Conversations with the bunyip

The idea of the wild in imagining, planning, and celebrating place through metaphor, memoir, mythology, and memory

Tamsin Kerr
BSc (Hons) Griffith University
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Abstract

What lies beneath
Our cultured constructions?
The wild lies beneath.
The mud and the mad, the bunyip Other, lies beneath.
It echoes through our layered metaphors
We hear its memories
Through animal mythology in wilder places
Through emotive imagination of landscape memoir
Through mythic archaeologies of object art.
Not the Nation, but the land has active influence.
In festivals of bioregion, communities re-member its voice.
Our creativity goes to what lies beneath.

This thesis explores the ways we develop deeper and wilder connections to specific regional and local landscapes using art, festival, mythology and memoir. It argues that we inhabit and understand the specific nature of our locale when we plan space for the non-human and creatively celebrate culture-nature coalitions.

A wilder and more active sense of place relies upon community cultural conversations with the mythic, represented in the Australian exemplar of the bunyip. The bunyip acts as a metaphor for the subaltern or hidden culture of a place. The bunyip is land incarnate. No matter how pristine the wilderness or how concrete the urban, every region has its localised bunyip-equivalent that defines, and is shaped by, its community and their environmental relationships.

Human/non-human cohabitations might be actively expressed through art and cultural experience to form a wilder, more emotive landscape memoir. This thesis discusses a diverse range of landstories, mythologies, environmental art, and bioregional festivities from around Australasia with a special focus on the Sunshine Coast or Gubbi-Gubbi region. It suggests a subaltern indigenous influence in how we imagine, plan and celebrate place.

The cultural discourses of metaphor, memoir, mythology and memory shape land into landscapes. When the metaphor is wild, the memoir celebratory, the mythology animal, the memory creative and complex, our ways of being are ecocentric and grounded. The distinctions between nature and culture become less defined; we become native to country. Our multi-cultured histories are written upon the earth; our community identities shape and are shaped by the land. Together, monsters and festivals remind us of the active land.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Work published in the course of the thesis (*refereed)

Journals


*Kerr, Tamsin 2004 “As if Bunyips mattered… Cross-cultural mythopoetic beasts in Australian subaltern planning” in Elizabeth Hartrick et al (eds) new talents write/ up Australian Research Institute and University of Queensland Press (Journal of Australian Studies 80): 14-27
<http://www.api-network.com/cgi-bin/page?archives/jas80_kerr>

Books and chapters

Kerr, Tamsin 2003 Community Cultural Development frameworks QCAN Brisbane


Conference and seminar papers

General rapporteur, closing forum, Creative Conservation (Environment, Culture & Community 2) University of Queensland, November 2005

“Pan place, Coyote space, and Bunyip country: planning for wild-ness and ecological imagination in the creative city” ISOCARP Congress ‘Making spaces for the Creative Economy’ Bilbao, Oct 2005
<http://www.isocarp.org/projects/case_studies/congress_platform>

“Bunyip festivals: ways to track and celebrate the non-human in our cities and regions” National Museum of Australia July 2005

“1842, subaltern studies, and the bunyip” Thesis presentation to Environmental History Group, Australian National University, Oct 2004

“Who speaks land stories?” Memory and History Symposium, Centre for Public Culture and Ideas, Griffith University, Aug 2003

“As if bunyips mattered…” Inter-Cultural Studies Conference University of Newcastle June 2002

Scholarships

2001 – 2004 Griffith University Women’s Scholarship
2005 Griffith University Postgraduate Student Association Bursary
2005 Griffith University Graduate Studies Travel Grant
2006 Completion Assistance Postgraduate Research Scholarship
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Introduction

This thesis asks ‘What if we took the idea of the wild seriously?’ It shows that the wild, embodied by the bunyip, speaks the voice of regional place-specific landscape, through mythopoesis, trustori, and creative cultural memory. The idea of the wild lies beneath all our philosophies and discourses. The wild is creative, fearful, animal, challenging, and complex. This thesis examines what happens to our stories, planning, celebrations, imaginings, and landscape constructions, when we allow the wild to surface. Our expressions of culture/nature become more emotive, more spirited, more complex and inclusive, more layered, active and celebratory, allowing deeper re-connections with the particulars of each specific place.

Planning and living in a community needs to be inclusive of both diverse human cultural groups and the non-human of nature, land, animal, and the mythic. Conversations with the bunyip develops a complex layered understanding of this role of place. It acknowledges the inseparable interactions of culture and landscape, worries at the nature/culture boundary, and shows how indigenous and multi-cultural philosophies might continue to change our practices and the ways we inhabit our landscapes. It shows the critical roles of creativity and ritual, the mythic and animals, in broadening our imaginations and in celebrating our inhabited land. The wild allows us to ‘reinhabit reality’, to be ‘at home on the earth, becoming native to our place’ (the respective book titles of Freya Matthews, 2005 and David Barnhill, 1999 or Wes Jackson, 1994). This thesis provides a framework to create better environmental and social spaces, and to think about how we live - how we dwell in reality. In merging the reason of planning with the wild of monsters, it revolutionises planning's potential by demonstrating how essential the regional and the wild is in constructing a sense of place. It calls to a wide audience interested in environmental and social change, in cultural and Australian studies, in environmental philosophy and postcolonial theory, in planning, and in the community creativity of the arts. The contribution of this work lies in its merging of cultural theory with environmental philosophy. It takes the subaltern of post-colonialism and links it to notions of the wild. Exposing the wilder and inclusive darker sides of metaphor, memoir, mythology, and memory makes us fully human and embeds us in place. Post-colonialism suggests land is shaped, if not created, by discourse. This thesis explores how multiple cultures’ discourses change the landscape (and not coincidently, how the wild might change a thesis and the practice of research). The wild lies within us all, and is a crucial concept in how we plan and live.

The introduction establishes the wilder style and layered structure of the thesis and overviews subaltern theory, which tries to give voice to the under-heard, and underlies the thesis’ metaphors of edge and wild. In summary, expect a wild but intellectual spirit to pervade
Conversations with the bunyip

Imagine a conversation with the bunyip. Imagine building relationships with an active and spirited nature. Imagine a world in which the wild mattered. A world where creativity flourishes and the mythic abounds. A world where we recognise that we talk in metaphors all the time, so we use them artistically to shape our understandings. A world with a tolerance for the innovations of madness and a respect for wildness. A world in which communities collaboratively shape their landscapes through celebratory memoir and place memory.

This world is already here. It lies beneath. By scratching the surface of our dominant understandings in science, history, and planning, we see its underlying influence. It is local rather than expert, found in memory not history, in the mythic not the rational. Traditionally, it has belonged to many colonised cultures. Acknowledging their subaltern influence might beneficially change dominant practices to become more socially and environmentally sustainable. The wild shapes the sometimes banal of the local to a more fearsome and active place. We inhabit place as both prey and protector. By recognising the complex influences of the wild, we find ourselves embedded in locale, culture becomes wedded to nature. By remaining open to the innovative and tolerant of the other, we keep the many cultured wild alive. The wild beneath reminds us of tolerance and wisdom.

This thesis shows how communities act, and have acted, when the wild surfaces. It models a wilder thinking, born of cultural philosophy and landscape memoir. It is complex and passionate, intellectual and dense, eclectic and emotive. Its parents are postcolonialism and environmental philosophy; its child is the subaltern wild. The child is brought up on a diet of metaphor, memoir, mythology, and memory. It inhabits a spirited, active place that is both shaped by and shapes its landscape.

The child might be the bunyip’s eldest daughter. I was named Thomasin (shortened to Tamsin), after the heroine in Thomas Hardy’s Return of the Native, its title themed my life, my interest in nature and place was secured. My father, Dr Jim Kerr, is a bunyip of Australian architectural heritage, my mother, Professor Joan Kerr, applied a regional wildness to the then staid documentation of Australian art and aesthetics. Although I remember many Australian bush camping holidays, much of my childhood was spent in England and Europe. At university, I rejected the bunyip’s art and architecture for a far more rational science degree in environmental studies, inspired by my involvement in the Tasmanian Wilderness Society. But I missed more complex contexts, consequently running an environmental philosophy course at the Australian National University with the support of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies. After ten years of government bureaucracy in environmental and social planning, I took a first class honours through Griffith University in public consultation processes, as both therapy and release. Following my own family’s ‘tree change’ to the hilly hinterland of the Sunshine Coast, I remembered the bunyip. My partner, Ross Annels is a furniture designer/ maker and our daughters, Katerina and Anika have creativity running through their veins. In our timber and organic growing amidst its blissful beauty, I located my love of place to the specifics of our West Cooroy property. The small dam behind my writing shed with look-far
eyes, was inhabited by an old mythology that whispered the wild to my academic logic. My PhD was transformed through conversations with this bunyip embodiment of the wild.

Just as the content deals with the many cultural layerings in the landscape, the style reflects the wild. This is no linear mastering of a single discipline, no apprentice piece to the modernist project, offering clear solutions to reductively defined problems. It is a far wilder and beloved beast than that. It is a cultural philosophy of the wild to be read against the grain of dominant ontologies. Its layering of arguments borrows from many disciplines and genres, a jack of all trades, an eclectic environmental postmodernism. It integrates the (non) language of the bunyip, the voice of the land incarnate. It draws on my view of the mountain, my personal inhabitation of place, and the stories and festivities of the Sunshine Coast or Gubbi Gubbi region in Australia. The writing rarely emerges from the swamp, preferring muddy metaphors that dissolve the dualistic problems of nature and culture, of animal and human, of spirit and science.

*Conversations with the Bunyip* gives examples of the impact of the idea of the wild for the way we imagine, plan, and celebrate place. The idea of the wild for how we describe and live our lives is expressed in *Metaphor, Memoir, Mythology, and Memory* (the four parts of this thesis). This introduction shows the influence of the wild in the style and structure of the thesis and makes connections between the subaltern theory of postcolonialism, wild metaphors, and the Aboriginal notion of trustori.

Part I examines methodologies and metaphors, comparing experiences of those that claim to professionally speak for the edge and the land with a wilder thinking more often undertaken by philosophers and ‘sea changers’. The more usual methodologies of the social sciences are less equipped to listen to the bunyip’s regional and inexpert voice. Although living amidst (on or off) the land is not compulsory to locate and link with wildness, it was a necessary step in developing this thesis’ bunyip methodology. In Part I, *Methodology and Metaphor*, the personal journey of the thesis is exposed through an examination of the ways we listen to edges.

Part II takes the practice of professional historians and nature writers and compares these to more inexpert memories and (often nostalgic) local histories. It mostly draws upon the stories of the Sunshine Coast region as an example to point to the constraints of the written word, and to the ways landscape is constructed through discourse. In human texts, the idea of nature is generally limited as a passive resource to be mourned, or at best as a contributor of human identity. But there are subaltern hints of a more active land that may be brought out through a landscape memoir reading of Australian literature and art, eliciting a more emotional, passionate, and personal connection to place. Part II, *Memoir* begins to highlight the potential and the creativity of this landscape memoir.
Part III turns to Indigenous and other cultural practices and their mythic influences and reflections across modern Australia, especially in the example of city and regional planning. Here the bunyip is properly introduced as a cross-cultural incarnation of the land’s wild voice. Its many parallels can be found across cultures and time, and imagined in the midst of cities. In such a way, we are not only reminded of the value of the non-human, but we remember the importance of human/animal/spirit coalitions in understanding place. Part III, Mythology allows us to imagine this constructive edge of fear through human/bunyip lore or in Donna Haraway’s 1992 terms, the ‘promises of monsters’.

Part IV shows how we celebrate this awesome, active, and many cultured place, rather than romanticise the falsely separated natural. It uses examples of regional celebrations and artistic activity to suggest a framework for community directed cultural development. These examples point the way rather than prove the argument for the importance of constructing a multi-storied, regional identity (remembering both good and bad). Creations of artistic objects and bioregional festivals of place offer a path to more collaborative conversations with the wilder nature/culture of the bunyip. From this celebration of community memory (both human and animal) emerges another way to regionalised embeddedness in place and a more sustainable relationship to the environment. Part IV, Memory shows how we practically advance a landscape memoir approach that embraces fear but refuses despair.

In capitalist society, we think ourselves so easily disassociated from place. Our goods and services, even our power, food and water are brought in from elsewhere. A better job in another city, another dam of dislocation, a desire to travel are all more valued than a settled embeddedness in place, belittled as yokel (at best the ontology of the noble indigene). The alternative attraction of ‘sea change’ is to elevate the common practice of the yokel, of traditional colonised peoples, of farmers, and of the poor without choice - to make deeper connection with a local landscape and its community. Perhaps too this is a practice that comes later in affluent western lives, after youthful adventures and ambitions are fulfilled or rejected. But perhaps risk can be found in the subaltern wildness of every place, in the landscape’s memory, in the bunyip’s mythology, in our changing metaphors and discourses. Perhaps we might elevate the place we inhabit now as the place we want to be, through the practical and creative impacts that arise from the idea of the wild. Then too, we might recognise each community’s sacredness of their local place, leading to a less destructive, wiser and more careful use of resources. Instead of mega dams that remove whole communities, we might conserve and value the spirit of local waters; instead of wholesale deforestation, we might more carefully reuse and recycle what we already have in situ. A settled embeddedness in place means we cannot simply move to someplace else when our local environment becomes too degraded. Rather, we work to keep or transform the place we inhabit into the wild paradise we might otherwise seek elsewhere. Because we expect and respect other community’s connections to their own place, we are vigilant about how we borrow their resources. We become better neighbours; a city might consider its regional (and indeed global) dependency more carefully. By creating and celebrating an active and wilder landscape, we
recognise closer relationships between nature and culture, between human, animal, spirit, and land. We become part of a place; part of its problem and part of its solution. We understand the land’s mythic significance in our lives; we respect and conserve its offerings; and thereby change our practices towards longer term sustainability. The paradigm of development is one that happens with us, not to us. And it happens best through the memory, mythology, and metaphors of place and of community. By developing the wild in ourselves, and seeing the wild in everyday environments, we make more emotional coalitions with the wild of nature. Our future lies in such conversations with the wild.
**Trustori and wisdom**

Bowral, a New South Wales country town, holds an annual bunyip festival to celebrate the memory of their place. Bowral was built upon a swamp, gradually excavated into a township. One of its early industries was peat-cutting, but as the swamp slowly disappeared, so did the industry. The settlers started to remember earlier tales about the bunyip that lives in the swamp. They told themselves these stories to preserve what was left of the bunyip's habitat. Today, the township celebrates this re-emergence of the bunyip, as a guardian of the place. The land around them is inhabited and it has been embraced as a place for creative expression, rather than solely as a resource.

When individuals and communities have wanted to explain their specific connection to a particular place, they have often resorted to the excuse of animals. When a new freeway is developed, strategically we cannot declare that the land is important to us (let alone that it has spirit), because this is an unacknowledged and undervalued relationship for the west. Instead, we protest that the land is a habitat for cute animals such as koalas or for endangered species; animals have often been an acceptable reason for re-locating development. The strongest protests against the 2006 Mary River dam proposal on the Sunshine Coast have been on behalf of the Mary River Turtle, Cod and lungfish, and farmer’s roadside signs add ‘my cows can’t swim’. Animals have allowed the west to covertly declare our strong relationship to local land, in a time when more direct statements threaten the generic sense of capitalist space.

The power of mytho-poetic beasts, like Bowral’s Bunyip, lies in imagination. Their appearance and attributes are left to the fantasy of the individual. The monster’s lores and desires can reflect or negate that which is. When Frankfurt’s greenbelt seemed under threat by development, a monster emerged. This monster inhabited the natural greenbelt, a symbol of its wilder place. Created by an artist, the monster is a strange cross between a crocodile and a flying pig. It is green, of course. Now, Frankfurters (and tourists) wear lapel pins of the monster with the words ‘Gruungurtel Frankfurt’ to remind them of its important habitat. The greenbelt, by becoming threatening, is no longer threatened.

By building a framework around such examples, they become a valued component of a social movement, rather than just one-off quirky events. The questions, ‘Is it really true? Did he really meet a bunyip? Do they really believe in the Gruungurtel?’ are not important. Much like histories’ question of memory, ‘Did it really happen?’ If we ask them, we are asking a form of ‘Are they mad?’ Whether or not the experience is real, we might value the metaphor seriously. By acting As If Bunyips mattered, or As If the Gruungurtel exists, we open up deeper possibilities, we make space for a wilder connection to place.
To step into the grand polemic for a moment, the wild and the mythological represents a crucial truth. The wild offers a different re-description of reality. History and science only give us facts; metaphor and imagination give us more motivating trustori (‘true story’). Trustori is a term used by the Aboriginal story teller Paddy Roe (1983) working with writer Stephen Muecke to refer to Indigenous mythologies/legends. Trustori relies upon creative imagination that uses story to get to the heart of an issue, only borrowing facts when they reinforce the message.

The Man who Planted Trees is a good non-Aboriginal example of the importance of trustori. It is the story of a shepherd, Elzeard Bouffier, who spends his whole life planting trees in the French barren highlands and who transforms them to places of life and abundance. The writer Jean Giono wrote this version as a response to a Reader’s Digest request in 1953 for a story about ‘The Most Extraordinary Character I Ever Met’. Having been warmly received, it was then indignantly rejected as not true and Giono was called an impostor. Giono had included too many verifiable details in his text which Reader’s Digest investigated, discovering there were no enchanted forests at Vergons, and no Bouffier had died in the hospice at Banon in 1947. Giono’s daughter, Aline Giono describes the nevertheless tremendous impact of Bouffier’s story:

Elzeard Bouffier has had a posthumous existence as remarkable as his imaginary real life. He has gone and planted his acorns and grown his forest all over the world, from New Zealand to Kenya, from Finland to the United States. Whenever his story has been published, people have believed in it. (Aline Giono, 1975, trans 1995: 43)

A German anthology of illustrated biographies requested a photo of Bouffier (duly sent) and others requested the exact address of the village and the nearest railway station so as to visit the workplaces of Bouffier. The Man who Planted Trees has since become both a successful children’s book and an animated video.

The Man Who Planted Trees is based on a meta-narrative found throughout history and across cultures. Versions include England’s John Barleycorn or America’s Johnny Appleseed, and the Hopi’s planter of corn, ‘Kokopelli’. There is also a very similar Taoist tale (in Kornfield & Feldman, 1996: 29-39). Both Taoist and French stories replace the provision of food with forests. They are told through a second hiking figure (who meets the tree planter), both include two wars, both have the tree planter leave a more conventional life because his wife and child die. Both describe the same solitary technology in planting and the same peaceful generosity of spirit. However, the differences are also interesting. The French version focuses on the labour of one (potentially) real man and his impact in transforming a barren countryside. The Chinese version is more about re-creating the traditional spirit of the ancient forests.¹ Each story starts from a different paradigm – one revering the memory of ancient forests, the other reviling the human misery of a barren landscape. While Elzeard Bouffier dies peacefully, Tam Yang Bun is still heard planting in the faint distance, acknowledged as part of the forest and becoming known

¹ One thousand years ago, the poet Li Po wrote:

We sat together, the forest and I
Merging into silence
Until only the forest remained.
locally as Mountain Tao or Tree Spirit. The French story is a beacon to the human spirit; the Chinese Taoist story is more about the spirit of the forest. The generic story is a fable, a parable to illustrate the truth. It doesn’t (or shouldn’t) in the end matter if it is real or not (or even who owns copyright). It has served to inspire reality and to contribute to the changing human/nature relationship. It is a trustori that is both powerful and inspirational: ‘a hymn to creation and a purveyor of confidence in man’s ability to change his – indeed the world’s – lot … to set in motion a worldwide reforestation programme that would rejuvenate the earth’ (Back cover, Harvill Press edition of The Man Who Planted Trees, 1995).

The subaltern wisdom within

While environmental philosophies form the surface of this thesis, the related underlying trustori is about an inherent cultural wisdom. Significantly, this thesis extends the metaphor of the edge in subaltern theory to that which lies beneath and within us – the wisdom we already know. There is a Sufi story in which a village asks a nearby wise woman for help. She asks them, ‘do you know the solution?’ When the villages say ‘no’, she says, ‘then you’re not ready to hear it.’ Still in trouble a month later, they call her back, more wily. When she asks, ‘do you know the solution?’, they say ‘yes’. ‘Then you don’t need me to tell you!’ She leaves again. When the desperate villagers call her back once again, half say ‘yes’ and half say ‘no’. ‘Good,’ she says, ‘the half that knows can tell the half that doesn’t’. The head man realises that they will have to find their own answer from within the village, rather than listening to outside experts, however wise. Perhaps their consequent solution is appropriate and local as well as being accepted by the entire village, despite and because of its painstaking development. The wise woman has shown them their answers lie within.

There is a difference between getting wisdom and having wisdom. Getting wisdom requires a buying in of skills and knowledge. I might wish to research enough to get a PhD. I might want to move to the country to find a closer link to land. I might wish for an indigenous soul. I might want to get art skills so as to improve my creativity. I might seek education: from books, from land, from spirit, from art, from community, from facts. I aspire to the getting of wisdom through future changes in my doing and being. I might in addition wish to educate the world so that it too behaves better in future. Getting wisdom will require doing something new, something different. Getting wisdom is based on originality and change. It is in this doing, that I might find wisdom, later.

But there is another – perhaps more grounded and stable - methodology. Rather than believe that wisdom is only possible by standing someplace new, by being different and better, I could look within and beneath where I stand now. I could celebrate the imagination within more local time and immediate space. I could find myself native in my existing reality.² Like The Man who Planted Trees, I might quietly act within present capabilities, rather than rail

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² The New Zealander, Michael King (1999) discusses the many meanings of ‘Native Born’. In New Zealand, Pakeha belonging is another kind of native New Zealander. In Australia, the white ‘native-born’ have less satisfactory references;
against barrenness. I might think ‘the thick time of hearsay’ (in Paul Carter’s words, 2004: 94) to be more
important than the dates of history. I stay on my side of the mountain, investigating its bounded view more fully. I
value the wilder parts, both within me and around me. While I celebrate my own culture, I remain porous to other’s
myriad influences. I rely upon older memories of those around me, the wilder emotions of those (almost) forgotten.
Together, we remember many culture’s legends, linking to (rather than appropriating) surrounding myths, so as to
celebrate especial place, wherever and whenever it is. Like Frankfurt’s Grunigurtel or Bowral’s Bunyip Festival, we
create a wider and wilder space to imagine our habitat’s inhabitants. The imagining draws upon the art and culture
that I and my near community already possess. We look within, within our individual bodies, within our fertile
culture and community, and within our present place and wilder metaphoric space to know we have wisdom:
situated, not parochial; particularised and local, not global. We find we have wisdom, now.3

The strength of the PhD process is that it allows time to both seek and unearth wisdom. To find the wisdom within
requires a rare (and undervalued) created space of lengthy free time dedicated to thought. The Sufi villagers
required time, rather than external expertise, to realise their wisdom within. The Man who Planted Trees spent a
lifetime in such secluded thought to offer a wilder wisdom to his hiking friend (and hence to us). The time of years,
rather than months, for a PhD allows for a slow garnering of the wisdom within. Facts can be gathered at a
moment’s notice, used to develop knowledge in a few months; but wisdom takes years. Wisdom comes from slow
collective community activity, expressed through metaphor, memoir, mythology, and memory – the trustori of
culture.

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
Where is the information we have lost in data?
(George Gilder’s adaptation of TS Elliot’s poem in Mackay, 1999: 104)

Data is a reductionist measure, knowledge is a linear narrative (leading to the Eureka moment); wisdom demands
a more complex layering. This thesis is cultural philosophy not social science, offering ideas rather than proof. Its
examples point to another way of thinking and doing, rather than garner evidence for an argument. The thesis’
stylistic resistance to western academic knowledge conventions might be the result of its content. Metaphor,

perhaps we will know we belong to this land, when we have an equivalent ‘Pakeha’ name and we are more than just ‘non-
Aboriginal’.3 This idea, that our multi-cultured society already contains the answers we seek, contradicts the western notions of
progress and the conventional academic’s notion of originality in research. Originality might lie instead in re-
acknowledging (perhaps redescribing) more hidden aspects of our culture – using depth, that which lies below, to change
the dominant landscape. The distinction between wisdom now and wisdom later reflects Chakrabarty’s (2001) distinction
between democracy now and democracy later (discussed in Part IV). It is also a close parallel to Levi Strauss’s distinction
between knowledge and inspiration. Levi Strauss (see for instance, 1997) says that cultural difference is exposed in the
processes of colonisation. To the European coloniser, he attributes knowledge, serenity, measure, and boiled (the
separation of food from its heat source using the cultural paraphernalia of a pot). To the colonised, Levi Strauss
attributes inspiration, violence, lack of measure, and roasted (direct and object-free cooking). Post-colonialism grapples
with both paradigms, and investigates the subaltern influence of the colonised upon the colonisers. It is not surprising
then that this postcolonial thesis begins to grapple with the role of inspiration (the wisdom within, the wisdom now), as
much as the role of knowledge (the wisdom later). Or indeed the difference between the measurable data of western
science with the lack of measurement in indigenous traditional understandings. The influences of other non-academic
traditions of knowledge pervade this thesis.
memoir, mythology, and memory, are rarely the stuff of more rational sciences. Perhaps too, such postcolonial methodology leads to wisdom, rather than knowledge. Knowledge follows a well worn path – the problem is reduced to sufficient simplicity that the solution appears, and knowledge is gained. But there are many cultures who offer more convoluted paths of communication. Wisdom has often emerged from the obscure and the Sibylline. The South African writer, Pamela Jooste, writes of a Bushmen elder:

He evaded the question which didn’t surprise me. Bush people rarely speak directly. They’re fond of riddles ant their greatest pleasure is to see an answer elude the listener and prove difficult or even impossible to find. (Jooste, 2000: 12)

Perhaps in the desire to dissolve rather than solve, in the pedagogy of mythology and metaphor, in the non-direct and the non-linear, we might tap into an Other wisdom that lies beneath western conventions of knowledge and information.

What I hope this thesis offers is a persuasive argument against facts as arbitrators or linear paths to truth, by modelling the power of the imagination and the freedom of trustori as a more creative and necessary link to understanding the world and our place within it. The accuracy of science does not engage us in the world; the reality of history makes us accidental tourists rather than immersed inhabitants. It is through the wilder metaphors of memoir, mythology, and memory that truth is imagined, but only if we are able to embrace the dark as much as the nostalgic and the sentimental. In acknowledging the fearfulness of the Bunyip, we celebrate an awe of nature, a more immersed human/nature coalition. By acknowledging the wild beneath or the wisdom within, we value the local and the native as well as the expert and the objective. By recognising the many cultured layers of our land as well as the wilder nature within our cities, we celebrate a more creative place; we imagine a more active space.
A Wilder Style and Structure

What allows us to research more wildly? Firstly, I think, an understanding that we always speak in metaphors (whether scientific or intuitive), and the metaphors we use make the world and limit our actions. Secondly, an attitude of generous open-mindedness to the shape of new (or subaltern) metaphors and a willingness to hear what they might offer. Like listening to contemporary classical music, accepting a different story requires tolerance. We must be ready for a different rhythm, or more likely, no (presently discernable) rhythm. We must be open to dissonance. We must be willing to challenge the patterns that we currently consider to be harmony. Rather than an overture leading to climax, we might be surprised by the more difficult structuralisms of the wild. The piece might require many listenings before we appreciate it. But we might use the excitement of the other to help dissolve the problems of the conventional. We might listen anew to find the always-present subaltern answers within.

There are many ways to write a message, and the ways need to be diverse if they are to be inclusive. Nollman, an interspecies musician, writes in The Charged Border, that it:

> is not the place where the whales reside but, rather, the desires and notion that both motivate and certify our encounters with them ... the view here is at once intimate and distant, subjective and objective, behavioral and mythic, hopeful yet tragic. The combination of so many contrary features blurs the biological with the cultural ... a multidisciplinary approach seems the only realistic way to proceed.  
>(Nollman, 1999: 45)

Undertaking research in a ‘more-than-human’ world challenges conventional methodological approaches; as Lesley Instone (2004: abstract) argues, they need to be ‘multilayered, multivalent, embodies and situated ... especially in relation to cross-cultural and post-colonial understandings’. To talk successfully with nature requires many methodologies and disciplines, including philosophy, social science, anthropology, politics and law, and the liberal arts. As such, like cultural studies, this thesis satisfies none of their individual requirements to speak a particular language, and sits outside their genred and disciplined boundaries. My subaltern, bunyip methodology, has different aspirations. The philosopher, Richard Rorty, says ‘The method [for change] is to re-describe lots and lots of things in new ways until you have created a pattern’ (1989: 9). Not dissimilarly, as an old man, Borges realised that the past ‘can be distorted by successive repetition. Because if in every repetition you get a slight distortion, then in the end you will be a long way off from the issue.’ (in Burgin, 1969:26). The original may be forgotten, but the pattern of memory makes the new, through repetition. I too wish to create another pattern by re-sewing the threads through layers of re-description. The spiral, layered nature of argument allows unusual points of contact; in the case of this thesis, developing original links between the many layers of culture that constitute a landscape. Such a layered approach has allowed the notions to emerge about landscape memoir, a wilder methodology, and the importance of imagining regionalised mythologies: “As if...” replaces “What is?”

The style of the thesis reflects its content. Just as the landscape is composed of the perceptual overlays of multiple cultures, the four parts of the thesis layer upon each other, repeating the melody in each movement,
rather than building the argument to a crescendo. The message that style is integral in conveying meaning is critical, for instance, in the anthropology of art (see the works of Anthony Forge or Howard Morphy, 1998). Content and context become one and the same. If the landscape is made up of many layerings of differing cultural assumptions about land, then so too is any objectified item, including a thesis. If we remember these landscapes better through wilder and more personal emotions, myths, and metaphors, then we also need to include these wilder methods in our research and writing to make meaning effective. If it takes many methodologies to build up a notion of the natural and to see the land, then a thesis investigating such things cannot simply draw upon a single discipline or style. This equal importance of context to content and the idea of the wild have led to an adventurous thesis form. The content of this thesis asks 'how many cultures are expressed in a landscape?'; the style similarly asks 'how many disciplines and genres are expressed in a thesis?' Like truth windows and post-modern architecture, the thesis exposes its construction in the final form through personal story, multidisciplinarity, and non-linear narrative. It uses both fact and fiction. However, there is a difference between reading for pleasure and reading for knowledge. If a text is well written and presented as fiction, readers will read slower and with more delight and comfort, wrapped in a fantasy world, perhaps curled up in bed with nightcap and gentle rain against the windows. But reading non-fiction often entails the quickest search to find the answer; any delay in presenting information is frustrating. So a text that confuses fiction and non-fiction is in danger of serving neither purpose of pleasure or knowledge. This thesis is both a non-fiction that refuses to deliver quick answers and a fiction that tells trustories. It lives on the high wire between such dualisms, spooling out the very wire it walks upon as it goes. While some have wondered how the wire is held up, others just wait for the fall. It is only upon reaching a tentative endpoint – the next supporting pole along the way perhaps – that the writer acrobat can be acknowledged as “brave”, or even “original”. The difficulty of this style in the boxed world of academic logic is that it offers a jack of all trades that conflicts with the master-of-one approach traditionally required by a thesis. Multidisciplinarity takes a risk in that it cannot speak a single discipline’s language in either style or in depth of knowledge. But neatly cataloguing interests into disciplines constrains their potential. Although a multidisciplinary bibliography is never as complete, a discipline’s missing key text is an opportunity gained for new insight. Multi-genred style adds to the richness. In dominant academic methodology, the personal and the story are belittled, included as illustration, rather than considered to be part of the argument. The personal story lends emotion and memoir, leading in the wild. The delight of a layered form is that it doesn’t have to be read sequentially; rather it may be dipped in and out, the style complementing the content.

This thesis proffers another model for research that emerges from the idea of the wild. Anglo-American scholarship in particular is based on rational critical analysis, but there are many cultures of scholarship. The layered and dense philosophical argument and the open exposure of the thesis’ construction is my stylistic choice. The content argues that landscapes are made up of many cultural discourses; the style reflects this argument, exposing and thereby deconstructing the classic assembling of argument. As such, the style presents a postcolonial challenge to modernism, reflected in the content failure of modernism’s children to deliver the goods.
The voices of the colonised fight back against Empire’s imperialism, against the imposition of modernism’s techniques. Rational clarity solves the problem, but this is only one epistemology. Postcolonialism strengthens the acknowledgment and importance of other ways of knowing. Postcolonialism says our discourses make the world, so the style of our discourses must reflect the world we want. I would like a world that embraces diversity and difference and that is passionately creative. Such a world requires a wilder and more inclusive discourse than that of monolithic positivism. It requires metaphor thinking in which scientific descriptions of reality are just one acknowledged metaphor among many. It might draw upon inexpert and passionate memoir rather than some separate objectifying history. Mythology might inform, and even direct, planning. Community memory locates us in the specifics of place in a way that the (perceived) global elitism of the Arts often misses. But we don’t just need to change the content, we need to talk about the content in a different way that better reflects and acknowledges diversity and creativity as things of determining value. This requires responding to the challenge of the wild. When we acknowledge the mess of the mud, we find the bunyip, become part of the earth, re-learn subaltern ways of doing and being reconnect with multidimensional reality, and thereby rethink human relationships to land.

Consequently, this thesis is a multi-layered attempt at placing a number of stylistic arguments into the same philosophical space (defined by the ideas of the wild, landscape, and creativity). Each Part tackles these issues using different methodological, literal, philosophical, and practical approaches. Stories, poems, and diary entries sit alongside research and philosophy. Footnotes offer other paths, more complex analyses, or explain the research background; and parables present simpler versions beside philosophical and academic essays. I used the excuse of deadlines for conference papers and journal articles to develop the next argument. I kept a frequent diary and wrote monthly ‘Mudlark’ letters to friends about our ‘Mountain Change’. Some small components of these remind me and the reader of this thesis’ context and limitations – at an individual, familial, community, cultural, and environmental level. I also meditated on nothing far too frequently in my dreaming/writing shed with a view. In an attempt to understand Paul Carter’s ‘material thinking’ through creative research, I did art that consistently seemed to dwell on issues of landscape. The thesis pervaded my life and my life pervaded the thesis. These multiple methodologies might dimly reflect a challenge to the validity of the personal/academic dichotomy. Hopefully they also serve to voice the thesis’ arguments through multiple styles, none of which remain unused in the art of writing. The personal story attempts to make more accessible the complex arguments drawn from in-depth readings and material research practices of many and diverse disciplines – the unifying voice becomes my own, a kind of personal discipline, an autoethnography. I hope that the range of genres and styles help to occasionally lift the thesis out of the worst of the mud. Perhaps for example, the personal obviates more turgid philosophical depths.4

4 Indeed, a number of philosophers, such as Gayatri Spivak, Dorothy Richardson, or Val Plumwood, have used more personal stories, at least in informal media interviews, to clarify the complex messages of their books.
The approach is not after all so risky. Rather it is in keeping with much postmodern writing and of literary experiments. Norman Klein, in discussing writing and erasure in his work on myth and memory:

found the structure of chapters often required inserts of fiction … each layer ... not a single chronicle … blending notes with a diary … to break off into essays … as an urban mass-culture historian … partly autobiographical … [to form] a contagion of fictions or docufables [as a] technique of simultaneous distraction … to show how binaries erase and memory decays. (Klein, 1997: 6-8)

Similarly, Joan Richards, in writing up her academic research on the history of Victorian mathematics, allows the personal memoir of her sick child to dominate and direct a wider more holistic view: to break down ‘the wall between the public and the private, the personal and the professional … [to create] a purely relative tale, not of logic and probability, but of accident and happenchance.’ (Richards, 2000: 270-271)

In summary, this thesis is a layered and complex beast that reflects the multicultural wildness that lies in our landscapes. It is unusual as it fractures traditional form so as to speak in a style that reflects the thesis’ arguments. It is less a thesis for reading cover to cover in a linear fashion, than a related set of layered arguments and styles. Each of its Parts draw upon different disciplinary approaches; philosophy and methodology (thinking), history and memory (researching), planning and mythology (directing), and arts and cultural development (participating). The thesis attempts, in both methodological context and theoretical content, an ecocentric, rather than a more instrumentally anthropocentric, approach to the philosophic problem of human/nature interactions.

Ecocentrism is based on an ecologically informed philosophy of internal relatedness, according to which all organisms are not simply interrelated with their environment but also constituted by those very environmental interrelationships. (Eckersley, 1992:49)

A belief that all organisms are constituted by their environmental interrelationships leads to a different, more subaltern way of being, whether that being is writing theses or celebrating landscapes. I have tried to show in both the style and content of this thesis what that might look like. Like Pierre Nora, the writer of Realms of Memory (1996 – 1998), I eschew the linearity of historical narrative for memory sites that include libraries, festivals, mythology, community art, and architecture (although I include the additional memory site of the land itself). These multiple layers and imagined voices reflect the ways that land is transformed into landscape through cultural discourse. In the concluding words of Mulligan and Hill:

This seems entirely appropriate, however, because ecological thinking encourages us to grapple with complexity and to constantly engage with the unknown, rather than seek neat closures and tidy, rational, solutions. (Mulligan and Hill, 2001: 314)

Our multi-cultured histories are written upon the earth; our community identities shape and are shaped by the land. I have tried to write with the land rather than about the land: an academic translation of an animal spirit voice under the ecological supervision of a mountain’s timescale. I hope its voice is intellectual but its spirit wild.
**Where the wild lies**

 Appropriately, the notion of wild has refused easy categorisation; instead, the wild transmutes across the thesis as a series of interrelated concepts that draw upon post-colonial subaltern theory. Here, I introduce subaltern theory and briefly examine my various layered attempts at developing a metaphor to understand and explain the heart of the term subaltern, especially as it applies to the notions of culture, land, and creativity. I explain how I moved from the common ‘edge’ metaphor of subaltern theorists to develop the metaphor of the ‘wild within’.

**The post-colonial subaltern**

 Poststructuralists (and postmodernists in general) – those that see nature as text - have often been set up in opposition to environmentalists – those that declare nature as valuable other.\(^5\) Perhaps postcolonialism with its understanding of the subaltern and of cross-cultural relations allows for at least the possibility of a merging of the two? We don’t need a transcendent naturalism to value nature. Particularity and diversity of layered place and the totally non-human nature as underlying universal (as expressed in deep ecology for example) is combined here through the example of the bunyip. The implications of globalisation, or indeed nationalism, could be to wipe out such particularity in generalisations, but I think perhaps it makes us yearn for, and drives us to, processes that establish ourselves in our own idiosyncrasy of place in contra-distinction to the blandishments of a more global panacea. Environmental postcolonialism is not in opposition to or at the edge of the mainstream; it is the underlying subaltern voice that has common links with colonised voices the world over. The promises of once colonised monsters are that they speak for the non-human; they lie under and amidst our cultural psyches. Like the lorax who speaks for the trees,\(^6\) their voices are accessible – they translate the rationally untranslatable (because it is inhuman); they add another voice that in its voicing transforms how business-as-usual might think about nature. The postcolonial remembered voice of the mythic might reconcile the environment and the postmodern.

 Consequently, the postcolonial perspective is applied in this thesis as a pervading theoretical approach because of its multi-historiography and eclectic collation of issues. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue in *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (1998), post-colonial studies stands at the intersection of debates about race, colonialism, gender, politics, and language. Colin and Susan Kenworthy in *First Australians, New Australians, Changing Places, Aboriginality in Texts and Contexts* put it simply:

\(^5\) See for instance, the many examples in Peter Hay’s summary in the final chapter on *Western Environmental Thought* (2002: especially pages 321-339).

\(^6\) This Dr Seuss (and A S Geisel, 1972) children’s book explains sustainable development as well as any public document and is much more colourful and enjoyable to read! The Lorax is a typical Suess imaginary animal crossed with a grumpy old man (a Haraway monster of animal/human coalition, a Mount Bauple amalgam of mythic beast, indigenous man, and madman) who speaks on behalf of the (almost) extinct Truffula trees overexploited by the Once-Ier. The Lorax reinforces the subaltern contention of my thesis – that human/animal/spirit coalitions require the wild, an element of madness, in order to take concrete form.
Postcolonial writing has made available a view of the world from the margins rather than from the centre. It has allowed readers to ‘change places’ and to see the world from the point of view of the colonised people. (Kenworthy, 1997: 7 - their emphases)

The edge, the margin, the borderland, the liminal has been a common metaphor for the Other and a playground of the academic. The edge in subaltern theory is attractive for precisely these reasons. For instance: Pandey (1995) writes ‘Voices from the Edge: The Struggle to Write Subaltern Histories’; Dirlik (1997) writes ‘Confucius in the Borderlands’; Sandercock (1998) writes ‘Voices from the Borderlands’; Pat Hoffie (1991) writes ‘Centres and Peripheries’. Espin says, women of color who are feminist live on “the borderlands” [allowing for] new experiences, new territories and new languages not known by those who inhabit only one world or speak in only one language (Espin, 1995: 135).

The edge metaphor draws upon different cultures’ and disciplines’ understandings of the role of edges. There are many ideas that draw upon notions of the edge: the margins of biology and ecology, Maori notions of the Pae,⁷ the liminal in nature writing, the role of the gutter in cartoon strips,⁸ the pristine edges of environmentalists, and the murky frontiers of conflict studies. As in the theory of biogeography, it is at the edges of a defined ecology that diversity is greatest and most change is possible. Actual and metaphorical edges are found between the central self and the peripheral other, and between constructions of Cartesian dualisms such as nature/culture and black/white. Postcolonial theory asks, what gets us to dance at the borders of these differences – that allows us to understand them and dismiss them at the same time? The edge place has generally been constructed as a positive, if sometimes romanticised, radical site that instigates change.

Subaltern studies emerged alongside the post-colonial paradigm that contributed to this ongoing popular academic discourse of ways to listen to other voices. Whereas liberation studies focused on practical ways to hear oppressed voices, subaltern studies used theory to question and redefine the boundaries of the oppressed. In political historical writing, the term ‘subaltern’ was first used by the Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, as a coded way to refer to the proletariat, yet still get his writings past the prison censors. It was adopted and developed by the Subaltern Studies Group, started in India in 1982 by Runajit Guha. This Group used a third world perspective to expose and critique the attitudes, ideologies, and belief systems of dominant history, politics, economics, anthropology, and sociology. They rewrote and reinterpreted the British Raj history of Indian peasant insurgency: from the peasant’s viewpoint, insurgency was not a crime, but a fight for social justice. They aimed to rectify elitist bias in research and re-examine events and themes from a more rounded perspective. The Group published

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⁷ The Pae (paepae is threshold, border) is the margin, boundary and horizon … a demarcation between the known and the unknown; between the familiar and the unfamiliar; … a barricade between the insider and the outsider’ (Jahnke, 1999: 194)

⁸ The gutter in cartoon strips (the blank space between cartoons) allows the viewer to fill in the action between each image. The cartoon gutter is a site of imagination, an active form of reading between time and/or place, that takes two separate images and transforms them into a unified idea (see for instance, Vicky A Clark’s argument in the exhibition catalogue for Comic Release, c2001: 38).
numerous volumes of *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* over the last 20 years (see for instance Guha, 1982 – 1989), and have influenced (some would argue, driven) postcolonial thinking across the world (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1998). Those who espouse the development of the subaltern include Homi Bhabha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Shahid Amin, Partha Chatterjee, and Gayatri Spivak.

The subaltern, borrowing the military metaphor, shows how the unacknowledged underling influences and shapes the dominant power structures as well as being oppressed by them. Spivak’s pivotal 1988 paper on *Can the subaltern speak?* answered her own question with an unclear and densely argued ‘no’. She argued that the positive role for dominant or colonial groups should be to make a space for emergent voices to be heard. Spivak was strongly influenced by the post-structuralism of Derrida, having translated *Of Grammatology* into English. Such thinking believes that discourse is more critical for change than action and rejects a pure definition of identity so that boundary distinctions between cultures are not fixed. In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999), Spivak returns to the concerns of ecofeminists in re-examining relationships between gender, culture and environment, as well as continuing her crusade against clear distinctions and definitions of the subaltern. In this book, Spivak argues that the ‘native informant’ is not a pure victim. She argues that the figure of the native is constructed through both a uniting and dividing of philosophy, history, and literature to emerge as a metropolitan hybrid. And the consequence is to rein in postcolonial critiques of such constructions:

> We cannot merely continue to act out the part of Caliban … the mud we sling at certain seemingly overbearing ancestors such as Marx and Kant may be the very ground we stand on. (Spivak, 1999)

Often the subaltern voice needs to be reconstructed from colonial texts (the writings of the dominant). Tradition, like history, is only interpreted by individuals of the present. It is an ever-changing feast that both reflects and responds to present day requirements. Patricia Seed (1993) says post-structuralism exposes the problem of trying to understand the colonised using the (only remaining) records of the colonial bureaucracies. Language, literacy, and politics distort even the most neutral-seeming records of the colonial past and obscure the colonised realities, the understandings ‘from below’. The practical strategy of the subaltern is to read colonial records ‘against the grain’. It is ourselves and our readings of the texts of culture that need to change. While the texts remain black and white, we must come to them with eyes of grey.

For example, western notions of democratic representation mean we assume that one person can speak on behalf of a cultural group. Both notions have been applied monolithically, especially in the case of Australian

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9 This is nothing new to subaltern or liberation studies – many have shown how the oppressed maintains vestiges of power and are able to subvert and change dominant cultures – see for example McGrath’s *Born in the Cattle* (1987) or Larson’s (1997) earlier study showing how the Malagasy grafted European Christianity onto their language and existing religious practices.
indigenous/settler relations, made more complicated because of a white yearning for a simple black past. With the best of intentions, we require a construction of truth, a creation of story as unchanging, independent of the complex realities. Perhaps white Australia wants Aborigines to show a cultural closeness to tradition and history that the settler culture has lost? No matter how carefully reconciliation is approached, there is always a danger of treading with racist feet. But this is not a reason to ignore or downplay the importance of Indigenous history in Australia (and other colonies); it is just a reason to be aware that every journey leaves its footprints. The records we have of traditional Indigenous evidence (whether through story, painting, or other art) are predicated on an impossible western demand for purity and authenticity that along the way constructs a false image and may in the end limit the opportunity for reconciliation. Nevertheless, this evidence is what both black and white Australia has to work with; as with any exercise in communication we resort to a partial and distorted truth in the hope that this can still lead to useful disclosure that furthers a diverse Australian community’s cultural development. And we hope that this does not exclude other truths.

A subaltern parade of metaphors

There are a number of ways to explain the subaltern and try to make it more user-friendly and accessible. No single metaphor for the subaltern completely encapsulates its theoretical concepts, but each point to some of the key themes found in subaltern theory. I have applied and developed different metaphors across the thesis:

The Other emerges from the classic Cartesian dualist polarity, such as white versus black or male versus female. The Other is exposed as lesser and linked across dualisms, so that for instance woman, body, and nature are connected and subordinate to man, mind, and culture. Ecofeminists, for example, have tried to reduce the polarising effect of such dualisms by arguing against the stereotypes they encapsulate, or more simply, by reversing that which is considered dominant. In ‘the Other’ model, land can be neatly placed with nature, in contradistinction to human culture. The more remote and inaccessible the land, the more Other it becomes; inhospitable or revered wilderness is defined in opposition to human habitable places. But the Other is too removing a notion, one that only exists as a defining opposite for the dominant. The Other’s polarising stereotype leaves no room for change. Black cannot be reconciled with white; nature cannot be conflated with culture. Land remains pure non-human matter, a passive resource perhaps but with no opportunities for more playful or more sympathetic anthropomorphising. Land as the Other is by its very definition, non-human.

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10 Elizabeth Povinelli (2002) in collecting Aboriginal evidence for Native Title Claims shows how whites require indigenous Australians to tell an impossible story of unity across time and culture rather than the more partial truth about themselves. Individuals are asked to speak on behalf of an Aboriginal Australia that constructs mythological links to land; and are rewarded for doing so with (at least promises of) status and land. She suggests white Australians need such indigenous stories to ‘ghost’ our own mythic longings. Similarly, Hobsbawm and Ranger, discuss the invention of an imposed and invariant tradition (along with the notion of nation) as a product of late nineteenth, early twentieth century, pointing out we cannot trust colonial records as representations of other's cultures.
The Edge changes the position of the Other – from a polarised far left (or right) to a boundary that encircles and defines the centre. The diverse and rich edge is a place in which lies madness and other societal pathologies. Land becomes the outlying country that defines the edge of human habitations. The city is defined by its country edge, a place to visit but not inhabit. Those who choose to inhabit the edge have opted out: they are the Sea Changers, the philosophers, the hippies, and the mad. The Edge is the main metaphor found in Part I of the thesis, Metaphor: Listening to Edges. The Edge metaphor could be used to justify my experiment of living in the country, rather than remain in the academic centre of the city, just as it justifies the third world positioning of many subaltern theorists. The edge, like the Other, is still a limited metaphor but there are more opportunities for ex/changes between the centre and its defining boundaries. The Edge explores the necessity of the wild and begins to develop the importance of the local and the inexpert in understanding the imagined active specificity of a place.

Timber Grain is developed as a metaphor for Part II, Memoir: The Creativity of Landscape Memoir. The image of cutting timber grain offers a way to read history. The timber metaphor explores the possibilities for subaltern readings against the grain through an examination of inexpert and local writings about the regional landscape of the Sunshine Coast. But it is the metaphor of Mud that wins out in understanding the Landscape Memoir of Part II, a concept that privileges memory and values emotions over the greater clarity of history and rationality. The Mud is an extension of the edge, in that it remains a place we don’t want to inhabit – a dank swamp of unknown dangers. We try to avoid the mud (even as we enjoy its potential as an edge place) by building over it with walkways and bridges. And so the wild lies beneath our cultured constructions, a fear we both flee and seek. The mud is a place from which mythic beasts, animal/human coalitions, might surface.

The Mud is further developed in Part III, Mythology: Imagining the Edge of Fear, from which its awesome inhabitants emerge. Like the troll that lurks beneath the bridge in Grimm’s Three Billy Goats Gruff, and the bunyip that lies in wait, the wild might still leap up upon us as we attempt to keep our feet dry. The Bunyip (amidst other mythopoetic beasts) not only embodies the otherness of the land, but also develops the possibility for more active nature/culture combinations. In acknowledging these active coalitions of edge and centre, we reduce the distance from core to periphery; the edge moves from that which lies around the centre at some distance from it, to that which lies beneath or within, the centre’s dominance. The Wild Beneath is the necessary darker underside of our cultural understandings and relationships to land. Part III’s image - the underside of a table top - merges the previous metaphors of timber grain, edge, and beneath. The Wild beneath is given another image in Part IV, Memory: Celebrations to embrace fear and refuse despair. Here it is the mangrove root that grows through both the mud and our cultural overlays. It is this protrusion – this metaphor for an active landscape - that is celebrated. The wild beneath is exposed through localised and more complex celebrations of the memories and imaginations of place.

11 Developed by my furniture making partner, Ross Annels.
The problem with ‘the wild beneath’ is that *beneath* can be read as simply the inverse of *above*. If the wild is considered a form of the pagan sacred, then the sacred above or the sacred beneath sounds very close to a monolithic Kantian-Christian transcendentalism, rather than the wild’s preferred many and plural locations. The prefix ‘pan’ means universal, and the god of that name is a many-sited pagan spirit that lives outside the lofty confines of the institutional sacred of our major religions. In this thesis, the wild lies everywhere. Hence, these metaphors do not necessarily reflect a progression; each metaphor demonstrates a useful but incomplete aspect of that which constitutes the ideas of the subaltern. The subaltern, as a key influence upon this thesis, deserves multiple exploration through these layered and diverse metaphors and visual images.

**From Edge to Wild Within**

Gramsci used the term subaltern as a metaphor for the proletariat in his political writings. Many post-colonial and subaltern theorists rely upon the metaphor of the edge. However, in the terms of land and art/ landscape creativity, the wild might be a better metaphor. I often use the wild as (at least a) more accessible shorthand for the complexities of subaltern theory. I have developed the metaphor of the Wild Beneath, as its common understanding most simply approximates a raft of concepts that reflect both the awe-ful unknown and a layering of the landscape. The Wild Beneath is that which lurks, a bunyip or a troll, the underside of the table or a protrusion of mangroves. Of course, the wild does not replace the subaltern (or indeed the edge), but I think it is a more comprehensive metaphor when applied to Australian notions of landscape and race.

The edge is too easily romanticised as appealingly radical, especially by academics. For instance, the African-American bell hooks writes:

> I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance – as location of radical openness and possibility. … We are transformed, individually, collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world. (hooks, 1990: 153)

In contrast, in the artwork produced by *Art & Language* (Hostage XIX, 1989 in Harrison, 1994), the text begins: ‘We aim to be amateurs, to act in the unsecular forbidden margins.’ Charles Harrison, the art theorist writing about this work, says: ‘What lies in the forbidden margins is not the romantic integrity of the oppositional, not the dogged virtue of Modernism’s excluded Others, but irredeemable and inescapable incompetence.’ (Harrison, 1994: 232) Harrison’s suggestion - that the edge is populated with the sheer amateur, ‘homely and priggish’, a place without meaning - is a far more challenging and discomforting (but still overly simplified) reality for those who overcome the guilt of centre living by ascribing the edge more positively. The problem with the post-colonial metaphor of the Edge as radical site, is that the edge’s incompetence and banality is ignored; the poor (aspiring and boring) copies of centre life are neither seen nor represented. Indeed, for those seeing change through the new and the original, such imitative banality is not worthy of study, but this ordinariness also makes the Edge metaphor more problematic.
The Edge as a metaphor in terms of Australian landscape is also problematic. While it might imply the less inhabited places such as border swamps, it might, more generally, be thought of as that most populous part of Australia – the coast. Perhaps the key problem of the Edge is that it is too attractive, sidetracking us from the deep issues of Australia’s heart country. Hence for instance, Australia’s concept of terra nullius. ‘That Captain Cook fella’ – an individual and forgiving Aboriginal representation of white Australia - has taken the responsibility and blame for poor black/white relations. Aboriginal stories from all round Australia show too many Captain Cooks – even Arnhem Land groups in far north Australia have stories about Cook landing and not saying ‘hello’. Perhaps the best (most humorous and forgiving) story about terra nullius comes from a Cunnamulla Kooma elder, Herb Wharton. Herb describes himself as ‘not very political but really bloody argumentative’ and he is an inveterate and superb storyteller. His Captain Cook story is a trustori which I badly paraphrase here:

Cook’s arrival on the sands of Botany Bay, decked out in velvet and frills, was just 150 years too early for Sydney’s Mardi Gras. His was an honest mistake. He put his telescope to his eye and gazed up the coastline, not inland, where he might have glimpsed the local inhabitants checking out the strangers from behind the trees. One Australian comments to the others, “Look at that silly old bugger, he’s not only lost, he’s trying to play the didgeridoo with his eye”. By the time Cook turned his telescope west, he couldn’t see anyone because all were rolling on the ground, kicking up their legs, laughing. So Cook declared Australia, terra nullius.

Those with power to make such declarations are guilty, whether through accident or design, of not looking at the whole. This trustori shows the centre preoccupied with and blinded by the edge of Australia’s coast, while the opportunity of saying ‘hello’ - of establishing and recognising the inland where real differences arise - is lost. Cook and Phillip may go on to dance with strangers (as Inga Clendingen suggests), but the legacy of that first contact is more truly expressed in the many Captain Cook trustori told by Aboriginal Australia.

We are so often fascinated by the edge that, as Spivak says, we too often sling mud at the centre without realising that the centre is where we stand, where we come from, and where we are going. It is the centre that needs deconstructing, breaking down into its component edge parts – both those that are remembered and those that are forgotten. The metaphor of the Wild Within might better express the complexities of knowledges and cultures that lie within us, both as individuals and as communities.

A diversity workshop exercise I have run a number of times gets people to progressively cross the room if they or any of their ancestors are born overseas; by the time great-grandparents are mentioned, no-one remains. A 2002 article in the Weekend Australian talked of Melbourne-born whites going to a family re-union in Alice Springs only to discover (some to their horror) that not-so distant relatives called themselves Aborigines. As Australians, we are a pretty mixed up race – to be anti multiculturalism seems to be anti ourselves. Once we start talking about people and not constructs, the categories crumble. Racism becomes as much about an internal personal hatred as it is
about excluding the threat of the other. The German poet, Rainer Maria Rilke expresses this internal Other in

**Turning Point:**

> But there is a boundary to looking …
> Now go and do heartwork on all the images imprisoned within you;
> for you overpowered them:
> but even now you don’t know them.

Getting to know the images imprisoned within you is to take the subaltern view of the wild within. Such images can be labelled as both central and edge personas. Rejecting the limitations of these labels is the process of naming the whole self. Ursula Le Guin says at the end of her Jungian inspired tale, *A Wizard of Earthsea*:

> And he began to see the truth, that Ged had neither lost nor won but, naming the shadow of his death with his own name, had made himself whole: a man: who, knowing his own true self, cannot be used or possessed by any power other than himself, and whose life therefore is lived for life’s sake and never in the service of ruin, or pain, or hatred, or the dark. (Le Guin, 1968: 199)

Similarly in Ruby Wiebe’s (1973) *The Temptations of Big Bear*, it is only in rejecting labels and destroying himself that a Cree tribal bear-inspired man can un-invent the world of the British and the American. Wiebe argues that Native Americans having resisted genocide, now must also reject the labels of the colonisers, destroying their own identity (as 'Indian' and its like); only then can a truth be spoken that creates the unimagined new. Greg Dening urges in his conclusion to *Beach Crossings*:

> Dare to voyage across times, cultures and self. Especially self. Especially self on the beaches of times and cultures. Set your global positioning system to edginess, in-between. … polarities on a beach do not work. They had to give something of themselves. In return they received a gift back. A small ray of understanding of the otherness within them. Crossing beaches will do that. (Dening, 2004: 346)

**Table 1: Embracing and rejecting dualisms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven steps to new dualisms</th>
<th>Contemporary examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reject monolithic truth; acknowledge the edge</td>
<td>Postmodernism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(create the dualism)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the other as problematic category</td>
<td>Black and feminist movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the centre as problematic category</td>
<td>Whiteness studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognise each other’s critical influence</td>
<td>Subaltern and postcolonial studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(change the power imbalance)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the dualism as (limited) metaphor</td>
<td>Philosophers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reject the category; imagine the new</td>
<td>Writers, poets and artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish the new monolithic truth and Repeat</td>
<td>The process of cultural metaphors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is only when metaphors become tired (and rejected by those that are created by them), that other mythologies can replace the current metaphor as ‘new truth’. This process breaks down the dualistic divisions, removing labels, but it is complicated (as one reductionist example, see Table 1). Firstly, the dualism might express a positive step in deconstructing an assumed (monolithic) truth. But the labels have to be seen to apply to more than the
dominated edge persona. Labels have to be just as problematically applied to the opposing/balancing centre metaphor. Hence, for instance, the importance of ‘whiteness’ studies (see for example, Belinda McKay, 1999). It is only when black and white is equally studied and exposed as a construct that the labels can start to be rejected. We cannot deny or ignore the dominant dualisms of the day, even though they might be politically and historically suspect. While it is commonplace to deride dualistic thinking, such dualisms still form the basis for how we develop and it is critical that we acknowledge their importance, rather than rhetorically denying their significance. They are records of our history, shapers of our political and cultural practices, and markers of our future. The existence of dualisms begins positively to problematise otherwise monolithic concepts. Dualisms remain key indicators of a culture’s dominant paradigm. They overcome or simplify the difficulties of communicating reality. Without the construction of black and white, we can neither literally nor metaphorically read our culture’s texts. Subaltern studies attempts a deconstruction of such texts, interpreting them through the unacknowledged but influential voices of the colonised. But the attempt is self-reflective and perhaps paradoxical; as Spivak says, the mud we sling, comes from the very ground we stand upon.

