reify signs, to treat them as static and unchanging, as capable of a singular, unitary, eternal meaning {Wood, 1997, p31}.

To pick up Voloshinov's point of the dominance over meaning by the ruling class, actually alludes to the materiality of history, and to pick up Tuhiwai Smith's point that only human's contribute to and write history, and Indigenous peoples are not quite fully human, or partially human and some not even human at all, then the greatest symbol, the eternal unchanging sign of unitary meaning then to be created by the ruling class then, is the material sign of *human*, which to pick up Marx's theory that materialism is both the basis for and the outcome of western labour, then it is the human that is the greatest unified sign of all.

Indigenous folk have been co-opted into western material productivity and labour based on its need for material language, in fighting against the premise and promise of *dehumanization*. Liberty and notions of freedom have been present within the notion of humanity, an idiolect of western civility since the Enlightenment, and brought forward into imperialism. Perhaps the biggest faux pa the poststructuralists have exposed by separating the notion of history from western production of language related to the production of ideas is in exposing the limits of language. The perceptual domain defined by the presence of western materialism, makes the notion of liberty – true liberty – a condition free of language, and therefore, free

from material existence. This for a westerner, is unimaginable, and is promoted as that domain beyond human dominion. But for Indigenous folk, it is imaginable, liveable and inhabitable, for it is representative of the world before invasion, imperialism and colonisation. It does also allow us to explore the notion of the human as a biological phenomenon, a product of material language and material existence.

In a culture of invasion and eradication, it is writing that has become the moral capital and memory. Through writing, memory exists outside of the body, the possession of physical buildings and architecture. The design of space ultimately meant the design of bodies. The human became so engrossed in the production of space and productivity, that he overlooked the fact that what he was in fact producing was language. Writing is itself the economical goal of western economy, for through language, words, concepts, the proliferation of story proffered within western ideology could and would maintain the supremacy of the western body, giving it access to resources and energy, whilst maintaining its health and order at the expense of less privileged bodies, or bodies who did not have a position of power within its ideology dressed as an economy.

Economics and writing are one and the same. Warfare and writing is one and the same. An economy is based on word production or the production of language, will require energy or

the exploitation of stored sunlight. Such an economy will make decisions that allow that economy to continue to exist. What we perceive as moral shifts throughout history are actually shifts in the mode of productivity, so that the production of language and space through the production of language can continue.

The 16th Century is the era of the factory. It is the especially important in the propagation of the western narrative, as it is within the factory that western language and ideology took on a materialistic form. The collateral of the western language in the 16th century took on a materialistic form, and the economy based on language now had a materialistic outcome in the form of goods, with goods propagating the need for services. The western language became a utility through which the western body experienced meaning through capital, with goods and services entering the everyday lives of the human. The human, in its growing disconnection from the earth, now had a physical utile expression of language in the form of capital and material possessions. To possess language became synonymous with materialism, the consumption of the language made available through the exchange of money. Production in the form of material possessions and accumulation of wealth also obscured the fact that western ideology is an economy of words. From ideas came words, and from words products, the desire of the human to be inclusively part of progress in the western narrative could now simply be 'bought'.

> Humans have become a plague upon the Earth…. The primal cultures surviving today far exceed our Western civilization in longevity {Metzner, 1993}.

Western ideology is an economy of language. It is the economy that ties the body to the material world, its vibration low and ignorant to the higher vibration, where the realm of the infinite and the power to manifest is revealed to the body. All elements of western economy is designed to alienate the human body from the life-world in that it perceives itself as being alienated, the dependency of the human body upon the economy of western ideology asserts the ongoing alienation from the life-world. It is here that western ideology is successful, for it has at this moment the power to inculcate the body by programming its nervous system through language.

Biology of humanism

> Human experience is incarnated. I receive the surrounding world through my eyes, my ears, my hands. The structure of my perceptual organs shapes that which I apprehend. And it is via bodily means that I am capable of responding. My legs carry me towards a desired goal seen across the distance.

> My hands reach out to take up tools, reconstructing the natural surroundings into an abode uniquely suited to my body. My actions are motivated by emotions, needs, desires, that well up from a corporeal self. Relations with others are based upon our mutuality of gaze and touch, our speech, our resonances of feeling and perspective. From the most visceral of cravings to the loftiest of artistic achievements, the body plays its formative role {Leder, 1990, p1}.

Human being is a phenomenon created through and by the presence of material language. According to the theories of Marx and Engels, the human exists in *production* of its own language, necessitated by its material existence. Writing is the means through which humans are produced in action and consequence of the action. It is writing that is the partition between the seen and the unseen, the knowable and the unknowable. The question of 'what is writing?' at its very heart lies the answer to 'what is human?' Within the question of writing and the human, one locates the body. Not just *a* body, but *the* human body. A body that exists at the expense of all other bodies, rendered unimaginable and unassailable through the power of western writing.

> Yet this bodily presence is of a highly paradoxical nature. While in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, it is also essentially characterized by absence. That is, one's own body is rarely the

> thematic object of experience. When reading a book or lost in thought, my own bodily state may be the farthest thing from my awareness. I experientially dwell in the world of ideas, paying heed to my physical sensations or posture. Nor is this forgetfulness restricted to moments of higher-level cognition. I may be engaged in a fierce sport, muscles flexed and responsive to the slightest movement of my opponent. Yet it is precisely upon this opponent, this game, that my attention dwells, not on my own embodiment {Leder, 1990, p1}.

The introduction to *The Absent Body* by Drew Leder speaks of the body created through language, the parameters of conception and the rules of the 'game', or the interaction with other body, predicated by language, and its syntactic structure. Movement through social space and into social domains that are protected through class and privilege is equal to the degree that one becomes aware of one's otherness. This is true for Aboriginal bodies, women and ethnicities, produced through the western male's gaze and his consumptive appetite in the need to decompose such bodies in the process of assimilating them through composition and consumption.

Aristotle's developed 'the logical foundation of physiognomical inference: as an enthymeme, a syllogism from signs… Aristotle founded the formal logical basis, from which modern

semiotics developed new approaches to physiognomics …' {Vogt, 1996}. In Aristotle's physiognomica, the human ideal took on an embodied semiotic form. The root of aesthetics and beauty lies in human idealism, but more importantly, in textuality itself. Physiognomica is not just the declaration of the human; it also assumes the physiognomy of the human as a literate, textual, linear being captured in time.

Autopoiesis incorporates the biological self reproduction capacity of the organism, but in modernity, it refers to the machine. The human body has been mechanized, and in this, operates systematically to reproduce the system that produces it. The human's mechanic Autopoiesis is hidden from itself. New information cannot be introduced into western ideology, for trapped within its own language the west can only continue to fracture that which it already believes premised on the privilege of knowledge. The application ad nausea of western language with the intention of consuming the light of beings that exist beyond the parameters of western ideology exploits such bodies through the consumerist practice of western writing. Writing necessarily steals the light of other beings, other bodies in the manufacturing of narrative. Manufacturing a story in the form of narrative requires energy, and the west has become specialist in harnessing energy for the purpose of narrative construction.

> … colonial discourse implies an understanding of colonialism as a 'text without an author'; there will always be authors of individual texts, but colonial discourse as such makes up a signifying system without an author. Colonialism therefore becomes kind of a machine… two obvious but important points that tend to get lost in today's emphasis on discursive constructions – the role of capitalism as the determining motor or colonialism, and the material violence involved in the process of colonization… in which philosophy, psychoanalysis, anthropology, geography, economics et al, are all brought together in one interactive economy and show to be implicated in capitalism's colonizing operations {Young, 1995, pp166-167}.

The colonizing machine has been a very successful mechanism for invading and securing land for exploitative purposes, as well as the bodies to whom the land previously belonged. The colonizing process therefore includes the methods of creating subject and object beings in its intention of supplanting the western colonial narrative within the lands belonging to Indigenous peoples. It is this colonising machine that would create the Aborigine in a bid to declare what it [colonialism] is not.

Chapter 10

Aboriginal fiction

> Not only must a narrative decide what counts as a body and what kind of bodies are possible within the narrative world; it must also determine how the body interacts with what is outside of it. This includes other human bodies as well as the surrounding environment – narrative space, objects, and natural forces {Punday, 2000}.