Perhaps in embracing the wild, the dualisms might begin to lose meaning. It is through understanding, acknowledging and celebrating the wild within - both within ourselves as individuals and within our cultural institutions as societies – that we might begin to reconcile and deconstruct such dominating dualistic metaphors as black and white, nature and culture, or animal and human. The concepts of the Other or the Edge allow for continual patronising sentiment or appropriation. But, when the concept is changed to the Wild Within, we might begin to find our own solutions. By admitting whiteness and its equivalent, we can also see that our own culture (rather than the more exotic alternative) has held its conflicting solutions to problems such as lack of spirituality. For instance, the common but subaltern Celtic history of many Anglo-Australians is also strongly regional and

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14 We are a long way from this point. We are still at the very beginning of the process: trying to understand that there might be some central worth in listening to edge stories. The postmodernist centre acknowledges more stories than its own. We can rewrite history to have a number of (more than one) viewpoints – we find and debate evidence that tells the black as well as the white side of massacres – Henry Reynolds is opposed to Keith Windshuttle, both of whom chose to look out from the centre in very different ways. We start to hear, and even (rarely) privilege the oral and pictorial histories of old Aboriginal women opposing the development of Hindmarsh Island bridge (see for example, Brodie, 2002), or a young native boy’s drawing of ‘Dispersal Usual Way: Some Good Shooting in the 1890s (see footnote 52, page 84). But we have yet to deconstruct our own identities. While we identify text as positioned ‘black’ or ‘white’, we have yet to acknowledge our eyes of grey.

There are of course problems with the wild within metaphor. It might be so wholeheartedly adopted that the influential roles of more mainstream aspects are not also critiqued. For example, the Australian appeal of subaltern theory is to disrupt and deconstruct the dualistic fears of an advocacy academic working on indigenous relations. The best of Germaine Greer’s Whitefella Jump Up essay (2002) argues that our national life could be more informed by Aboriginality but the worst is a ‘manifestation of the “white Aborigine” … as attempts to appropriate indigenous culture for commercial gain or to conjure into being a spiritual attachment and “belonging” to land.’ (Tony Birch, 2003: 85). The subaltern helps, at least in theory, to overcome, this fear of becoming Greer: of vaguely suggesting ‘a quest for a black magic cure to white Australian problems’ (Mary Ellen Jordan 2003: 92); of positive racism, of sentimentalising and appropriating indigenous culture with careless and romantic generalisations, and ofoptimistically avoiding the historic and ongoing badlands of black/white relations in Australia. For Marcia Langton (2003:82), the two offences go hand-in-hand, leading to ‘facile conclusions’ and an impossible reconciliation for national identity.

15 As Geoff Sharp (2003: 93) asks, ‘Could it be that the problem for us relates to the recognition and renewal of what we already have rather than simply learning it from Aboriginal people?’ The answers lie closer to home (and the way “home” is defined is obviously critical: Sharp defines it as white reciprocity – a kind of bridging social capital).

This is not just up to Aborigines or activists: some respect for those almost-timeless generations who lived and developed this island before us is surely beyond race or politics: it simply flows from a love of place. (Boyce, 2003)

But is a love of place enough? There is, at least, an educative role for indigenous stories and understandings. There is also a place for white ancestor’s voices and a place for land love purely within the urban. A deeper, wider, more complex understanding (or deconstruction) of indigenous/settler, and city/country relations is necessary to be able to develop a deeper understanding of human/land relations, as Val Plumwood (2000) argues. The theory of the subaltern both negates and develops the underlying notions of land love and an active landscape.

A land such as Australia has many cultures; if we are to recognise them, we need intercultural approaches. Such collaborations require that we also like ourselves and have as much (or as little) respect and understanding for our culture and its history as we do for the subaltern culture/s with which we wish to cohabit this land. We need to see culture in nature - having respect for Country, as well as seeing nature in culture - understanding the wild within. In this thesis for example, Part One shows how country and city can evolve to become interchangeable notions of the wild. Part III gives parallel examples of a role for mythic beasts and animals: they draw out the strong indigenous culture that underpins the nature of the countryside, and they re-create wilder nature in the heart of the city. With a notion of the Wild Within, we might go anywhere and take the wild with us. Wildness is at least as much about intent as it is about process, reflecting the inner state and not merely the outer environment. The Wild Within metaphor moves throughout this thesis, as an influential but unconscious sub-theme (reflecting the way the subaltern operates in mainstream society). The Wild Within is always (potentially) accessible, offering a trustori understanding to the wild and the subaltern.

This thesis delves into and exposes that which lies within and beneath in as many levels as possible, through text and context as well as content. What personal journeys and private emotions lie beneath academic rationality? What future for identity lies beneath politicised notions of the land? What fear lies within our stories of place? What of the non-human lies beneath our constructs of the city? What of the wild lies within our everyday? What existing practices of landscape memoir lie beneath the dominant more scientific stories we tell ourselves? In acknowledging these subaltern practices, we might change the world through greater originality and insight in both perception and action. It is this layered, emotional, discursive, and intellectual understanding that combines to make a complex and creative thesis on cultural landscapes.
Part I Methodology and Metaphor

Listening to edges

Sketch for a Bunyip Tamsin Kerr July 2006
**Metaphor Overview (Bunyip methods)**

A thesis that relies upon the theory and practice of the wild to imagine a more active land needs to develop a corresponding methodology that understands the importance of metaphor in constructing the world. Part I tells my more personal journey and investigation to test both the application and associated outcomes of various methodologies. There are many ways that community develops a culturally different relationship to land, including art and festival, and also story-telling and planning. And there are many ways to investigate these issues: through talking with groups using a form of participative action research; through academic documentation and workshop-based research; and, less commonly, through thinking a deeper inhabitation of a particular place. I develop this latter vocabulary of place thinking, drawing upon the role of metaphor and influences from Greek philosophers to Sea Changers, as the preferred bunyip methodology for listening to edges. Perhaps, it is a wild (if not mad) metaphor of the mind, as much as it is a relocation of the body to country, that might hear the non-human so as to imagine and create a more active landscape. Although place thinking might be a confusing, fearsome, and hopeful methodology, it underpins and justifies the wilder style and structure of the thesis.

**Where the wild things are (with apologies to Maurice Sendak)**

The time Tamsin wore her bunyip suit and made mischief of one kind and another, institutions called her 'Wild Thing!' and Tamsin said 'I’ll eat you up!' so she was sent to the country without eating anything. That very year in Tamsin’s retreat a forest grew and grew – and grew until her mountain hung with vines and her restrictions became the world all around and an ocean of ideas tumbled by with a writing craft for Tamsin and she sailed off through past and future and in and out of weeks and almost over five years to where the wild things are. And when she came to the place where the wild things are, they roared their terrible roar and gnashed their terrible teeth and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws till Tamsin said ‘Be accepted’ and tamed them with the magic trick of acting as if the wild things mattered and institutions were impressed and called her the woman of all trades and myths and made her the most wild thing of all. ‘And now’ cried Tamsin, ‘let the wild celebrations start!’ ‘Now, be an active land!’ Tamsin said and built frameworks for the wild things and their human celebrations. Then all around from far away across the world she smelled good things to eat, so she gave up being queen of where the wild things are. But the wild things cried, ‘Oh please don’t go – we’ll eat you up – we love you so!’ And Tamsin said, ‘No!’ The wild things roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws but Tamsin stepped into her private writing craft and waved good-bye and sailed back over five years and in and out of weeks and through past and future and into the time of her very own where she found the institutions waiting for her, and they were still hot.

(Diary entry, December 2005)
Methodologies of place

This thesis argues that celebrating place makes a space for the voice of the wild to be heard; and, that creating a space for the subaltern to be heard leads to more creative discourses on place. Three key strands of land, creativity, and the wild weave across this thesis. Themes reflect:

- the land and its scape (as shaped by discourse and story using memory, mythology and metaphor),
- the relationships between creativity, celebration and cultural change,
- and the role of edge places, of wildness, in both societal and academic frameworks.

Subaltern theory defines the edge voices of human societies and shows how they might be heard. From the onset of the thesis, I have been interested in whether subaltern theory could also be applied to the non-human; can animals and indeed land be constructed as edge voices in similar ways? I therefore approached areas and disciplines that presented themselves as experts in edge voices. Firstly, community cultural development practitioners, who commonly use art activities to develop and expose the less dominant voices of a community, whether Indigenous, multi-cultured, disabled, young or aged. Then, nature writers and environmental historians who tell place-based stories, trying to expose the voice of the land rather than the history of a people. Finally, I relied on my own inhabitation of a wilder space and a more personal communing with some embodiment of nature – a sort of place-based thinking or meditation. This last closely parallels the reflexive methodologies of autoethnography (see Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner, 2003) and of ethnopoetics (see Ivan Brady, 2003 or Victor Turner, 1983). Each methodology is reflected in the Parts of this thesis and each came with a co-requisite and almost prescriptive outcome.

So, as a serendipitous sub-theme, this thesis has investigated methodological approaches and their results. Differing approaches could be seen (in post-rationalisation at least) as a starting point for Parts II - IV of this thesis, their products tied to the type of methodology used: Part II Memoir, a discussion of landstories, relies upon a classificatory academic methodology; Part III Mythology, an investigation of bunyips, relies upon place-based meditation and metaphor; and, Part IV Memory, exploring the role of community cultural creativity, uses participant observation and participatory action research. While this is the sequence of discussion in the thesis, here I discuss the methodologies in the order that I undertook them: participative action research was followed by academic research, whilst place based thinking more correctly pervaded the process of the entire thesis. It is this latter and wilder ‘bunyip’ methodology of place thinking that is perhaps the best way to understand the active voice of a landscape.
Choosing Insights over Frameworks: participative action research

In my resistance to academic thesis writing and coming fresh from local government, I was initially attracted to participative action research. This seemed to be a methodology that offered immediate outcomes, (partially) repaid the participants for their participation in my research, and worked on a problem that emerged from the field. It seemed a very distant cousin to the dusty academic tome read only by its examiners. I wanted to locate examples of positive human/active nature celebrations and examine the role played by community cultural development (CCD) in changing attitudes. As I realised their widespread, underreported, and certainly undertheorised nature, I moved from an Australian wide focus to the regional area of the Sunshine Coast. I chose the Sunshine Coast predominantly because of proximity, but also because the range of activities seemed to cover an adequate representation of national projects, and because I had established links with Maroochy Shire Council (in which I had been working as the cultural relations officer), Noosa Shire Council (where I lived), and the Queensland Community Art Network (QCAN) who were then partnering Maroochy’s Arts and Cultural Development officer in developing the Sunshine Coast Regional Networking Project. Consequently, a project emerged outlining a regional framework for CCD.

Project Summary

A working group of four – QCAN’s executive director, QCAN’s project manager, the Arts officer of Maroochy Shire Council, and I – ran the project over the next 18 months. We obtained $20,000 funding mainly from the State Government’s Regional Arts Fund (then administered through Arts Queensland), with lesser amounts from local government and in-kind support. We identified ten key projects: seven examples of local, non-government processes: Woodford Folk Festival, Splash! (a celebration of waterways), Cooroy Butter Factory (Art and Environment community centre), Linsey Pollak (teaching and playing accessible and multi-cultural music), PAKTI (the Power of the Arts as a Key To Inclusion, a multi-abled theatre group), Nungeena (Aboriginal community centre based on land and reconciliation), and the Eumundi markets (a major arts and crafts market funding the Eumundi and District Historical Society); as well as three local government managed processes: The Floating Land (Noosa Council Gallery environmental art); ArtSynC (Maroochy Council’s arts incubator); and a summary of the Frameworks project and its ongoing regional context. Defining and using these examples, I wrote the booklet Community Cultural Development Frameworks to examine the philosophy, policy, principles, and practices of CCD (Kerr, 2002b).

Over 2002, I was involved in these ten projects, participating and interviewing other participants, CCD workers, project managers, and CCD experts. Each interview was returned for comment and changes made. Participants owned the words and used the material in funding applications and acquittals, as well as in individual project promotion and media releases; for example, Linsey Pollak sent my piece on his work to the South Korean Times to promote his tour. These interviews, some philosophical framing, and a large number of questions (with spaces for answers) formed a participation kit sent to the regional project participants and CCD experts around the
State. The process culminated in a day-long forum bringing together and paying all participants. This recorded discussion was combined with returned participation kits, interviews, some later e-group chat and other comments. As a result the Frameworks process: started to build a regional notion of Sunshine Coast CCD practice; analysed the projects and the theory behind CCD practice; and made practical links between individuals and groups. (A number of consequent initiatives have been, at least partially, attributed to new relationships developed through the forum and the Frameworks process).

But, by the draft final publication, I had become the meat in a participative action research sandwich, trying to represent both local CCD practitioners and central administrators. Many of the regional CCD practitioners showed a general dislike of government administration and a specific dislike of QCAN. Conversely, Arts Queensland and QCAN (as the funders of the project) wanted a promotional outcome. Representing both interests was incompatible. Art and CCD policy changes in the State department of Arts Queensland were mirrored in QCAN as officers worked closely together. Consequently, the project moved from Frameworks to Insights, reflecting the administratively simpler solution of relegating local arts policy and projects to local government (as the ‘recognised provider of regional infrastructure’ in Insights, QCAN, 2002: 4), rather than (as originally envisaged) trying to develop administratively independent ‘regional hubs’ to facilitate the arts. This local government solution contradicted the conclusions, I (and others such as Feral Arts) drew from the Frameworks project which suggested that CCD practice was best understood and practiced outside of local government. The policy change spelt the end of Frameworks: it made the difficult tightrope act of mediating between urban bureaucrats and regional practitioners impossible. Consequently, I was not involved in the production of the final booklet, and an ex Arts Queensland employee, Judith Pippen, competently managed its additional research and production. Insights: community, culture and local government (QCAN, 2002) did not try to build an intellectual framework to regional CCD practice, instead relying on the tried and true CCD approach of offering “snapshots” and including a listing of resources to encourage local government adoption of CCD.

Participative Action Research Discussion

Although each participative action research process is different, maybe some general conclusions can be drawn from this project. Participative action research does produce direct outcomes that are collectively developed, but these are strongly influenced by the more powerful participants. The government agencies (that manage the purse strings – in this case, Arts Queensland through the Regional Arts Fund) made policy decisions that,

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16 For example, Bill Hauritz, the director of Woodford Folk Festival is opposed to arts administrators in general. Under Bill’s directorship, Woodford has deliberately steered away from government dependency and the consequent dictates of government fashion. Bill’s concerns are that the current government driven and politically correct nature of the arts sector leads to a limited ‘pursuit of excellence’ rather than celebrating the authenticity of popular culture. Bill gives the example of the consequent undervaluing of amateurs. Bill says ‘if CCD is partially about encouraging community based arts and culture, it should not be about creating more professional artists or arts administrators’ (See Kerr, 2002b: 23 based on a 20/5/02 interview with Bill Hauritz). Neil Cameron, who runs the fire events at Woodford, has also had difficulties with QCAN as a result of a QCAN article in their magazine claiming that what he did was not CCD. While Woodford Folk Festival was public about their dislike of QCAN, other participants complained to me privately: three other project participants disliked QCAN’s approaches and were only willing to be involved because I was the known and respected regional facilitator.
despite contradicting the research findings, were the key influence in the end product. Generally, the methodology of participant action research excludes new approaches or a wider overview, as those participating are already embedded in the practice. CCD, for example, is limited by a community arts perspective and a focus on artistic outputs (be they performances, festivals, or murals) rather than to less tangible processes that facilitate relationships and build collective cultures. CCD could be interpreted more widely to include the work of planners or public health workers, who also attempt to actively influence the processes of cultural change. However, in this case, the majority came from the accepted arts arena of CCD, so such non-conventional links and wider applications were not established.¹⁷

The collective nature of participative action research limits the opportunities for intellectual critique or lateral solutions. In this case, when I talked to individual participants, they were often and vocally critical of other CCD approaches and organisations, including much local antagonism to QCAN. However, in the Frameworks forum, every approach was collectively endorsed. Projects were justified as ongoing spirals in the regional CCD framework, so that even failed endings could be transformed into successful beginnings. The collective unwillingness to assess or rate projects within a framework, stemmed from an understandable aversion to making negative comments in an area already under threat. Participants feared losing future funding, naturally needed to put a positive spin on their endeavours, and regional participants needed to maintain ongoing relationships across projects that cultivated the same participants. More importantly, the working group was unable to critically examine the learning opportunities that arose from the process. Quite reasonably, QCAN wanted to help create better government policy and keep its triennial funding through working with and promoting government Arts policy; the Maroochy Arts officer needed to promote her good work, not so much to the public as to her own Council so they would continue to support her position.¹⁸ Because of these more important day-to-day concerns of survival, neither partner organisation could afford to look too deeply at the Frameworks' implications or be too intellectually rigorous. And this is the fundamental outcome of a participative action methodology: there are real outputs, but of necessity, with little critical depth. The collective nature of the approach drives the direction of the research: my interest in developing an intellectual and regional framework for CCD was subsumed by the working group's need to promote their positive organisational role in CCD practice;

¹⁷ I included the Eumundi Historical Society as a case study to attempt to broaden the artistic emphasis of CCD, as the President, Wes Morris was keen to include planners in CCD. The Association is responsible for an Arts and Craft Market every Saturday with over 300 stalls (and another 200 in the town) and an estimated 10,000 weekly visitors. An average yearly income of around three-quarters of a million means they can be committed to supporting a strong regional perspective through funding community cultural development activities and organisations, especially around Eumundi and its district. In Wes' words:

  The kinds of communities which we live in will necessarily shape the kinds of cultural activities which occur in them. Thus debates about preserving community identity or simply building dormitory suburbs are absolutely real cultural questions. (Wes Morris: CCD e-group; October 2002)

This point was lost, a number of comments in the participation kits saying the Eumundi Historical Society was not really CCD, and an email reply to Wes from the forum's facilitator, Robyn Goldsmith, more carefully saying this was context not content.

¹⁸ Her fears were justified; two years later the position of Arts and Cultural Development Officer of Maroochy Shire Council was changed to a generic Community Development Officer.
my interest in the role that place (or land) might play in shaping a regional CCD practice was lost in the need to generalise and thereby make relevant to all local governments the proclaimed exemplar experience of the Sunshine Coast.

As in most cases of participative action research, this process involved much talking, both individual interviews and collective discussions. It created outputs that were used as promotional tools by its participants. It developed new (and sometimes lasting) relationships across groups and individuals. It offered immediate outputs that were based on collective CCD practitioners’ understanding of a problem and its solutions. By its very nature then, it was unlikely to lead to new directions or approaches. It was limited by the agenda of its more powerful participants, by the niceties of regional collective behaviour, and by the day-to-day realities of survival. As such, it could not offer an intellectual framework or in-depth analysis of community cultural development. The CCD arena has always tended to be intellectually light; most analyses are descriptions of projects that tell a good story and many of its practitioners prefer action to thought. Despite the web sites, magazines, organisations, and attempts such as this CCD Frameworks project, CCD practices are usually still individually driven and have little common framework or philosophy in which to place themselves. I believe this is due to the same methodological problem as that of participative action research (or some version of it), which in the end limits the ability to change and evaluate. There might be some practical recommendations and some useful outputs for participants, but without other methodological practices and the appropriation of theory from other disciplines, participative action research lacks the capacity for critical analysis.

Part IV Memory emerged from this CCD participative action research, but has been strengthened by subaltern theoretical understandings as well as other methodologies. In the later stages of the thesis (mid 2005), I supplemented the data gathering for Part IV by working with the National Museum of Australia on celebrating place and by attending a long workshop on environmental art and an international conference on Creative Territories in Noosa. Without these other inputs and methodologies, Part IV would have been as intellectually limited by participative action research methodology as is the field of Community Cultural Development.

In summary, Participative Action Research might lead to positive insights on (or snapshots of) the content of particular projects, but it is unlikely to build an intellectual or critical framework for the social context that both drives and is driven by these projects. Participative Action Research and Community Cultural Development discussion cannot analyse the overall pattern of the threads because their focus continues to be on promoting the individual yarns.
Naming patterns and classifying: the distant comfort of academic research

After 18 months of a frustrating process, my confirmation seminar was overdue. Despite searching, I was unsurprisingly lacking a theoretical framework for the thesis, and I was disillusioned by (at least my own experience) of participative action research. I was still interested in how land might shape a regional community’s culture, but wanted a wider focus than CCD. So I turned to how people told or wrote their local stories; story, and local story in particular, being the currency of the non-professional, embedded in place rather than expertly and distantly objective. I chose a traditional academic methodology, relying predominantly on the record-holding institution of the library, and to a lesser extent, of local history societies and serendipitous contacts. I read documents relating to the land of the Sunshine Coast region – tales from explorers, settlers, and Aborigines, from nature writers and wildflower painters to local histories, PhDs, and escaped convicts. I took copious notes. It seemed that the more professional the content, the less local the context, and vice versa – the more local the content, the less professional the status of the writer. Local stories, I concluded, belonged to the inexpert.

I sought for patterns to deal with the sheer mass of data accumulated. This academic methodology determined a comfortably familiar outcome: a typology of classification, a created term of ‘land story’. Memory and emotions seemed more important factors in shaping place than professional histories or rationality. I named the pattern: ‘landscape memoir’. I became so wrapped in the academic that it seemed appropriate to even claim a new field (in the manner of Foucault) of landscape memoir, through the establishment of a journal bringing together art, story, and essay on the emotional memories inspired by land. Ironically, I used academic methodology to develop a notion of landscape memoir that was intended to be antithetical to traditional academic approaches.\footnote{This too is a tried and true academic methodology – to self reflexively and critically appraise ‘the very ground we stand on’.}
Landscape memoir defines an emotional embeddedness in locale, whereas more traditional academic expertise has tended to rely upon a rational distance from the object of study.\footnote{Such positivist methodologies have been under threat for many years, from feminists through to post-colonialists, but they still remain a dominant influence, especially for the social sciences.}

Over the course of the thesis, I attended many conferences, symposiums, and seminars. Two that helped me to develop the notion of ‘land story’ and to assess the academic methodology were the International Nature Writers’ muster for five days in October 2003 and the National PhD workshop in Environmental History for five days in October 2004.

Slow stories and learning to listen when nature hails

The 2003 inaugural nature writer’s muster was held at Camden Head Pilot Station and the Kendall community hall on the mid coast of NSW. Its patron is the well-known writer Eric Rolls; his wife Elaine van Kempen developed the five days of presentations, one nature walk, a few dinners, and a couple of book launches. Scott Slovic, Richard Nelson, and Laurie Kutchins came from America, Kenichi Noda from Japan, and a bevy of
Australasian talent, both white and Indigenous Australians; Kooma elder, Herb Wharton, gave the culminating Henry Kendall address. Perhaps the most common phrase heard was ‘I’m not a nature writer but … I do write about nature’ (paradoxically ‘nature writer’ seemed to hold a stigma, or at least an undefined understanding, even for attendees). The rare interventions from the floor to the rehearsed speakers and readers of prose and poetry were valuable: Jenny Kerr’s mountain song broke the talking head format and someone else suggested that nature writing had its equivalent in the slow food movement: that nature writers created and celebrated the slow story. When John Cameron approached the microphone, the storm and hail against the tin roof made the deafened audience restless. John valiantly, doggedly continued on, until the chair intervened and we surged out onto the veranda to appreciate nature’s fury. The next day John got his second coming; he approached the microphone with nervous glances heavenward and told us his lesson from this muster: he had learnt to listen when nature hails. And this was my lesson from the five days of discussion – nature writing is learning and developing ways, as writers and as readers, that we can listen to, interpret, and translate into words that which nature has to say. It was about giving a more active voice to nature. Nature is not an adjunct or a background to the human story, nor is it the victim of human aggression. It is to be witnessed, and listened to – the best of nature writing, the Muster agreed, becomes the voice of (and for) nature. The strength of Indigenous approaches to land also became more apparent and further influenced the Bunyip proposal discussed in Part III of this thesis. However, a danger lies in the form of nature writing that relies upon the sentimental and the lyrical, in that it excludes other ways of relating to a more active nature (discussed in Part II).

**Distant mappings of place**

In contrast, from a landscape memoir perspective, the 2004 PhD Workshop in Environmental History at the Australian National University was enjoyable but unsatisfactory. It brought together academics and research students as part of the growing academic field of environmental history and as a support for PhD students working across similar areas. Environmental history has been promoted as working at the interstices of the arts (history) and sciences (ecology), writing histories of place (see for example, the works of Tom Griffiths or Deborah Bird Rose). I was excited by the potential methodological implications for more traditional and single discipline approaches. However, presentations followed the natural (and occasionally cultural) history of a specific area, rather than a philosophical or ethnographic theory of place. I alone studied the area in which I lived; asked the question, ‘does land exist outside our perceptions?’; discussed land mythology; and suggested a (non-cynical) emotional connection to land. When I said people lived in my region because they loved the place, such ‘romanticism’ was generally rebuffed, some citing the example of how desperate young people are to leave the country. When I talked about an emotional and spiritual connection to, and memory of, the land, I moved beyond the academic edges of objectivity and professionalism. In contrast, most other participants travelled to their areas of study, spent in-depth time with inhabitants of both the human and non-human variety, wrote their story and left – the consultant’s fly-in/ fly-out approach. A couple had not been to the places they wrote about at all. To confuse matters, despite (or because of?) my strong personal involvement in the place I wrote about, I was less interested in the place itself than in its wider implications for more general human/ nature interactions.
was interested in the spiritual, ritual, emotional, artistic, celebratory, cultural interactions that embed people in place rather than the scientific or economic dissections that distance humans from nature. As an approach to the land, I found I preferred memoir over history: memoir with its connotations of local error and emotion versus history’s impartial distant amassing of facts (the social aspirant to science).

**Maplessness**

This difference between memoir and history was brought home to me during the workshop. As the presentations progressed, I realised I had made an omission: unlike everyone else, I had forgotten to bring a map of the area I was working on. As each map appeared, I began to wonder why I had forgotten such an obvious accoutrement. The answer perhaps separates the local from the academic, the memoirist from the historian. The environmental historian loves the abstract environment, but dares not analyse their dwelling place for fear of an emotional response that will reduce them to the inexpert: the academic in them cannot say “I love my place”; at best they generalise to say “I love place”. They remain careful cultural tourists of destinations, taking their maps of the other with them – maps that help orient themselves and their audiences as professionals, maps that define an objective distance between subject and object, maps that separate their human maker/ marker from the natural other. Conversely the memoirist is so embedded in place that a map is unnecessary, both geographically and metaphorically. In my case, the Sunshine Coast was a convenient and regional example (that I loved) of a much wider spread (universal) relationship between humans and nature. Ironically, it was not the geographic place that mattered, rather what it represented, encapsulating human perceptions of landscape. So I had two apparently conflicting reasons for not having a map, both of which were about not needing to demonstrate a particular connection to place: I was sufficiently immersed in the particularity of place that I knew where I lived and how to get there; and, it was an unimportant detail to an audience who I assumed were more interested in what-and maybe how - I have learnt, than in where I have learnt it. 21

**Classifying terms and academic patterns**

‘Landscape memoir’ emerged out of slow stories and learning to listen when nature hails, as well as from maplessness and a need to discern an overall pattern to my ‘land story’ research. ‘Landscape memoir’ became both a resistance to and an embracing of the academic methodology. Perhaps such conflicts epitomise the role of the self-reflexive academic; a prevalent theme in theses and journal article outputs of academia, if less so in book form, where such methodological uncertainties are generally removed.

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21 Does specific place shape ideas, then? There is an interesting and complicated argument here about a specific relationship to a particular place and its inverse and more sentimental notion of land. My experience would suggest that it is only in the detail of, and emotional attachment to, the particular, that a general philosophy can be developed that is not jingoistic. General understandings about humans and land do not stem from patriotic notions defined by a political boundary, rather they stem from a deeper connection to particular place. I take up this notion of national identity in conclusion of Part IV.

My desire to immerse myself in my (newish) place leads to a rejection of the cultural tourist with map in hand. Contrast my approach with that of the place poet, Deb Westbury, who runs writing workshops ‘through the fertile natural landscape of story-dreams, memory and life history’ that she titles ‘A tourist in your own town’. Thinking as a tourist, she argues, allows for ‘fresh new ways of thinking about place …turning caterpillars into butterflies’ [in Grafton ArtsFest Program, Spring 2005: p34]. There is never a single approach, even in terminology: while Deb’s methodology transforms old locals into new inhabitants, mine is perhaps aimed at embedding new locals in old places.
The obvious criticisms of such a classificatory research methodology are utilitarian. It is rare that a new category or word or discipline (in this case ‘landscape memoir’) so captures the imagination that it (re)shapes reality, so most such exercises are futile, except perhaps in their role as a confusing shorthand for that particular academic piece. Even when a new word or concept (such as social capital, sustainable development, or ‘The Lucky Country’) is powerful enough to capture a wider audience, it rapidly loses its shape and meaning; a good academic idea is appropriated and reduced by policy pundits to a motherhood phrase applied to everything. The opposite problem is that research might objectify and distance the “object of study” so much that it not only loses popular connection, but also meaning. The academic becomes personally invisible in such “original” research. However, increasingly, the “I” is common in academic writing, although acknowledgement of personal emotions or their bodily symptoms remains rarer.22 Emotions are the ultimate shapers of meaning; if all emotional connection is severed, then the object that remains loses significance.

Yet, pattern perception, especially the reduction to simple patterns, makes communication possible (at least for those within a common culture). The role of the academic is to name and classify a pattern in such a way that it is understood as a useful communicative tool – a norm or metaphor for the otherwise indescribably complex. But the role of the academic is also to expose such metaphors when they become irrelevant and tired, because they no longer apply or they cover over and hide diverse approaches of greater use. Hence the emergence of the subaltern theorist in academia that consoles my ultimately academic heart. It is not Foucaultian new disciplines, or even philosophical discourses, that change the academic environment. It is in recognising the emergence and use of existing but subaltern metaphors, that the academic methodology of naming patterns and classifying can be justified. It is when such writers and speakers attempt to inhabit, rather than more simply visit, such edge places, that their social commentary might change our mapped perceptions of the world. Part II discusses the researchers and writers, environmental historians among them, who dare to investigate their own lived places with a ‘landscape memoir’ approach. As John Hanson Mitchell investigates his place in Ceremonial Time:

> It occurred to me, after I came to know Nompenek, that if I were to thoroughly understand Scratch Flat, genuinely dig out the story of the things that happened here, I could not rely solely on the maps, town records, and other official documents; I would have to get all the sources. And so I began asking everyone I could think of who might know something about the place or its past – archeologists, historians, old farmers, local eccentrics, Indian shamans, developers, newer residents, and local farmhands. I began to take on all comers, so to speak, all views of the past, present and future, and all the official and unofficial histories. And from these various sources, all of which I set down here without prejudice, I think I have uncovered the mystery; I think I have discovered what it is that I sensed in the words and fields on my first walk over this insignificant little patch of the planet. (Mitchell, 1984: 15)

By examining emotional responses and showing at least a partial understanding of the land’s subaltern and multicultural histories, such methodologies alter and build upon layered perceptions of the environment, creating both land and identity.

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22 Maybe an emerging style; see Margaret Somerville’s Body/Landscape Journal, Mark McKenna’s Looking for Blackfellow Point, Freya Matthews’ Merri Creek, Peter Hay’s Vandemonian Essays, and internationally, the work of Nast and Pile, or Donna Haraway.
Place thinking: the difference between metaphor and madness

An inhabitation of place has been the methodology from which I have benefited most over the last five years. This place-based thinking is generally a less acknowledged or discussed methodology. Because of its importance in developing my thesis and its under-theorised nature, I spend more time in unpacking the traditions and implications of ‘place thinking’ than I do the previous methodologies. This supervision of a mountain has been the most interesting. It looks to (dream-interpreted, meditation-mediated, metaphor-created) data drawn from the earth and its wisdoms - the land and its cultural representations. It uses (at least a metaphor of) madness, ie non-linear thinking that emerges from a unique relationship to a particular small piece of place. From such madness, new relationships can emerge as translations based on syncretistic approaches, rather than just upon the more portable texts of other methodologies.

Place thinking is both the most original and the most traditional of methodologies. It unearths a fresh and previously under-acknowledged subalternal voice and allows for new and original insights to more rational and distant academic methodology. But it is at the same time, a time-honoured methodology in developing a community’s cultural content, used extensively and especially in many indigenous groups, but also frequent in spiritual practices of the heart. Place thinking offers redemption to the type of academic methodology that is more based on rational practices of the purse. By acknowledging and allowing this traditional but subalternal voice to shape academic methodology and other dominant cultural practices, the dominant take their first steps in reconciling the dualisms of mind and spirit, distance and place, and of indigenous and colonial cultures. These grand claims are taken up again and form the methodology behind Part III in examining mythologies developed from the land and Part IV in expressing community celebrations of place. Place thinking is about a whole hearted (and whole minded) immersion in landscape. Deborah Tall in From Where We Stand asks:

Where’s a word for a wholeheartedly lived-in landscape? Maybe simply place – which we’re willing to say has a “spirit”, a character evinced in the lives of its people – place, which is humanly defined by buildings and customs but is also firmly attached to and in part defined by the piece of earth on which it sits. (Tall, 1993:10)

Place thinking is about evincing place as a character; imagining and embodying the land with a more active relationship to its inhabitants. This imagined landscape is an ecocentric process. It is what William Howarth in his article ‘Imagined Territory’ (1999: 515) refers to as ‘ground-truthing’. And what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘geophilosophy’ or ‘thinking [that] takes place in the relationship of territory and earth’ (1994: 85).

There is a fine line between madness and developing new metaphors for place.23 I would argue that place thinking requires a transition through madness in order to evolve new (or to apply older more traditional) metaphors. We need wild thinking to get to metaphor thinking.

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23 In the midst of turning wild thinking about land, goddesses, bunyips, and geomancy into a land metaphor, I was accosted for some hours by a permanent edge inhabitant (acknowledged in the town as mad) who told me that (t)his butter factory site was the centre of the universe because the goddess had come to him (in a spaceship) and talked to
A long aside on the background to Place Thinking

Wild Thinking: the case for madness

Greek philosophers are perhaps the most famous for (wild) thinking. Socrates went barefoot and in rags on even the coldest days and spent days just thinking. Plato (as the key informant of the Greek philosophers in his Symposium writings) gives a number of examples where Socrates just stopped to think, not moving until he had some resolution. After a long day of motionlessness, the locals would bring out mats to watch him continue to think during the whole night. (Perhaps a modern audience equivalent is Big Brother up late?) For the Cynics (a key Greek philosophical school named after Diogenes), the stated co-requisite to wild thinking was a denial of worldly goods. Antisthenes, an aristocratic disciple of Socrates, was the original 'Sea Change' exemplar. In mid life, he retreated to the simple life, a 'return to nature', in which he declared 'I had rather be mad than delighted' (in Russell, 1946: 241). Antisthenes' most famous disciple was Diogenes, a typical anarchist in his rejection of authority and so much in retreat from luxury that he lived in a tub or burial urn, deciding to live like a dog as he considered animals as much his brothers as humans.

While it might be drawing a long bow to link voluntary simplicity with madness (centuries of monastic contemplators might be offended), there are some connections. There are strong historical links between madness, particularly manic depression, and creativity, particularly for writers, as argued convincingly for example by Kay Redfield Jamison in Touched with Fire (1993). There are certainly connections between edge places and madness: the pathological definition of madness is that it is removed from more central cultural norms. Those that reject the mainstream of society (and its economic incentives) and move to a place nearer the edge through voluntary simplicity could also fit such a definition. However, despite the very popular ABC Series Sea Change, moves to edge places such as 'Pearl Bay' are uncommon.

Burnley and Murphy (2004) in their population analysis of Sea Change Movement from Metropolitan to Arcadian Australia (predominantly defined as perimetropolitan and coastal zones) claim that down-shifting (swapping income for lifestyle) is more prevalent than physical relocation away from the urban; and that regional growth is more likely to result from tourism and niche agriculture than from movers to ‘turnaround localities’. Burley and Murphy show that Sea Change has generally slowed since the 1970s, although they predict that this may change in the future depending upon how cities continue to develop.

him about the importance of its land. I listened with both attraction and fear because the words didn't seem much different to my own. As David Rothenberg says, such wildness is a tendency we both flee and seek.
Cindy Dowling’s book, *Sea Change: Australians in pursuit of the good life* (2005), on the other hand focuses not on the statistics but on the people. Its journalistic 20 interviews allows more readily for an edge of madness. She claims people escape ‘the quickening’ to a simpler life of ‘warm sand and slow days… the Pearl Bay Dreaming’. My favourite story is that of Catherine Johns, a gypsy witch whose hands and face are tattooed with dragons (related to bunyips as demonstrated in Part III of this thesis). At 40 she moved from a job in Melbourne as a TAFE teacher to running Artemis, a women’s spiritual retreat and animal shelter in the South Australian mallee country. Her neighbours, although continuing to gossip, have offered a friendly and supportive tolerance (if not understanding) to a lifestyle where spiritual growth is more important than money. Her retreat to animals and spirit echoes Diogenes’ alliance with canines (although feminism is a clear point of difference). The common theme through these 20 personal stories is the comment that (initially at least) most friends and families were less than supportive, considering such a move to be ‘off the beam’, ‘a 90% negative response from loved ones’, ‘my mother wanted to have me committed … my girlfriend thought I’d had a nervous breakdown and needed therapy’, ‘they think I’m nuts’, ‘people thought we were crazy’, ‘my daughter described me as “a once brilliant man who now drums and dances naked around a fire all night in the woods”’ contrast with the one exception in which ‘Our family was very supportive. Our friends in awe’. At least in the anecdotal, in difference, madness lies.

However, place thinking does not necessarily require a retreat to wilderness, just a creative imagining of wildness. Perhaps the best example is Thoreau, famously remembered for his evocation of wilderness, *On Walden Pond*. In fact Walden Pond was a swamp located beside a train station and close to Concord, not a wilderness. It was Thoreau’s rejection of the political economy of his day and his creative imagining of wildness that ensured his popularised but misunderstood place as the champion of wilderness. Thoreau’s essay, *Walking*, (which could be summarised as a version of ‘go west /wild, young man’) is more lyrical and less of a political statement than *Walden*. It is written later (1861), after Thoreau has finished with justifications for why he moved to the wild. *Walking* is more about why the wild moved him. In searching for a body of ideas that expressed his yearning for the wild, Thoreau turned away from literature and poetry and towards mythology and ‘the wildest dreams of wild men’ (390). He says: ‘I confess that I am partial to these wild fancies, which transcend the order of time and development. They are the sublimest recreation of the intellect.’ (400) Interestingly (like my own preoccupations), it is mythological animals that he draws upon to make his argument and to claim ‘all good things are wild and free’ (400). It is bogs and swamps that attract Thoreau most. In distinguishing his love of Nature from that of more social men, he says: ‘I feel that with regard to Nature, I live a sort of border life, on the confines of the world in which I make occasional and transient forays only’ (408). It is these imagined edges and edge places, the future of the West (set up in distinction to Europe) and of the Wild, and the cultural influences of an American landscape of clarity and distance, that are Thoreau’s preoccupations. His imaginative ability in creating wilderness is so strong that generations later we still think of him as the father of wilderness and nature writing. In fact, the wildness was in his head rather than in his environment; it beguiled him.

25 Numbers refer to pages in Avenel Book’s 1981 collected writings of Thoreau, Henry David (1817-1862).
As David Rothenberg says in *Wild Ideas*, ‘The wild is more than a named place … It is a tendency we both flee and seek’ (1995: 33); wilderness is ‘the craziness we fear and yet need right in our world (31) … we love and fear the wild in all parts of our culture (xiii)’. Wild thinking in academia holds the same place as does the wild in dominant society: it is to be feared for its illogic but also loved for its occasional great insight. Margaret Somerville claims the positive and feminist pleasure of babble for its diversity and its aural connection to nature: ‘Babble is not only language that is incoherent and meaningless, but it is visionary and revelatory, closer to the landscape, allied to the sounds of streams and birds.’ (Somerville, et al, 1994: 194). Perhaps it is impossible to place think, to imagine landscape embeddedness, without also succumbing to babble, to wild thinking. Wild thinking is an incarnate haunting of humans by nature. Such an imagination of wilderness is madness by another name. And such a subaltern imagination offers possibilities, seldom grasped, for new cultural metaphors.

**Metaphor thinking**

In the early 20th century, the writer, Dorothy Richardson26 tackled the issues of metaphor and edge places in a number of writings and media interviews. When asked to answer the three questions, ‘What would she most like to be, to do, and to know?’ she responded: to be ‘a member of a world association for broadcasting the goings-on of metaphors’; to do, to build a cottage on a cliff (which she later elaborated as building a liminal site to experience the boundary between, and the intersections of, material corporal existence and the immaterial, spiritual world); and to know how to be in two places at once (the simultaneous presence of both concrete material and metaphorical spaces). Elisabeth Bronfen (1999), who writes about Dorothy Richardson’s *Art of Memory*, takes up her fascination with metaphor:

> The ideal psychic, political and spiritual attitude consists in a unifying state of suspension between opposites … (we) realise this privileged position by using spiritual and creative activity so as to be present simultaneously in the physical and the imaginative world … the appeal of metaphor derives from the way in which it captures the essence of a particular thing precisely by skirting around it and refusing to name it directly. (Bronfen, 1999: 2-3)

Similarly, the writer Margaret Atwood argues that stories must be indirect to have power. Texts that clearly tell all, leave no room for the imagination of the reader; if the reader is not engaged in the process of creating the story or metaphor, then they will not be persuaded. The strength of metaphor lies in its lack of definition. Conversely, philosopher Richard Rorty in his book, *Contingency, irony and solidarity* (1989) says we decide which cultural language or metaphor to choose on the basis of its ease of use, predictability, and simplicity (rather than its authenticity). The theory of metaphor is contradictory: the strength of metaphor lies both in its simplicity and in its lack of definition.

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26 Dorothy Richardson (1882 – 1957) wrote the first stream of consciousness novel (she preferred ‘interior monologue’; I might prefer ‘wild’). *Pilgrimage* (12 vol., 1915–38; omnibus ed. 1938) recorded the inner experience of one woman. She moved in avant garde and artistic circles, including the Bloomsbury set. (Perhaps at the time of World War One she remained less noted than Joyce or Woolf because of her Germanic connections?) Richardson published many essays, poems, sketches and other pieces of journalism over her lifetime and was fascinated with metaphor.
Metaphors are fundamental to human communication; they range from useful analogies to the metaphors we live by - grand notions of Science, Culture, Nature or Spirit. Raymond Williams attempted to define a few in his book on *Keywords*. Philosophers, Mary Hesse and Donald Davidson have argued for metaphor as the agent of change, making intellectual development of culture possible. The historical complexities of science, nature, and spirit (presented here in very brief samplers) give an example of how metaphors both shape and are culture. Emerson claimed nature as the symbol of spirit. Hegel thought of natural science as a distorted green disciple of the spirit world (but argued for the better ‘truth’ of the poet and the revolutionary). Mary Hesse showed scientific revolutions to be metaphoric (but not progressively better) re-descriptions of nature, rather than authentic insights into truth (the intrinsic nature of nature itself). She argued the causal forces of change (ie metaphors) are as equally responsible for talk of DNA as they are for talk of late capitalism. Donald Davidson argued that the difference between the literal and the metaphoric is not a distinction between two sets of meanings or interpretations, but simply a distinction between the familiar and the strange. For dominant western society, the literal is science, the metaphor is spirit. Conversely, colonised and subaltern voices (and the poets, revolutionaries and romantics who acknowledge them) see science as the strange, and spirit as the familiar and literal truth. We move back to Emerson and Hegel. The notion of spirit is just as constructed as (and not more truthful than) the notion of science (and vice versa, of course) – while the pendulum of philosophical fashion might swing one way or the other, spirit and science are closely linked. Truth and faith are both constructs of the human mind upon an unknown, indescribable other, the nature of which cannot be proved to exist independent of human thought. It is human language, rather than that which it describes, that is moot.

**Language is a virus**

As Derrida and Spivak know, it is our choice of grammar that shapes the world: our language is our reality. If there is no separate reality from language, then the question of whether language is a medium of representation (of that which lies outside the self – nature) or of expression (that which lies within the self – culture) becomes meaningless. Under post-structural assumptions, language cannot act as a medium between the self and reality, nor is it progressive; is it simply a useful metaphor to a particular time and place. Old metaphors die off into literalness to become the platform and foil for new metaphors. In Spivak’s terms, the mud we sling comes from the very ground we walk upon. Descriptions of reality are ‘simply a disposition to use the language of our ancestors, to worship the corpses of their metaphors’ (Rorty, 1989: 21).

Cultural vocabularies differ in how they describe the world; that is to say that truth changes. Such differing vocabularies are not always capable of translation, nor are they necessarily dispensable, or able to be unified into some grand super vocabulary. Differing vocabularies can sit side by side in coexistence, even if they are contradictory. One pattern only becomes preferable over another, when it offers better tools to deal with a problem.

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27 ‘Language is a virus’ is the title of a song by Laurie Anderson, using the words of William Burroughs.

28 If language is specific to a time and place, globalisation with its move to a single language and ironing out of regional differences, has some disturbing implications. By removing the regional dialect, it removes the reality of that place and replaces it with a monoculture of sameness; MacDonald’s is just the tip of the globalisation iceberg.
currently dominant aspect. If the world is active or even existent, then its (human) communicator serves an almost priestly function of putting us in touch with a realm that transcends the human. We continue to want to worship some deity – nature, god, truth, science, or even our own spiritual nature. But if the world is constructed by human language, it is our chance selection of language, our choice of utilitarian metaphor, that determines our identity. Our choice of language shapes the land and our relationship to it. The failure of science and its language to instil environmental change illustrates it as a limited metaphor. For instance, the scientific analysis of “natural disasters” now comes with cultural question marks, made possible by better understandings of indigenous relations to land.29

The philosopher, Richard Rorty argues ‘that a talent for speaking differently, rather than for arguing well, is the chief instrument of cultural change’ (1989:7) and that it is literature and the role of metaphor that do this best by reinforcing a sense of human solidarity in the face of private individual freedoms. A poet is widely, one who makes things new. It is the arts that do metaphor best: “arguing well” may be the domain of science, but “speaking differently” is the domain of arts. Rorty argues:

Interesting philosophy is … implicitly or explicitly, a contest between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new vocabulary which vaguely promises great things. The latter “method” of philosophy is the same as the “method” of utopian politics or revolutionary science (as opposed to parliamentary politics, or normal science). The method is to redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways until you have created a pattern …This sort of philosophy does not work piece by piece, analysing concept after concept, or testing thesis after thesis. Rather, it works holistically and pragmatically. It says things like “try thinking of it this way” - or more specifically, “try to ignore the apparently futile traditional questions by substituting the following new and possibly interesting questions”. It does not pretend to have a better candidate for doing the same old things which we did when we spoke in the old way. Rather, it suggests we might want to stop doing those things and do something else. (Rorty, 1989: 9)

Rorty would claim this half-formed new vocabulary comes from the new (and ultimately the real, but that is another argument). I would claim, drawing upon my subaltern inspired metaphor of the wild, that it comes from beneath. The ‘new’ metaphors are already extant, just sub-dominant and un(der)acknowledged. Dominant languages can be developed and changed by trawling through the underlayers of culture; subaltern metaphors are elevated to metaphors of greater influence through acknowledgement and discussion. It is the (always present) subaltern discourses that have the potential to shape and change culture.

This subaltern model is consequently not interested in solving inherited problems, but in dissolving them; by disrupting or cracking the concrete of dominant discourse, we might make space for subaltern weeds to grow through (thereby changing cultural aims and identities). We can only compare metaphors with each other, and not with that which goes beyond language, the inaccessible or imaginary ‘fact’. We can only imagine truth and act ‘as if’ it mattered. This is the methodology used in Part III, laying Indigenous and Western approaches to land

29 An example of drought is discussed at the end of Part IV in issues of identity.
planning side by side to emerge with a differing metaphor for land. We might imagine new ways of doing and being, by imagining 'as if bunyips mattered'.

‘LAND-GUAGE’?
The inverse of discourse theory would suggest that nature shapes culture.\(^\text{30}\) Does the land (that is the real) have its own language? Land can reinforce our linguistic constructs and programs of culture – Australian landscape can be both fearful to the European and comforting to the native eye. Can we read the land only through such human cultural constructs? Or can we move beyond language, and even culture, to a more Hegelian world of universal spirit? We certainly don’t rationally decide to do such things; change is at least a more poetic and awkward beast than that. Does the mountain exist independent of our understandings or constructions of what a mountain represents?

The descriptive story, as reflected in much of the essence of nature writing and of exploration journal, is not enough to answer such questions. It is the metaphor and not the description that is important, and it is the metaphor that is held in a context that lies beyond, not merely outside, of literature. There are methods that enhance the reception of metaphor – these methods rely upon more collaborative creative practices of secular ritual, collectively (publicly) owned objects, and community art. The story is important when it contributes to these things, and perhaps the best stories (in the current scientific context of the pendulum’s swing between science and spirit) draw upon and constructs a more spiritual mythology. Perhaps there is another not so novel way of doing that lies outside the construction of a new language. Perhaps it is words themselves that have formed the obstacles between nature and culture, between land and humans? They certainly form the divide. As Buddhists have been (wordlessly!?) arguing for a long time, without words of description we have a more direct, less removed, relationship with nature. What then of the meditative response or the contemplative retreat?

Environmentalists or nature writers might argue for the essential voice of the natural world to introduce a new set of intrinsic and independent motivators of change (deep ecologists are only the tip of the iceberg when even legal theorists, such as Christopher Stone (1996), can ask if trees should have standing). They cannot justify this in a separate cultural language, nor can they merely appeal convincingly to some spiritual intuition or sense of connectedness. They can question a temporarily dominant mode of thought by examining other and differing cultural approaches, they can leave the way open for change by placing cultural quotation marks around a particular set of questionable human practices. But this does not necessarily effect change. The problem with nature writing (or travel or exploration journals) is that the metaphors – the descriptors of land – have not been different from the metaphors used by the mainstream, so that while they may reflect a cultural and/or intellectual change, they cannot create or cause that change. Ironically, it is older languages that speak of human

\(^{30}\) At a social and environmental audit course I was involved in co-teaching, the battlelines were drawn. My students declared the social could not exist with the environmental, to which I replied that the environment could not be imagined without the cultural.
responsibility to non-human powers that sound newest to our scientifically enlightened ears. Whether these are truthful is an immaterial point. What I am interested in is how such subaltern metaphors might question notions of what constitutes an effective agent of change. If it is the metaphor that transforms, it can only do so in a receptive context. Part IV argues it is the arts and community cultural development activities that increase that receptivity.

Whether discourse constructs reality or reality shapes discourse will always be arguable. But the two approaches are not necessarily incompatible. Poststructuralists and environmentalists might agree that the choice of metaphors do expose the power relationships in land and identity. Metaphors are important because they are agents for change and they dictate action. It is impossible not to reduce the complexities of relationships to some communicative shorthand. We reduce and amalgamate certain approaches and assign them to that of the mainstream, dominant, and central while others remain subaltern, marginalised, or oppressed at the edge. It is the selection of metaphor, of the shorthand that we use, that exposes the cultural power. Perhaps in Australia’s cultural development, it is enough here to simply suggest a move towards the set of questions posed by an older more subaltern set of languages, in the midst of which (in this thesis at least) sits the judgemental and disturbing figure of the bunyip!

Bunyip metaphors are like disparaged 19th century ‘bunyip aristocracies’; they are unlikely to be taken seriously in mainstream Australia. But the bunyip has emerged in Part III of this thesis as my own metaphor; the bunyip represents the personified subaltern voice of land. What if bunyips were taken seriously; what if bunyips mattered? The bunyip shows the importance of the role of metaphor in cultural discourse and change, and points to mythology as key to understanding place. It suggests how mainstream practice might change if we heard the subaltern. The bunyip opens us to both an overcoming of fear of the other and a re-enchantment, a fearfulness, of Nature, changing wilderness to wildness and (re)reading culture into the land. While this idea may be a powerful one for recasting the land as active, it has not often been practiced by the dominant culture. Part III can only hypothesise as to what insights the bunyip and others of its ilk might offer as a metaphor to strengthen mainstream responses to both environmental and race issues.

31 It is false to suggest there are only two approaches (postmodernism and environmentalism). There are many attempts at combining elements of both, some of which, such as cultural geography, predate both.
32 However, the role of mythological beasts has been more than theoretical. For instance, in January 2004, protesters formed the Rainbow Serpent as part of a rally to Save Cylinder Beach at Point Lookout, North Stradbroke Island. A collaboration of North Stradbroke Island conservation groups, Quandamooka traditional owners - the Noonuccal, Goenpul people – and concerned residents joined forces to call upon the island’s Rainbow Serpent to save Cylinder Beach. The Rainbow Serpent, totem of the Noonuccal people and protector of Stradbroke, was last invoked in the successful campaign to Leave Straddie Unabridged, 25 years ago. The Serpent has been effective in uniting the subaltern voice so that it is heard and acted upon by the dominant and more mainstream Redland Shire Council.
A bunyip methodology

All of which is a necessary philosophical digression to come to my personal methodology of place thinking. Like other Sea Changers, be they ancient Greeks or wild women, I have retreated to a simpler, more natural place to partake in some wild thinking, so I must believe, to some extent at least, that place is capable of shaping thought. Ironically, what has actually emerged from the undertaking of a country based PhD is a firmer belief that discourse shapes place. In fact for me it has been the PhD process rather than the place that has determined the answers, although the place may have instigated the questions.

In an inverse of the usual PhD practice, I chose to live (permanently) in the field and analyse the offerings of the university. In living away from cities for the first time in my life, over five years I have gained perhaps a more visceral notion of edge places and of land. A grounded telling. I live in the interstices between rural and urban, between coast and bush on a hinter-land of the Sunshine Coast. I have come to practically know (rather than theoretically question) the differences between the centre and the periphery. All the more reason to examine the edge places they create. My constant view of Cooroora Mountain across the green valley remains an active thorn in my academic side, reminding me of other ways of knowing and being. And I have wondered if not living in the country is one of the limits that contain academic thought. Not a very novel conjecture, as demonstrated by the many others who have chosen to think on and write from the edge places of land – Thoreau (perhaps), Heidegger, and locally Wendy Sarkissian to give specific examples; ethnologists, anthropologists, geologists, zoologists, nature writers, to be more general.

Perhaps country living has more fully exposed the many differing understandings of land. In a smaller population, there are fewer options than in the city of sticking with like, so I have become more exposed to other ways of thinking through a greater diversity of friends and acquaintances: farmers, Murries, hippies, bureaucrats, greenies, developers, artists, doctors, and conservatives. In Robert Putman’s terms I have been building bridging social capital, rather than bonding social capital. Perhaps too, because of the cheaper lifestyle and more natural scenery offered by the country, I am more often exposed to mainstream’s undercurrents (the poor, the underemployed, the revolutionary, the mad, and the artist). And having chosen to inhabit the place in the long-term, I cannot afford the luxury of declaring my (environmental) approach to land as the only or best truth. My response to this diversity has been to, both theoretically and practically, develop a multi-layered sense of place. Perhaps, if I had stayed in the city, such sustainable/development conflicts would have remained as valued theory, rather than being banished in the practice of rural social survival. But I think it more likely that it is the intellectual engagement and depth of a PhD process that has led to such a post-colonial, post-structural dissection of land (and that at the very least, has allowed me to label it in such a way).

33 Wendy Sarkissian wrote an awarded thesis on environmental ethics for planning, based as much upon a series of letters about building her own place in a remote part of Australia as upon more generally academic processes. See Sarkissian, 1996.
There are more approaches to land and human relationships than there are approaches to PhD methodologies, but the issue of their compatibilities remains related. Certainly, it is possible for differing paradigms to exist side by side, but whether they can be combined is more problematic. In their Sea Change study, Burnley and Murphy optimistically paint a landscape of the local as: ‘an identity that newcomers and longer-term residents will manifest for places that comprise sites of intersecting social relations, meanings and collective memory.’ (2004: 211-213). Burnley and Murphy ask a number of interesting questions, particularly with regard to notions of ‘the local’, such as ‘are turnaround communities different?’ and ‘within these communities are “locals” and “newcomers” different in attitudes and lifestyle?’, to which they answer a weak no, primarily because of the generally high mobility of all Australia’s population. If the differences are weak, then a symbiosis of city and countryside becomes possible. While I would agree that the ‘local’ is developed through a socially constructed sense of place, the suggested longer-term compatibility of newcomer and local is more problematic. What migration pattern statistics cannot measure is the strength of feeling about attachment to place that develops over time for those (fewer) non-mobile in the population. These differences between local and newcomer are underlined in their differing perceptions and requirements of the land. New settlers, like metaphors, come in waves of colonisation and are often met with similar attendant dismay by encumbered locals. While it might be possible to reconcile differing interests, it is much more difficult to reconcile differing realities, and this is the dilemma of cross-cultural perception and the starting point for my thesis.

and all the time the unmapped shore
harbouring under their feet
(slain by what fabulous gorgon’s head?)
what stone dragons?
(from Here be dragons by Rob Johnson in Eaden & Mares, 1986)

‘What stone dragons’ might lie in the (unmapped) land beneath the new settlers’ feet? By living near a mountain in a place more inhabited by other species than by humans, I have hoped to imagine/investigate this more active (and mythologically inhabited) notion of land. This is an ethnopoetics approach. Anthropologist, Victor Turner, used ethnopoetics as the methodology for his work on ritual and symbolic action:

Ethnopoetics comes at a time when knowledge is being increased of other cultures, other worldviews, other life styles, when Westerners, endeavouring to trap non-Western philosophies and poetries in the corrals of their own cognitive constructions, find that they have caught sublime monsters, eastern dragons, lords of fructile chaos, whose wisdom makes our knowledge somehow shrunkened and inadequate. (1983: 338)

34 Nor do migration statistics begin to accurately measure those who have been displaced from their land without choice. Cherbourg (an ex Aboriginal reservation) residents for instance still had a very strong attachment to their (Sunshine Coast) country even though they were no longer local to it. There is a vicarious consumption of place that economic indicators are incapable of measuring.
35 Waves of new culture, bringing waves of new metaphor, invade in serial assaults. There is a weak parallel between the sea-changer and the local with the colonialist and the indigene. There is always a future invasion, bringing new challenges and discourses. And it is only after the next invasion that there lies a possibility for new settlers to be reassigned as native (although perhaps only when/ if they have reconciled with - both shaped and been shaped by - the local culture).
Unlike Turner however, I would hope we are liberated and enlightened rather than belittled by such cross-cultural investigations. Those living ‘on the land’ often claim a closeness in which land is a more influencing agent (but most, like Lucy Lippard (eg 1997), would not go so far as to posit an environmental determinism). I wanted to imagine how would we act, how would our thinking change, if contemporary urban culture believed the land to have its own spirit, its own desires? It is an unoriginal thought, as land spirit had been the traditional influence on lifestyle for most Australians for centuries. But how could current dominant and white culture start to approach this understanding? What could we modify in our own practices that would start to respect this concept of land?

This is the powerful lure to the methodology of place thinking; a chance to interpret or imagine the land’s memory and the land’s stories. Herb Wharton at the 2003 Nature Writers’ Muster said ‘History is not written in books; upon the earth it is written, and the story told in tracks.’ I want to live in these tracks and interpret the earth’s history. I want to translate the thoughts of the bunyip into words of metaphor about the land’s story. A creative imagining that would require an artistic, rather than a scientific approach. Art helps us to understand the metaphors of landscape patterns; it gives us access to the layers of cultural understandings and terrains of tracks. Science separates the real matter of land from such patterned metaphors; the scientific approach, in its amassing of monolithic facts, destroys (or hopes to colonise) other cultural stories, understandings, and metaphors that explain land. Paradoxically, it is only in the acknowledged layering of as many as possible cultured understandings of land, that the land materialises (and is capable of being cherished by a whole community). Perhaps the multifarious and tolerant nature of art better explores such manifold landscapes than do the hypotheses of science.