The making of the aborigine

The idea that Australia was peacefully settled is a pervasive. Australia as a country unoccupied and belonging to no-one, the absence of war, and the mythology that the Aborigines did not fight for their country, is one that continues to inform the mythology of Australian nationhood. The fight for Indigenous rights to land has always been a question of language. The notion of the boundary according to Wilber is the operation of illusion. The same boundary, the dichotomy and binary inherent to western textual culture and ideology,

was transported to the land now known as Australia along with the discarded British citizens come convicts.

> … to draw boundaries is to manufacture opposites…. And the world of opposites is a world of conflict … The simple fact is that we live in a world of conflict and opposites because we live in a world of boundaries. Since every boundary line is a battle line, here is the human predicament: the firmer one's boundaries, the more entrenched are one's battles. The more I hold onto pleasure, the more I necessarily fear pain. The more I pursue goodness, the more I am obsessed with evil {Wilber, 1979, pp18-19}.

The illusion of the Aborigine began in 900 A.D when the Pope drew a line through the globe. The northern hemisphere was inhabited by Christians, the southern hemisphere inhabited by heathens. The boundary drawn by the Pope found a biological signifier in the form of the Indigenous body of the land now known as Australia. The drawing of the line, the boundary that separated north from south and south from north, was effectively a declaration of war.

> The point is that we always tend to treat the boundary as *real* and then manipulate the opposites created by the boundary. We never seem to question the existence of the boundary itself…. This goal of separating the opposites and then clinging to or pursuing the positive halves seems to be a distinguishing characteristic of progressive Western civilization … Progress, after all, is simply progress *toward* the positive and *away* from the negative. …. However vividly the differences between the opposites may strike us, they nevertheless remain completely inseparable and mutually interdependent, and for the simple reason that the one could not exist without the other {Wilber, 1979, pp20-21}.

The story of discovery and the opening up of the land of the colony of Australia is a story of heroes, writing a wilderness and untamed land into civility. The composing of the land into a civilized environment made hospitable to human authorship, the heroes of discovery pitted themselves against the wild environment, and the ancient peoples who lived in the land having called it home for millennia, are all premised on the original boundary represented by the withdrawal from the natural world, and like the natural world, those of us whose worldview depend on the land, a war was pitted against us as well. The exploitation of the boundary made the dehumanization of the land and Indigenous peoples not only necessary, but unavoidable, for it was and is inherent to the western world view.

> To maintain an idea means to draw a boundary line between concepts felt to be true and concepts felt not to be true. To receive an education is to learn where and how to draw boundaries and then what to do with boundary aspects. To maintain a judicial system is to draw a boundary line between those who fit society's rules and those who don't. To fight a war is to draw a boundary line between those who are for us and those who are against us {Wilber, 1979, p18}.

The invasion and colonisation of the land now known as Australia was an economical necessity for the British. It also provided the means to deal with the lack of space for the growing criminal element in British society. It was necessary that the colony would be self supportive through the development of a local economy. The invasion and colonisation of the land now known as Australia was not a place one journeyed to by choice.

> Transportation to the Australian colonies was one of the most common punishments for serious crime during these years, and much discussion revolved around the utility of this method of punishment … Supporters of the system hoped that fear of banishment would deter potential criminals, whilst

> those who succumbed to temptation would be removed to a safe distance… One of the primary functions of exiling convicts to Australia was to deter crime at home. Undesirables in Britain might be dissuaded form a life of crime if they realized what savage retribution would be wrought upon them once they were apprehended by the authorities {Clarke, 1977, pp1-2}.

The myth of the nomad is one that would establish the ancient Indigenous body of the land now known as Australia as an unhuman, unwilled, and instinctually motivated. That the invaders chose to destroy the dwellings of the Indigenous peoples inhabiting the area lends to the construction of the nomad, effectively disassociates the Indigenous body from the land, removes all intelligible world-views, and makes men, women and children, unconscious wanderers.

The western body not only took possession of the land, but also of the bodies that had been neurologically entwined with the land for millennia. The body like the land became an energetic resource that would be utilized for the purpose of the author to compose and re-conceptualize a self realized narrative to which he is positioned as central and centre. The reassigning of the ancient bodies into the Aborigine had begun.

> The ideas of 'race' and 'nation' are categories of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion. They identify socially constructed boundaries which separate the world's population into discrete groups which are commonly (although not exclusively) alleged to be naturally distinct. Considered abstractly, the criteria's signified in the process of categorisation and division are discrete. Concerning the idea of 'race', the object of signification is biological: commonly, it is a phenotypical feature (eg. Skin colour, hair type, shape of the head), but genetic and other less immediately visible biological phenomena (eg. Blood) are also signified. In the case of the idea of a 'nation', the criterion is usually cultural in character (eg. language, 'way of life'). In practice, it is often difficult to sustain this distinction because 'cultural' characteristics can be represented as 'natural' and therefore biological endowments {Miles, 1993, p56}.

The location of Aboriginality within the definition of ethnicity asserts that Aboriginality itself is a form of ethnicity, or otherness. According to Marxist theory, Aboriginality is a social relation rather than an entity, something existing in itself. The term Aborigine is a concept that is continually constructed through social relationships – between Aboriginal as well as non-Aborigine peoples. The basis of these relationships however, is the historicity contained

in the term itself, including the original intention of the emergent nation of Australia. The Commonwealth definition of Aboriginality is

> An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as such and is accepted as such by the community in which they live {Dudgeon, 2000, p43}

The Aborigine is not an arbitrary phenomenon, but is the outcome of colonial intention. The west's desire to possess the lands of the Indigenous folk made the concept of Aborigine inseparable form the concept of Australia. To hold dear these values one perceives them as both 'natural' and 'necessary' dually. They are either 'right' or 'wrong', with any society at any given time participating 'willingly' or 'unwillingly', by economic will or the will of the character, effectively, these concepts or understanding have been blurred'{Cohen, 1982, p3}.

> Basically, those ideologies which we develop as participants in a capital society, are dually presented as 'our own', and these values necessary for a 'human' society. Marx developed a method of conceptualizing social phenomena in terms of the social relationships entailed within them; Freud,

> a theory of how social relationships are internalized by the individual {Cohen, 1982, p4}.

What is Aboriginal is such a quagmire because it is an illusion. It is not a case of how the Aborigine is *represented*, but more that the Aborigine is a *representation* already; it already is a representation, one which the dominant culture through its technology has the power to manipulate and stipulate. In the struggle to reify the concept of Aborigine as though it is the only one available to us, is to have our attention averted from the life-world, the world of our Ancestors, and instead towards the power of western technology as though it has the power to shape and manipulate our realities. In a sense it does, for it shapes and influences society, who in turn attempts to recreate the Aborigine within social relations. It is necessary for Indigenous peoples to understand their own position within this social relationship.

'Reich understood the processes of psychological development described by Freud as the process by which the dominant social relationships are reproduced within the individual as a corresponding character structure' {Cohen, 1982, p5}. The Aborigine is a socially and politically produced phenomenon, and in its production, supports the concept of Australia and Australian history. Through its presence, the Aboriginal body as the lowest common denominator is the pivotal identity around and through which other bodies are socially and

hierarchically ordered. In short the Aboriginal body is kept in place to serve the privileged western body, and at the service of Australian nationalism.

The experience of being aborigine

> Language is the capacity of one individual to alter, through structured sound, gesture or visual emission, the mental organization of another individual {Allott, 1991}.

Our lives, our bodies, are about story. The history of this country now known as Australia is but a story produced and manufactured over the top of stories that were and continue to circulate since time immemorial. I am but a part of that story. I am a story. My body, its muscularity, blood, heart, eyes, teeth, its atomic and molecular structure, is held together by story, and like Aristotle's human and slave dichotomy, demarcates the human from the barbarian, its fundamentalism being the distinction between the capacity of one body to alter the state and condition of another.