In any case, I believed that the key method to such place thinking would require a living on the land, and would employ art to, not only develop a more creative and imaginative wild thinking, but also allow for a hearing of the land’s voice. Perhaps it is a lazy solution; I assumed (probably correctly in my case) that through living in a beautiful landscape, apparently less tamed than the city, I would have easier access to an understanding of the wild. I needed the site and not just the mental attitude; I wanted the long views in reality rather than their wordy metaphors in books. But such conjectures in their clumsy inversion can be interpreted by the more populous urban as a language of exclusion. What I hoped to do in this thesis is to confuse the dualisms and their power holders, so that their reflections replace their shadows. I have come to realise that country living is just one form of reality that approximates the metaphor of an imagined landscape of wildness. The land’s more active story can be imagined anywhere that emotional artistic creativity and edge thinking survive. The relationships between people and land can be just as wildly constructed in the cities as in the regions. It starts with a particular connection to a small place, wherever that place is to be found. To find such wildness within the confines of a city or its suburbia is a contact to be valued and celebrated. It is a common theme of writers of nature. Tim Lowe’s most recent book, The New Nature (2004) claims distant wilderness as a myth, saying nature is here in our cities
and gardens. John Hanson Mitchell (2001) suggests that *The Wildest Place on Earth* can be found in Italianate gardens:

> We don't have to offset the unhoused *deserta* any more, the chaos of wilderness; we need to rediscover it... The garden is not the end, it is the beginning, the place where you preserve the wild spirit that will save the world – In gardens is the preservation of the world, to paraphrase Saint Henry [Thoreau – In *wildness* is the preservation of the world]. (Mitchell, 2001: 179).

In introducing his poems, Philip Booth, rejects place in favour of imagination and art:

> Whether we live and write in sight of Mt Rainier or midtown Manhattan, no matter where we experience being in place, we immerse ourselves in our deepest selves when we begin to write. It's from instinctive memory, from the wilderness of the imagination, from a mindfulness forever wild, that Art starts. (Booth, 1999: xvii)

Booth suggests that art (capital 'A' poetry, in his case) comes from wild thinking; this thesis also suggests that wild thinking might come from art (such as community cultural celebrations). Ivan Brady’s ‘Anthropological poetics’ (2003) uses poetic rather than scientific methodologies and descriptions as a way to uncover reality, much as the postmodern Indigenous Australian uses trustori. It is a methodology reflected in this thesis, inserting a passion in the discourse.

> anthropological poetics can do more than capture (or create) and convey the poetries and literature of various cultures. It can require greater philosophical justification for its ethnographic endeavours and at the same time help to erase some unnecessary distortions of detachment from its objects of inquiry. (Brady, 2003: 565)

The recognition of poetry as an intellectual activity in cultures of the Other reminds us of our own cultural emphasis on its importance. Cross-cultural conversations bring us back to the importance of creativity and the power of metaphor. Poetry rings true, rather than simply being true. And if we start conversing with the subjects of such poetry itself, then we move into and open up another wilder (if not madder) realm. Bunyips change descriptions from what actually happened to a deeper imagining of place - a wordy attempt at participating in the fearsome sublime, the silence of the sacred space. The autoethnography of “writing from within” becomes far more challenging (and dangerous) when the “within” comes from inside the bunyip. But, as Brady points out, ‘The poeticizing movement is not hopeless. Translation is possible. But it is by definition a changing frame.’ (2003: 559) The bunyip’s methodology requires both thinking big and thick description.

In making space for the edge and the wild, we might also more deeply celebrate place, and by celebrating place we make use of a wilder imagination that also creates a space for the subaltern. Wild-ness is the subaltern voice ever present in our urban places and accessible through our art and celebrations, as is shown in Part IV. We need to re-member and re-create wildness. By recognising its subaltern voice, we give it substance, so that the wildest place on earth might be found in the midst of our most dense cities. It is not the reality but the imagined landscape that allows for wild-ness, a metaphor that can be applied to and in any space.

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36 For instance, Aristotle proclaimed poetry as more scientific (philosophical) than history, and today, Miles Richardson (1998) shows, ‘social scientists have long turned to poetry’.
However, for me such insights only arose from a methodology firmly embedded in a place where the potential human coalition with nature was strong. Unlike Booth or Thoreau perhaps, I have less imagination for wild-ness. I have needed the view of the mountain, the actual place of approximate wilderness, before I could begin to understand the less dominant rhythms in the dance between nature and culture. But those endowed with better imaginations or able to participate in more creative celebrations of place, do not necessarily need the retreat to nature; rather they can ‘buck civilisation right in its midst’. This is the essence of the subaltern – it is there, all along, underlying/ under-layering the populous dominant.

But an irresolvable conflict remains. The dilemma of place thinking lies in the question of whether the place is necessary to the thinking, or can such wilderness lie in the mind of any thinker, wherever they are placed? And will any place do, or should it in some way approximate wilderness? These issues are taken up in the short story Nature/ writing in Part II. The dilemma lies in the heart of my confusion on place thinking methodology. To make a hypothetical comparison: one woman lives in the country surrounded by beautiful landscapes and writes about the land; another lives in the city, is a committed environmentalist and writes on the theory and literature of place; which is the more likely to believe place to be real? If dualisms adequately reflected ontology (or how humans behave in their worldly constructions), the answer should be straightforward.

The way I engage in any changes in my life is through intellectual analysis. Moving to the country has been no different; I have read a lot and been driven to take on the subject matter of this PhD. The interesting thing in the many country writings I have read, both fiction and non-fiction (some of which I cover in Part II), is their similar themes. As an example, I am struck with how analogous my themes (in my letters and diary entries) are to Thoreau’s: we both rail against political economy and turn to (at least the metaphor of) wildness. Apart from the grand comparison and the accusations of unoriginality, it is tempting to simply believe that Nature shapes our thoughts into the same patterns. Living closer to Nature would become an essential process to understanding land and wildness. But I think it is rather the character of those who make such moves – the intellects and passions of Sea Changers across the centuries – that drive any similarities. It is the intent to live more removed from the mainstream, rather than the process of living in the country, that allows for wild thinking. It is the desire for an intimate connection with a specific place rather than the specific influence of the place itself. It is the intent to establish a deep connection to place (wherever the place) that changes the possibilities for cultural discourse. The heart and mind of a good writer can translate wild thinking into its various and co-requisite written metaphors. How successfully they do this, forms the basis for the growing academic field of ecocriticism.

Ellis and Bochner in their article on ‘Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject’ argue for ‘a way to transgress the conventions’ (2003: 203) and ‘offer lessons for further conversation rather than undebatable conclusions’ (2003: 218) in which:

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37 As an added perk, place thinking allowed me to limit the grander notions of land and culture to a more specific (but ultimately spurious) focus of the Sunshine Coast region and helps to develop an argument for regional rather than national identity.
authors make themselves and their personal experience a central focus of their research ... exposing how the complex contingencies of race, class, sexuality, disability, and ethnicity [and in my case, land] are woven into the fabric of concrete, personal lived experiences, championing the cause of reflexive, experimental, autobiographical, and vulnerable texts. (Ellis and Bochner, 2003: 200 and 202).

This ‘autoethnography’ displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural, so that texts appear in a variety of forms – short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose. (Ellis and Bochner, 2003: 209) The methodology of autoethnography helps ‘cross some of the boundaries separating the arts and the sciences and to focus attention on diversity and difference instead of unity and similarity.’ (Ellis and Bochner, 2003: 223).

Clifford Geetz (1973) claims that all such anthropology (or ethnography) is fiction, constructed and fashioned and never from the whole cloth. Its personal immersion and consequent poetic writing overcomes the distance of the Other, leading to the dynamics of knowledge and ritual, theatre and history (see Laurel Richardson, 1994).

Autoethnography is:

... knocking down some of the walls... a space to write between traditional social science prose and literature and to stimulate more discussion of working the spaces between subjectivity and objectivity, passion and intellect, and autobiography and culture. ... More and more academics think it’s possible to write form the heart, to bring the first-person voice into their work, and to merge art and science. (Ellis and Bochner, 2003: 245)

An autoethnographic approach has allowed me to both recognise the importance of and analyse the import of my country conversations with the bunyip. An autoethnographic and ethnopoetics style begins to approximate the bunyip’s methodology.

Such bunyip thinking demonstrates the fine line between madness and metaphors. The allure and pitfall of the methodology is that it might change the world through a new metaphor, or it might more commonly be simply wild thinking. Both ethnopoetics and autoethnography come from a re-visioning of the world, both reject cultural norms as necessary dictates of action, both use the perspective of the edge to effect or attempt change. If I claim I talk to bunyips in my backyard, I am mad. If on the other hand I use the symbol of the bunyip to embody land, then I am a philosopher of nature’s metaphors. Especially in Part III, but more generally across the whole of this thesis, I have relied on the more contemplative methodology of such place thinking to develop an imaginary place-based syncretism, bringing together unusual or conflicting ideas or languages, to attempt a new whole. It is aided by the place in which I live, but ultimately (as always) it is an intellectual endeavour. Whether the resulting metaphor is a powerful enough agent to effect (or at least affect) change or simply an example of too wild thinking can only be determined by its reception.
Multiple methods conclusion

These multiple methods show in practice, in theory, and in spirit why the subaltern or edge places remain (despite global theorists’ claims to the contrary).

- In practice, the experiences learnt by, and in, the local and regional are marginalised in policy decision-making that relies upon the city-based professional. While the administrators of policy development might look to the regions for examples and to justify their edge credibility, this practice is not extended to the point that such edge places are allowed to direct policy change.\(^{38}\) The experience of regional involvement in urban-based policy planning is incommensurate; neither have the other’s interests at heart. Those who dictate policy are not only uninterested in local contributions, but often don’t perceive them at all; when they rarely do, they assess them (rightly) as threatening their power base. If the local holds their own tools and the expertise to plan and create their own community cultural development, what need is there for any overview? Country people interested in city policy are frequently driven by similar patterns as Sea Changers; their perceived rejection of city lifestyles becomes yet another threat to urban professionals. Participative action research and community cultural development tries to overcome these practical stumbling blocks to listening to edge voices, but as long as they are funded or directed by a more central bureaucracy, they are bound to fail.

- In theory, the local and those who write from the local are automatically assigned as inexpert; embeddedness in place does not equate with intellectual objectivity, nor does the specific and emotional details of everyday memories make for grand histories. The detailed place-based writings are the subaltern voices in our cultural histories, rarely afforded credibility or value.

- In spirit, a retreat to land, and its embodied expressions of wildness, can too easily be confused with madness, the ultimate definer of the edge.

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\(^{38}\) QCAN for instance (at least between 2001 and 2004) mostly offered expertise to regions through providing training courses. Its ‘kitchen table’ consultations were limited to its city location. In the Frameworks case, QCAN neither acknowledged nor acted upon criticisms that it undervalued regional contributions through its adoptive stance of expert provider, rather than relationship facilitator for example. Unsurprisingly, they were more concerned with developing agreeable relationships and following the policy dictates of their funding body, Arts Queensland. When external funding is prioritised, being seen to be active becomes more important than actual effectiveness or democratic evaluation.

A relationship model of participative action research is probably more valid and robust that the independent expert educator, especially for working in small regions. It is one that, for example, Feral Arts adopts more often than QCAN (at least in the early 2000s). Feral Arts works with small remote communities developing ongoing friendships; QCAN offers documented training to targeted regions within more bureaucratically specified timeframes and performance objectives. Needless to say QCAN is better funded than Feral Arts, but I would argue that Feral Arts is more effective (because they more often adopt the bunyip’s wild methodology, embedding themselves in place).
The problem of place thinking is that if I am local, then I am not an expert. Collectively we are frequently guilty of such assumptions: the nearby is not as apparently knowledgeable as the distant; an overseas speaker is more attractive than a local one. And this is reflected in the popular media as well: grand universals are more welcome than details of the particular. We look to the more distant expert because he is objective; the local woman who facilitates relationships and community change is more likely considered a gossip than an expert. The more local the knowing, the less expert the knower, until finally at the most embedded the knower is declared mad. No wonder academic methodologies are keen to remain distant from place. Even in their nearest approximation of madness through the development of new ways of thinking/new metaphors, academics of philosophy are careful to distance themselves from simple descriptors of the real.

As I would like to be both embedded and expert, I must untangle such incommensurables through my methodology: I don’t only listen to a bunyip that lives in the dam behind my writing shed, but I transform the bunyip into a subaltern metaphor of land incarnate. And so I optimistically hope to approximate the language of the edge without wholly adopting its methodology of madness. This thesis tries to speak differently, more personally and emotionally than mainstream academia, using the language of metaphors and multi-cultured mythologies and drawing upon grass-roots festivals and public art; it relies upon the work of poets rather than of scientists but also hopes to influence more pragmatic disciplines, such as planning and community work. Whether it can be successful in both dominant and edge languages is unlikely. But it is only in the syncretistic attempt that it can even become a possibility. Such is the methodology of landscape memoir. Rather than a monolithic and linear argument, well expounded and defended, this thesis relies upon lateral thinking, passionate talking, and academic research, as well as imagination, and lived experience, to weave the stories and patterns drawn from wilder metaphors into a textual cloth of an active land’s story.

As a personal example, when I ran courses in Environmental Planning at Griffith University, I employed a planning consultant to give a lecture; we had known each other as professional planners in Canberra. However, when she ran public consultations on a residential development around the University of the Sunshine Coast, I was perceived and invited to attend as an informed local, rather than as a professional planner.
Part II Memoir

The creativity of landscape memoir

Michael Salmon in *The Monster that ate Canberra* (Salmon, c1972)
**Memoir Overview (Human texts)**

This thesis re-imagines land as active and explores the cultural implications of this active land for our current understandings and practices. Part II examines the role of memory and history in texts and story, key western discourse technologies, that explore the relationship between the land and its inhabitants. I start with a short story, *Nature/ writing* that wryly demonstrates some of the issues and problems of environmental writing – of voicing the land’s story. Land (and its human embodiment) is rarely written as active in the ‘land story’ of nature writing, local, and environmental histories. Land remains a subaltern voice, even in place based texts. Hence, I develop the concept of *Landscape Memoir* as a more emotive, memory based understanding of place that both incorporates and creates an active landscape. Landscape Memoir goes beyond the written word to include art and cultural practice; as such, it is aligned to and might reconcile more Indigenous approaches to land (discussed more fully in the mythologies of Part III).

Historically, landscapes have become the colonised subaltern object, to be exploited, protected or mourned; such an attitude to land is reflected in western (non-fiction) texts. The active spirit of land is remembered and sensed through subaltern celebration and through embedded emotional connection to place. This is landscape memoir, more common in literature and art. A collective community landscape memoir, through land festivities and representations, builds upon a sense of place that also unites and develops cross-cultural relations within a community. This love of my place, this inhabitation of darker skins, begins to transform western discourses, and hence transform the land.

*Landscape Memoir* is passionately created from personal connection to place. Slow stories emerge from the expressions of visual, performing and creative arts about land and its scape. They acknowledge the many cultured view of land and opportunities for reconciliation. *Landscape Memoir* overlaps with nature writing and environmental histories, but it relies upon memory rather than history and upon emotional response rather than rational science as the tools to express our human-nature coalitions. *Landscape Memoir* is about imagining, not so much the memory of the land as the creative memoirs inspired by its spirit, through the creative and performing arts as much as through written work. While Part II mainly discusses the background and theory in developing the concept of Landscape Memoir, Part IV fleshes out the concept with many extant practical examples.
I: Nature writing

Nocturnal scamperings

*In which a rodent disturbs the night and the peace of mind of two writers.*

Another piece of paper was scuffled to the nest and a slow tearing sound repeated until the paper more satisfactorily resembled the forest floor remains of its erstwhile self. Nothing - no unusual stomp, no rattling of the night pan - could deter the determination of the rodent. They lay awake, exhausted of possibilities for a good night’s sleep. The moisture in the air draped a limpid blanket across their forms. The humidity borrowed their souls to dance to a night rampant with noise - crickets rubbed their legs together, frogs expanded their throats, birds whooped and miaowed, wild dogs howled. Somewhere a cow bellowed and a rooster crowed, signs of at least some attempt at domestication of the lush dominatrix that formed their present environment.

The morning was no better - cicadas dominating their aural scene left no room for noises less piercing or dramatic. Their decibel level, surely above that recommended for ear protection (but being natural the noise was excused from the measuring manias of man), was amazingly constant. The mouse, showing complete disregard for the diurnal nature of the day, continued locating and dismembering the thin once-tree slices. The ongoing sound of tearing paper was the most terrible of noises. They had not been able to locate which of their boxes was under attack. Being connoisseurs of the sound and safe consumption of words, they were unhappy to allow such activity to extend to that of lesser animals. Still worse - having been taught to publish or perish - they feared that if the concrete example of their work was literally, rather than metaphorically eaten up, they would cease to exist. Especially in this vapid atmosphere, so newly inhabited by their city lives.

Already thin with tiredness, they were seeping away at their edges, embraced by the sticky wetness of the jungle’s permanent fertility. They were less defined, less separate from that
which established dominion over nature. The clothes (that even so maketh the man) worn in crisper climes had been abandoned - skins sacs held visceral bodies together. Their skins appeared darker with mud splashes and travel dust still clinging to moist dank parts. They felt more than light-headed. This feeling of transience was reinforced by the hidden but aurally evident mouse consumption of themselves as words. Their bodies fell silent and their minds cartwheeled in hindsight at their errors in repositioning.

Survival Planning

*In which, as usual, fantasy conflicts with desire, but good preparation is not disturbed.*

Perhaps it had been a wild idea - to seek the solitude of the rainforest depths in order to greenly write on environment issues. But armed with images of Thoreau, of Heidegger, of Pollan, and the many others assumed to have used such method writing (the obvious precursor of method acting), they advanced on editorial aspirations to produce their finest work.

They located a sufficiently isolated place through an acquaintance. Preparation became a battlefield between an advanced urban fantasy of retreat and their expressed desire for real contact with the earth (both planetary and dirty). The cottage (not a hovel they assured themselves) had no power, so would require many laptop batteries and few gas bottles. Water and heat however were overabundant. Only food and mosquito nets were essentials. But to urban professionals, influenced by prevailing confusions of wants and needs, many other boxes filled their (finally justified) four-wheel drive. Past writings, essential for the running of creative juices; antiperspirants, to prevent less desirable juices; and bottles of fine wines, to replace worse jungle juice offerings.

Inconsistently, they argued over the inclusion of the stovetop cappuccino maker, citing irreconcilable differences between the desired simple life and this potent symbol of what they planned to escape. It came, along with fantasies of white linen and panama hats. They thought of nineteen-century punkah wallahs and silver service waiters brought by elephants for the English Raj. Of course such intrusions upon their desire for rustic solitude prevented any mentioning of such politically incorrect fancies for hired help. Instead they packed the champagne glasses. It was perhaps the atmosphere they wanted, not the lifestyle.
So debates and packing complete, ensconced in the familiarity of their four wheel drive, they drove away from pestilential phones to pests of a more literal kind. Apart from the essential matching mobiles - hopefully the reception would suffice: being in touch with the environment should not have to preclude them from staying in touch with their editor, their friends, their relations, the news, their shares. What they would miss least was the unsightly power lines, signs, lights, cables, high rises, blare, and noise of the city.

It was a long drive that they shared - 12 hours separated shunting, city stagnant, traffic from the once dusty roads that now more correctly could be described as quagmires.

**Losing sense**

_In which metaphorically he loses a rib and she turns to salt with apologies to the Book._

In their travel weary state, their mud map and the mud roads grew together in comprehension murky. A plastic compass swinging from the rear view mirror continued to issue directions, but the connection between compass points and logic points was mute. Ignorance and the night served to cast darkness on their proceedings, and without proceeding they became stranded in unaccustomed obscurity. Strangler figs loomed large in their headlights, taking on more meaning than was comfortable or necessary. A cooler presence of mind was lost amidst the greater confusion of geographical dislocation in a hot climate.

What is more natural in such circumstances than a flaring of tempers, a temperamental outburst of fear, tempered only by their generally temperate natures? Accusations and headaches do little to locate their temporary abode, nor does it settle their disquiet. Finally they collaboratively guess their sense of place, but it is on a track that even their four-wheel drive will not negotiate. They are stumbling along with arms outstretched waiting for a looming sign of habitation. He falls and some sharp stone smashes into his rib, making him wail breathlessly into the night noises. Suddenly, as if reliant on such echo(eco?)-location, their abode appears. They are not grateful, only somehow more intimidated.

While he lies, bewailing his sore rib, she wades through the humidity back to the car, seeking solace in their beloved things. She returns with arms full of secure boxes containing linen, food,
mosquito nets. She drips sweat over his prone body. One droplet on his lips tastes of pure salt. Without opening his eyes, he wonders if she is his salvation or his damnation.

There is no toilet, but they discover what they take to be an old night pan in the dust under the rickety bed. Exhaustion overcomes finicky preferences: tomorrow they will dig a toilet pit. Tonight they will collapse. But sleep is slow in coming. In desperation, she returns for their boxes of papers, for their coffee percolator, for some sense of home. It is only when their possessions, still boxed in fatigue, are protectively clustered around them that they are able to fall into a fitful slumber.

**Heroic identities**

*In which we wait for the recovery of the writers after their scuffles with postcolonialism.*

Despite their melting into the jungle, they have lit a fire. Not so much as to eat something that is not raw (there is plenty of gas left), rather to celebrate (they tell themselves, investigate) some ritual primeval urge. Shadows around the edges of the fire’s light are dancing to a different drum. More urbane parts of themselves wonder if they too should join the laughing shadows. Their writing is not going well and they have turned off their mobile phones, wondering if the later excuses of being too remote will be lies or truth.

But they are starting to be more fully of this earth. Concreted city certainties are dissolving; their boxes of black and white greying under caked mud. Without distinctions between man and nature, nature and culture, what is left? Struggling with words, they feel that good copy becomes only possible when such simplistic polarities are preserved. The storytellers within them wish to both describe and retreat from the jungle’s absorption. In the morning, the ashes of their fire remain: dust to dust. They no longer ask themselves if they have their story, or if they have become one with the environment. They are starting to leave.

Darker figures, long term inhabitants of such environments, become more discernible. Their shadowy quality lessens as the sun snakes across the skies’ well-worn tracks. When the writers look up from their drafts, they are startled that theirs was not an uninhabited space after all. They (who?) vanish in fear - of intrusion, of acceptance. In the end, the excluded poke their
brown fingers in the pale dust that lies between the muddy tyre tracks - the only evidence remaining that the civilised have got their story.

Their story seeks the transformative power of the natural environment. Hardened politicians have walked in the rainforests only to re-emerge less dry. Others have found spirits and spirituality in the messages written on the leaves and in the water droplets; romance in hosts of yellow flowers. Our heroes are still to emerge and we wait with bated breath for confirmation of transformation, we want their wordy, worldly evidence of what this humid environment can do - convert individuals, change society, dream new and romance old cultures, conquer and not divide. We wait in hope for new stone tablets. We wait for the heroes' return to tell us what we already know. Only then can we act.
II: Nature, writing

Was young once
Early days hot, fast, erotic
Deepest, darkest father; steamiest, healthiest mother held me as seas boiled
But growth pulled asunder - my independence.

Body bulges: cooling mountains, hot cesspits, tropical jungles
Difficult teen adjustments to new life seething within and across.
But flourished in mythological dreamings of childhood
Giant animals: bunyips boomed, snakes the colour of rainbows
Left beauty marks on body cherished
God and goddess stories imprinted on skin, channelled in mind

Skin mites in wet areas - fascinated, horrified, awed
Dream created, life worshiped
Body creatively shaped through art and memoir
Ephemeral life loved and itched over my being

Thoughtless few rotations of the sun
Roaming itches dug in to hard scabs skin without feeling
Inured lessons of body
They forgot me, I forgot them
Few mites remain to paint stories of love
Still occasions, briefest moments left of praise

Aging now uncomfortable scabs on cancerous skin
Mites have paled to ticks releasing darker poisons into depths
Insufficient stillness, collective blurs confined to hard places
Body is dug into, classified, rated with numbers
Valued with shreds of once worshiped trees
Body fades without joyful stories
(Told by parents, retold in myths of itching listenings)
Rites gone, stories gone, waking gone, roaming gone

My family see surface beauty in picture postcard banalities
Cold comfort to powerful erosions of despair and weariness
Past dot pictures should have stayed under skin - in dust or bark

What is left if not my voice?
Parents far removed, childhood friends dissolved in climate belief
Scabs grow, suffocating with hardness
Drying in arid rationality

Desolation aghast - not yet so old
Legend-making process a painful celebration
Seek moisturiser of creative renewal
To tender scabs through art and heart
The waters of story

Telling of past in frantic need of different future
A story in more desperate hope
A dreaming of devolving culture and evolving change
My body is the land and its inhabitants.

I scribe my story into my self

We are nature, and we are writing
Who speaks land stories? Inexpert voicings of place

This section asks ‘Can the land have a voice?’ in land stories and examines the relationship between subaltern theory and landscapes. It investigates how we make space for the voice of the land through various written genres including exploration journals and nature writing, indigenous storytelling, and rural women’s local histories drawn from Australia’s Sunshine Coast region. These include Petrie’s Reminiscences and the exploration journals of Green; nature writings such as Nancy Cato’s The Noosa Story and the work of botanical painters; local histories and Indigenous tales. How is land’s voice heard – who speaks for and from the land, how do they speak, and who listens? Can the inanimate have a voice; can the subaltern apply to the land itself? Who or what remembers the foot of the conquistador: the expert history or the amateur memories of the coloniser; the stories and art arising from the responses of those displaced; restructured post-colonial mythologies; or the land itself? The way we define edge voices determines how they might be heard. The subaltern is reflected, defined, denied, and created in written land stories. We are all colonisers of land, transforming it to differing cultured scapes.

The complexities of the subaltern

Subaltern theory tries to define edge voices, and shows how they might be heard. Can land itself be considered a subaltern voice: can the land speak? While subaltern theory repositions the ‘Other’ as more central, it has rarely been applied to the non-human. Subaltern methodology might expose an otherwise voiceless nature. We might re-read the records of those who write about the land in an attempt to draw out the land’s voice. A typology defined as ‘land stories’ is proposed here that tries to speak for the particularity of place and to write from the land. The grand of subaltern theory and land identity when applied to the humble of land stories, exposes the relationships of memory and history, of amateur and expert, and of fiction and fact. Critically, it draws out the relationship of loss between land and race relations, through examples of story. The role of the story has been commonly emphasised as a key post-colonial/subaltern strategy that offers status to the voices of marginalised groups. This section compares the differing status of land story genres. It attempts to show how the subaltern is defined, reflected, denied, or created in land stories and how written story might (and might not) make space for the voice of the land.

Post-colonial and in particular subaltern theory seems like the ideal tool with which to investigate an environmental history of the Sunshine Coast, because of its preoccupations with race and colonialism, and its interests in both the geographic and metaphoric margins. However, the dilemma is not that subaltern theory fits well with a coloniser notion of land. Because subaltern theory arises from notions of globalisation, it does not fit so well with notions of the local (a paradigm upon which land stories, at least, are based). Colin Wright (2001) discusses the relationship between notions of place and subaltern, post-colonial theory. He argues that while the

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An earlier version of this section was presented at the Memory and History Conference run by the Centre for Popular Culture and Ideas at Griffith University in October 2003 and then published in Limina (Kerr 2006).
Particularity of place should remain ethically important within a deconstructionist paradigm, the new global fluidity has also been the cause of postcolonial theory. Perhaps both poststructuralism and post-colonial theory arose, as precisely formal responses to this new fluid sense of place, a wrestling with language toward a new eloquence appropriate to the displacing of place, which is the inevitable concomitant of globalization.

If we dis-place place, Wright argues, we get post-structuralism and hence a notion of the subaltern. If we re-emphasise place and in particular the local, what then happens? We can never return to the (always constructed) purity of indigenous land relations. If the subaltern emerges through globalisation, perhaps it submerges when the focus returns to the local. But the ‘we’ has been changed and reconstructed so the boundaries are more blurred.

Subaltern theory attempts to ‘read against the grain’ of colonial documents – a metaphor drawn from timber cutting. It is harder but also more sensible to cut across the grain rather than with the grain, in order to get a good cut and a better view of the log’s history. And for most timber, the grain runs straight and unidirectional; you can trust the sturdy English walnut - it is easy to read and to cut the grain. But in southeast Queensland (as elsewhere) there is timber to be found that makes reading the grain a difficult art, if not an impossible task. Run your fingers, for example, up and down the wood of the spotted gum and it’s hard to tell which way the grain lies. Nor does it split cleanly along the grain; it leaves jagged and complex edges. There are few smooth or simple stories in Queensland native timbers. Just as in nature, so too in culture.

Land writings topography
There is a wide range of Sunshine Coast texts about locale. They range from historical documents to contemporary poetry. Often they are a method used to locate, and site the author or editor who, through such specific choice of geographic writing, proclaims a spiritual rather than economic sense of place - a sense of ownership that is less about dominion over and more about responsibility for. By writing their environment’s history, they declare an attachment to the specifics of a place, an interest in a particular land that is grander than mere resource economics. Turning memories of place into histories is a process of acquiring identity, a process of becoming owned by a place. In these writings, place is needed to evolve identity, subaltern or otherwise. At the very least place becomes the cultural signifier of identity. We attribute these land/culture relationships to the construction of Indigenous identity, but such an emotional (if not the spiritual) connection to place is commonly found across local and inexpert writings on land, independent of race.

A short attempt at a typology of these geographically based writings (perhaps a topography), based on written texts of the Sunshine Coast region, may help to define this land story genre. The following suggests some of the genres of place writing that might fit into the category of land story: local histories, indigenous tales, nature writing, and academic texts. I examine these texts in order to explore the current limited ‘grain’ of history/land relationships. The process of history selects and privileges only a few such local texts. Most are generally
unsubstantiated tales seen by historians to lack validity. However, I do not want to privilege one text above another, whether black against white, old against new, or fact against legend. Rather than building a factual history of the Sunshine Coast by winnowing available texts through authorial provenance, I want to use these land stories to examine the linking role of memory to place.

Local histories

Local histories often aim to record local memories before they are lost. They generally range from hand-printed short booklets of poorly presented type to self-published books with photos, maps, line drawings and cartoons. They include accounts of earlier settler lifestyles. A rare few are raised to the status of capital ‘H’ History (such as Constance Campbell Petrie’s work mentioned later). The local history collections of public libraries and historical societies are the obvious source of such books.

In 1950 DW Bull (1872-1960) wrote memoirs of early Tewantin and district, called Short Cut to Gympie Gold (probably recorded by Mrs FH Watson and self-published by her only in 1982). He writes on the first page: ‘Before we all pass away, meagre as it is, I am recording some of my memories’. Like many storytellers, Bull appeared to value a good story over fact but was also inclined to sentimentality. He mourns the old fig tree at “Tea-want-im” (a Bull story about Aboriginal requests becoming the place name of Tewantin):

Let us remember also that this grand old fig tree provided a meeting place for Blacks and Whites, when these two peoples lived in harmony, sharing what nature provided and the opportunity of learning whatever they could from each other’s lifestyle (Bull, postscript, unpaginated).

Bull may have learnt a few things from ‘King Tommy’ under the fig tree in the late nineteenth century, but one of the reasons for the professional rejection of local history is when such individual memory is universalised.

Hessie Lindsell’s self published Eumundi Story A collection of stories on the history of Eumundi, is described as ‘a series of chapters with photographs, illustrations, maps and cartoons …to be kept as a record of past events … as a help for the next generation.’ (1989, author’s note, unpaginated) Thirteen years later, Audrey Lowe used the same format to publish A Country Childhood in the 1930’s and 40’s, a nostalgic recording of her childhood memories of living at Ridgewood (ten miles west of Cooroy). She says: ‘And so I have gone back to that other time when life was slower – life was simpler in My Country Childhood.’ (2002, preface)

Amateur booklets are more often come upon by chance – passed on by neighbours knowing my strange passions or sold at local stalls. Esma Armstrong (J.P. Ass. Dip in Local and Applied History) produced a short, small booklet called Through Belli, a history of the difficulties in transport routes to the Gympie Goldfields that passed 15km west of Cooroy (the same area as Lowe covers). It is hand typed with pasted in map and diagram and has no date. The information is without an author context and conflates (acknowledged) excerpts from

41 An interesting aspect of these local histories is the process of de-professionalisation. Those who take on the writing of a local history, no matter how qualified, become reduced to simply another amateur. Expert historians write about places they do not inhabit or love, perhaps then to retain their expert status; the fear of going native is kept at bay through a careful cultural tourism of the other.
Retrospect of Coaching in Australia by WM Lees, tales of a pioneer Edgar Foreman, and Anthony Trollop’s Australia and New Zealand with more general information. Such amateur histories show how knowledge of the micro-local is valued. In Through Belli, a common reference is to Bottle and Glass Road, the steepest and worst part of the trip where passengers had to get out and foot it up the ranges after Yandina. This was named because a road worker or traveller (depending on the story) had carved the shape of a large bottle and glass on a box tree, giving hope to weary travellers that just over the next hill were refreshments and fresh horses.

Indigenous (written) stories
A long term oral, art and performance tradition, Dreaming stories were often only written down in response to white versions or requests for authenticity. They are commonly presented as picture books for children that offer education in both ethics and the geography of survival. Olga Miller\(^{42}\) has written and illustrated many such books based on stories told by her father, Fred Wondunna from the Butchulla tribe of Fraser Island. In 1964, with her brother Wilf Reeves, she wrote The Legends of Moonie Jarl. By 1993, this was expanded into Fraser Island Legends Retold by Olga Miller. She explains of these stories that it was:

> never envisaged that they would be of interest to anyone outside the family circle. However, now that the history of the Australian Aborigine is such an important part of school curriculums, I would like to share these stories with the children of today. (Olga Miller, 1993: forward, unpaginated).

Her last book written in 2001, Wook-Koo, writes of the ‘Free-ways’ (Aboriginal tribes’ common routes) and their ‘Yerra’ (or gateways to Butchulla country) around Woocoo Mountain. The cover explains: ‘She wants all children, not just Aboriginal children, to be taught the stories and customs and skills.’

Alf Wood in Along the Sunshine Coast, Dreamtime to now (1988, expanded from 1982 edition Tales of the Sunshine Coast) tells of a range of coastal/ hinterland conflicts in the Dreaming\(^{43}\) as well a history of place. He refers to white exploration as ‘white man’s walkabout’ and added several fishermen’s yarns, or ‘whiteman’s nonsense’ in response to requests. He describes the book as ‘a souvenir that will keep happy memories alive’.

Nature writings
Nature books generally describe place through pictorial and scientific accounts of geology, flora and fauna. They are studded with widely varied art of paintings and photos. As a subset, environmental histories tend to bemoan the impact of settler culture, recording the last of ‘pristine nature’ before development progresses.

\(^{42}\) Olga Miller was known as ‘Caboonya’ (keeper of records), a title passed on to her by her great grandfather. In the 1960s, her main recording role seemed to have been as artist and illustrator, but the 1990s she is using both text and picture to record her culture. See also thesis’ pages 75-76 & 109.

\(^{43}\) Such hinterland/ coastal conflicts are still reflected in today’s politics - the coast man (being stronger because of better resources) continues to win the fight. A repeated Dreaming story is that of Teewah (the hinterland rainbow man) and Burwilla (the coast wind giant) fighting over the maiden Murrawar. They fought for days causing a tremendous storm – the beach and sand dunes eroded away, leaving only steep cliffs stained with the colours of the rainbow. The loser, Teewah’s body forms the coloured sands and the fight is followed by a long drought with no rainbow. (See Alf Wood 1982 or Hector Holthouse 1982). The similar Ninderry/ Coolum fight over Maroochy might be a rare exception to hinterland loss since both men suffer the wrath of the gods.
In the tradition of Ellis Rowan, women botanical painters have described their place for posterity and for love. Elizabeth McDonald writes in her lyrical introduction to *Wildflowers of the Wallum* on the history of place:

As the wild things of the world return to the place of their birth, so our land possesses those born here ... Here are some flowers I have saved for you; you will not find them in many places along the coast any more, but inland from Coolum and in many corners between the “For Sale” notices you may come across a few. (McDonald, 1980: 12)

The forward by Harold Caulfield reads:

The wallum ... is fast disappearing to further the cause of so called progress ... her book will not only give much pleasure to people but will also stimulate interest and create an awareness of the need to quickly conserve as much of the Wallum as is possible before it is too late. (McDonald, 1980: 5)

Kathleen McArthur\(^{44}\) writes in *The Bush in Bloom A Wildflower Artist's Year in Paintings and Words*, ‘we have a problem in the fact that much of our flora is unfamiliar for the reason that it lacks associations in our consciousness’, so they are not seen, and so not preserved for posterity. She continues:

It is only when the mind opens that the flower blooms ... there is no time available to be patient and wait for natural changes when our heritage of flowers is being destroyed so fast. (McArthur, 1982: 8)

The months of the year form the chapters of her book, such as ‘Bloodwoods and Fruit Bats’ (11-21) found in the Cooloola region over January; they are accompanied by botanical paintings that include ‘Bloodwood’ (11), or ‘Pink Euodia with Mountain Butterfly’ (13-14 with accompanying Haiku poem).


Surely the developers with their millions of dollars ... should be told to go elsewhere, and not use their money to destroy such a delicately balanced and fragile ecology as that of the Noosa estuary. (Cato, 1979: 140)

Ironically, these books led to Noosa’s claimed/ famed population cap, and the concomitant branding of “Noosa” as the playground of the rich, attracting more development interest.

**Academic Texts**

Land stories, because of the requirements of locale and memory, have largely fallen to the perceived amateur. However, in the field of environmental history, there are now a number of historians who consciously seek to situate themselves in the local. Some Australian examples of this type of work include Tom Griffiths’ *Forest of Ash* (2001), Greg Dening’s *Beach Crossings* (2004), Mark McKenna’s *Looking for Blackfella’s Point* (2002), Peter Read’s *Belonging* (2000), and Martin Thomas’ *The Artificial Horizon* (2003). This is an emergent area of interest that at its most optimistic, may contribute to future changes in academic process as well as the

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\(^{44}\) Kathleen McArthur also co-founded and led the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland in the 1960s, campaigning to save the Great Barrier Reef, among many other things.
historiography of land writings. However, presently it is still too bound to a cultural tourist methodology. Environmental histories come with maps; they are rarely so embedded in the place that ideas are sufficiently developed to replace these guide posts and signifiers of the needing-to-be-mapped terrain. There are rare exceptions when expert historians discuss their own places of habitation (perhaps McKenna or Thomas, although both spend much of their time in nearby cities – Canberra and Sydney respectively). Most environmental historians, as discussed in Part I, continue to visit the ‘Other’ place, and write, perhaps more sympathetically, their tourist guides of that culture. 45

More often than not, academic texts (like this one in your hands) are transposed or raw theses, rarely able to contain themselves to the local. They are more than ‘land stories’ of place, and show the difficulty and uniqueness of combining the expert with the local without removing a sense of the land itself. Academic texts referring to the Sunshine Coast region cover the gamut of historical methodologies; but few consider the evidence of the land itself.

In 1910, John Mathew (MA BD) writes of the country of the Kabi and Wakka tribes in Two Representative Tribes of Queensland. Mathew lived on his uncle’s station in his early teens (from 1866 to 1872) and learned Kabi dialect, which he maintained while training as an ethnologist in Melbourne. He addressed the ‘puzzle’ of the origin of Australians, particularly using linguistic evidence, and wrote the book to address all the ‘exceptionally important information … in solving anthropological difficulties’ (1910: xxii – xxiii).

Reverend John G Steele, a physics lecturer and medicine dean at the University of Queensland as well as an Anglican priest, wrote the well researched Aboriginal Pathways in 1983. His chapters twelve to seventeen cover The Sunshine Coast, Cooloola, Fraser Island, Conondales, the Mary Valley, and Maryborough District (1983: 160-230). 46 He delineates many tribal groups of the Kabi Kabi region, showing their land and paths and researching the legends that tie them to place, as well as documenting settler (predominantly missionary) records and responses. For instance, at Eight Mile Rocks near Rainbow Beach, a ‘Thugine’ (rainbow serpent monster) lived in the sea, looking to harm unprotected children. It caught two disobedient boys and turned them 45 In contrast, many traditional historians refer to places they have never visited. While most historians include anthropological and sociological disciplines along with documentary evidence, fewer consider the evidence of the landscapes (let alone the voice of the land) in which their histories take place. In 2005, I went to a talk by a senior academic researching a writer’s 5 year stay on the Sunshine Coast and the influence of the landscape on her work. Having coffee together later, I asked her what she herself thought of the Sunshine Coast landscape. She looked askance declaring she had never been to the place. I felt her sense that there should not be a need to go beyond the written word, and that my implication of an additional way of understanding (through inhabiting the place), was to cast a slur upon her excellent research. Ironically, she was much more tied to a ‘patriotic’ notion of love of (unquestionable, real and nationally defined) land, whereas the best I could come to was the multiple discourses that created a regional landscape and helped to embed humans in place. I wondered later if perhaps it was only because I lived daily under a mountain that I was able to dissect human perceptions of it, whereas her city based life had more simply (and enviably) allowed for a solid belief in the active force of nature.

46 While Steele has just one chapter on the Sunshine Coast, I include the wider area as part of the region, based on the area covered by the many traditional sub-groups of the Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi Kabi) speaking peoples.
into rocks that can still be seen today (Steele, 1983: 185). The rocks act as more than concrete reminders of the dangers of the sea; they unite the culture of the Dulingbara (people of the nautilus shell ornament) with the natural landscape, establishing a strong and specific sense of place.

Elaine Brown’s 1995 Master's thesis ‘Nineteenth Century Cooloola: A History of Human Contact and Environmental Change’ is another environmental history that shows how the natural environment of the Cooloola coast was perceived and used by both Aborigines and European settlers in the nineteenth century. It was approached:

through the characteristics of the locality itself, then developed through descriptions and narratives that reveal salient aspects of the Aboriginal presence, the European invasion, and the occupation and abandonment of land. (Brown, 1995: abstract)

Bruce Elder in Blood on the Wattle: massacres and maltreatment of Aboriginal Australians since 1788 (1988, expanded 1998) writes of both positive and horrendous black/white relations in his chapter describing arsenic murders at Kilcoy in the 1840s. The tribes of the area were the Nalbro on the eastern slopes of Blackall and Dallambara in the Connondales (both part of (T)Jinibara and more widely the Kabi Kabi language group). In 1822, the New South Wales (including what would later become Queensland) Governor Thomas Brisbane sent out exploration parties to locate a new penal colony, the site for Brisbane. Later, two escaped convicts Davis and Bracewell (or Bracefell/ Bracefield), with Andrew Petrie opened up the Sunshine Coast region to settler Australia. They reported the Aboriginal importance of the Bunya tree as ceremony, food, and meeting place to Governor Brisbane. Consequently, the Sydney Colonial Secretary’s Office on 14th April 1842 proscribed the bunya and its land from white settlement and destruction because of its importance to the Aborigines. The Statute reads:

no Licenses be granted for the occupation of any Lands within the said District in which the Bunya or Banya Bunya Tree is found. And … remove any person who may be in the unauthorised occupation of Land whereon the said Bunya or Banya Bunya Trees are to be found. His Excellency has also directed that no Licenses to cut Timber be granted within the said Districts.

Such good intentions may have been in response to the conflicts of another 1842 event. The first settler in Kilcoy was brief but destructive; Evan MacKenzie arrived in 1841/2 and returned to Scotland in 1845. The 1842 tales at the Bunya Festival acted out being poisoned by white man’s flour at Kilcoy Creek and the loss of one whole group (around fifty people) who normally attended as a result. A later unnamed Aboriginal memory recalls:

47 This legend was collected by Harry Aldridge in 1904 and recorded in A W Howitt, Native Tribes of Southeast Australia, London 1904: 431.
48 A version of this thesis has been published as Elaine Brown (2000) Cooloola Coast Noosa to Fraser Island The Aboriginal and settler histories of a unique environment.
49 I prefer the term Bunya Festival over the more commonly used Bunya feasts. To me, these three yearly events had the flavour of the Woodford Folk Festival. They were a ritual opportunity to camp together on someone else’s land full of plenty to share news, performances, music, dance, and food.
50 This poisoning is supported by missionaries and Stephen Simpson, the Crown Lands Commissioner at the time in reports to the Colonial Secretary, based on evidence from Bracewell. Simpson writes that at a meeting of a great number of Blacks belonging to different tribes, a story was told by Blacks from the Bunya Scrubs to the south about a group of 30 men, women, and children dying. Their death is keenly described: ‘swelling of the head, foaming of the mouth, violent retching and thirst, trembling of the limbs and sudden prostration. These tribes vowed vengeance...’,
'That blackfeller been eatim damper. Then plenty that been jump about all the same fish, when you catch im, big mob been die – him dead all about' (Elder, 1998: 113). Elder dubs Kilcoy with the dubious distinction of being the start of a regime of terror in Queensland, as Aboriginal people at Baroon who saw the re-enactment swore vengeance on all Europeans. William Cootes concludes in his history of Queensland ‘that very many of the murders perpetrated by the blacks for years afterwards were more of less in direct consequence, or in revenge, of the wholesale poisoning at Kilcoy’. Bruce Elder’s book typifies the methodology of history, united more by timeline than by place – but this chapter shows the powerfulness of a place (and an individual) in shaping the future.

Other histories focus more on biography, once again requiring a reading against the grain to hear the voice of the land. In 2002, Christine Halse published A Terribly Wild Man, based on her long term interest in Ernest Gribble. Gribble was a passionate and paternalistic advocate for Queensland Aborigines over the first half of the twentieth century. Among other things, he was responsible for the meeting of his sister Ethel and Butchulla man Fred Wondunna through his work for the Fraser Island Mission School. When it was clear Fred and Ethel were in love, Gribble married Ethel off to his compliant right-hand man, William Reeves in 1903. When Reeves died in 1906, Fred returned hoping for marriage. Gribble and the family were horrified (Gribble all the more so because of his own liaison with an Aboriginal servant), especially when Ethel became pregnant. Ethel was sent to Sydney to hide the scandal, but Fred managed to follow and finally, in 1907, they found a priest willing to marry them. The couple retreated to the sanctuary of Fraser Island and all mention of Ethel was censored from public documents (see Halse, 2002: 82-85). Legally, relationships between white men and Indigenous women were proscribed, but the opposite was unimaginable. We cannot know their frequency of occurrence, as relationships such as those between Ethel and Fred were not recorded in either legal response or historical documentation. As such, relationships between white women and Indigenous men became truly invisible. It is only through the memory of

Stephen Jones in his Maleny booklet Four Bunya Seasons in Baroon 1842-1845 suggests that the 1842 Bunya Statute and the proposed reserve was the NSW Government’s response to (and attempt to cover up the impacts of) the poisoning (1997: 11).

51 Another version of this is told by Arthur McConnel in an unpublished manuscript in the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland called Blacks. He says a Durundur boy reported the results of the poison: ‘The boy said “plenty fellow jump about like it fish when you catch him.”’

52 Arsenic poisoning was not uncommon. There are many examples. Raymond Evans (1993) writes of fifty or sixty Aborigines being killed by poisoned food at Whitesides Station on the Upper Pine River at around the same time. Other more direct forms of murder too were commonly disguised as Kangaroo shooting or Dispersal. One pictorial subaltern record from Cooktown consists of a lead pencil sketch by Oscar, a young Aboriginal boy, showing four moustachioed Native Police shooting at three running-away wounded Aborigines. The drawings are held in the National Museum of Australia and are discussed in Kim McKenzie and Carol Cooper (2001, pp 157 – 163). Oscar’s forty drawings were sent by Henry Glissan, manager of a Rockhampton cattle station, to Melbourne friends as a children’s entertainment in March 1899. Oscar had been at the station since he was 9 or 10 in 1887. He did not speak much English, but loved drawing, so Henry ‘got him a book and some coloured pencils & let him have a good try at it’ (p158). Other pictures include ‘Some Maytown Swells Doing the Block’ (three white women in full paraphernalia and three bearded white men all with pipes), ‘Palmer Blacks Preparing for Battle’ (some twenty-two Aboriginal men each holding a woomera and numerous spears), ‘Camooweal White Ladies’ (five in hats and bustle dresses in blue and one with red polka dots, possibly holding handbag, parasol or handkerchief), and ‘Police Boys doing Duty (Lynch Law)’ (three Native Police with red boots, caps and epaulets, standing around a tree to which two Aboriginal men are chained by hands, feet, and necks). Oscar drew and Glissan captioned the drawings to give this subaltern documentation of north Queensland colonisation.
their family that Ethel and Fred’s relationship re-emerged as history. Olga Miller and Wilf Reeves (the storyteller ‘Moonie Jarl’) are the children of Fred and Ethel, and the first to write down Indigenous stories of Fraser Island and its surround. Perhaps it was their parent’s passionate black/white relationship that allowed for the cultural crossover of written word and oral story traditions. Perhaps too it was the sanctuary of place (their home of Fraser Island) in the face of social erasure that ensured the evolving importance of telling and writing their particular land’s story.

**The subaltern voice**

Such localised and particular accounts have connections at least in geography – they are land stories. And perhaps because of the joint emphasis on locale and on the local, the line between fact and fiction, between history and story, seems thin indeed. Arguments move back and forth across authors and over time about, for instance, the real story behind the naming of Noosa. Is it an Indigenous word, Noothera, meaning shade as Cato (1979: 3) writes, or a politely taught response to uncomprehended settler questions: ‘No sir!’ as Bull (1982: 13) suggests? Many prefer to believe the former - to believe in the subaltern resilience of Indigenous culture, to believe that settler culture was influenced by local naming. They hope whites do not distort or entirely eradicate in their invasions; that it does not always have to be about or in response to the dominant. But such arguments can never be fully laid to rest, because alternative histories are rarely written in ignorance of the extant dominant version. Noosa naming stories epitomise the problems in finding the subaltern voice. White misunderstandings of black responses to white invasions have become the reductionist history of the last 200 years.

But, the history of the colonising and colonised voice is a confused one that does not neatly separate into oppressor and oppressed. Local histories are a selection drawn from inexpert memories. Expert conclusions rely upon the cross-substantive process of the professional historian, who selects or rejects from the local documentation of memories. If, as Pierre Nora claims, memory must die to become history (see for instance Nora’s introduction ‘Between Memory and History’ in Nora, 1996), how is it that under similar conditions, only certain memories are elevated into history? How is one textual source privileged? In the Sunshine Coast region, the source most often used by historians is probably Constance Campbell Petrie’s 1904 *Tom Petrie’s Reminiscences of Early Queensland*. It is valued as an early settler account and for its informative and sympathetic view of local Aborigines. Other sources are viewed less reliably. Brett Green’s 1996 publications of his great-grandfathers and grandfathers’ diaries (six books titled *Tales of a Warrior: Legends and Stories about the Kabi speaking peoples of the Gympie/ Cooloola/ Fraser Island/ and Sunshine Coast Regions of S.E.*)

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53 Cato draws upon the dictionary of southeast Queensland tribal languages developed by FJ Watson in 1944, in which ‘Noosa’ is proposed as a corruption of ‘noothera’ or ‘guthuru’ (‘shade’ or ‘shadow’) in Dalla, a sub-dialect of the Kabi-Kabi language.

54 Not least of which, in Elizabeth Povinelli’s description, is the white longing to ‘ghost’ an Indigenous mythic past (2002).

55 Here is yet another reason why Australia is a long way from a more multicoloured multiculturalism. The dominant focus on black and white conflict means Australian histories often overlook the influences of the long-term Chinese settlers or post-colonial immigrants.
Queensland (Transcribed from the diaries and notes of John and James Green 1840 to 1938) have been reported as frauds. Green and Petrie make for interesting comparisons. A subaltern reading would suggest both have authenticity despite (and perhaps because of) their differing reception. Both books record ancestral memories of Indigenous lifestyles. Green is a living resident of Gympie; Petrie is a past historian from a respectable and noted family. Petrie’s original text is in contemporaneous papers; Green’s originals were lost in transit to the Oxley library. Petrie’s history is prefaced with a sense for loss of traditional indigenous lifestyles; Green’s is more of an informed but rollicking yarn. Across mainstream media and historians, Petrie is considered genteel and Green is suspect. It is Petrie (without a doubt the voice of the coloniser) who most acceptably supports and gives status to the colonised voice. She does so within the contextual limitations of her time. Roth, the Protector of Aborigines, encouraged her to think of her work as a record of a dying race. She did so though with less consequent (Victorian) sentimentality than one might expect. And, rather than disparaging the naıve rituals of the noble savage (a more common, but perhaps believable, flaw in Green), Petrie often makes direct comparisons with what she points out as similar European customs. If Petrie is the voice of the coloniser, then she also presents the approved voice of the colonised – her portrayal of Aborigines has agency. Petrie is accepted as historical record whilst Green is relegated to fiction – Petrie writes a more acceptable, a more respectful Indigenous history than Green, but who represents the subaltern voice?

The unifying sense of loss in land story

The grain of these Sunshine Coast texts is hard to read indeed. If generalisations are possible, then it is that they are motivated by a sense of loss. Constance Campbell Petrie writes of the lost way of life for local Aborigines; Audrey Lowe writes of a lost way of life for early settlers; Kathleen McArthur and Elizabeth McDonald paint the disappearing wildflowers before they are all gone; Nancy Cato writes of the loss of the natural around Noosa Heads. They record a past lifestyle or place before it is forgotten. And it is loss that appears a primary motivator for local histories. Historical societies are continually recording the memories of the last generation while libraries are scanning in old photos; stories of before become the nostalgia of today. It is the past that is seen by local

56 Partly I think because of the four explicit descriptions of sex, relying upon a claimed indigenous use of a Viagra precursor – not stuff that makes it into the accepted texts of history books. Green’s ancestors also happen to have met every person mentioned in other histories (convenient but possible) and their journals are perhaps overly comprehensive. See the debate ‘The Green Diaries’ in local newspaper The Gympie Times, Sat, 25 April 1998: pp 4-7, in which historian, Elaine Brown, argues they are ‘highly improbable’, and an elder Green family member offers a very different memory, claiming the ancestral Greens never visited Queensland. Green ‘stands by diary authenticity’ and claims the accusation of fraud is politically motivated. In any case, the information is well researched and in itself provides an alternative interpretation of history (whether actually true or not).

57 This is a very complex question. Perhaps the fact that Petrie has been privileged by historians as the acceptable text should make it suspect in subaltern terms. However, she sympathetically champions an indigenous voice. Green has been more accepted by amateur locals (both indigenous and settler) than by historians or institutions, although, and perhaps because, he records a much more colonialist attitude. Green epitomises the wild – a rough and rollicking voice that is too often missing in strait-laced histories. Ironically, he does not serve the current Indigenous agenda of mainstream historians; perhaps his records of a (sometimes appalling) colonial attitude have now become the unheard subaltern voice? Petrie’s history is popularly preferred over the nastier and more violent conflicts recorded by others. In his history of black/white relations in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast, Raymond Evans obliquely referring to Petrie, concludes, conflicts have become ‘agreeably shrouded’ under the stories of Bunya feasts (Evans, 2002: p 60). However, the Bunya festivals can also recover subaltern history, as Evan MacKenzie’s 1842 tale (discussed previously) demonstrates. In the murky details, a clear definition of the subaltern is bedevilled!
historians as the subaltern, in the face of the ever-threatening present. It is the particular and the local fighting for a voice within the universalising global future of unstoppable progress. And it is the loss of memory that forms the basis for such inexpert histories. Chakrabarty (2001:11) applies Pierre Nora to show that western societies are characterised increasingly as societies in which memories die faster than history, or memories die and produce history. Stories of the inexpert and the local are generally nostalgic, keeping memory alive, even if it has little historical basis. Indeed, perhaps we have no better combined past to remember. As Haydie Gooder and Jane Jacobs (2002: 213) ask, ‘when the settler nation fantasises about co-existence, is it engaged in remembering or in forgetting?’ Perhaps moving forward to a reconciled future requires just such an exercise in imagination, more likely to be found in memory than in history. In any case, most local histories rely upon inexpert memories that reflect loss, not gain. If I might be allowed a poor pun, subaltern local history is not about reading against the grain, but about reading against the gain.

The land and its scape

There are as many possible understanding of landscape as there are cultures (and sub-cultures). The discourses are varied. Naively speaking, land for the coloniser is historically an object of resource (of interests not values). Land for the colonised has been portrayed (by popular culture at least) traditionally as a source of myth and story. Historically, there has been an imposition of settler culture upon the unheard indigenous understandings of land. Displaced settler cultures do not, at least initially, understand the offerings of a new landscape or its indigenous cultural overlay. Simon Ryan (1996) contrasts a European perception of Australia with an Aborigine’s perception of the city to show how cultures differ in their readings of landscape. Paul Wenz was a new Australian of French origin, who brought his culture’s eye to the Australian landscape, bemoaning its lack of history and mythology:

> forests are generally not dense enough to shelter elves or ghosts; no Red Ridinghood could gather strawberries in them, or meet a wolf or doe in them, for the shade of the tall eucalyptuses is too scanty for strawberries; wolves and does have never existed in Australia … There is no history … there is a total lack of ruins that are the tangible past, of the old castles and the old temples that form part of the history of a people. (Ryan, 1996: 126)

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58 I have yet to see a written local story that celebrates a positive history of gain; a story that is not, in part, a deliberate recording of that which is gone or going. Perhaps this reflects the status of local histories; such memories become stories of the victim and do not belong to the official or professional narrative of history. Official (politicised) history on the other hand tends to be about progress, not loss. This is equally simplistic and problematic. The past is uncivilised; the grand alchemy of history justifies the present central position; for instance, it transmutes spiritual lore into rational law (can you even have rational lore or spiritual law?) and such is named progress. Searching for, and acknowledging, localised stories of loss may be the immediate (dualistic) response to grand history, but it too oversimplifies the past. If memory is nostalgia, then history is progress, and both concepts are awkward. Nostalgia glorifies the past, history glorifies the future. Inverting the accepted process, to nostalgic history and progressive memory, might be the first requirement, but ultimately a new metaphor for stories about the past/future is needed to change cross-cultural and cross-natural relationships. It is memoir that weaves different times together; it is hearsay that suspends past, present and future in the same solution. It is indigenous traditions (understood as the Dreamtime for example) that conflate the past and the future into a much enlarged present, full of mythic beasts that are both creating and destroying the world and its inhabitants. This different sense of time and archaeology of the future might be necessary to move beyond the dualistic conflicts epitomised in nostalgic memoir and progressive history.
Of course, this misreading of landscape (the cultural overlay onto land) can be applied in reverse. Ryan goes on to cite Rhys Jones who romantically describes the reaction of an Aborigine upon seeing a city for the first time:

The idea of buying and selling land like any other commodity and of attachment to the land only as a matter of transient convenience was totally alien … Here was a land empty of religious affiliation; there was no wells, no names of the totemic ancestors, no immutable links between land, people and the rest of the natural and supernatural worlds. Here was just a vast tabula rasa, cauterised of meaning. (Ryan, 1996: 127)

But cultures change and adapt. Paul Carter’s 1987 ‘Naming Place’ in Road to Botany Bay cites Barron Field who in his 1825 Geographical Memoirs laments the unsuitable Australian ground for poetry because of ‘the eternal eucalyptus’ (and in particular its non-deciduous nature and lack of contrast). Compare this early view with, for instance, Les Murray’s claim that Australian Land (the bush) is ‘the three quarters of our continent set aside for mystic poetry’ (in Murray, 1986).

Settler cultures have learnt to celebrate a love of land without necessarily needing to claim any closer relationships to or understandings of indigenous cultures. For instance, Marcia Langton (2003) shows: ‘a distinctive Australian settler voice that speaks of a deepening attachment to place and locality as the core of identity has emerged in Australian literature’. She cites many modern books: David Malouf’s The Conversation at Curlow Creek, Richard Flanagan’s Death of a River Guide, Tim Winton’s Dirt Music, Rodney Hall’s The Island in the Mind trilogy, Murray Bail’s Eucalyptus, Nicholas Rothwell’s Wings of the Kite-Hawk, Peter Read’s Belonging, Eric Rolls’ A Million Wild Acres, and George Seddon’s Landprints. These writers show that we have learnt to understand a not-so-new landscape. However, we have also changed the landscape to become a new thing. The view of the mountain is always changing. But, as Carr points out in What is History? (1961: 26-27) using a mountain metaphor to analyse historiography:

It does not follow that, because a mountain appears to take on different shapes from different angles of vision, it has objectively either no shape at all or an infinity of shapes.

Landscape is a cultural overlay, a description of place. But the provocative question of land remains. We generally assume that the mountain exists independent of its descriptors and their visions. There is a realist core to our theoretical notions of environment. The words we use, the discourse or the story we apply to the mountain, may limit our understanding of the place, but they also reinforce the assumption that the place can be, wordless.

The mountain might be ‘bad’ (inaccessible, filled with dangers and ghosts) or ‘good’ (affording pleasant views and clean air); it may look different - a feng shui dragon, a Dreamtime warrior, an ore resource to be levelled, a place for orientation, or a marker of home - but we experience the place as more than a metaphor.

Should we even ask ‘does land remain without the discourse?’ Does a tree falling in a human-free forest still make a noise? It seems a very human centric question. Land has been conflated with truth in postmodern and postcolonial eyes, so that it represents the unfashionable positivist (the ontological reality). But it is the mapping - the linguistic and metaphoric constructions of land, the multiple layers of meaning and understanding - that may
literally shape our view (but maybe the mountain also shapes that which is possible?).\(^{59}\) Perhaps the land's voice is the truly subaltern, perceived as the always colonised, always object, never active force? Is there ever an active land? The popular understanding of land as real or independent of people and human culture is still far removed from discourse theory which argues that without our language overlay there is no land, and that the world is imagined into existence through discourse, that is, the language and culture of human beings.

In *Just Relations*, a story of a fictional small Australian township built on gold, Rodney Hall suggests it is people who create the landscape and the land:

Whitey's Fall perches halfway up a mountainside, the mountain the people created. Year by year they accumulated the knowledge, the experience. They have the words so they know how to live with it. By their toughness they survived to heap up its bluffs, by scepticism they etched its creekbeds. They've lived and spoken every part of this mountain, they've dreamed it and cursed it, looked to it for salvation and penance. Its outcrops of granite are the very ones the people named, quarried and picnicked on before you could say there really was a mountain in this place at all. And the forest covering tells of its secrecy.

So, the mountain came to be there and indifferent to the people, those clinging whittlers in mud burrows. The mountain stood up, hunched and massive … cliffs crashing one by one down the mountainside in a flurry of gold dust. And the mountain created a wind appropriate to its shape, so the wind set and that's how it remained.

In those times the Aborigines of the region, the Koories, had no knowledge of any such mountain. Neither did they know nor care about gold. And but for gold, who would have stayed here at all? (Hall, 1982: 19-20)

The mountain is not only physically created by gold mining and forest clearing (so that it becomes visible), but also metaphysically created by settler culture's view of the conquering nature of hard labour and the importance of gold over other resources. According to Hall, the culturally changing view of the landscape does more than change the land – it literally creates the land (although the mountain does create its own shape, too). It is a view I am increasing persuaded by. It is in the collaborative telling of such tales, in the collation of land stories, that the mountain starts to take its form. It is in the intersections of such tales that a new view becomes possible. But it is a difficult shared history, when our differences extend beyond the shape of the mountain, to its very existence. Nevertheless, it is this discourse that shapes the land into landscape.

**The voice of the land in land stories**

To find the voice of the land in Sunshine Coast land stories requires a reading against the grain of loss that they express. But perhaps it is only through stories of loss that land is structured and understood. I am interested in the ways that memories and histories talk of land, how storytellers literally situate themselves, and how writers use words to locate themselves in locale. How does, or indeed does, land itself get heard in these land stories?

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\(^{59}\) This view is approximated through a sort of green postmodernism, in which land is 'the fundamental yet never fixed plane of immanence on which the constitution of multiplicities takes place' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 34). Land still needs some fundamental (if never fixed) ground and I have to wonder if the 'plane of immanence' is just a postmodernism for reality?!
My analysis of nature writing, diaries, and exploration accounts – the cultural documentation of land colonisations - especially in the regional context of the Sunshine Coast, shows that such land stories do not generally imply an active land. Rather, land is passive. Humans do things to land; land is very rarely written about as something that shapes humans. Of those cited here, only Elizabeth McDonald says, ‘our land possesses those born here’. But mostly these land stories speak a language of loss – the loss of landscape through human action or inaction. As Mitchell claims in *Landscape and Power*, landscape remains ‘the dreamwork of imperialism’ (1994:10). The writers discussed above write about the landscape, the things that lie imposed upon the land, rarely about the matter of land itself. The underlying land, like earlier notions of the ‘noble savage’, remains a pure thing. It is impossible to describe or understand without the sullying of whichever colonising culture holds power. While in subaltern histories, that which represents the subaltern voice is debatable, the distinction is clearer in human/nature relations: the land is always the colonised.

How else might the voice of the land be heard? It is voiceless with few obvious mechanisms to gain standing in the process of history. Land is the truly subaltern – its interests can only be voiced by its colonisers (and for better or worse, we are all users of land). Environmentalists have claimed to speak for the environment and courts such as the NSW Land and Environment Court have given trees standing through proxies. These responses are predicated on the notion that the land is a powerless and passive resource that we must shepherd, husband, or control. Our present day view of land is much the same as our past colonial views of colonised peoples. The historical building blocks have similar patterns: it is to be defeated and won over, it is a resource to aid us in our endeavours, it is a helpless thing to be protected, it is a dying thing to be mourned. So maybe there are things to be learnt from subaltern theory that can be applied to land. Perhaps land is not after all entirely passive (or pure) in the face of such attitudinal onslaughts. Perhaps land too, like the subaltern, has a way to manipulate its colonisers. And perhaps it is never possible to write directly on land, but only to read against the grain of such land stories – to read for memory rather than history.

Maybe the land’s voice best emerges when the western archival emphasis on the written word is avoided and preference is given to the role of the creative and the visual in the arts, performance, mythology, or meditation techniques. Paul Carter (eg 1992a, 1992b) attempts to change the value of words by emphasising the silences inbetween. Pierre Nora (1996-98) suggests many memory sites for the west, that include libraries, festivals, community art, and architecture. It is through memory, rather than through history, that we might best capture the land’s voice, so we need to change our methodology. Perhaps though, Australia has already such well developed land methodologies through more Indigenous imaginings?

60 The written story may be an insufficient mechanism to capture the voice of the land, to describe ways of knowing land, or to describe a more active landscape (at least in the history of written story to date on the Sunshine Coast). Other ways to hear land might combine oral traditions and more creative cultural and artistic practices into a form of story through the use of metaphor and land myth. There is an important place for metaphor, oral traditions, art and ritual, in land story. I discuss this later in Parts Three and Four.
Inexpert identities of place

Dennis Lee writes in ‘Cadence, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space’ that a colonised writer’s home is to find words for their space-lessness: ‘Instead of pushing against the grain of an external, uncharged language, perhaps we should finally come to writing with that grain… a thoroughly edgy, uncertain homecoming’ (1974: 167). A similar thoroughly edgy, uncertain homecoming is offered here.

There are a number of land story implications. There are inverse links between globalisation (the concomitant of postcolonialism and subaltern theory) and the local, and between a notion of an active landscape and a literature of loss. There also seems to be at least an historical divergence between levels of expertise and writings about a particular knowing of place, so that only the inexpert speak local land stories. The postcolonial theory that privileges (creative/ global) discourse over the (realism of) land object may inadvertently silence the very voices it hopes to hear, for instance, the active land expressed in Dreaming metaphors of Aboriginal Australia. So too might the written ‘land story’ genre that mourns loss rather than celebrating gain. Perhaps, if we return to notions of a more active land, we might have more diverse (local) histories that focus on gain, rather than loss. If so, is the notion that we create the landscape through discourse compatible with the idea that the land is an active and influencing agent? 

The specifics of a particular locale are reflected in its disrupted literature. There are cores and peripheries both within and without that subaltern dynamic. We are all colonisers of land, transforming land to differing cultured scapes. It is the active (identifying) influence of land, as well as fear of its loss, that impels the writing of local land stories. Regional and grander histories are often collated from such inexpert and under-acknowledged voices and show the complexities of Indigenous/ settler interactions that both reinforce and un-define notions of the subaltern voice. But these wider histories are more removed from the particularity of place and the suggestion of an active land is subordinated to land’s role as a (passive) site of resource conflict. The land encapsulates a form of pure subaltern theory – it is always colonised so that the voice of the land is only heard through the discourse of its colonisers. In Australian history, the voice of the land was most commonly given active agency through spoken and artistic stories, often based on land topography. Today, however, when the written word dominates, it is this western form of communication that gives status to stories of and from the land. These stories tend to be nostalgic, focusing on loss, and set in a passive landscape. Landscape cannot have a separate voice, because it does not exist in such a wordy way without humans. Humans interpret, if not create, the land using better or worse cultural overlays. The regional stories examined here mostly fall within the passive land paradigm. Perhaps the active land paradigm is missing from written land stories exactly because of their written form. Martin Mulligan (2004) referring to Judith Wright’s 1973 poem, Falls Country, says, ‘We lack the appropriate literacy to speak in the language of leaves.’ Perhaps there are other forms of communication –


61Fictionally, at least, Rodney Hall’s mountain of Whitey’s Fall shows that both notions are possible at the same time.
meditation, mythologies, or the visual and performing arts - that lend themselves more readily to a differing (more active and positive) language of land and its scapes?

Does place shape identity? Is identity only completed through place? The regional writers analysed here have used place to evolve identity. Perhaps turning memories of place into written history is the process of acquiring identity, of becoming owned by a place. In any case, it seems that identifying self through place is the part of the inexpert. Talking about the local is the realm of the amateur. The expert, or professional, has historically been beyond place, objectifying the land/human relationship. By acknowledging and writing about an identity shaped by place, the storyteller is cast into the role of the inexpert. But perhaps it is these inexpert voicings, or memories, that start to more closely approximate land stories, to speak the subaltern voice of land.

In simplistic summary, history is framed by biographies and dates; memory is framed by place. It is locals and thereby 'inexperts' who write mostly about place, although generally the land's voice is still represented as passive through stories of loss. Perhaps, by applying a subaltern perspective to land, we might hear a more active voice, one more common to indigenous understandings. An equivalent western emergence of an active landscape requires an emphasis on memory and emotion rather than on history and rational science. To date, an active land's voice has not been common in the genres of local history, nature writing, or academic texts, even those that write from a place perspective (at the very least in the examples of the Sunshine Coast region). Perhaps a new genre of 'landscape memoir', that includes art and community culture as well as story, might be defined and developed to adequately reflect more creative, emotive, and active memoirs of place.

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62 Although of course many professional academics, such as for instance, New Zealand’s senior landscape architect Val Kirby, recognise the importance of the local in the relationships between heritage landscapes and community identity: What is required on the Coast, and elsewhere, is acknowledgement of the significance of a dynamic, complex series of local, culturally defined heritage landscapes, which are critical components of the sense of identity of each community. (Kirby, 1993: 128) However, the embedded social and inexpert memories of place that this entails remains problematic for most institutional (heritage) practice.
From land story to landscape memoir

The original heuristic tool of ‘landscape memoir’ emerged from my frustrations with the limitations of land stories. In keeping with a postcolonial approach, it is more inclusive and less rational than land story, involving community cultural activities as well as individual creativity in art and written works. Landscape memoir enables access to elements of the subaltern/ edge/ land/ culture nexus, which in turn allows new images or metaphors of an ‘active’ land to develop. This section discusses the theory drawn from philosophy, literature, and art, which has helped to develop my concept of ‘landscape memoir’, and shows how it underlies the rest of the thesis in memory, myth, and metaphor. The theory behind landscape memoir discussed here is developed in praxis in Part III’s discussion on Bunyips and other animals; and in practice in Part IV’s drawing together of current examples of bio-regional community cultural art and festival that reflect the concept of landscape memoir.

Realism, Art, Memoir and Land

Historical and scientific facts about the non-human do not explain cultural relationships to nature or form emotional connections to land. But, neither is a more romantic contemplation of landscape sufficient. We need a multi-layered approach to landscape that reflect more complete and complex understandings of place.

We have known since Ruskin that the appreciation of landscape as an aesthetic object cannot be an occasion for complacency or untroubled contemplation; rather, it must be the focus of a historical, political, and (yes) aesthetic alertness to the violence and evil written on the land, projected there by the gazing eye. (Mitchell, 1994: 29)

According to Ruskin, realism is a pathetic fallacy when applied to metaphors of nature without spirit. Ruskin (1856) lauds the simple truth in early great poets describing an active nature (such as Homer) and contrasts these with the lesser anthropomorphic metaphors of his contemporary poets (such as Keats). From his analysis emerges spirit – the metaphor becomes mythology (and therefore, in Ruskin’s eyes, more aesthetically and romantically acceptable).

Homer had some feelings about the sea; a faith in the animation of it much stronger than Keats’s. But all this sense of something living in it, he separates in his mind into a great abstract image of a Sea Power. He never says the waves rage, or the waves are idle [Ruskin’s pathetic fallacy]. But he says there is something in, and greater than, the waves, which rages, and is idle, and that he calls a god. (Ruskin, 1856)

To Ruskin, the attribution of human traits to a real nature is not as acceptable as the understanding of an anthropomorphic god, the spirit of that nature.

The von Guerraud (almost sur)realist landscapes of Australia’s early colonialism are similarly outdone by William Robinson’s multi-perspective many-angled pictures of grand spirit (inspired by the landscape of southeast Queensland). The realist landscape photography of Steve Parish is likewise deconstructed in Martin Thomas’ 1999 discussion of Dombrovskis’ photos of the Tasmanian wilderness. That which purportedly constitutes the real comes into question, not to mention that which merely represents reality. Neither cadastral maps nor dot
paintings look like what they represent, but both have and reflect such important value within their cultures that they are accepted as representing reality.\(^{63}\)

It is memoir that breaks down dualistic polarities between truth and fiction; it is more suited to our knowing post-ism ways. As Drusilla Modjeska argues in *Timepieces* (2002), the emotiveness of memoir has immediacy. Memoir offers a:

state of stripped-down fear, a collapse of identity, [in which] another consciousness emerged – tentative, ‘protean’ and ‘glinting’ … [It tests] the boundary between fiction and writing that came from life… crosses the boundaries of discipline and genre, that … distrust the heroic and find meaning in the ordinary. (Modjeska, 2000: 162 - 166)

Modjeska says politicised autobiography, viewing self onto a lens of history, is too singular; and that the post-modern, post-feminist generations feel experience through imagination, using more than one voice to express simmering emotions through memoir. Modjeska claims postcolonialism has put memoir on the bestseller lists, in which she includes: immigrant Raimond Gaita’s *Romulus, My Father*; Peter Read’s *Belonging* written on his shared intuitive place with Denis Foley; Kim Mahood’s unsentimental mourning in *Craft for a Dry Lake*,\(^{64}\) Jackie Huggins’ scholarly but authentic voicing of her mother’s ‘double fold of silence’ in *Auntie Rita*; and Kim Scott’s *Benang*, a postcolonial tale about those who live between the black world and the white, disowned heirs of both. Modjeska’s memoir is a difficult art:

It has developed in a paradoxical space between two polarities, between the incapacity to tell its truth and the inability to avoid it … the talk of recreating experience is a red herring and that the difference in the sorts of truthfulness brought to the endeavour has less to do with the accuracy of memory and the reliability of evidence (though both matter) than with the nature of the relationship between the memoirist and her material … the question isn’t so much one of truth to a narrative that exists outside the text as of fidelity to the creative process … memoir is a mapping of the mind … the way the voice encompasses the material, it works with: fact, fiction, memory, speculation, invention, testimony, fabrication, retrieval … to weave more than one time together; narrative time, historical time, personal time, psychological time. (Modjeska, 2000: 190-196)

Australian memoir stands in the space between grand biography and personal testimony. It is in the latter, in diaries and journals (whether fabricated and actual), that Australian writing has been strongest. Personal testimony is in Drusilla Modjeska’s words, ‘too unreliable for history and too literal for fiction’ (2002: 177). Such is the memoir base for an Australian landscape memoir. The emotive mapping of the mind of the landscape memoirist builds the relationship between the reader/writer or artist/viewer and the land, so that it too is multidimensional and multi-temporal. Landscape memoir strips down the identity to raw emotions and begins to dissolve human/ non-human divisions. Landscape memoir exposes our connections to place; perhaps it frays our

\(^{63}\) The nature of these representations of ‘ownership’ is discussed in Part III.

\(^{64}\) In which Kim Mahood writes:

*If you can’t locate yourself in some sort of narrative or myth, you can’t survive for too long in this country. It needs to be a strong story to take its place out here, and it needs to be something that comes from the country itself.*
human edges and exposes our natural souls, in Barry Lopez’s phrase, ‘as though not completely finished at the skin’. Mark Tredinnick argues that landscape writing:

- works of lyric engagement with country – might be understood as enacted, articulated **listentings**... To catch the place truly, the writer must write from the landscape’s point of view (which of course is multiple, eternally restless, in which many time-scales play); one must write as though one were, for a moment or two at a time, the place. (Tredinnick, 2003: ii and iv)

While I too have made such attempts at landscape writing, perhaps the common failure of such writings lies at the heart of Ruskin’s pathetic fallacy: it is not the place but the spirit engendered by the place that needs to be expressed. Such a strong body of work, which emotionally embeds the writer in the particularity of place, has formed the core of Australian literature, from Katherine Susannah Prichard and Dorothea McKeller to Tim Winton and Peter Read. Such landscape memoir is also to be found in the work of artists, from traditional indigenous painters through to the contemporary works of artists like Judy Watson or Fiona Foley. It has been when we have written or created art about the emotions inspired by the spirit of the land, rather than writing about the land itself or ‘being’ the land, that our writings are the strongest. It is a sturdy Australian practice indeed that embeds us in the local place; landscape memoir is an unsentimental, but highly emotive ongoing tradition.

Landscape memoir finds Ruskin’s greater spirit underlying nature and offers it worship through the material process of making creative and collective work. Paul Carter (2004) shows how artists in their making are engaged in creative research, that practice and theory are the same, a ‘**material thinking**’. Such collaborations stem from memoir, not history. Carter says:

> The thick time of hearsay, in which past, present and future are suspended as if in a colloidal solution, far from engulfing the people in instant confusion, signified a creative culture committed to local invention. (Carter, 2004: 94)

The personal and emotive story of individual or group relationships (both animal and human) to their environment, the nature they inhabit, becomes a community’s landscape memoir. It incorporates: collective memories of place; specific cultural mythology surrounding the human /nature relationship (or coalition) in that particular place; emotional responses and histories, as well as future imaginings. Memory (and imagination) has become popular because it accepts difference rather than truth. Like Pierre Nora’s work on **Realms of Memory**, Mark Tredinnick’s PhD on *Writing the Wild* (2003) claims there is no Australian nature writing, primarily because he argues that such landscape writing must be lyrical (and also because he did much of his research in the States. Although if I were to similarly generalise, I would say that the wild is much better understood in Europe and developing countries than it is in America, perhaps with the historical exception of Thoreau). Such a lyric sentiment has not formed the basis of Australian culture, let alone its writings on land. It is unsurprising that Tredinnick can:

> wonder how we could have made a prose so formal, so mannered and gardenesque out of a set of landscapes so wild and unruly, so unconforming. Their remains a deep rift in Australia between culture and nature; between the city and the bush; between the diction of letters and the common mode of speech ... Too little of our writing strikes the right note between the discourse of the expert and the discourse of the local inhabitant. (Tredinnick, 2003: 455)

I would argue that it is not lyricism but emotive embeddedness in land that marks the landscape memoirist, and Australian writings are rife with love and fear inspired by land. Perhaps though Tredinnick is right, these are not nature writings (nature writing in Tredinnick’s lyric sense is too removed from reality; in the naturalist sense, too removed from personal immersion). These many Australian writings form instead the ongoing, maybe subaltern, Australian tradition of landscape memoir.
landscape memoir relies upon memory not history, because: ‘Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. … History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer’ (Nora, 1989: 8). Each landscape memoir is not a concrete truth. They are not a process that once explained becomes immutable, bound by the laws of science. Landscape memoir cannot be universalised. Rather landscape memoirs are used as a particular community culture’s temporary guiding tool, providing both identity and sense of place (at the ideas level) and dictating the hows and whys of environmental resource use (at the practical level). Landscape memoir becomes a cultural metaphor, explanatory tool, and heuristic model of a particular community’s approach to nature at a particular place and time.

The creative tension of ‘what really happened’ in memoir finds its equivalent in the search for a pristine and real nature in land story. While memoir relies on Robert Dessaix’s partnership between philosophy and literature, landscape memoir relies on a partnership between philosophy, literature and art. Memoir when applied to landscape avoids the divisions between environmentalism and postcolonialism, those that would claim land is reality or truth and culture is artifice. Land in Australian writing is like Australian memoir; it is unsentimental, un-American, in its rejection of the lyrical, but ever present – from Steel Rudd’s comedic love of land in On our selection to Barbara York-Maine’s 1967 beautiful equivalent to A Sand Country Almanac (Leopold, 1949) that starts and ends with weather, Between Wodijil and Tor. Bruce Bennett description of Roger McDonald’s The Tree in a Changing Light (2001) as writing that is ‘not merely external description or decoration … it shows the value of expressing a deep subjectivity in human responses to the environment we inhabit’ (Bennett, 2003: 108) defines landscape memoir. Other attempts at writing land reject the emotive vagaries of memoir for less persuasive and less personally involved histories: environmental histories are mired in the natural sciences; nature writings are either lost in pathetic fallacy (of lyricism) or serve as handmaidens to scientific description. Nor are local histories (of necessity dictated by place) a sufficiently authentic voice for land, in their mournful emphasis on loss. They serve a purpose, but it is not one that evokes an active and positive land/human coalition. Positive representations of land abound in Australian literature and art. Mulligan and Hill say writers:

help to take us beyond the constraints of rational thinking (which dominates the world of science) into more emotive and enchanted relationships with our environments. In this sense, contemporary writers like Malouf and Winton follow in the traditions established by people like Lawson, Dark, Wright and White. Along with May Gibbs, they are the writers who can be seen as ecological pioneers of Australian literature. (Mulligan and Hill, 2001: 111)

But they agree writers do not create mythologies, rather these come out of ‘broader social and cultural processes’. Perhaps it is through a community’s cultural activities that the active land can be expressed and experienced in more collaborative ways: in festival, in rituals of land – in the celebration of emotions inspired by land. Amidst the rational dominance of environmental glasses half-empty, such a practice of landscape memoir appears a radical optimism indeed.

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[66] Barbara York Main (1967) uses both her science and her writing skills to focus on a small place of bush in the West Australian Wheatbelt. The cover blurb says in part, ‘but most of all she had an emotional bond with this stretch of country in which she spent her childhood and to which she has returned regularly all her life.’
In summary, landscape memoir is not limited to words, but can also be expressed in art and festivity. Whether art, story, or other cultural activity of place thinking, these draw upon and build a relationship between memory, mythology, and memoir of place, allowing for multiple histories and understandings of a multi-layered land (rather than the single monolithic historical/scientific fact). This approach makes space for a cross-cultural and multidimensional view of land to form landscapes that are at least as much of the mind as they are of the materials comprising the view. Landscape memoir is a different and thick language: a hearsay not a biography, a memoir not a novel, a metaphor not a painting, a landscape not an ecology. It is not about dualisms: it blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction, between land and body, between mind and emotion. Landscape is not an environment that surrounds us or a scene that serves as mere backdrop to our doings. Landscape is us: it includes us in mind, body, emotion and spirit. Perhaps we should not attempt to write as if we were land, but rather as if land were us – a coalition of the human and non-human. Memoir is not history but is critical to cultural understanding in its weaving of patterns and reflection of attitudes. Memoir is self-aware of the impossibility of truth but seeks like art to authentically represent, to express, that which is in our collective minds and hearts. Our constructed landscapes can only reflect our multi-cultured selves. We can never know the land underneath and at best landscape memoir abolishes the dualism. The map is merely metaphor: it is time to move on from Descartes! Landscape memoir lies in the mud bath of emotions expressed by memory, myth, and metaphor.

67 Many examples of this multiple approach to landscape memoir are given in Part IV.
Memory, myth, metaphor and mud

This thesis builds up a picture of how humans can create an experience, and not just a representation, of land. We represent land in stories, and these shape our perceptions of place. There are degrees of involvement: from an historical or nostalgic rendering of resource loss (as told in the land stories of this Part) through an animation of country that approximates the experiential (as embodied by the bunyip of Part III), to an active participation through community art and bioregional festival (examples of which form Part IV). Perhaps poets are best at adapting text to approximate the indigenous soul of a place. But English discourses are limited; as Judith Wright says ‘landscape’ is a very poor replacement to express the Aboriginal paradigm of ‘earth-sky-water-tree-spirit-human continuum’ (Wright, 1985: 32). Terry Tempest Williams in Red: Passion and Patience in the Dessert asks:

How do the stories we tell about ourselves in relationship to place shape our perceptions of place? … the stories they [the Navajo] told, animated the country, made the landscape palpable and the people accountable to the health of the land, its creatures and each other. (Williams, 2001: 4)

The differences between human stories of land can be partly explained by the differences between a text-based and an oral culture of storytelling. Sally Butler in her art history course on Indigenous landscape (2004 University of Queensland handout) says:

Oral culture relies on memory rather than written documentation and so the ‘word’ acts in a more multi-dimensional manner – interacts with song, dance, ground designs, body painting, music and the context of place.

Perhaps then, as the word moves from text to voice, humans move from representations of place to participation in place. But words are not enough to hear the land’s stories. The active voice of the bunyip does not appear particularly compatible with the written word of land stories that tend to shape histories of loss and mourning. The professional, objectifying, and select processes of history, map making and planning reflect distant and passive attitudes to land. Written (and especially expert) words act to reduce the complexities and conflicts in human/nature relationships. But history and wisdom is not just handed down from heaven (the intellectual sky) or written up in books; its memories come up from the embodiments of - the tracks and trails upon - the earth. It is their recognition and celebration that form the framework for experience in Part IV

It is through memory, myth and art in locale that the metaphors of an active landscape can be more fully explored. It is creativity, whether in planning or in art, that opens the door to landscape memoir. Negus and Pickering (2004: vii) argue ‘creativity is a process which brings experience into meaning and significance, and helps it attain communicative value’. It is such processes that evoke landscape memoir that maintain an active sense of the land’s spirit. These include rituals and soundscapes (through community cultural development activities), land shaped mythology (such as the bunyip), community festivity (both local and regional), and art where landscape is the active influence rather than the backdrop. If such metaphors were taken as seriously as the written word in western texts of decision-making (more than mere accompanying images), then Australia
might conceivably have both a sustainable environmental practice and an aesthetic culturally reconciled identity
that is shaped by the process and content of multiple landscape discourses.

It is only by putting our hearts in our mouths and wading out through more difficult territory that we might meet
the bunyip, the guardian of all such intricate crossings. Landscape memoir offers us just such a muddy terrain to
traverse; in doing so, we learn to value complexity over rationality, depth over height, messiness over simplicity,
and metaphor over fact. The metaphor for unearthing the subaltern is not to be found on a bridge but rather in its
underlying swamp. As long as we rely upon the rational clarity of bridges to understand the other, we will fail.
Instead we need to ‘get down and dirty’ in the muddied mud of emotion; to seek out its liminalities and talk to the
bunyip.

Raymond Evans argues we too smoothly build bridges across disturbing memories by relying upon factual error
and overly nostalgic memory. In discussing the bunya gatherings in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast,
Raymond Evans concludes:

It was only when that [settler] dominance had seemed complete that European nostalgia and myth
making began to construct wistful tales of the lost, ‘mystical’ bunya gatherings … Their treatment of
participants in the great bunya gatherings as either ‘noble savages’, ‘cannibal’ plotters or a ‘doomed and
vanquished people’ – and sometimes an ingenious amalgam of all three – served as both a literary
abridgement and bridge across a critical no-man’s land of disturbing historical memories – that
forbidden recess where all the particulars of race war and colonial conquests now seemed to lie
agreeably shrouded. (Evans, 2002: 60)

The darker, more guilt-ridden, histories (for which we might otherwise feel obliged to apologise) are abridged or
bridged over. Raymond Evans points out accurately that we need to understand the land beneath. For historian
Evans, its truth will only emerge when sheared of misleading myth and ‘wistful tales’. But for me it is precisely
these things (of error, emotion, and experience) that have allowed another story – the story in the mud – to be
remembered at all. (Without the bunya feasts, there is no place that remembers MacKenzie’s massacre, no
process leading to colonial and later western documentation). The mud is where landscape memoir takes us.

Of course, subaltern land relationships already exist. They are an active extant and even influential force that
remains generally unrecognised or unacknowledged. Our neat cultural constructions of place have always been
underlined with wilder creations. This is my key development from subaltern theory. Hence celebrations of the
subaltern wild are likely to be found in the mud – in the regions68 and the poorer suburbs rather than in the
CBDs, in the fingered dust illustrations of unwritten tales. Words tend to create, intentionally or not, bridges of
shorthand – ‘abridgements’ – that for the sake of clarity avoid messy complexity. Perhaps, as Part IV suggests,

68 It is in the less wordy processes of landscape memoir, in the particularity of the regions, that the mud sticks. In an
American fiction about a Cree man’s subaltern attempt to change the colonial discourse, Ruby Wiebe’s character
Corporal Sleigh, knows the value of mud:

Corporal Sleigh never read a book because people in them never walked in mud … You never got the sense of
anyone being downright dirty the way territories’ mud stuck to you in globs (Wiebe, 1973: 272)
the mud can be best investigated through community cultural celebrations of festival, mythology, and art, rather than through more wordy textual representations.69

A new metaphor is powerful when it draws upon trans-cultural human emotions, such as fear, and upon the long-term links between human and other animals expressed in traditional mythologies. Perhaps like salt in cooking (or the subaltern in the mainstream), it is most effective when it improves the flavour without being seen. The strength of the mythic is that it alludes to this process of that which can’t be seen but that sways our cultural conversations.70 Such a muddy inhabitant emerging from the landscape, attributed with more emotional and arbitrary responses (those that we don’t otherwise like to impose on humans), could be the powerful subaltern voice that changes the community’s culture to one aligned with our own animal forces and the land itself. Mythic beasts have powerful impacts in our past histories and in our present memories, reminding us of our wilder nature, as discussed further in the next Part.

So, can the land have a voice? The short answer is no, and especially not in the language of words. How might we otherwise express the interests of the land? This thesis suggests we might rely upon an embodied metaphor – a mythopoetic beast perhaps – that could be celebrated through festivals of profane ceremony. It is such traditional and always present subaltern elements that need to be read through the grain of history. An active land has the potential to become exposed through creative activities that evoke and respect memory, traditional mythologies, emotional responses and celebrations of a wilder nature - elements not found in more expert constructions of nature/human relations. It is the land’s memory, the land’s spirit, that we should learn and celebrate if we want to gain environmental wisdom. If the mud is where landscape memoir takes us, perhaps it needs a personified form to be more easily grasped. Each place might develop its own readily understood mud metaphor accessed through myth and memoir. The mud might rise up from its underlying subaltern place beneath our bridges of science and history. The mud might form into the wild mythopoetic animal that has lain dormant in our collective imaginations. And perhaps such beasts might become agents of change. Perhaps, it is time to not only acknowledge but also celebrate the bunyip. Such an embodied landscape memoir unleashes the subaltern within to reshape the world.

69 I have to thank my first experiences of Woodford Folk Festival for the original connection between festival and mud. Its very hot and very wet environment meant even the wearing of gumboots didn’t prevent the mud sticking. We all - urban professionals and local hippies alike - literally walked in (not on) the land. The festival reflected a medieval village, a world turned upside down, a profane ritual in which urban black clothing was shed in favour of muddy rainbow colours (I even wrote a column about it, see Kerr, 2001a). I like to think the smell of the mud persisted back in working life, its festive influence working its subaltern charm.
70 The co-requisite problem of the mythic, like the subaltern, is that it is difficult to grasp and substantiate. The mythic is a slippery beast that avoids the proof of documentary evidence and facts in favour of hearsay. It is created in collective imagination and adopted without rationalisation.
Part III Mythology

Imagining the edge of fear

Olga Miller in *The Legends of Moonie Jarl* (Reeves & Miller, 1964:35)
Mythology Overview (Human/ Bunyip lores)

Written story is insufficient in expressing an active land’s voice. Part III explores other cultural devices and creative expressions of cultural memory, using mythology. The active spirit of the non-human might shape human discourses as is explained in Tracks (a ‘mudlark’ email that offers a glimpse of the thesis’ personal context), and in Conversations with the Bunyip (reflecting my place-based relationship with the non-human local inhabitant). But, like the Frog chorus, the wild might hold its own celebrations, uninterested and independent of human desires.

Part III examines the practice of planning as a key example of dominant community cultural activity that has many subaltern elements, which if taken seriously might change environmental practice, race relations, and possibilities for creativity. When land is seen as an active force, its embodiment can be expressed through mythologies and mythic stories of beasts: the dragon of feng shui, the rainbow serpent of Aborigines, or the Celtic fairy. I argue that the bunyip – a culturally compromised creature of Australian mythology – serves a contemporary and multicultural Australia, using fear to remember landscapes as non-human places of awe. The bunyip relies on the drawing power of imagination: a metaphor created not from What is? but from As if. Planning for mythopoetic beasts (the bunyip and its protean embodiments, such as Pan or Trickster Coyote), and more simply making space for the spirit of animals, celebrates an active nature and contributes to creative and environmentally aware cities and regions. In Australia, the dreaming and stories of the Bunyip begins to unravel cross-cultural complexities, and proffers an example of how planning and maps might move forward with animals and the arts to build a reconciled approach to land.

One thing I have learnt - put a bunyip into the middle of a thesis and it sits in judgement, disturbing all other ideas and thoughts, sending muddy ripples back and forth throughout the chapters. It takes on a voice and reflects a culture of its own that has made my ideas more thoughtful, more creatively considerate of a wilder different construct of nature.

And I remain in fear of being eaten (only here and possibly in my nightmares does the examiner become the bunyip!): For becoming the white Aborigine. For wanting a solution. For offering grand theory instead of humbler questions. For ignoring the experiential. For being too academic. For not being academic enough. For not enough evidence and justification. For remaining too rational. For preaching what I practice and for not preaching what I practice. The bunyip is insensitive to such methodological guilt. It lives, as much as it can, outside my/ our constructs of nature. If it lived within them, the world would be a different place.

(Diary entry, June 2003)
Tracks

Last week, I attended a printmaking workshop and a wonderful piece sprang out of my intellectualising about landscape. I have been unoriginally thinking that perhaps the landscape is entirely made up of what we make of it - it exists through the process of our imagination.

Without a cultural overlay (indeed, many cultural overlays) the land cannot come into being. The resultant artistic work became a landscape made up solely of tracks - the hill a four wheel drive track, the land around the hill human footprints, the sky filled with bird feet, erratic emu footprints run up and down, a rolling stone leaves its uneven imprint, the visual after-tracks left by long grass waving in the wind sweep across the whole.71

The only track to the top of Uluru is the sacred track of the haretail wallaby dreaming, so that Margaret Somerville (1999: 53) says, 'All the tourists who struggle up and down the Rock become little wallabies.' This makes me wonder if we become the tracks we use. If we drive too often on highways, we become cars; reflected in our use of language - I need a tune-up; he traded her in for a new model; she just ran out of fuel; this'll get your pistons pumping. And now, as many of us travel across the more intangible tracks of the internet, we are slowly becoming computers with not enough memory, in need of upgrades, a few bytes short of an apple! (But perhaps this change in language reflects our aging society - from sex to amnesia!) Even if we resort to footpaths in the hope of (re)becoming human, we have to tread carefully. If we meander along the art of the Rocks in Sydney, we follow the original path of the river (with the settler name of the Tank Stream), now diverted and piped out of recognition. And how many sacred animal paths might we unconsciously follow, becoming smaller and more marsupial by the minute?

How do we know where our travelling might take us - how do we know what our choice of routes might make us? Even when we consciously follow tracks, we are unthinking. The young girl, who follows the filly's tracks every day to catch and ride, becomes the braying, horse-faced woman. The farmer facing the charge of cattle - mending fences and vetting animals - slowly becomes more bovine. People who walk their dog daily, following excited paw prints through city parks, are later memorialised in comic twin photos of dog and owner.

71 See the title page of this thesis.
Perhaps with a new sort of mapping, a more spiritual awareness of place, we could more consciously choose our evolution - improve the balance of what makes us. Perhaps humanity is only ever borrowed tracks from the earth, from our inventions, from our environment. We are part of, and not separate from, the landmarks left behind by all the histories of place. Those histories carved by stone and metal, quarried by bulldozer and water, imprinted by tree and by land-drover, touched by all of us animals from the dreaming and from the now. The rainbow serpent leaves his footprint at Bauple Mountain, but so does the developer with his housing estate. The wombat and the human both leave cairns of evidence along every track they use.

Perhaps the maps we use should be far more complex and far simpler than those drawn from country; perhaps they are the country itself? Lewis Carroll, through his German old man character in *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, says the cartographers finally made a map of absolute exactness, using a scale of one mile to a mile: “It has never been spread out, yet,” said Mein Herr: “the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.” (Carroll, 1976 edition: 617)

And we also are doing nearly as well as our representations. Ross is immersed in the arts and crafts - being the president of Craft Queensland and the artist of a new exhibition piece titled *In Memory*, an elegant table and two very high backed chairs evoking a tree stump and saplings, accepted into the contemporary furniture exhibition (on for the next three weeks at the Cooroy Butter Factory). I have been absorbed in the theory, art, and practice of landscape, gave a paper on land stories (local histories and nature writing of place), and been collecting (and painting) some artistic, emotional and intellectual, responses to land. Kat is deep in tests and homework at the moment, but generally manages to live a far more balanced lifestyle than her parents - combining the physicality of tai kwon do, the artistry of painting, with her more intellectual and spiritual sides, and not forgetting the mundane demands of family living. Anika is on a new regime of tests, diet, exercise, teaching, and medication under the focused approach of a number of specialists and assistants, in an once-and-for-all attempt to crack the reading and other barriers to her obvious creativity and intelligence - maybe (this time, we hold our breaths), it is working. Pajda has emerged with a beautiful coffee table of curved triangles of steel, wood and glass for the furniture exhibition; this follows a 10-day Vipassana meditation retreat from a highly emotional few months of separating from his lovely long-time girlfriend.
I am still gently processing Joan's death - each new obituary prods the process along a little more (I think about 7 fissures of grief) and at the end of this month (good grief, that's next week!), I'm going to Government House in Sydney to accept a major posthumous award for her work. Ironically, if she had died an old old lady, there would be far fewer to remember her and to continue her life works - an earlier death may have benefited what she held most dear - the equitable intertwining of art and life. So there is grief, but (to mistakenly echo the phrase) it's good grief!

I am gradually, slowly learning, that I too have rights as well as responsibilities, that I don't have to please the world, let alone be responsible for its improvement. I am slowly learning to put my energy into my family first. Not to put work (in its various guises of saving the world) first, not to put strangers first, with no consequent energy left to even snarl at my family. And now, I am trying to also learn to put me first - give myself time, be gentler and more loving of myself. I have been able to "do" loving-kindness in the face of the faults of humanity, but not to myself. Even now, I can only justify self-absorption as another way of knowing - like holograms, the whole world might be found in an atom. (ie The problems and the changes needed in the world might be found in the problems and changes needed in myself (or vice versa of course). If everything flows from everything else - a holon (a whole that forms part of a whole, eg atoms, molecules, cells, organisms, worlds, universes), then everything can be inferred from the atom. The integrative whole can be inferred from the individual. Can the individual hold all the answers? Do we need to look outside our own bodies? Our bodies might become the journals of our world. A sort of Buddhist self-absorption may be the best way to enlightenment - the craft of self, with look-far eyes, on the river of life.) Or, as Mettaphor sings, 'We can't change the world 'til we change ourselves'. But I still can't say that I am valid solely as an object of self interest or self care.

The potential of this realisation has only come to me very recently. On our way from the environment day fair to picking up a bushwalking Katerina, in an unusual moment of release from the busyness of life, Anika and I spent ten minutes on Peregian beach. It was late afternoon and the beach was almost deserted. The lifeguard was taking the flags away and the sunlight slanted across the horizon. I bared my feet to paddle along the edges of water and land. The first wave splashed over my feet and I was completely overcome with its gentleness. It was cool and loving, caressing my feet in a way that I have never before experienced nature. We impose
notions of ourselves onto everything we see, of course; nature for me had always been unforgiving, fierce, passionate and glorious. Suddenly here was a picture of nature as loving and gentle, quiet and caring, a calm blessing. While my feet were embraced, I wept. Tears streamed down my face for all I might miss in life and in nature, by being - and seeing - fierce. Was it too late to try gentle, not only for others, but most particularly for myself? I don’t know the answer, but I do (dare I say, fiercely) remember the insight brought by such gentle waves.

Life has been quietly travelling along the paths we make for it. Vegies and fruit grow in the garden, bush turkeys eat our compost, our dog Nutmeg kangaroo bounds through tall grass after thrown sticks, and we dryly look forward to the seasonal fall of rain. Hope it’s a good wet season along all our paths and tracks (afterall, a bit of mud adds to the sensual enjoyment of life and land). Our days are full of creativity, our nights are full of friends and insects. We still swim, garden, and make bread. We mow less than we should and celebrate more than is necessary. Life is good while it lasts and now is the time to confirm our choices in life as opportunities to be creative and enjoyable!

Mudlark letter (September 2004)
As if bunyips mattered... Cross-cultural mythopoetic beasts in Australian subaltern planning

Landscape memoir that draws upon subaltern and cross-cultural practices of memory and mythology might inform and broaden the ways we plan and celebrate our landscapes. For instance, planning of land and place with mythopoetic beasts (dragons, fairies, rainbow serpents) in mind has a long tradition, not only within ancient cultures, but also within western modernist planning. In Australia, the cross-cultural mythology of the bunyip could form the basis for a more creative, authentic and relevant planning philosophy (and hence re-define Australian planning practice). Creative assumptions on, and making space for, the habitations of bunyips could change the dominant culture’s use and attitude to land, as well as indicate the heart of the reconciliation process. Australian society would act as if bunyips mattered.

Reading mythopoetic beasts into the landscape

The subaltern in planning refers to non-western or non-dominant approaches to planning. Planning is a geographic construction and upholding of a community’s cultural and physical development. Subaltern planning is a common but unacknowledged form of planning by sub-dominant groups of a culture. It exists alongside the spoken practice of planning. Its ideas are often appropriated without acknowledgement, but unlike insurgency planning as posited by theorists such as Leonie Sandercock; it rarely directly challenges the limitations of modernist planning practice. While the subaltern has influenced the outcomes of planning, it speaks a generally unacknowledged and unwritten language (and therefore falls too often outside the rubric of academic analysis) because the poetic use of myth and story does not sit well within dominant, western planners’ notions of planning as rational, logical and scientific. So, subaltern planning is that undertaken by the community-based, non-professional on a regular basis.

Subaltern planning is often not referred to as planning; however it serves the same purposes as ‘capital P’ planning. Subaltern planning practices are also processes that map the land, determine living and settlement patterns, and express the culture of a society in a concrete way. By comparing the subaltern planning of Aboriginal traditional art (for instance) with white planning practices, new possibilities for reconciliation emerge. One of the many examples of subaltern planning is the reading of mythopoetic beasts into the landscape and the construction of their influence on culture and living patterns. As one way of reading, rather than of doing, three interpretations are proffered here: the place of the dragon in feng shui, the place of the fairy in city planning, and the place of the rainbow serpent in traditional Aboriginal planning (dimly reflected in the legless lizard impasse of modernist planning for Gungahlin).

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72 An earlier version of this section was presented to the University of Newcastle’s Inter-Cultural Studies Conference in June 2003 and then published as Kerr, 2004 by the Journal of Australian Studies.
The Dragon

Feng shui is about the flow of energies and their influence on a landscape. It was first mentioned over five thousand years ago in the Taoist book *Li Shu or The Book of Rites*. The Rules for Burial say that ‘the flow of energy dissipated by wind stops at the boundary of water’; that is the Chinese words for wind – *feng* - and water – *shui*. So a good gravesite must have good feng shui: ‘often a spot referred to as a “dragon’s den”, a place where the natural and the beneficial feng shui forces of a mountain concentrate’ (Lo, 1994). Feng shui refers to both the physical environment and the more mystical and abstract influences. It relies upon: the five Chinese elements of metal, water, wood, fire and earth; the Tai Chi of yin and yang; trigrams of the I Ching; and the Lo Shu diagram (or in English the magic nine square chart, possibly based on the markings of a turtle). Feng shui practitioners are often referred to as geomancers or ‘interpreters of messages from the earth’ (Mazur, c1995).

About three thousand years ago, the Chinese applied the concepts of yin and yang to their city planning (Hai Guan, 1971), so that the land, its topography, and vegetation were respected in the design and construction of human habitations. Evelyn Lip gives a number of examples of ancient Chinese cities in which: ‘The feng shui theory of planning, Confucian ideals and ancient Chinese social and political hierarchy were clearly reflected in their plans’ (Lip 1990).

Feng shui is the art of placement - reflecting its geographic nature, and as the art of living in harmony - reflecting its more spiritual nature. There are a number of schools within this complex technique. The interpretation useful to the argument presented here is that of the Form School of Feng Shui. The Form School was given written authority in the ninth century AD by Yang Yun-Sung who lived in southern China, a region full of spectacularly shaped mountains and hills. A landscape that reflects the four celestial animals in the right location will dictate the planning of any human habitation on any scale, whether a city, a house, or a desk. The four animals to be found in the landscape are the bird (or occasionally phoenix), tiger, tortoise, and most important of all – dragon.

In broad terms, if the skyline in the east looks like a dragon, then the site is beneficial. Statues of dragons (however small) are also recommended to improve the Chi (good) flow of energies.

In a lecture entitled ‘Is there an Artificial God?’, Douglas Adams simplifies the principles of feng shui to that of accounting for dragons:

> go back to the issue of how you figure out how a room or a house should be designed, and instead of going through all the business of trying to work out the angles and trying to digest which genuine architectural principles you may want to take out of what may be a passing architectural fad, just ask yourself, “How would a dragon live here?” We are used to thinking in terms of organic creatures; an organic creature may consist of an enormous complexity of all sorts of different variables that are beyond our ability to resolve, but we know how organic creatures live. We’ve never seen a dragon, but we’ve all got an idea of what a dragon is like, so we can say, “Well, if a dragon went through here, he’d get stuck just here and a little bit cross over there because he couldn’t see that and he’d wave his tail and knock that vase over.” You figure out how the dragon’s going to be happy here, and lo and behold, you’ve suddenly got a place that makes sense for other organic creatures, such as ourselves, to live in. So, my argument is that as we become more and more scientifically literate, it’s worth remembering that the fictions with which we previously populated our world may have some function that it’s worth trying
to understand and preserve the essential components of, rather than throwing the baby out with the bath water … a precise parallel to the entities we create around ourselves to inform and shape our lives and enable us to work and live together. Therefore I would argue that though there isn’t an actual God, there is an artificial God, and we should probably bear that in mind. (Adams, 2003: 146-147)

Generally, in China and in other Asian countries the dragon has played a major role in the planning of cities and homes. Dragons are also reflected in subaltern Australian planning (although more the prerogative of the Women’s Weekly than of planning authorities). When I worked in the ACT Planning Authority on religious infrastructure provision, I collaborated with a Taiwanese Chinese Buddhist group and another planner to simplify the feng shui siting requirements of a proposed temple in Gungahlin. However, when we found a suitable site (hill behind, water in front, facing east), the Planning Authority was still unable to grasp why such land should be reserved for the use of a temple, and the group went elsewhere with their substantial funding and generous aspirations. It will be a while before location guidelines in planning authorities provide for the sense of dragons in the landscape. Nevertheless, subaltern planning practice is alive and well, not only among Chinese and religious practitioners, but also in many western homes and offices. Generally these practices do not seek to challenge the western planning orthodoxy; practitioners do not protest when new suburbs are located badly. Instead, feng shui practices sit outside of the limits and overcome the constraints of western planning, by retrofitting water features along with the notion of dragons.

The Fairy
At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a general western interest in reviving old mythology though art and place, and making links to the spiritual, reflected in pre-Raphaelite and art nouveau movements. The fairy was adopted by many, from Rudolf Steiner in his system of education through to Arthur Rackham in his many illustrations. In Peter Pan, a popular pantomime of the time, as Tinkerbell lay dying, the audience is asked to ‘Clap if you believe in fairies’ and to thunderous applause the fairy recovers (by the 1960s the fairy had fallen out of favour and the pantomime lost its popularity as Australian audiences booed the dying Tinkerbell(73)). Judy Wells (in Anna Rubbo 1997: 126) suggests that the fairy motif: ‘echoes the sense of loss experienced during the late 19th century expansion of the city. It was an imaginative response to the displacement of the natural from cities and town.’

In the early twentieth century of Australia, there was a swell of both feminism and theosophy. Many women rejected Christianity for more occult ideas of religion that included those of Isis and fairy. Those attracted to theosophy were ‘in the court of the faerie queen’ (referring to Queen Elizabeth I’s personified hope for religious reform, see Jill Roe, 1986). The fairy was the icon of magic and change, especially for women. Theosophy and Steiner’s adaptation of ‘anthroposophy’ were popular. In 1910, the Victorian Spiritualist Union showed the spirit drawings of English theosophist Georgiana Houghton in Melbourne. Houghton said her work was drawn by

73 Pers com Joan Kerr 2003 and written up in a Scoop review of Queensland University saying the Easter Bunny had taken the place of the fairy by the Australian 1960s.
seven archangels and she was only the medium, indicating the acceptable type of ‘thought forms’ and ‘spirit messages’ that continued to ‘swirl around in much late nineteenth-century western art’ (Joan Kerr, 1997: 51-53). Jenny McFarlane, in her ANU PhD, is rereading modernist art as inspired by the fairy and discusses the impact of the fairy in the culture and planning of Australia. She talks of the theosophical planning that was done in Lane Cove based on the role of the fairy, and of a jewelled cross that was buried to signify this new spirituality in the early 1930s.

One recognised proponent of the fairy in Australian planning is the architect and artist, Marion Mahony Griffin who worked in the first half of the twentieth century. She formed ‘a professional, personal, and intellectual partnership’ with Walter Burley Griffin (Willis & Hanna, 2001: 14). Their combined interest in landscape architecture and ideal of a place where ‘everyone lived at home with nature and each other’ was reflected in their commitment to ‘the Christian occult Anthroposophical Society’ and general interest in theosophy (Fondiler Berkon, 1977: 79). The Griffins’ major contributions to planning in Australia were the city of Canberra, the towns of Leeton and Griffith in New South Wales, and Castlecrag in Sydney, in which they pioneered environmental design (design based upon existing terrain rather than a superimposed grid plan). They were interested in planning ‘that would free the spirit of the beholder’ (Rubbo 1997: 123). Marion’s architectural drawings exhibited in 1914 at the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in Melbourne were highly coloured and used gold on silk rather than paper.

Peter Proudfoot suggests that the planning for Canberra was based on the crystal, water, and luminous light; that such a sacred and ancient cosmological schema was the basis for the Griffins’ drawings for Canberra (Proudfoot, 1994: 74). Certainly a notion of the spirit pervaded. Amongst ACT planners’ folklore, there persists the belief that the first suburbs of Canberra were planned to accommodate ‘the wives’, referring to the wives of the Chief Engineer and of the architect, Walter Burley Griffin (ie Marion Mahony) and their belief in fairies. For instance, the need for small areas for fairies to dance in – fairy rings - has been used to explain the many little green patches between groups of houses around Ainslie. In Marion Mahony Griffin’s unpublished diary, The Magic of America, she says that the same faculty that allows us to believe in fairies also allows for creativity and original work, reminding us of the importance of the imagination.

Again we must convince the minds of children, warped by the superficialities of our present day thinking, that they are surrounded not only by a world that they can see and hear and touch with their physical senses … but are also surrounded by another world, the world of causes just as diverse, just as rich, just as full of adventure, which they can learn to perceive and in perceiving to enter, and in entering to become a creator in this realm of criterion, the world of life.

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74 A reference to the theosophist’s faerie queen herself, Annie Besant who with Charles Leadbeater wrote Thought Forms.
75 Discussed at a number of Royal Australian Institute of Planning Association ACT meetings and pers com Alison Burton, then Acting Chief Planner 1994.
76 A photocopy of Mahoney Griffin’s diary is held in the Sydney public library near Castlecrag.
For the same faculty which enables one to see the fairies is a faculty which enables one to do original work in all human realms, and to transform our community, so rich in toys and tools, into a civilisation thereby attaining great and worthwhile ends. For this, human beings must develop their spiritual powers of perception, the basis of a new form which will enable them to know causes as precisely as at present they know effects … if they [her planner students] wanted to be among the geniuses in their work, they must be ready to develop that kind of thinking which would someday enable them to see the fairies. (Mahony Griffin, nd: 229-34)

There are certainly indications in Marion’s diary and in Proudfoot’s work that the Griffins’ design for public open space was made to be imbued with magic and spirits. Marion’s writing on the importance of the idea of fairies offers a glimpse at how mythopoetic beasts could enter western planning. At the very least, the primacy of the landscape and its more spiritual qualities in the Griffins’ planning is clear. The Griffins were: ‘at once public-spirited and ecological, spiritual and non-materialistic, and in tune with the essential rhythms of the land.’ (Rubbo, 1997: 130)

**The Rainbow Serpent**

Much of settler Australia’s knowledge of the role of mythology in traditional Aboriginal society, epitomised by the rainbow serpent, comes from anthropologists. For example, Strehlow’s classic study emphasises that: ‘Aboriginal religion was a religion for men and women living in a land which had never ceased being inhabited by supernatural beings’ (Strehlow 1971: 627). The Berndts say religious rituals pervade traditional Aboriginal life. The Dreaming (or Dreamtime) is the sacred source of all life, and the key to physical and spiritual survival. Mythic beings and spirit children act as intermediaries bringing life from out of the Dreaming (Ronald and Catherine Berndt, 1992: 302-303). So slithers the rainbow serpent, as a key mythic being across many Aboriginal cultures, into an explanation and planning of the Australian landscape.

The Butchulla people from the Fraser Island region refer to Beeral as their god and, although rarely mentioned, his sign is the rainbow. His son is Yindingie, the serpent or carpet snake. The two were often combined into the rainbow serpent, spoken of as Yindingie. Yindingie’s codes for behaviour and safety of place were still being taught from elders to young people in the 1960s. He is credited with leaving a footprint (obviously the serpent before the Christian God told him to slither on his belly) in the rocks of Bauple Mountain and one in Urangan in Hervey Bay. As the Butchulla ask: ‘Who but Yindingie could take a step like that?’ (Moonie Jarl, 1964: 18).

The Maung people from North Goulburn Island of the far north Northern Territory tell a tale reflected across tribal groups of Arnhem Land: when a noise disturbs the Rainbow Snake, Ambidj, he eats all the tribe. Heavy with people he crosses to the mainland, leaving a deep groove, that forms what is now unimaginatively called

77 The Butchulla territory includes central Fraser Island, Double Island Pont, Tin Can Bay, Bauple Mountain, and Burrum Heads. To the north lay the Wuka Wuka (or Waka Waka), to the south the Gubbi Gubbi (or Guvie Guvie). Butchulla is the spelling used by Moonie Jarl (aka Wilf Reeves and Olga Miller, 1964) in The Legends of Moonie Jarl. It is now more commonly spelt ‘Badtjala’ and geographically refers mainly to K’gari or Fraser Island.
‘Number Two Sandy Creek’. Unusually however, the rainbow snake is killed and his stomach’s contents are freed. His body now marks a large waterhole named Ingana (see Berndt, 1992: 399).

There are countless examples, popularised in the white mind by books such as Bruce Chatwin’s *Songlines*. The rainbow serpent moves across the Australian landscape, creating and mapping key formations – not only to prevent getting lost, but also to reinforce and maintain cultural knowledges. Traditionally, Aboriginal people have used their art to represent: ‘a mobile and purposeful play between statements of identity, mapping and narrative, sacred symbol and formal pattern’ (Mary Eagle 1999: 244).

**Transcribers of place: Aboriginal art and Western plans**

*Black Painting*

The white evidence collected shows that stories were traditionally remembered in Aboriginal society through songs and art. Paintings are highly stylised with many hidden and symbolic meanings. A half oval can be a person sitting down, a number of such symbols around a circle could be a meeting around a fire, or a waterhole, or indeed any meaning assigned to it by its creator and their select company. Meandering designs can represent physical tracks or creeks as well as the mythic travels of ancestral beings. Howard Morphy (1998: 129-132) gives an example where the same painting is interpreted both as a story about Dreaming ancestors creating the land, and as an everyday map to show the route of a recent trip. An explanation of such a map/painting may or may not be given to ‘outsiders’, depending upon the level of sacredness of such material: ‘Significance of designs, for whom, and prepared by whom, is vital in understanding Aboriginal art right through this Continent.’ (Berndt, 1992: 413)

One such example of the detailed differences and their importance formed a major exhibition by the National Gallery of Australia in 1997. *The Painters of the Wagilag sisters’ story 1937 – 1997* showed the range of interpretations given to the story over time and over place. In brief, the Wagilag sisters and children are eaten by Wititj, the Olive Python, vomited up and brought back to life by itchy caterpillars; the snake eats them again and then leaves impressions in the ground when he falls from the favour of the other great snakes. The exhibition brought together artists from across Arnhem Land of differing Yolngu moieties. There are a great number of similarities across the four generations and the ten or so moieties that indicate the strong influence of elder dictates in the manner of the paintings. One of the curators, Nigel Lendon, says: ‘Painting is crucially a performance of knowledge, inheritance, and the assertion of authority’ (Lendon 1997: 22). The Arnhem Land painting tradition relies upon an elder or ‘a djunggayi, who carries managerial or custodial responsibility for a person’s land and the related stories and ritual.’ The artist responsible for the ‘full account of the primary narratives to which their country refers’ (Lendon 1997: 23) gets permission from his or her djunggayi to be able to paint their interpretation of the story. Ground rules establish continuity and stability as well as the authority of their forebears - core narratives dictate the art always shows the great Snake encircling the Sisters, footprints, triangular imprints which hold the circular forms of the Snake’s heart and cloaca, lines of itchy caterpillars, and
the black circle of the waterhole. Other elements – sand, palm, clouds, stars, moon, dogs, etc – are more variable, depending upon who holds the current right to paint the full narrative. The paintings demonstrate the Yolngu explanation of variation within a stable cosmology (see Taylor's 1987 thesis, ‘The same but different’: social reproduction and innovation in the art of the Kunwinjku of Western Arnhem Land). Each painting has multiple viewpoints (eg aerial, planar, or wrapped) consistent with Yolngu epistemologies:

in which a multiplicity of ways of reading or explaining natural and social phenomena is fundamental … dependent upon who is interpreting what, and for whom, and the degree to which ‘meaning’ may or may not be enunciated. (Lendon, 1997: 32)

Aboriginal art becomes what Karel Kupka (1965: 109) refers to as ‘painted literature’. Art describes belief systems, interprets the natural and social worlds, activates sacred and secular accounts of nature and culture, confirms the structures of social life and the social status of the painter (Lendon 1997: 36). But the art is also sold as aesthetic artefacts, so that Andy Waytjuku can say:

he's bridging, building the bridges and creating this one [Wititj, the Python], that is his Mother … bridging this reconciliation. To both worlds, Aboriginal society taking it up into white society, this one, Wititj. (Waytujuku quoted in Caruana and Lendon 1997: 130)

Superficial readings of Aboriginal art involve the attribution of attitudes of map making and aerial views to the dots. Howard Morphy (1998: 103) puts it simply: ‘Aboriginal paintings are maps of the land.’ 78 But as with most practices, there are more layers of meaning on offer that are as much dependent upon the expertise and authority of the viewer as upon the artist. The secret meaning is the least accessible, the most hidden from view. And alongside this collaborative cultural construction of traditional Aboriginal art sits a capitalist world hungry for the popularity of (and only maybe for the associated education on reconciliation from) the work of celebrated individuals. 79 The already fetishized commodity of landscape is exacerbated by such imperial appreciation of Aboriginal art. Thus the anthropological interpretation, that has been generally used to understand the role of art and mythological beasts in Aboriginal society, is slowly changing. Perhaps, it is time for other professionals to interact with the original stories of Australia, and to offer their own reconciled re-interpretations. While it has become fashionable to talk about map-making and Aboriginal art, the western map-making planner has had rare opportunity to interact with such cultural offerings.