Growing up as an Aboriginal person, I felt myself at the centre of a drama, a play almost, whereby my limits were inscribed onto my being, the construction of my reflexive self the

result of the beliefs espoused by bodies around me, their impressions ultimately contributing to my own sense of self. As an Aboriginal person, I received attention, and the attention, the falling of another's gaze upon my body, was loaded with the residual grand narrative, whether it is the story of social Darwinism or Australian nationalism, my location within society conceptually and physically positioned my body in its margins.

> The truth about stories is that that's all we are. The Okanagan storyteller Jeanette Armstrong tells us that "Through my language I understand I am being spoken to, I'm not the one speaking. The words are coming from many tongues and mouths of Okanagan people and the land around them. I am a listener to the language's stories, and when my words form I am merely retelling the same stories in different patterns" {King, 2003, p181}.

The story I tell myself, and the story that is imposed is all that I am. Sometimes they – the autobiographical and the external narrative that seems to whirl about me – are the same. Sometimes they are not. It is here that my resistance to the colonial narrative that seeks to possess my body is located. A rejection of the story that is manufactured by colonialism is the basis of returning to the story that I know is here; in this land, and is indeed, the land itself. My family, my community members, we are all but stories; stories that rub up against each other on a daily basis. I don't know their stories any better than they know mine. It is important though, I feel, that the uniqueness of our stories are able to exist unencumbered by

a greater force that attempts to homogenize and artefact our existence; the colonial story that has named us as Aborigine. As an Aborigine, the unique stories of our embodied being collapse into a non-descript Otherness within the colonial grand narrative, and the Australian historical narrative. The very cells of our bodies, the answer to the energetic force of the universe as it vibrates through us, loses its unique resonance that speaks of our importance of being, our necessary journey into which we have been born. It is lost it seems, that each of our bodies is the universe speaking, the Ancestors genetic structures grown from millennia of living with and through the land.

The appearance of my body as an Aborigine demarcated me from the mainstream society, ensuring the status of other in the land of my Ancestors. The boundary represented by the physical and symbolic presence of my body was experienced as though a distance between me and a white person. It was as though a play was being orchestrated around me; that I was stuck within a role, a pervading silence where my voice should be. It was as though being spoken to without any communication.

> We have probably all wondered at one time or another what the land was like before the fences and the bitumen – we have all sighted a bridge to another time. But when I walked the land, it seemed as if I had only my imagination to conjure up the past. At other times I felt that the past was there but that I had no way of reaching it, as if I had to learn a new language

> before I could understand what had happened. But if I was to understand my own place in this part of Australia, I felt I had to know more about the lives of those who had walked before me on the same ground {McKenna, 2002, p5}.

I grew up on the far south coast of New South Wales. I grew up on Yuin land. The awareness of prior Indigenous ownership of the land was not really spoken about, while the histories of the bean and crop pickers that passed through the area was. I grew up a crop picker. I first began picking beans with my family at the age of five years old. My family still pick beans for income to this day. We lived in huts. The farmers who owned the land upon which we had free tenancy in exchange for work, had watched generations of Aboriginal people pass through their crop fields. I had little understanding in those early days that working was not optional, but rather an exchange whereby we forfeited choice for shelter. It was an area and a time that the reflexive identity of Aboriginality was clearly class inscribed and spatially ordered. Who I was in the world was in direct relationship to my body. Central to my emergent identity, was the understanding that I am Aboriginal. My family is Aboriginal. All the folk who passed through the farm were Aboriginal. And we worked irrespective of flood and heat.

> According to Heidegger, what individuals will find through sincere self-exploration is the incessant approach of my own death. Fearing my own annihilation, I pursue as many diversions as possible. Living in a world of diversions postpones the need to question the meaning of my own existence and that of the world in which I live. This cycle of responding to the fear of annihilation with more and more diversions deepens one's fallenness in the everyday world of the 'they'. Yet, it can never eliminate the inevitability of one's own death {Carey, 2000, p3}.

The *they-ness* referred to by Carey is the world of constructed identity. The homogenizing of Indigenous experience throughout millennia preserved in Nation, Language and Place names, has effectively created a 'they' through the colonial experience, replacing of course the multiplicity of cultural and biological identity created by the Indigenous body's interaction with the life-world.

The issue of identity is actually an issue of story. In *Blacklines* Michael Dodson gives an account on the question of Aboriginality, its construction and role shaped within the colonial gaze. The issue of representation is an important one within western textual culture, for its power to shape bodies and life experiences is infinite. Who should or should not participate in Aboriginal representation is a question that is not isolated or culturally specific, for within a

culture of writing, the issue of representation is the practice of authorial legitimisation. In other words, the question of representation has to do with the author and the possession of narrativity, dependent upon how textual culture seizes the power to shape and manipulate matter through the written word. The question then is, if

> This right to control one's own identity is part of the broader right to self-determination; that is, the right of a people to determine its political status and to pursue its own economic, social and cultural development
> … Recognition of a people's fundamental right to self-determination must include the right to self-definition, and to be free from the control and manipulation of an alien people…. It must include the freedom to live outside the cage created by other peoples' images and projections {Grossman, 2003, p31}.

Aborigine is a technological statement, a consequence of conflict, and a semantic inhibitor with the intention of a biological and temporal outcome. The function of the term Aborigine more than any other, is to disclose the parameter between society and the marginality that is marked by the term. The temporal distinction of Aboriginality is sustained through language. Identifying as an Aborigine is not about becoming, but rather the constrained parameters that demarcate what an Aborigine is, for in the quest to find *what is* an Aborigine, it inevitably

constitutes *what is not*. To state 'I am an Aborigine' is to concurrently state what one is not. The rules and regulation of identity is policed in terms of what is allowed to enter the temporal domain of Aboriginality, and what remains excluded.

> The whole system of experience – world, own body and empirical self – are subordinated to a universal thinker charged with sustaining the relationships between the three terms….Now, if one's own body and the empirical self are no more than elements of the system of experience, objects among other objects in the eyes of the true I, how can we ever be confused with our body {Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p241}?

The racially divided society into which I was immersed, not born, for I was born in Queensland, and spent my earlier years on the border of Queensland and New South Wales, were the founding principles of my understanding of who I am in the world. The land yawning beneath our young playful feet, vibrated with an immense power and presence beyond my articulatory powers. Yet it vibrated within me. Spoke to me of an immeasurable bodied authority that belittled my presence. In the land of crop picking, saw mills and dairy farming, I was small. Settlement was small; the land, large. It seemed to mock all of us. Let us know that at any given moment we would disappear into the vastitude of bush along with

those who came before us. The owners of the farm exploited fear in order to control the Aboriginal people in their employment. The land though, rose behind the backs of the farmers set on tractors who would come by to survey the paddocks. There was uneasiness here, and to this day, still. The unspoken and unspeakable acts committed against the original peoples of this land still here, still present and part of the environment in which I grew up. I felt a lack of peace here, and still do. It is as though there is a disjunction between the stories that are told, and those that are not. And I feel this truth through my body. My body speaks a language that even I am unaware of, for it communicates directly with this life-world, this land where people were hurt and killed, and no amount of stories laid atop of this can stop its vibrational impact.

> On the far south coast and the Monaro, these silences have sometimes been so deafening that they reveal a deep sense of unease in relation to the history of settlement. In southern Eden-Monaro, there has rarely been a rational or comfortable creation story. Almost always, in the region's press and in local histories, there has been a struggle to explain, to forget, or to come to terms with unpleasant memories. But the struggle of settler culture to explain the presence of Aboriginal culture, and the way in which this has changed over time, tells us much about the making of history in Australia {McKenna, 2002, p65}.

I begin this story with the experience of growing up on the far south coast of NSW because it speaks of the disparity of the historical narrative being actively produced within the social space which I found myself a part of. The notion of my private sense of self was obliterated by the white gaze of the farmers who owned the property. The public sense of self, or that space beyond the farm, was one where the experience of being cheap labour was consolidated within the identity of Aboriginality through the discrimination encountered. It was a constant part of movement, of self reflexivity that would shape my identity, understanding of self, and ultimately, my body. The question that marked the beginning of this inquiry was, how much of this was my imagination, and how much was real?