White Planning

All maps are full of conventions and distortions. Western planners also create highly stylised designs with hidden symbolic meaning as part of their urban and regional planning process. For instance, colours take on especial significance to the select group of a planning agency. In the ACT Planning Authority, at least during the early 1990s while I was there, yellow meant community services such as libraries and halls, but included emergency and religious institutions; blue was for commercial and retail enterprises. Such colours were placed carefully into

78 Morphy and others (including my own) cross-cultural analogies are perhaps too clumsy an attribution of a western objectified map upon a more embedded cultural process, but they at least start to expose Aboriginal art as more than graphically strong indigenous story pictures.
79 Which in turn distort the notion of tradition, just as Povinelli (2002) warns.
the design after much community discussion and (hopefully) overall agreement, but it remained for the Chief Planner - the djunggayi by another name - to dictate or change the details of exactly where and what each colour represented. Just as traditional Aboriginal artists hold information on their land/ culture, so too are expert planners the geographic information holders of western culture. Not only do maps tell us where to put things, they also tell us about dominant society and its aspirations.

**Possibilities for reconciliation?** 80

In some sense, traditional Aboriginal artists and contemporary Australian planners have both served the same purposes in the same manner. They are transcribers of place. They are the keepers of the maps that interpret land and land use. They are holders of arcane knowledge kept alive through a notion of expertise, community consultation, and through ceremony. Both depend upon a mythological and culturally specific significance with hidden layers of understanding that vary with the expertise of the viewer. In indigenous art, the reading of land and of story differs. In white plans, the role of the compass for instance indicates a whole history of north/ south relations where north is always on top. Both have a notion of scale: one reflects mythological proportions, the other geographic relations. While one has been labelled art, the other professes itself as a science of rationality that mostly lies outside ‘the messy complexities of reality’ 81. The traditional land knowledge of Aboriginal groups is represented through their art, as a form of mapping culture. And indigenous mapping skills have been long recognised; an 1858 report noted that Aboriginal children in Victoria’s education system ‘are very quick … in geography by mapping’ (William Thomas quoted in the Report on the Select Committee of the Legislative Council 3 Feb 1859: 39 in Mary Eagle 1999: 236). Perhaps the difference of planning labels – black art, white science - merely reflects the power of the colonised dichotomy.

But white planners impose humans on *terra nullius* (the *tabula rasa* of land); Aboriginal painters conversely impose land on humans. Aboriginal plans give animals as much importance as humans. The unifier of Aboriginal art/ plans is a discourse over land, myth and the past. The unifier of white plans/ art is land, development and the future. There are differing white and black understandings of the land and how we should relate to it. Is there a possibility for reconciliation (a moving towards each other’s cultures)? What role might Australia’s mythopoetic beast, the Bunyip, play in such an imagined reconciliation?

**The Bunyip**

The bunyip is a bird! The Australian Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*) is also known as the brown bittern, bullbird, or bunyip. It lives in swamps or lagoons in southeastern Australia from Fraser Island in Queensland to Ceduna in South Australia. Its call is unusual: ‘a note of distant foghorn with no start or finish – a deep ‘woomph’, repeated

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80 A notion of reconciliation is contrasted to the idea of assimilation in which white Australia tried to ‘civilise’ black Australia – ie make Aborigines just like white people. Rather reconciliation is about recognising both sets of doing as valuable and capable of contributing to dominant norms.

81 There are many planning texts that demonstrate planners’ predilection for simple rationality. See for example, Baum 1996; Forester 1989; or Sandercock 1998.
up to 30 times, heard from afar; thought to have inspired aboriginal 'bunyip' legends.' (Pizzey 1980: 61). More commonly, of course, the bunyip is Australia’s yeti monster. It is wild nature, living in swamps. It exists in tales to scare children or to explain the terrible. It continues across many Aboriginal legends and has been adopted by white Australia as a common, if childish, monster. It could become a symbol for a more universal Australian monster, as it reconciles not only black and white stories of the bush, but also white Europeans to the wilder nature of Australia.

In Fraser Island, the Bunyip is called the Melong by the Butchulla people. Moonie Jarl (Wilf Reeves) from Fraser Island introduces their legends:

> The Melong of our stories, for instance, would be the witch in fairy stories ... The super-human animal, which in my father’s stores was called Melong, might well be what some people refer to as the “Bunyip” ... you know there is a bad swamp there; a Melong lives there! (Moonie Jarl, 1964: 3-4)

While the Melong is scary, he also plays heroic parts in other Butchulla legends. He is ‘the spirit of darkness and punisher of all wrong-doers’ (Moonie Jarl 1964: 36). He returns stolen goods through the use of magic fire and creates the platypus by sitting on a water rat that had been stealing the duck’s eggs (Moonie Jarl 1964: 35).

Wandi’s (Olga Miller) accompanying illustrations, like most traditional work, tell the story and map the land in the same picture. They are based on symbols and designs that hold special meaning to the Butchulla people. Such designs were sometimes woven or stained from local rushes and berries or drawn with the coloured sands of Fraser Island in yellow, red, black, bluey-grey and orange. On the mainland, Mount Bauple defined the Badjala (Butchulla)-Dowarbara border and was a critical site, steeped in legends and taboos. John Steele in his work on *Aboriginal Pathways* refers to a number of legends that say the mountain was inhabited by a melong, an ‘old blackfellow’, and a burain or madman – possibly an amalgam of all three. In any case it made the mountain a place to be very careful – requiring permission to use resources - if not to avoid entirely as a site where storms and madman bites were all too common (Steele, 1983: 227-229).

As discussed on page 84-85, Moonie Jarl (‘Teller of Tales’ - Wilf Reeves) and Wandi (‘the Wild Duck’ - Olga Miller) were brother and sister living in Maryborough. Theirs is an interesting cross-cultural history. Their father, ‘a head-man of the Butchulla’, along with ‘other leaders of the Butchulla people’, taught his children their legends and the art of illustrating them. Their mother, a daughter and sister of Anglican missionaries, taught them how to strategically express this land lore through more concrete western text and illustration. For more details, see Halse (2002) and Moonie Jarl’s (1964) introduction.

Olga Miller reworked these tales as *Fraser Island legends retold* (1993). She expands the stories of the Mellong (adding the extra ‘l’), described as ‘a powerful spirit – the Punisher-of-Wrong-Doers’ (17). The Mellong squashes a lizard as well as the rat, and sends storms and floods to kill wrong-doers. In one Ark-like story, the good families are told to go to Mt Bauple, and are saved from the flood, but have no fire; they send off birds to fetch an ember; the smallest bird returns with a fiery ember on its back and becomes known as the firebird (‘The Firebird’, 44-50). The Mellong/ bunyip also rewards good deeds (34). Olga Miller’s stories clearly show how both animal and human are treated equally in Butchulla legends.

83 The amalgam of mythic beast, indigenous man, and madman reinforces the subaltern contention of my thesis - that human/animal/spirit coalitions require the wild, an element of madness, in order to take concrete form.

84 And nicely enough, Mt Bauple, now a national park, is still off bounds for the general population, requiring special Queensland NP&WS permission to enter. (The NP&WS story relies on a different discourse though; it is justified through the equally important story of needing to maintain the purity of the original strain of the bauple nut (or macadamia) trees in the Park.)
There are many such bunyip-like figures in Australian legends. Not all can be attributed to the brown bittern, as many ‘bunyips’ are found outside of southeastern Australia. The Yawuru people from the Broome area of Western Australia talk of the Wadaba or Gumbun, a yeti like creature who lives in the mangroves and is to be avoided.\textsuperscript{85} The Yalanji people of Cape York in northern Queensland fear Turramulli, the Giant who towers above the trees, eating any large animal, including people. His ‘Wonk, Wonk’ is heard in swamps and ‘sounds like distant thunder’. (Perhaps the range of the bittern was once much greater, although the Jalanji say the sound is imitated still in swamps by large green bullfrogs, as a warning. See Trezise & Roughsey, 1982). Herb Wharton, a Cunamulla elder talks of the Munta-gutta, a serpent-like creature that can sweep young children into the river with its water spout (Wharton 2001: 40-46). The Munta-gutta acts as both a warning and law keeper. In answer to my Munta-gutta question, Herb confirmed the Butchulla’s Melong as the ‘same story’, and told me:

Nowadays they have fences around pools to keep the children out, it serves the same purpose really. But of course it has a much deeper meaning as well, about the law and its holders … law keeping was its important other role. (Wharton, October 2003 at the Nature Writer’s Muster in Kendall, NSW)

Thus the bunyip, in one form or another, has a respectable indigenous history across Australia. But it is unusual in that it has crossed the gaps between both black and white cultures and between art and science. ‘Bunyip’ has become the anglicised generic for such creatures; according to the National Museum of Australia (2002: 6) the term original came from the Aboriginal Wergaia language of Western Victoria and was first recorded in 1845.\textsuperscript{86} The bunyip was first sketched by whites in the mid-nineteenth century and looked a little like a nine metre long, two-legged emu/goanna cross. It was referred to as the Challicum bunyip after the property near Fiery Creek near Ararat where an outline of the bunyip had been maintained by the Djapwurrung people (National Library of Australia, 2003).

The bunyip was initially treated by whites as a serious subject for scientific investigation and vestiges of such status still remain. The explorer, Hamilton Hume, recorded the discovery of an unidentified creature’s large bones near Lake Bathurst, NSW in 1818.\textsuperscript{87} An escaped convict, who lived with Victorian based Aborigines between 1803 and 1835, recorded bunyip sightings (about the size of a full grown calf with dusky-grey feathers), saying the natives considered the animal something supernatural (in The Journal of William Buckley, released by Tim Flannery, 2002). An unusual skull was found on the Murrumbidgee River in New South Wales in 1846 and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[85] Wadaba ingan jimbin gundurungun jabijina. Ngangarajun walangarijanu magurr. Jirril ngamidibi wananya jayu. Roughly translated as ‘look out, it’s Gumbun, the mangrove man, run as fast as you can’. Information was adapted by Pat Torres (Jalygurr; 1987) from Kimberley Aboriginal folk stories based on storytelling from nine traditional elders.
\item[86] Although the Oxford English Dictionary says 1848 as first use of bunyip, giving a secondary meaning of ‘an impostor’. My research suggests even earlier uses of the term, although the language origin remains unclear.
\item[87] Bill Beatty says the word bunyip first appeared in the official reference to this Bathurst creature; in the minutes of the Geographical Society of Australia on the 19th December, 1821:

The suggestion was recorded, following the report by the explorer Hamilton Hume of the existence of a strange animal in Lake Bathurst, supposedly a manatee, hippopotamus, or bunyip, that Hume be reimbursed for expenditure incurred in any further attempt to obtain hide, teeth or other tangible evidence of the existence of this creature. (Beatty, 1960: 44)
\end{footnotes}
put on exhibition in the Australian Museum, Sydney as a ‘bunyip skull’ (although, possibly this was an early
exercise in museum marketing). As one of many typical examples, the Melbourne Morning Herald of 29th
October 1849 reported:

The Veritable Bunyip has been seen at last! We are informed by Mr Edwards, the managing clerk at the
office of Messrs Moor and Chambers, that during his late trip, and making the circuit of Phillip Island, he
and his party were astonished at observing an animal sitting upon a bank in the lake.
The animal is described as being from six to seven feet long and, in general appearance, half man and
half baboon.
Five shots were fired, and the last discharge was replied to by a spring into the air, and a contemptuous
fling out of the hind legs, and a final disappearance in the placid waters of the lake. A somewhat long
neck, feathered like an emu, was the peculiar characteristic of the animal.

Perhaps evidence for the bunyip’s existence has been located through Kakadu rock art near Wongewongen,
Northern Territory. A 235 centimetre painting of a large tapir-like animal with long hair and accompanying pouch
with baby was found, thought by palaeontologists to represent a Palorchestes prehistoric animal that became
extinct 18,000 years ago. The Kapirigi, traditional owners of the Gagudji Association Kakadu, describe it more
simply as ‘an animal out of the dreaming’ (quoted in George Chaloupka 1993: 100). Other Gondwanaland
megafauna might audition for the bunyip: such as Muttaburrasaurus (swamp dwelling, deep bellows); the
Plesiosaur, Woolungasaurus (amphibious, sharp teeth, long neck to take prey quickly from the edge of water,
named after an Aboriginal mythic beast, Woolunga, that swallowed stones to weigh itself down in the sea), or
Rapator (roaring and carnivorous – for more details, see Film Australia’s documentary Muttaburrasaurus
or Norman Yeend’s book version, 1995). But, the Palorchestes seems to me a ripe candidate for the origins of the
bunyip.

The bunyip quickly moved from science to the stuff of literature. As the National Museum (2002: 6) says: ‘This
people-eating monster of Aboriginal legend has been keenly adopted by non-Aboriginal artists and writers.’
The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature (Wilde et al 1985: 126) lists several such authors: E Lloyd, A Visit
to the Antipodes (1846); William Westgarth, Australia Felix (1848); G C Mundy, Our Antipodes (1852); Joseph
Furphy, Such is Life; and Steele Rudd, On Our Selection. The bunyip also appears as the main character, rather
than a passing reference in many later books: J A Barry’s Steve Brown’s Bunyip (1893), Charles Fenner’s
Bunyips and Billabongs (1933); Charles Barrett’s The Bunyip and other Mythological Monsters and Legends
(1946); as well as having its own Australian pantomime ‘The Bunyip’ first staged in Sydney by Ella Airlie in 1916.

When WC Wentworth suggested the establishment of a colonial peerage in 1853, the concept was quickly
ridiculed as a ‘Bunyip Aristocracy’, a term coined by Daniel Deniehy (in Pearl, 1972). Bunyip Bluegum is the
name of a koala character in Norman Linsey’s Magic Pudding, and a short story The Bunyip of Barney’s Elbow

88 The National Museum goes on to explain:
Descriptions of it vary greatly: some give it a frightful human head and an animal body; some emphasise its
threat to humans and its loud booming at night. It is said to inhabit inland rivers, swamps and billabongs.
was published in the *Bulletin* in 1946 and reprinted in story collections of 1956 and 1965. And the bunyip persists: Bill Beatty (1960) tells multiple tales over the century of terrifying wailing at the Wilga Waterhole in central-western Queensland, attributed to the bunyip (1960: 77-80).

Just as fairies and witches became the stuff of European children’s tales, so too has the bunyip. Ethel Pedley’s classic 1899 children’s tale, *Dot and the Kangaroo*, has a terrifying sound of the bunyip bellowing in gully darkness. In the early 1900s, the bunyip was illustrated by both May Gibbs and Ida Rentoul Outhwaite. The bunyip is still immortalised in poetry and song: in the 1980s the Australian Broadcasting Corporation produced songs and dance tunes by Michael Atherton, that included a children’s song with the chorus: ‘It’s a bunyip, a bunyip with a bite, so don’t go on walks while it stalks, through the bush at night… it’s got a big appetite’. The bunyip is also found in contemporary children’s literature: *The Monster that ate Canberra* or *The Bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek* to name just a couple. In the latter written by Jenny Wagner and illustrated by Ron Brooks, the Bunyip wondering about his appearance, meets a scientist.

The man was busy with a notebook and pencil, and did not look at the bunyip. “Sh,” he said, “I’m busy.” The bunyip waited for a long time, and then he said, very slowly and clearly, “Can you please tell me what bunyips look like?” “Yes,” said the man, without looking up. “Bunyips don’t look like anything.” “Like nothing?” said the bunyip. “Like nothing at all,” said the man. “Are you sure?” said the bunyip. “Quite sure,” said the man, and looked right through him. “Bunyips simply don’t exist.” (Wagner, 1973)

This is an attitude that encapsulates the problem of contemporary science and technology when it tries to talk to Aboriginal mythology, even one as cross-culturally compromised as the Bunyip. But if we continue to ignore this land’s mythology, if we don’t plan for such wild nature, we are in danger of being consumed by it. In *The Monster that ate Canberra* (Michael Salmon, c1972), a short-sighted Bunyip leaves his billabong because it had become the dumping ground for rubbish from the smoggy city. He chomps his way through the great public buildings of Canberra’s modernism, eating the Academy of Science as pie, the National Library as iced birthday cake, and the stale Parliament House to, unsuccessfully, overcome his indigestion. The official response to the bunyip is to administratively pass the buck and put him on trial. Along with other Australian animals, he had never bothered to learn English, so does not defend himself, and is placed in a zoo. The metaphor hardly needs explanation, demonstrating perhaps the original inhabitants’ attitudes to western knowledge and power (although don’t forget that the Bunyip is short sighted and motivated by pollution and hunger) as well as the western officialdom’s response to the ‘problem of the Aborigine’.  

89 In which ‘spine-chilling cries’ are heard near Mudgee, but ultimately ‘the Yahoo was never heard again … gone to join the bunyip and other impossible terrors’.  
90 The Bunyip is also described in this *Radam Scadam* tape as having ‘the head of a seal, and the tail of an eel’. This is similar to the description given in 1873 from Dalby, Queensland: ‘It has a head like a seal, and a tail consisting of two fins, a larger and a smaller one.’ (in Bill Beatty, 1960: 44)  
91 There are many other children’s books about the bunyip. In *The Midnight Monster* a little girl running for the midwife at night is scared up a tree by a ‘Wow-ee Wow-ee’ or bunyip in a Hunter Valley historical fiction by Edel Wignell (1998). In Irena Sibley’s *The Bilby and the Bunyip* (1998), a grumpy bunyip relents to help paint and deliver Easter eggs in her pouch for the overworked bilbies. In *The Bunyip on Little Mountain* by Gus O’Donell (1979), a little boy brings tourism to his rural landscape when he tells of the bunyip on a nearby hill; but bunyips have a very strict rule ‘Bunyips
So how does the bunyip fare as a forerunner in the icon’s race for reconciliation? There are a number of problems. The deeper layers of the bunyip’s indigenous meanings are only briefly glimpsed in tales such as the Butchulla’s, and in any case, should perhaps not be widely accessed. And it can be argued that the white bunyip’s gradual deterioration from an object of science to the stuff of children’s tales has lessened its status as potential icon. Yet in a brave new world, where the education of children is the most important cultural task and science has been dissected as a puppet of colonialism, this would not be viewed as deterioration but as cause for celebration. More critically, there are few other mythological beasts that have been adopted by both indigenous and settler cultures, or that epitomise such a unique Australianness. The bunyip wins the race as the only contestant.

As if … (a conclusion)

Perhaps this section all too truly reflects Gary Hall’s critique of cultural studies as being ‘at the crossroads of magic and positivism’ (2002: 35). Perhaps too it unconsciously emerges from the cultural soup at the same time as Allen Carlson (2000: 216-237) describes relations between American Indian and white landscape fictions, mythological descriptions and cultural embeddedness, in his book on aesthetics and the environment. This conclusion attempts an instrumental reversal of the more usual academic and intellectual thought that focuses upon the idea and its justification through evidence. An instrumental approach says it doesn’t matter if it is true (or even if the explanation is sufficient), it is about the consequences of the idea – if the consequences are good, then the idea should be adopted. Just as Douglas Adams argues for an artificial god, I would argue (at least) for an artificial bunyip. Whether we give credence to bunyips’ existence or their iconic status is immaterial. An Australia that planned as if bunyips mattered would indicate much about the positive development of Australia’s culture.

If we are to take the idea of reconciliation seriously, then white Australia needs to move towards a more indigenous understanding of land just as much as black Australia needs to proffer, or at least model, such cultural knowledge. Reconciliation implies that white planning needs to develop from the Christian, scientific notions of tabula rasa to adopt a more multi-perspective, multi-layered approach. In traditional indigenous planning:

\[
\text{country was an idea interchangeable with ancestry; there was no divide between representations of land and of people, hence no ‘landscape’ in the western sense of an abstract scene waiting to be filled (Mary Eagle, 1999: 236).}
\]

Is a merging of these two styles possible and can it lead to reconciliation? Or do we simply stay within the power plays of those who believe in records (whether white or black)? Is there a part the land plays in being labelled and interpreted that leads to a similar technique of description? Does the land remember the foot of the

must never, never allow themselves to be seen’. Sally Odgers (1996) writes of an unusually child friendly bunyip: a young bunyip learns that \textit{Bunyips Don’t!} lie in the sun, have friends, sing, dance, or have fun, only to break all those rules at a kid’s party - Kim Gamble illustrates with a cheery Tasmanian tiger-esque bunyip. Patricia Wrightson has also written a number of award-winning books in the 1970s that are based on bunyip mythologies, discussed later on pages 131-132.
conquistador? If it remembers the foot of the rainbow serpent, then do we unearth a pre-Christian garden of Eden?

Just as the wider issue of habitat preservation in environment circles has relied upon the promotional positives of native animals (koalas and bilbies being prime examples), so too could the development of good planning rely upon the better qualities of our own mythopoetic beast – that the bunyip is widely understood and commonly appreciated, even if not real, cute or furry. We don’t have to believe in bunyips, just in what their created existence could imply for changes in practice. If our plans were made as if bunyips mattered, we could ironically perhaps inhabit a more human and cultured place that acknowledges the creatures of our collective thoughts. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said in 1832 (quoted in Porte, 1982: 81): ‘Dreams and beasts are two keys by which we are to find out the secrets of our nature … they are our test objects.’ While Marion Mahony refers to her time’s culturally structured fairy notion of the numinous, the same might apply now to the bunyip. To adapt her words, ‘if planners want to be among the geniuses in their work, they must be ready to develop that kind of thinking which would someday enable them to see bunyips’.

Determining the description of our own planning beast could become and direct the process of reconciliation and cultural identity formation. Determining the preferred habitat for such a creature would determine the philosophical value we place on differing elements of the environment, whilst removing the NIMBY element of such debates. If the contemporary seriousness of such debates could be mitigated by the sense of play and creative influence indicated by the idea of bunyips, then perhaps we would all be more involved in the shaping of our culture and our habitations.

So can we civilise (in Marion Mahoney’s use of this word) western planning with mythopoetic beasts? Can we subvert ‘capital P’ Planning with the subaltern? The process of reading the influence of mythic beasts into the landscape is perhaps most commonly understood in the adoption of feng shui in western subaltern planning for (mostly individual) human habitations. In Australia, if the beast of choice is the rainbow serpent, we ignore white culture; if a Celtic fairy, we ignore Aboriginal culture. This section, along with the National Library of Australia, suggests the indigenous bunyip has been widely adopted by white Australia and is the best symbol of reconciliation.

Perhaps, western culture is starting to plan for the bunyip – ‘swamps’ (the presumed and preferred habitat of bunyips) have become ‘wetlands’, indicating their valued change. But white Australians don’t have places we avoid, places we leave for a wilder and more dangerous nature. We have no dangerous hill tops (no western equivalents of the monster myth-filled places such as Mount Bauple, Mount Beerwah or Mount Katahdin). We still think we can colonise everywhere and everything – even unbuildable places become wildernesses to trek or mountains to conquer. There is no imagined unvisited place that lies in our language of mythology. Despite Ross
Gibson’s 2002 book on the same, we have no recognised ‘badlands’. As Chris Wallace-Crabbe asked almost twenty years ago:

Could any Australian lay hold of an uninhabited stretch of landscape in this way, getting a grip on its phenomena and their meanings together? … It may be that we await an Aboriginal landscape perceiver of genius to depict and persuade. (Wallace-Crabbe in John Carroll, 1984: 180)

Rather than leaving enough space for the bunyip, we are rapidly filling up the small spaces left by the fairy and bulldozing the hills of dragons. The rainbow serpent is being pushed out of the landscape and into the safer pages of books about the Dreamtime, a time now removed (instead of co-existing). If we don’t start taking the idea of the bunyip seriously, we expunge our last chance for intrusions of the non-scientific into our cultured constructions. Without the bunyip, our world is a poorer place. An Australia that planned as if bunyips mattered would be a reconciled Australia with a deeper understanding of land encapsulated in a cross-cultural approach that (conf)used both art and planning. So, if you believe in the idea of bunyips, clap your hands.
Conversations with the Bunyip

The bunyip raises its sleepy head from the edge of the water behind my writing shed. 'I thought you didn't exist anymore', I interpret her burbles. I've been busy, I apologise. She looks hungrily at me. I try to move more slowly, talk more gently: I know, I forgot to stand and stare, but I'm back now to gaze at the mountain. Maybe if I just sit and meditate a little, she'll see me a little more clearly? I try to become part of her landscape rather than fast-moving prey. I hope her hunger pangs diminish.

Luckily the bunyip, and by extension the land, moves slowly. Bunyips, like my best thoughts, lie at the edge, the inbetween, the interstices, the boundaries between life and imagination, between day and night. She's a creature slow to anger, but when riled, she shows her wildness and her teeth. She has a sleek almost seal like head, especially when wet. Some protestant part of me wishes I could tame her, make her somehow more useful to the cause, but mostly I revel in her sullied resistance to be identified, labelled and defined. She is not, afterall, a creature of science, but a far more threatening land mythology that I have to deal with. She lives unpredictably in a world of uncertainty and without logic. I try to learn her lessons, but it is rare that I feel I understand them. She is a trickster with an inconsistent message of animal justice that makes me uncomfortable. Mostly I avoid her, pretending she doesn't exist. But she unexpectedly continues to emerge out of this land's daydreams. I am swamped by her awe-fullness. Consequently, I both fear and praise her.

The bunyip has what sometimes appears to be an arrogance, but I think this is just the vantage of a longer term view, a total immersion with locale, and a non-human conception, that is beyond me. By its very nature, the bunyip is hard to understand. She speaks in riddles - metaphors that cannot be easily reduced to dualistic human notions. She speaks a new and revolutionary

92 Barry Lopez says about wild animals:
To insist on a conversation with the unknown is to demonstrate impatience; and it is to imply that any such encounter must include your being heard ... The eloquence of animals is in their behaviour, not in their speech. (Lopez, 2003: 162)
I'm not sure that I expect the bunyip to hear me, but I am certainly impatient in my desire to somehow translate her ontology. Luckily, Lopez (2003: 165) goes on to say:
To “hear” wild animals is not to leave the realm of the human; it’s to expand this realm to include voices other than our own. It’s a technique for the accomplishment of wisdom. To attend to the language of animals means to give yourself over to a more complicated, less analytical awareness of a place. It’s to realize that some of the so-called equations of life are not meant to be solved; that it takes as much intelligence not to solve them as it does to find the putative answers.
While I might extrapolate to mythopoetic animals, it is a relief to know that this might accomplish wisdom, not madness!
language that is threatening and therefore mostly incomprehensible. And I try to create a human-comprehensible pattern through many re-descriptions - not by analysing piece by piece, scientifically testing concept after concept, but by writing in holistic, and maybe even pragmatic, metaphors.

More poetically, perhaps a little closer to the earth, is the indigenous notion of ‘trustori’. According to Roe and Muecke, trustori (true stories are mythologies/legends) and devil stories (spirit/devil explanatory stories) are spoken narratives, whereas bugaregara (‘the law’ from the dreaming) are more likely to be songs, ceremonies, and rituals. And the bunyip seems to me to be a trustori (with a bit of devil story thrown in) - more sophisticated than even our most sophisticated of philosophers. As humans we stumble towards an understanding, we slouch towards Bethlehem. And perhaps the problem lies in our persistence in framing even new thoughts in odd conventional languages - the languages of the rational, the academic, and even - God should forbid - the bureaucratic. It is the languages of the edges, such as the trustori, that may best interpret the metaphors of the bunyip.

I am not of the edge. My thoughts are too guilty of the sins as colonialism and omission. But the bunyip has thrown me off-centre. I am losing the view from the centre. I am no longer (if I ever was) central enough material. Looking through the bunyip eyes, I am relieved to see that I am not successful enough, not human enough, not male enough, not old enough, not able enough, not rationalistic enough, to inhabit the centre. I am, what Melissa Lucashenko claims herself to be, ‘Not quite white in the head.’ I have listened to the bunyip, and I fear I can never go back. Perhaps I am, indeed, already eaten?

So I humbly hope that I catch glimpses of bunyip metaphors. Mostly she talks from an edge place - swampy and ill-defined. It is a difficult and uncomfortable place to stay for long. I sink in the mud and the mosquitoes swarm; I am neither swimming nor walking. But the bunyip’s view is biased towards these edge places. Those she admires most (or at least those she has the closest relations with) are those who inhabit such edge places, those who stay at edges for longer terms. So her telling is biased away from the centre of human endeavour - she even rejects the unbeaten path and the road less travelled (there is no road map to her swamp). She is a creature of untameable nature. She offers no route of any likely comprehension to human senses.
Bunyip illuminations are limited to very rough human understandings – bad translations, developed incrementally over time. I try to overlay an artificial map, a poor likeness, onto her wild imaginings. When I make wildly (tamely?) wrong interpretations, overuse her resources, or refuse the slow absorption lessons of the land, she threatens to eat me, again. I remain scared of her fierceness, her burbling language, her labelling of human insanity. I am in awe because I have seen what she can do. I am not sure that I should even be near her or try to understand her, let alone attempt the impossibly futile task of putting her bunyip concepts into any human frameworks. They are convoluted thought processes. And my translation is so full of human failings and short term references - I hope that I haphazardly reflect the language of the bunyip. I try to site the bunyip’s dreamtime complexities into the limited language of our day. But in doing so, I fear I fail her. Perhaps others have dreamt her metaphors more naturally?

Diary Entries (July 2003 & March 2004)
Remembering the wild, imagining the bunyip in the urban

The bunyip dwells in places human rarely visit, let alone inhabit. Perhaps, the bunyip myth is maintained by the myth of wilderness, as Messner, in his quest for the yeti argues:

> Without wilderness there is no yeti. Thus, the survival of the yeti myth is dependent on the survival of the last wildernesses – areas so undeveloped that even the local population cannot conclusively confirm or refute the equation of the brown bear with the yeti. There is much more behind our thirst for monsters than curiosity or escapism. There is the fear that the earth is losing the last regions where myths can flourish. (Messner, 2001: 164)

But Messner also quotes Milarepa, an eleventh century Sherpa poet, who says:

> What appears as a monster
> What is called a monster
> What is recognized as a monster
> Exists within a human being himself
> And disappears with him

Hence, we might also remember the spirit of the bunyip (or the yeti or other monsters) in our most populous places. Cities are reminded of the power of the wild through fires, floods, storms and other natural disasters. Perhaps a more creative and less destructive everyday reminder lies in the power of community imagination. Leonie Sandercock suggests, ‘The task of a new planning imagination is to search for the city’s songlines, for all that is life sustaining’ (Sandercock, 2003: 228). Perhaps we might best meet this task through the accessibility of animals, as symbolic Other. Cities might imagine and celebrate monsters, and in the process acknowledge the wild amidst the urban. The wild of the city lies in its imagination and creativity, hence the importance of the creative city movement for remembering a more active and animal nature in the midst of human culture.

A more active nature is inhabited fully. The human/ nature distinction becomes confused. Nature might be constructed as less wild and more cultural, whilst humanity might be constructed as less cultivated and more wild. The natural landscape is full of culture; landscape is a layering of human cultural perceptions. Instead of a ‘natural’ swamp, we might see its mythic attributes; the bunyip of the swamp for example teaches us about resource use and the lore of relationships. In imagining the bunyip, the swamp becomes a cultural institution. The bunyip shows how culture underlies and informs nature. ‘As if Bunyips mattered…’ shows how the Australian country is full of the cultural.

Conversely, the city, the highpoint of human culture, could be re-imagined as full of the wildness of nature. We might consider spaces amidst the city’s density for the non-human. We might for example create and celebrate habitats for animals, both real and mythic, in the midst of the urban. The next section shows how the creative city could acknowledge wildness. It discusses the importance of animals, mythic and otherwise, in a community’s remembering of the wild. It shows how the wild beneath is already glimpsed in city practices and how these might be built upon and reinforced to acknowledge the wilder and more creative spirit of place. The next section on the creative city shows that planners might be led to believe in bunyips through a greater emphasis on
imagined and planned animal habitats, even in the midst of the city. Through the planner-led, community
establishment of such small, green, and mythic places, a city might become consequently grounded in its own
particularities and creative histories of place. A reminder of the slower non-human caring for place might remind
busy human perspectives of the long-term and the land.

The idea of the wild, the metaphor of the bunyip, can inform the city and be applied across the world. This next
section also offers other cultural equivalents of the bunyip, beginning to specify the importance of regional
definitions in each particular community’s mythic metaphor for place. It generalises the bunyip, acknowledging
the regional bunyip equivalent of every place and suggesting possible global presences. While this thesis
focuses on the Australian site, it does not play the Immigration Minister to international visitors, especially when
they offer mischief of their own kind, and reinforce an imagining of a more active land. Pan can be glimpsed in
the sculptured gardens of Italy and the coyote roams the edges of American suburbia. The Chinese Form School
of Feng Shui shows how animal forms in the landscape shape human dwellings and lifestyles; feng shui’s most
important mythopoetic beast - the dragon – has found its unofficial way into subaltern Australian landscapes and
individual homes. The bunyip is but one of a protean company that can represent and relocate non-human space
in the midst of human dwelling.
Pan place, Coyote space, and Bunyip country: planning for wilderness and ecological imagination in the creative city

A creative city needs to make planning decisions based on diverse cultural and emotional understandings of land. Urban four wheel drives demonstrate an unmet need for imagined risk and creative wilderness in our cities. The planner's challenge is to overcome the inability (or unwillingness) to imagine an Other and non-economic landscape. Urban cultural constructions of place have always been underlined with wilder and older creations. How might mythopoetic notions drawn from the subaltern and the local subvert western planning paradigms of economic development? The acknowledgement of animalistic metaphors reminds us of our wilder nature, one less subject to concrete order—a wilder nature that also develops the creative class. Creativity attracts the creative; keeping the creative requires access to an active and layered cross-cultural landscape, a locale of both natural beauty and authentic heritage. Planners can help create such an active landscape in cities through the provision of spaces for the non-human, based upon community facilitation of long-term traditions and celebrations of the local environment. The expert, objectifying, and select processes of history, map making and planning have reflected more distant and passive attitudes to land. It is through memory, myth, ritual, festival, and community art that the metaphors of a more active landscape might emerge.

Creativity relies on different ways of thinking and doing, as well as drawing upon an eclectic and culturally diverse range of resources. A May 2002 article by Richard Florida in the Washington Monthly discusses the rise of the creative class, explaining why cities without gays and rock bands (for example) are losing the economic race. Florida, author of The Rise of the Creative Class (2002b), says that despite a desire to attract innovation and high tech growth, towns remain trapped in the past.

While it certainly remains important to have a solid business climate, having an effective people climate is even more essential. By this I mean a general strategy aimed at attracting and retaining people—especially, but not limited to, creative people. This entails remaining open to diversity and actively working to cultivate it, and investing in the lifestyle amenities that people really want and use often [urban parks, bike lanes, off-road trails, authentic heritage buildings], as opposed to using financial incentives to attract companies, build professional sports stadiums, or develop retail complexes. (Florida, 2002a: 11)

This section argues if city planners want to build creativity into cities, then they need to be thinking in environmental and culturally diverse terms, actively working to cultivate multiplicity and amenity. And to be successful, they need to take a much greater step, far beyond the diversity suggested by Florida. To plan for a creative city requires a creative planner and planning that flows from a creative and imaginative process. A key indicator that might suggest such creative planning is taking place, lies in planning for the additional diversity of the non-human and the mythic in our city spaces. Animals in particular provide both an easy entrée into the

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93 A version of this section was presented to ISOCARP's (International Society of City and Regional Planners) International Congress on the Creative City in Bilbao, Spain in October 2005; published in their Congress Annual Proceedings (Kerr, 2005b) and at <http://www.isocarp.org/projects/case_studies/congress_platform>
natural world and a reconnection with more traditional approaches to understanding the world and our place in it. This section shows how animals, both mythic and biological, reflect the wild and the need for the wild in our cities, and suggests how we might plan for and celebrate these non-human influences in developing a more creative and multicultural spirit of place. It is the mythic that offers a creative cadence to our built spaces by referencing both the imagined life and traditional memory.

What lies beneath? The trolls of subaltern theory

The use of myths and archetypes has often been proffered as social therapy by psychoanalysts (from Jung to Thomas Moore or Arthur Mindel). I offer one now as a metaphor for subaltern theory. We build bridges to avoid contested and difficult terrain, but the terrain remains beneath. And under each bridge, waiting for our crossing, lie the trolls that inhabit these muddier terrains. Even when we cross unscathed, we know (at least subconsciously) that the trolls are there. Every now and again the trolls leap up to our bridges of easy clarity to demand a toll of recognition. The muddiness of reality, the ground we ultimately stand upon (courtesy of the now seemingly more flimsy structures of our bridges), has emerged in the embodiment of the troll to remind us of our subaltern links. The subaltern underlies our dominant colonising structures, and it is from such ground that our edifices develop strength. If we refuse to acknowledge the troll’s voice, not only will our bridges be destroyed, but we will be eaten. By paying the toll, we acknowledge more indigenous and traditional underlying influences while keeping to the cultural self-comfort of our known bridge. Only a very few get down in the mud to celebrate another kind of crossing! This section pays the toll, I hope, even if it ignores the wilder lure of the mud.

What lies beneath? A table’s shape is defined by its edges; its top the most visible and usable of surfaces. But the underneath is the hidden edge that lies in darkness – the more interesting place of unknowing. It is from this dark side that archetypes lie in wait to trip up our sophisticated and rational cultural constructions. The table-top of city planning is only possible because of what lies beneath. The trend to celebrate the more creative has encouraged the troll to emerge from its darkness. By making room in our cities for these darker mythopoetic beasts or cultural archetypes, by giving them a place at the table, we change not only culture/nature relationships, but also the relationships between developing and developed countries or indigenous and settler cultures. By celebrating the existence of human/animal coalitions in the construction of city landscapes, we are also acknowledging a wilder and more diverse place. This is the basis for a more creative city.

Donna Haraway in The promises of monsters: a regenerative politics for inappropriate/d others argues ‘we must find another relationship to nature besides reification and possession’ (1992: 296) and that we can do so when we turn to inspired localised gods; that ‘nature is the place to rebuild public culture’. Haraway argues we should refute rationalism and redefine ‘us’ to include: ‘the human-discourse partners of animal, inorganic and

94 An argument taken up by Freya Mathews in her 2005 book Reinhabiting Reality that emphasises the importance of the mythopoetic as a way to restore culture with nature.
non-technological actors ... nature is made, but not entirely by humans ... [into] the narrative of collective life’ (297). While artists and storytellers might interpret such narratives, it is the administrative responsibility of planners to determine the concrete realities of collective life. The acknowledgement of a more active nature through imagining the animal and monster voices that lie beneath might help in redefining the west’s imperatives from economy to creativity.

**Animals, animals everywhere**

We need another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals. They are not underlings, they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth (Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*, 1928).

Donna Haraway suggests the promises of monsters lie in their ability to remind humans of their natural connections. She includes ‘the coyote and protean embodiments of a world as witty agent and actor’ (1992: 298). She gives an example of a peace protest in Nevada in which demonstrators crawled through a dragon beast as a surrogate birthing to stand on illegal land ‘as an act of solidarity with the tunnelling creatures of the desert, who had to share their subsurface niches with the test site’s chambers.’ (319). For Haraway, it is the alliance of human and non-human actors that will change the maps of the world, and it is animals who act as the change agents.

Animals are fairly obvious actors, and their interfaces with people and machines are easier to admit and theorise … animals lose their object status that has reduced them to things in so much western philosophy and practice. They inhabit neither nature (as object) nor culture (as surrogate human), but instead inhabit a place called elsewhere … [their] otherworldliness must not be disenchanted and cut to our size but respected for what it is (Haraway, 1992: 332)

Animals can act as a surrogate nature, representing the non-human interests of community, that too often lie forgotten beneath our bridges of planning. Barry Lopez’s (2003) definition of community is that it must include its original indigenous groups and acknowledge the presence of wild animals. It is animals, he argues, that most easily allow the creative power of imagination to be lit.

And what draws me ahead is the possibility of revelation from other indigene – the testimonies of wild animals …The idea that animals can convey meaning, and thereby offer an attentive human being illumination, is a commonly held belief the world over. The view is dispa­­raged and disputed only by modern cultures with an allegiance to science as the sole arbiter of truth. The price of this conceit, to my way of thinking, is enormous …

The fundamental reinforcement of a belief in the spiritual nature of animal’s lives (ie in the spiritual nature of the landscape itself) comes from a numinous encounter with a wild creature. For many indigenous people (again, in my experience) such events make one feel more secure in the ‘real’ world because their unfolding takes the event beyond the more readily apparent boundaries of existence. In a numinous encounter one’s suspicion, profound, persistent, and ineluctable, that there is more to the world than appearances is confirmed. (Lopez, 2003: 160 and 164)

According to Lopez, it is animals that increase our collective wondrous awareness of the world, and it is indigenous people the world over who have been ‘more at ease talking about animals as exemplars of abstract ideals, as oracles and companions, and as metaphorical relations’ (Lopez, 2003: 164).
The metaphors we use change the world. When bunyips replace measuring sticks, we remove the human/nature dualism, changing the passive external resource of nature into a more sustainable coalition of human/animal/mythic/land. We belong alongside bunyips (and other non-humans) in forming the trustori of landscape; our fate is not separate. The postcolonialist, Helen Tiffin (eg, 2001) has shown that our “othering” of animals lies at the base of our discourses of racism; that an investment in speciesism lays the foundation of imperialist oppression. The sciences (both physical and social) might separate humans from nature so as to explain and examine nature’s uses within a stable, unchanging metaphor. The arts and community creativity in general might challenge the metaphor, making space for a shifting of emphasis. By listening to the voices of many cultures, we might begin to learn that our answers lie within, acknowledging the animal spirit. The South African Pamela Jooste writes:

He asks Bastiaan [the Bushman elder] how it is that he and his people hunt so well and he gets his answer with a small flash of gum. ‘It’s because it is ourselves we hunt,’ he says. ‘Understand that and ask yourself: “What would I do now if I were that animal?” and your animal self will give you the answer.’

(Jooste, 2000: 45)

We transform landscape by shifting emphasis to the wild and the regional; that which lies within – our animal selves - already knows and is part of the active landscape.

Ultimately though, I think, the social learning we might gain from animals cannot be handed down by any expert genius or particular culture. It is developed through a social facilitation of each extant community, and it draws upon that community’s multiple cultures and their mythic links to the distinctiveness of their particular place.

Science and history have demonstratively played an ineffective role in preserving ‘wilderness’ (badly defined by the very paradigm that destroys it). Planning has relied upon the same rational paradigm and has not only removed wilderness from the city, but defined the urban in opposition to the wild. So the majority of the world’s developed population has become removed from and ignorant of the role of the natural and the feral; the environment becomes a minority concern. In contrast, the developing world and colonised subaltern cultures have generally maintained a notion of wild-ness by acknowledging the sacred role of the animal. Human celebrations, rituals, and art have been used to create a landscape memoir that keeps the ecological imagination active and emotive.

Yet these subaltern influences are not so buried in western cultures. They lie barely beneath the surface of our cultured constraints. Dragons live in the small boy or museum imaginings of dinosaurs, and in the increasingly common practices of feng shui. Our love of the sacred in animals can be found in the continuous revival (survival) of the pagan, in our children’s stories and fairy tales, in the use of dogs as therapy in hospitals, even in our cataloguing of endangered species. By appreciating their influences we might undo their otherwise more destructive response to their lack of acknowledgment. If we planned a valued place for the troll, it might no longer live under the bridge exacting tolls or vengeance.
The wildest place on earth?

An American religious landscape painter of the nineteenth century, Thomas Cole, wrote an essay on the beauty of the American landscape as unspoiled, primeval and virgin (conveniently overlooking its longer-term inhabitants). His expression of wild nature as American landscape reinforced a necessity for imagination that still applies today (as does unfortunately the notion of separate, pristine and uninhabited wilderness):

In this age, when a meagre utilitarianism seems ready to absorb every feeling and sentiment, and what is called improvement, in its march, makes us fear that the bright and tender flowers of the imagination will be crushed beneath its iron tramp, it would be well to cultivate the oasis that yet remains to us.

(Cole in Mitchell 2001: 137)

Wilderness was created as the antidote to the poisons of industrial society. Wilderness was a useful cultural construct of the nineteenth century. Simon Schama says in *Landscape and Memory*, 'But of course the healing wilderness was as much the product of culture’s craving and culture’s framing as any other imagined garden'. The poet, Gary Snyder differentiates wildness from wilderness: wilderness is an entity, a fragile place that is easily destroyed; wildness is a concept – a force of nature found not only in wilderness but also in suburbia and cities, and even in barren devastated landscapes. Mitchell in his book *The Wildest Place on Earth: Italian Gardens and the Invention of Wilderness* (2001) says in wildness of the restoration of the world. Wildness requires daily contact:

a life in nature, or a life with nature, rather than one of those extended wilderness sojourns, which require ironically, and in fact perversely, the use of the highly advanced, energy consumptive technology of flight to attain. (Mitchell, 2001: 16)

If we can glean, or imagine, wildness in our cities, then we might return to a more natural understanding of place.

‘Wilderness’ is a weakening dominant metaphor for the wild – indicated by the increasing use of cultural quotation marks; one culture’s trash is another’s treasure. Perhaps the wild is held more in our minds and hearts than in our landscapes. In any case, our increasingly urbanised lives need the wild all the more. We need fear, the new wildness, a more (primal) emotive response to land, the pan-ic inspired by Pan. Mitchell says that ‘19th Century painters of wilderness wanted to inspire terribilità – a state of fear or ecstasy, the sense of the sublime, an elevated emotion in the presence of power and beauty’ (2001: 61), and shows how wild ‘terribilità’ might be found in the cultivated Italian gardens of today because of the presence of Pan. There have always been places where humans should not go. Thoreau in 1846 climbed Mount Katahdin in Maine, despite the local Indian avoidance of the spirit of the Mountain, Pomona. Before reaching the summit, he realised this fear (‘a place not yet tamed for the human children of the gods’) and turned tail. This was Thoreau’s ‘Contact’ that led to his questions: ‘Who are we? Where are we?’ Perhaps it is in such fear or awe of nature that we might find identity.

95 There are many cultural versions of this tale. The Nalbro people of the Sunshine Coast in Australia were afraid to climb Mt Beerwah (the largest ‘mother’ mountain of the Glasshouse Mountains) because of a spirit that lived at the top. They attributed explorer, Andrew Petrie’s later blindness as the direct result of the spirit’s vengeance, after Petrie climbed Beerwah despite warnings (Petrie, 1904: 251).
The purpose of urban four wheel drives is not afterall to manage difficult terrains, but to meet an overly urbanised populace’s need for imagined risk and created wilderness; to recreate the identity of the hunter. In the UK (at least) it is even possible to buy spray-on mud for the city-based four wheel drive as an indicator of imagined wildness. The Australian poet Les Murray says we imaginatively accommodate, behind the Louvres of the garage, ‘…the four-wheel drive/ vehicle in which to make an expedition/ to the bush, or as we now say the Land, / the three quarters of our continent/ set aside for mystic poetry.’ The four wheel drive epitomises our city yearning for the wild and the non-human. But there are better ways to meet this need than in the purchase of such unused commodifiers (the commodities we buy in to signify the missing mythic).

Planning for the non-human and the mythic
Mitchell compares the elation felt by a teary tourist in Notre Dame Cathedral with the video camera response of American national park visitors, in which he has yet to see one ‘swept to tears by the power of the place. And yet, this spirituality, this pure force of wild nature, the unexpected religiosity of place is why these sites were originally preserved.’ (2001: 150). Rather than simply planning for more national parks, perhaps we need the equivalent of more city cathedrals that encapsulate a spirit of place in the heart of the urban. These could be small sites of wild nature come upon unexpectedly, inciting a rapid retreat and a quick panic at their clear inhuman nature. They might be green follies, parasitic temples, and other small structures for small sites, like the many wonderful examples given in Topos (2004). Unlike city Central Parks, they would not be places of daily human recreation. Instead, they would be places for our imagination to reside and for more creative celebrations of an active and emotion-charged nature.

Perhaps it is time to celebrate the underlying non-human and the wild of our cities in more concrete ways – allowing for and mapping its existence would generally require little land, but may make greater spaces of spirit. The habitat of such animals would only be limited by the local community’s imagination; it would be a rare community that might imagine an animal so large that its habitat would become economically impossible, since wilder nature seems to prefer (or resort to) places that are most difficult to develop for human habitation. Determining the place, the habitat, and the creature would not only encourage creativity, it would also develop the participating community’s culture and change attitudes to nature. Perhaps it might make participation in planning processes enjoyable and light-hearted, rather than focusing on more intense sustainable development dichotomies.

Generally planning has been an instrumental process, so that each area of land is marked out for a (human) purpose. There are very few, if any, spaces intentionally reserved to be purposeless. Even riparian or buffer zones are named with some attempt at human justification; wilderness areas are to be conquered and trekked, unbuildable places become recreation zones. There are no spaces of the non-human, no place of the other in our human developments. An ecocentric planning response would involve more than buffer zones. Rather, we might plan for particular places to be left alone (by the human), to be inhabited by the imagined or the real non-
human specific and endemic to that region. Environmental planners already identify and lobby for rare and endangered animal habitat (knowing that the animal, especially if cute or furry, is the best social argument for preserving the place). And social planners, along with community cultural development workers, have the skills to facilitate a social dreaming. Together they might use participative consultative processes to help a community determine: where to site their locally wild place, and the particularities of the creatures that might inhabit such an unvisited inhuman location. The processes of community – mythologies, memories, land stories, and art (rather than the more expert processes of the natural sciences or histories) might aid in creatively defining (the metaphor of) such non-human owners. Artist, poets and storytellers might help create and celebrate the mythopoetic beast, but it is planners that can facilitate such processes as well as allocate and save its habitat.

It is the particularity of place that modifies the monster animal metaphor into a thing of meaning and value for those living there, attracting a greater diversity of multiple cultures and of past, present, and future populations. In my community planning experience, there is an initial reluctance and an overflowing joy in the development of such talismans – this is the wild thinking that we both flee and seek. It serves both postcolonial and environmental ends by offering a strong counterpoint to western ways of doing and planning. Such dominant groups, developed countries in particular, might demonstrate a re-connection with land. Wild and mythopoetic animals seem the easiest access point to an understanding of a more active land. But each place needs to develop its own sacred animal, of relevance to its particularity. It might draw upon and borrow from other mythologies, or at least be reminded by Aboriginal, Indian, Chinese, European, and increasingly Southeast Asian mythologies. But it needs to also build upon the west's own mythologies of place: it needs to be bioregional, and draw upon the local ecology and local community culture. Those who inhabit the place, who are embedded in its particularity, are those who shape the place. With the aid of community based planners, they might shape their place with a positive and creative imagination that celebrates the wild in their land and in themselves.

The planner and architect of the garden city school, Marion Mahony Griffin’s fairy arguments are germane here too. The ability to imagine and believe in fairies (or more widely, the numinous) is reflected in the same ability to be creative; if we populate our cities with myths, we make it a more creative place. To plan with the mythic beast in mind is to develop the creative city. There are many examples of how such beasts might be defined and planned for, but each beast to be relevant must be locally developed; the fairy cannot be applied across time and place. Anthony Harding in The Reception of Myth in English Romanticism (1995) says that the Romantics own mythmaking drew its meaning from contemporary politics and ideological conflict, rather than a timeless unchanging myth of generalised value. Mythmaking cannot be universalised. In asking who or what might inhabit the non-human spaces, the importance of specificity and locale cannot be overemphasised. Pan, Coyote and the

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96 Perhaps these places are not entirely unvisited by humans. The imagination of a small child when fearfully visiting the waste space of the vacant block, the undeveloped weed infested leftovers, or the edges between developed land and creaking sea, approximates that which we might like to emulate.
Bunyip are three brief generic examples of regional beasts that might serve as samplers for, and embodiments of, a more creative and active nature.

**Regional Mythic Creatures**

A new metaphor for creativity might draw upon powerful and cross-cultural human emotions, such as fear, and on the long-term links between human and other animals expressed in traditional mythologies. The mythic element is important, remembering the wild; as Sheila Canby concludes for example: ‘Dragons remain potent symbols of nature beyond man’s control’ (1995:43). If the new metaphoric creature intertwined a region’s people’s mythologies and memories - a creature of direct meaning to its locale and its inhabitants, then if might be strong enough to sway our cultural conversations, and make more creative cities. This muddy inhabitant emerging from the landscape, attributed with more emotional and arbitrary responses (those that we don’t otherwise like to impose on humans), could be the powerful subaltern voice that changes the community’s culture to one more aligned with our own animal forces and the land itself. Such beasts have strong impacts in our past histories and in our present memories. Pan overcomes the power of more dualistic metaphors, being both man and beast; the Coyote breaks down the walls of a suburban psyche through both its real and mythological presence; the bunyip invades not only western civilised landscapes, but also the discourse of progress; these emotive, animalistic, metaphors continue to remind us of our wilder (and, I would argue, more creative) nature, one not subject to economic rationalism or concrete order.

**The Great God Pan is not dead**

Pan, half-man, half-goat, is the classic wild god of the mountainside. He is the son of the trickster messenger, Hermes and of the human Penelope. He inverts the world and embodies the spirit of the dark forests, sleeping in the afternoon after orgies of sex, wine, dance, and music. It is the reed instruments of Pan that give us panpipes. If disturbed, Pan engenders panic, to the point that whole armies have fled in fear at the noise of Pan. Patricia Merrivale in her study of Pan, the goat god, his myth in Modern Times (1969) makes it clear that Pan covers a lot of ground: Pan is both a god and an animal, the god of the whole of nature. It is not a coincidence that Pan means everything in Greek and is the root of panic. Mitchell says:

> Pan was one of the traditional horned guardians of the Omphalos, and if you came face to face with him ... you could cross a threshold and step into the sacred zone of the spirit world and gain the source of knowledge of the universe. (Mitchell, 2001: 189)

But whether you survived is another matter! Pan is the ‘emblem of escape, of danger perhaps, of passion and mystery and energy, music and ecstatic dance and ancient rhymes and rhythms ... an image of contact with the old forces that rule nature.’ (191). Pan sounds like an opportunity and a symbol for a wilder celebration of nature, if ever there was one.

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97 Love, the other great human motivator, sometimes is read as sentimental nostalgia, so that love of place is not enough. Also, fear is less owned by humans, more attributable to the beast than love, so an appropriate emotion for the development of human/animal coalitions.
Val Plumwood, an Australian environmental philosopher, argues we need a re-inhabitation or re-enchantment of a more than human world, an acknowledgement of the greater powerfulness of nature, and of our fears of nature.\(^{98}\) She draws on past cultures, showing how the forest gods deteriorated from Dionysus to Pan to the Devil – so that in our western culture’s forest spirits have become evil, our timber-centred culture ignores the other values of the forests (whereas ‘over-mature trees or residue’ also act as home for other species, water-table, and spiritual values). She claims that as a philosopher, she picks up sticks to clear the way for new paths, understanding the historical and colonial reasons for ways of behaving. Our current impasse with respect to the environment is the division between spirit and matter; from this split emerges an unforgiving monotheistic god, demonstratively strong enough to drive out the value of paganism and its forest spirits.\(^{99}\)

Despite the Christian legend that the wild lord of the earth has been replaced by a single lord of heaven, the Great God Pan is not dead. He remains a subaltern influence. He has survived over the centuries, even in the assumed form of the devil; he is in the writings of Thoreau, Emerson, Cole, Rachel Carson and other advocates of wild nature. Today, whole web sites are dedicated to how Pan creates human panic: In *Pan(ic) in the woods*, there are hundreds of stories about experiencing Pan in nature of the ‘it happened to me’ variety, strange sounds, sensations, and emotions inspired by a more active sense of nature – one writer refers to ‘landscapes of panic’. Michael Roads, a spiritual writer living in Nambour on the Sunshine Coast, in *Journey through Nature* (1990) describes his mystical experiences of Pan as an entry to a deeper understanding ‘with Nature … a dimension beneath the surface of our everyday reality’ (ix-x). Like Merlin’s teaching of the young King Arthur in *The Once and Future King* (TH White, 1939), Pan transforms Michael Roads into the non-human of water, blackberry, dog, crystal, dolphin, and finally the light of whole consciousness. Pan is acknowledged as humorous and incomprehensible; he becomes a teacher merging human and non-human. The last comment on Pan is by Mitchell, the writer that inspired me with his maze-like images, and shows Pan’s ongoing nature:

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\text{Pan is very much with us. And it is not necessary to outfit expeditions into the remnant wilderness at the uttermost ends of the earth in order to find him. Just go out to some nearby dark wood on a moonless night, bushwhack thirty yards into the thickets without a flashlight, stand still for a few minutes, and wait. He’ll be there. (Mitchell, 2001: 194)}
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**Trickster Coyote Embodiments**

The Trickster Coyote reveals the function of an active landscape and is both haphazard and liminal. The University of Virginia library’s site (1999) offers a number of traditional stories about Coyote, written up by nineteenth century American settlers: *The little coyote* by Mary Austin; *How Squire Coyote brought fire to the Cahrocs* by John Vance Cheney; and *Little friend Coyote* by George Bird Grinnell. The Trickster travels in the region of the ‘in-between’, a place of fires, thresholds and boundaries. Barbara Babcock-Abrahams says the

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98 Plumwood’s terms are ‘a materialist spirituality of place’ and ‘a dialogical interspecies ethic’; see for instance Plumwood, 2002.

99 Val Plumwood has written many books and articles covering these issues, but like other philosophers, perhaps her arguments are most accessible in interviews, such as that on Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s Bush Telegraph radio program on 10 November 2003.
Trickster Coyote ‘tends to inhabit crossroads, open public places, doorways and thresholds’ (1975: 159). Larry Ellis claims the Trickster as a Shaman of the liminal:

Liminal reality holds sway here, and thresholds or points of crossing – bridges, crossroads, and fords – are of special consequence, for they provide a point of interaction between mortal or mythic beings and the forces of the liminal. (Ellis, 1993: 59).

Franchot Ballinger (1989) says Native American Trickster tales educate and entertain with the notion of ‘living sideways’. The Trickster Coyote represents an opposing force to the rational planner. As Margaret Atwood says:

It’s the Trickster who’s responsible for the changes – the mistakes, if you like – that have brought about the sometimes deplorable mess and the sometimes joyful muddle of this world as it is. (Atwood, 1998 LA Times article)

It is the failures of the cowardly foolish and impatient Coyote that make the world. Coyote Trickster helps transform liminal edges into thresholds, doorways to cultural change or Otherness, through the satirical use of metaphor, symbol and image. Lewis Hyde (1998: 159) says: ‘Trickster is among other things the gatekeeper who opens the door into the next world; those who mistake him for a psychopath never even know such a door exists.’ Trickster might be wild and irrational, if not mad, but he opens the door to an active nature. Coyote Trickster breaks the rules and powerfully creates the new, mostly through laughter, lust, and inattention. He remakes culture through disorder.

The coyote dismantles our western dualisms. William Bright in his Coyote Reader (1993) claims the Coyote as the apt mediator between animals and humans, nature and culture. While such Trickster nature remains hard to define, grasp, stabilize or taxonomise, we are reminded that nature is still out there. For Bright, the coyote offers us ‘a dynamic interposing of the mind between polar opposites, as if affirming “either/and”’ (1993: 182). Harold Ramsey in Reading the Fire: Essays in the Traditional Indian Literature of the Far West (1983) says the Coyote offers the promise of god and man that each generation must interpret anew: ‘If we laugh at him, he grins at us. Whatever happens to him happens to us.’ (1983: 29) Paul Radin in The Trickster: a study in American Indian Mythology (1972) says the Coyote is timeless: ‘the “mythic” Coyote and the “biological” Coyote are not two different things: they are two manifestations of a single identity … either on the reservation or in the city: it’s the same Coyote.’ (1972: 177). But the Trickster’s mythic core lies in his embodiment of the land he inhabits; Larry Ellis says the Trickster metaphor lies in:

a place that is more closely associated with the landscape in which he travels and performs than in who or what he appears to be. … It [the landscape] sings his boundaries, and in this way, perhaps defines him. (Ellis, 1993: 55 and 66)

In discussing such intersections of biology and culture, Haraway turns to ‘available metaphors and narratives’, but also invites into this science/art intersection the wit of the coyote.

In considering what kind of entity “nature” might be, I am looking for a coyote and historical grammar of the world, where deep structure can be quite a surprise, indeed, a veritable trickster. Non-humans are
not necessarily “actors” in the human sense, but they are part of the functional collective that makes up an actant.\textsuperscript{100} The ‘collective’ of which “nature” in any form is one example from my point of view, is always an artifact, always social, not because of some transcendental Social that explains science or vice versa, but because of its heterogeneous actants/actors ... the artifactual “collective” includes a witty actor that I have sometimes called coyote ... re-inventing an old option within a non-Eurocentric Western tradition indebted to Egyptian Hermeticism that insists on the active quality of the world and on “animate” matter. Worldly and enspirited, coyote nature is a collective, cosmopolitan artifact crafted in stories with heterogeneous actants.