> …*what is real is what we regularly talk about.* For better or for worse, there is little evidence that we have any idea of what reality looks like from some absolute point of view. We only know what the world looks like from *our* point of view {Gregory, 1988, p184}.

I remember the first time I was called a black bastard, and the first time I heard the word *abo* used on national television. When I heard this term on a midday show watched by my Aunty, I was shaken. It occurred to me in this instance as a nine year old, that what I was experiencing locally was a national consensus. That according to the world, I was what they referred to as an *abo*. A stone sank within me, and would stay submerged at the core of my being up until the very present. Upon this stone, my emergent identity as an Aborigine was

built, and I found myself adrift within Australian history and society. I was the dispossessed and alien; for I belonged to a story that white Australian's would want to silence, denigrate and obliterate in order to free their conscience. In other words, I was merely an object in another's narrative whilst treading water within the remnants of my Indigenous story. I was caught in the war of stories, a war of one party to tell their version of the story over another party.

> … the efficient causes of Western racism appear to have been the need to rationalize dispossession and/or exploitation of non-European peoples; extreme ethnocentrism, which is to be accounted for in terms of a complex range of factors, important among which is the idea of social development, biological evolutionist, and egalitarianism {Stevens, 1972, p13}.

I once thought I was on the losing side. In fact, at high school a visiting educator told me I was on the losing side, pointing his finger in the direction of the assembled students he waved his hand across the breadth of the student body and declared that 'there were losers amongst us'. I recognise now that the educator was attempting to introduce the concept of Indigenous history and rights to us as students, but it is this statement that impacted upon me in a negative way. The area which I grew up in has a history of racism into which I was socially and culturally indoctrinated. The townships and farming properties, the artefacts of western colonial space, woven through the ancient land now known as Australia, present local

frameworks through which I was taught how to be Aborigine, and how to occupy the spaced created for me within western consciousness and historicity. The countryside, vast and mocking the concept of space itself, seems to resonate at a volume which remains undeniable. Out here, it is loud. Situated within the land, the body cannot ignore the story, song, historicity preceding colonisation, and that manufactured by colonisation itself. The stars are brighter, the music of the land louder, and the visual presence of the land amplified. There is no escaping out here, for one rubs up against one's mortality endlessly.

The environment in constant change reminds one of the inescapable continuums, the ongoing change that is a part of being and living in this amazing land. The close proximity to death is constant. The decaying bodies of animals on the river's bed we passed on the way to the blue swimming hole educated us on the endless cycle of life and its ongoing ness. My Aunty once remarked it takes but a second to become a memory. And such a transition from being into non-being is swift and irreconcilable and sometimes inconsolable. It is the kind of space where questions would take root that required answers, who I am and why I am needed a resolve, for the alternative was to disappear back into the land that holds me fast. Notions of death and irreverence dotted the landscape, providing the landmark of one's mortal coil. But there was something calling me to move beyond this place, and in search of an understanding of who I am in the greater constitution of the universe. In short, I was answering the Dreaming without knowing at that time that this was the guiding force to which I was responding.

Something greater than western historicity, and greater than my own being, made itself known to me through its power. The experience of racism that was to shape my life took root here, in the far south coast.

> From the moment the settlers arrived in south-eastern New South Wales, they encountered physical evidence of Aboriginal culture. When king tides lashed the coast and eroded the sand dunes, the settlers found the bodies of Aboriginal people in the sand, 'doubled over in the fashion of a burial.' When they searched for oysters at Wapengo Lake, north of Bega, they found their bodies in layers in the banks of the tidal lake. When they walked the land they saw the corroboree rings, the canoe and shield trees, the middens and the burial grounds. On the coast they came across the caves that Aboriginal people had used for shelter. When they ploughed the land they found Aboriginal bones, teeth, axes, and tools. With every layer of the surface removed, the land 'without a past' revealed an antiquity the settlers failed to comprehend {McKenna, 2002, p73}.

I became part of this living reminder to the colonisers who 'settled' the area of the story of the land that preceded and excluded them. The physical evidence of prior occupation was undeniable to the colonisers who worked the land, productivity that marks the western legacy of invasion. The attempt by the colonisers to mask their illegitimate access and claim to land

is one made necessary by the Australian historical narrative. The national story of peaceful settlement defies the physical and lived realities experienced on the land, by both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people. There is a dissolution that occurs here between the written word, the historical narrative of Australia, and the story that was revealed each time a layer of earth was moved. There continues to be a disconnection between the national ethos of 'mateship' and the lived experience of Aboriginal peoples, all of whom have inherited the clash of story.

> Sometimes the settlers collected Aboriginal artefacts as trophies or odd items of interest. On other occasions they simply destroyed them or threw them away. In Bega, one Aboriginal elder is said to have given an early settler a large stone marked with the traditional boundaries of Indigenous societies on the far south coast. The settler's grandsons destroyed the stone. In the words of Sister Bernice Smith in the 1960's, one of Bega's first historians, when settlers did show any of the objects they had collected to Aboriginal people, 'they would never speak, they would just look away … some of their sacred stones, simple little things that we wouldn't think of, would be part of their life, part of their treasures. The spirit world is very important to them still'. The settlers contact with the material evidence of Aboriginal culture was a constant reminder that *they* were not the original possessors of the soil {McKenna, 2002, pp73-75}.

The reveal of an Ancient story that contradicted and illegitimated the presence of the western body in the lands belonging to the Ancients, emphasises the importance of story as an inescapable premise of how a body locates itself in time and space. It calls into question all doctrines and ideologies generated by western imperialism and colonialism in its bid to validate and legitimate its presence in lands gained immorally. In *Looking for Blackfella's Point*, Mark McKenna documents the ongoing contradiction between story as promoted through Australian nationhood and western ideology, and that story held in place by the land with which the colonisers came face to face with. The central question that McKenna exploits is how dispossession of Aboriginal people was and continues to be validated by western ideology but more specifically, Australian historicity. These justifications include the belief by westerner's that Aboriginal people merely wandered the land like beasts, had no sense of production and were passive to the land. But as Philip Clarke states in *Where the Ancestors Walked,* Indigenous folk were far from being passive to the land, but rather altered it to suit our needs.

> In Australia, there is much historical evidence to show that Aboriginal people actively harnessed the resources of the environment. Coastal and riverine zones were sometimes modified for fishing, as noted by William Dampier in 1688. Dampier described stone fish traps in use by the Bardi people of Karrakatta Bay, north of Broome on the Kimberley Coast. The use of such fish traps were widespread across Australia ….

Aboriginal people also used fire to open up the country by removing the understorey to allow easier travelling and to promote the future growth of grass for game species. In the account of his exploring, Edward J. Eyre remarked at length on the wide open plains that he found to the north of Adelaide. He appears to have been puzzled by them, particularly where there were remnants of large growths of timber nearby. In other places, the dense mallee-type vegetation had pockets or grassy openings that to Eyre were like 'oases of the desert'. He suggested that the 'plains found interspersed among the dense scrubs may probably have been occasioned by fires, purposely or accidentally lighted by the natives in their wanderings'. It is interesting to note that Eyre considered these grass plains to be an improvement on the dense mallee scrub, as they provided feed for his horses and were easier to traverse. Aboriginal people also preferred not to walk through dense prickly thickets if they could avoid it. And at least some of the plant foods eaten by Aboriginal people would have benefited from the opening of the understorey and the build up of ash produced from regular burnings {Clarke, 2003, pp62-66}.

There is much historical evidence that supports the fact that Indigenous people were far from passive in response to the land, Indigenous people were technologically involved in manufacturing the environment suggests a people who were far from passive and subjugated by the environment. The 'understorey' is also the under-story, so to speak. Because of the visual, physical and spiritual presence of Indigenous people in the landscape, such presence has had an impact upon the Australian identity and historicity, but most importantly, upon that temporality that constitutes Australian itself. The agency of the landscape shaped the temporality of Indigenous peoples, and in this, made Indigenous folk distinct from western temporal existence, 'Aboriginal movement patterns were not only regulated by season, but also tended to occur along certain corridors in the landscape'{Clarke, 2003, p113}.

Although the land has vital agency and energetic impact upon the rhythms and temporality of the body, the Europeans though found themselves traversing the same passageways as Indigenous peoples, and the land though within western culture is not viewed as being alive and vital, lends itself to informing the temporality of the local western body none the less. 'The first European settlers found well-worn paths or tracks in some areas when they arrived in Australia. The visibility of these corridors suggest that they were frequently used by the local people when hunting and gathering and when moving camp' {Clarke, 2003, p113}. Perhaps it is this that is best understood as the 'understory', the land as an agency that ultimately informed the movement and rhythm of Indigenous bodies as well as colonial bodies, despite western cultural values that denies the land as a living being.

> One major track made by Encounter Bay Aboriginal people in South Australia ran from Hindmarsh Valley to Willunga, a distance of over 25 kilometres. In western South Australia, Aboriginal tracks ran between water sources, connecting the coast with the arid interior, while in Tasmania, Aboriginal 'roads' were used through dense or swampy country, but were not required in open woodlands, where travel was much easier. In western Victoria, Aboriginal paths linked places, such as ceremonial grounds and important eel fishery sites, and in northern Queensland, walking tracks called *djimburru,* crossed the ranges and were used by Djabugay people when seasonally moving between the coast and the tablelands of the interior. European settlers observed such tracks in frequent use by Aboriginal people in the early days of the colony, and made use of the tracks themselves {Clarke, 2003, p113}.

The colonizers utilized the roads and pathways forged from millennia of Indigenous economy, where the season dictated the movement of the Indigenous body. These roads and pathways are an important consideration when determining Australian identity, for the very foundation of Australian identity is the conduit forged by the Indigenous body, the very body denied through the Doctrine of terra nullius, and the same body whose dispossession is justified by western ideology as moral, and like the colonial bodies of the early days following invasion, Australian identity was forged upon the tracks of those whom walked before, the story of dispossession and Australian historicity and identity are inextricably linked. The issue of

Treaty for Indigenous folk of the land now known as Australia like the Aboriginal jaws and teeth unearthed, is the conflict of story, or rather the inadequacy of story to explain the physical presence of artefacts that speak of prior and ongoing occupation of the land now known as Australia.

The very veins that criss-cross the personage of Australian identity flow with the blood of generations who for millennia shaped and cultivated the landscape of the land now known as Australia. The land of the Eurobodalla shire felt sad to me, and having returned there recently, I still feel sadness there. The agricultural subsistence that comprises the industry that has resulted in naked hills cleared for economic exploitation and gain, seem to cry in their nakedness to be heard. The many Aboriginal place names in this area, and indeed all over Australia, speak of a presence that for all intensive purposes seems to be no longer there. But it is here, for I feel it. And now having spent years researching this project, even western science tells me that the energy of those past are still here, present, for they can never be past.

I felt as though I were being called. Called away from the community in which I grew up. I was desperate; desperate to find out who I was in the world, in the vastness of the cosmos within which I was adrift. There seemed little answers to the many questions, and the lack of answers left me absolutely terrified of annihilation, of disappearing without ever having understood my existence. There seemed to be little answers here. Yes I was a daughter, sister, cousin, and niece, but there had to be more than that, for surely that is not who *I am*. I know now that I was in search for an authentic self, a place in the universe, world, country, community that would speak of what it is I am here for. Within this colonial story in which I found myself, there was only the tension of Aborigine or non-Aborigine. Am I Aborigine, and if I am, how? Am I not an Aborigine, if not, how?

Thomas King in *The Truth About Stories*, speaks of the authentic Indian. His travel's to Aotearoa and Australia brings him into contact with other stories, other constructions imposed upon the Indigenous peoples of those lands, the Aborigine and the Maori. He is constantly confronted by the impressions of the Indian, its symbology and meaning as it cascades through colonial minds and bodies. King comes to realize,

> In the end, there is no reason for the Indian to be real. The Indian simply has to exist in our imaginations. But for those of us who are Indians, this disjunction between reality and imagination is akin to life and death. For to be seen as "real," for people to "imagine" us as Indians, we must be "authentic" {King, 2003, p54}.

In King's assertion of the role of authenticity in offering visibility to the Indian, there are whisperings of the experience of the Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Australia. The imagined Aborigine as it appears in the colonial texts, the ignoble, and the degraded, surely has an impact upon the way Indigenous individuals perceive their own experience, their own selves. Aboriginal phenomenology revealed the layer that is woven across my eyes, of being called to perform in the theatre of Australian nationalism. In the end, there was no need for me to be real, for I was born into the role in which the physical presence and symbology of my body served the colonial narrative, where other bodies interacted with me within this premise. If there was no need for me to be real beyond the theatrical symbology of my body, then how was I ever to know myself; my authentic self rather than an authentic Aborigine? In the local theatre in which my community is posited, whereby the delineation between white and black is still present, sometimes unspoken, but always lingering, I felt the need to fight against the role prepared for me in this drama of Australian colonial theatre. How much power do others – black or white – have over my body, my self perception and awareness, and indeed, my destiny? Hunting and gathering keeps me strong, reminds me of

who I am since time immemorial. But it seems even that is being eroded by western policing of resources, for the story of the west has assumed power and authority over my being. But I felt there was and remain a greater story, and so I went in search for it.

As bodies occupying a position within western society, who we are first to ourselves, and then to others, is not something we are left free to discover. How we come to know our selves is imposed from external sources, this meaning directly imprinted upon our bodies. There is a direct relationship between western textuality and this intimate sense of self that one develops throughout one's lifetime, convinced that the ego self is one's true identity, rather than that self which is infinite and indefinable, living eternally in the moment, rather than that material body which other material bodies gaze upon, judging as object and consigning a space within one's own schemata as to the meaning and the value of the body which is walking towards us.

As a person who has always identified as and been identified as, an Aborigine, the consequence of this relationship between text and body has had an impact upon my sense of self and wellbeing, influencing my actions and beliefs. As an Indigenous person exposed to western colonizing forces, it has indeed been a struggle not only for peace of mind, but also well being, a place of safety and the space to 'Be', not as I am defined through textual definition and social interaction, but as the very breath that this moment passes through my lungs, bringing my body into entropy and creation at once, the right to exist free of external

forces which attempt to further dispossess me, not only from my land, but also my Ancient Self, and how I experience this Ancient notion of self in the very present, for it is the present alone that exists.

Those times when I am positioned within and around other bodies, this interaction is at first determined by my awareness of my own Aboriginality, and other organisms or bodies response to this. Aboriginality is a phenomenon that was learned through this interaction with other bodies, and in determining a position within societal order, the reference Aborigine is the one I eventually embodied through interaction and experience. Iaculo refers to this process as the contact boundary, where the body as organism interacts with the environment, then withdraws to assimilate this experience as determined by good and bad;

> According to the theory described in *"Gestalt Therapy",* which is based on the ground of the phenomenological-existential thought, the experience of contact, defined as a process that involves organism and environment, happens in a place, in a point, which has been called "contact-boundary". Where boundary does not mean "separation", but place where the experience happens and the self unfolds. The self loses its characteristic of stable and fixed structure and comes to be identified as a process that exists every time an interaction between organism and environment takes place {Iaculo, 2001}.

As a young person, I oscillated between disregard and curiosity of how whites functioned in the world. I was told as an Aborigine, I was different to whites, and whites were different to us. My experience informed me that as an Aborigine I was subservient to whites, and as an Aboriginal female, subservient to all others, including Aboriginal males. The contact boundary in this instance is configured through the application of language. The term 'Aborigine' in societal and domestic context, served as the 'boundary', the self configured within its parameters. What is Aborigine, and what does an Aborigine 'do' or how does and Aborigine 'act', come to inform the characteristic of self.

The social mobility of my body is restricted in proportion to the awareness of Aboriginal subjectivity and object informs my sense of self. As an Aborigine, the Australian bureaucracy has predefined me. The three-point definition must be upheld if I am to be recognized as an Aborigine by any governmental department. It is a definition which plagues my existence through the incessant questioning of what and who is an Aborigine. Thus, being for the majority of my life constricted and restricted in my individual right to self determine and identity, deprived of the right to act in the service of my own needs, the restriction of choice has thus impeded my sense of self, and the choices I may feel free to make so that I may take direction over my own personal needs, and life.