Coyote is no ghost, merely a protean trickster. (Haraway, 1992: 331, 332, and 298)

The Trickster Coyote embodies a wilder creativity than most of us (planners and otherwise) feel comfortable with: ‘He is both conjurer and conduit of the creative and cultural forces that he puts into motion’. (Ellis, 1993: 57) But the Coyote also shows us there are diamonds in the mud, if we choose to see his doorway. Coyote nature is more than animal; it represents an active nature as well as a chaotic spirit of creativity. The natural has agency and acts upon us. The Trickster is the patron of celebrations, such as the Mardi Gras, where social customs are temporarily ignored or reversed. The Trickster makes and re-makes the world, an essential part of creativity. If we want to contribute to the creative city, we need to apply the gift of a mischievous and lively imagination. The Coyote and its Trickster spirit, signifies the liminal boundaries between animal and spirit, between the biological and the mythical, and between human and nature. Trickster Coyote allows us to howl at the moon and evade the pervasive rational, grinning all the while.

Bunyip Reconciliations

The bunyip (described on pages 108-113) reconciles white settlers to the wilder nature of Australia, and the human to the non-human. The author Patricia Wrightson imagined such journeying coalitions in her award-winning books. For example, in \textit{The Ice is Coming} (1977) she describes a young Aboriginal man Wirrun working with the many mythic spirits of country to avert the ice and free the land. This animal, spirit, human coalition comprises: animal inhabitants that include birds, lizards, whales, and a spirit dog; spirits such as the Mimi rock/earth spirit; and humans from ‘the People’ - long term indigenous groups, and ‘Inlander’ – rural groups (but she excludes ‘The Happy Folk’ of the cities). ‘These [animal, spirit, human coalitions] see me true, for they are me, said the land crouching over the sea. \textit{But where are the eyes of men?}’ (214). Wrightson pictures the fear of the intangible ‘Mu-ru-bul, Tu-ru-dun, Bunyip’ as Wirrun goes to the river edge, not noticing the cloudy water:

Something heavy moved in the reeds. Red eyes glinted, strong jaws clamped and pulled ...The Bunyip had him ... a smell: of iodine and slime and decay, but mostly of age (Wrightson, 1977: 166 - 167)\textsuperscript{101}

But it is this ‘ancient one of the waters’ that takes him to the place of ‘the Eldest, a First Thing’, and scares away two ice giants,\textsuperscript{102} pungently contributing to Wirrun’s collective, emotive and spiritual quest of freeing the land’s spirit.

\textsuperscript{100} Borrowing Terrence Hawkes’ term: actants operate at the level of function, not of character; several characters in a narrative (actors) may make up a single actant.

\textsuperscript{101} Later described: ‘something drifted there, large and slow. A wetness of scales or feathers or fur - an arm or flipper reaching, a drifting smell of slime and age’ (Wrightson, 1977: 216)
The bunyip acts as a cross-cultural Australian symbol for the awe-ful and the sacred in nature. It has engaged Australian communities. The National Library of Australia runs an ongoing web-based project in schools discussing the bunyip and encouraging children to imagine and draw its appearance and traits. Such a process is successful and accessible, and might be generalised to other communities and creatures as part of a process of re-inhabiting our regional and local landscapes.

Celebrating Land/ Imagining Beast

We might imagine a more active nature if we draw upon these metaphor of monsters. As Haraway points out in her paper, ‘Monsters have the same root as to demonstrate; monsters signify’ (1992: 333). And monsters such as Pan, Coyote, and Bunyip make us uncomfortable as the emotions of panic, chaos and fear shows respectively. They all smell and are more lustful than seems acceptable; their myths ‘are the story of intelligence arising from appetite’ (Lewis Hyde, 1998: 1). Planners and the more rational order seekers amongst us, have tried to bridge over and build out their appetites from the city, but they lie beneath, an always subaltern presence, if not influence. As we seek the more creative in our cities, their spectres have risen up, demonstrating links to landscape and imagination that we ignore at our peril.

Perhaps the environment is best celebrated through the memory of such supernatural beings and their tracks, remembered through the specificity of place. There are many such existing place-based festivals - community-based processes that arise from the grass-roots to celebrate the seasonal rituals of animals and their movements (discussed in Part IV’s Bunyip Festivals). When new human developments are planned, environmental assessments are undertaken that map and expose the non-human. The golden bell frog is found on the Sydney Olympics site or the legless lizard in the greenfield development of Canberra’s Gungahlin. Spaces are put aside for such animals and areas left undeveloped. Planners already have processes to reach community agreement as to what of the non-human is important enough to re-locate development proposals. We can generally all agree if the animal is both rare and cute that at least some token aspect of its habitat should be retained. We have planned for animal and mythopoetic spirits in the past, as the fairy example of Marion Mahony Griffin attests; we have worshipped roadside shrines as traditional peoples in earlier histories; we celebrate them today as the myriad of animal place festivals indicate. Such places of inhuman spirit remain as ongoing subaltern influences in our human developments.

Mitchell emphasises that the wild-ness of Pan can be located everyday and everywhere, and especially in the settled density of Europe. He says:

102 All the errant ice giants, ‘Ninya’, are sung back home to their own country by The People of the inland region where the ice giants come from, as they can do no (spiritual or physical) damage in their own place. It is only when these mythic beings leave their own region that the land is reduced. Each monster must be locally located and stay within its region to maintain a sustainable and balanced landscape.
Italian Renaissance garden designers always left one section of the grounds, the so-called *bosco*, in a natural state, complete with native trees and a dense undergrowth of wild shrubs and herbaceous plants. (Mitchell, 2001: 189)

This idea was emulated by Capability Brown in English estates and carried to the New World, for example in the Paca Gardens of Maryland. Today, several landscape designers in Canada have used forest folklore as a metaphor to inform their project proposals, whether they are garden festivals, urban parks or town plans. Peter Jacobs in his article shows that Quebec forest metaphors and mythology are most effective, as they draw upon ‘emotional forces that inspire a profound attachment to the forest’ (Jacobs, 2004: 90). The path of gods upon the land is an old and common traditional story: the rainbow serpent marks grooves, tracks and waterholes in Australia, the feng shui dragon shapes how the Chinese live, and in West Africa the serpent creates a series of massive ditches.

There is always a tension between non-western and western groups as to how such landscape features are described and perceived. A deep groove on the North Goulburn Island of the Northern Territory is both the track of the rainbow snake, and mapped as ‘Number Two Sandy Creek’ (see Berndt, 1992: 399). European accounts of the ditches in West Africa ascribed them with western military designs and exploits; whereas Norman and Kelly show that the Hueda and Dahomey groups linked them with mythic tales of serpents and rainbows – they ‘used the built landscape to reference cosmological factors … to negotiate and shape the political landscape’ (2004: 109). Such a process as the west acknowledging these ‘cosmological forces’ in our landscape, might also bring about a reconciliation between traditional and modern cultures. Judy Ling Wong discusses the success of the Black Environment Network in Britain in ‘engaging all cultures to create sacred spaces by drawing on the cultures of their origin and beyond’ (2003: 30). Their three projects (*The Medicine Wheel* in Milton Keynes, *The Balaji Temple* in Tividale, and *A Forest of Memory* in Cashel Forest) have increased environmental participation and cross-cultural understanding between different faiths and cultures. There are many such examples from community cultural development workers across the world.

If planning is to engage in like processes, then it must also engage the community. The emotions inspired by mythic animals such as Pan, Coyote and Bunyip along with their protean and localised relatives may be just what is required to allow wild spaces their place in our city scapes. Wild spaces, however small, if acknowledged and celebrated, might increase our appreciation of the environment and of the many cultures that make up a city society. Perhaps, now it is time for planning to pay the toll price and to give status to the incarnate land of the troll.

**The wilder spirit of the place?**

The dominant western value system based on economics suggests the outer life is more important than the inner life, that ‘basic needs’ of food and shelter are more important than spiritual needs. From a non-western point of view the argument has often been turned on its head: if you have no resources to spend on the critical
connection to place, how can you live? Such an Aboriginal approach to country, for instance, is taught at Angatja in the centre of Australia. The elder Nganyinytja, who does much of the teaching, offers a philosophy of open country, open mind and heart, strong spirit and culture. She says that by being in and feeling the open country, people hear the land and know themselves:

They lose their spirit living too long inside shut houses ... Our spirit stands open. I live in the open, where I can see the hills and the bush ... Living in the open, not enclosed, one's spirit is strong. A long time ago everything became our relatives – the stars, the earth, the hills, the different animals we eat for meat, the vegetable foods – everything (Nganyinytja in Diana James, 1991: 109).

Nganyinytja embodies Australia’s Indigenous plea to the west in saying we need to reconnect with the land to see more clearly our relationship to all elements of the Earth. Diana James, who is involved in Angatja, says:

we must believe in life’s meaning renewed by theatre, art, and any personal or communal creative expression – an expanded definition of “community art” where we can fearlessly constantly create our own active culture, giving birth to the unborn within ourselves. (James, 1991: 115)

But these remain subaltern arguments. Welfare discussions are dominated by low cost housing and better diet provisions; planning is dominated by development and public goods. We continue to ignore issues of ‘fearless creativity’. Perhaps place celebrations and planning spaces for the non-human is the first step to reconciling these differing approaches. Animal planning and celebration of the local landscape offers an easy entrée for western culture to begin to understand the importance of, and its own subaltern relationships to, land. Optimistically, they might change the misunderstandings between economic and spiritual value systems, or at least change the capitalist assumption that everyone should aspire to a plasma TV.103 Perhaps finally, the dominant middle class could lose their baffled, but complacent air as to why their attempts at proffering welfare to its subaltern communities never benefit the target communities. Bronfen (1999) argues for creativity’s role in straddling spiritual imagination and economic physicality. The creative approaches inherent in animal planning might allow mainstream society to stand with one foot in each camp. And what’s more, such place planning and celebrations could be, and are, enjoyed by a more inclusive community.

An imagined landscape of human/animal coalitions

Place based animal planning and celebration offers us an accessible way forward to reconciliation between developing/indigenous and developed/settler cultures. Mythopoetic beasts such as Pan, Coyote and Bunyip (and their more regionalised embodiments) might help build a culture of engagement. Whereas capitalism is based on an assumption of generic sameness of place, the development of each region’s beast would reinforce another understanding that each place is different, specific to the qualities and traits of the (mythic) animals born of a particular community’s imagination and history. It is not only our ecology and our creativity that would benefit if we resorted to a little wilder planning in our cities and regions.

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103 Many have suggested the west is lost to the capitalist pursuit of material happiness at the expense of maintaining spiritual connection with place. Peter Read (1999) quotes Kevin Gilbert’s comment on the colonisation of Indigenous Australia as “the intolerance and uncomprehending barbarism of a people intent only on progress in material terms ... a rape of the soul so profound.”
Imagined animal and human coalitions are not new. Behind them lie centuries of tradition, taken up by many artists and story-tellers. For instance, Nollman argues for the environmental role of artists in *The Charged Border*: ‘the environmental crisis is a crisis in human perception. If it’s true, then artists play a key role in persuading the collective human sensibility to honour nature.’ (1999: 65). Nollman, a musician trained in theatre and dance, developed a taste for interspecies music because of a turkey’s response to his flute. Having become friends with the turkey, he then broadcast ‘Music to Eat Thanksgiving Dinner by’. His success found him playing music with a number of other animals: drums with kangaroo rats, shakuhachi with a wolf pack, and most notably electric guitar with dolphins and whales. Nollman’s conceptual art process:

- thrives on subjectivity, participation, and improvisation ... the symbolism of this mutable bond is at least as powerful as the music produced. Interspecies music flirts with myth, perception, environmental activism, cognitive science, shamanism, underwater acoustics, and the edges of art as much as it flirts with whales. It frolics with our basic conception of what it means to be both human and/or animal. (Nollman, 1999: 66)

The extremes of nature and culture that lie, dualistically separated, at edge and centre are no longer an interesting reality or a useful metaphor. Rather it is in the substitutions, cross-overs, and translations between nature and culture that might shape more creative places. Donna Haraway in *The promises of monsters* again:

> When the pieties of belief in the modern are dismissed, both members of the binary pairs collapse into each other as into a black hole. But what happens to them in the black hole is, by definition, not visible from the shared terrain of modernity, modernism, or postmodernism. It will take a superluminal SF journey into elsewhere to find the interesting new vantage points. (Haraway, 1992: 330)

Let’s hope that planners are members of the party that takes this interesting and superluminal science fiction journey, and that they are not simply dismissed with older pieties of belief. Planners have the community skills and place-based mindset as well as a public good imperative to enable each specific community’s creative place. They are developing Leonie Sandercock’s ‘new language for planning, the language of memory, desire, and spirit’ (2003: 209). Planners might choose to be collaborative passengers, if not the pilots, of such collaborative animal/human journeying.

It is the created landscape with its coalitions of human and non-human that might lead the way on such a journey of imagination. Just as in planning, there is no end-point to such imaginings, since each imagining needs to be specific to a time, a place, and a community. Each community of subaltern terrain and mainstream bridge might imagine their local beast and its habitat as payment to the wild and monstrous troll that lies beneath our too-often civilised and rational constructions of land.
**Frog chorus**

Wow - rain. It was so wet yesterday that half our road and all our paths have eroded away. It was so wet yesterday that our dam went from empty to overflowing in just a few short hours. It was so wet yesterday that parts of Brisbane flooded as badly as the 1974 floods and northeastern NSW has been declared a disaster area. We'd been expecting rain for some time now. It should have started raining months ago, our tanks were getting low, the dam was almost dry, plants were complaining. Apart from the wet around Woodford time, there's been no rain to speak of. Lunchtime yesterday, despite the apparently blue skies, it suddenly bucketed down for about 10 minutes. Ross and I sat out in the carport appreciating the downpour and wondering where the clouds were. Even after it had passed by we could see no clouds that should have brought such heavy rain - most odd. No doubt a portent of what was to come. By about 4pm it was dark and ominous. By 6pm it was a full-blown storm, thunder, lightning, wind, and cats and dogs falling out of the sky. The storm lasted 'til 10pm and then moved on out towards the sea.

But in those 4 hours we got what felt like half our yearly rainfall! Very exciting, but not really the best thing for our house or garden or road. A couple of our garden sculptures were also smashed, the roads disappeared, but we all stayed safe.

But what I love best about a downpour of rain after a dry spell is the consequent night time frog chorus. We have a lot of frogs on this property, some go tock, others wark wark, others almost squeal. But the ones that I love most are the frogs that sing together. What sounds like hundreds of these choristers emit a long drawn out ‘cer-reek’ that rises to a crescendo and then stops for a couple of seconds before starting again. It's such a community action, requiring a high degree of cooperation, that I could go down and kiss the lot of them, without even hoping for a prince.

In the dark ages when I learnt zoology at university, we were taught Victorian attitudes that portrayed Nature red in tooth and claw. Evolution was about who out-evolved who, the selfish

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104 The metaphor of cats and dogs has much more positive connotations after my multicultural relations work. Under ‘Sharing Our Wisdom’ in the Multicultural Development Authority News (v1, n3 2000), a Philippine grandmother says: To live in harmony with life: when the strong wind comes, like a bamboo during tempest you bend; when the flood comes raging you open your gates; and when the rain pours you raise your hands and arms to the sky and play with the cats and dogs.

105 Litoria gracilenta, although there are few records of such mass collective chorus as I have heard from our dam. Unfortunately, a year or two after this a couple of keelback snakes moved in during the drought and decimated the population; the chorus has been sadly depleted.
gene dominated, and competition was our only anthropomorphic understanding of the animal world. Consequently, when I hear such strong alternative evidence for a cooperation that does not even appear necessary for the survival of the species - I am always elated that we humans can get it so wrong in the name of science. Nowadays, post the communism paranoia and the cold war, cooperation is no longer a dirty word. We can afford to see its influences in that objectively separate world of Nature.

For me the frog’s chorus will remain a glorious reminder of the foibles of human endeavour, a paean of praise to the postmodern criticisms of science, and not coincidentally, confirmation that cooperation produces wonders of art. So I always look forward to the first rains, not just for their practical tank filling capacities, but also so I can smile gleefully that night when the frogs sing!

Diary Entry (March 2001)
Part IV Memory

Celebrating Landscape Memoir to embrace fear and refuse despair

Ron Brooks in The Bunyip of Berkeley\'s Creek (Wagner, 1973)
Memory Overview (Bunyip/ Human creativity)

This thesis has shown the richness, scope and depth that metaphor, mythology, and memoir offer a reworking and subversion of dominant land/society relations (especially those expressed through the disciplines of history and planning). Active landscapes are celebrated across the world. Place, story, and object all play critical and complementary roles in expressing a community landscape memoir. What does landscape memoir look like in contemporary practice? Part IV suggests examples, from around Australasia and more particularly the Sunshine Coast region, of creative cultural activities that acknowledge the spirit of land/animal/human relationships and their co-requisite place-based identity. It relies upon a praxis of subaltern theory and personal regional experience. Part IV shows a Landscape Memoir practice is already strong.

In examining place-based festivals, public, site-specific, and environmental art, this Part layers upon and practically explores the themes of the thesis. It starts with a parable, The woman who planted souls, that collates community cultural development examples from various regions of Australia. A framework begins to emerge on ways we use creativity and festivity to re-interpret the land and imagine its active voice. I develop an art now model as a proposed tool for developing community memory that includes the cross-cultural and the non-human. By investing the sacred in environmental and artistic objects, the mythic archaeology of a community is realised. By asking ‘What lies beneath?’ the surface of a site, a more complete and meaningful engagement with land and culture becomes possible. Specificity of place-based art and celebration emphasises the regional in building identity. Embracing the local involves recognising the darker aspects of a place, developing an awe of its specific fears, so as to resist more global despair.

In a time when so many artists have learned to confabulate with extremes of horror and alienation, the most daring thing an artist can do is to fill a book, a gallery or a theatre with joy, hope and beauty. … To refuse despair has become an ecological imperative. (Betty and Theodore Roszak, 1996)

Part IV is about local community and artist celebrations that use art and festival to embrace fear but refuse despair. The fear inspired by the embodied landscape of the bunyip is acknowledged and accepted, rather than transmogrified into a manipulated fear of the Other (the alien, the criminal, the enemy or the terrorist). By embracing and personally experiencing fear (the Pan-ic of the woods or the dismay of Aboriginal Australia), we might challenge the validity of more third-hand scare-mongering politics. Community identities develop positively from the subaltern influence of an active landscape and cross-cultural contact. As Tim Cresswell reminds us, ‘Place and memory are inevitably intertwined … public memory is inscribed in the landscape’ (2004: 85). Rather than nationalistic jingoism that aims to be exclusively relaxed and comfortable, we could use regional celebrations of place memory to be inclusively wild and creative.
When Karin Waters was not so young anymore and disillusioned with the city, she moved to the country. To a part of the country much like the rest of rural Australia. The surviving population of Karin's town - the could-have-beens, the has-beens - drifted about in a listless manner. Wind blew down the main street, moving litter and clattering bins. Shops were empty except for dust and spider webs; old signs clanked in their illegibility. The few businesses that remained did so out of a lack of imagination or motivation. The regional paper declared the place a ghost town - a sad memorial to a primary past. Government policy barely in advance of lack of timber had closed the mill down. The butter factory had long gone in the interests of economies of scale, spurred on by a manufactured fear of bacteria. The dairies were following, sinking under a competition policy that railed against any form of protectionism. Banks had withdrawn, petulantly denying any public good responsibility with claimed shareholder demands of profits before people. Businesses had been centralised, rationalised, and downsized. The

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106 An earlier version of this story, without the footnotes, was published as Kerr, 2002 in Songs of Unsung Heroes. The title references the work of Jean Giono in The Man who Planted Trees (discussed previously, pages 8-9). In writing the woman who planted souls, I used the autoethnographic approach described by Ellis and Bochner, in which: [A story] might use composites or change some identifying information. Or you might collapse events to write a more engaging story, which might be more truthful in a narrative sense though not in a historical one. (Ellis and Bochner, 2003: 232)

107 Karin Waters is not entirely fictional and bears a close relationship to many wonderful countrywomen who, with their hearts and souls, use cultural activities to galvanise their communities, reinvigorate rural life, reconnect with the environment, and bridge racial divides. Women, who work long, volunteer hours for the love of their community and land, act as inspirations for The Woman Who Planted Souls. These include:

• Ange Newton, the pub owner of Harrow - a town that weekly recreates the burial of a bushranger in Victoria.
• Pauline McLeod and Mary Jane Page, Wodi Wodi women in southern NSW, committed to teaching their culture to whites and blacks across the country.
• Beulah Adams and Sue Blacklock, featured in a 2001 ABC Australian Story, descendants from opposite sides of an Aboriginal massacre at Myall Creek Station in 1838. They decided, 'if we want reconciliation, we should do it now...We looked at the land and there was a strange bond there between us...in such a short time'.
• Jill Jordan, involved in the Maleny Credit Union and in Heart Politics and in her community's development and vision, encourages people to 'start your own dreams rather than move to Maleny'.
• Lea Durie, a landscape architect for Caloundra in Queensland, drew up a community facility and landscape proposal for Cooroy, to demonstrate the town's creative responses to its mill's closure.
• Wendy Creighton, editor of the Fassifern Guardian at Boonah, speaks for all such women when she says, 'we looked for small ways in which we could make a difference. Our overnight success is the result of about 15 years of hard work'.

108 Karin is over 30, and probably closer to 50: if you ask people who their leaders are, 70% will nominate men who hold official positions, aged between 50 and 70. But if you ask who in town gets things done, 70% will nominate women aged between 30 and 50. (Van Tiggelen, 2001: 25)

109 Thirty-six of Australia's forty poorest electorates are rural or provincial.

110 Tumby Bay in South Australia was galvanised into action by a newspaper article. On 9 March 1991, the State paper, The Advertiser, published 'A Town Waiting to Die', saying 'there are only three or four businesses in town who are doing any good' and that there was no enthusiasm, hope, or optimism left.
private hospital in the town had finally closed - not for lack of the sick and dying, just for lack of the wealthy sick and dying.\textsuperscript{111}

Karin Waters moved there because of what the land told her that its people could not. She moved because of the mountain that grew behind the town, outcrops of fluted columns hidden until the last minute behind tall trees. She moved for the fecund growth and the vibration of life beneath her feet. Driven by a vision, she moved for the future sensed between the droplets of humidity. It was at least unconsciously a calling of soul, a yearning to bury her heart in land-love, to root herself to place. In her past, obstacles of solid concrete and fine architecture had reduced such contact to fleeting bliss on rare holidays. Karin’s move was more than an attempt to find the grand in nature; it was also an attempt to find the humble.

The land was simmering, ready to erupt all. It was not dormant, but crouching and poised to leap over a palaeontological timescale. Even though she lived a more fleeting life, she recognised its active urgency. The first people told a dreamtime tale that Karin understood. The mountain, translated into English as Mother Mountain,\textsuperscript{112} had once been a tribal elder who had angered the local gods. She had been a leader of family and a teacher of creativity, but she had offered too much wisdom too fast to her people. The gods had slowed her lessons down to a rate that could be absorbed by her descendants and other more invasive species of humans.

Karin found her passion and her strength at edge places - places where water met land, where sky met earth, where body met soul, and in the serenities of dawn and dusk. She almost meditated on the mountain, inwardly gazing at the shimmering blue peak. She imagined the mountain’s thoughts of timeless creativity and tolerance.

In fear of becoming too eccentric, too secluded, Karin joined the few remaining local organisations with which she felt a mild political alliance so as to make friends and find a social place in the town. They were lacklustre, relying on the rare new blood to make changes or to re-
focus their purpose. They were so caught up with petty squabbles - letters of accusation flying back and forth - that their original visions were lost under threats of litigation. Karin tried to re-invigorate their purpose, but soon realised that forward-looking activities were lost to the gossips and misalliances of the past. She had hoped existing community groups would be sufficiently resourced and enthusiastic about their town's future that change could be easy. She wished that the mountain's message and the feeling of hope she learnt from the land could translate to the people of the area. She had not allowed for the years of metaphorical drought that crushed spirits and embittered souls. The town's people had learnt to become suspicious of governments that withdrew support, and wary of the occasional enthusiastic revivalist, manufacturing hot air rather than goods or services. If she was to bring the mountain's message back to its local inhabitants, she needed a less rancorous and eroded path.

Then Karin discovered the local pub was up for sale. This was the remaining place of town culture, shrivelled as it was under the copious application of alcohol. The publican, feeling too old and sick to continue had had the pub on the market for years, gradually lowering the price as his sickness worsened. Karin offered 50% of the takings for a number of years, feeling she would be turned down. But her timing was perfect - the publican's cancer was at the point he had to walk away, so any offer was acceptable. This was how Karin became committed to the town's future, to a 24-hour job, and to desiring another way of doing. Curiosity and some derision at this city slicker's foolishness brought more customers than the pub had seen for years. Karin capitalised on and agonised over the power of alcohol to comfort the disillusioned. She wanted to offer more, but she needed the money. Instead of tablecloths and vases of flowers, she provided butcher's paper and pots of coloured pens. She started hanging the resulting doodles on the walls, offering free beer to those judged the week's best. Whether creativity or beer was the motivator, the doodle art caught on. More serious artists emerged. The old clientele became a morose minority. The pub-art drew inter-town visitors. By the end of the first year the pub had a reputation that attracted a coastal sponsor to offer an award to the year's most popular work. People drew on their surroundings, on beauties and daily miseries;

113 A common problem in the city-country transition for socially aware women, reported to me by a number of new enthusiastic country dwellers, and my own experience. Another woman and I both joined the local Landcare board, but found the continual accusation and threatened litigation from past staff and board members, made any forward looking strategy impossible. Perhaps such examples provide the justification for community art as an alternative change agent?

114 The mantra of the bush 're-invent or perish', has been 'spruiked at provincial campuses around the country, spread by tourism graduates who become shire development officers, and preached by dozens of "future search facilitators" touring community halls' (Van Tiggelen, 2001: 22)
they cartooned local wannabes and pub regulars; their craft self-reflecting a new face to the town.

Karin sought government assistance to further the mountain’s lessons. She so confused the local council that their administrative boxes separating community and economic development became mercifully conflated. They directed her to the State, who directed her to the Commonwealth, who directed her back to local government. Those willing to give any answers told her she was a commercial enterprise and hence not deserving enough. She saw how little government had to offer her regionally not-remote-enough community. Her frustrations erupted at the government’s alibi of social capital. The bureaucrats told her with unconscious jealousy: ‘you may not be rich, but at least you’re happy’ or ‘you’ve made a lifestyle choice’. She knew then it had always been up to the town, its people and their unacknowledged skills to make the changes.

So, one night she suggested that the town re-enact its history as a draw card for coastal tourists – a way to add a meander to the beaten path. Over some months, the suggestion went from the butt of a joke to the head of a town committee. Gradually, most of the small population became involved; only a few arms needed twisting after meetings with free drinks. One woman had sewed costumes for television and offered her services to kit out the town.

The historical society incensed part of the town’s community with their version of the past, even though it was well supported with transcripts of old-timers. Stories were coloured or sanitised as required; prize roles became fiercely contested; and a community theatre was born. Tourists showed a patronising interest. Nevertheless, Saturday nights became the town’s busiest for years and city dwellers spilled over into Sunday mornings, climbing the mountain and surprising the land.

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115 ‘We should realise now that no government is going to come galloping in on a white charger to save the bush’. (Jeff Watson, CEO, Shire of Boorings in Mitchell, Queensland). Peter Kenyon, who runs the Bank of Ideas and the Centre for Small Town Development in Western Australia, also emphasises self-help strategies: ‘the bush has to quit playing the victim and waiting for the cavalry to arrive’ (2001: p25)

116 The advantages of a skills audit, formal or informal. The Cooroy Butter Factory, looking for ways to promote itself and its artists discovered that one of its more active members had sewed the costumes of the Bananas in Pyjamas for the children’s television program on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

117 Historical Societies tend to collect the oral evidence from its members and so histories are frequently limited to those of the white middle class. This is only a problem when the societies claim such memories constitute the formal history of a town, often resorted to in the interests of survival; funding and recognition go to groups telling “true” histories afterall. (See for instance Pioneer Families of Cooroy & District by Betty Sutton and The Cooroy-Noosa Genealogical & Historical Research Group).

118 This parallels the story of Harrow - a town that weekly recreates the burial of a bushranger in Victoria. It’s Ange Newton, the local pub owner, who at 37 drives the process, roping in locals after they’ve had a few, and believing in the benefits and enjoying the fun.
This gradual success, or perhaps the outsider's eye, caused a number of rifts in the town - the biggest of which centred on the count-for-nothing Aboriginal inhabitants. Some of the historical society's sanitised history included the whitewashing of a black massacre undertaken by the ancestors of the town's most upstanding citizens. Some wished to ignore its implications and others to deny it ever happened. Karin was not willing to be considered such an innocent bystander to the past. She wished to acknowledge the deed, maybe to somehow commemorate its location and terror in their weekly enactments. She knew that she needed support from the atrocity's descendants - both victims and perpetrators. Despite their frequent presence in her bar, she had never formed a relationship with any of the town's Aborigines. So with great trepidation, she fronted up to the local Murrie community.

Many of the tribal elders no longer lived in the town. They had been dispersed a century earlier by the Aboriginal Protection Board, and later, according to the wisdom of the time, brown-skinned children were given better opportunities in far-away cities. The competing native title claims reflected the divisiveness of these actions, and rival claimants were only slowly returning to the area. The Aborigines who remained, barely survived the pervasive racism through the rough care and political ability of three older wise women, who rejected the justifiable anger of the young men for something closer to compassion. After much discussion, the women had decided to disclose their cultural knowledge and their understanding of the land to both Murries and whites. It was fortunate that it was one of these women that opened the door to a nervous white stranger, asking for their endorsement in correcting history. In the end, the

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Peter Kenyon encourages towns in tourism ideas:

> tourism is about stories. It's not about a cairn outside town marking an explorer's passing. Every town has a story to tell and these stories should be exploited in some form. That's why Harrow works so well. (Kenyon, 2001: p25)

The reinvention success of Harrow is dependent on the unpaid; 'It's the volunteers that get the job done every week' (p27) and create the tourist attraction.

119 The Queensland Community Art Network reviewed an early version of this story. They asked that this sentence be removed before they would consider publishing, because it suggested a false sympathy for the perpetrators of the stolen generation. But perhaps, a tolerance and sympathy for the past equates to a tolerance and sympathy of the other. By demonising the voice of the past or of the Other as inaccessible and non-defendable, we make our own position dangerously unquestionable: "They got it wrong, but we have progressed, so cannot make that mistake again." In Australia today ironically, there are whispers of a repeat of the Stolen Generation in the current exposure of drugs, alcohol, and violence in small rural Indigenous communities and the impact it has on their children's potential. If we recognised that the 19th century impulse stemmed from much the same concerns, we would be more wary of our next (horrified) response to such issues. Advancement and progress service the same metaphor as civilisation and first world. If we associate the past with the primitive, then we cannot learn from either. In rejecting the moral stance of continuity, we serve the very endeavour we might wish to condemn.

120 These women are inspired by Wodi Wodi women from the South Coast of NSW. Pauline McLeod (well known to watchers of Playschool) and Mary Jane Page who are committed to teaching their culture to both whites and blacks across the country through schools, workshops, conferences, and the media.
massacre was not re-enacted weekly (still too much for any place to bear), although a memorial stone became a highlight of the tour and a commemoration - almost a celebration - was held yearly. Perhaps the best outcome was the friendship that grew between the two women, finding in each other a rare humanity and respect. Their willingness to be portrayed in black and white became a cultural symbol for reconciliation and meant the town's story became nationally known.121

As optimism grew so did the community's resilience. Karin inspired the town's leaders and those with money to spare, to start their own bank; profits were returned to local facilities, promotions, and festivals.122 Another new local, a landscape architect, drew up coloured future landscapes, sent them to Council, and tacked them to community notice boards. To her surprise, her vision was adopted with few modifications by the town.123 Previously desperate-to-leave young people found themselves immortalised in community art and thanked for their hard work in streetscaping. Trees were re-planted down the main street, a fountain cascaded over local stone in front of the community hall, new paint and new facades attracted successful businesses and longer-term residents.124 After years of pleas, the government relocated its unemployment service to the town - ironically as its services were finally decreasing in demand. A bank tried to return, but the town's newly established community bank meant too low a customer base for its more institutional cousin's survival.

Only now did benevolent government bodies and academics claim responsibility for the town's work, speaking of economic revival, community capacity building, and cultural tourism. But under the direction of dated political economic frameworks, they missed the point - proving that

121 This story comes from the ABC's Australian Story series put to air 26 July 2001, called 'Bridge over Myall Creek'. While researching her family history, Beulah Adams was devastated to discover that her great-uncle had taken part in a massacre of 28 unarmed Aboriginal women, children, and old men, at Myall Creek Station in 1838. With shame and disbelief, she nervously approached Sue Blacklock, a descendant of two brothers saved from the massacre, and they decided, 'if we want reconciliation, we should do it now.' They wept and hugged: 'We looked at the land and there was a strange bond there between us...in such a short time'. Consequently, Reverend Brown as Coordinator of Reconciliation for the Uniting Church organised a state-wide conference at Myall Creek that erected a memorial rock. Beulah and Sue talk of each other as sisters and Sue has accepted Beulah into her tribe.

122 Based on Jill Jorden, co-initiator of the Maleny Credit Union in the early 1980s; she encourages people to 'start their own' - to create their own version of a Maleny rather than move to Maleny itself.

123 Based on the work of Lea Durie, Caloundra's Landscape Architect. She moved to Cooroy from Melbourne in 2000 and put many hours of unpaid work into drawing up a proposal for the old mill site. The plans were then used to promote Cooroy's future to funding bodies and major organisations.

124 Streetscaping is the most common solution to small town revitalisation. In Quilpie, heritage colours and new facades on the main street has given greater confidence to the town. In Cooroy, a team of work for the dole young people became responsible for plantings and treatments. They were known as the Orange Brigade because of the safety colours worn, and locals almost always stopped to say thank you.
institutionalised bureaucracies have little room or capacity for matters of the heart and the soul. It is the part of us that believes in unimaginative dictates that cringes at the Karin Waters of this world, feeling uncomfortable in their wildness and passionate spirituality. She later told an admiring media, in some frustration at their glib stories, that: 1. Instead of moving to her now-thriving town, people should re-create their own towns as places of desire; 2. Their “overnight success” had taken over ten years of hard work by volunteers whose drive for social justice was stronger than their need for economic security;125 and 3. Although the work was done by women, true to the annals of history, it was mostly talked about by men claiming responsibility only when success was assured.126

Nonetheless, this deeper felt, less cartoonish and more critical, history of the region attracted numerous and self-reflective visitors. People no longer came for the novelty value of a hick town. They came to see an enactment of their own hidden desires of reconciliation with an ancient land and its peoples. They stayed for the quiet strength of the town and a growing appreciation of the land's beauty. It was the town's first step to a reunion, not only with Australia's first inhabitants, but also with the land itself. The people of the region listened again to the voices of their environment, and their mountain's dormant hope re-invigorated the population. The mountain got its own day of festivity every year, celebrating new sport and old culture as well as its natural environmental aesthetic.127 Mother Mountain started to relax and Karin Waters could not stop smiling. She had started a journey without end; another step across the bridge into an old land.

125 Wendy Creighton, editor of the Fassifern Guardian, Boonah's local paper, said 'we looked for small ways in which we could make a difference. Our overnight success is the result of about 15 years of hard work' (quoted in Johnston, 2000: 16).
126 A common issue for towns who are successful at revitalisation. It is only after problems are resolved, that help is offered. Consultants such as Peter Kenyon, whose businesses rely on being seen as an instigator of change in small towns, claim involvement or responsibility. The same is true of academics working on the rural, especially those immersed in action research. There is a benefit in reporting on and hence perhaps encouraging other towns in successful and creative economic strategies, although too many stories of self-made towns may lead to less government support when need is real.
127 Robin Trotter shows the city marketing of such regional distinctiveness as tourist 'escapes' so that 'tourism has become a key player in local or regional identity formation.' (Trotter, 2001: 351).
It is Australia’s country-side, out-back, and sea-front, that has always provided our most romantic mythology. It is Australia’s country-side, out-back, and sea-front, along with its media representations in art and literature, to which the population flocks looking for answers. The best and most talked of television participates in this return of Romanticism, with demonstrations of sea changes and new-made lives.

How should this renaissance of the rural be described? An influx of city visitors does not represent a returned interest in a primary industry past, nor does it imply a tourist interest in the cultural other. It is more possibly a deep human desire, welling from 60,000 years of cultural practice, to connect with the land and its spirit. Some attempt to connect directly to the ancient culture guiding this path, dancing corroborees bare breasted. Some sit in a dank rainforest, listening to its depth of cathedral wisdom and its birds and burbling waters, an embracing of tree-hugging. Others gaze silently at the colours of a desert sunset, a Namatjira or Kame Kngwarreye painting of red and purple, their solace provided by artists describing such land-love. And a few live in the life-blood itself, tending our food and our future along with the parable of the lucky country.

It is not in the end an economic triumph for the bush, but a spiritual crossing for the whole country. It is the foundation of a set of values, not easily found in central business districts. A collaborative relationship with the land can become a prime motivator for relationships between communities. And this valued connection, once again, comes from the iconic heart of the country, from the place that Australia’s honesteries emerge, from the great Australian legends of the bush. But perhaps, this time, the legends are women’s business.
Arts Now or Later? Community Cultural Development and Visual Literacy

Within western institutionalised culture, land is often treated as a colonised object, to be romanticised, protected, exploited, or mourned. A more active sense of land (where human/nature relationships are based upon gain, not loss) might be celebrated. Active land celebrations and representations build upon a complex sense of place that acknowledges conflicts and develops cross-cultural and non-human relations within a community. Memory, myth, and participative art, developed through the specific wisdom of locale, evoke the metaphor of landscape memoir, including: rituals and soundscapes (through the community participative arts), land shaped mythology (such as the bunyip), community festivity (both local and regional), and art where landscape is the player rather than the backdrop. Public celebrations involve creativity and the community: individually in poetry, literature, sculpture, and paint; collectively in festival, mural, and theatre. To describe such activities in shorthand, I use the term Community Cultural Development (CCD), developed by the Australia Council to broaden the parameters of community art in the 1980s.128

This section draws upon a praxis of theory and personal practice. Theory includes Chakrabarty’s postcolonial division between subaltern memory and dominant history as reflected in colonial attitudes to democracy; and indigenous understandings of art. Practice comes from my social planning experience of CCD, broadened further through researching and participating in Sunshine Coast regional art and cultural practices.

It is those arts and cultural activities of CCD that fit into an art now (art is life) model, rather than an Arts later (audience development model) that offer most in changing and developing community attitudes. While the mainstream might consider the art of ‘refusing despair’ as a one-off, bizarre or quirky happening - a fun piece to end the news with, CCD recasts these regular common events as the news itself. By describing the many imaginations of the wild, we might acknowledge and build upon this social movement that reconnects human community with the active nature of place, inclusive of both humans and non-humans. Creative CCD embeds community in place.

Life is art

Art produces self-reflective communities and creative individuals. Craft is non-consumerist, offering richness instead of riches. Outdoor art allows for art and craft to be widely available and accessible. As one man said to me at a bottle shop in Perth, ‘Art has to be out in the open so everyone can see it, don’t hide art behind walls’. And this, I think, is the basic definition of public art. I would add, ‘art has to be out in the open so everyone can see and participate in it’. Art and craft becomes part of everyday life – a core subject in schools, an everyday

128 Although the administrative CCD unit of the Australia Council was (perhaps temporarily?) abolished in early 2005 to much protest, the concept has been adopted around Australia – in State departments with art responsibility, in community art lobbying groups such as NSW CCD, and by community art facilitators and practitioners.
activity in community halls and open studios. Not just looking but doing both performing and visual arts: playing rhythms on self-made percussion, expressing local tragedy through purpose-written theatre, children's Easter hats parades through town, all contribute to individual development and community identity. This is community art. Without it, our society is a poorer place, lacking opportunities for greater resourcefulness and tolerance.

Why should we all use our creative power? Because there is nothing that makes people so generous, joyful, lively, bold and compassionate, so indifferent to fighting and the accumulation of objects and money. (Brenda Ueland in Julia Cameron, 1992: 4)

These understandings of life are extant in many indigenous traditions. One example is Diana James' description of 'Angatja: A Community Arts Project'.  Angatja is 600km from Alice Springs where visitors live and learn an approach to country under the guidance of indigenous elder, Nganyinytja. James co-runs these tours through her business, ‘Desert Tracks’.

At Angatja the distinction between community, art and life is not relevant. These differentiations have been made by outside European observers. In traditional Aboriginal lifestyle, art and life were one. Our Western civilization, in contrast, too often sees art as the external object, the thing created rather than the process of creation. Community arts in a Western context is a reaction against this and an attempt to energise the communal creative process. (James, 1991: 106-107)

There are many community cultural development practitioners who follow an art is life model. Linsey Pollak is one exemplar, seeing music as the breath that keeps us alive. Linsey lives on the Sunshine Coast, running community workshops and giving multicultural concerts around the world. Linsey aims to bring out the music in us all – to de-commodify the art of music. Most people have some form of music in their lives; at the very least, everyone listens to music (even if it is only the muzak of supermarkets). But, the current focus on audience development keeps the majority as passive consumers of musical spectacle. Opportunities for risk-taking and community music making are lost in the limited musics of the marketplace. Linsey dreams of a society that doesn't have a word for musician, because everyone plays music (just as we don't use 'breather' because we all breathe). In Music Alive (Luke Jaaniste, 1998), Linsey says:

I think that for me, music is an art form that's got real power to bring people together, and when a community makes its own music, a musical and cultural life can be established that affects the creativity, diversity and energy of that community.

Community performances directed by Linsey create a world alive with rhythm and notes. This is Linsey's legacy: encouraging the joy of active and multicultural collaboration in the daily music of life. Generally, Linsey uses music to express the culture of the whole community and particularly less visible groups. Linsey puts every waking hour into a community music that acknowledges and appreciates cultural diversity, because without it, community cultural change is not possible. Linsey uses the art of music to locate and express the subaltern voice, offering a new harmony to dominant tunes.

Individuals with passion and commitment act as key facilitators of CCD. Karin Waters comprises such people, and there are many other less composite examples. On the Sunshine Coast these include: Linsey Pollak, Kari
from Splash!, Bill Hauritz of Woodford Folk Festival, Shelly Smith of the Nungeena Aboriginal Corporation for Women’s Business, and Terri Delaney and Florence Teillet from PAKTI (facilitators of multi-abled community theatre), among many others (see Kerr, 2002b and QCAN 2003). These CCD individuals work inclusively across the whole community on shoestring, one-off project budgets. To continue with the example of Linsey Pollak: in 2000, Linsey Pollak developed a multicultural component to the Gympie Goldrush Festival, with minimal funding through Festivals Australia (a Commonwealth government group that seeds cultural activities on a one-off regional basis). Linsey chose Gympie precisely because of the assumptions about its beer drinking, country music culture. Large sections of a community become marginalised to invisibility in such dominant stereotypes: for example, when Linsey invited a Papua New Guinea dance group, it turned out that their relatives lived in Gympie. A lot more unusual people attended the 2000 Festival, showing the diversity of Gympie’s hidden cultures, though rarely collectively recognised and celebrated. While Gympie enjoyed the outcome, finding a source of repeat funding is difficult and takes up unavailable time, so the multicultural component has not been repeated. Facilitators of creativity such as Karin Waters (in all her manifestations), Linsey Pollak, or Diana James and Nganyinytja make art a part of everyday life. While there are products, it is process that opens new ways of viewing who and what constitutes community. CCD’s potential lies in changing and broadening a community’s perception of its identity and place.

Community Art and Community Cultural Development

Community cultural development involves more than community art. CCD is the collaborative and collective development of a community’s culture. Community planning, myth-making, and reframing the past through history and memory, are also CCD processes that affect community identity; the Other - human or (rarely) non-human - dissolves to become part of the defined community’s whole.

In community art, an individual artist develops a concept (perhaps at the request, or based on the perceived need, of a community) and the community then assists in the concept’s realisation, hopefully learning skills and techniques from the artist in the process. The community facilitates the artist’s expression (frequently providing free and unacknowledged labour). Community cultural development theoretically inverts this process - the artist facilitates the community’s expression. The community develops a concept and then (only perhaps) asks an artist to assist in realising its vision. For example, in many indigenous art traditions, an artist is granted ‘custodianship’ of a community’s self-expression; in expounding their community’s understanding of country and life, endorsed artists follow a strict set of community guided dictates in their art. In contrast, the dominance of the individual creative genius in western Art reflects the importance of the individual in our political and social landscapes. While CCD process is more embedded in traditional indigenous cultures, it forms a subaltern part of western methodology (if not its self-concept), as Part III’s example of planning demonstrates.

Community cultural development requires different skills. Listening, consultation, conflict mediation, facilitation, and cross-cultural translation are at least as important as the individual artistic ability of the worker. The worker
may still provide skills in creative techniques, but has to let go of the outcome. They are no longer the controlling ‘Artist’ in an individualised western sense. They are the worker that assists the community in developing its identity by providing a creative medium for expression. This community/worker collaboration allows the group to determine and dictate content through an artistic tool; the CCD worker provides technical know-how, administration, and/or mediates the development of collaborative content. Practically, because of the conflicts in group process, the representation of community is always stage-managed, if not manipulated, by the worker. CCD is facilitative community planning more than community art. Like the best of planning, the best of CCD work acts as an invisible (change) agent. CCD work requires persistence and links to place; Prosper Kompaore at a CCD meeting in May 2001 quoted a Burkina Faso proverb:

“How is it that sky-high termite mounds can be made by such tiny insects?” The answer, counselling determination, endurance, commitment and plenty of sustenance: “It takes earth and earth and earth…” (in Adams & Goldbard, 2002: 175)

Chakrabarty (see 1997, 2001 as examples) shows that it is a ‘democracy now’ rather than a ‘democracy later’ model that respects and expresses the subaltern voice. ‘Democracy later’ is associated with notions of history; it is an expert and colonialist approach that believes people have to be educated before they are ready for democracy. Voting will only have an impact after people are educated in the importance of politics, history, and democratic processes. ‘Democracy now’ instead believes that enfranchising people is the process of change. Education lies in democratisation; people already hold the skills and ability, they simply need to wrest access. ‘Democracy now’ assumes people have the knowledge equivalent to the prerequisite further education of the ‘Democracy later’ model (inexpert and memory based as it may be). As discussed in the thesis’ Introduction, now assumes an inherent wisdom, later presumes a lack and ignorance.

In artistic terms, such a distinction could be applied to CCD and the arts. Collective art activities parallel the ‘democracy now’ model of change. Creative activities, that are self-directed by diverse participants, assume that an artistic capability (and hence also appreciation) lies in everyone - creativity is latent, not learnt. The ‘democracy now’ of community arts assumes that given basic tools and access, anyone can become an artist, or express their community’s culture and aspirations within an artistic format. Collaborative environmental art and public sculpture could be one tangible example. It is when such creative outputs are ignored, that arts administrators turn to audience development and art appreciation programs, in the hope that greater visual literacy will, in time, mean that art is appreciated. Arts administrators transform perceptions of community from ‘creative participant’ to ‘receptive audience’. This official approach fits with Arts later; art will only have its real impact on a community’s culture after the community has been educated to read the artist’s message and consider it important. For the same reasons, funding programs in the arts often aim to promote individual artists’
professional development, so artists are better able to express their message.\textsuperscript{130} The art now model seems to work best, unsurprisingly, with CCD processes that are removed from government, away from the institutionalised and expert centre and often independent of ongoing Government funding. In contrast, Councils and government auspiced groups tend to use an Arts later model to justify their resource expenditure: either as some form of professional development for artists (as does Maroochy Council’s art incubator, ArtSynC); or to educate a community appreciation of art (as does Noosa Council’s The Floating Land – its director, Kevin Wilson, wants ‘to develop a culture of art in the everyday life of communities’).\textsuperscript{131}

The art now/ Arts later division deconstructs the monolithic within both art and CCD. It references an opposing set of paradigms – history, expert, democracy later, audience development, bridge versus memory, subaltern, democracy now, art is life, mud – themes found across this thesis. Arts later fits an ‘audience development’ approach that requires education in visual literacy; art now is the ‘art is life’ aspect of community cultural development. For Chakrabarty, ‘democracy now’ is memory; ‘democracy later’ is history. For Nora (1989: 8), memory is living community, epitomised by festivals, whereas history can only ever be reconstruction.

Community cultural activities might fit into either paradigm, but it is CCD’s art now form, along with the powerful human emotions of fear and celebration, that might create a strong enough metaphor to reflect the human/ non-human coalitions expressed in, for example, many indigenous mythologies. The inclusive community wisdom of an art now approach is skilled at celebrating the subaltern. The very act of celebrating stories of gain about an active landscape (rather than mourning the victim or ‘believing Cassandra’) is changing our story of resource driven, human economic dependency upon the land. It is celebrations of active place (rather than scientific predictions of doom) that change notions of the human environment from that of a passive dwindling resource to a more active emotive influence. The inclusive approach of arts now exposes indigenous and other, always-present, subaltern elements of the wild, and evokes memory and emotion rarely expressed in expert constructions of nature/human relations.

\textsuperscript{130} This is a key reason why community cultural development (art now) and individual artist development (Arts later) should not be lumped together in the same funding package (as they have for example in Regional Arts Development Fund of the state agency of Arts Queensland) - they have fundamentally different goals and operate under conflicting paradigms.

\textsuperscript{131} These programs are discussed in more detail in Kerr, 2002b and QCAN, 2003 and referred to in the methodology on pages 32-35 of this thesis. They were chosen from the Sunshine Coast region to represent a breadth of activities, from individuals working alone to fully funded local government initiatives. The most effective projects in terms of building a community’s cultural and environmental development were removed from local government: a poor sign for the quick fix of simply funding local governments to undertake such activities. Perhaps a change in the responsibility for CCD might help refocus CCD as a process tool rather than a product outcome. CCD has become the responsibility of arts and culture officers who are, despite the rhetoric, focused on the quality of the outcomes (because of the way they need to acquit projects to Councils and funding bodies). If CCD is to be made the sole responsibility of local government, it may be better placed in other process oriented parts of council that are not funded on a project basis, such as planning or community health. In the longer term however, for CCD and its equivalents to be effective as a tool in developing positive and active human/ nature and human/ human relations, a broader, more regional and facilitative, non-government mechanism, supported through a ‘hands-off’ funding process (from National and State Government agencies and potential corporate sponsorships) is needed that lies outside of local government.
The creative elements of landscape memoir change our discourse on land, so we might celebrate the bunyip. It is time for an inclusive community metaphor that respects memory, traditional mythologies, and emotional responses. We might use spiritual and creative activity to both fully inhabit and imagine the world. The methodology and metaphor no more requires belief than do the metaphors found in science and history, but, to have equal standing, the idea must be a powerful enough communicator so that we can ask – and act - As if it were true. And this is, at least partially, the role of arts now: to draw upon the emotional memories and mythologies of wild and muddier places in our societies, and to create cultural change that reshapes social and environmental problems by instigating new discourses of the imagination across a community. Arts now allows us to inhabit the space between physical reality and creative imagination – to imagine the space and celebrate the place of what was previously the other. We might shape our cultural conversations through a creative landscape memoir metaphor. We might hold festivals of the bunyip and thereby reshape community memory.
Bunyip festivals: ways to track and celebrate the non-human

The only cure
I know
Is a good ceremony,
That's what she said.
(Leonard Silko, Ceremony 1977: 3)

A key role of festivals is to articulate a region’s culture. This section gives examples of place-based festivals. Festivals build a landscape memoir by exposing the voice of the subaltern in both community and land. Bioregional festivals and ceremonies celebrate a specific sense of place – processes that create an experience of, rather than just a representation of, country. Bioregionalism: ‘involves an intimate understanding by humans of the place in which they live and a close association with it, both in physical / biological and spiritual / aesthetic terms’ (Sylvan and Bennett, 1994: 119). Bunyip festivals celebrate subalter landscapes when the bunyip or its equivalent acts as a cross-cultural symbol for the awe-ful and the sacred in nature. Perhaps the environment is best celebrated and remembered in the specificity of place through supernatural beings and their tracks. In Aboriginal terms, they might be Dreamings; by encompassing wider society there is a greater recognition and understanding, not only of the local environment and its non-human elements, but also of the contributions that indigenous understandings and lifestyles have made, whether covertly or not, to the more dominant, human-centric approaches of western societies. Human festivals that celebrate animal rituals take us beyond and outside the dominant paradigms. They offer us more creative and lateral approaches in developing landscapes. We might re-imagine the landscape, re-animating it with the non-human or nature spirit. Such nature celebrations also elevate the importance of locale; it is the particular place and its (non-human) inhabitants that are revealed.

Festivals create magical hybrids between nature and culture, between the physical and the imaginative, the sacred and the secular, and the past and the present. They involve both ceremony and ritual, using myth to link humans with the environment: ‘On its most integral level, ritual is the interface between nature and culture’ (Burnham in Kastner, 1998: 256). Lucy Lippard says:

The animating element is often ritual – private or public, newly created or recreated through research and imagination (itself the breath of life), … Dance … with singing and music, it is the art most rooted in a continuing present, ‘Myths are things which never happen, but always are.’ Ritual takes place in the temporal framework of myth, in that Celtic ‘time between times’ of twilight, mists and hybrids (Lippard, 1983: 159 and 163).

The role of festivals is to use spiritual and creative activity so as to be present simultaneously in the physical and the imaginative world. JC Cooper (1990:11) says traditionally festivals: ‘involved the whole community, since

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132 This section is indebted to the discussion of this thesis’ themes in a seminar and consultancy commissioned by George Main of the National Museum of Australia in July 2005.
133 There are of course animal festivals – such as the collective chorus of the graceful tree frog after the first rains – but humans are not invited, except as accidental audience (see the Frog chorus diary entry on pages 136-137).
there was no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, and they served a dual purpose in uniting both.' It is this wildness (that lies between the most cultured of spaces) that describes the process of festival. Wild spaces, when acknowledged and celebrated, increase an appreciation of the environment and of the many cultures that make up a community. Creative place based festivals lead to a wilder spirit of place, an understanding of more muddy and confused terrains in culture, race, and environment. It is not only our ecology and our creativity that would benefit if we resorted to a little wilder and more animal imagination.

Festival examples

There are many community-based processes that arise from the grass-roots to celebrate the seasonal rituals of place that follow local animals and their movements. Melbourne celebrates the Return of the Sacred Kingfisher; Maroochy’s Splash! celebrates the role of water and the black swan; and the Lake Bolac Eel Festival traces and promotes the returning path of the eel in Western Victorian waterways. Having a peripheral involvement in Splash! for a few years, I offer it here as a small example of an art now festival of landscape memoir.

Welcome to Splash! A celebration of the waterways. This is the story of a sacred element – the human connection with water. This is the story of the life of a river - born in trickles, gushing in joyful torrents to meet with other waters, slowing to a more collaborative pace, ending in graceful meanders. This is the story of life that is created in these waters. Life that reflects the changes of this river’s rhythm. This is the story of collaborations and celebrations that are built around and beside water.

Our story begins and ends with these celebrations in a gathering place called Flowtown – a town that follows the river. Flowtown is a town willing to live on the edges, a town willing to move with the flow. Where the river moves, the town follows. We are a town unrestricted by administrative boundaries and conformist traditions. We are a nomadic town, moving to a flow and pace set by the more natural laws of the river. We are a town of people willing to pack up, to move on, to go with the flow.

Let us follow the river’s journey and see where it leads. The orange banners show us the river’s path. This is not a straight path. Indeed every turn reveals change, every bend a new wonder. As we weave from place to place along the river, the faces of our town are revealed.

We celebrate edge places. Places where the water meets the land, where night meets day, where sky meets earth. Flowtown celebrates places where cultures cross, where the natural connects with the cultural. Such edge places create the heart of change. Such edge places create the future. Transformations along the changing river, the town travels with the flow, and the water moves on.

134 The Lake Bolac Eel Festival is held in April at the boatshed and foreshore near the town of Lake Bolac in Western Victoria. Hundreds of the Bulugbara Aborigines traditionally used Lake "Boloke" as their meeting place during eeling season, to feast on and celebrate the eels, and built a stone eel formation to the east of the township. James Dawson in his 1881 book on Australian Aborigines said:

Lake Boloke is the most celebrated place in the Western District for the fine quality and abundance of its eels, and, when the autumn rains induce these fish to leave the lake and to go down the river to the sea, the Aborigines gather there from great distances.

The Eel Festival aims to provide a free event to enrich the artistic and cultural content of the community, to promote and protect the ecology of Lake Bolac, to bring together environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage, to foster reconciliation, and to promote ecologically sustainable rural practice. It features concerts (predominantly folk performers), forum, historical displays, and stalls. The forum emphasised the cultural and environmental state of the waterways, focusing on eels, farming, and water quality. As well as the Festival, a small group take about 10 days to walk from the mouth of the Hopkins River at Warrnambool, and then along Salt Creek to Lake Bolac, following the traditional path of the eels returning from the sea, and drawing attention of landholders and the wider public to the cultural and environmental state of their waterways. The Festival’s major sponsors are VicHealth and Ararat Rural City, as well as over 20 local businesses and community groups. (Information from the Lake Bolac Eel Festival site, accessed 13 May 2005 <http://www.eelfestival.org.au>.)
Flowtown is a gathering place for humans and other animals. We are a creation of collaboration, a sad commemoration of destruction, an indigenous learning of land, and an optimism for future festivities.

Happily, there are many more guides on this life river’s journey than just orange banners. We rely on our respected elders, our collective wisdoms, the knowledge of traditional owners, and the energies of the young. We rely on message guides from the mountains and the trees. We learn from the voices of the borderlands, from the physical wisdoms of nature, and the unspoken communication of animals. The annual journeys of the black swan remind us of our own rituals. But nature’s guides can be capricious. The Gubbi Gubbi peoples warn us of the fickle Willy Wagtail who will try to lead us astray. But we will stay on the river’s journey – we will stay with the flow, we will go with the flow.

Flowtown has many guises, many stories – travel with us now to hear just a few.

(Introduction to the 2001 Splash! ceremony held on Chambers Island at the mouth of Maroochy river on the Sunshine Coast, coordinated by Kari, written by Tamsin Kerr, and read by Beverley Hand, Dalla woman of the Gubbi Gubbi language group.)

Splash! is ‘a carnival of communities and waterways from the range to the sea – from many ripples to a Splash!’ (October 2000 Splash poster), held every second October. It includes large puppets, drama, a parade, music, sculpture and activities such as making an organic boat or printing a footprint flag. But the day is the result of much more – small communities have been involved in creating their ripples in the Splash! story from May to September. In 2002 there were over 20 partner communities, each with their own set of outcomes: Maroochy Waterwatch volunteers made ‘Swanitor’ (swan monitor) puppets and costumes, intellectually disabled groups made paper mache swans; Caloundra kids worked with Mooloolah Waterwatch, potters created precious water pots, Maroochy Council’s departmental heads made prayer flags, Noosa hearing-impaired kids made shadow puppet plays, Gubbi-Gubbi dancers performed the connections between animals and people, and Maroochy kids transformed into willy wagtails (predominantly a girl’s choice) or mudcrabs (if you’re a boy) – just to name a few. Splash! engages and networks a wide range of communities, who are then brought together in its culmination - a day of inclusive celebration and a peaceful evening as the moon rises over Chambers Island.

Kari, a Palmwoods based artist, musician, and community environmentalist, is the watery force behind Splash! She was inspired to start Splash! by the Return of the Sacred Kingfisher Festival and she revisited the Kingfisher festival to be musical director with the help of a Maroochy Regional Arts Development Fund (RAFD) grant. When she returned to the Sunshine Coast, she established Splash! in association with Maroochy

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135 The Splash! Festival and this river trustori reflect the importance of ritual: as Thomas Moore says, ‘To be in ritual is to be in the river … and ritual is like myth … A ritual sense gives life to the ten thousand things, to multiplicity unimaginable.’ (1983: 2-3).