> Being in the world is not enough for the subject to define himself, it is necessary to make choices. Freedom, even if it can arise from the past, is

> realised in the here and now, in the present, since it is only thanks to action that the individual completes his deliberateness, meets his needs and modifies the environment… Actions can therefore also have the deep power to change the world of the personal meanings {Iaculo, 2001}.

My ancient Indigenous perspective is negated within a materialistic culture, where object realities are accepted as truths, as though are no other ways of viewing the world. We accept that a man is a man as is defined within western culture, this definition of masculinity projected onto other cultured bodies. The western construction of femininity too projected onto my Indigenous body as a part of the colonisation process, seeks to rob me of the intimate relationship I have with my country. These constructions projected onto our bodies, disrupt and order the world within western frameworks and truths, and each time I am identified as an Aborigine, I am affronted with the task of having to represent myself with a foreign language, and free myself from the shackles of western cultural constructions.

The state of aboriginality

The day to day reality for Aboriginal people presented as so called facts, rob Indigenous folk of all hope, for which it is said a person can live only eight seconds without, as though we are shackled within social order and constrained by our demographic. Reconciliation is a movement that seeks to assert and establish our rights within the western social system by

educating us with western thoughts process' and skills, although does not seek to support Indigenous cultural philosophy and Meaning.

The classification and representation of Aboriginality continues to position it as a disputation over which Indigenous peoples must struggle in order to self determine and reclaim sovereignty. Michael Dodson in his essay, '*The end in the beginning: re(de)finding Aboriginality'* presents a strong history of this struggle{Grossman, 2003, p25}. Dodson recapitulates the earlier terms applied to Indigenous peoples, such as savage, nigger, and the primitive positioned as civility's antithesis. The litany of terms reflective of the western body, illustrate the contempt with which the Indigenous body was brought into western consciousness. The fear of the new land, its mystery propagated by the lack of knowledge and control the western body had over the country, was transferred to the Indigenous body, and would service the western world view by locating the other as the unconquered, affixed to both body and land alike.

> Since their first intrusive gaze, colonizing cultures have had a preoccupation with observing, analysing, studying, classifying and labelling Aborigines and Aboriginality. Under that gaze, Aboriginality changed from being a daily practice to being a 'problem to be solved {Grossman, 2003, p27}.

The concept of Aboriginality is contentious. It populates Indigenous people's lives with an incessant questioning that always makes us answerable, accountable to someone or something.

What is Aboriginal?

> Who is Aboriginal? What is Aboriginal? For Aboriginal people, resolving who is Aboriginal and who is not is an uneasy issue, located somewhere between the individual and the State… The label 'Aboriginal' has become one of the most disputed terms in the Australian language. There are High Court decisions and opinions on the term and its meaning. Legal scholar, John McCorquordale, has noted sixty-seven definitions of Aboriginal people, mostly relating to their status as wards of the State and to criteria for incarceration in institutional reserves {Langton, 1993, p28).

Aboriginality is treated as a fixed, real thing, but Langton tells us, it did not exist before 1770. Aboriginality, Langton reminds us, 'arises from the subjective experience of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who engage in any intercultural dialogue'. It is 'not a fixed *thing*. It is created from our histories. It arises from the intersubjectivity of black and white in dialogue' {Langton, 1993, p31}.

Aboriginality is in other words a place that is constantly negotiated and constructed. It is a textually created site constructed by the west because it needed the Aborigine to exist, and as Moreton-Robinson has asserted, required to declare the presence of the human in the presence of the unhuman – the Aborigine. The greatest lack in current thought relating to Indigenous peoples is the distinction between the ancient temporality of Indigenous cosmology and the imposed western temporality represented by the term Aborigine. Indigenous well-being is currently framed by economic rationalism, the Aborigine and the ancient temporality of Indigenous peoples obscured due to the lack of extrapolation on what exactly constitutes an Indigenous perspective and way of being.

The Howard government's shift from reconciliation to 'something it called 'practical reconciliation' {Manne, 2003, p5}, is testimony to the ongoing pressures of Indigenous peoples to conform to the language of the dominant culture by way of adopting the lingua francas or the language of economics. From Noel Pearson's proposal of mutual obligation, to the recent comment by Mr Aden Ridgeway where once he was opposed to the Howard government's Indigenous policies, recognises now that a shake-up was needed {Karvelas, 2006, p1}. The ongoing issues at the core of Ridgeway's comments are the issues of employment and health. Ridgeway does say that "Shared responsibility agreements are so specific to certain locations that health itself is a broader question and needs a whole-of-government response nationally and within the states and territories … An able body and an able mind ensures that you're likely to go out and get a job or work hard once you've got

one"{Karvelas, 2006, p1}. Time and again, the concepts of Indigenous health and wellbeing are economically aligned with the dominant economy, and in this, the temporality of the ancient culture, the one which allowed the many realities that exist to be accessed, is being continually diminished in exchange for the prospects of economical survival and retrieval from intergenerational poverty. But why was the shake up needed? Indigenous peoples are constantly called to find the moral benefits in amoral acts of bureaucracy. The ancient Indigenous internal support mechanism represented most strongest by the presence of language, but in the absence of language, the Indigenous body itself which is the genetic result of language spoken for millennia, is imbued a wisdom that it yet to be fully comprehended by contemporary thinkers.

> … to begin to speak about Aboriginality is to enter a labyrinth full of obscure passages, ambiguous signs and trapdoors. The moment the question is asked, 'Who or what is Aboriginal?', an historical landscape is entered, full of absolute and timeless truths, which have been set in place by self-professed experts and timeless truths, which have been set in place by self-professed experts and authorities all too ready to tell us, and the world, the meaning of Aboriginality {Grossman, 2003, p28}.

Michael Dodson in his essay *The end in the beginning: re(de)finding Aboriginality* is illustrative of the confusion of temporalities that have been created through western textual language, and its power to impose a sense of truth inhabited – though forcefully at first – by Indigenous peoples. There is an ongoing befuddlement, a matrix of identity that is actually a clash of temporality – one that was present before invasion (what the west calls pre-history) and the temporality that is the consequence of the imposition of western linear. There are two different temporalities at play here; that of the Indigenous body in the period before invasion and colonization, and the colonised concept of Aborigine. Though this may seem inconsequential within discursive practice, it impacts upon the lived experience of Indigenous peoples. Temporally, it is the difference between eternity, and the finite limited existence of western language.

It is Eastern philosophies that teach us that there is only the moment, the ever present now. Indigenous cosmology too, has this quality. Indigenous cultures that populated this land for 100 millennia did so by living in the moment. The distinction though between an organic ancient temporal world views has been so interwoven with the western intersubjective experience of the 'Aborigine' that more than two centuries since invasion, the search to establish a framework that deals with the 'Aboriginal' situation is very much the labyrinth Dodson speaks about. The interchanging of the western temporal forced subjective experience of Aboriginality is easily and problematically confused with the ancient pre-invasion temporality of ancient Indigenous existence, and it is necessary that these temporal

zones are clarified so that voices such as Langton, Atkinson, Heiss, Behrendt et al can truly be appreciated in their contribution.

Accessing the infinite

> "I will tell you something about stories."
>
> "They aren't just entertainment."
>
> "Don't be fooled."
>
> "They are all we have,
>
> all we have to fight off illness and death."
>
> "You don't' have anything if you don't have stories."
>
> Chad Meyers, "Who will Roll the Stone Away?"

{Atkinson, 2002, p93}

The work by Judy Atkinson in *Trauma Trails* is an insight into the pain of Aboriginal peoples. The strong themes at work here is the confusion of a group that occurs at their inability to articulate experiences.

> As people reflected on and discussed their lived experiences a number of major themes emerged … the links between the child, adolescent, and adult experiences of violence to traumatisation, listing the feelings and behaviours that have resulted to show that cyclic situations of repeated and compounding traumatisation may result {Atkinson, 2002, p146}.

The traumas suffered by the participants read like a litany of psycho-physical affliction. Some of these experiences as listed by Atkinson are

> Institutional racism; structural violence; constructed poverty; police violence; witnessing domestic violence; being sexually assaulted; being beaten as a child; being psychologically abused; having no experience of loving family relationships; mother – daughter conflict (relationships full of pain at generational child rape); father-son conflict; being removed from family; experiencing adults drinking and fighting; having family members suicide; broken relationships; living in chaos – being told one thing and experiencing another; constant moving from places of pain {Atkinson, 2002, pp146-147}.

While many may argue that the experience of chaos and pain is not relevant to all Aboriginal peoples, it is relevant to the majority. Having grown up in a community where disorder is the context of the lived experience, the honesty of Atkins' group reaches into the depths of the consequence of western historicity upon Indigenous peoples. The embodied experience of the Aborigine, the one marked by violence and pain, is one that requires incredibly healing. The many conversations of 'what is this [western society] all about? What is going on?' Given the degree of trauma suffered by many Indigenous people, it is difficult to interact with anything other than pain; the pain of being colonized, being denied access to an identity that is not framed by the western gaze, a sense of privacy and safety in your world and immediate society.

At the beginning of this thesis, this was my story. In some ways, it still is. The environmental conditioning of the primary environment is incredibly powerful. The racist concepts that are experienced 'out there' find there way 'in here' through community, family, immediate kin, because there are few of us who are untouched by the pain of being denied heritage.

> Thoughts and feelings include: being black which mean never feeling good enough; feeling anxious, nervous, sad, angry, hate, jealousy, suspicious, sick, seesaw of fear (taking over the whole body); anger; the need to punch, stab,

> kill; flooding with feelings; flashbacks (like a movie in front of you happening again and again}; not being a part of anything; number; never feeling happy, contended, loved or love; feeling of no value; totally isolated; desolation is unbearable; stranger with family but part of the drinking group; wanting to die; constant feelings and thoughts around suicide {Atkinson, 2002, p147}.

Language is a powerful conditioning. The lived experience of the people, who have shared their subjective experiences of Aboriginality, folk who occupy a place in historicity that supports the western body in its domination, perhaps unknowingly, definitely unwillingly. I found myself at the beginning of this project, suffering from many of the afflictions listed here. In order to execute this project, I had to peel away layer by layer, the pain, the confusion, the ignorance. As the postmodernists have told, if we are a product of language, than how are we ever to be free, to get to a clearing while it is language that has control over us. My first step in walking toward this clearing was to no longer identify as Aboriginal. I am an Indigenous person, ancient, and I shall refrain from representing myself in the written word at this time. While it is easy to stop identifying as Aborigine, it does not necessarily mean that my body was ready to forsake the only territory it has every known, be it on the periphery of society, a small plot in a community, or the lumpy dirt of a bean paddock.

It is my body, neurologically programmed by western language to occupy a specific place in western historicity that had to be healed. But language could not heal it. Not at first. Perhaps

because I was asking so many questions in the phenomenological investigation into being – being an Aborigine – that my nervous system went haywire. I had to endure three years of intense anxiety. At one point my body was caught in an adrenalin loop and every movement triggered off intense fear of death. I felt at that very moment I was going to die. And that moment stretched for three years. My body was being pumped full of poison, and all the doctor could offer me was sleeping tablets. Then one night, I lay quite still and listened. I heard my body speak. It was saying things. Telling me quite specifically what it was afraid of. What I was afraid of. I then stopped running from the anxiety, and instead turned to face it. I began to do things quite deliberately that would intensify it. I did this because in these moments the voice of my body was loud and clear. I learned that I was afraid of public space, of being in society, where the unpredictability of racism could attack me – and has in the past.

Then after listening to my body, I would intentionally interrupt the thought processes that were sending the anxiety through my body. I learned to embrace the concept of death, as this was the real thing that was immobilizing me. I accepted that death is out of my control, and should I need to go now, then so be it. Certain things triggered the anxiety; fluorescent lights, dehydration, extreme fatigue, wrong energy, and low blood sugar levels, anything that put a strain on my back. I prayed. I prayed for a day that the voices in my head that told me I was going to die this very moment would stop and that I could at least walk by the river without being swallowed by fear; incredible fear.

It turns out anxiety was the best thing that ever happened to me. In order to control it, I learned how to breathe properly, and in this learned about the connection between my breathing states and emotional states. I had not encountered any literature at this point, but through research discovered a whole body of work on the subject.

By bringing on anxiety so that I could listen to my body speak; I learned that there was a theory called Neuro-linguistic Therapy. It is methodologies in how to listen to your body, for your body is the greatest wisdom and will tell you what you are really feeling. In this, I learned to listen to my body and this intensified the phenomenological investigation. Neuro-linguistic Programming is where you interrupt your thoughts; do not let the fear thought exist long enough to continue to dominate your emotional state. Most of all, I learned to breath right, to exist in the moment, to overcome this condition of imposed duality, the mind body split, the good bad dichotomy, originating in Ancient Greece, and in my own country, took my body hostage. By breathing correctly, I could detach myself from the cityscape, no longer be shaped by the physiognomies of the folk around, their interrogating gaze that spoke for them; 'Are you Aborigine?' In breathing deeply, the energy of the hateful could not shape me, for it was the breath that took the potency from their gaze, and the poison from their words.

I started treatment for my back, the major nervous system of our bodies. Immediately, the benefits were far reaching. Things no longer seemed so painful, and so chaotic. Then finally,

I started on something called Neuro-Emotional Technique, or NET. Neuro-Emotional Technique is a way of finding out how words have come to mean in your body. Through word association, blocked energy is unblocked. In finding out how the initial experience shaped your perception of yourself and or the world, the constructed layers of identity, the build up of language, is stripped away like an onion peel.

Through the breath, being still and in the moment, time falls away. I am as much as I possibly can be, back in the infinite. I am once again, timeless. Freedom and liberation are positioned as revolution and violent upheaval; I have found it to be gentle, a journey into my own breath, and listen to my own body. The Eastern notion of authentic self has served me well, but there is one stark difference and it marks the departure, the limits of Eastern philosophy; and it is the responsibility to this land. My breath reconnects me with something infinite and purposeful, and the chance to believe in something greater than myself that is not western, is the greatest liberation of all. I have retrieved myself from my own past, turned my back on western historicity. I turn toward the nothing-ness that is my something-ness existing in the everywhen.

Frameworks for spiritual healing

There are necessary components to do with language that need to be dealt with in awareness; and that is the discussion that treats Indigenous health as a plural objective of healing 'Aboriginal people' and the more important issue of dealing with the Indigenous individual. The Australian historical narrative has positioned the Indigenous body within its story of colonization as first absent, and then unhuman when faced with the reality of its physical presence. The result for Indigenous peoples was the trauma of how the colonists responded to the presence of the Indigenous body through deploying racist ideology, and the often inhumane treatment of Indigenous peoples. The work of Judy Atkinson talks about the intergenerational affects of trauma specifically related to invasion and colonisation, and talks about for Aboriginal people, 'being human is relationship centred' {Atkinson, 2002, p30}. The colonial construction of Aborigine indeed denies the individual, and though community relationships are important, the first responsibility is to individual health. Dudgeon et al quote Swan and Raphael (1995) who refer to the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO),

> Health does not just mean the physical wellbeing of the individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community. This is a whole of life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life. Health care services should strive to achieve the state where every

> individual can realise their full potential as human beings and thus bring about the total wellbeing of their communities {Dudgeon, 2000, p85}.

It is the individual health that needs to be the focus. Speaking of Aboriginal health does not humanise health issues for Indigenous peoples, for it does not deal with the fact that the ill health experienced by Indigenous peoples are also experienced by non Indigenous peoples. For example, the high rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease are afflictions experienced by non Indigenous peoples as well. These conditions however appear to be more of a problem in Indigenous communities because of our smaller population numbers. This group of affliction can best be understood as sedentary disease, and applies to both Indigenous and non Indigenous bodies. The fact that it is occurring in Indigenous and non Indigenous communities is argument for the possibility that colonialism is a language that is harmful for all bodies.