136 The Return of the Sacred Kingfisher Festival is held annually in Melbourne. This festival collectively celebrates the return of the kingfisher to the restored riverine environment of inner city Brunswick. It is timed to coincide with this beautiful bird’s annual migration home. It is organised by CERES, a group that among many such environmental activities, also runs a city farm on the river to teach classes in an organic environment. Freya Mathews, writer and philosopher, is one of the organisers of the Festival. In her article on Singing up the city (2000), she says:

The Kingfisher festival brings hundreds of local performers of different ethnicity and cultural provenance - schoolchildren, dancers and artists - together with thousands of local residents, environmentalists and activists, in a cathartic, high energy celebration of place. Its dramatic re-enactment of the retreat of the kingfisher in the face of ecological holocaust and its return in response to the efforts of local people to regenerate their ‘country’ through revegetation and restoration, symbolises the beginning of a new ‘season’ of peaceful co-existence between the people and the land in this locality (www.freyamathews.com/CERES).
Waterwatch. Splash! and the Kingfisher Festival are now sister events – in 2004 the Sacred Kingfisher emblem made an appearance at Splash! whilst sculptures of the swan and frog, and a few prayer flags returned the favour. In 2002, Splash! was funded through many small grants: the Sunshine Coast RADF; Moreton Bay Catchment Area Committee; the Australia Council; Arts Queensland; Maroochy Waterwatch; and Healthy Waterways. Splash!’s biennial nature allows time for recovery, project spin-offs, growth, and not least of all, funding applications. It has many outcomes: schools get the rare opportunity to discuss the differences between endangered and threatened, and the general community finds the special in a previously unconsidered environmental awareness. Kari writes a regular bulletin to keep the community in touch with Splash!, as well as create and maintain the multiple Splash! community. She finishes with ‘Watery regards’ – not a wishy washy farewell, but an indication of the high respect she has for the impact of water. Given time, Splash! could erode all obstacles with its strong environmental messages of hope and celebration. The waters of Splash! are seeping into more staid organisations and swirling through the many eddies of community.

There are many such creative celebrations that draw upon imaginary landscapes and the more spiritual or mythic in the non-human world. The landscape itself is often the focus of celebration. Southeast Queensland’s Mountains to Mangroves Festival is a broad example of the many local mountain festivals around the world. The emblem for the Mountains to Mangroves Festival is the Giant Wood Moth (Endoxyla cinerea) – the heaviest moth in the world. The moth’s life cycle is two years, creating a new generation for every Festival. The major food of the moth larvae is the inner bark of the Queensland Blue Gum, found along the entire Mountains to Mangroves corridor. The Mountains to Mangroves Festival is a biennial regional arts and environment festival that celebrates the connection between the north Brisbane community and its natural environment. The Festival engages communities from 16 suburbs along the Mt Nebo to Boondall Wetlands corridor in arts, environmental and recreational projects over a 17 day period. It creatively networks key environment groups (the instigators), historical groups, community organisations, schools, arts agencies, and individuals - those with a connection to the unique corridor of bushland on Brisbane’s Northside, from Camp Mountain in the D’Aguilar Range to Boondall Wetlands on Moreton Bay. This green corridor supports a myriad of animal and plant species as well as being a place for the human species to relax and enjoy nature-based recreation. Festival activities include guided day and night tours of the corridor, walks, plantings, community concerts, art installations, and workshops. The aim of these activities is to link the people of the Mountains to Mangroves corridor with their place in its history, its environment, and its future.

There are historic days and world environment days, celebrated with a precise notion of place, as well as their related but more generic festivals that could take place anywhere. An Aboriginal dance, common exhibitions on better resource use or national history, and local stalls, do not necessarily constitute a particularity of place celebration. But one interesting example held over four days every April/ May is the Kurnell Historic Festival (site accessed May 2005, <sssec.org.au/resources/bobs_corner/1999>). Its exhibits, ceremonies, tours, and
entertainment include: tall ships in the Bay, Aboriginal dances, street parades, re-enactments, clifftop concerts, dragonboat races, and fireworks. It is a place festival embracing the cultural as well as the natural, based in a badly damaged environment. Kurnell's environment has deteriorated from densely treed and biologically diverse to industrial wasteland as a result of nineteenth century ringbarking and unsuccessful sheep farming, and twentieth century industrial access to cheap land that established Australia's biggest oil refinery, a carbon plant, a major landfill, a sewage treatment plant, and two sandmining companies. But in 1999, the Kurnell Historic Society decided that its survival was worth celebrating – they claim Sydney's most important single wetland, its best mangrove belt, its best tract of saltmarsh, pockets of rainforest, rare dune forest, and heathland. The Festival celebrates modern Australia's historical Firsts: Cook's first landing place, Joseph Banks' first collection of Australian botany, Phillip's raising of the First Fleet Flag, the first encounter of Aborigines with British colonists, and perhaps the first Australian environmental protest when Aborigines objected to the cutting down of trees by Phillip's sailors. But, the Festival also promotes rehabilitation of the Kurnell Peninsula: 'The Festival is a cry from the Shire's heart to all Australians - and especially those in Canberra - to set about that rehabilitation.' Festivals can be educational as well as enjoyable; in the case of Kurnell, a form of protest and lobbying for change. Kurnell shows that the spirit of a place is not only found in the presence of splendour, but also in the history of degradation and memory: 'to remind posterity that Kurnell used to display the finest range of sandhills on the NSW coast'. A particular place does not need to be beautiful or bountiful to be celebrated.\footnote{137}

What does constitute a place based celebration? I would suggest the commonality in a place-based approach is the ritual inclusion of animals.\footnote{138} Bioregional festivals tend to include a ceremonial or ritual use of local animal motifs or tracks linked to indigenous traditions. Key indicators of celebrating place might be: inclusion of a local animal motif; involvement of local Aboriginal group(s); reference to local geological or natural feature(s); a spirited sense of active landscape; engaged participative processes; and education and lobbying capacity.

**Celebrating Subaltern Identity**

The festival is an extension into the present of the world-creating mythical event ... the whole purpose of entering a sanctuary or participating in a festival is that one should be overtaken by that state known...
in India as “the other mind”, where one is “beside oneself”, spell bound, set apart from one’s logic of self-possession … we enter the play sphere in the festival, acquiescing in a game of belief, where fun, joy and rapture rule and the laws of life in time and space dissolve. (Joseph Campbell, 1972)

Joseph Campbell says festivals create Myths to Live By and link us to an Other and wilder state of being. Bunyip festivals offer ways to track, plan for, map or mark out, and celebrate the non-human in our cities and regions. It is the land’s memory (more so than human memories) that bioregional festivals celebrate so as to gain environmental wisdom from, and become embedded in, a particular place. Australians have been tracking, mapping and celebrating the non-human for centuries. In our contemporary information-rich world, it would be interesting to now track and map present-day celebrations that bring together the human and the non-human through a specific sense of place. Perhaps, festivities of land’s geology are not as adaptable as festivities of the animal spirit of the place: it is harder to think like a mountain than to move like an eel. A bioregional knowledge is better expressed through celebrating the seasonal rituals of local animals than through environmental celebrations of more generic (or more obvious) elements in a landscape. Although both might re-create and re-imagine the land as an active force, and powerfully influence a people and environment relationship.

Participative place based festivals have the potential to transform the subaltern undercurrents of land and race into an undertow that sweeps mainstream Australia to new (ecologically sustainable and culturally reconciled) metaphors of identity. Celebrating a particular place offers the understanding that each place is different; in connecting with this difference, we are also connecting with the subaltern voices that belie more mainstream notions, such as the capitalist assumption of the generic sameness of place. Place based festivals celebrate a community’s embeddedness in place and link the human with the non-human. The way this is done depends upon how people conceive or imagine these connections. Some might use ecology (everything is connected) as their metaphor, or bioregionalism, or their detailed knowledge of flora and fauna. Others might use community dance and music, or environmental art to express their emotional experience of place. Others might collect memories or photos, and tell stories of place. Place based festivals celebrate the many ways we imagine co-habitation with a particular place; they develop a community’s personal landscape memoir.

The parable of Karin Waters lets us build an “imagine if…” framework of such networked collaborations. While the celebration of one particular place can be derided as local sentiment, a framework based on many such celebrations, along with bioregional and subaltern theory, offers an understanding of regional creativity as an important social movement, also in westernised culture. One-off NIMBY protests are united under the social

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139 Thanks to George Main of the People and Environment Program of the National Museum of Australia (and partly as a consequence of my week with the NMA), a section on the Museum’s website is being developed to feature and support just such place festivals through a calendar and worked framework of examples.
framework of an environment movement. In just the same way, one-off ‘quirky’ events can be united into a cultural movement for celebrating place.

But such a collated framework should not be used to dictate CCD possibilities (through policy, funding, or administration); each regional cultural activity needs to remain grass-roots and community driven to fit an arts now (community evolved, creativity from within) approach. CCD is not transformative while it still operates under the methodology that promotes community education (where local communities are expected to simply consume, and be grateful for, the message; rather than allowing change to evolve from the community itself). Funded CCD activities are often less community based because of the imposition of an external artist or funder; external project-based funding requirements measure administrative capacity rather than community interest. To date, funding for arts, CCD, and festivals has been generally based on a one-off project/ add-on entertainment model, rather than a community-evolved philosophical framework built around transforming cultures. Grass-roots activities are processes that don’t necessarily conform to the generic fashion of rhetoric; rather they connect human and non-human components with their bioregion. Perhaps like the derided ‘bunyip aristocracies’ before them, ‘bunyip festivals’ put spirited sense of place before the dictates of funding or government policy; they connect human and non-human inhabitants with the mythic, rather than deliberatively aiming for national recognition or tourism success. One consequence of this lack of accessible funding is burnout and change; for example festivals may be less frequent events, or only last as long as a driving individual’s passion or presence. But such changes more directly reflect the interests of local community, rather than the wider political rhetoric of government policy. While they might become lost to documented history, they remain in and develop local community’s memories. Occasionally, they are remembered more widely through an ethnographic framework, or more commonly they are self-documented and promoted to a potential global audience through the massed information (goat-track, not highway) of the internet.

Maleny’s demonstrations against the introduction of a Woolworths supermarket, for instance, are given greater depth and meaning in a wider framework context of environmentalism; the NIMBY becomes the subaltern. For instance, the Australian Commonwealth Government’s Festivals Australia does not fund the same festival twice and has no policy framework to direct decisions or evaluate outcomes. Festivals Australia is a typical example of community arts funding processes across Australia. There is little policy that dictates what is funded and funding is minimal - $1million per year spread around the myriad of Australian festivals. Funding is allocated to unique and innovative projects that are attached to regular (and preferably long-term and remote) festivals, but the projects cannot be ongoing components. Over the first four of Festival Australia’s funding rounds (May 2003 – November 2004), no place or festival appeared more than once. This one-off approach means there is no evaluation or framework in which to site ongoing projects or festivals. (Even externally funded activities if part of a networked framework of CCD might share their success stories, their potential and their rhetoric might still act to inform and change CCD’s limited intellectual base.) Rather than assessing whether the project is likely to meet its own goals (or the funding body’s policy, when there is one), successful funding is more often determined by whether the application form is filled out correctly and if the budget balances. Administrative capacity becomes a sufficient winnowing criterion of community applicants because the amount of money available does not correlate with the time required to undertake the bureaucratic application procedures. Consequently, many place-based CCD activities happen outside of government funding processes.
Place based festivals are inclusive of the broadest range of cultural understandings of place. They include (or celebrate with) the non-human. Animals of festival celebration and mythopoetic beasts such as the bunyip challenge the way western society thinks about land, and exposes the influence of underlying cultures on more mainstream ways of doing. Bunyips and their protean embodiments celebrate the spirit of a place. If we were to identify such place based celebrations as part of a deeper conversation about Australian identity, we might offer an intellectual and practical way of expanding upon the west’s limited views on the resource of land and its indigenous colonising. The subaltern and the wild is temporarily celebrated and grasped as it breaks through more western constructions of rationality. Celebrations of place, especially those that include animals (mythic or otherwise), present us with an opportunity to be part of the Other and to experience our culture’s and community’s subaltern influences.
Landscape memoir and site specific art: voicing object memories of place?

Site-specific art, including public sculpture, landscape, and environmental art, offers another way to express a celebration of landscape. Environmental artists are in the business of making site specific objects, interpreting the voice of the land by drawing upon local and land stories. They might re-create sacred objects and mythologies adapted to the place and its community in which they work. In best practice, the work of site specific artists come closest to bringing together story, object, and place to form a community’s mythic archaeology. But site-specific art is frequently limited by romantic notions of purity, so does not fully grasp the darker potential of completely expressing a community’s landscape memoir.

The life of objects

Objects are products that solidify processes. Objects hold their own sacred energy and symbolise the embedding nature of story and place. They are an important component in engaging community, because they materially express a community’s cultural development in a tangible form. Regional imaginations will be the stronger if linked to objects of cultural significance and relevance for that place. The story and the place are made more complete by the object (conversely the object without story or place becomes meaningless). An engaged experience of place requires story, object, and landscape site. It is the triptych of place, story and object that creates the most powerful of metaphors.

In western society, objects – particularly as defining items of national or local identity - have traditionally been the preserve of museums (although, some museums have tried to reposition themselves over the last few years to be more than holders of objects and to move beyond covert biographies of collectors). Less historical objects are found in galleries; their art reflects or (less commonly) drives the cultural metaphors that develop contemporary identity. Museums and galleries enliven objects with story, increasingly through the use of computer technology and artist or curator statements. And this has been successful, even if the cost has sometimes been to privilege the story over the object. However, place is a less critical concept in the identity-forming and reflecting institutions of most museums and galleries. For instance, the National Museum’s object catalogue documents a small part of their collection with descriptions of the object, but has little information on an object’s provenance, that is, its details of place (whether place collected, place made, place of use, or place of association).

Just as I have been asking how we might reanimate land (changing it from a passive resource to a shaping force), I could ask how we might reanimate objects? As Nick Thomas (2001) asks, how might we overcome the powerful institutionalised mock re-contextualisation of the object within a smooth unitary (and often assimilative) narrative? The present endeavour of museums is to tell better - more emotional, more spiritual, more imaginative, more engaging - stories about the object. But unless the object has been given context through a multiple voicing or curating, it remains within the dominant narrative of national identity. Alternatively, the object
might be created for a specific place, as it is in some environmental art. But this requires at least a representation, and preferably an experience, of that place, both for the viewer and for the object and its creator.

A place-centred approach might become the key to a successful and accessible cultural experience, because it is the specificity of place that supplies the missing ingredient in reanimating objects and their stories. And similarly, without the object, the place and the process of story is less powerful. Objects re-engage their communities and become charged with additional meaning. Communities might tell new stories about the object - both previously unknown histories and memories, and contemporary practices motivated by the object's presence. The object is enlivened - not only does it bring new stories, but it brings new audiences and stronger links between its community of place and more national identity. Objects might also be (re)created by artists to service a particular community's needs to 'document' their story.

Such a process for overcoming decontextualisation is more accepted for indigenous artefacts, and there are a number of contemporary examples of objects returning to their communities and place of use. This both engages the community in the identity-collecting work of museums and strengthens the role of the object as a holder of cultural value. Traditionally in Indigenous society, objects were a critical component of celebrations. In Western Cape York, the Wik people (made famous through Native Title) have a tradition of making ceremonial sculptures, in clay and more recently wood, as centrepieces of dances. These tell important stories of different totemic creatures and mythic events that affirm both law and trustori in their culture, as well as explaining the Dreaming creation of the landscape. In the Northern Territory, the Yolngu made their ceremonial objects out of wood ‘so hard that they will gap the blades of steel axes’, so they would not rot when stored in the mud of sacred billabongs (see John Rudder, 1999: 14-15).

In non-Indigenous and more cross-cultural community traditions, objects also play an important role. For instance, the paper-mache black swans of Splash! appear at the Chambers Island celebration in southeast Queensland and then travel to Melbourne’s Merri Creek. More generally, environmental and public artists create site specific art that optimistically expresses both the voice of the community and of the land. There is even a role for the electronic object and its representations through the internet (thereby perhaps overcoming issues of conservation and singularity, as well as accessibility). Place can be represented through story, mythology, and the visual and performing arts, as well as through histories, geographies, geologies and maps. It is the accessible format in celebrations of active and particular places that combines both story and objects to embody and enliven the heart of community identity.

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142 Examples include the returning of Aboriginal bones to regional keeping places or the National Museum of Australia’s re-placement of possum-skin cloaks in their maker’s community (possum-skin cloaks travelled with a curator to their making place and new cloaks were also made by the objects’ place community).

143 Films of such (modified) celebrations were recorded in 1962 (see Peter Sutton’s ‘Sacred images and political engagements: A brief history of Wik sculpture’ in Queensland Art Gallery, 2003:54-59).

144 To be left in the care of their bunyip equivalent, perhaps?
OBJECT TRAIL

For instance, a cross-border regional ‘object trail’ might follow land tracks and animal migrations celebrated in local festivals, such as the (H)eeling walk of the Lake Bolac Eel festival. Animal migrations are bioregional in interest and in their physical paths taken (they pay no attention to government boundaries or state lines); an object path that follows their tracks might lead to a more ecologically based relationship. A regional object trail could be both virtual and real and build upon the heritage trails of State agencies, and ideas from existing projects, such as: the former Cobb&Co/ trading route in southwest New South Wales that brings together artists, museums, heritage and landscape with sculptures and artworks; or Murray Arts, who select an object and re-engage it and the community through a 3 minute community video. Objects held in museums and artwork from galleries could travel to place and localised festival with an accompanying curator or go to nearby local history museums as an accompanying display.

Some objects cannot be restored to (and by) place because of the impact of time; they represent a time and/or place – a way of life – that is no longer. But by returning them to a new community that inhabits the old space, their heritage might be better accessed and understood. Alternatively, virtual objects could be displayed that connect to place-based websites (and link back to the object’s institutional home). Or communities could have access to entire catalogues and pictures of objects from State and National collections and could select their own virtual exhibition of relevance to each specific event. Like the community exhibitions on the New South Wales Art Gallery web site, these create new community meaning through re-arranging and linking images of objects. An object trail that links into grass-roots initiatives such as place-based festivals, driven by local community issues of identity and heritage, as well as allowing (at least virtual) community curatorial input, is more engaging because it is less contrived (and politically motivated) than exhibitions dictated by national policy alone. An object trail that celebrates the tracks of animals begins the (re)merging of human/ animal/ spirit/ land within a regional focus.

An object trail is just one example of processes that might de-mystify and make more accessible the work of objects within western paradigms and allow greater community place-based interrogation of what constitutes Australian and regional identity. This might be done in association with festival and more creative practices. Kenneth Foote in Shadowed Ground (1997: 5) says, ‘As a geographer, I could not help but notice that the sites themselves seemed to play an active role in their own interpretation.’ The same applies to place-based objects. We might imagine and animate the life of objects. Perhaps we might imagine for a moment that things not only have their own lives, but that those lives are as fully felt by the objects themselves as are our own emotional and spiritual journeys. Things become attached to place, they have a home that both evolves and evokes. Place shapes objects, moulding identity. When objects move home, they go through difficult adjustments, but eventually settle into their new place that reshapes their cultural identity and meaning. Long time museum

145 A subaltern project of reading alternative interpretations ‘against the grain’ of more institutional understanding and presentations - objects are given different contexts from which new stories of community identity emerge. See <www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/myvirtualgallery>
objects eventually forget their place of origin and become defined by the shelf (each object aspiring, of course, to high visitor numbers). We use objects and surroundings to shape and define our identity; we might imagine that objects use humans and place for exactly the same purpose. Some objects survive migration, surrounded by kin and representations (maps, photos, video re-creations) of their home, their place. Or (more rarely) their stories are so strong that place is of secondary importance. An unfortunate few become misplaced nervous wrecks, shadows of their former selves, incapable of engaging the viewer or of evoking place. They are relegated to the heap of unviewed, unused and useless objects that lie forlornly in the darkness of archive boxes. Even the most successful of museum objects are misplaced in the sense that they no longer have an ongoing dialogue with their original country or community. As Rumi, the 13th century Persian poet, puts it in *The Reed Flute’s Song*: ‘Anything pulled from a source/ longs to go back’.

If we use maps and photos to evoke a sense of place in the object, it is only a representation, a memory, rather than a full experience of place. Perhaps objects might be fully experienced or remembered through in-situ ceremony. The important role of place for objects is obvious in the increasing community creation of roadside memorials for road victims; the separate funeral ritual does not adequately express the place of death, so commemoration objects are sited as critical markers, a public declaration of the place’s importance. Place already drives the creation of object in many traditional and grass roots activities; if, for example, museums or galleries collected and re-located such objects as roadside memorials, they would lose much of their significance and community value. Similar objects in museums need to be re-placed (at the very least temporarily) to remain meaningful.

However, a number of cultural changes are needed within institutional practices, if place is to be wedded to objects (and their stories). The culture of experts needs to be deconstructed and curators need to draw upon (if not be comprised of) more diverse and creative voices. Exhibits need more acknowledged ownership and responsibility. Like the credits at the end of a film, exhibits should include a panel of authors, curators and administrators involved in their development, as well as explaining how diverse communities have been represented. The changing policy aspects of exhibiting could be made overt; for instance, a small introductory exhibit on ‘The making of… (the exhibition)’, that included a copy of the exhibiting policy or style guide might allow and invite the re-use and re-imagining of objects by visitors and the wider community, to express other stories and wilder places. Exhibits in national institutions such as museums and libraries express the current dominant and expert story of Australia and its identity. A more open acknowledgement that this represents only one set of epistemological practice might encourage other more regional voices, community based stories, and collations of objects to emerge.146 These wilder, subaltern voices might also be collected and promoted as

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146 These more local stories are held and found in local museums and galleries but local museums in particular are usually volunteer based and often represent only one sub-culture in their region. Objects are collected rather than curated; narrative threads are difficult to access. External institutions whose expertise lies in identity formation might become
another voice contributing to Carter’s ‘thick time of hearsay’. People like Tim the Yowieman, The Fishman, or Herb Wharton engage new audiences and attract media attention precisely because they are imaginative and wild, telling trustori to get to the heart and to the diversity of people and land relationships in Australia. An acknowledgement of place-based objects and wilder institutional practice might go hand-in-hand.

To experience place thoroughly is to go beneath objects and texts. Words and things are not enough to hear the land’s stories. As Australian indigenous voices have argued, history and wisdom is not just handed down from heaven (the intellectual sky) or written up in books, its memories come up from the embodiments of - the tracks and trails upon - the earth. It is the recognition and the celebration of such tracks that form the argument for experience through community cultural activities. It is a landscape memoir, rather than an environmental history that links us, embeds us in place. The story - whether scientific, historical, or local - is not enough. It is the imagination that is created through the links between words and memories of an object and its place that reactivates both. Perhaps it is through a community’s cultural activities that the active land can be expressed and experienced: in festival, in rituals of land, in public and collective art – in the celebration of emotions inspired by land.

**The practice and rhetoric of Artists in Nature**

Site specific art, environmental art, and public art produce place-based objects. They potentially celebrate a community’s landscape memoir. A mythic archaeology and a community theatre of local identity occur when artists collaborate with a community to explore and expose collective memories and emotions. Artists might create objects in situ that give validity to and make concrete these memories and celebrations of place, especially unearthing what lies beneath (the subaltern voices, the Other of community and land). In best, aspirational, practice, by making ‘contact’ with the place, artists make contact with the layers of community memory in the land (ie the landscape), and reflect the specifics of that particular place. Four examples of art in nature show its potential: in France 32+32=2000; in South Korea, YATOO; in Queensland *Bathing/ Farming with Mary*, and in southern New South Wales, *the fishman*.

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involved in the local place. A more collaborative story-telling might engage broader audiences by turning a mish-mash of objects into reflected local memories.

147 Tim Bull formally changed his name to the Yowieman, taking on a Cadbury’s court challenge and winning in the process. He describes himself as a travel writer, cryptonaturalist, tour guide and guest speaker and lives near Canberra. I talked to him 28 July, 2005. He uses the Yowie to engage and inform particularly children with the mythic and the environment. He is putting together a book and website, *Simulacra*, of faces and forms in the landscape. He also told me of the bunyip festival that happens in Burrawang Swamp (a place where if the peat is mined, the bunyip will die), Bowral NSW, where even their hockey team is called ‘the bunyips’. The publican of Burrawang Village Hotel Ed Woolfrey and a school teacher put on an annual school play about bunyips and indigenous knowledge - bunyips are a never ending project!
32 artists were met at a rural station in France, given motorbikes to cross 90km of country so as to discover the place. They were then asked to dig graves and bury a symbol of their artist’s life: for instance, one artist, on all fours, sang his song into the grave. A granite tombstone reads: ‘Here, 32 ripe artists fell down from the trees to make love with 32 small villages’. (Now, surprisingly in rural France, tourists might stumble upon a cemetery of artist’s lives!) Artists were transformed into ‘craftsmen of common life’ allowing for a more collaborative community theatre between the population and the artists. The common activity in each village was a wedding between the artist and a villager (often the mayor). On 20 May 2000, 32 weddings took place in the region, with 9,700 actors and no spectators. These ‘plays’ suppressed spectators, demolishing the clear roles in Art of the ‘emitter’ and the ‘receiver’ (French philosopher, Pierre Levi’s terms). Art became intentionally about communication rather than commodification – ‘there is nothing to sell’ (any products, such as CDs and postcards were given away for free). The artist’s contract was to live a conjugal life with the villages, to eat in each house, and to be directed in their consequent art projects. When the work was made (Francois Davin, one of the participating artists, says ‘the children were born’), a village feast celebrated the process. The village in which Francois worked, Nané (of 101 inhabitants) now pays for 3 artists per year for 2 weeks (about $4,000), and works with contemporary art centres (who asked to be associated with the village). The funding acquittal for 32+32=2000 was problematic (How many spectators? None. How much money earnt? None, in fact could you give us some more?) More funding was given because the event attracted 250 media and a movie was shown on all channels on French national television. The media was not sought as publicity or spectacle; rather, it was hoped to stimulate discussion on the role of art, to ask ‘What happened here?’ and ‘What was the question?’

\[32+32=2000\]

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148 Information comes from Jean Bojko and particularly his keynote speech ‘People as the central art material’ at the Creative Territories Conference in Noosa on 17 June 2005. Bojko says community art is not to solve the problem, but to point out the problem: ‘artists send signs from the lighthouse and the captain of the boat makes his own choice.’ Bojko has been involved in many fascinating projects; to glibly mention a few: imagining a new story by getting a village to throw coins in the river (to make the river, not the banks, rich) and the legend (‘a coin in the river will make you happy forever’) becomes a tourist attraction; a cross-cultural project getting a famed Arab orator to read and sing Victor Hugo; an artist chef and four people each week are recorded to make a recipe book and a final conference of 52 chefs and 208 conversationalists; 25 artists provide 50 old people with ‘Artist on Wheels’ and 8 local families make films (given camera and training) of the process. Early in his anarchic community theatre career, Bojko was funded to produce a play for an opening. Instead he took the money and hired 12 poor for 3 months as professional poets (hundreds applied and the recruiting of people was already the play). 28 artists and philosophers worked with the 12 poets and 400 people came to hear the ‘factory of expression’ speak about poverty as a social and political problem. His conclusion is that art should always be a festival, rather than the sad sacrilegious whispers in galleries. As a community artist, Bojko’s cultural (and audience) question is: ‘How is Madame de société?’
YATOO’s name is based on Chinese characters, ya meaning field or nature and too meaning to throw or to express. This South Korean association of nature artists is based around the river, Geumgang and the city Gongju, and started in 1981 by three artists to study what was then termed ‘site art’. In 1983, YATOO ran its first conference asking What is Nature Art? From the early 1990s, they encouraged international exchanges and now hold a major biennial international art festival to encourage a nature friendly outlook (to contrast the more urban and human-centric stance of other Korean art). In 1995, the nature art festival involved 87 artists from 24 nations. Locals were surprised but interested, bringing ice creams and sweets to the artists and taking photos with their children. The consequent art is now in a public nature art park in Gongju. By 2005, YATOO runs four workshops each year to mark the four seasons, inviting artists to sit in nature and find its seasonal meaning. YATOO is supported by both central and regional governments. Ko Seung-hyun, the president of YATOO, in his March 2005 letter invited artists to imagine unlimited Visions about Nature with the question: ‘How can contemporary art connect visions to the future of nature and human beings?’ Ri Eung-woo, a long-term participant, says nature is a site of creativity and disappearance, its continuous growing and dying always provides a different pleasure and interest; if you understand the culture of eating rice (three times a day), then you understand YATOO.

YATOO’s relationship with nature is based on traditional Korean viewpoint, and thus does not try to subjugate nature or objectify it merely as a source of utilizable materials. Themes, such as the circulation of life or stern order of nature are prominently featured in YATOO’s art. Thus YATOO’s work is both deeply natural and human, and has formed a mutually nourishing relationship between nature and man. (YATOO’s website: <www.yatoo.kr> accessed September 2005)

Much of Korean nature art involves living sculptures. Humans are a frequent part of the final product: body art extends the natural sunset, a man and a cow eat grass together as animals; human heads emerge from cairns. Other animals form part of the art as well: living sea shells are placed in lines on the sand and their consequent movements back to more random patterns are photographed. Nature is given an active part in art creations, allowing the wind to blow a large suspended brush across paper. Both an awareness of living objects and the human form are very much part of nature art in Korean philosophy. YATOO develops the Korean philosophy of nature through art and effectively spreads it throughout Korea and the world.

Information comes from YATOO’s website: <www.yatoo.or.kr> and <natureartbiennale.org/eng/> accessed September 2005 and Ri Eung-woo’s presentation to the Creative Territories Conference on YATOO (18th June 2005). Ri Eung-woo is one of the better known South Korean nature artist, and has held many solo and international exhibitions of his work. One recent 2005 exhibition on The metamorphic and Re-perception shows his philosophical interest in the communicative life of objects, relying on ‘living, rather than formative arts’. Of his interest in collecting and reusing natural and manmade objects, he says:

In the middle of my careful watching they [the objects he has collected], each of which had its own shape and characteristic, are dancing in the virtual space and moved to optimal places. They do come into being again instead of being burnt or thrown away. Those meaningless wastes gain vitality at my finger tips, becoming essential parts of my creation (from Ri Eung-woo’s 2005 Catalogue).

Ri Eung-woo, like other South Korean nature artists often uses his body as part of the artwork statement, sometimes posing amongst rocks, lying on sand to form part of the setting sun’s path, or shaping hands to reflect the angles of twigs.
Bathing with Mary

Bathing with Mary was a river art project organised in 2003. The Mary River is the major water source for the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast. Its coordinator, Francois Davin, drew upon his experiences in France to develop a process of artists and mentors working with landholders and farmers who bordered the river. While the Mary flows predominantly in Cooloola Shire (Gympie area), the Mary projects are run in conjunction with Noosa Council, piggybacking onto the availability of international environmental artists in The Floating Land (discussed later). Four emerging artists worked with established artists to make site specific art on farmer’s land bordering the river near Federal. Wendy McGrath made ‘Mary’s bed’ using a coverlet of sewed camphor laurel leaves, Susanne McLean set up a place in which viewer/participants could write letters to Mary, Francois Davin created a white painted skeleton canoe of tree branches, hung at the height of the river’s original course to remember ghostly pasts. Sally Spencer mourned the rareness of the Mary River Turtle. She took bones of the turtle to local schools, asking children to replicate them in white porcelain clay (and discussing the environmental issues of rivers and rare animals at the same time). The bones – some fired and some not – were piled into a circular midden (the white bones gleamed like a spotlight in the midst of the dank forest floor) and white square flags of silk, painted with Japanese-style turtles were hung around the bones. Sally Spencer engaged many people in both the creation and the viewing of the work and it was developed into a larger body of work touring local sites and galleries. Bathing with Mary led to the Regional Arts Development funding of a later project, Farming in Mary in 2005, in which 10 Floating Land international artists were hosted by 10 farms to create sculptures from materials found on the land that celebrated the river. Four local artists also created sculptures on the four bridges in the Valley. A number of towns along the Mary (Imbil, Kandanga, Dagun, and Amamoor) each held collaborative celebrations to mark the winter solstice, dance, workshop, tour, eat with and farewell, the artists over the last week in June 2005 in which the sculptures were on display.

The Fishman

John Reid is a landscape photographer and senior lecturer at the Canberra School of Art, interested in the visual arts as a catalyst for social change and developing a sense of place through cultural identity. In January 1988, John Reid, Mark Boxsell and Jenny Hillman went on a field trip with their new acoustically sensitive automatic orbital scan camera. They left the camera in the Wombeyan Caves and when developed, one photo dimly showed the bottom and legs of what they termed ‘the fishman’. They returned and gradually worked out the fishman inhabited the Deua and Shoalhaven watercourses, but only seemed to become visible through the camera. Alone at the Mongarlowe River, John Reid blacked out and the camera recorded the fishman again. Han Tran and Mark Falkner also became involved in the search. While there was no evidence found in the upper

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150 This information comes from the website <www.fishman.com.au> and from an interview with and presentation by John Reid on 28 July 2005. John has also notably done artwork using defaced Australian currency, and performance pieces where his naked body becomes just another roadkill. He is the head of the ‘National Environment Bank’, issuing artistic landscapes as money to raise funds for environment organisations. John is also involved in developing an ARC proposal called Engaging Visions taking 6 regional areas across southeast Australia and encouraging long-term relationships between visual artists and local communities. This proposal follows the success of ‘Special Forever’, a ten year community cultural development project of the Murray Darling Basin Commission.
reaches of the Murrumbidgee, John met the fishman face to face for the first time in the Murray. He decided that the Buddawangs (a national park) was ‘fishman’s middle-earth’. Jenny Hillman lost interest in the fishman, declaring him ‘yet another white male incursion into the landscape’. John continued obsessed. He argued that the story of making a picturesque landscape photo is the story of the making of its path,\(^{151}\) that we need imagination as much as we need knowledge, citing the example of the Loch Ness monster. By walking in the wilderness, we heighten culture, showing how the view from the edge becomes a wildness of greater mystery when seen as a non-human space. John refused the support of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, because he feared their science and technology would remove the mystery. Mark Boxsell left to go overseas, but he never arrived, his disappearance reported by New South Wales police. John thinks, in his last encounter with fishman, that the fishman’s face looked like Mark’s, now more alive on a journey in an environment unmediated by artifact. John says, ‘a journey into wilderness is a journey from which one never recovers’.

The fishman story acts as an agent in developing a sense of place, a pride in the southeastern NSW region and its rivers. Not co-incidentally, it has also attracted ongoing media interest. The fishman adds the potent gift of mystery transforming the specimen of nature to a symbolic and mythic fiction. John promotes this in three ways: mosaics of 10x8 photos record the sumptuous detail of place, requiring careful examination to catch glimpses of the fishman (a traveling exhibition called Fishman of SE Australia - An Oral/Visual work); a 45 minute narrative on discovering/encountering the fishman (its presentation is summarised above); and, mass media and web extension. The website documents journal entries and photos from the late 1980s and early 1990s about the fishman, creating an environmental philosophy of the arts. The fishman went public in September 1992 on Late Night Live and the 7:30 Report of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the story is still attracting media interest. On the 5th May 2005, the local ABC’s show, South East Mornings, covered the story as ‘Myth or reality? It’s all a bit fishy’. The fishman engages us in the well-being of rivers and forests. John Reid says (from the traveling show’s catalogue):

I knew all things were a construct of the mind: yet, my mind had constructed in Fishman something that knew me before I knew myself. Through my obsession with this creature, I discovered the power of silence. I discovered the power of advocacy. I discovered a discovery. I endured scepticism armed with nothing more than human testament. I attracted as believers people who value imagination as much as knowledge. I aggravated as detractors people who have been suffocated by reason. I repelled in twitches scientists who had lost their sense of wonder … I elevated Fishman from fact/specimen to fiction/symbol. I collaborated with journalists to build Fishman as super media myth … put to work in campaigns to save old growth forests; in promotions to save national parks. I have drafted an ethic pertaining to photographic practice in wilderness that is responsive to conservation concerns. Again, my art and teaching practice change.

\(^{151}\) In his journal entry for December 1995, John says: Photographers are not renowned as desirable curators of the unknown. Wilderness landscape photographers, who prey on endangered places and who release their pictures to an expectant public without the story of their production, without declaring their path, are among its most wilful violators. <www.fishman.com.ay/html/dom2a.html> accessed July 2005
The fishman is an artistic and creative process to imagine and embody the wild. Its products are as much about social and environment change as they are about photos, websites and exhibitions. The objects are a necessary part in the construction of the mythic and fearful story, and the story celebrates and elevates specific details of a loved region. The human/animal/place of the fishman epitomises an individual’s Landscape Memoir.

**Artists in Public Place versus Place in Public Art**

*Romantic philosophy and the problem of site specificity in environmental art*

Artists in nature, like CCD workers and nature writers, often bring a romantic and sometimes arrogant philosophy to their work that says nature is good and culture (and especially the west’s) is bad. The example given here of *The Floating Land* is an environmental art biennale organized in Noosa with the involvement of the key international artist in nature group.\(^{152}\) It typifies many aspects of environmental artists.

*The Floating Land* is billed as a ‘gallery without walls’ for the work of environmental artists and run by Noosa Council’s Regional Gallery on the Sunshine Coast. Kevin Wilson, the director of the Noosa Regional Gallery until 2006, is its instigator. He was inspired by *Les Vent de Forets* (in which international artists work with the natural materials of a French forest to create public sculptures in situ) and by *Sculpture by the Sea* (large artworks placed on Australian coastal beaches). Kevin invites international artists to submit designs and those selected have fares and materials paid, and accommodation provided. Artworks are manufactured by the artists, some with assistance from community volunteers, focusing around water. Works are displayed on sites around Noosa foreshores and the hinterland. The artists often then work on other regional projects: at Woodford Folk Festival in 2001; and the *Farming with Mary* project in 2005. The ideas and the art are exposed to tourists and local residents across the Sunshine Coast; people are generally engaged and interested (as well as enraged, some vandalism always occurs). *The Floating Land* is a project that builds on Kevin Wilson’s philosophy, in which respect for the landscape and an understanding of creativity go hand in hand.

However, the reality does not always live up to the rhetoric. Noosa relies upon nature tourism as its key economic base and the Council puts less emphasis on community engagement and more cultural and spiritual aspects. Kevin Wilson’s aspirations were that *Floating Land* would become part of the tourism psyche, like the Noosa triathlon, and be tied into tourism packages with B&Bs, hinterland, and gallery works. This goal of tourism does not always sit neatly with building community social capital. Art audiences were frustrated by the environment obscuring or even demolishing the art (for instance, in 2003 the wind tore the paper sails of one artwork and it was consequently removed by the artists, in 2005 two projects sank in the sea instead of floating).

\(^{152}\) Information comes from: my practical involvement in site-specific art comprising a ten day international workshop and conference in June 2005; my work with QCAN on CCD Frameworks that included a number of interviews with Noosa Regional Gallery director, Kevin Wilson; and more general ongoing participation with environmental art projects across the region.
Others found the art threatening or too attractive; works were destroyed or stolen. None of works are permanent because of vandalism and local complaints. The art is seen to pollute Noosa’s ‘pristine natural environment’. There were problems in 2001 getting the Queensland Environment Protection Authority’s approval for placing artist’s work on the river, because of the river’s A-grade rating. Consequently, there has been no further river work. *Floating Land*’s emphasis on the natural comes at the cost of the local human cultural issues. The interaction between community and artists proved difficult. Kevin’s experience of the French equivalent to the *Floating Land* (*Les Vent des Forets*) was that the artist is vaunted and the community has a cohesive, village mentality. In Noosa, the mix of tourists and residents, the greater distances, and a more casual culture, means artists have been treated with suspicion, by both locals and Council staff. The lack of community cohesion or interest is compounded by the fact that the (underpaid) artists also want more informal time to be by themselves (Noosa’s beach possibly offering more attractions than a French forest?). Another unexpected initial outcome was there was not much use of natural materials on site; most 2001 pieces were built first in studios, leaving both nature and the public out of the process of creation. Three *Floating Lands* later and more artists build their work on site, relying only slightly more upon local materials.

For instance, the 2005 program of *Floating Land* featured international artists doing beautiful work. Byoung Tak Moon designed a 5 metre spiraling dragon’s tail made of iron reinforcing and branches, based on South Korean mythology. Bonggi Park designed a stunning folly on the water made of archways of branches, with a small meandering jetty to reach it (made by undocumented local furniture makers, Jonathon Fuller and Pajda Perina). Motoyuki Niwa made bamboo sculptures of pelican and eagle, reflecting common seashore fauna. Francois Frechet made a large bamboo ‘scarecrow’ pyramid to float on the sea, ‘built by animals to frighten humans away from doing further environmental destruction’. Ludwika Ogorzelic made a long 20 metre crystal structure of gladwrap-like plastic threaded across trees to create a space of light and tension, that looked like (but vehemently was not) a spider’s web.

These environmental artists from around the world (all members of the Artists In Nature International Network) worked alongside workshop participants, including myself, from around Australia to create site specific art around the site of Noosa Woods. Francois Davin, president of AININ (Artists In Nature International Network) coordinated the workshop, teaching his site specific philosophy and techniques. AININ:

believes that art in nature implies respecting nature, not using or abusing it for the sake of art. This means a specific creation for each individual site whether it is in a rural, urban or social environment as an alternative for the traditional presentation of art objects in museums, galleries and public spaces.(See <www.artinnature.org> accessed July 2005)

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153 Nine dragons around the world hold up the sky. But as humans destroy more of nature, each dragon drops to the ground burying themselves back into the earth. Byoung has traveled the world making the same sculpture of the disappearing dragon’s tail. As this is his ninth sculpture, we should expect the sky to fall any moment now. I loved the association between object and story myth. I only took issue with the beach site; surely the dragon should be crashing in the face of some of our more destructive transgressions, in front of the ever-expanding freeway or coastal development perhaps, thereby referencing some of these more negative human aspects?
Francois says site-specific art is ‘not necessarily environmental art, rather art that pays attention, listens, to the site and responds to it’. The practice of AININ is effective and wide ranging, although like many minority projects, is prone to cliques and clichés. The same group of artists tend to tour AININ’s (self-developed) International circuit of festival and activities. Francois Davin who moved from France to Noosa, and Kevin Wilson (also ex-president of AININ), provided much of the first hand evidence that informs my understanding of the official culture of AININ; their response to volunteers, audience, workshops, and the sites is a passionate philosophy and an ironically elitist approach about the role of artists. There is an inadvertent air of bringing art and environmentalism to the great unwashed. It is easier to do art in a small village than in a city because they appreciate you more, says Francois. The concept that the farmers might have a longer-term connection to place, and a more widely spiritual understanding of their effective coalitions of human, animal and plant, is not on AININ’s agenda. Rather the regional presents opportunities for art (and artist) advancement and farmer education. In response to my question on the first day of the workshop about volunteer recognition, Francois reiterated Kevin’s earlier point (at a Woodford Folk Festival workshop in 2001) that local volunteers need not be acknowledged (or paid) as co-artists because they are simply happy to bask in the glow of the artist. The community does not dictate the work of the artist. Rather, the community is to be educated and developed. The artist is to be praised, admired, supported, and celebrated. Despite (and perhaps because of) this attitude, the elder men of AININ contribute significantly to the strength of environmental art around the world. It is individuals such as Francois Davin who often make and promote the watershed difference to the community cultural development of an area. But, Francois or Kevin Wilson reflect only one aspect of the wide practices of artists in nature.

There are other artists in nature, who rather than looking for the limelight, see their practice in almost spiritual terms. They make their art for themselves; theory and audiences are incidental. Some of the most beautiful pieces designed during the 2005 Floating Land were very ephemeral work, not designed as public sculpture. With few exceptions, many of these quieter environmental artists were local women or workshop participants. Corrie Wright sat on site, sewing banksias leaves into groups to make a huge chandelier and to make connections with the public – metaphorically casting light upon both the forest floor and cultural practices. Wendy McGrath sewed leaves from the macaranga tree (a rainforest pioneer species) into the spirit of nature – a beautiful gown showing: ‘nature constantly making her debut – the “haute couture of the forest”’ (on last page of photocopied handout ‘Noosa Long Weekend The Floating Land Guide to Sculpture Trail’, June 2005). Lynn Shannon did not want to be named (but she appeared in the Guide nonetheless); she has been making rock-balancing sculptures around the water’s edge for many years, so was included in the promotion for Floating Land. Elaine Clochegty disappeared during much of the workshop; hidden in the forest, she made an exact shadow of one of the trees - paperbark stem running along the ground to the tree’s base and each replicated leaf pinned to the forest floor with tiny twigs. It was a beautiful labour of love that most visitors missed because it was so gently and covertly presented. Another workshop participant, Dianne Dickson’s work of three large but delicate canoe-like nested baskets, hung from a tree reflecting the many layers of landscape; each contained a
threaded reference: yellow cellophane, traditionally made twine, and natural vines. The base was swept and lined to reflect the ellipsoid shapes above, and Dianne invited other offerings; by the end of the week, it was covered in shells, leaves and shapely sticks. Val Bennett placed three bamboo sail skeletons on the edge of the bay, imagining them as both white coloniser and indigenous viewer. These last two works showed a more unstable (and to me interesting) relationship to nature than the more usual serene practice of spiritual communion with nature.

My work was an attempt to offer some site-specific philosophical commentary on the sometimes romantic processes of environmental artists and to encourage audience participation (see boxed text on page 198). It certainly stirred emotions – it was vandalised and remade, some praised and respected the work, while someone I know (being a small town afterall) wrote on the path in front, ‘Fuck off artsy wankers’. But, the art did its job: many ties were added and removed over the course of the week. And, when I took the remains away, it had collected, during tidal changes, the less romantic flotsam of a community living beside water: countless tangled fishing lines, cigarette stubs, plastic cups, and a Coca-cola can had all been caught up in the plastic coverall of the west.

In general, the lack of site specificity and the romanticised practice remains the flaw of the Floating Land event. In the instance of the 2005 Floating Land, its art and workshop was sited in Noosa Woods, an easy walkable small spit of land between the river and the sea. Most of The Floating Land works were not specific to the particular site of Noosa Woods; they could be placed in any natural environment near water without losing meaning. To be unromantic, Noosa Woods was dredged out of the river mouth to provide more beach, parking space, and a place for dogs. Many artists and participants in the workshop bemoaned settler Australia’s lack of connection to place (and suggested their work as amelioration), so none celebrated this strong western connection to (and indeed creation of) Noosa Woods. Most of the 2005 invited pieces had been fully designed before the artist had even seen the site, let alone known of its history or community. In the commissioning process, photos of the natural scenery sent to overseas artists were considered sufficient site information. Even when the artists worked for a week on the site, their interactions with the community were haphazard and sometimes limited by translation; and no formal information on the history or culture of the site was provided to either artist or audience. Hence, artists relied upon their own short communion with the natural, kept artificially separate from the cultural. They did not have the knowledge of a specific and complete landscape to work with, rather a more generic knowledge of their own professional practice. Many artists become known and are selected for a particular style and outcome, and their success depends upon repeating the process independent of the site. The resulting pieces are often beautiful, but not usually site specific; conceivably they could be placed and given meaning anywhere. Their site specificity is limited to the non-gallery space; they celebrate the outdoors of nature’s generica.
The romantic nature of the practice means that only narrow aspects of the site are acceptable to hear. Most artists try to use natural materials from the site (excepting of course all the wire, nails, fishing wire, pulleys, steel frames, tractors, bamboo, etc used in their construction). However, other materials on a site also tells the story of place – the flotsam of old buckets, plastic bags, the evidence of dog, cow, and other feral animals, concrete paths, picnic tables, fireplaces, power lines, taps, toilets and car parks. The site itself may be artificial, dredged or reclaimed from degraded or agricultural land. This more important history of a site (since without it the site would simply not exist as a place for environmental art) is subaltern to the (re-created) natural that is romanticised and celebrated. Rare human history is generally only acceptable if indigenous (too often a romantically constructed mythic past, sheared of its conflicts - there are few white histories represented in environmental art, even the noble savage scarcely remains part of the environment).

I believe that until we acknowledge the cultural aspects in place construction (even and especially when negative), we have no truly site specific art. Until we start commemorating our complex role in the construction of nature, we have no chance to develop coalitions of human and non-human. The philosophy of AININ reflects that of many practicing environmental artists that divorces nature from culture, celebrating the former whilst discounting the latter. My experience of most environmental art is that, by ignoring the cultural history of a place, the consequent art is neither site nor context specific. The contemporary movement of environmental artists most commonly forms an, often beautiful, traveling gallery without walls rather than an informed and community involved celebration of a specific place.

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154 For this reason, Christo’s work is more interesting than Goldsworthy’s, because it engages with culture, and a more plastic human beauty. Goldsworthy relies upon an infinite impossibility in realigned natural beauty to produce art, and he is a purist in using site specific material only, so the work is always ephemeral. Goldsworthy was criticized by the workshop’s teacher, François Davin, for worrying more about the photo than the site, reflecting (just as in community cultural development) the usual suspicion of commercial success (it’s no longer art). Christo was not considered within the practice of AININ despite its site-specific quality: his work was simply destructive of environmental values.
Site specific philosophy (on site specific artists)

Site: In the tidal zone at the edge of land and sea, where mangrove roots protrude and sand drifts at the far end of Noosa Woods.

Time: One week temporary installation during Floating Land with work of international environmental artists on display.

Intent: A philosophical commentary on artists in nature. A participatory process allowing for the desire to intervene and comment by its audience (and a measure of their interest).

Objects: A sign with holes and ties of red wool and pandanus plant hanging down (like temporary orange baling twine on farmer’s fences - ready for tying); A tacky cheap yellow daffodil, see-through plastic tablecloth overlying mangrove roots; Some sand drifts on top; Pierced with holes through which the occasional mangrove root protrudes; Some protruding mangrove roots tied with celebratory red wool or strips of natural material from the surrounding environment; Other roots still covered by the tablecloth.

(The front of the sign reads:)

Site specific philosophy

Nature breaks through.
The flotsam of Western romanticism.
Celebrate its emergence and thereby embed a new multi-cultured layer of
Release the plastic host of daffodils to be washed to more invasive places.
Will you add to the ties, or undo the knots?

The red tide

The reed untied

OOOOOO

OOOOOO

(The back of the sign reads:)

The fine print

Tamsin Kerr mudlark@spiderweb.com.au

An on-site editorial commentary about and for artists in nature. A work of site-specific words rather than acts of good deed. Christo’s wrapping meets the common woman’s tablecloth, her domestic body of text bleeds into the red tide (the reed untied). The process contradicts the painstaking natural products of Goldsworthy’s exterior with the West’s quick coverall of fake floral interior.

The many cultural layers of a place make up its nature. Western romanticism is tied to notions of the pristine in the environment, the environment as human saviour/ sacred, but the environment is always a cultural construct (and none more so than in the Noosa woods: re-made for re-creation).

The flotsam of Western romanticism is washed up onto Australian foreshores. The legends of mangrove roots is that they will grow through anything, even badly transposed English Romanticism toward the sunshine of the natural. And they do. Australian nature breaks through Western culture.

In tying celebratory ribbons of natural material around such breakthroughs, we (and particularly site specific artists) are tying down the cultural transposition as well. In such an act, do we mark the tree for felling, or are we tying a ribbon round the young mangrove in celebration? Is it better to keep the valued garbage of our transposed culture: in place and grow over new layers of commemoration, allowing past layers to re-emerge; or to release it so it might fly away, cluttering or glorifying other places?

How then should we treat ourselves in this colonised place? A another plastic invasion of the natural? Or is a more complex process of irremovable layering taking place? We are always transposing culture to new places; our discourse shapes land into landscape. Perhaps, in celebrating these more complex landscapes, we keep nature active and ourselves engaged.

A public art exemplar: The Edge of Trees

Ironically, public art (with little site specific rhetoric attached) might be created with more awareness of its complete landscape. Edge of Trees is one example of a site-specific sculpture developed through an
architecturally driven public art process. This Museum of Sydney’s sculpture by Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence was inspired by a piece of (almost) subaltern writing: in 1985, Ian and Tamsin Donaldson edited *Seeing the First Australians*, in which Rhys Jones wrote:

> the discoverers struggling through the surf were met on the beaches by other people looking at them from the edges of the trees. Thus the same landscape perceived by the newcomers as alien, hostile or having no coherent form, was to the indigenous people their home, a familiar place, the inspiration of dreams. (Jones, 1985: 185)

Curator, Peter Emmett picked up on ‘the edge of trees’ as a profound symbolic meeting place; the concept for the artwork that now stands outside the Museum of Sydney was born. It is designed with a great deal of knowledge about the history and the many layers of the site: originally a grove of trees, it became the first Governor’s residence and then the place for Sydney’s Museum. Like much of Australia, the place is contested ground: it combines both Indigenous and settler histories. Public art was commissioned:

> to create a counterpoint that speaks for other ways of knowing and remembering this place – the organic, the Indigenous, the romantic, the mutable … a shared and contested site of environmental and cultural memory: alive, resonating with ghosts and demons, hopes and dreams; not settled at all … a palpable imaginary place. (Emmett, 2000: 23)

The final award-winning work by Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence is many tall timber sculptures designed to be walked amongst with their recorded soundscapes (in Eora and English) and engraved texts. They reflect the skyscrapers of today, the building footprints from both the archaeological evidence and the present Museum, and the possibilities for a future reconciliation (as well as the edge of trees). It has become ‘the most loved sculpture in Sydney, probably Australia’ (selection committee member, Joan Kerr, 2000: 43), representing ‘a more complex, layered, and inclusive understanding of the importance of place’ (architect, Richard Johnson, 2000: p98). It is, in the words of Janet Laurence, ‘a reflective space of both darkness and light’ (2000: 101).
The bunyip memory of place

Embracing site-specific fear

It is the ability to consider and reflect upon the dark as well as the light that indicates the importance of both cultural and natural aspects of the place in site specific artworks. Environmental art, if it is to achieve its rhetoric of site specificity, needs to consider culture as much as nature, to understand the dark as well as the light, the subaltern memories of a place as much as its natural beauty. Perhaps then it can come of age and be valued by the community as is public sculpture like *Edge of Trees*.\(^{155}\) Developing the darker aspects of landscape memoir in place-based artistic objects further develops community and adds value by locating local specific meaning and place identity. As historian, Greg Dening says: ‘The living need a history disturbing enough to change the present’ (Dening, 1996b: 96). Site specific art needs to refer to the natural beauty of a place, but also must include its cultural memories, both of celebration and of conflict. It needs to incite unease, if not fear, as much as praise. The emotional, experiential, engaged, and embedded memories and perceptions of land form the basis of *Landscape Memoir*, capable of being transcribed by artists into cultural objects of complex meaning. Successful and signifcant site specific art embraces the fear but refuses the despair of the site’s culture as well as of its nature. To site objects in their specific places requires art as much as science, memoir as much as history. A cultured landscape requires imagination and the thick time of hearsay. To quote Greg Dening:

> The history of things will have to enfold the meanings of the present in which they were made and all the meanings of their successive presents.
>
> It is the same with places. The history of places, especially in places of cross-cultural encounters, will take as much imagination as science to see. Blood and ashes are blown away with the dust. Shouts and songs die in the wind. Pain and happiness are as evanescent as memory. To catch the lost passions in places, history will have to be a little more artful than being a ‘non-fiction’. It will have to have, among other graces, a trust in and a sense of the continuities of living through different times, despite all the transformations and translations that masquerade as discontinuity. (Dening, 1996b: 97)

Artistic and cultural commemorations of the imagined landscape must embrace the whole of a landscape’s memoir - name the whole place - through an ecocentric community cultural development of local regional identity. But, the stated philosophy behind much site specific art continues to reflect audience development (an art/ democracy later, historical approach) rather than community cultural expression (an art/ democracy now, memory approach); community education is at least as valued as community participation. Perhaps the gap between rhetoric and practice is understandable for the project-by-project based, low funding of the community arts (artists are paid in the hundreds not the thousands). Projects have to be talked up in fashionable terms to get ongoing funding and commissions, therefore the rhetoric of successfully funded projects will always be better than their still under-funded practice.

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\(^{155}\) Although the generally temporary nature of environmental art makes the object’s endeared familiarity over time impossible. Permanent sculpture has an advantage over temporary work in terms of gaining popularity. But the use of the *Edge of Trees* example here is not about audience reception. Rather it demonstrates one example of how more culture and site-specific information could be used in environmental art (particularly that which claims to be site-specific).
While environmental art might be beautiful and encourage people to nature (developing an audience for the environment and perhaps for art), it is limited by its romantic philosophy of ‘the natural’. A site is more than its natural component. The mistake in the conduct of environmental art lies in ignoring the cultural aspects of a site, or separating the cultural from the natural as having lesser value and importance. Without a long-term inhabitation of place (or a way to access, facilitate, and translate such local knowledge), the community cultural development aspirations of site specific artists are too often rendered as the aesthetic ‘plonk’ attributed to public art. The Edge of Trees is just one of many examples that point the way to more complex and participative existing practices. Jean Bojko creates participants from the local community and its culture; YATOO and The Fishman use myth to work as much with their own bodies as with nature; Bathing with Mary celebrates the natural and cultural history as well as community memories of the Mary River site. Such environmental art avoids the romanticised nature good/ culture bad dualism by embracing (fearful) history and culture as well as its environment, the human as part of the natural. Art can only become the practice of refusing despair in full knowledge of both positive and negative interactions. The best of environmental artists create objects that successfully celebrate these more complex human/nature coalitions.

The collaborative and community directed processes of traditional Indigenous art practices (as described in Part III) offer an ironic counterbalance to many of the artist-driven practices of the Artists In Nature International Network. So long as community cultural development acts as educator rather than servant to a community, it continues in the Art later model. The local and the regional are subservient to the external imposition of ideals. The particularised wisdom and memory of each specific community is lost amidst generic practice. 32+32=2000 offers a structured challenge to these elitist art practices (because the artist is buried and marries the community), and demonstrates that the strength of country towns is their sense of local identity, rather than how it is expressed by the non-resident professional artist. The Fishman inhabits the community and the environment that is the subject of his mythmaking; his art approaches the animal/human/land coalition as an indigenous inhabitant. Similarly, YATOO’s South Korean artists include themselves in the picture; the human animal is just another way to describe nature, another part of the natural. The human and the cultural are as emphasised as the natural (to be less dualistic, humans construct and are constructed by cultural nature). The local community’s memory of place and knowledge of history is just as important as the external artistic conception. Site specific art requires the cultural of community memory, an exposing of the artifice in art, and an acknowledgement of the human in the construction of the natural. It needs to celebrate both negative and positive human relationships to nature as much as the impossibly separate natural. Without the cultural, environmental art generally loses the details of site specificity. The best of place-based objects lies in a more community directed acknowledgment of the cultural amidst the natural. They tell the multi-cultured and full history of a site; they reflect the negative emotions of the wild as much as the positive of the environment. The value of voicing object memories of place lies in their site specificity, the naming of the whole site, and their landscape memoir approach.
Agreed (and often multiple) reality might be represented through a creative object or a text, while it might be experienced through action, such as a ritual walk or festival. When that representation or experience is successful, it reduces the separation from the other. The best of creativity allows for a participation with rather than a comment about. David Tacey in discussing Australian landscape poets (such as Judith Wright and Les Murray) says they ‘do not merely describe or represent land, they participate in it … the old and habitual dualism between self and other is undermined … Great poetry is simply the achievement of mythopoesis’ (1995: 162).

Perhaps the reasons why some environmental and community art or festival is not successful is not because the outcomes are bad (any art/ object/ event can be talked up with a good story), but rather because they are not complete. CCD needs to operate as part of a critical framework; festivals need bioregional embeddedness; and environmental art needs to operate with a valuing of culture. All have tended to ignore the darker sides of the stories they are illustrating and hence lose much of their subaltern potency and meaningfulness. This ‘darker, sceptical reading of landscape aesthetics’ is supported by theorists such as Mitchell:

“We” now know that there is no simple, unproblematic “we”, corresponding to a universal human spirit seeking harmony, or even a European “rising” and “developing” since the Middle Ages. What we know now is what critics like John Barrell have shown us, that there is a “dark side of the landscape” and that this dark side is not merely mythic, not merely a feature of the regressive, instinctual drives associated with nonhuman “nature” but a moral, ideological, and political darkness that covers itself with precisely the sort of innocent idealism [art critic, Kenneth] Clark expresses. (Mitchell, 1994: 6)

This dark memory is the counter to nostalgia and romanticism. Instead of mourning a golden past (and hence imply a dismal future), we might admit that both past and future are full of complexities. Embracing the darkness as well as the light in the histories and memories of our past might enable us to both celebrate present gains and embrace future possibilities.