It is necessary to understand the subject experience of being Aboriginal – Aboriginal phenomenology – and provide frameworks where the issue of Indigenous health is not segregated from the human experience of ill health. While there are cultural specifics relating to the lives and consequent wellbeing of Indigenous peoples, it is the relationship between language and the self that will provide the greatest attribute in dealing with issues pertaining to Indigenous wellbeing, for it is language more than any other that configures the health of

our bodies. How others speak and refer to us affects our health, but it is primarily how we speak to ourselves that becomes our most important defence against illness.

It is necessary that in any health policies designed for Indigenous communities

1. Attends the need of the individual. The needs of the individual will of course be unique. How an individual speaks to and about him/herself, will affect individual well being. Self esteem issues, belief systems, etc will all have an impact upon an individual's health. The wisdom of the individual's body will be valuable in developing healthy options for the individual. Non-western frameworks need to be examined as a possibility in developing specifically Indigenous frameworks for Indigenous health.
2. Relocates the Indigenous body at the centre of any emergent frameworks designed to deal with the lack of Indigenous well being. The Indigenous body due to its ongoing relationship to place is quite a different body to the western body. The philosophical, neurological and epistemological differences between Indigenous bodies and western bodies cannot be ignored in any emergent frameworks designed to deal with Indigenous health. It is a requirement that what the west accepts as health systems for western bodies will not necessarily be a healthy option for Indigenous bodies. In fact, that western medicine exacerbates or at least is an ongoing consequence of colonialism, needs to be examined.

3. An analysis of the role of colonial language in framing Indigenous peoples and having a negative impact upon healthiness needs to be a part of an emergent health discourse. The application of western medicine to Indigenous bodies needs to be re-examined. Holistic methods of inhibiting Indigenous dis-ease need to be considered as preventative methods, rather than accept that Indigenous disease is an inevitable genetic, cultural, communal and physiological outcome. It is this kind of powerlessness that lends itself to exacerbating the high morbidity and mortality rates experienced by Indigenous peoples. Once this type of belief is accepted by an individual, then health immediately becomes problematical. Again, an examination of westner language and how it frames Indigenous identity is necessary in the healing process of Indigneous peoples.

Initially, phenomenology provided a wonderful framework that allowed an intense dialogue between what I thought to be mind and body. Phenomenology has though revealed the dialogue was between body and spirit. In order to hear the conversation between body and spirit, it was the concept of mind that had to be deconstructed in order to understand the power that language has had in constructing what I thought to be a personal identity. But the identity I carried for so long was far from personal, for the concept of Aborigine is one that is owned by colonial authors, and it is this that Indigenous peoples would benefit most greatly from accepting. For so long, the term Aborigine has been held to my breast as though it were the only piece of land belonging to me, a precious gift. But to identify as Aborigine is to

constantly enter into the labyrinth and endless arguments over what constitutes Aborigine. But while the concept of Aborigine is finite, there is a more wondrous infinite possibility to do with identity, and indeed to do with the experience of living itself.

So to pick up on Judy Atkinson's statement that being human for Aboriginal people is relationship driven and NACCHO statement that it is the wellbeing of the individual that will benefit the community, I will simply put forward two important points that mark the beginning of Indigenous wellbeing.

- There are other sites of identity available to us, and they are thousands of years old. This will depend on your language group or nation, and for those of us who do not have this information, it is most important to note we all have immediate access to these ancient temporalities are our bodies themselves. The first part of healing would involve listening to the body, allowing the body to speak. Environments that alleviate the chaos of every day living, allowing an individual to feel and hear their own bodies is of the utmost importance. These are practices that draw on Neuro linguistic therapy, and Neurosemantics. But these terms need not be an obstacle, for it is simply the practice of sitting and listening to your body that is the most important act of all.

Atkinson acknowledges the relationship between the body and the land when she discloses

> It is important to understand people's relationship with land in considering trauma, for country can hold healing or traumatic memory and energy, by the human activity or ceremony that has made a place unique, sacred or profane {Atkinson, 2002, p30}.

The land is central to Indigenous cosmology, and it is central to Indigenous wellbeing, and it is this fact that Atkinson refers to. Atkinson draws upon the open exchange of energy that occurs between body and land for Indigenous peoples, especially those sites that are culturally significant, but also those sites that have been created through trauma. Atkinson's work is incredibly valuable to the healing of Indigenous peoples, for her work acknowledges the vibrational impact of the life-world on the body, as well as those moments in history that have been suppressed by Australian historicity. In the healing process it will be necessary to provide a way of communicating with country for those who are unable to access their homelands. However, to return to the significance of the body, the most important place to begin is to become open to the life-world itself, and make our bodies available to this dialogue. Indigenous peoples are often confronted and overwhelmed with the obligation of finding answers to questions of ill-health for Aboriginal people as a group; however it is possible to find a private place and personal process to communicate with country in one's own way.

- The presence of the body in the land of our Ancestors means that there is potentially the ongoing vibrant conversation taking place between the body and the life-world, and taking notice of the more than human life-world around us. Animals and plants are a precious part of Indigenous cosmology, and to begin to view them with the same reverence as we would a human Ancestor is a vital part of recovering a way of seeing the world more in tune with the ancient temporal practices of Indigenous cosmology.

On a personal level, these two practices are the most important. They do not require government support, and they are practices that can be implemented at absolutely no cost. They are simple concepts around which meditative practices can be built, and are exercises with a potentially creative outcome that can lead to a form of story telling inspired by ancient consciousness by adjusting the temporal relationship to place. I will go no further in developing specifics of how such practices will be developed, as that is not the point of this work, but merely offer a way to begin this reflective process.

The Right to Dream

The Right to Dream has been a journey through which I have endeavoured to see beyond the self as constructed by western language. I have attempted to get beyond the parameters of the languaged boundary that defines Aborigine in order to access an ancient self that encounters something magnificent and grand within this land now known as Australia. In the past I have

been blind to this country, ignorant of its vibration and numb to the power and potential that exists in every moment, surrounded by the land whose form is the result of the presence of my Ancestors within this country. This research has been an attempt to find a way to think about wellbeing, but more importantly existence beyond the reality that is promoted by colonialism. The issue of Indigenous rights is one so heavily consigned to dialogue with bureaucracy that the very simple beginning point for Indigenous wellbeing exists already within the individual and any journey into wellbeing will always be done first by the individual.

Country speaks

I am travelling through Katherine. I have been called to attention by silence many times, heeded voices, a whispering, a gale like thunder that interrupts my consciousness. I cannot anticipate the moment in which the land begins to take on another form; a more human form populated by people. It is as though a new set of eyes are working; the surface land and the masses who inhabit her, stand like sovereign centuries, their shoulders hunched in the form of an ant hill, or tall and daring like the tree. Cruising up Nitmiluk Gorge I see families of stone – an attentive male, a youth, and the unmistakable presence of a woman - who watch those who float up the waters of Nitmiluk, silent yet powerful. I look, and then must take another glance quickly, for I am certain I see people.

The land is awakened to me – or I am awakened to the land. It is vibrant, deep and alive. I feel connected. I am at last alive, and in this moment, the land takes on the form of a human presence to me. I have searched for years without knowing that this is the moment that would be waiting for me. I can only say that now I have arrived, this is what the journey has been about. The land for so long was dormant and inhospitable. I was alien and alienated in my own country. The willingness to be open to the energy of the ancient realm has gifted me with a connectedness to something greater than myself, and greater than a reality demarcated by western language. In the quiet science of sitting and listening, I heard the call of the ancient realm; in the land, but first within myself. If we were to lose connection with country, this would be the greatest loss of all, for there is reverence here, the ongoing openness about being participant in something great that is sustained through the relationship with the land and universe, which is ultimately reflected in how we relate to each other. If we can be quiet and still long enough to listen to our body in this great dance of universal energy, it may give us each a chance to hear the song that is the core of our own, unique existence.

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GLOSSARY

Aborigines: Colonial constructed identity, a textual representation deployed within Australian nationalism.

Indigenous: term specifically referring to the ancient body pre-colonisation, marked by its temporal distinction to the Aborigine.

Human: A biological phenomena defined its capacity to (re)produce textuality and produce historicity

Cosmos: a term pertaining to the whole

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