The regionalised bunyip (whether Melong or Fishman) offers an intellectual way of challenging how we think about land. Western society’s relationship to land is as problematic as its relationship to indigenous groups. If we adopted and celebrated more complex notions of specific localised places, we might unearth a myriad of possible ramifications and practical outcomes in planning and place-based creativity. In developing this subaltern metaphor of What lies beneath? rather than what lies at the edges, I hope for a less offensive subversion of the dominant paradigm - a process: that makes and imagines spaces for that which is willing and ready to rise, and that allows surface celebrations access to greater depth and understanding. But fear and other darker emotions are a necessary component. A celebration that relies upon cute (animals or landscapes) to embody the natural leads to an overly sentimentalised view of nature – a pristine (and too often passive) nature devoid of and separated from culture. The choice of the bunyip and its protean relations brings a depth of darkness to the picture. The (anthropomorphised) lust of the coyote or the fear of the fish/man, more accurately reflect the complexities and shadows of human/nature relationships. It places humans into the landscape – prey as much as protector. Culture lies beneath nature just as much as nature lies beneath culture. ‘What lies beneath?’ implies mystery, fear and curiosity. In investigating these dark and shadowy elements, we add diversity, complexity, and accuracy to form a more complete picture of life.
A creative process that continually asks *What lies beneath?* allows for moments of individual insight and collective community development. A darker landscape memoir is based on deep regional knowledge of land, the wisdom of community memory, and the wild creativity of imagined human/non-human coalitions. We might broaden our metaphors of identity so as to acknowledge, if not embrace, an active fear but refuse its passive cousin of despair.

**Celebrating the bunyip wild**

Complex and complete celebrations of the regional allow for a layering and intertwining of human and nature, rather than a more linear and direct polarity. We celebrate the mud that is, rather than the rational logic that should be. Emotions and imagination reveals our place in the mud beneath, where we get to meet other inhabitants of the wild. The bunyip story in particular makes the natural more than a passive resource. If we can perceive the land with these eyes, then we can see nature as an active and influential agent. But it is the other views (more generally western) that dominate the ways we have seen the land. Our environment remains a human resource: a place to unwind, to categorise, to mine and develop, a loss to be mourned, or a source of inspiration for greater endeavours of human beauty. A wilder and less commonly understood story is that which draws upon earlier memories and older legends of place. Such stories lie beneath our resource driven understandings of land. These stories are remembered in myths, legends, fairytales, and folklore of almost all cultures. They are the landscape memoir of a particular place in which the land becomes alive, embodied with spirit and mythic-beasts.

How might we listen to bunyip stories of a more active place? How might we see the world through bunyip eyes? There are many existing ways. They seem most successful at the very local level and through celebration rather than protest – protest protects the passive, but celebration reveres the active. Site-specific art and festivals have the potential to imagine a wilder and more creative place; they reveal other pictures of land. We understand human/land relationships more fully, when we celebrate the whole place, recognising its conflicting, layered histories of darkness and delight. The proviso is that place celebrations are not limited by the romantic or lyrical concept of landscape. This too easily reinforces the perception that nature is passive and continues to separate human endeavour from nature (humans remain the viewers of, rather than the participants within, the landscape).

Place celebrations need to build in the darker forces of nature – the fear of the Bunyip, the laziness of the trickster Coyote, and the lust of Pan, in which human/animal/spirit become intertwined and the place remains a complete, active, and influential force. The child, fearful of being eaten by the bunyip, does not remain a viewer of the scenery; rather she is a participant on the world’s scene. When we add the bunyip to our understandings of the world, we stop seeing nature as separate from culture: the wilderness is returned to (or re-imagined as) home for the oldest cultures; and the city also becomes a place that can unearth and celebrate its wild beneath.
By adding the equivalent local and specific version of the bunyip – be it the Melong of Fraser Island or the Sacred Kingfisher returning to Merri Creek – we creatively embed ourselves in the specifics of regional place.

There are wilder stories in us all. By acknowledging this wild within, by valuing our wilder and more usually feral nature, we also value the stories of indigenous cultures and the memories of wilder spaces. We might even begin to imagine the culture of animals. The bunyip’s environment will continue to be categorised for human resource, but we will tread more warily, knowing also the bunyip’s wrath at careless overuse. We really feel ourselves to be part of the ecology when we live in fear of being eaten (by the bunyip or our wilder selves). We sense the wild beneath/within, rather than the wilderness apart. The bunyip returns humans to be part of (and not separate from) nature.

The artificial distinction between human and nature has set up unsustainable patterns of resource use. It might be reduced through creative imagination. We might use our love of ritual and celebration to re-member a more integrated human/nature coalition. A landscape photographer might imagine and create a mythic inhabitant such as the Fishman within his subject. An environmental artist might hang Nature’s gown, sewn from macaranga leaves, in the midst of a holiday destination. A creek community might collectively celebrate the returning patterns of animal migration. By celebrating the more complete and complex specifics of a locale, community identities become tangible and regional as well as inclusive of all their parts, human and non-human. Nature, in this partnership, is not a universal; humans can only partner that which is particularised and local. Nature/culture becomes situated as home. The nature aspect of such a partnership teaches other, wilder and more local, ways of looking and being, so that a ‘place-thinking’ emerges.

But the dominant paradigm still overemphasises a rational human culture. The wild (both the wild within humans and the wild around humans) needs affirmative action. Rather than cute, awful; rather than peaceful, unsettling. Nature should not be reduced to some human arcadia or sentimentalised into harmless aspect. Instead, nature might be awe-full rather than adorable. It might be celebrated rather than mourned. Likewise, humans might place more emphasis on their wilder natures: to use emotional creativity, not scientific rationality; to rely upon memory, not history; to talk of spirit guides instead of economic guidelines. We would rely upon local wisdoms rather than global experts. Such wildness might be aided through place thinking, allowing nature both a mind and a voice in human methodologies. We might imagine a landscape memoir, created by an active nature/human coalition.

Such wildness already lies within. It is not hard to access. We just acknowledge our emotional memories, remember our myths, and celebrate both the human and the non-human in our particularised locales. There are many extant examples. By bringing them together within a framework of the wild, they are transformed from
quirky one-off curios to a powerful social movement. Rather than hope for future change, we simply need to imagine, now.

A fuller sensing of land entails a more local and inclusive sensing of place and self (to value ourselves, we must value the feral as much as the ‘pristine native’). It relies upon community based, collaborative, creative and celebratory approaches of a wilder and more inclusive active nature. There are many examples of bioregional festivals and creative activities - celebrations of the movements of animals/spirits or the work of environmental artists - that remind, reshape, and retell the spirit of the wild. Such practices can be drawn upon to create a layered (rather than a polarised) framework for the nature/culture relationship. A ‘landscape memoir’ approach (in which emotion, memory, and mythology supplant reason, history, and science) allows the local and the indigenous as important a voice as that of the generally more distant expert and professional. The wild lies as much within us as around us; it is less an edge place than a beneath place; it is an inherent local wisdom that frequently protrudes into more rational and educated economies. By sensing its bunyip spirit, we might use the underlying wild to literally reshape the world and our sense of place or identity within it. The arts and the sciences are partial tools in representing landscape, made more complete through experiences of the local and the wild. It is through conversations with the bunyip that we might better imagine space and celebrate place.

The power of community memory is that we remember (or re-invent) our own subaltern connections to place - relying upon the mythic as much as the factual, upon the arts as much as the sciences. Wild thinking creates this archaeology of community memory. Community creativity of the arts opens the possibilities for wild thinking. As the Czech organiser of both a 2003 international conference on ‘Wilderness as the Phenomenon of Integral Culture’ and an exhibition on ‘Wilderness – Nature, Soul, Language’, Jiří Zemánek says, it is:

creative and compassionate perception that offers us a key to enter “the living world” … the human “I” is much more all embrace than our rationally contemplating ego … the loss of memory about our own roots, the memory of humanity, our nature … There are more and more people who have the ecological, respectively systemic and spiritual, view of the world (ideology) that transcends the dichotomy of modernism and traditionalism, they prefer participation and collaboration with nature … the intact self-forming nature. This is about the voice of the archetypal wilderness in us that cannot simply be wiped out of the world like a tropical rainforest. This is reflected not only in the ecological movements, but it asks us the fundamental question that regards the quality of life, the character of our creativity (imagination), spirituality and culture, and finally the transformation of contemporary civilization. … The source for finding ways to our more partner-like and co-evolutionary coexistence with the natural world. … They are non-cognitive intuitive forms of understanding that implement and balance our dominant rational discourse that has closed us into a prison of the so called objectivity and has thus deprived us of our perception of the multi-dimensional world – ie of the living procedure, depth and holiness. … The language of art is actually one of the most suitable means that expresses this “wild thought”. (Zemánek, 2003: 14-16)

Place memory is larger than community memory, more inclusive than tradition and history, and more engaging than scientific knowledge. Westernised community memory is generally limited to contemporary timeframes (asked to name an Australian hero, most people will name someone in their own lifetime, asked to tell a history
of their place, they will tell it from the time of their occupation), so it is insufficient to remember the longer account of a place. There is value in the longer timeframe; hence community memory needs to be associated with other practices to become institutionalised. Such is the endeavour of history. But history is written by the powerful, becoming the story of dominant culture. So we might turn to subaltern place memory: ritualised in festival, solidified in objects, legitimised through lore, and mythologised through story. Palaeontology might begin to understand the long term physical aspect of a place, but it doesn’t make humans think like a mountain. Knowledge of the ongoing inhabitation of animals, the wisdom of the mythic, the community lore of old wives’ tales and urban legends, bring a greater sense of the everlasting to community memory. The long term is remembered through a memory of place. It is remembered in thick time, less defined than the serial manner of historians or futurists. The bunyip, for example, is an older landscape memory that suggests a process in which humans might think like the wild. The bunyip might be a human construction (or it might not), but it is an important mythology/methodology that stretches out community memory to become place memory. The language of the bunyip is the language of the land; the bunyip’s memory names the whole place. We might approximate the bunyip’s memory of place through landscape memoir.
Celebrating Subaltern and Regional Landscapes of Identity

We choose our metaphors and they dictate our perceptions and actions; perhaps we might rewrite the metaphors, especially those that link identity to land, through small place-based changes. The Nation State of Australia is not as tangible a descriptor as more regional human scale land relationships. A national identity based on economics (for instance the GDP) rather than spirit, is a choice dictated and agreed to by the mainstream. The argument advanced by middle-class guilt, that it would be better to feed the starving than spend money on creativity, stokes the (assumed) superiority of the dominant western value system. That is, for the poor at least the outer life of the needs of the body should dictate resource allocation. But from non-western perspectives, a (spiritual) sense of place is critical. And perhaps for all of us, identity is only severed from place at a high cost.

A more regional emphasis on place celebrations may be one of the first steps to reconciling these differing approaches. Place celebration offers an easy entrée for western culture to begin to understand the importance of subaltern relationships to land. At their more optimistic, place celebrations might change the misunderstandings between economic and spiritual value systems: place-based celebrations offer us an enjoyable way forward to reconciliation that most of us would be willing to take. In my conversations about place-oriented festivals with the National Museum of Australia, George Main from the People and Environment Program wrote:

My feeling is that festivals like the return of the Sacred Kingfisher Festival & the Eel festival at Lake Bolac have strong commonalities. Each appear to involve a real focus on the particular nature & history of individual places, a celebration of those places, and a brave turning towards local social & ecological wounds arising from colonial history. They seem to me to be about a broad, hopeful process of decolonisation. (George Main, e-mail 4/5/2005)

If we consciously celebrated subaltern and regional landscapes, then our sense of identity would change. Human identity could be based on natural and human-scale systems rather than artificial political boundaries. If we were no longer economically or politically defined, then perhaps we would no longer lead Thoreau’s ‘lives of quiet desperation’. Our identity could be tied to regional and specific place and its non-human inhabitants: ‘I’m a bunyip woman or a Kingfisher man’ (or perhaps more regionally and collectively, ‘We are Melong women’ or ‘We are Merri men!’) might replace ‘I’m Australian’. Such an understanding of identity might indicate (or drive) an environmental and spiritual life more fulfilling than the politically defined economic one we lead today. But none of these ideas are new - Thoreau also campaigned against political economy, and
Indigenous Australians lived a regional environmental and spiritual life with just such animal totems for hundreds of years. While these themes may never be fully adopted by mainstream western society, it is important that they continue to be re-presented and promoted, so we are not lost forever in the wilderness of economic salvation, so that there will always be Sea Changers and wild thinking, so our identity will always be more complex and diverse than simplistic jingoisms. In Gary Snyder's essay on bioregionalism 'The Place, the Region and the Commons' in his 1990 book The Practice of the Wild, he says:

> In the old ways, the flora and fauna and landforms are part of the culture. The world of culture and nature, which is actual, is almost a shadow world now, and the insubstantial world of political jurisdictions and rarefied economies is what passes for reality ... Bioregional awareness teaches us in specific ways. It is not enough just to "love nature" ... our relation to the natural world takes place in a place, and it must be grounded in information and experience (Snyder in Barnhill (ed) 1999: 97 and 99).

Such grounded information and experience might be more easily gained and understood through regional celebrations of place, than through national eulogies of sentiment. Perhaps identity is less about colour or nationality than about a human scale relationship of people/animal/land coalitions.

When nature/culture is imagined as an active coalition, the separated wilderness disappears, and we value and celebrate our own wildness and our specific local place. Rather than rational science or undisputed history, we might equally apply imagination and wilder thinking. Rather than humans economically owning land, land might spiritually own humans (as it has across many regions for centuries). Rather than nationalistic jingoism that celebrates the monolithic hero, we could inclusively use regional celebrations to be wild and creative.

**National Identity and Nation Building**

> We have known ...that the violence of this evil eye is inextricably connected with imperialism and nationalism. What we know now is that landscape itself is the medium by which this evil is veiled and naturalised. (Mitchell, 1994: 29-30)

Discussions on national identity and nation building reflect insecurity, which is a necessity in the growing system of globalisation. A nation that doesn’t question its identity and place in the world is either in collapse internally from subaltern elements or in danger externally from cultures too long unacknowledged (or both as in the pre-Sept 11th position of America). Just as planning and strategy needs to be continually revisited to maintain relevance to its community, if we do not revisit identity debates often they ossify into the most simplistic and dominant discourses. The
more complex debate on multiculturalism fills a vacuum that is otherwise vacuous – ‘Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, Oy Oy Oy!’ Australia needs to revisit the identity debate with some depth. Ernest Renan (1990) says nation is constructed from a rich legacy of memories that must include the colonial and the local. Pierre Nora (1996-1998) shows how French social memory shapes national identity while also acting as a counterweight to the nation-state. If we ignore the issues of identity as passé, then we leave the field open to more dangerous and shallow versions. The issue of Australian identity will continue to plague us.

The Howard Government wants to replace notions of multiculturalism with integration: Prime Minister Howard re-elevates the 'Brave Pioneer and the Little Aussie Battler' while condemning 'Black Armband Historians'. However, Germaine Greer's alternative in Whitefella Jump Up (Quarterly Essay, 2003) is described by Marcia Langton as a:

weak tonic for this shallowness of identity ... ignorant of an enormous body of fictional and non-fictional writing, cinema and art ... which, if wrestled with honestly, lays the foundations for a new story of the nation. (Langton, 2003: 78-9)

This thesis has attempted a little honest mud wrestling between subaltern and dominant notions of identity and our collective relationship to the lands of Australia. The promotion of the particularity of small regional places may prevent the emergence of the otherwise more sentimental shallowness of a jingoistic nationalism.

The devising of a nation's identity symbols (emblems, stamps, coins156, or insignia) officially offers creative opportunities – it is as much about imagination as it is about reflected reality. Yet, Australian symbols could be more imaginative and valued without losing status. Our floral emblem is neither a symbol of love (England’s rose) nor has it been a valued commodity for trade (Holland’s tulip). We unimaginatively use the most ubiquitous of our native animals (to the point that we cull them constantly) on our shield. We could instead choose the mythological or the non-native for their attributed values (the rainbow serpent and the bunyip157 might parallel England’s lion and the unicorn). We predominantly choose the populous over the rare, the reality

156 Coins might allow for more public debate on visual evidence than is otherwise undertaken. The public furore on the replacement of Caroline Chisholm with the Queen on the $5 note (notes were illegally, frequently and literally defaced, t-shirts – the ubiquitous indicator of any community campaign – were made, columns were written) led to her quiet removal in favour of Henry Parkes and the fathers of federation. Similarly, Catherine Helen Spence came to represent women in Caroline Chisholm's absence.

157 There has actually been a set of 6 bunyip stamps issued in July 1994 by Australia Post, each done by a different artist. But stamps are rapidly disappearing as objects contributing to the debate on public identity, as emails and mobiles take over. Perhaps instead, call tones could be designed to echo the ‘woomph’ of the bunyip?!
of the day-to-day over the strengths of the mythological, and hence we undervalue and forget the latter's influence.

Identity debates conflate time and give us an entrée into dreaming thinking. They offer rare reflection on the integral notions of past/present/future. Independent of our choice of symbols, their ideology and influence are reflected across time - they become timeless, in the same way that Aboriginal symbols and mythologies lie outside history. The rainbow serpent is a pre-human figure of creation legend, a present day reminder of resource and resourcefulness, and a future being of hope and protection. Equivalently, the 'three cheers' version of history is dependent on Australian legends of the digger, the bronzed Aussie figure on the present beach, the older swaggie with black billy in his hand, as well as projecting into a predominantly physical future of the sporting hero. These figures construct our identity as is shown in debates about republicanism or the Constitution preamble (See for example Mark McKenna's discussion on the development of a new Constitutional preamble in 'Poetics of Place', 2003 or indeed Russell Ward's *The Australian Legend*, 1958).

Why is the digger praised as a hero? The Government took young men from their families and futures, asked them to support or imagine a far flung and irrelevant set of values from an English civilisation, sent many of them to a futile and early death or disability at far away places like Gallipoli. By the acknowledgement and valourisation of these deeds, the Government then makes itself subject to huge claims of compensation, which it surprisingly happily acknowledges by setting up a large bureaucratic mechanism (only part of which is Veteran Affairs), supporting and giving high status to relevant emerging community organisations (RSLs), and paying life-time pensions to both soldiers and widows. In contrast, when the Government takes younger and darker coloured children away from their families to inculcate a far flung and meaningless civilisation's values, and that permanently maims and disables a whole generation, its reaction is part denial and whole avoidance in fear of the costs needed for compensation (and while the wider community may not all agree with this stance, they claim they understand the economic reasons: compensation payouts would be too great a burden on the taxpayer and their administration would be a nightmare).

It is the process of identity formation and debates that allows such choices to be made, such differing treatments. If we ignore national identity as a right wing outdated concept in a
globalised world, we allow such processes free reign - they remain unquestioned. Just as if we scoff at Equal Employment Opportunity approaches, disclaiming their need to identify the demographics of minorities because that would be exposing and unfairly labelling them, then we are condemned to assume that the present (and dominant) makeup of any community is acceptable. Without an examination of identity, tips in America are called corrupt bribes in Asia.

Identity debates are an acceptable way for the wider community to construct and discuss the future, as well as providing an opportunity to clarify regional position. Rather than a clichéd embarrassment, the changing issues of a nation’s identity should be seen as a critically important component of every debate on each country’s soil. With more popularised and grass root debates about identity, Australians might arrive at more diverse and regional understandings of community identity. Jingoistic perceptions of drought might for instance be replaced by an acceptance that drought is just another rhythm of country.

The ongoing coverage of Australia’s drought has exposed some interesting cultural contradictions in our approaches to land and perceptions of country. As seven out of ten Australians have never lived in the country, common perceptions of ‘the bush’ are reduced to media grabs and political mythologising. From such, most Australians can only presume a Hanrahan perspective of country life. (*Said Hanrahan* is John O’Brien’s ironic poem; each verse on drought, flood, or fire ends: “We’ll all be rooned [ruined]” said Hanrahan’.) Daniel Flitton (2005) in his article on ‘City Life, Country Living’ compares the pronouncements of politicians with those of Hanrahan: Howard similarly appears at the end of each ‘natural disaster’ to commiserate about the hard life in the country. Flitton points out that this approach does little to change city perspectives, even though some rural Australians are campaigning for refugees while their city cousins are often lost amidst more individual aspirations of redecoration. It is tempting to continue to stress these inconsistencies in country/ city stereotypes, and to perhaps romanticise the country escape. But stereotypes exist for a reason and the good comes with the bad. The grounded conservative stereotype of the country can be viewed and, more importantly listened to, in a number of ways.

I was talking to an old timer about (what else but?) the weather, and she offered a wisdom about the rhythms of country life that is missed, not only by the likes of Hanrahan and Howard,
but also by writers like Flitton and myself. It is an insight that I am only slowly inhabiting, even though it is a simple understanding just as accessible to those wiser than me (gardeners, walkers, listeners perhaps?), who are able to appreciate such lessons wherever they live. My hard-wired urban casing needed the unadulterated country lifestyle and an old woman's comment before I could begin to understand the less dominant rhythms in the dance between nature and culture.

I was bemoaning the dryness and the lack of water in the tanks and dams (as a woman living in the country, it has become the expected and accepted thing to say; it feeds the country drought of city fashion). She said that she had come to love and value the changes, and to know that no matter how long the dry went on, a wet would always follow. Nothing startling, but gently said with what I can only grandly describe as a more spiritual depth than my resource driven dependency. This quiet embracing and love of these patterns in nature transforms the too-often eulogised hardships of country life into something more akin to a life lived with country. Land is not just a battleground between men and unforgiving nature. There is another layer to our story of country that stems from a lived understanding of place; it grows from quieter voices and an indigenous empathy for land. When we recognise these underlying landscapes, anything becomes possible. Perhaps we might return to more successful farming of a native produce evolved to specific regional patterns of country and thereby, even, reduce our water use.

These calm understatements from edge places are of less media interest than political grandstanding on primary resources, but their muted message is an alternative that needs to be re-presented. An attuned lifestyle might include listening to the land's voice and its patterns, rather than imposing short term economic imperatives on a piece of earth that has survived for more years than man can measure. Its patterns might be affected by its human inhabitants, but they cannot be ameliorated by money or national sentiment. Rather, I think, we need a deeper understanding and gentler celebration of the peculiar patterns inherent to each regional place.

(National Identity and Nation Building is based on diary entries from Nov 2004 and May 2005)
Conclusion

Each Part of this thesis discusses creative ways that human cultures celebrate place and imagine space. The wilder subaltern – that which lies within – gets emphasis through landscape memoir, art now approaches. Historians and planners can also be artists and madmen (and vice versa, of course); western culture can remember its own indigenous imaginings; humans relate to their animal spirits; romanticism and nostalgia are made more complete through embracing the dark. The rational is subverted by the wild beneath, so that a more creative, environmentally sustainable, and racially aware metaphor – epitomised by the bunyip - might (re)emerge amidst our cultural discourses on land.

Each Part offers a key idea that draws upon subaltern discourse of the wild:

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Each idea offers postcolonial mud to environmentalism. The subaltern lies beneath; it breaks through the constructed layers of landscape perception to dominant cultures of the surface. It is perhaps best expressed in the embodied form of mythopoetic beasts, inspired from older wisdoms. Making space for other cultures and the non-human celebrates place specificity through art, imagination, and festivity; and vice versa. A wild and creative metaphor, a thick time of hearsay, a many-cultured delight, a spirited community, an active land, surfaces up from below.

The edge is the division.
What is known is always from the past.
Through knowledge the new is a reworking of the old.
The sum total of knowledge is culture.
Culture is the veil through which we describe nature.
The process of nature continues despite our analysis.
Our analysis is part of the process of nature.
The process of nature must include the actions of man whether or not they are destructive.
Man’s description of ‘nature’ as something separate – out of town – where the edge is the division between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, is an illusion.
‘Nature’ and ‘culture’ are the same thing.
There are no divisions.

Environmental artist, Chris Drury (1995)
Frantic love is small but wild

I finish this thesis alongside the wild. June is the beginning of the antechinus season.
Antechinus are fierce native hopping rat-like animals, whose sole focus is feeding, then
breeding. The males in particular feed then breed so completely, they forget all other drives,
dying of exhaustion at the end of antechinus season in August/September. It is a short, but
fiercely focused life. When everyone else is away and I lie quietly writing, the antechinus works
beneath me - scratching and knocking on the wood, rearranging our possessions, while feasting
on our plentiful supply of its favourite food. Antechinus are carnivorous, so are welcome here -
eating the mice and insects that borrow more heavily upon human supplies. Best of all, I think
the antechinus' version of chocolate is crunchy, fat-filled cockroach, so that these electronics
destroyers all but disappear over an antechinus' wintering.

Antechinus are not graceful. One day, a noise in the kitchen forced me to abandon writing to
investigate. An old Gladwrap roll had fallen from the top shelf of the pantry. It lay on the floor,
box broken, but still inhabited by a passionate scrunching and scrambling. All I could see was a
round furry ball of a bum and a long twitching tail. I assumed the antechinus was stuck in the
roll, so picked it up, antechinus firmly embedded, to show to Ross in the shed. I got halfway up
the driveway when the antechinus finally protested. In the process of carrying the roll, I had
shaken out the remaining cockroaches. An indignant antechinus appeared. It sat on the top of
the roll, staring at me with wide little possum-like eyes. I swear the only thing that was going
through its head was 'Is it too big to eat?' Having decided the answer was yes after a magical
moment of contact, it turned tail, scampering back to warmer and smaller food.

I love this small mammal. As I lie above, it works below. I am so focused on this final edit, on
finishing, that I forget to eat; the antechinus (at least at present) so focused on eating that it
forgets fear. Its fierce focus reflects my own and our contact is synergistic. Not only does it
remove less welcome animals, it loudly, noisily, proclaims its domain - the domain of the wild.

And the rest of the family in this hard and stressful time of ending? It is an overly busy and
difficult time for us all, I think. Katerina's job as apprentice chef has undergone a major
transition in all but place. The owners sold to a new group who have changed Kat's style,
presentation, workmates, hours, pay, and passion. Positively, this means she has booked her
driving test for the 1st August (also the D-day for my thesis), so that she can widen her options
to workplaces in Noosa or beyond. She is soon to turn 18 (hoping for a large party on the weekend after 14\textsuperscript{th} August), so then we will have to consider her all grown up – she already makes a fairly convincing impression.

Ross is busily working on a ‘landscape memoir’ display cabinet for Noosa Library to show the books of Nancy Cato, having recently made a ‘landscape memoir’ exhibition throne (and a lot of domestic commissions inbetween). The impact of my thesis has been felt on more than his increasing household chores – the thesis’ spiritual influence on our ideas as great as my gradual abandonment of familial physical responsibility. Ross has been working seven days a week now for some months, without apparently reducing the long list of impatiently waiting clients – he is feeling the pressure. And Marcus, who has been working part-time for Ross (and others) and living in the caravan since February is having second thoughts. His girlfriend and family still in Germany, he is gradually realising that Ross’ creativity of work is generally hard, challenging, and underpaid. A couple of jobs Marcus has taken on have proved more complex than he anticipated, and there is a look of leaving in his eyes. But this may just be the winter malaise that affects us all...

Anika, as usual, becomes more cheerful and obliging under pressure (although belied by the eczema on her skin). She is on holidays after a self-pressured term and a school report full of praise. She is pushing herself to learn, bringing home many books to (oh-so-slowly) read with agonizing patience, as well as managing her own entertainment in the temporary (we hope) absence of family and friends. She hopes, despite more pessimistic warnings - for a magical transformation on thesis D-day, back to a family, a garden, a holiday together (or at least a day a week). There are things that will come true in time - perhaps through her birthday wish on 8\textsuperscript{th} August. She will be 12, almost a teenager. I think we will be taking her and a couple of friends to an afternoon musical play garden in Kin Kin with Hubbub, Linsey Pollack and friends.

And we all hope what Anika hopes. We hope for an end to this excessive busyness - running too fast to stay in the same place. We all need more time with friends, family, and community. More time to stare at the sky, smell the flowers, and drink afternoon tea (or wine) in the relaxed knowledge that tomorrow is another day. By spring, as the (male) antechinus is dying of exhaustion, I hope the wisdom of humans might result in a little more self-preservation. Hopefully we remember to eat with friends and family and rest with mountains. Hopefully spring
will see us ready for the future and happy with the past, even as we always live in the present. Hopefully by Spring we will be consoled with better promises of living, more satisfaction in working, and more usual days of joy. Even in this current pressure-cooker, we have managed quite a few rare days and dinners. As long as we hold on to (at least) the memory of what we value, it remains a potential future. We look forward to many more reminders! But meanwhile, back to the short, fierce focus (optimistically with a more long-term outcome than that) of the antechinus!

(Mudlark letter, 1st July 2006)
Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to explore an active nature; interpreted through cultural metaphors that build up into what Holmes Rolston III refers to as a ‘storied landscape’; a sense of place with overlays of multi-cultured meaning. The powerful embodied metaphor of the bunyip has emerged from imagining wilder human/ non-human coalitions. For Donna Haraway, it is the alliance of human and non-human actors that will change the maps of the world.

It’s not a “happy ending” we need, but a non-ending. That’s why none of the narratives of masculinist, patriarchal apocalypses will do. The System is not closed; the sacred image of the same is not coming. The world is not full. (Haraway, 1992: 27)

It is a non-ending I offer in conclusion to an irrational narrative built upon a repeated layering of argument. There is no final thesis position, rather ongoing and continual conversation. It is not a solving but a dissolving of problems that I seek.

I started this thesis wishing to examine how an active place might shape human community and identity. I ended with a far more complex notion of place that discards such simple relationships. Place is built upon a multi-layered set of complex cultural perceptions. Place slides between notions of the real, the mythological and the imagined, and as such it can hardly act (or be acted upon) in a single purposeful way. My confusions as to whether place has shaped me or I have shaped place become hollow when the concept of place is unpacked. Place, like many other keywords, is a useful linguistic metaphor but it cannot act as a medium between the self and reality: in the process of its defining, lies its undoing.

So too, the edge is a sloppy metaphor for the subaltern. It is the voices beneath, rather than the voices around (at the edge of), that underlie dominant voices. Just as the landscape is built up of layers of perception, some of which are more overt than others, so too is the subaltern. The layered landscape image offers a more useful metaphor for subaltern theory than does the concept of the edge. The edge implies that the Other lies at some distance from us, but the better metaphor is that it lies within. Nevertheless, the concept of the subaltern presents the same practical constraint as Freud’s unconscious: it is impossible to disprove its presence, because its very definition relies on it being unacknowledged. Perhaps though, both the subaltern and the unconscious can explain the inexplicable, uncivilised responses that should not continue to occur in (western constructions of) rational society. Perhaps subaltern fear can explain the irrational dominance of four-wheel drives on urban roads?

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158 Americans expressed horror at the third world resemblance of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina struck in September 2005, because they thought of such Other as being someplace else, at a great distance from ‘the richest country on earth’. Such an attitude means they are ineffective in acknowledging their own issues of poverty. If they recognised that the third world lies within, a subaltern influence, their solutions (to embrace the fear but refuse despair) would be about self-medication and other countries might gain more US empathy. There are many such examples: of course, the same arguments are applicable to Aboriginal issues within Australia.
Content and context are good examples of the role of metaphor and subaltern theory. Planning concerns might be written off as context by one community cultural development worker, but seen as central content by another. The personal story may be grudgingly allowed as context in relationship to the main argument by the intellectual academic, whereas it becomes critical content in determining the story in many indigenous practices. A successful metaphor might move that which is defined as context into that which is defined as content. But, the subaltern is only valid in context of dominant expectations, and what lies at the dominant surface changes in the context of each social sub-group; and each social sub-group is in part defined by its subaltern element. In the end, it is the audience and their own context that defines the meaning and interprets the degree of subaltern expression/revolt or traditional conservatism. It is the reader or viewer who holds the greatest power in shaping writing or art with meaning. It is when readers and writers (the creators and their audiences) come together that any agreed social pattern can be constructed; hence the importance of the role of academic institutions and of museums and galleries (and their like).

Instead of demonstrating how much I know or have read, I wanted to use the precious time of a PhD to explore the wisdom I didn’t know. I used the thesis to investigate the issue of the wild rather than verify a hypothesised point. Consequently, examples in this thesis have been used to forward ideas rather than to prove a singular reality. In assessing the disciplines of history, planning, and leisure studies, the thesis shows how a wilder cultural philosophy problematises the epistemology of social science. In not adopting the custom of solving the problem of the subaltern. But I did not aspire to this form of research agenda setting - that parallels mathematical proof with its linear logic and solving QED moment. (Mathematics is the pinnacle of the paradigm of western knowledge. Its reduction of complexity to the purity of numbers, its mania for measurement, its self-confirming logic of proof - setting up the problem and then solving it with that satisfying “quod erat demonstrandum” (which was to be demonstrated) is the style of argument upon which much of western academic methodology is based. It is a style I most enjoyed, a clear and logical comfort amidst the wild confusions of life, as a young first year pure maths student at the Australian National University. The conventional thesis, especially in the sciences (and those that seek to emulate the sciences), imitates this style: setting up a hypothesis, amassing sufficient statistically valid data to prove (or more correctly and rarely, disprove), leading to a conclusion that solves the problem.) This thesis does not end in a conclusion that shows that I have proved what I set out to prove. Rather, it hopes to encourage others to engage in their own conversations with the mythic bunyip other. Literature reviews constrain by discipline, and PhDs seem often more about demonstrating knowledge of academic form than about creative ideas. Instead, here is a model for the ever-increasing number of PhDs to act as if research really mattered, rather than show adherence to convention, another rung in the academic career. The siting of this PhD under the administrative supervision of the social sciences has had its own constraints.

Another area, such as philosophy or the arts, may have been more accepting of the non-linear and complex style, leading perhaps to a less polemic plea for the idea of the wild and of unreason. As Higgins & Morgan point out in their article on The Role of Creativity in Planning (2000: 126), for planners...

Breaking new ground can be a lonely and frightening experience. Developing the confidence to do this, including taking risks and continually learning from them, unlocks a more promising future, rather than being stuck in
The thesis dissolves conventions and disciplinary boundaries, so as to see what might change. The idea of the wild, when taken seriously, changes the way we live our lives: as Thoreau says, ‘In wildness is the preservation of the world’. It certainly has changed my undertaking and presentation of this thesis, so that perhaps it models a micro example of the impact of the wild - anarchic and creative, uncomfortable but attractive at the same time. Through its layered philosophy of metaphor, memoir, mythology, and memory, this thesis attempts to understand the bunyip’s messy and complex ontology. In both its writing and its living (content and context), there has been an attempt to de-centre myself, to imagine the writing from inside the heart of the other – from the regional, from the past, from the indigenous, and from the non-human. The original challenge of this thesis lies in the challenge of imagining and communicating the voice of the land through a bunyip mythology. What becomes important is the usefulness of the story, rather than its factual accuracy or even whether it is real. This is the power of the notion of trustori (and its snobbier cousin metaphor) and the importance of the mythic and its voicing – it allows us to imagine, to access a bigger picture than ourselves and our own culture. The land’s voice is heard through the trustori told about it; the bunyip reminds us we are as much part of nature as she is part of culture. The bunyip puts us into place.

The more I delve into themes such as monsters or landscapes, the more I am reminded that it has all been said before, maybe in slightly different ways and contexts, but the trustori remains the same. For instance, Howard Daniel, himself writing in the 1960’s, reminds us of Goya’s and Malraux’s earlier contributions on imagination and monsters:

> The grotesque and fantastic world which reveals itself when reason sleeps has always proved fascinating to ordinary mortals, though never more so than today. In a civilization so unoriented and fevered as our own, where what is accepted as reason appears to lead only to final destruction. Man is driven to retreat continually into his imagination which, as Goya observed, “begets impossible monsters when deserted by reason.”

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As Walt Harrington (1997) says: to write from inside the heads of participants and evoke the tone of their felt lives.

As Art Bochner argues across his many works on evocative narratives.
Conclusion

... Whether it is a *Capricho* of Goya or the *Uli* figure from central New Ireland, each of the works collected in this "museum without walls" – to borrow Malraux's [1949] wonderful phrase – was produced by an artist, known or unknown (Daniel, 1964: front dust jacket & 21)

There is little that has not already been imagined in our many and lengthy histories. As author, Antoni Jach says in *The layers of the city* (1999), 'Naturally we are only alive because of those who have gone before us. We live on top of their bones, on top of their aspirations and dreams. We were dreamt up by our forebears in a fit of optimism.' The best another contribution to the aspirations of our forebears can do is to update their ideas' appeal to a world more interested in the new than in the past. A quick glance at the coffee table picture books of any bookshop is enough to convince me that the well worn argument against pristine, human- and culture-free wilderness needs to be ongoing. And myths and festivals are also well trodden themes. However, perhaps together, monsters and festivals unlock an older idea of land's sentience. The combination of celebrating fear turns landscape memoir into a familiar inherent practice. Perhaps, this thesis makes unusual links across rhetorics, between the reason of the present and the unreason of the wild – to unearth and remind with the subaltern. The best I can do is welcome the impossible monsters that might emerge in the process of rebuffing reason. The worst I might do is to slay the bunyip through too many words.

The thesis has involved some personal journeys for its writer. As one of its sub-themes on black /white relations, I have moved along the same steps as those in Table 1. I knew there was no talking about relationship to land without including an indigenous understanding. I had previously overcome the awe of the Other working in cultural relations, but during this thesis, I had to overcome the fear of myself. I started wishing to claim myself black (the simplest solution in the face of white academia) or at least to claim strong allegiances to indigenous understandings of the world. I wanted to move from reconciliation back to (an inverse) assimilation – an assimilation of whites into black culture. I looked to black solutions to solve white problems. But in terms of land, neither reconciliation nor assimilation (whichever way it goes) will work. While it may be a favour we do indigenous groups by paying respect to their stories, it is more a favour we do ourselves. Yet this is no simple dualism: Indigenous culture is not the layer that lies beneath White culture. The division becomes less relevant in a subaltern reading. In the simplest understanding, we might remind each other of our own culture's memory and mythologies. My genealogy is mostly European, but my (and my grandmother's) spirit is native to this place. As Aboriginal artist, Pamela Croft, says of her work that investigates cultural layering within landscape and memory:

> The viewer is invited to exchange histories. This story is not about divisiveness but about creating new forms of cohesion, demonstrating that for some Australians there is another layer to the love of Australia, embodied in the actual earth… *land home place belong*. (Croft, 1999: 262)

Val Plumwood in her article, 'Belonging, naming and decolonisation', says the process is 'not appropriation but dialogue, co-vergence and hybridisation' (2000: 93). The ghosted story of Indigenous culture acts as a useful signpost to our combined earlier cultural memories, that draw upon many and diverse influences. I see (the continuous reconstructions of) Aboriginal understandings of land as one of the many important reminders to the 'surface' of the west of its own deeper, many cultured and complex society, full of such subaltern memories. The
subaltern metaphor of what lies within, developed in this thesis, shows we can no longer sadly agree ‘Poor Bugger Whitefella got no Dreaming’ (as for instance, the title of both Mary-Anne Gale’s 2000 PhD or anthropologist, Stanner’s 1979 essays suggest ). Our links to land are similar in their human and non-human coalitions, even if different in their particularity of place development. The influence of subaltern cultures continues to soften western hard dualisms and simplistic, reductionist thinking; maybe even (rarely) challenging the win-lose mentality with something more akin to reconciliation. The underlying groups keep social justice on the table. The traditions of the past remind the dominant of environmental sustainability. The subaltern is the keeper and the prick of conscience for wilder, more complex trustories. The subaltern remains as evidence of the multiplicities of reality. The subaltern acts as the dominant’s subconscious memory, a reminder of the crucial idea of the wild.

In our cultural memory, underlying more scientific dominance, we have similar relationships to land. It is just a tweak of imagination to take what we already do as a society and transform its discourse. Settler Australians’ own subaltern Celtic cultures were strongly regional and based on worship of the earth with rituals and celebrations. The bunyip re(in)states an earlier cultural memory in the use of animals to understand an active place. Our human/non-human coalitions are disguised but extant: in the child’s fascination with dinosaurs, in the continuous revival (survival) of the Celtic and the pagan, in the tale of the little Mermaid, in Aesop’s many fables (such as The Hare and Tortoise), in the increasing use of therapy dogs, even in our cataloguing of endangered species. Although, as a multicultural Australia, not all of these ring true; like other colonised countries we must meet the challenge of our more recent multi-cultured construction and find a site-specific sense of place. Dominant settler groups and whites in particular, need to acknowledge or establish their own connection with an influential Australian landscape.

Wild and mythopoetic animals seem the easiest access point to understanding a more active land. But each place needs to develop its own sacred animal, of relevance to its particularity. It might draw upon and borrow from other mythologies, or at least be reminded by Aboriginal, Chinese, European, and increasingly southeast Asian mythologies. But it also needs to build upon the west’s own (scientific) mythologies of place: that is, it needs to be bioregional, drawing upon local ecology and local community culture. A localised mythic animal might bring together science and art, colonial and colonised cultures, as well as combining the theories of postcolonialism and environmentalism. In acknowledging all the surfaces of the table, its top and its darker underside, we have a more complete understanding of its construction. In naming the whole place, the creature that emerges engenders awe – a metaphor to be respected rather than romanticised. Perhaps if we (re-) embraced the localised fear of neglecting country, this would replace the need for the politically manufactured terrorism of xenophobia.
This thesis proffers more than just another theoretical, albeit multi-disciplinary discussion on land. It offers robust, or at least fearful practical examples of what a postcolonial environmentalism might look like – in the particular and local imagining, development, planning, and celebration of a tangible embodiment of both place and nature. It builds a framework from the many celebrations of an active land, including memoir, festivals, environmental and public art. It recasts them as the feast (or at least the critical seasoning) in dominant consumption, rather than the apparent odd dishes of the Other. On the northern Sunshine Coast, postcolonial environmentalism might look like the traditions of the Melong; at Lake Bolac, it might be the eels. Generically (in Australia), the bunyip is no longer regionally specific enough. As a metaphoric and generalised descriptor for an awe of nature, it paves the way for other more particularised creatures. It is the particularity of place that modifies the bunyip metaphor into a thing of meaning and value for the inclusive diversity of those living there - not only the many-cultures of the present, but also past and future human and non-human populations. We might happily move to the complexities of Paul Carter’s ‘thick time of hearsay’ or John Hanson Mitchell’s ‘ceremonial time’, one less particular about a sense of past and future and hence less wrapped up in notions of progress and progression.\textsuperscript{164} The development of such talismans requires a wild thinking that we both flee and seek; as Bill McKibben (1990: 201) says, ‘The comfort we need is inhuman’. The subaltern can be both wild and creative. Subaltern place thinking offers a strong counterpoint to dominant ways of doing and thinking; it serves both postcolonial and environmental ends.

Subaltern alternatives have been and always will be present. There are innumerable examples. When white society first settled in Australia, the diary of Watkin Tench shows as sophisticated an understanding of such complexities of invasion and discovery, primitive and civilised, black and white, as we are ever likely to reach. The now derided black ceremonial archway to welcome royalty in 1901 has become the welcome to county fire raising ceremony of today. We can only believe in progress, if we think the latter more respectful than the former. The archway has been derided as racist, but I think it had exactly the same intent as today’s celebratory openings. A concept of progress, if it were ever to make sense, might be when we bring to light subaltern voices, rather than believing in or aspiring to the new. Originality is not about discovering something previously unknown; rather it is re-exploring our cultural stories and representations through different eyes and making syncretic connections. Originality is about exposing and making better links between our surface reality and what lies beneath. We develop by (re)unearthing, acknowledging and imagining the underlying voices of our society; by adding diversity we add depth, another layer to what makes us, and more ways to grasp the ideas up from below. And such diversity goes beyond human to that which we are, both animal and land.

The strong traditional human/ animal/ spirit alliance expressed through lore and legends is a reminder, to all, of our animal nature. And animals have a lot to teach us, as our many mythologies express: Monkey and dragon,

\textsuperscript{164} And the subaltern lies ready in support; for instance, the phrase ‘now and then’ implies something about our willingness to conflate the present and the past, despite our rigorous divisions.
Coyote and dog, devil stories and Aesop’s fables. Every culture has its animal fables and moral lessons – it takes but the merest subaltern prick as reminder. In the end, humans are animals; so an argument for the alignment between, alliance of, human/animal is almost nonsense. But civilisation has been about separating man (at least) from the animal and the beast, in a (futile) attempt to be less subject to its lusts and appetites. By acknowledging the animal within, we acknowledge this fear, and appreciate its outcome – an embedded place in nature, a re-(e)merged culture/nature, a chance to live sustainably in this world.

This is not however, an argument for a retreat to the noble savage. We can’t return to another’s (or even our own) past, however romantic we make it. Population growth and technological change has made sure of that. However, by changing that which we emphasis in our histories and memories, we might make a different future. By listening to the subaltern of society, by recognising the desires of the other within ourselves, we open the doorway to another way of thinking and doing. Some will choose to close (even slam) that door, others might peer out wondering where it might take them. The idea of the wild requires accepting the mythic/animal within; this first step allows us at least to stand upon a different threshold.

The subaltern proves the adage that there is nothing new under the sun; we don’t have to develop new ways to do things, nor do we simply re-create or link to old ways. It is the pulling together of both, the cross-cultural (over time and race), that makes for change. It is easier to remember that we already do (or have done) these practices, than to see them as more difficult new assaults of the mountain. The idea an active land is already extant in celebration and imagination. Western culture is very close to (if not already practicing) a festival of the bunyip that celebrates local histories of gain and more creative and complete cross-cultural imaginings.

But is the advancement of positive festivity denying our darker histories, bridging over muddier conflicts? Are such processes just another excuse to not say sorry, to not recognise disadvantage, to not recognise the past and its wrongs? Prime Minister Howard’s165 success, in issues of black/white relations at least, has been to oppose the nay-sayers, the black armband notions of history, and to instead believe in the inherent goodness of present Australians. Howard would say we are not racist (or sexist or any other ‘ist’) and therefore don’t have to be chivvied into better behaviours; our ancestors might have done things wrong, but ‘we’ are innocent. Howard’s strategy is that of one nation; we need to celebrate a unified Australia, one that is not divided by race.166 While Australia might wish to acknowledge its past, it doesn’t wish to be gloomy about it (and apologising would be an empty gloom indeed). Popular social change to black/white relations cannot rely on exposing historic truth alone.

165 Please note: Howard is a convenient communicative device; he acts as a reductionist symbol for an intelligent racism. What a great opportunity Howard provides in offering a focus for the too-often ignored but embarrassingly frequent rumblings about race. He exposes racism and lends it his name in a more sophisticated and insidious form than Pauline Hanson. His continuing success and his ‘honest John’ self-exposure of racism (even though denied) means that the Howard metaphor is an aspect that must be taken seriously. He is representative of worldwide leadership in his rejection of the challenging, creative Other, returning instead to the familiar comfort of conservative values.

166 For a good analysis of Howard’s approach to black/white relations, see David Marr’s profile on John Howard in Sydney Morning Herald 4 July 1998.
As well, to successfully counter the success of Howard’s (non or at best assimilative) approach to race, we need reasons to celebrate the existence of indigenous Australia and of its legacy in our ‘unified’ present. If we are to talk ‘equality’, then we need to not only acknowledge but also advance the lessons that black culture has offered our dominant white culture, just as much as white culture has proffered the perceived advantages of the biomedical model and the (increasingly modified) welfare state. Mainstream Australia needs to determine (and recognise) what it is that black Australia has taught – albeit in a subaltern way – to whites. This thesis has suggested some of the ideas and the processes in which this has occurred, especially with respect to land, but the acknowledgement and developing changes that result from subaltern processes are ever evolving and ongoing.

Hence the need to recognise the subaltern in Australian culture – to know what lies beneath – not just vague blandishments about land value or environmental ethics, but precise localised stories, be they memory, mythology or metaphor, that name the whole place. And further, to recognise their implications for change and to promote their hearings. The bunyip in this thesis becomes the symbol, the exemplar, the metaphor, for an Australian landscape. It reflects Mark McKenna’s call for fancy and the fanciful in an Australian constitutional preamble, so as to respect ‘the land as an animate and spiritual force, drawing on indigenous notions of caring for country’ (2003: 190). A less broad-brush, more detailed approach to fancy is necessary for smaller, more local regions. For me, the broadly termed Sunshine Coast from Fraser Island to Kilcoy constitutes a region – one that perhaps more closely approximates the boundaries of the Gubbi-Gubbi language groups or the geographic reach of the Bunya nut festivals than it does current local government boundaries. Perhaps the lessons have been absorbed more easily here because of the overt physical beauty of the place? And yet, an acknowledgement of where these lessons come from (at least as the inspiration that exposes our connections to land) has been much more erratic. There is a ritual of acknowledging country before getting on with the business of the day167 – but even this mild process is rare.

After two hundred years whites seem just as competent to hear these voices as they ever have been. There are numerous instances over Australia’s white history (Watkin Tench, Constance Campbell Petrie, or Governor...

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167 A typical example is the Chancellor’s opening at a Griffith University conferral ceremony (for Patrick Troy in May 2006). She said: ‘I’d like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners’ and then went on to talk about the PhD conferral. There are few such introductions in Australian formal ceremonies, so they are to be praised. However, I am struck by the common language we use in this process. We’d like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of country, but we don’t (or can’t) actually do the acknowledging, because usually we don’t know who the traditional owners are or were - we can rarely even offer local tribal names, let alone actual people. Such generous beginnings can so easily be reduced to rhetoric (the conservative’s argument against political correctness). The writer, Bill Lines, controversially suggested at the 2003 International Nature Writer’s Muster that ‘Welcome to Country’ is about a form of redemption, another way to absolve and thereby ignore white guilt. However, I think, no matter how banal, it does recognise the subaltern; it remains important in at least acknowledging that there are other connections to place, other relationships to land. While the University might own the land, the Chancellor is tacitly acknowledging another more spiritual and localised connection in which the land might own its people (optimistically, a sort of reading against the grain of capitalism?). At the very least, such conceding of the ground is considered a positive beginning by most Indigenous friends I know.
Brisbane are just tips of the iceberg) where whites have not only recognised but suggested lessons learnt from black Australia. There are the same, one must assume minority, voices speaking today. How might we hear the strengths and long-term knowledge of black Australia as well as hearing a white acceptance of such (at least in acknowledging similar stories within our own culture)? The literature and culture of loss has not in the end succeeded in developing the cultural changes needed to hear the subaltern message – Australia as a whole is still unsure what the message might contain let alone how it might speak. Another metaphor, another story, clothed in a different and stronger emotion (not guilt, not sorrow, not pessimism) might make the difference.

Howard’s rejection of black armbands is right, but only because he confuses the content for the emotional context. Hence a need to celebrate stories of gain, to recognise the bunyip, to make sure community festivities are as grass-roots and as removed from current bureaucratic government motivations as possible. We need more complex and creative imaginations that are strong enough to stand against the patriotic blandishments of the politician. David Tacey, an Australian expert in landscape and psychological archetype, says ‘we ironically give the Gods or demons more sway over us by disowning them’ (1995: 182). We need to own, to re-enchant place, with the bunyip and its like. An awe of the bunyip might subvert (or replace) the need for a fear of terrorism.

The major challenge today is to stay with the uncertainty, the chaos and confusion, and not to want or expect firm answers, complete systems, or clear models. We must attempt to explore our confusion, examine it, and not rush back to the past for a bygone order, nor move sideways to completely embrace (in often uncritical or romantic ways) the religious systems of other cultures. We have to learnt to remain in the present with an attitude of what Keats called ‘negative capability’, which is the ability to be in doubts, uncertainties and mysteries without any irritable search after fact or reason … These times require a certain courage or openness, since we are forced to live on the wild side … encountering the raw and unformed energies that will become the archetypal foundations of a future world-view. (Tacey, 1995: 195-196)

The bunyip (or Pan or Trickster) epitomises these wilder archetypes of ‘negative capability’. We might escape a romanticising of the past and the sentimentalising of the other, through a focus on the now and its subaltern energies. We might celebrate our darker and wilder natures in collective cultural activity that both brings the bunyip to light and muddies our certainties. A deep love of place is not reducible to a sentimental or romanticised history. There is a critical and valuable role for the darker side of the wild. Indeed both love and fear are necessary (and not necessarily opposing) elements that enable embeddedness in place. Perhaps such deep affective responses such as awe and humility result from this dynamic between love and fear. And it is through this emotive inhabitation of place that we might again link to the vital necessity of sustainable living practices and reject the shallower offerings of material commercialism. Our mediated, televised culture offers generally unsatisfactory replacements for generating such deep emotions of love and fear. The more creative and darker celebrations of the wild presented in this thesis, re-engages local communities with their environment; they become wild and native to place.
It is through creative collaborations that the arts become (potentially) successful agents in cultural change. Celebrations and *art now* approaches, at their most aspirational, collaboratively unearth the subaltern, allowing for greater diversity and understanding, exposing the complexity of our souls, and ensuring both movement and life. Interesting art and cultural activity by its very definition develop the next cultural metaphor. By the time art is economically successful, it has been transformed into wallpaper art and blockbuster movies. It is capital A Art individually undertaken and popularly celebrated – such Art can only ever represent the tired metaphor of yesterday, rather than lie beneath the winds of change. Art as a whole does not automatically lead us to the wild. It is the often belittled, small-a *art now* that muddily underlies and underlines our mainstream development. It is the collective collaborations of folk that hold the most promise (and the most banality) in expressing the metaphors of tomorrow. The role of art is not to provide a bridge across to other cultures. *Art now* (in its festivals and community cultural development activities) puts us in the mud of the liminal, a place we need to experience in order to acknowledge authentic (as opposed to appropriated) culture, a place in which we might meet trolls or bunyips, the embodiments of a more active landscape.

The wild is lost amidst the discourses of both the nostalgic and the logical, just as the regional is lost amidst nationalism and globalisation. The specific is lost to the generic. In giving dominant status to science, economics, and history, we lose sight of the critical spirit of place; the wild is (again) made subaltern. By redescribing the wild as wilderness (separate, uninhabited, and pristine), we misplace its culturally inhabited essence of locale. As Eastburn & Milligan (1998) summarise, 'The landscape is a repository of our culture, as well as a natural resource.' The wild continues to lie within us, beneath these dominant paradigms. Although we tend to sentimentalise the wild in our culture’s texts, within these stories also lies a more fearful and less despairing landscape memoir. Although we rationalise the wild in our compartmentalised planning, planning too can act, and has acted in both our own and other cultures, as if the wild mattered. This thesis shows that the wild continues to live within us: metaphor, memoir, mythology, and memory are where the wild lies; collaborative arts and inclusive place-based creativity are how to find it. It is those arts that admit to more complex and messy histories that can unearth and re-surface the wild, and thereby transform the metaphors we live by. This thesis shows why and how we embed ourselves in place and how critical the regional and the wild are for our long-term cultural and environmental sustainability.

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168 Note: This does not reduce the binary of nature/culture to simply culture, which as Plumwood says is highly problematic; she suggests 'working out new terms for both the relata, both nature and culture' (2001:26). In the meantime, I admit some culpability in 'the post-modern tendency to reduce nature to culture' (Plumwood, ibid), but only if culture is equally reduced (or enlarged by) nature – perhaps in this thesis the wild in the city counterpoints the essential culture of nature. This is David Abram's 'more-than-human world' (1996) and it is also Plumwood's goal, reflecting my own desire for conversations with the bunyip: contextual and negotiated relationships of communication, balanced dialogue, and mutual adjustment between species, starting with our own, in what would be, in the old terms, a liberatory blending or meeting of nature and culture. (Plumwood, 2001:32)
A more sophisticated sense of place and identity acknowledges and perhaps emphasises subaltern cultural influences. Using the politics of fear to advantage, and collapsing dualistic polarities through the use of landscape memoir, draws upon strong regional processes rather than their global reflections. While we cannot resile from post-isms and globalisation, this provides all the more reason for an equally well developed regional sense of place and identity. Particularity and diversity of layered place remembers the non-human (or at least its human expressions of belief and mythology) as a valuable and practical way to express a postcolonial nature through human planning and celebration. Planners are the west’s version of the keeper of place and to a lesser extent of identity (through maps and city plans), so they, along with community cultural development workers and artists, might be in the best position to facilitate a community’s defining of the especial animal or symbol of that place and ways to celebrate it. Perhaps it is time for planners to stop concentrating on providing maps (the cultural overlay of the tourist and development proprietors) and focus instead on a bioregional community’s cultural development and expression of specificity of place. We might all benefit in the move from the scientific and rational ‘What is?’ to the creative and imaginative ‘As if…’. In the end, those who inhabit the place, who are embedded in its particularity, are those who shape the place: to borrow an Aboriginal term, they sing the country.\(^{169}\) I would hope they do it with a positive and creative imagination that celebrates the wild in their region’s landscape and in themselves.

In the cultural environment of the early twenty-first century, there is a rejection of political correctness and its co-requisite inclusive paradigm of postmodernism, reduced to an ‘anything goes’ criticism. Once again, in Australia, Prime Minister John Howard leads the way in the media outrage, accusing English teachers of rejecting spelling and pure text analysis for dangerous and pointless feminist and overly inclusive re-readings. In this simplistic rejection of ‘isms’ (and the co-requisite resurrection of capital ‘H’ History), we belittle ourselves. What this thesis has shown is the real strength that lies in coming to terms with Other readings. A better understanding of indigenous philosophy, for instance, also brings out the most interesting elements within western culture (as writers like Stephen Muecke especially in *Ancient and Modern* (2004) have also shown). Other readings help expose our wilder, more animated, and celebratory connection to land. They broaden and deepen our range of responses: from that of ‘environmental crisis’ to ‘re-inhabiting reality’

There is a powerful set of metaphors that link people to place. The country ‘gets under the skin’ or ‘gets into the blood’; people become married to their country. This is the language of kinship mingles with a language of embodied nativism. Such permeability opens persons not only to place but to the substance and history of the place. (Deborah Bird Rose, April 2004: 2 of 5).

We might recognise and re-emphasise the importance that memory, mythology, emotion, and art now activities hold, and have held, in our own culture.

\(^{169}\) Such terminology is also found in more Eurocentric philosophy. For instance, Martin Heidegger says, ‘But there remains the song that names the earth.’
Landscape memoir embeds us in the specifics of locale, developing an active coalition of human and non-human. A colonialist, expert (and capitalist) distancing from place might give humans responsibility for, or dominion over, nature (in the same way as it has traditionally enabled a western civilisation superiority). But it does little to explain our emotional connectedness to land and the non-human, nor has it resulted in success - even in its own terms of sustainable development. Landscape memoir removes (or at least lessens) the distinction between human culture and non-human nature, so that impacts upon the environment are impacts upon ourselves. We speak with the land, not about the environment. We give voice to the wild, because we recognise the wild lies within ourselves. By honouring the wilder nature that lies both within us and in our landscapes, we change the emphasis from resource survival to a more creative spirit of life (or as Deborah Bird Rose’s 1992 title more succinctly puts it, *Dingo makes us human*). A landscape memoir that includes the bunyip (or its equivalents) and an *art now* methodology – monsters and festivals - reanimates the land giving humans a celebratory place within (rather than a mournful or dutiful separation apart). Donna Haraway says:

> Perhaps the world resists being reduced to mere resource because it is – not mother/ matter/ mutter – but coyote … our hopes for accountability, for politics, for ecofeminism, turn on revisioning the world as coding trickster with whom we must learn to converse. (Haraway, 1991: 201)

This thesis has shown how Australians might, and do, converse with the wild coyote’s equivalent. We build place memory through art, creativity, festival, and trustori, so as to name the whole place as an active landscape – our inhabitation becomes one amidst many creatures, both real and mythic. By conversing with the bunyip, the consequent human/ spirit/ animal understands and participates in an active land.
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This is how it always is
when I finish a poem

A great silence overcomes me,
and I wonder why I ever thought
   to use language.

(from Rumi’s poem, *A Thirsty Fish*)